

Christian Guesthouse Owners Fined in Same-Sex Couple Complaint

Christian guesthouse owners on Friday lost an appeal on a 2011 ruling that fined them £3,600 (about \$5,670) for refusing to let **same-sex couples** rent double rooms.

Last year, Peter and Hazelmary Bull were found guilty of discrimination after denying a double room to a same-sex couple in 2008. The Bulls' policy is to only rent double rooms to heterosexual married couples.

The Bulls appealed the decision, claiming that they had always restricted double rooms to married couples in accordance with their **Christian beliefs**.

The judge who gave the Bulls permission to appeal explained that his original ruling affected "the human rights of the defendants to manifest their religion and forces them to act in a manner contrary to their deeply and genuinely held beliefs." However, Court of Appeal upheld the original decision on Friday.

Andrea Minichiello Williams, CEO of Christian Concern, said it was the wrong decision. As she sees it, a number of judgments have now elevated sexual orientation rights above historic **freedom of belief**—a move she insists was never the intention of Parliament and has no democratic mandate.

"Bed and breakfast owners have now become another category of people in the U.K. who will be penalized if they try to serve the public without compromising their religious beliefs," Williams says.

"We are heading towards a two-tier society where only those

who subscribe to this new state morality will be able to operate in the public sphere. With full homosexual marriage now on the horizon, protecting conscience will become more important than ever.”