

# YOUR GUIDE TO THE RIGHTS OF COHABITING COUPLES

A LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND SERIES



## What is a cohabiting couple?

If you are living with your partner but you are not married or in a civil partnership, you may be considered a cohabiting couple. Irish law gives cohabiting couples certain legal rights. For example, if your relationship breaks down or if your partner dies, you may be able to apply to court for financial support.

## Do I qualify as a cohabitant?

Only a court can decide if you qualify as a cohabitant. To qualify, you must show that you lived with your partner in an 'intimate and committed' relationship for a number of years. The court will look at:

- the length of your relationship,
- how financially dependent you were on each other,
- whether or not you have children, and
- whether you were considered a couple by others.

## How long do I need to have lived with my partner to qualify?

To qualify as a cohabitant, you need to show that you have lived together with your partner for:

- five years, or
- two years if you have had a child with your partner.

## Why should I talk to my solicitor?

The law in this area is complex. Your solicitor can help you to understand your rights and guide you through the application process. As there are strict time limits involved, you should talk to your solicitor as soon as possible after your relationship ends.

## More information

For more information about the rights of cohabiting couples, visit

[www.lawsociety.ie/familylaw](http://www.lawsociety.ie/familylaw)

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