resolution

AWARENESS WEEK 2026

MEMBERS' TOOLKIT

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BACKGROUND

Resolution's Awareness Week 2026 will take place during the week beginning 30 November. This year, we're continuing to champion meaningful cohabitation reform and build momentum following the Government's consultation.

Our voice is only as strong as our collective membership, which is why you have a vital role to play in raising awareness, spreading the message and making sure the need for change stays firmly on the agenda.

During the week – and beyond – we're asking our members to get involved to help amplify our calls for cohabitation reform by:

- contacting your local MP
- writing to your local media
- sharing our campaign activity on social media

Whatever you choose to do, you'll be playing a role in reinforcing the need for government to prioritise these reforms and provide basic protection for millions of UK families currently not recognised under the law.

PARLIAMENTARY EVENT – WEDNESDAY 2 NOVEMBER

This year, we're taking our campaign for cohabitation reform to Westminster. On **Wednesday 2 December**, we will host a Parliamentary drop-in event in Westminster, hosted by Sarah Russell MP.

More than 50 Resolution members registered their interest in joining us at this event, to meet with their local MP and other Parliamentarians to highlight the lack of legal protection for cohabiting families and make the case for continued momentum towards meaningful reform following the Government's consultation.

For those members who are attending the event, Resolution has been, or will soon be, in touch with separate materials to help you publicise your attendance and meeting with your MP.

We will be sharing commentary and images from the event that members are encouraged to share with their community.

The Parliamentary Event is just one part of our campaign. Whether we will see you at Westminster or if you plan on supporting the campaign from where you're based, we hope you'll get involved during Awareness Week.

Together, we can make cohabitation reform a reality.

WHY WE ARE CAMPAIGINING FOR COHABITATION REFORM

There are 3.5 million cohabiting families in the UK – approximately one in five of all families are unmarried couples and this is expected to grow to one in four by 2032. Cohabiting families are the largest family type in England and Wales, yet unmarried partners have no automatic legal status or "common law marriage" rights.

After years of campaigning from Resolution, in June 2026 the Government opened a consultation that could give unmarried couples legal rights on separation and on death. Ending in August, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) is now weighing responses, with a course of action likely to be set out by the end of the year based on the consultation's findings.

With cohabitation reform featuring in the governing Labour Party's election manifesto of 2024, no legislation has yet been introduced to implement it. With just three years until the next general election must be held, time for these reforms to be enacted is beginning to run out, with a swathe of other bills to make their passage through Parliament in the first instance.

The window of opportunity for encouraging fulfilment of this manifesto promise is therefore narrowing.

During Awareness Week we aim to convince politicians on both sides of the political aisle of the need to prioritise these reforms and provide basic protection for millions of UK families currently not recognised under the law.

WRITE TO YOUR MP

We're encouraging Resolution members to reach out to their MP and invite them to meet with you to discuss the need for reform.

Awareness Week is a fantastic opportunity for you to write to your Member of Parliament and set out the changes we want to see, as we stand up for and support family justice professionals in creating a system that works to protect clients in your area.

To assist you, we have drafted a template letter or email that you can copy, personalise and send to your MP.

It's crucial that policymakers understand the value of Resolution's voice, as we continue to shape the future of family justice, putting Cohabitation Reform top of our agenda.

We would like to remind members that Awareness Week is all about starting the conversation. If your MP is not available during Awareness Week, we encourage you to meet with them in the coming weeks and months and continuing to press for change.

If you are planning to meet with your MP during Awareness Week, or the weeks that follow, please do let us know. We will be on hand to share briefing notes with you that contain our key messages and asks.

TEMPLATE LETTER TO MP

Dear **[INSERT FULL NAME OF MP]**,

As a **[INSERT NAME OF CONSTITUENCY]**-based member of Resolution, the membership organisation representing family justice professionals, I am writing to ask for your support of our campaign to provide better legal protections for cohabiting couples, and request a meeting with you to discuss the urgent need for reform.

Resolution represents 6,500 family lawyers across the UK and campaigns for improvements to the family justice system. Over recent years, our work has focused on ensuring cohabiting couples to have basic legal protections in the event of relationship breakdown or the death of a partner.

There are 3.5 million cohabiting families in the UK – approximately one in five of all families are unmarried couples and this is expected to grow to one in four by 2032.

Yet unmarried partners are not currently recognised under the law, nor conferred so-called "common law marriage" rights in the event of a partner death or relationship break down. The result is millions of families lacking basic protections under the law, with many mistakenly believing that they do.

The Government has committed to reforming cohabitation laws – which Resolution has welcomed. However, it is of vital importance that the Ministry of Justice presses ahead with the reforms as a matter of urgency. Already halfway through this Parliamentary term and with a legislative programme currently in motion, there is a limited window before the next election to deliver on this Government's manifesto promise.

Under current law, vulnerable people and their children are the ones failed most by a lack of protections. People face financial hardship, inequality and emotional distress because the law has failed to keep in step with the reality of how so many families live their lives. Resolution is supportive of 'opt-out' rights, so that rights are automatic unless the couple chooses to 'opt out'. This means that there will at least be a basic level of protection.

Without a legal framework for relationship breakdown, it is the economically stronger party who is advantaged. Resolution is urging the Government to press ahead with its planned agenda. Without reform many cohabitants – predominantly women – will be left vulnerable.

I urge you to support this important campaign and I would be delighted to meet with you to discuss these matters further, and identify how I may be able to help with any family justice-related casework you may receive.

Please contact **[INSERT DETAILS]** if you would be interested in a meeting.

Additionally, Resolution's is holding a parliamentary drop-in event on Wednesday 2nd December, from 1:15pm to 3pm in Room N of Portcullis House, on the Government's commitment to strengthen the law for cohabiting families. You will have received a separate invitation, and I would encourage you to drop-in.
I look forward to your response.

Kind regards,
[Name]
[Firm/Town]
Member of Resolution, the family justice membership body.

ACHIEVING LOCAL PRESS COVERAGE

We've drafted this letter to the editor that can be tailored to your area. You can send the letter to any existing media contacts or by Googling your local paper. Their telephone number will usually be available on their website and in copies of the paper.

Copy and paste the letter into the body of an email. You can also download our Vision for Family Justice and attach it to your email.

If you'd like to follow up, you can ring or email the day after sending the letter to find out if they need any additional information on the copy you sent through.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I am writing on behalf of Resolution, the national organisation representing 6,500 family justice professionals, to highlight the urgent need for reform of the law on cohabitation.

Resolution members from across the country will be in Parliament this week, meeting MPs to press the Government to deliver on its manifesto commitment to give greater protection to unmarried couples when their relationships end, either through separation or bereavement.

In England and Wales, living together does not give couples the same legal rights as marriage or civil partnership, despite many people believing otherwise. There are an estimated 3.5 million cohabiting couple families in the UK, and the number is expected to continue growing.

Too many people are suffering right now and facing economic hardship because they either do not want to marry or because other life events get in the way.

The Government recently consulted on proposed reforms, and Resolution is calling on them to now turn these proposals into action and set out a clear timetable for reform.

It is now time for a basic framework of rights and protections that recognises the reality of modern family life and prevents people, particularly those who are financially vulnerable and their children, from facing unnecessary hardship.

Yours faithfully,

[Name]
[Position]
[Firm/Town]
Member of Resolution, the family justice membership body.

Please make sure to let us know about any engagement you may have with local media, so that we can keep our records up to date.

POSTING ON SOCIAL MEDIA

If you're on Social Media, we want you to tell your followers about the pressing need to prioritise cohabitation reform and provide basic protection for millions of UK families currently not recognised under the law.

Here is some simple guidance and example posts you can use to help you.

- Tag @ResFamilyLaw on X or LinkedIn where possible.
- Use the hashtags #CohabitationReform and #AwarenessWeek.
- Posts with images are far more likely to be noticed and shared. You can use these graphics to accompany your posts.
- Why not add your own perspective or example to make posts more authentic.
- Like, share, and comment on posts from Resolution and other members.

The below are suggested social media posts to publicise to your network highlighting your involvement in this campaign. You can also find these examples online.

EXAMPLE POSTS FOR MEMBERS SUPPORTING AWARENESS WEEK:

Cohabiting couples deserve legal protection. But under current law, unmarried couples have very few rights if their relationship breaks down – even if they've lived together for decades or have children.

This #AwarenessWeek, I'm proud to support @ResFamilyLaw's campaign for meaningful #CohabitationReform. It's time for the law to catch up with modern family life.

There is no such thing as a common-law marriage. And the consequences of that misconception can be devastating. Many people assume that living together gives them legal rights if they separate. It doesn't.

This #AwarenessWeek, I'm supporting @ResFamilyLaw in calling for urgent #CohabitationReform.

Millions of people live with a partner without marrying or entering a civil partnership. Yet, if their relationship ends, they can be left with little or no financial protection.

It's time to change that. I'm proud to support @ResFamilyLaw's campaign for #CohabitationReform.

Imagine spending 20 years building a life with someone, raising children and sharing a home – only to discover that you have very few legal rights if your relationship ends.

That's the reality for many cohabiting couples. This #AwarenessWeek, I'm backing @ResFamilyLaw's call for meaningful legal reform.

Cohabitation reform isn't about undermining marriage. It's about protecting people who are vulnerable when a relationship ends.

The law needs to recognise the realities of modern family life and provide basic protections for cohabiting couples.

#AwarenessWeek #CohabitationReform

Being a Resolution member means championing better outcomes for families – and that includes families who aren't married.

This #AwarenessWeek, I'm supporting our campaign for cohabiting couples to have at least basic legal rights when their relationship ends or their partner dies.

EXAMPLE POSTS ENCOURAGING MEMBERS TO CONTACT THEIR MPs

The Government has consulted on cohabitation reform. Now we need to keep the momentum going.

This #AwarenessWeek, I'm encouraging fellow Resolution members to contact their local MPs and make the case for change. Our collective voice can make a difference. #CohabitationReform

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I've contacted my MP to highlight the urgent need for cohabitation reform.

The law currently leaves many unmarried couples without basic financial protection if their relationship ends. That's not good enough. It's time for change.

EXAMPLE POSTS FOR FIRMS TO USE DURING AWARENESS WEEK

This #AwarenessWeek, we're proud to support @ResFamilyLaw's campaign for meaningful cohabitation reform.

The law currently provides very limited protection for unmarried couples when their relationship ends. We believe it's time for that to change.

#CohabitationReform

The law needs to reflect the realities of modern family life.

We support Resolution's longstanding campaign to give cohabiting couples basic legal protections on relationship breakdown or death.

This #AwarenessWeek, we're adding our voice to the call for change.

This #AwarenessWeek, we're standing with @ResFamilyLaw to call for a fairer legal framework for cohabiting couples.

#CohabitationReform

Cohabitation reform matters. It matters to couples, to parents, to children and to families who deserve basic financial protection when relationships end.

We're proud to support @ResFamilyLaw's campaign and its call for meaningful change.

#AwarenessWeek

As a firm, we're proud to support Resolution's work campaigning for a better family justice system.

This #AwarenessWeek, we're backing Resolution's call for cohabitation reform and a legal framework that better reflects the way people live today. It's time for change.

EXAMPLE POSTS EXPLAINING WHY COHABITATION REFORM MATTERS

One of the biggest misconceptions I encounter in family law is the idea of common-law marriage.

People often assume that living together for a certain length of time gives them legal rights if they separate. It doesn't.

Family life has changed. The law needs to change with it.

More and more couples choose to live together without marrying, but the legal protections available to them haven't kept pace.

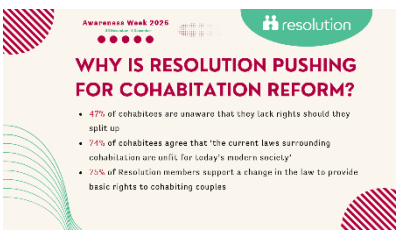
We need a system that recognises modern family life and provides basic rights when relationships end.

#CohabitationReform

You may wish to download these Social Media graphics to accompany your social media posts.







FURTHER INFO

More information about the work of Resolution can be found here: Resolution

If you have any further questions about the role you can play during Awareness Week 2026, please contact Resolution's Press Office, on press@resolution.org.uk.