

Knowledge organiser

AQA A Level Sociology 7192 • Families & Households • L021 • v1.0

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How have same-sex relationships changed family life?

Concept	Meaning
Legal recognition	Acknowledgement of a relationship or status through law.
Social recognition	Acknowledgement or acceptance of a relationship in everyday social settings.
Marriage	A legally recognised partnership with socially defined expectations.
Civil partnership	A legally registered partnership distinct from marriage.
Heteronormativity	An assumption that heterosexual relationships form the standard or default.
Chosen family	Relationships understood as family through care and commitment rather than only descent or marriage.
Connectedness	Personal ties shaped by shared history, emotion, memory and obligation.
Family practice	An activity through which people sustain family relationships.

Change without a single template

Concept	Meaning
Displaying family	Communicating to others that relationships or activities count as family.
Negotiated roles	Responsibilities worked out between people rather than simply inferred from a category.
Intersectionality	Attention to how social positions and inequalities combine in experience.
Visibility	The extent to which people or practices are publicly represented or recognised.
Continuity	Persistence of features alongside other changes.
Institutional barrier	An organisational rule or practice that restricts access or recognition.
Sexual orientation	A dimension of sexual or romantic attraction, distinct from gender identity.
Gender identity	A person's sense of gender; it cannot be inferred from appearance or relationship category.

Worked explanation

Years of mutual care give meaning to Sam and Lou's chosen tie. Naming a partner or carer on a form displays a relationship to an institutional audience.

Avoid these confusions

The 2013 Act and first marriages on 29 March 2014 refer to England and Wales; do not assign one date to the whole UK. Civil partnership and marriage are distinct statuses. Sexual orientation and gender identity are different concepts; neither can be read from appearance. The fictional same-sex couples are explicitly described, not inferred. Smart (2007) and Finch (2007) supply concepts used across family forms, not claims that all LGBTQ+ people share one experience. No family type is ranked, and no personal disclosure is required.

Retrieve later

Tomorrow: define legal recognition and social recognition. In one week: explain a case mechanism and one limit without notes.