

# UNITED KINGDOM: Ashers 'gay cake' row: Bakers win Supreme Court appeal

*The Christian owners of a Northern Ireland bakery have won their appeal in the so-called "gay cake" discrimination case.*

BBC (10.10.2018) – <https://bbc.in/2pXYimf> – The UK's highest court ruled that Ashers bakery's refusal to make a cake with a slogan supporting same-sex marriage was not discriminatory.

The five justices on the Supreme Court were unanimous in their judgement.

The high-profile dispute began in 2014 when the bakery refused to make a cake with the slogan "Support Gay Marriage".

The customer, gay rights activist Gareth Lee, sued the company for discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and political beliefs.

But the bakery has always insisted its objection was to the message on the cake, not the customer.

Ashers lost the case and the subsequent appeal, but on

Wednesday the firm won its appeal at the Supreme Court.

The legal battle – which has lasted four-and-a-half years and has cost nearly £500,000 so far – has raised questions over equality and freedom of conscience.

Ashers bakery's general manager Daniel McArthur said he was delighted and relieved by the ruling.

"I know a lot of people will be glad to hear this ruling today, because this ruling protects freedom of speech and freedom of conscience for everyone," Mr McArthur said outside the court.

Mr Lee said the case had made him feel like a second-class citizen and that he was now concerned about "the implications for all of the gay community".

"To me, this was never about conscience or a statement. All I wanted to do was to order a cake in a shop," he said.

Northern Ireland's Attorney General John Larkin welcomed the decision.

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, which has supported Gareth Lee's action against Ashers, said it would study the implications of the judgement carefully.

“There is a concern that this judgement may raise uncertainty about the application of equality law in the commercial sphere, both about what businesses can do and what customers may expect,” said Dr Michael Wardlow, the organisation’s chief commissioner.

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