

Landmark UK ruling on 'gay marriage cake'

A Belfast bakery run by evangelical Christians was not obliged to make a cake emblazoned with the message 'support gay marriage', the UK Supreme Court has ruled, overturning a £500 damages award imposed on it, says a report in [The Guardian](#). In a unanimous decision, Britain's highest court found in favour of an appeal by Ashers, which had refused to produce the cake in 2014 for Gareth Lee, who supports the campaign to legalise same-sex marriage in Northern Ireland. The judgment reverses earlier decisions in Belfast County Court and a Court of Appeal ruling that the company discriminated against Lee, who is gay, on the grounds of sexual orientation. The five justices on the Supreme Court found the bakery did not refuse to fulfil Lee's order because of his sexual orientation and therefore there was no discrimination on those grounds. Freedom of expression, as guaranteed by article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, includes the right 'not to express an opinion which one does not hold', the court decided. It held that 'nobody should be forced to have or express a political opinion in which he does not believe', adding: **'The bakers could not refuse to supply their goods to Mr Lee because he was a gay man or supported gay marriage, but that is quite different from obliging them to supply a cake iced with a message with which they profoundly disagreed.'** The case has aroused international interest. The US Supreme Court reached a similar conclusion in another bakery case in June, when it ruled in favour of a Colorado baker who had refused to produce a wedding cake for a gay couple in 2012. Lee said he would be considering his options, which could involve appealing to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.