

First Minister
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

8th May 2024

Dear First Minister,

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to office. We look forward to working with you to protect, strengthen and advance human rights in Scotland.

As you know, the task before you is vast and urgent. Children across Scotland are going hungry as families are pulled deeper into poverty, more households than ever before are stuck in temporary accommodation for months on end, disabled and older people are being refused the social care support that they desperately need, and some Scots can't access the medical care they have a right to. These are just some of the human rights emergencies being experienced by people in Scotland today.

We have welcomed the Scottish Government's positive rhetoric as the UK Government has taken a sledgehammer to rights protections. The incorporation of the UNCRC in particular is an achievement that Scottish Ministers should be proud of and is already bringing positive impacts for children and young people. We also strongly welcome the Scottish Government's commitment to introducing a Human Rights Bill within this parliamentary session which will enshrine everyday environmental and human rights protections into domestic law, and make them legally enforceable for people across Scotland.

The third sector and civil society have backed the incorporation of all human rights into Scots law to the hilt, devoting substantial expertise and capacity to shaping the Human Rights Bill over many years. Many have been involved in various Scottish Government working and advisory groups, and there have been three Lived Experience Boards where individuals have given their precious time to help shape the plans. The Bill consultation saw hundreds of community and civil society organisations involved in discussing and responding to the Scottish Government's consultation questions. Coming after years of campaigning for this Bill, there is overwhelming support to now see a strong and effective Bill introduced and passed.

Given the urgent need for it, and the resources that Scottish Government have already devoted to developing the legislation, we look forward to seeing this Bill introduced to Parliament imminently and seek your assurances that it will not be delayed. We understand the many competing issues facing you as First Minister, however the challenges that Scotland faces are the very same challenges that this Bill will help to address. Strengthening our NHS, tackling the housing emergency, building more empowered and powerful communities, improving social care, and stemming the rising tide of poverty; the Bill can help to achieve the more just Scotland we all want to see.

Scottish Ministers have made repeated and high-profile commitments to the Human Rights Bill being introduced. In making real those commitments, you can help to create a Scotland where no one is left behind and where our fundamental human rights are not just rhetoric, but are a reality for all. We urge you to do so.

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Amnesty International
Human Rights Consortium Scotland
Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance
Art27 Scotland
Welfare Scotland
The National Autistic Taskforce
The Hong Kong Scots
Environmental Rights Centre for Scotland
Inclusion Scotland
Making Rights Real
Scottish Care
Marie Curie
C-Change Scotland
Include Me
Broke Not Broken
Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland
MySelf-Management
Scottish Women's Aid
Play Scotland
African Caribbean Women's Association (ACWA) Scotland
Zero Tolerance
Faith in Older People
Mornay Way Tenants & Residents Association
Liz Richardson, member of Human Rights Bill Lived Experience Board
Glasgow Disability Alliance
North Highland Women's Wellbeing Group
Doors Academy SCIO
Scottish Women's Budget Group
Coalition of Carers in Scotland
Brown Owl Legal Support
Maxwellton Court Tenant Association
Shopmobility Renfrewshire

Transition Edinburgh
VOICES ADFOCAD
Northern Ireland Council for Racial Equality
Community Transport Association
Welsh Centre for International Affairs
Scottish Child Law Centre
Just Fair
Bridges Programmes
Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund
Women's Platform
Creative Lives
Who Cares? Scotland
Carers Trust Scotland
Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance
B healthy together
Social Benefits Consortium CIC
Parenting Across Scotland
Families Outside
Equate Scotland
René Cassin, the Jewish voice for human rights
Feniks
Close the Gap
Edinburgh Community Food
Disability Equality Scotland
The Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI)
Scottish Recovery Consortium
Voluntary Health Scotland (VHS)
Howard League Scotland
Liberty
See Me
Age Scotland
Carers Scotland

VoiceAbility

Waverley Care

Generations Working Together

JustRight Scotland

Scottish Drugs Forum

Engender

Autism Rights Group Highland

Women's Support Project (Rights & Choices)

Global Justice Now

Money Advice Scotland

One Parent Families Scotland

Independent Advocacy Perth & Kinross

LGBT Youth Scotland

Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN)

The Scottish Women's Convention

Glasgow Human Rights Network

RNIB Scotland

ASH Scotland

SAMH (Scottish Action for Mental Health)

Scottish Community Alliance

Scottish Youth Parliament

East Ayrshire Advocacy Services

Children in Scotland

Equality Network

Scottish Women's Aid

Empower Women for Change

Psychiatric Rights Scotland

Mary Nnamani, Individual Human Rights Defender

Shelter Scotland

David Scott, Postdoctoral Research Associate in International Law and Governance,
University of Glasgow

The Poverty Alliance

THRE (Third Sector Human Rights and Equalities)

GCVS (Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector)

Douglas Jack, Teaching Fellow, University of Strathclyde.

Who Cares? Scotland

Lorna Walker, Member of Human Rights Bill Lived Experience Board

SCLD

Outside the Box

CAPS Independent Advocacy

Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE)

Justice Scotland

Koldo Casla, Human Rights Centre, University of Essex

Amanda Foster, Member of Human Rights Bill Lived Experience Board

Advocacy Highland

Grassmarket Community Project

Ken MacIennan, Member of Human Rights Bill Lived Experience Board

Alcohol Focus Scotland

Forth Valley Migrant Support Network

CEMVO Scotland

Migrant Voice

Deaf Links

Dr Amanda Cahill-Ripley, Senior Lecturer in Law, University of Liverpool

Aidan Flegg, Researcher, University of Glasgow

Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights)

Women's Aid South Lanarkshire and East Renfrewshire