

Today...

An open letter to our political leaders on Human Rights Day.

Dear Political Leaders,

Today is Human Rights Day. Across the globe, people are celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This international Magna Carta for all humanity has inspired so much, including our own Human Rights Act.

Today we celebrate the often overlooked everyday differences our Human Rights Act makes for people across the UK. Our examples are many, whether this is supporting children to access education, stopping inhuman treatment of older people, providing refugees with safety, preventing discrimination, or offering justice for victims and families failed by the system, and many more.

Today we celebrate how our Human Rights Act strengthens our democracy, giving everyone a voice, and ensuring the powerful do not go unchecked.

Today we celebrate how our Human Rights Act does more than defend our traditional liberties. It makes the universal human rights we share with people across the world part of our law here at home.

Today the future of human rights in the UK is uncertain. Today we stand with the Human Rights Act recognising it is the promise of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights made law here at home. We urge our political leaders to stand with us.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Bowen, Director, **British Institute of Human Rights**;
Fiona Bawdon, Caoilfhionn Gallagher, Martha Spurrier, Director, **Act for the Act Campaign**; Paul Breckell, Chief Executive, **Action on Hearing Loss**;
Steve Johnson, Chief Executive, **Advice UK**; Justine Hodgkinson, Chief Executive, **Advocacy Focus**; Rachel Rowlands, Chief Executive, **Age Connects Morgannwg**; Dean Richards, Chief Executive, **Age Connects Neath Port Talbot**;
Karen Crane, Chief Executive, **Age Connects North East Wales**; Jeff Hawkins, Chairman, **Age Connects Wales**; and Chief Executive, **Age Connects Cardiff and the Vale**; Brian Sloan, Chief Executive, **Age Scotland**; Matthew Evans, Director, **AIRE Centre**; Neil Campbell, Chief Executive, **Alternative Futures Group**; Joe Powell, National Director, **All Wales People First**; Kate Allen, Director, **Amnesty International UK**;
Shaminder Ubhi, Director, **Ashinana Network**; Wayne Myslik, Chief Executive, **Asylum Aid**; Ewan Roberts, Centre Manager, **Asylum Link**; Dann Kenningham, National Coordinator, **ATD Fourth World**; Donna Covey, Director, **AVA (Against Violence and Abuse)**; Priscilla Nkwenti, Chief Executive, **BHA for Equality**; Elizabeth Prochaska, Chair, **Birthrights**; Asif Afridi, Deputy Chief Executive, **BRAP**; Andrew Copson, Chief Executive, **British Humanist Association**; Ann Chivers, Chief Executive, **British Institute of Learning Disabilities**; Brian Gormally, Director, **CAJ**; Maurice Frankel, Director, **Campaign for Freedom of Information**; Helena Herklots, Chief Executive, **Carers UK**; Dr Philip McCarthy, Chief Executive, **Caritas Social Action Network**; Tam Baillie, **Children and Young People's Commissioner, Scotland**; Peter Newell, Coordinator, **Children are unbeatable! Alliance**; Anne Longfield, **Children's Commissioner for England**; Sally Holland, **Children's Commissioner for Wales**; Louise King and Carla Garnelas, Co-Directors, **Children's Rights Alliance for England**; Jim Bowen, Manager, **Clynyfw Care Farm**; Jatin Haria, Executive Director, **Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights**; Catherine Rayner, Chair, **Discrimination Law Association**; Martyn Jones, Chief Executive, **Diverse Cymru** Leigh Daynes, Director, **Doctors of The World**; Carol Boys, Chief Executive, **Down's Syndrome Association**; Gary Fitzgerald, Chief Executive, **Action on Elder Abuse**; Sarah Green, Director, **End Violence Against Women**;
Jo Glanville, Director, **English PEN**; Bharti Patel, Chief Executive, **EPCAT UK**; Dimitrina Petrova, Executive Director, **Equal Rights Trust**; Ali Harris, Chief Executive, **Equality and Diversity Forum**;
Jacqui Hunt, Director, **Equality Now**; Jago Russell, Chief Executive, **Fair Trials**; Mustafa Field MBE, Director, **Faiths Forum for London**; Cathy Ashley, Director, **Family Rights Group**; Sam Smethers, Chief Executive, **Fawcett Society**; Susan Munroe, Chief Executive, **Freedom From Torture**;
Peter Roscoe, Chair, **FRESH**; Chris Whitwell, Director, **Friends, Families and Travellers**;
Nik Noone, Chief Executive, **GALOP**; Henry Blaxland QC, Barrister, **Garden Court Chambers**;
Terry Reed OBE, Co-Founder, **Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIRES)**;
Gillian Caldwell, Executive Director, **Global Witness**; Lucy Peake, Chief Executive, **Grandparents Plus**; Bella Kosmala, Coordinator, **Greenwich Migrant Hub**; Helen Hibberd, Centre Manager, **Hackney Migrant**; Centre Prof Cornelius Katona, Medical Director, **Helen Bamber Foundation**; Alison Gelder, Chief Executive, **Housing Justice**; Frances Crook, Chief Executive, **Howard League for Penal Reform**; Dr Damien Short, Director, Dr Corinne Lennox, Co-Directors, **Human Rights Consortium**; Kevin Hanratty, Director, **Human Rights Consortium**;
David Mepham, Director, **Human Rights Watch**; Simon Hancock, Board Equality Champion, **Hwel Dda University Health Board**; Dr Theo Gavrielides, Founder & Director, **IARS International Institute**;
Marai Larasi, Executive Director, **Imkaan**; Imran Khan, Partner, **Imran Khan and Partners**; Deborah Coles and Helen Shaw, Co-Directors, **INQUEST**; Sarah Khan and Kalsoom Bashir, Director, **Inspire Women**;
Saira Grant, Chief Executive, **Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants**; Shauneen Lambe, Executive Director, **Just for kids Law**; Alys Karmali, Interim Director, **JUST West Yorkshire**; Andrea Coomber, Director, **JUSTICE**; Kate Roberts, Head of Policy, **Kalayaan**; Julie Bishop, Director, **Law Centres Network**; Steve Hynes, Director, **Legal Action Group**; Nicola Mackintosh QC (Hon) and Jenny Beck, Co-Chairs, **Legal Aid Practitioners Group (LAPG)**; Paul Roberts, Chief Executive, **LGBT Consortium**; Paul Martin OBE, Chief Executive, **LGBT Foundation**; Shami Chakrabarti, Director, **Liberty**; Eithne Rynne, Chief Executive, **London Voluntary Service Council**; Phillip Watson, Chief Executive, **Manor Gardens Welfare Trust**; Theresa Schleicher, Acting Director, **Medical Justice**; Jenny Edwards CBE, Chief Executive, **Mental Health Foundation**; Zrinka Bralo, Executive Director, **Migrant and Refugee Community Forum**; Don Flynn, Director, **Migrant Rights Network**; Paul Farmer, Chief Executive, **Mind**;
Deborah Gold, Chief Executive, **NAT**; Rob Greig, Chief Executive, **National Development Team for Inclusion**;
Sarah Yiannoullou, National Director, **National Survivor User Network**; Megan Dunn, President, **National Union of Students**; Des Kelly, Executive Director, **National Care Forum**; Jeremy Taylor, Chief Executive, **National Voices**;
Zarin Hainsworth, Chair, **NAWO**; Patrick Yu, Executive Director, **NICEM** Sean Silver, Chair, **Northamptonshire Rights and Equality Council**; Koulla Yiasouma, Commissioner, **Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People**; Colin Devine, Coordinator, **North West Community Network**; Sarah Rochira, **Older People's Commissioner for Wales**; Katherine Murphy, Chief Executive, **Patients Association**;
Karen Chandler, Chief Officer, **Pembrokeshire People First** Sally Daghlian OBE, Chief Executive, **Praxis**; Juliet Lyon, Director, **Prison Reform Trust**; Andy Gregg, Chief Executive, **Race on the Agenda**; Rita Chadha, Chief Executive, **RAMFEL**; Carla Ferstman, Director, **REDRESS**; Maurice Wren, Chief Executive, **Refugee Council**; Mia Hasenson-Gross, Director, **Rene Cassin**; Clare Algar, Chief Executive, **Reprive**; Emma Scott, Director, **Rights of Women**; Yasmine Ahmed, Director, **Rights Watch UK**; Prof Cathy Warwick, Chief Executive, **Royal College of Midwives**; Omar Khan, Director, **Runnymede Trust**; Barbara Natasegara MBE, Chief Executive, **Safer Wales Ltd**; Marjorie Wallace, Chief Executive, **SANE**; Mark Atkinson, Chief Executive, **Scope**; Eamon Keane, Convenor, **Scottish Legal Action Group**; Durrah Mahmood, Trustee Secretary, **Songololo Feet**; Jan Gavin, Chief Executive, **Southern Advocacy Services**; Jon Barrick, Chief Executive, **Stroke Association**;
Heidi Travis, Chief Executive, **Sue Ryder**; Joy Hibbins, Founder/Codirector, **Suicide Crisis**;
Kolbassia Haoussou, Co-ordinator, **Survivors Speak OUT**; Dr Ngoyi Barthelemy, Malumba Managing Director, **Tameside Human Rights Watch and UK Immigration Services**; Prof Katja Ziegler, Director, **The Centre of European Law and Internationalisation (CELI)**; Matthew Reed, Chief Executive, **The Children's Society**; Annette Lawson, Chair, **The Judith Trust**; Anna Gaughan, Chief Executive, **The Life Story Network**; Juliet Harris, Director, **Together – Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights**; Frances O'Grady, General Secretary, **Trade Union Congress**; Penelope Gibbs, Director, **Transform Justice**; Yvonne MacNamara, Chief Executive Officer, **Traveller Movement**; Martin Coyle, Director, **True Voice**; Paul Dillane, Executive Director, **UK Lesbian and Gay Immigration Group**; Alan Anstead, Coordinator, **UK Race and Europe Network**; Dave Prentis, General Secretary, **UNISON**; Dianna Holland, Assistant General Secretary, **Unite**; Natalie Samarasinghe, Executive Director, **United Nations Association – UK**; Michele Lamb, Head of Department Social Sciences, **University of Roehampton and Crucible Centre for Human Rights**; Alexandra Runswick, Director, **Unlock Democracy**; Kunle Olulode, Director, **Voice4Change**; Mike Sherriff, Chief Executive, **Voluntary Action Islington** Eleri Butler, Chief Executive, **Welsh Womens Aid**; Joyce Kallevik, Director, **Wish**; Jonathan Toye, Chief Executive, **WNDiS (West Norfolk Disability Information Service)**; Polly Neate, Chief Executive, **Women's Aid**; Annie Campbell, Chief Executive, **Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland**; Vivienne Hayes, Chief Executive, **Women's Resource Centre**; Oliver Carter and Rachel Francis, Co-Chairs, **Young Legal Aid Lawyers**.

The British Institute of Human Rights

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