

First Minister  
St Andrews House  
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Edinburgh  
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3 April 2023

Dear First Minister,

## **Human Rights in Scotland**

Congratulations on your election and appointment as First Minister.

The Scottish Human Rights Commission is the National Human Rights Institution for Scotland. Our role is to uphold human rights, to promote compliance and best practice, and to serve as a bridge between Scotland and the international human rights frameworks. Through our policy advice, legal analysis and promotional work, we seek to ensure that policy and practice reflects and upholds individual rights.

I strongly welcome your recent statement indicating your intentions to continue the previous government's commitment to advance the human rights agenda in Scotland. Therefore I urge you to ensure the following are delivered by your Government:

- Planned incorporation of international human rights treaties into Scots law through a new human rights bill for Scotland, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the UN Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the UN Convention on the

Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in addition to the inclusion of new rights for older people and to a healthy environment;

- Bring forward the required amendments to allow the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Scotland) Bill to proceed into law; and
- Resource and deliver the Scottish National Action Plan for Human Rights (SNAP2), which was launched on 30 March in collaboration with rights holders and duty bearers.

The Human Rights Bill has the potential to revolutionise human rights throughout Scotland, with new preventative and accountability measures. However, incorporating international treaties into Scots law will be insufficient by itself to ensure human rights are fully realised throughout Scotland. Our recent reports to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Universal Periodic Review highlighted a number of significant concerns around housing, poverty and detention that pose a real risk to human rights.

The Commission will continue to deliver our statutory responsibilities to protect and promote human rights through what I hope will be a positive, regular and honest dialogue with you and your colleagues.

As such, I would be grateful for an early meeting with you to set out our position on incorporation, discuss the mandate and resources of the Commission, and to outline our priority areas for 2023/24.

I wish you every success.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Duddy', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ian Duddy  
**Chair**