



27 March 2023

An open letter to Humza Yousaf MSP, First Minister of Scotland

Dear Mr Yousaf

First of all, congratulations on your election as leader of the Scottish National Party and as First Minister of Scotland. We wish you all the best in your new role and we hope that you will work to honour and extend the legacy of progressive legislation that defined Nicola Sturgeon's time in office.

We were delighted that, out of the three candidates for SNP leader and first minister, you were the only one to respond to our open letter during the election. You gave us concrete assurances on your commitment to women's safety and dignity accessing abortion services and children's rights. We know that our allies and co-campaigners on those topics were grateful for your support too.

In response to our open letter, dated 27 February, you stated that you were "yet to be convinced" by the assisted dying bill that will shortly go before parliament. You stated that you were seeking "reassurances that it has the right safeguarding protections for some of the most vulnerable people," and that you would "engage with stakeholders and relevant groups."

We would be delighted to meet with you alongside some of our co-campaigners on this topic, to make the case that the assisted dying legislation outlined in Mr. McArthur's bill is humane, moderate, and compassionate. We would be delighted if you were to have a change of heart on assisted dying for terminally ill adults. But this is not the ask we would attach to this meeting. **We simply ask that, if the bill passes Stage 1 scrutiny, you and Scottish Government start working in good faith, as a matter of urgency, to ensure the smooth introduction of any successful legislation.** This would include priming relevant departments and teams and ensuring accompanying guidelines are prepared to a high standard.

You have given every reason for hope that you will preserve and build on the progressive legacy of Nicola Sturgeon. Acting to ensure the smooth implementation of assisted dying legislation – which, there is every reason to hope, will become reality soon – would make a clear statement of intent in this regard. We appreciated your willingness to discuss and work with us constructively in the amending of the Hate Crime & Public Order (Scotland) Act when acting as Cabinet Secretary for Justice. We are therefore hopeful you will continue this approach both with ourselves and other civic society groups in your tenure as First Minister.

We hope that you will be interested in meeting with us. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have further questions or comments at this point, at Fraser@humanism.scot.

With thanks in advance and congratulations again on your appointment

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Fraser Sutherland".

Fraser Sutherland

CEO, Humanist Society Scotland