

30 May 2024

Dear [Party Leader],

## **Our priorities for a secular, humane, and compassionate Scotland and UK**

Humanist Society Scotland is dedicated to fostering a rational, secular, and socially just Scotland and UK. We advocate for ending religious privilege in our government systems, ensuring full and equal human rights for all, and the protection of our natural world for future generations.

As the general election approaches, we seek your stance on five crucial issues that matter significantly to our members, supporters and the majority of voters in Scotland who pursue meaningful, ethical lives without religion. We request your response to the following questions:

### **1. Unelected Bishops in the House of Lords**

The presence of 26 unelected bishops in the House of Lords represents an outdated religious privilege that undermines democratic processes in the UK. Does your party support the removal of these unelected religious advocates from the House of Lords?

### **2. Freedom of Thought and Belief**

The [Freedom of Thought Report 2023](#) highlights ongoing discrimination against non-religious communities in 186 countries. Will your party advocate for the UK Foreign Office to champion freedom of religion and belief in all its bilateral engagements and lead global efforts to abolish blasphemy and apostasy laws?

### **3. Climate Emergency Action**

The climate emergency is an urgent global crisis. According to a recent report in the journal [Nature](#), 89% of people worldwide demand greater action from their leaders. What steps will your party take, in collaboration with the Scottish government and local authorities, to implement effective measures against climate change?

### **4. Protect Asylum Seekers**

The UK has a moral and legal responsibility to help those fleeing persecution and abuse, in order that they can be safe and rebuild their lives. Non-religious and faith-leaver asylum seekers are often treated less favourably than other belief-group minorities on arrival in the UK. Will your party stand up for the rights, dignity and wellbeing of asylum seekers?

### **5. Stand up for the LGBT+ community**

In recent years, LGBT+ people across the UK have endured a climate of hostility fuelled by politicians, public figures and the mainstream media. Will your party

stand up to the rampant discrimination against the LGBT+ community that has characterised much of today's political and cultural discourse?

As humanists, we believe in rational, evidence-based decision-making. With 51.1% of people in Scotland now saying they have no religion, humanist values of reason, dignity, and compassion are more relevant than ever for policymakers. I look forward to sharing your response with our members and supporters.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'F Sutherland', written in a cursive style.

**Fraser Sutherland**  
**Chief Executive of Humanist Society Scotland**