



# IMPACT REPORT 2019

Prepared for the Summer AGM

# INTRODUCTION

**FROM ANDREW COPSON**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE, HUMANISTS UK**

Welcome to the 2019 Humanists UK *Impact Report*, our annual report to show just how far our members and donors' contributions go towards realising our shared vision of a tolerant world where rational thinking and kindness prevail. The past 12 months have been tremendously successful for us, and I certainly hope the facts, figures, stories, and triumphs contained within these pages will make you proud to call yourself a humanist.

One of the greatest difficulties we had putting this report together was knowing what to leave out. With so much going on across our campaigns, services, and community work – and in so many parts of these isles – not every story, victory, campaign success, or fundraising effort made it to the page. But just think: for every word we've committed to print, there are thousands more which tell how the people who make up this movement are making positive changes across society.

Here seems like a good place to mention our new President. We owe a great debt of gratitude to Shappi Khorsandi for her term as President, which saw us connect with thousands more people who share our values. Her successor, Professor Alice Roberts, is already doing amazing work on that front too, bringing the work (and achievements) of members like you to even greater attention. There's more on that in the report. I hope you enjoy reading it.



PAGE 1

## THINK FOR YOURSELF, ACT FOR EVERYONE

### WHO WE ARE

We started out in 1896, and since then we've always been a movement at the forefront of social change.

Today, Humanists UK is backed by over 85,000 members and supporters and over 70 local interest humanist groups who infuse our work with energy, drive, and relentless optimism at every level. Their commitment and generosity allows us to promote free thinking and freedom of choice for everyone.

Our policies are formed with the support of more than 180 of the world's most prominent thinkers and experts, including scientists, philosophers, writers, academics, and public figures. We work to advance these policies with the help of more than 100 parliamentarians who are members of the All Party Parliamentary Humanists Group (APPHG).

PAGE 2

### WHAT DO WE WANT?

- A world where everyone lives cooperatively on the basis of shared human values, respect for human rights, and concern for future generations
- To help non-religious people to be confident in living ethical and fulfilling lives on the basis of reason and humanity

### WHAT DO WE DO?

- We promote humanism, work on behalf of the non-religious, and support those who wish to live humanist lives, including through the provision of humanist ceremonies and support services
- We campaign for a secular state, challenge religious privilege, and promote equal treatment in law and policy of everyone regardless of religion or belief
- We offer a humanist perspective in public debate, drawing on contemporary humanist thought and the worldwide humanist tradition



# YEAR IN NUMBERS

PAGE 3

*This report is full of information about what we've been up to, but for an easy reference, here's a quick snapshot of our impact since last year.*



# PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING



PAGE 4

Our work supporting humanism in education continues to be enormously successful. and demand for humanist school speakers continues to grow, with record numbers of teachers making use of the resources on our Understanding Humanism website. We also delivered training to hundreds of education professionals and spoke to 35,000 children through 217 school speakers.

One of our biggest advances in education this year has been the production and launch of our second online course, 'Humanist Lives', presented by our President, Professor Alice Roberts, and published by the online learning platform FutureLearn. The course explores the lives of humanists from across the globe, the different ways they express their humanism, and how they bring meaning to their lives.

Featuring video contributions from humanist scientists, artists, politicians, campaigners, celebrants, and pastoral carers, it offers a

rich and accessible introduction to humanism and the positive impact humanists are having on the world around us. We expect the course to be very popular; over 20,000 people worldwide took our previous course on 'Introducing Humanism', presented by Sandi Toksvig. You can enrol to take our Humanist Lives' course at [futurelearn.com/courses/humanist-lives](https://futurelearn.com/courses/humanist-lives).



**We aim to arrive at a situation where humanism is understood as an ethical and fulfilling non-religious approach to life involving a naturalistic view of the universe**



# EVENTS AND LECTURES

## GROWING ANNUAL LECTURE SERIES

Our public lectures on humanist themes attracted larger audiences than ever before. 2,000 turned out to hear Professor Richard Dawkins make his final Darwin Day Lecture appearance, lecturing on the moral courage of the non-religious and passing the baton of regular lecture chair to Professor Alice Roberts. Award-winning journalist Cathy Newman gave a fascinating Rosalind Franklin Lecture on the untold stories of 20th century women to 400 people on the eve of International Women's Day in March, chaired by our patron Joan Smith. And in May, geneticist Dr Adam Rutherford gave an extremely timely Voltaire Lecture on 'The return of

scientific racism' for an audience of 800 people, exploring recent resurgence of so-called 'scientific racism' and white supremacy, chaired by Alice Roberts.

As well as hosting one of our most successful annual Conventions to date in Newcastle last June, attended by over 400, our annual Blackham Lecture in Birmingham saw educationalist James Williams lecture on 'Getting science right' in schools and universities, while Joan Bakewell presented a stirring Holyoake Lecture in Manchester in November, discussing a lifetime spent in broadcasting and campaigning for women's rights and humanism.

Clockwise: Cathy Newman, Adam Rutherford, and Joan Bakewell.

## WALES, NORTHERN IRELAND, AND THE CHANNEL ISLANDS

Wales Humanists and Northern Ireland Humanists are our official sections helping to promote humanism, expand our community services, support our legal work, and lobby devolved governments in Wales and Northern Ireland respectively. They have been busy with public debates, radio appearances, and local events around Wales and Northern Ireland, including high-profile campaigns on Welsh education changes and the smacking ban, and the Northern Irish blasphemy law. Community organising in Northern Ireland is going particularly well, with well-attended brunch events, as well as packed comedy nights in central Belfast, such as 'A Night of Humanism' in January, which drew in 400. We continue to have a presence at events like Pride Cymru, the Eisteddfod, Belfast Pride, and marches on issues like abortion rights and marriage equality.

Since its launch last year, Channel Islands Humanists has only grown, with an expanding programme of local events across both Jersey and Guernsey. As well as work to raise popular awareness of our assisted dying campaign in both bailiwicks, we conducted our first legal marriage in Jersey in April and hope to do the same in Guernsey in due course.





# SERVING THE COMMUNITY

## LOVE IS IN THE AIR

We had a great year for our weddings, with humanist marriages becoming legally recognised in Northern Ireland in August 2018 and in Jersey in April 2019.

Our campaign for legal recognition in England and Wales was given a boost by some brilliant news stories. Our analysis of all weddings and divorces in Scotland won international headlines by showing that humanist ceremonies in Scotland are the most likely of any, including religious weddings, to lead to enduring unions. And in May, new data showed that our weddings grew in number by 266% in 15 years, while marriage as a whole declined. In fact, more couples in England and Wales chose Humanists UK weddings than chose Jewish, Muslim, or Baptist weddings. Our case for legal recognition, which would bring parity with the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Jersey, has never been more pressing.



**We aim to arrive at a situation where people with humanist beliefs and values are supported in identifying themselves as humanists and in expressing those beliefs and values in their lives**

*Our network of humanists working on the ground now includes 448 humanist celebrants, 217 active school speakers, and 260 non-religious pastoral carers – operating across England, Wales, Northern Ireland, and the Channel Islands.*

PAGE 8

## EXPANDING SUPPORT OFFER

Our network supporting non-religious people in institutions like prisons and hospitals, the Non-Religious Pastoral Support Network, continued to grow throughout the year. In the last 12 months, our 260 carers in institutional roles were able to support 12,000 individuals.

Our service supporting people who leave high-control religions, Faith to Faithless, has also been through a period of expansion. Building on its online peer support and the training it provides to frontline services such as police, we have helped provide a community to diverse range of so-called 'apostates' by hosting an ambitious schedule of socials across the UK, including a series of fascinating science and history museum tours led by Faith to Faithless Vice Chair, Ste Richardsson.

Faith to Faithless Chair, Aliyah Saleem, and Vice Chair, Ste Richardsson.





# PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND POLICY

## ANOTHER STELLAR YEAR

LEGAL MARRIAGES IN JERSEY AND NI

HUMANISTS AT REMEMBRANCE DAY

MAJOR ASYLUM PROCESS REFORMS

NEW ASSISTED DYING COALITION

PAUL LAMB RIGHT TO DIE LEGAL CASE

'CONVERSION THERAPY' BAN PROPOSED

ORGAN DONATION WINS EVERYWHERE

CRACKDOWN ON ILLEGAL SCHOOLS

HUMANISM ON THE CURRICULUM IN WALES

MAJOR 'THOUGHT FOR THE DAY' CAMPAIGN

FACTS VS FAITH: RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION

STEINER SCHOOLS AND FAITH SCHOOLS

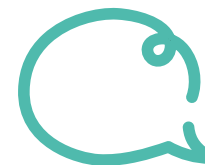


We aim to arrive at a situation where public debate and policy are shaped by humanist perspectives

### ASSISTED DYING

We continue to campaign for a change in the law so that people with terminal and incurable illnesses can choose, if they wish, to end their lives with dignity. In February, we teamed up with End of Life Choices Jersey, My Death My Decision, Friends at the End, and Humanist Society Scotland to launch the Assisted Dying Coalition, a new national body for the right to die which we hope can help galvanise the movement for a more compassionate law. In March, our Coalition partners My Death My Decision published new research that shows now a full 93% of the public support a change in the law.

In May, we teamed up with our member Paul Lamb to launch a new legal case to secure the right to die for people in England and Wales. We've since launched a national campaign to support Paul, which gained generous coverage on the BBC and elsewhere. We previously supported Paul alongside Tony Nicklinson in an earlier Supreme Court case, in which Paul was invited to return to court should Parliament fail to act on his issue. We believe that time has now come.



**93% of people now say they support the right to die for people with incurable illnesses**

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH, 2019



## ORGAN DONATION CAMPAIGN SUCCESSES

After more than a decade of humanist campaigning for a more rational

approach, organ donation laws are changing across the UK and the crown dependencies, following the change we campaigned for in Wales in 2015.

As a result of this work, a new 'soft opt out' organ donor register will come into force in England in April 2020, and in Jersey on 1 July 2019. Legislation to achieve the same in Scotland, Guernsey, and the Isle of Man is making rapid progress. We continue pushing for these same changes to come to Northern Ireland.

We have since been working closely with the UK Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) as part of the official awareness campaign for the new legal changes, which are expected to save 700 lives per year. DHSC have also introduced a section on humanist attitudes to organ donation, and have made custom humanist-themed organ donor cards available through their website.

## GOVERNMENT PROMISES BAN ON 'GAY CONVERSION THERAPY'

After years of our campaigning and some intense activity to raise awareness of this problem in the 2018, the UK Government announced in July last year that it was committing to a ban on so-called 'conversion therapy' – a pseudoscientific religious form of abuse aimed at 'correcting' people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.

We had called for the Government to act on this at the UN Human Rights Council earlier that summer, and worked with journalists to expose the activities of controversial 'gay cure' groups operating in the UK. We have helped to steer the development of a major study into the harms of gay conversion therapy, promoted case studies in the media, and organised panel discussions to further highlight the issue.

The Government's new pledge is to proscribe the 'therapy' across religious, medical, and non-medical settings UK-wide, but with constant shake-ups in Westminster, we know we will need to hold them to their word and bring a ban before Parliament.



We aim to arrive at a situation where the UK is a secular state guaranteeing human rights, with no privilege or discrimination on grounds of religion or belief

## SAVING HAMZA

In May, our member Hamza bin Walayat, an ex-Muslim humanist seeking asylum after facing death threats in Pakistan, was at last granted asylum. We launched our campaign to save Hamza in January 2018 after he was told he would be deported for failing to correctly name Greek philosophers as part of an incoherent 'test' of his humanism.

Our national campaign attracted 12,500 signatures which were delivered to the then-Home Secretary Amber Rudd, and we organised a joint letter in the *Guardian* signed by over 150 philosophers proving the Home Office wrong. We achieved all of these campaign aims, with Home Office assessors now taking mandatory training from us directly, ensuring that non-religious claims won't be simply thrown out in future. Hamza is now free to enjoy life, and has just completed his training to join the Non-Religious Pastoral Support Network. He hopes to volunteer within the NHS.

## FIRST ILLEGAL SCHOOL CONVICTION

In October 2018, we welcomed the first conviction against an illegally operating religious school, which came on the heels of our joint investigation with the BBC which exposed the scale of the problem, and evidence of physical violence being meted out within these schools. Because of this organisation's work, the UK Government has at last promised



Pictured: Hamza bin Walayat





concrete actions after years of refusal. It is putting forward proposals to create a register of children not attending school for the first time ever, enabling authorities to better safeguard and protect the rights of tens of thousands of children.

## HUMANISTS AT REMEMBRANCE DAY

After years of campaigning for humanists to be recognised at the National Service of Remembrance in Whitehall, last November we achieved a breakthrough by participating in the national ceremony, where Andrew Copson laid a wreath at the Cenotaph.

This achievement is due in large part to the steady work of our Defence Humanists section, which brings together non-religious people from throughout the armed forces and Ministry of Defence.

The event marks a milestone for national recognition of humanists who until now were not represented in the national event, which is broadcast on BBC One.

We also attended the National Service of Remembrance in Wales for the first time, where our celebrant Lorraine Barrett gave a reading,

while Northern Ireland Humanists and Humanist Society Scotland were represented in Belfast and Edinburgh.

## INTERVENTIONS AT THE UNITED NATIONS

Over the last 12 months, we made numerous statements at the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva. We challenged member states whose harsh Internet censorship laws act as *de facto* blasphemy laws, and called on states to abolish their blasphemy laws and recognise the right to express religious dissent as a central facet of the right to freedom of expression. We also drew attention to the plight of individual humanist writers living under fear of death or corporal punishment in countries such as Saudi Arabia. And we used our platform to challenge the UK Government to do better, drawing attention to its failings in relation to Northern Ireland's oppressive abortion ban and conversion therapy. In another important statement, we railed against a dangerous European Court of Human Rights ruling which declined to strike down Austria's blasphemy law – shamefully declaring it a matter for individual countries to decide on. We warned that the ruling will give succour to those countries, including Pakistan, which actively seek to forbid 'defamation of religion' in international law.

## MAJOR REFORMS IN WALES

We were delighted when the Welsh Government finally published a draft of its new curriculum in May. The new law will make Religious Education lessons fully inclusive of humanism and introduce world-class new Relationships and Sexuality lessons. We also rallied our members to back Welsh Government plans to outlaw the beating of children, which faced stiff opposition from a minority of evangelical Christian activists organising under the name 'Be Reasonable'.

## RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION

One of our biggest victories last year concerned the implementation of new, LGBT-inclusive Relationships and Sex Education lessons across English schools, as well as Relationships Education at primary level. The issue became a national flashpoint topic in the spring when a large group of Muslim protesters began bombarding national media and Birmingham schools with objections to the curriculum, promoting myths about what was being taught and stressing their right to pass on homophobic, counter-factual beliefs to their children and deny them factual information. We worked around the clock to provide a voice of reason in the national media on this topic and promoted online petitions to put pressure on the

UK Government to unequivocally support the schools involved. In June, the High Court granted one of the affected schools an 'exclusion zone', which will allow pupils to attend lessons again and allow teachers to do their jobs.

## 'THOUGHT FOR THE DAY'

In November, we published an open letter from Sandi Toksvig, Simon Singh, Julian Baggini, Nick Brown MP, Ed Byrne, Alice Roberts, Peter Tatchell, and many others calling on BBC Director-General Lord Hall to end the ban on humanists appearing on Radio 4's *Thought for the Day* slot. This complemented the ongoing protests outside Broadcasting House and BBC Salford by our partners South East London Humanists and Greater Manchester Humanists.

## STEINER SCHOOL INSPECTIONS

After years of work by Humanists UK to raise awareness of issues around Steiner schools, the national schools inspectorate, Ofsted, has failed three such schools in England for the first time, citing significant educational and safeguarding weaknesses of the sort we first raised four years ago. As well as promoting pseudoscience by discouraging vaccinations and promoting homeopathy, whistleblowers have long attested to systemic bullying issues across private and state-funded Steiner schools.

# GROWTH & ESTEEM

PAGE 15

## FAITH TO FAITHLESS AWARD

Our community services work is focused on putting humanism into practice, which for us means helping people in times of great need. We're pleased to see increasing recognition for that work. Faith to Faithless, our programme providing peer support to people who leave high control religions and cults, won the Lord Lieutenant's London Faith & Belief Community Award for its work providing services to vulnerable people in November. Our trustee Imtiaz Shams, who co-founded Faith to Faithless with Aliyah Saleem, was there in person to receive the award (*pictured right*).



## ELEVEN EMPLOYED PASTORAL CARERS

Humanist pastoral support in prisons and hospitals has grown at an incredible rate in recent years. We now operate in over 40% of NHS trusts in England and Wales, and an astounding eleven(!) members of our Non-Religious Pastoral Support Network now have paid roles in

hospital, university, or prison chaplaincy departments. They are already making an enormous impact. Our pastoral carer Lindsay van Dijk, who runs her department at Buckinghamshire NHS Trust, was awarded trophies for her team's outstanding work in pastoral care, with honours for 'putting people first' and 'clinical support'. The awards were given by Buckinghamshire County Council and the Health Service Journal Awards programme.



We aim to arrive at a situation where we are respected as an organisation for our expertise and professionalism and recognised as the national voice of humanism and a leading national voice for the non-religious and for secularism



We aim to arrive at a situation where we are an expanding, financially healthy and sustainable organisation with high standards of governance and management

## PARTNERSHIP WITH HSS

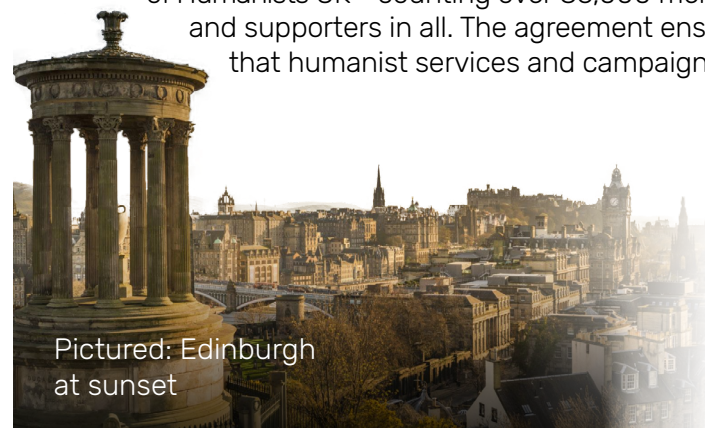
Our new partnership agreement with Scottish charity Humanist Society Scotland (HSS) came into force in 2019. The new agreement codifies and strengthens our close working relationship with HSS, qualifying its members to join the Non-Religious Pastoral Support Network and ensuring mutual recognition of celebrants when they move between Scotland and the rest of the UK, the Isle of Man, or the Channel Islands. As a result of this new agreement, all 15,000 members of Humanist Society Scotland have become associate members of Humanists UK – counting over 85,000 members and supporters in all. The agreement ensures that humanist services and campaigns

across the UK are all of the highest quality possible, that humanists across the UK can speak with one voice in meetings with the UK Government, and that both organisations continue to work efficiently in pursuit of our shared vision.

## MORE HUMANIST NETWORKING

We've expanded our reach further by launching two brand new networks for both Humanists Teachers and Humanists in Government.

The Humanists Teachers network, headed up by English teacher (and Humanists UK trustee) Alexander Williams, launched in November 2018, and supports humanists in education to help each other and share best practice. Humanists in Government launched with an event hosted by our Vice President, Professor Jim Al-Khalili at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in April 2019. Its purpose is to bring together like-minded civil service personnel and other professionals working across the UK and devolved governments and ensures a humanist voice can be heard within Whitehall.



Pictured: Edinburgh at sunset

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

INCLUDING THE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE  
ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2018

	Funds 2018			Funds 2017
	£ restricted	£ unrestricted	£ total	£ total
INCOMING RESOURCES				
Incoming resources from general funds				
Legacies and donations	194,933	1,579,035	1,774,027	1,010,396
Other trading activities	-	12,228	12,228	9,456
Investments	-	17,251	17,251	23,736
Incoming resources from charitable activities	-	1,077,582	1,077,582	987,292
Total incoming resources	194,993	2,686,096	2,881,088	2,030,880
RESOURCES EXPENDED				
Costs of generating income	-	(182,049)	(182,049)	(160,756)
Costs of charitable activities	(154,946)	(1,837,210)	(1,992,156)	(2,078,588)
Total resources expended	(154,946)	(2,019,259)	(2,174,205)	(2,239,344)
NET INCOMING RESOURCES/(RESOURCES EXPENDED) BEFORE TRANSFERS AND INVESTMENTS	40,047	666,837	706,883	(208,464)

OUR FULL FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR IS AVAILABLE ON THE CHARITY COMMISSION WEBSITE AND AT [HUMANISTS.UK/MEMBERS](http://HUMANISTS.UK/MEMBERS)

	Funds 2018			Funds 2017
	£ restricted	£ unrestricted	£ total	£ total
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES <i>(continued)</i>				
Net gains/(losses) on investments	-	(20,218)	(20,218)	49,873
Net income/(expenditure) for the year	40,047	646,619	686,666	(158,591)
Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	40,047	646,619	686,666	(158,591)
Balances brought forward at 1 January	84,177	868,619	952,796	1,111,387
BALANCES CARRIED FORWARD AT 31 DECEMBER	124,224	1,515,238	1,639,462	952,796

SENIOR STAFF

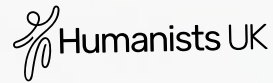
Chief Executive Andrew Copson  
Director of Public Affairs and Policy Richy Thompson  
Director of Community Services Teddy Prout  
Director of Operations Catriona McLellan  
Director of Communications Liam Whitton  
Director of IT Andrew West

BOARD OFFICERS

Chair Tamar Ghosh  
Vice Chair Naomi Phillips  
Treasurer John Adams

Auditors Knox Cropper  
Bank The Co-Operative





---

**THINK FOR  
YOURSELF,  
ACT FOR  
EVERYONE**

---

Humanists UK, 39 Moreland Street, London EC1V 8BB  
0207 324 3060 • [info@humanists.uk](mailto:info@humanists.uk)