

## Human Rights Day Statement: Response to COVID -19

The COVID-19 pandemic has fostered levels of social solidarity not seen in most of our lifetimes. It has revealed to us what we truly value: being with our families and friends, the institutions and services that express our care for each other, the invaluable role of essential workers whose contribution for too long has gone unrecognised and unrewarded, our communities and the environment that we must all protect. We have been reminded of what we have in common and that when we act together rather than just for ourselves, we all benefit.

COVID-19 has also laid bare the historic and structural inequalities that already existed between us. The pandemic has disproportionately affected Black, Asian and minoritized ethnic (BAME) people, older and disabled people and their families, women, those in poverty, insecure housing or precarious employment and people who have come to the UK to escape difficult circumstances abroad. We are renewed in our commitment to do away with these persistent injustices.

Our National Health Service and welfare state were created out of the sense of shared identity and common purpose that emerged from the Second World War. That era also inspired the creation of an international human rights movement based on the inherent dignity of everyone and a vision of universal freedom from tyranny and want. This moment requires no less ambition.

We believe that a just and more equal UK requires improved protection of our human rights by giving, for the first time, legal recognition to the rights to health, housing, food, social security, education and just conditions of work. Our policy makers and institutions should be obliged to adhere to these rights and, crucially, those who face the greatest injustices must have their voices heard as leaders in bringing this change about.

Now is the opportunity for us to build the better society to which we aspire. A society in which everyone has the rights they need to flourish.

There is no more time to waste.

*Endorsing the statement does not indicate endorsement of Just Fair's other work.*

### **Signatories**

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