**SNAP: Scotland’s National Action Plan for Human Rights**

**Quick guide**

This document contains some key facts about SNAP: Scotland’s National Action Plan for Human Rights. More information is also available on the SNAP website at [www.snaprights.info](http://www.snaprights.info).

**Contents**

[1. What is SNAP and who is it for? 2](#_Toc94529547)

[2. Where does SNAP come from? 3](#_Toc94529548)

[3. Why does SNAP exist? 4](#_Toc94529549)

[4. What’s in SNAP? 4](#_Toc94529550)

[5. How does SNAP work? 5](#_Toc94529551)

[6. What will SNAP achieve? 9](#_Toc94529552)

# What is SNAP and who is it for?

SNAP is **Scotland’s National Action Plan for Human Rights**.

**Its vision is a Scotland where all can live with human dignity.**

What is SNAP?

Human rights belong to everyone!

**SNAP is for everybody in Scotland!**

# Where does SNAP come from?

In Scotland, developing a national human rights action plan was first identified as a priority during the early years of the Scottish Human Rights Commission. The commission led a major research project to identify gaps in achieving human rights in Scotland. The project was called ‘[Getting it Right?](http://www.snaprights.info/how-snap-was-developed/getting-it-right)’, and was published in 2012. This laid the groundwork for Scotland’s first SNAP, which ran from 2013 to 2017.

National human rights action plans have their roots in the UN human rights system. At a global human rights conference in 1993, the UN adopted the [Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/Vienna.aspx). This includes a recommendation that all countries follow an action plan to identify steps to improve the way human rights are promoted and protected.

In 2009, [the Council of Europe (CoE) also recommended](https://rm.coe.int/16806da952) that countries across Europe use national human rights action plans to make sure they have a system in place to uphold human rights.

SNAP fits all the criteria that [the UN recommends for national human rights action plans](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/training10en.pdf), as shown in the list below.

* **Evidence-based**

Research and input from panel members have influenced the priorities for action.

* **Inclusive**

A wide range of stakeholders were involved in shaping the commitments.

* **High-level and long-term support from across all state and public bodies with responsibilities for rights**

The Scottish Government and national public bodies support and approve SNAP.

* **Action-orientated**

For each priority issue, SNAP has in place specific and achievable actions for change.

* **Realistic**

SNAP takes account of practical limits and, where possible, action is included in the work of public bodies.

* **Measurable**

SNAP outcomes are linked to indicators that can be used to track progress.

* **Supported with the resources needed to put commitments into practice**
* **Monitored, with progress independently reviewed**

# Why does SNAP exist?

Human rights are increasingly mentioned in Scotland’s laws and policy, but it is widely recognised that more action is needed to make sure everyone enjoys their human rights in everyday life. Given Scotland’s commitment on economic, social and cultural rights to [‘progressive realisation’](https://www.scottishhumanrights.com/projects-and-programmes/strengthening-economic-social-cultural-rights/), we should always be aiming to achieve better. Progression realisation means continual positive progress on the status of rights.

SNAP makes it possible to find [Scotland’s international human rights treaty obligations](http://www.snaprights.info/international-obligations) within the context of public policy. It is an effective way for the Scottish Government and other public bodies to move beyond supportive statements about human rights to put international obligations into practice.

Promoting and protecting human rights is an ongoing job. There is no country – including Scotland – that can seriously expect to solve all its human rights problems within a relatively short time. The UN recommends that national human rights action plans such as SNAP should be part of a long-term process, and as one action plan draws to an end another should be developed to take its place.

SNAP is a strategic and thorough plan that sets out human rights improvements as realistic goals that can be achieved (with adequate resources) through practical actions involving all sectors of Scottish society.

# What’s in SNAP?

There is a draft SNAP that is based on strong evidence of and involvement in human rights issues in Scotland, including the following.

* Research such as [Getting it Right?](http://www.snaprights.info/how-snap-was-developed)
* Learning from the first SNAP (2013 to 2017) [(for example, from annual reports and case studies)](http://www.snaprights.info/).
* Recommendations from [an independent evaluation of the first SNAP](http://www.snaprights.info/evaluation).
* The views of over 1,000 people who took part in a [2017 national participation process](http://www.snaprights.info/snap-2).
* Analysis and further research by the SNAP Development Working Group (15 people from Scottish civil society and the public sector) during 2018 to 2019, [published for feedback in a draft action plan in 2019](http://www.snaprights.info/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/SNAP-2_Online.pdf).
* Analysis of the [national feedback](http://www.snaprights.info/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/SNAP-2-Consultation-Feedback-Report-vFinal.pdf) by the Scottish Human Rights Commission.

SNAP is also firmly based on international human rights laws and standards, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and many treaties approved by the UK. These protect a wide range of human rights, such as the right to an adequate standard of living, to work, to education, and to the highest standard of physical and mental health that a person can achieve. These treaties also protect the rights of groups of people whose rights are most at risk, such as women, children and disabled people.

SNAP aims to be as thorough as possible. However, there could be some issues that are considered a priority that do not appear in the next SNAP. This is because SNAP needs to be realistic and achievable (to follow the UN guidance). Any issues and actions that are not in the next SNAP when it is published could be added in the future. Promoting and protecting human rights is an ongoing job and the UN recommends that plans like SNAP are an ongoing, long-term process.

# How does SNAP work?

**Multi-stakeholder initiative**

SNAP is a partnership involving various stakeholders, and there is no one person or organisation that is totally accountable or responsible for it. From 2013 to 2017, the first SNAP was a partnership involving over 40 organisations and individuals, co-ordinated and supported by the Scottish Human Rights Commission.

**Governance principles**

Nine principles for governing and delivering SNAP have been identified. These are based on [important learning from the first SNAP](http://www.snaprights.info/evaluation) and the [development process](http://www.snaprights.info/snap-2) of the second SNAP. The nine governance principles are as follows.

1. SNAP should be a collaboration between government, other duty bearers, civil society, and people with lived experience of human rights issues.
2. The Scottish Government should play a leadership role in SNAP as the key organisation with human rights obligations in Scotland, and this leadership should be enabling and empowering, rather than top-down and directive.
3. People with lived experience must be given real decision-making and governance power on an equal footing with other people – power imbalances between people with lived experience and paid professionals should be actively acknowledged and addressed.
4. People with lived experience should have their time and expertise recognised, acknowledged and valued, including through appropriate financial compensation.
5. Civil society organisations should have their time and expertise recognised, acknowledged and valued through appropriate financial compensation.
6. Rights holders should be meaningfully involved throughout the design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of SNAP actions, and in SNAP governance structures.
7. Governance and delivery structures should be as simple and streamlined as possible, and they should have clearly articulated roles and responsibilities for everyone to see.
8. SNAP should be accessible, visible and accountable to people across Scotland through proactive and inclusive communications and appropriate reporting. This could include a formal accountability relationship with the Scottish Parliament.
9. Dedicated, independent secretariat support is needed to ensure the effective governance and delivery of SNAP, including support for rights holders’ participation and administration of events and meetings.

To put the nine governance principles into practice, there are three different (but related) requirements that SNAP needs to work effectively and learn from the lessons from the first SNAP.

* The SNAP Leadership Panel
* The SNAP Secretariat
* SNAP actions

**SNAP Leadership Panel**

Although no one person or organisation is totally responsible for SNAP, it will be overseen by the SNAP Leadership Panel, which is made up of various stakeholders.

The panel’s overall purpose is to govern and direct the way in which SNAP is put into practice. It will make sure that SNAP is developed and put into practice using the principles of a human rights-based approach, as defined by the PANEL Principles (participation, accountability, non-discrimination and equality, empowerment and legality).

The panel will have approximately 25 members, including the following.

* People with direct personal experience of human rights issues (‘rights holders’) – at least 50% of members
* Representatives from Scottish public bodies (‘duty bearers’) – five to six members
* Civil society organisations – five to six members
* Scotland’s two national human rights institutions (the Scottish Human Rights Commission and the Equality and Human Rights Commission) – two members

For its first 12 months, the panel will be co-chaired by a senior representative from the Scottish Human Rights Commission and the Scottish Government. Panel members will be appointed for an initial term of three years.

The intention is for panel members to work together as equals, using shared leadership and consensus based decision-making, which is when decisions are taken by all the members of a group.

A terms of reference document has been developed for the SNAP Leadership Panel. This contains information about the panel’s purpose, members, governance principles and key activities. It also sets out the membership rules, information about payments and expenses, length of appointment, frequency of meetings, ways of working, accessibility and inclusive communication, and the support that is available from the SNAP Secretariat.

The priority for the SNAP Leadership Panel will be to finalise and launch the next SNAP (based on substantial development work carried out from 2017 to 2021). Once SNAP is launched, the panel will watch over it.

**Independent SNAP Secretariat**

The second SNAP requirement is to create a small, independent secretariat which has appropriate resources. Its role is to provide administration, communication, participation, monitoring and evaluation support to the panel, the co-chairs and those involved in delivering SNAP actions.

For a short-term period, the SNAP Secretariat and SNAP Secretariat Lead are hosted by the Scottish Human Rights Commission and funded by the Scottish Government.

**Identifying and delivering SNAP actions**

The third requirement for SNAP is to contain and deliver its actions. The first SNAP ran from 2013 to 2017 and delivered over 50 actions in a wide range of areas, such as criminal justice, housing, health and social care.

There are currently around 40 actions listed in the draft second SNAP. These actions are directly linked to the wide range of human rights issues that have been identified through research and public engagement across Scotland. They are designed to achieve the seven long-term positive human rights outcomes (listed on the next page).

To get SNAP ready for launch, the panel will review and update the actions in the draft SNAP, and possibly identify new actions. After SNAP is launched, the panel will monitor the actions and develop new actions to replace those that have been completed.

As with the first SNAP, a wide range of people and organisations will be involved in delivering SNAP actions in the future. SNAP is designed to be a complete and structured approach to human rights planning, actions and monitoring in Scotland. The actions cover a wide range of different human rights issues in a co-ordinated way, involving different sectors of society.

# What will SNAP achieve?

After it has finalised the list of SNAP actions, the SNAP Leadership Panel will finalise the medium-term outcomes and indicators of success. (The panel has a draft of these to work on, based on the current list of 40 actions.)

SNAP aims to achieve seven positive human rights outcomes by the year 2030.

1. Each of us is empowered to understand and embrace the value of human rights, asserting them in all parts of our lives.
2. Each of us can participate in shaping and directing decisions that affect our human rights and the rights of others.
3. Organisations providing public services contribute to a human rights culture by valuing and putting human rights at the heart of what they do.
4. Scotland increasingly implements its international human rights obligations, influences and learns from international experience and promotes human rights in all of its international engagement.
5. All organisations are held to account for the realisation of people’s rights through international and domestic laws/ regulation and monitoring.
6. Each of us has access to and can enjoy quality public services, which respect our dignity, irrespective of who we are or where we live.
7. Each of us experiences improved opportunities and life outcomes whilst Scotland experiences an overall reduction in inequality of opportunity and outcomes.

End of document.