

It is time for BBC to include Humanists on Thought for the Day

We are calling on the BBC to open their flagship reflective slot *Thought for the Day* to humanists.

Religion doesn't hold a monopoly on ethical worldviews. There is another mainstream tradition as old as religion, called humanism.

Humanism is a positive, everyday philosophy which encourages us to value ourselves and recognise that other people are as valuable as we are. That has deep implications for the way we treat each other and our environment.

The BBC is failing in its legal duty to treat non-religious beliefs equally with religious beliefs, 'belief' being defined as "a collective belief in, or other adherence to, a systemised set of ethical or philosophical principles or of mystical or transcendental doctrines" (Communications Act 2003).

The BBC is also failing its remit to reflect the diversity of beliefs of its audience and the wider population. Half the British population¹ do not belong to any religion and at least 36%² say they share humanist values. In Scotland where Humanist weddings are legal, more people choose them than ceremonies conducted by the Church of Scotland or any other denomination or faith. Amongst under-30 year olds in the UK, 70% have no faith.³

To argue, as James Purnell (Director, Radio and Education, BBC) does, that non-religious views are sufficiently represented across 'the whole of the BBC's output' is to miss the point – that humanism is an equal partner in the 'belief' category.

We call on the BBC to address this injustice and include humanists on Thought for the Day.

¹ 50.6% describe themselves as belonging to no religion: [British Social Attitudes Survey's 31st report, 2014](#)

² An [Ipsos MORI poll](#), published in 2007 for Humanists UK indicated that:

- 36% of people are humanist in their basic outlook;
- 62% said 'Human nature by itself gives us an understanding of what is right and wrong', against 27% who said 'People need religious teachings in order to understand what is right and wrong'.

³ 70% of young Britons (16 – 29 year olds) identify as having no religion: ['Europe's Young Adults and Religion: findings from the European Social Survey'](#), a report by St Mary's University, Twickenham and the Institut Catholique de Paris (ICP) published March 2018.