

# Combating Antisemitism

A British  
Best Practice  
Guide



All-Party Parliamentary Group  
Against Antisemitism



Department for  
Communities and  
Local Government

PCAA  
FOUNDATION

# Foreword

## Message from Rt Hon Greg Clark MP Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government



Antisemitism and hate crimes of any sort are completely unacceptable in our society, which is why Britain has some of the strongest laws to protect people from violence and bigotry.

I am proud of our efforts to confront this issue, working with Jewish organisations like the Community Security Trust, and representatives from all sides of Parliament. This has also led to significant improvements in tackling other forms of hate crime, including Islamophobic and homophobic hate crimes.

Our work has been internationally recognised, with many organisations seeking our advice on attacking the scourge of antisemitism wherever it exists. This booklet aims to bring our advice together in one place, so as antisemitism persists, our international colleagues can see what we have done and what may work to support Jewish communities around the world.

Our efforts have meant we've seen a fall in antisemitic incidents in Britain this year – but one incident is still too many. We will continue to learn the lessons in Britain, and urge anyone who witnesses a hate crime to report it so perpetrators face the full force of the law.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Clark". The signature is written in a cursive style.

**Rt Hon Greg Clark MP**

Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

## Message from John Mann MP Chair, All-Party Parliamentary Group Against Antisemitism



As Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) Against Antisemitism I have sought to combat anti-Jewish prejudice according to three principles. First, that non-Jews should lead the fight against antisemitism, because the struggle against prejudice is not just the responsibility of its victims. Second, that any success we achieve in combating antisemitism should be used to fight all forms of racism and discrimination. Third, that Parliament must set the national standard in these matters and do so across party lines.

Over more than ten years, the All-Party Parliamentary Group Against Antisemitism has sought to transform the way in which antisemitism is both perceived and combated in the UK. We have commissioned two all-party parliamentary reports which have been published with recommendations for Government, Parliament and civil society. We do not believe in reports that sit on a shelf. We have expected and where appropriate demanded action. The APPG Against Antisemitism has worked successfully with Government and other key partners to implement the inquiry recommendations and other measures and to report on our achievements.

One of the recommendations made in our reports was to share details of our work with international colleagues and friends so that they might benefit from our experience and our learning. I hope that this guide will inspire other parliaments to run their own inquiries into antisemitism and make progress against the rising tide of anti-Jewish hatred in our world.

We will continue to act and I encourage anyone reading this guide to do so too.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Mann". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**John Mann MP**

Chair, All-Party Parliamentary Group Against Antisemitism

# Introduction

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# 1.1 Introduction

Over more than a decade, successive British Governments and the parliaments which have held them to account have together been seeking to build and continuously improve upon efforts to combat antisemitism.

The UK has a proud history of democratic accountability, free speech and appropriate statutory regulation. Protection from discrimination exists in the UK for a number of what are known as ‘protected characteristics’. These include age, sexuality, gender, race and religion. There is no specific law on antisemitism in the UK, rather offences might be covered by public order laws, anti-discrimination laws, human rights law, communications law or the civil law, depending on the circumstances. Despite the UK being acknowledged as having one of the best legislative frameworks in the world to address hate crime, it is essential to employ an accompanying robust communications strategy which reassures the public that those who commit hate crimes will be punished with the full force of the law.

Regrettably, Britain similar to many other countries, has witnessed an upsurge of antisemitism in recent years. Whilst overt anti-Jewish hatred is socially unacceptable, it unfortunately still exists. Exacerbating this, in line with the global trend, traditional antisemitic tropes continue to resonate within mainstream

discourse about the Middle East conflict in relation to ‘Zionists’ or the ‘Jewish Lobby’. Meanwhile ideological antisemitism remains a deadly driver for jihadist terrorism as has been witnessed on the continent of Europe in Toulouse, Brussels, Paris and Copenhagen.

Working in partnership with numerous stakeholders, many policy initiatives and institutional frameworks have been enacted which have helped to build confidence amongst British Jewry that Britain remains robustly opposed to anti-Jewish hatred. Importantly these measures have also addressed concerns shared by other victims of hate crime.

This short report is designed to highlight what has been widely acknowledged as British good practice in countering antisemitism and to act as a guide for international parliaments or governments seeking to adapt and implement similar models in their own jurisdictions.

**The Parliamentary  
Perspective:  
Context, Action  
and vigilance**



## 2.1 UK All-Party Parliamentary Groups and the APPG Against Antisemitism

In the UK as well as taking part in formal parliamentary business, MPs are active in other areas and have numerous different interests. All-Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs) are informal cross-party groups that do not have official status within Parliament. They are run by and for Members of the Commons and Lords, though many involve individuals and organisations from outside Parliament in their administration and activities.

In the UK, the All-Party Parliamentary Group Against Antisemitism has a full time secretariat, provided by a charity named the PCAA Foundation. This allows for a member of staff, IT and other support for the group. The relationship

between the Foundation and the APPG is transparent and declared through the various registers that exist within the UK parliamentary system. The relationship is important because it has enabled the APPG to be more active than a number of the other APPGs in parliament.

For a number of years, the APPG functioned as an educational forum, organising briefings, running seminars and hosting social events with speakers. In 2005, a Labour Member of Parliament, John Mann MP, was elected as chair of the All-Party Group.

## 2.2 Commissioning, Preparing and Delivering an Inquiry

Having been elected chair of the APPG, John Mann concerned about the rise in antisemitism since the year 2000, commissioned an All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism. He would subsequently commission a second inquiry in 2014 specifically related to a rise in antisemitism linked to the conflict between Israel and Gaza in the summer of that year.

A separate inquiry into conduct of candidates for election was also commissioned and reported in 2013.

### KEY FINDINGS: 1

Political leadership is fundamental to successful parliamentary action against antisemitism. Having at least one parliamentarian willing to contribute significant time and ideas yields significant benefits.



## Structure and Process

As APPG's are informal, the first all-party inquiry was unofficial. However, it was decided that the parliamentary panel's research of the topic should imitate the format and style of a Parliamentary Select Committee which in the House of Commons, holds the government to account. In practice, this required the recruitment of a panel of MPs, supported by a secretariat that acted as clerks, who took both written and oral evidence then produced a written report of their findings.

### KEY FINDINGS: 2

Replicating existing parliamentary systems and structures ensures processes are understood, respected and can have a greater impact.

For the first all-party inquiry, it was considered important to demonstrate significant interest and commitment from experienced Members of Parliament. The chair was a former Minister and among the 13 other panelists were many senior parliamentarians. None of these panel members were Jewish and nearly no-one represented constituencies with a significant Jewish community. For the two subsequent inquiries, membership was drawn from both the Houses of Commons and Lords, from the largest political parties and the smallest.

### KEY FINDINGS: 3

The following factors were found to be important when recruiting the parliamentary panel of inquiry:

- A high profile and senior chairperson who was willing to take an active lead
- Cross-Party representation (from at least four parties)
- A mixture of senior and newer parliamentarians
- Few Jewish members or members representing a constituency with a sizeable Jewish contingent
- Parliamentarians who were not generally known for speaking out on matters concerning Israel or antisemitism
- A core group of panel members who were actively involved in the process

The cross-party nature of the inquiries was fundamental to their success. Removing partisan politics ensured that in both constitution and reputation the panels of inquiry were independent and serious. Crucially and as would subsequently prove to be the case, having support from across

the political spectrum ensured that when there was a change of government, the incoming administration were already subscribed to structures and recommendations emanating from the inquiry panels.

## **KEY FINDINGS 4:**

Working on a cross-party basis is fundamental to successful reporting and parliamentary action. It improves the likelihood of continuing governmental action across changes in administration.

### **Secretariat**

The secretariat worked directly to the panel and was wholly independent of NGOs and Jewish community organisations. For the first inquiry, there were two full-time members of staff, a part-time clerk to the inquiry, based in Parliament, and additional media and legal consultants were used on a temporary basis. In the second and third inquiries, all the secretariat function was provided by the PCAA Foundation which received pro-bono legal advice.

### **Project Planning, Evidence Gathering and Transparency**

In preparing for the parliamentary inquiries, a number of factors were considered. A timeline was determined with enough time (some 10 weeks) allowed between the call for evidence

and the final deadline for submissions and for analysis and categorisation of written evidence before the oral evidence sessions began.

The terms of reference for all three inquiries were designed to be simple and focused and were in general aimed at:

- a) Establishing the existing climate
- b) Assessing how it was being addressed
- c) Offering recommendations for improvement

Whilst a general call for evidence was issued, for each inquiry a database was created of organisations and individuals to target for written evidence. It is important that evidence should have as broad a base as possible and not just come from the Jewish community. Submissions were requested and received from the following:

## **KEY FINDINGS: 5**

The skills considered desirable for the secretariat included:

- Knowledge of parliamentary procedure
- Political skills (working with the panel)
- PR experience (liaising with the press and networking)
- Project planning, research and analysis and report-writing

- Government (local and national) and public bodies
- Police and law enforcement agencies
- Faith groups
- Jewish community organisations
- Academics and academic institutions
- Trade unions
- NGOs and other organisations
- Journalists and commentators
- Foreign embassies and other international organisations
- Individuals (including victims of antisemitism)

The first UK inquiry was officially launched at an evening reception and a press release, including a call for papers was distributed. It is imperative that any inquiry process be open and transparent so that no-one can subsequently claim that dissenting evidence was excluded or that the process was selective or biased. To that end, letters of acknowledgment were sent to all submitters and submissions were then categorised for easier analysis. Whilst all submissions should be provided to panellists when collated, short summaries of the submissions can help the panel better digest what has been submitted.

To supplement the written evidence, oral evidence sessions may be organised. Enough time should be left between the deadline for written submissions and the oral evidence sessions, in order to analyse gaps in data that exist and to identify which areas should be explored in more depth. Again, cross-party subscription to the process can help where high-level political witnesses are sought for the oral evidence sessions. Considerations for witnesses should include:

- Balance: Cover a broad range of opinions and aspects of antisemitism, including dissenting voices. Refrain from having too many witnesses from within the Jewish community.
- Profile: Invite senior figures
- Structure: Plan a coherent structure for the sessions to create themes and focus
- Timing: Plan the timing of each individual session and don't invite too many witnesses
  - better to have fewer, giving the panel time to explore issues in depth

All sessions should be recorded and transcribed and briefings for panellists and witnesses explaining the process, distributed in advance. For the UK, this mirrored official parliamentary committee proceedings.

Having gathered all relevant written and oral evidence, additional research, as directed by the chair, was conducted or commissioned by the secretariat. Clarifications of existing evidence were sought from the authors when necessary.

For both the UK antisemitism inquiries visits were undertaken, co-ordinated with the relevant British Embassies, to set the research in a European context and provide comparative evidence.

Itineraries and briefings were prepared for the delegations before each visit and reports circulated to all panel members afterwards.

For the UK Inquiries, panel members kept a 'dignified silence' while conducting its work in order to maintain a credible and independent

process that did not appear to have reached a foregone conclusion before the final report had been published. Media advisors helped devise press strategies. This covered:

- Securing media attendance at witness sessions
- Placing news pieces in the national press at the start of witness sessions
- Co-ordinating media activity with witness organisations that chose to publicise their evidence during the inquiry
- Helping place opinion/comment pieces in broadsheet newspapers

In addition, key messages and question and answer documents were prepared for panel members.

In the UK there were issues concerning libel and defamation. Evidence given to official select committees is protected in part by Parliamentary privilege. The inquiry was unofficial and therefore the panel and witnesses were not protected in this way and some of the witnesses were not aware of this when they submitted their evidence. Before the transcripts and selected written submissions could be made public, they were read for libel and various redactions made.

For each inquiry, the final reports were made publicly available on the group's website and details of the inquiry, including press releases and calls for submissions, were published throughout the process.

## KEY FINDINGS: 6

In planning an inquiry:

Terms of reference should:

- establish the existing climate, assess how an issue is being addressed and offer recommendations for improvement

Evidence should:

- be sought from as broad a base as possible
- where oral hearings are being conducted, take account of balance, profile, structure and timing

Transparency should:

- be full, evidence should be catalogued and acknowledged. Websites and other public messaging systems used appropriately

Visits Can:

- Help inform recommendations and place findings in a wider context

Media and Libel laws should be considered.

## 2.3 Follow-Up and Implementation

### Conclusions, Report and Responses

Once the report had been compiled, the panel were given the opportunity to approve and comment on at least two drafts of the report. It is important that the final version is approved by all panel members and that all are happy to put their names to it. The report itself was not covered by parliamentary privilege and was therefore read for libel.

Key items that did require address were the definition of antisemitism the panellists would use and the central role of free speech in British society. Sections on both these topics were prominent in the second all-party inquiry in particular.

Hard copies of the inquiry reports were published for distribution. The report was published on the group's website along with the redacted transcripts of the oral evidence sessions and selected written submissions. Again, timelines and media strategy were considered.

The report was embargoed until the publication date but copies were made available to journalists, witnesses and key commentators the day before publication.

The cross-party nature of the proceedings was again important as it enabled responses to the inquiries to be secured from top-level politicians and officials. In the UK, formal government responses to the inquiries were secured and subsequent activity is detailed in the next section.

### KEY FINDINGS: 7

The report will be judged on its implementation. Employing a full-time secretariat will allow for a report to be more successfully implemented.

The continued engagement of invested parliamentarians will ensure a government can be held to account over its response to a similar report and the promises it makes.

Following publication of the All-Party reports, the full-time secretariat to the UK All-Party Group worked with MPs to prioritise recommendations and draw up an implementation plan. Where possible, the secretariat sought to keep the panel involved in implementation of the recommendations and at all times, ensured cross-party parliamentary support for its activities.

Parliamentary activity in the UK – debates, petitions, motions, briefings, educational sessions and other events, have enabled the group to maintain both the profile and political pressures required to see the recommendations of the All-Party reports implemented.

The continuing review and publication of updates as regards successful implementation of the report has been welcomed by panellists and concerned members of the public alike.

# Governmental Action



## 3.1 Responding to Parliament

In 2006, the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism published its first major report and set out 35 recommendations for parliament, civil society and for government. In March 2007, the then Labour government responded with a formal Command Paper, followed by a progress update in May 2008. In 2010, the Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government laid a third paper and subsequently a departmental report in late 2014.

### KEY FINDINGS: 8

Formal governmental responses to parliamentary reports on antisemitism have empowered others to track progress and hold Government to account for its actions.

## 3.2 The Cross-Government Working Group on Antisemitism

Many of the efforts to combat antisemitism at a governmental level have been co-ordinated by the Cross-Government Working Group on Antisemitism. This is a group, established in line with a recommendation of the first All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism, which meets quarterly and brings together civil servants and members of key Jewish communal organisations. Secretariat to the group is provided by the UK Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) which also contributes to the funding of the Cross-Government Hate Crime Programme.

### KEY FINDINGS: 9

Establishing a cross-governmental task force costs little and delivers joined-up thinking from departments. It ensures measures to tackle antisemitism can be co-ordinated independently but with buy-in from relevant Jewish community stakeholders.

The group is important for it ensures government departments are co-ordinating efforts on antisemitism. In addition, it gives an excellent platform for engagement with the Jewish community so action could be effectively communicated to and processed with the key stakeholders.

## 3.3 Government Action

Over nearly a decade the Department for Communities and Local Government, which leads on much of the counter-antisemitism work for the UK Government, has worked in more than ten different areas to improve British systems for addressing racial hatred. What follows is a short overview of some key areas in which progress has been achieved with most of it discussed and considered with the Cross-Government Working Group.

### **Policing**

Agreement was sought and achieved for all police forces to record antisemitic hate crimes and from 2009 specific data on antisemitism was disaggregated from other hate crime statistics. Since 2011 this improved data has been included in the National Crime Statistics and published annually. The disaggregated antisemitism statistics are now available through the 'True Vision' web portal. Between the police and the UK Jewish charity the Community Security Trust which records antisemitic incidents, the UK has one of the most accurate sets of data in the world.

The British Government's relationship with the Jewish community has been built on the solid work of the Cross-Government working group on tackling antisemitism which ensures that they are alive to any issues and concerns of the Jewish community and can respond quickly.

### **Prosecution**

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) is the principal prosecuting authority for England and Wales and has policy on and a guide to prosecuting cases of racist and religious crime. It operates a Code for Crown Prosecutors and has Casework Quality Standards. Following both All-Party Inquiries into Antisemitism and working through the Cross-Government Working Group, the CPS has put a series of steps in place to improve its procedures and support for the victims of hate crime has improved.

The CPS have also recently introduced community impact assessments which have been particularly helpful in assessing the impact of banners and hashtags displayed at demonstrations have on the Jewish or any other community.



## **Jewish School Security**

Provision for the security of Jewish schools in the state sector has improved. This is in part the result of a grant of over two million pounds per year, introduced by the coalition government in 2010, and administered by the Community Security Trust. In 2015 the Prime Minister, Rt Hon David Cameron MP, announced further funding for private and independent Jewish schools, synagogues and other Jewish communal institutions.

## **Universities**

Inspired by the efforts of the Cross-Government Working Group and the APPG Against Antisemitism, relevant UK universities bodies have produced reports on the experience of Jewish students, good relations on campus and hosting external speakers. The UK Government continues to oppose academic boycotts of Israel and support academic freedom.

## **Holocaust Memorial**

The UK Government supports much work in this field, including programmes run by the Holocaust Educational Trust, the Holocaust Memorial Day through the HMD Trust and Prime Minister David Cameron formed a Holocaust Commission which in turn led to the establishment of a Holocaust Memorial Foundation which will build a striking new Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre in central London. The government provides significant funds to Holocaust Memorial and Educational organisations and programmes.

## **A UK Envoy**

The All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism of 2006 recommended that the UK adopt a similar approach to the United States of America in appointing a special envoy on combating antisemitism. Whilst this recommendation was not followed, in 2010 the Foreign Secretary appointed the first UK Envoy for Post-Holocaust issues. The envoy sought to enhance, improve, streamline and develop the UK's approach to international discussions and our role in the various Holocaust education and remembrance organisations of which we are a member. Sir Eric Pickles MP, the current envoy has extended the role and remit to cover antisemitism.

## **Protection from Harm**

Since 2010, over 150 people have been excluded from entering the UK for not being conducive to the public good and in some of these cases, antisemitic action or rhetoric has been an aggravating factor.

## **Cyber-Hate**

Successive UK Governments have sought to collaborate with industry and improve Criminal Justice System responses to help protect victims, improve standards and prosecute perpetrators. So too, parliamentary groups and civil society organisations have been working with social media companies to try and find innovative solutions to combating online hate. Ministerial seminars have been held in parliament and discussions have led to action within the OSCE Ministerial forum. UK Government officials have worked closely through the Inter-Parliamentary Coalition for Combating Antisemitism (ICCA) forums for engaging industry to tackle online hate. The government has also supported the establishment of the 'UK No Hate Speech Movement' which trains and supports young volunteers who seek to challenge online hate through 'counter-narrative' activity. This is in addition to support for the UK's 'True Vision' online reporting system.

## **Online Newspapers**

A particular concern for the Jewish and indeed other communities had been vile comments left on the open forums provided under articles and elsewhere by newspaper websites. Following discussions at a meeting of the Cross-Government Working Group on Antisemitism, an approach was made to the UK Society of Editors which was later funded to undertake a survey of website moderators in order to produce a good practice guide for online content. The subsequent Society of Editors report included a number of important advisory points for online comment editors.

## **Clean Elections**

Although the British Government neither commissioned nor played an active role in the All-Party Inquiry into Electoral Conduct, government departments were encouraged to submit evidence to and respond to the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism. The report of that inquiry, published in October 2013 was welcomed by the Prime Minister amongst others.

## **Tackling Antisemitism in Football**

The Football Association (FA) has signalled to managers and players that it will not tolerate antisemitism. Through the Cross-Government Working Group and the APPG Against Antisemitism the football authorities have been urged to do more to combat antisemitism. The FA has introduced Strict Liability for clubs regarding fans' behaviour which prevents clubs from arguing a due diligence defence in the case of, for example, racist chanting. The FA has said it will punish clubs if there are two offences involving the same club within 12 months. So too individual clubs have on occasion shown their intention to punish antisemitism. The leading anti-racism group 'Kick It Out' have helped to improve reporting of incidents in football and the Premier League is now working with the British Council to run cultural awareness programmes for footballers.

## **Interfaith and**

### **Inter-Communal Activity**

Centrally, the government supports Near Neighbours to promote social action and interaction at a grassroots level and to bring people together from different faiths, ethnicity and cultures. Over 1000 local projects have been created benefitting over 750,000 people. The Interfaith Network which working together with local authorities, faith communities and others, leads on interfaith week activities of which there were are hundreds each year. There is some crossover with intra-faith initiatives such as the impressive Jewish communal inspired ‘Mitzvah Day’ and Muslim communal inspired ‘Big Iftar’. Good practice has already been shared internationally where possible and particularly at EU and Commonwealth level.

Of course activity is not just undertaken by the UK Government nationally but by devolved governments and the Scottish and Welsh Governments have their own programmes of action. In addition, local authorities have their own programmes of action including major cities like London and Manchester.

Limited space prohibits a full review of all that has been achieved – there have been successes in discussions about online payments systems, work with the Schools Linking Network, collaborative initiatives with the British Council and more. However, in summary a significant programme of work has been undertaken with generally positive outcomes. One of the key benefits of the work in tackling antisemitism that bears repeating is that the results achieved serve not only to improve life for the British Jewish community but for all the victims of hate crime.

## **KEY FINDINGS: 10**

Having a programme of work through which key policy gaps can be identified and addressed will allow government wide reach in its efforts to combat antisemitism

According to Jon Boyd of the UK Institute for Jewish Policy research, data from multiple sources indicate that levels of antisemitism in the UK are among the lowest in Europe. He has maintained that this is almost certainly a result of “the extensive efforts that have been made by the UK government, the police, educational institutions, sporting organisations, civil society and Jewish community organisations to try to tackle the problem.” He has specifically noted the importance of the “multi-disciplinary approach” to combating antisemitism that has meant “multiple different UK Government departments are all involved in multiple ways.” As he rightly states, “in spite of everything the UK Government has done, 2014 still saw more antisemitic incidents than any previous year since records began, according to Community Security Trust data. So if we want to tackle antisemitism, if we want to tackle racism in general, we have to work to create and sustain a context in which it is given no oxygen whatsoever, and where we maintain a constant watchful eye for any signs of renewal.”

Domestically, efforts to combat antisemitism in Britain will continue. The UK has already inspired other countries to run their own all-party inquiries and to establish programmes of work. This has led to similar inquiries into antisemitism in Germany, Canada, and Italy between 2010 and 2013. If internationally British efforts can help guide or inspire efforts to combat antisemitism it is our obligation to share details of them.

This booklet is designed to do just that.

## Acknowledgements

A number of people have contributed to this guide and the work which it represents. Thanks are due to all the parliamentarians, current and former, of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiries into Antisemitism and Electoral Conduct, to the secretariat staff of the APPG, to the Department of Communities and Local Government, the Cross-Government Working Group and the many people that represent the stakeholder organisations involved with this work.

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 The All-Party Parliamentary Group  
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