

# **Tackling Antisemitism:** An action plan for our party

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**Lisa Nandy**  
We win together

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The crisis of antisemitism in Labour is a crisis in the soul of our Party. The collective failure of the Party leadership to deal swiftly and decisively with high profile cases gave a green light to antisemites that they could find a home in Labour.

The existence of any form of racism, institutional or otherwise, is an attack on and a betrayal of our values of tolerance, respect, equality and solidarity. I have always stood with the Jewish Community against antisemitism – from the shadow cabinet and the backbenches. Now I want to lead our Party out of this shameful period in our history.

While new rules and processes will give us the tools we need to eradicate this problem, the deeper issue is one of culture. We have faced an antisemitism crisis because there are fringe elements of the left who hold deeply pernicious or ignorant views about Jewish people, and there was a failure or a refusal to act when those people reared their heads in our Party. A factionalised response, defensive and lacking in empathy, generated a culture of denial that is in itself antisemitic in the way it contested the complaints of our Jewish members, refusing to allow them to define the very prejudice they face.

As Leader I will take a different approach, challenging prejudice and showing zero tolerance. I will root out those who seek to poison our movement with hatred. As Chair of Labour Friends of Palestine and the Middle East I have advocated for a two state solution, and for the rights of Palestinians facing human rights abuses.

I have never allowed my support for the Palestinian cause to veer into hostility towards any community, nor would I demand any community in this country defends the actions of a foreign government.

I will not allow anyone who seeks to exploit that cause to try and shield antisemitic behaviour to have a home in the Labour Party, and nor will I allow the word Zionism to be weaponised and turned into a word of abuse. As Leader, I will work to create a welcoming culture for people who share our values, and a zero-tolerance environment for those who hold antisemitic views, or deny and belittle the experience of the victims of antisemitism.

I have fought to defend our party against these people without fear or favour. I spoke out about antisemitism when I was in the Shadow Cabinet and publicly broke ranks in calling for Party policy to be robustly applied, and without exception.

We need a Labour Leader who is committed to taking a “zero tolerance” approach to antisemitism. I have that commitment but more importantly I have a plan to put words into action. I am grateful to my many friends across this movement who have experienced antisemitism and have helped me to understand what must be done, as a minimum, to restore trust. I know it is only the beginning and I look forward to working with you to rebuild the Labour Party I believe in.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa Nandy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Lisa Nandy**

## 1) ZERO TOLERANCE FROM DAY ONE

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I will oversee the enforcement of a culture and practise of zero tolerance for antisemitism within the Labour Party.

Upon taking the leadership of the party, I will prepare to implement the conclusions of the EHRC report by creating a task force of current and former staff and officials who will be dedicated to overseeing our response to the findings.

The seriousness of the EHRC decision that the statutory thresholds had been met, triggering this investigation, cannot be overstated. The recommendations have a legal basis and it is essential we understand they will be a foundation to build on, not an end point in themselves.

Ahead of the EHRC report, I will continue to press Party officials to lower the threshold for suspension of membership when there are credible accusations of antisemitism, Islamophobia or other forms of racism, and end the practice of “Reminders of Conduct” letters being sent in place of proper investigation.

Beyond these moves, and the zero tolerance approach I will expect, I will have no active role at all in the disciplinary process which must be independent of interference by the Leader’s Office.

## 2) A NEW INDEPENDENT PROCESS

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Labour’s disciplinary process has not been working for some time. Even when implemented in good faith, it is not trusted to handle the wave of cases the hard-working staff team have faced because legitimate concerns about political interference and the factionalised nature of the process have put these efforts under a cloud and created a climate of suspicion and fear.

I will lead on the adoption of a new, independent complaints process and committee. That will include overseeing the drawing up of the plans, which will require careful consultation and thought in order to build faith and confidence in it from the bottom up. This independent process will be guided by, and adhere to, the IHRA definition of antisemitism and its examples.

Once the independent process is established, I will personally introduce any rule changes that are required to implement the change to the NEC, and I will lead the fight to pass those changes at Conference. We should have nothing to fear from subjecting ourselves to external scrutiny.

### 3) TRAINING FOR STAFF AND OFFICIALS

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The failure of our current systems and processes has also exposed the extent to which Labour's training resource for staff and officials was unprepared for the crisis we have faced.

We cannot expect the NEC and NCC members to make decisions on cases without specific training and education on antisemitism, and its forms – the tropes, the coded language, and the changing manifestations of the threat.

We should review and improve the trainings that are currently offered, and require anyone and everyone with responsibility for handling and making judgements on cases where there are accusations of antisemitism to have undergone that training.

It is unfair to expect very junior staff to make decisions about antisemitism without the knowledge or protection they need. No longer can we set ourselves up to fail.

### 4) FULL TRANSPARENCY

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We will not re-establish trust without being open and accountable for what happens under our watch.

A start has recently been made on this but there must be full transparency from the NEC, NCC, disputes panels and everybody that touches this issue, including the publication of figures on cases and the actions taken. This will cover the basics such as the number of complaints received, rejected or moved on to the next stage, and the time it has taken to reach that stage.

I will ensure this information is published regularly, shared with MPs, local parties, the Jewish Labour Movement, and the media. If we are confident that we are handling these matters properly then we should have nothing to hide.

Under my leadership, every CLP and federal body of the Labour Party will be proactively encouraged to engage with training, facilitated by JLM, into antisemitism, what constitutes it and how it manifests.

Training and education is not, however, an alternative to discipline. We need a rich education process that empowers our message with the politics of an anti-racist movement.

Our training process must ensure that our members have the tools to discuss the Israel-Palestine conflict constructively, without resorting to tropes, and giving members the ability to confront those who seek to weaponise these issues to further an antisemitic agenda.

## 5) EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR MEMBERS

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## 6) A CULTURE CHANGE

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As Leader, I will work to create a welcoming culture for people who share our values, and a zero-tolerance environment for those who hold antisemitic views, or deny the experience of the victims of antisemitism.

This requires action from all of us. In particular, Labour MPs should not share platforms with people suspended or expelled for antisemitism and Jewish members have been denied the opportunity to define the very prejudice they face. That must never happen again.

## 7) CELEBRATING OUR PAST

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The Labour Party has a long and proud history of solidarity with the British Jewish community.

The Jewish Labour Movement helped found the Labour Party, and as one of our oldest socialist societies has always been at the heart of our family. We share not only history but our most deeply held values.

It is what makes the erosion of trust all the more painful, and deepens my resolve to rebuild it within and beyond the Labour family to restore our reputation and re-establish our credentials.

Under my leadership, the Labour Party will celebrate our shared struggles and traditions, and learn from failures and mistakes. It is the key to maintaining a healthy relationship, one built on solidarity that celebrates our proud legacy of standing up against antisemitism, acknowledging when we have got it wrong – never forgetting those who have come before us, their struggles, or what they teach us.

It is a history that is personal to me, and one we will not only cherish but, in the face of rising antisemitism, one that under my leadership we will take actions to advance.

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