

IHRA DEFINITION OF ANTISEMITISM

Council	27 February 2020
Report Author	Director of Corporate Governance
Cabinet Member	Leader of the Council
Status	For Decision
Classification:	Unrestricted
Ward:	All

Executive Summary:

The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government has written to the Leader to strongly urge the council to formally adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism and to use it on all appropriate occasions.

The definition is not legally binding, but it is an invaluable tool for public bodies to understand how antisemitism manifests itself in the 21st century. It demonstrates a commitment to engaging with the experiences of Jewish communities and supporting them against the contemporary challenges they face.

Recommendation(s):

- (1) This Council welcomes the cross-party support within the Council for combating antisemitism in all its manifestations. This Council hereby adopts the following definition of antisemitism as set out by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and pledges to combat this pernicious form of racism.

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

- (2) In addition the council agrees to the inclusion of the IHRA definition and working examples within the council’s constitution and codes of conduct for members and officers.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money	There are none.
Legal	The definition, although legally non-binding, is an important tool for public bodies to understand how antisemitism manifests itself in the 21st century, as it gives examples of the kind of behaviours which depending

	<p>on the circumstances could constitute anti-Semitism. The full text of the definition can be found at: https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/sites/default/files/press_release_document_antisemitism.pdf</p>								
Corporate	<p>The Government has adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism, as they recognise this is one of the strongest signals we can give our Jewish communities. It demonstrates that we hear and understand their concerns and are ready and willing to act in response.</p> <p>The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government has written to the Leader to strongly urge the council to formally adopt the IHRA definition and to use it on all appropriate occasions.</p>								
Equality Act 2010 & Public Sector Equality Duty	<p>Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to the aims of the Duty at the time the decision is taken. The aims of the Duty are: (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, and (iii) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.</p> <p>Protected characteristics: age, sex, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief and pregnancy & maternity. Only aim (i) of the Duty applies to Marriage & civil partnership.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td colspan="2">Please indicate which aim is relevant to the report.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act,</td> <td style="text-align: center;">X</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it</td> <td style="text-align: center;">X</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.</td> <td style="text-align: center;">X</td> </tr> </table> <p>The definition is not legally binding, but it is an invaluable tool for public bodies to understand how antisemitism manifests itself in the 21st century. It demonstrates a commitment to engaging with the experiences of Jewish communities and supporting them against the contemporary challenges they face.</p>	Please indicate which aim is relevant to the report.		Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act,	X	Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it	X	Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.	X
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Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act,	X								
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CORPORATE PRIORITIES (tick those relevant) ✓	
Growth	
Environment	
Communities	✓

1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance brings together governments and experts to strengthen, advance and promote Holocaust education, research and remembrance.
- 1.2. The IHRA supports policymakers and educational institutions and briefs government officials and NGOs active in global initiatives for genocide prevention.
- 1.4. The United Kingdom has been a member of the IHRA since it was founded in 1998. The delegation consists of representatives from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, academia, voluntary sector including the London Jewish Cultural Centre.
- 1.5. On 26 May 2016 in Bucharest, the Plenary of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) adopted a non-legally binding working definition of antisemitism:

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

- 1.6. The IHRA has published examples to guide organisations on the implementation of the definition, these are set out in section 2 and are considered to be essential supporting elements of working definition.

2.0 IHRA Examples to Guide Organisations

- 2.1 The IHRA has published examples to guide organisations on the implementation of the definition. the Alliance has pointed to the following examples which may serve as illustrations. Manifestations might include the targeting of the State of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic. Anti Semitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and is often used to blame Jews for ‘why things go wrong’. It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

- 2.2 The guidelines highlight manifestations of antisemitism as including:

- Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.
- Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by nonJews.
- Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).

- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.
- Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.
- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour.
- Applying double standards by requiring of it behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterise Israel or Israelis.
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

Contact Officer:	Tim Howes, Director of Corporate Governance
Reporting to:	Madeline Homer, Chief Executive

Background Papers

Title	Details of where to access copy
None	N/A

Corporate Consultation

Finance	Chris Blundell, Head of Financial Services
Legal	Estelle Culligan, Head of Legal and Democratic Services