



THE

JEWISH

MANIFESTO

THE BOARD
OF DEPUTIES OF BRITISH JEWS
PROUD TO REPRESENT THE COMMUNITY



The Board of Deputies of British Jews is the democratic and representative body for the UK's Jewish community. We are the first port of call for Government, the media and others seeking to understand the Jewish community's interests and concerns.

The Board of Deputies acts as the Secretariat to the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on British Jews. The APPG aims to broaden and deepen connections between Parliament and the UK's Jewish community.

Charitable activities with which the Board of Deputies is identified are funded by The Board of Deputies Charitable Foundation (Registered Charity No. 1058107), a company limited by guarantee and registered in England (No. 3239086).

Copyright © 2017 The Board of Deputies of British Jews

Printed in the United Kingdom

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
THE TEN COMMITMENTS	4
GLOBAL JEWISH ISSUES	6
ANTISEMITISM, RACISM AND EXTREMISM	7
COMMUNITY RELATIONS	10
RELIGIOUS FREEDOM	11
HOLOCAUST ISSUES	15
ISRAEL AND THE MIDDLE EAST	18
JEWISH LIFE CYCLE	22
EDUCATION	23
YOUTH AND CAMPUS	26
WOMEN	28
WELFARE	29
HOUSING	29
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	30
JEWISH VALUES AND CULTURE	36
SOCIAL ACTION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE	37
CULTURE AND HERITAGE	40



INTRODUCTION

THIS MANIFESTO IS AIMED AT INFORMING UK POLICYMAKERS ABOUT JEWISH INTERESTS AND CONCERNS.

The Board of Deputies hopes that the Manifesto will empower our political representatives to understand and champion these causes.

In each section, the Manifesto outlines 'Policy Asks' on which the Board of Deputies would like support from the Government and parliamentarians. As a summary, we have also highlighted 'Ten Commitments' that capture the essence of the community's needs.

The 2011 Census put the UK Jewish population at 269,568. This is comprised of large clusters of Jews in some of the UK's major cities, as well as smaller communities across the country. The UK Jewish community is very diverse in terms of religious and cultural affiliation, as well as in socio-economic terms.

The Board of Deputies of British Jews prides itself on its representative and democratic structures, which have in turn contributed to the formulation of this Manifesto. While there is no single 'Jewish view', the Board of Deputies has sought to represent as much of a consensus as possible with this document.

Through a community-wide consultation, which involved the participation of over 300 stakeholder organisations and individuals, the Board of Deputies has been able to capture the diverse range of issues which affect the UK Jewish community across its religious, cultural and socio-economic diversity.

We hope that you find it useful and informative, and we look forward to working with you to implement these policies.

THE TEN COMMITMENTS

PLEASE SHARE YOUR SUPPORT FOR
THESE TEN COMMITMENTS ON SOCIAL
MEDIA WITH THE HASHTAG
#TENCOMMITMENTS
@BOARDOFDEPUTIES

THE BOARD OF DEPUTIES OF BRITISH
JEWS ACTS AS THE SECRETARIAT FOR
THE ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY
GROUP ON BRITISH JEWS

PARLIAMENTARIANS SEEKING UPDATES
OR INFORMATION ON THE THEMES
LISTED IN THE MANIFESTO SHOULD
JOIN THE APPG ON BRITISH JEWS, THE
APPG AGAINST ANTISEMITISM, AND THE
ALL PARTY BRITAIN-ISRAEL
PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

WE WOULD ASK POLICYMAKERS TO:

1

Oppose extremism and hate crime, including antisemitism, anti-Muslim hatred and other forms of hate.

2

Promote good relations, understanding and cooperation between all of the UK's communities.

3

Defend the right to a Jewish way of life, including kosher meat, religious clothing, circumcision, and flexible working to accommodate Shabbat and Holy Day observance.

4

Support efforts to remember and understand the Holocaust and strive to prevent any future genocide.

5

Advocate for a permanent and comprehensive solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, resulting in a secure Israel alongside a viable Palestinian state.

6

Promote peace projects that unite communities and resist boycotts that divide communities.

7

Affirm the importance of faith schools within the education system.

8

Support the provision of religiously and culturally sensitive youth and social care services.

9

Promote a more just and sustainable future in the UK and abroad, supporting efforts to tackle poverty, climate change and human rights abuses.

10

Celebrate and support Jewish heritage and cultural institutions.

GLOBAL

JEWISH

ISSUES



ANTISEMITISM, RACISM AND EXTREMISM

ANTISEMITISM AND RACISM IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Antisemitism remains a fundamental challenge facing the British Jewish community. There is widespread concern at the proliferation of antisemitic discourse in UK public politics, where politicians and activists of all affiliations find it acceptable to use antisemitic tropes and stereotypes in their language and actions.

The Community Security Trust (CST) works closely with the police to monitor antisemitism and protect Jewish communities against it. The CST's 2016 Antisemitic Incidents Report recorded 1309 antisemitic incidents, the highest figure since records began in 1984. Ordinarily, there are spikes during periods of tensions in the Middle East, exemplified during outbreaks of violence in Israel and the Palestinian Territories in 2009, 2012, and 2014. July 2014, for example, was the worst month for antisemitism on record with almost as many incidents as in the previous six months combined. Yet, despite a relative détente in the Middle East, antisemitic incidents remain at a constant high, due partly to antisemitism infusing the language of public figures, infecting all political parties and movements.

In December 2016, the Government adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism, followed by the main opposition parties and the Scottish Government. The police use a previous iteration of the definition and several devolved and local authorities, including the London Assembly and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, have formally adopted it in recent months. The definition helps to explain some of the characteristics that may be present in antisemitic discourse and allows for a clearer understanding of what constitutes modern antisemitism, including showing the difference between legitimate forms of criticism of Israeli Government policy and hateful comments. We urge all parties to adopt the definition to ensure that antisemitic discourse is eradicated from public political life.

Actions which may or may not be antisemitic – depending on the exact circumstances – but which create a sense of fear and apprehension amongst Jews can include: the waving of flags of terrorist organisations like Hamas and Hezbollah at demonstrations; protests against events with Israeli or Jewish speakers; targeted boycotts of, or vandalism against, Israeli or Kosher products; and delegitimisation of the only Jewish state, Israel.

A robust political and policing response is required when criticism of the policies of a government spills over into hatred, intimidation or violence against a religious or ethnic group. With the growth of social media, antisemitism is finding new forms of expression which must be monitored and countered. We would therefore welcome additional political and material support to prevent and prosecute antisemitism and other forms of racism in these new media. We call on politicians of all stripes to lead by example and be responsible in their language, and to call out others when they are not.

Racism directed at any group – whether online, on public transport, or on the street - is a scourge on our society. The Board of Deputies commends the work of Tell MAMA, a charity that monitors and advocates against anti-Muslim hate crime and endorses the ongoing cooperation between the Jewish community's Community Security Trust (CST) and Tell MAMA, as a prime example of the kind of partnership that is needed to tackle hate crime in all its forms, in particular anti-Muslim hatred. Furthermore, the Board of Deputies is working with Rene Cassin to raise awareness of the racism and other challenges faced by the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in Britain. We will continue to speak up against all forms of racism in our society and call on politicians to do the same.

POLICY ASK: Publicly support all efforts to combat antisemitism and racism.

POLICY ASK: Support the adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism.

POLICY ASK: Support the continuation of the important work of the Cross-Government Working Group on Antisemitism.

POLICY ASK: Be particularly aware of the risk of increased antisemitism at times of heightened conflict in the Middle East.

POLICY ASK: Take action on hate and extremism as expressed on social media.

POLICY ASK: Ensure that assistance is provided to third-party reporting bodies and security agencies, such as the CST, which monitor and protect vulnerable groups, including the Jewish community.

EXTREMISM

THE THREAT

The Jewish community has long been on the receiving end of extremist rhetoric and violence, whether from the far right, the far left, or Islamist sources.

Jewish communities across the world have been a focal point for terrorist attacks by supporters of the so-called 'Islamic State', Al Qaeda, and other terrorist groups whether in Paris, Brussels, Copenhagen or Kansas. Islamist extremism poses a threat to much of European society, with the threat of jihadi-style terrorism a concern in many countries, especially in Western Europe. For this reason, synagogues and schools observe rigorous security, and require additional support and vigilance.

In the meantime, supporters of designated terrorist organisations Hezbollah and Hamas remain a threat. Hezbollah operatives have been accused of launching attacks against Jews in Bulgaria and

“

**COMMITMENT 1:
OPPOSE EXTREMISM
AND HATE CRIME,
INCLUDING
ANTISEMITISM,
ANTI-MUSLIM HATRED
AND OTHER FORMS
OF HATE.**

”

Argentina. It is particularly alarming for the Jewish community to see the flags of these movements flown at demonstrations in the UK.

The Jewish community remains concerned about messages about Jews being broadcast through the television, the internet and written materials, spreading hatred, conspiracy theories and sometimes incitement to violence. Sometimes this relates to support for terrorism against Israel, which is clearly also unacceptable. We are particularly concerned that young people, especially in the Muslim community, are receiving hateful stereotypes about Jews.

However, Islamists are not the only source of hatred against Jews. The far right's disdain for a diverse society is often targeted against Jews. Some elements of the far right, Islamists and the far left – the latter often on the basis of extreme hostility to Israel – are prone to supporting violent antisemitic movements; revising, denying or celebrating the Holocaust; spreading anti-Jewish conspiracy theories and/or making derogatory comments about Jewish character traits or appearance. This hatred provides fertile ground for extremism, and even violence.

Social media is increasingly the prime medium for extremism and hatred to spread. Social media companies need to do much more to self-police content shared on their platforms rather than simply relying on users to report it.

POLICY ASK: Continue and enhance efforts to monitor and effectively counter extremism in all its forms.

POLICY ASK: Provide resources which protect the physical security of Jewish religious and cultural sites. This includes the Home Office's annual grant to the CST to support security provision for Jewish communal infrastructure.

POLICY ASK: Monitor and challenge extremism in the media, on social media and in other settings.

POLICY ASK: Proscribe Hamas and Hezbollah in their entirety, and ban displays of support for them, such as flag-flying at demonstrations.

EXTREMISM AND SOCIAL CONSERVATISM

As the UK and other countries grapple with the challenge of extremism, there is sometimes a question about where to draw the line on what constitutes extremism. We have been concerned that sometimes views and lifestyles which are socially conservative, but which carry no risk of violence, are drawn into wider definitions.

Society should not tolerate the undermining of democracy, nor hatred, violence or abuse against women, the LGBT community or any individual, minority or group. These behaviours should be robustly challenged and met with the full force of the law where appropriate.

However, there must be a balance where socially conservative views or behaviours do not lead to hatred, violence or abuse, or the subversion of our democratic values. Drawing a definition of extremism too widely can serve to alienate communities who could otherwise be key allies in tackling extremism.

POLICY ASK: Take care not to conflate social conservatism with extremism.

SECURITY FOR JEWISH SCHOOLS

In 2010, it was announced that the Government would provide financial assistance for the payment of security guards at all Jewish Voluntary Aided faith schools in England. This helps guard against the threat of terrorism to Jewish schools. The announcement lifted a significant pre-existing financial burden from Jewish parents, and demonstrated a strong practical commitment by Government for the well-being of British Jews. Jewish parents should not be financially disadvantaged due to threats of terror attacks on their children's schools. Children and schools are the Jewish community's security priority.

This was brought into terrible focus in March 2012 when a Jihadist gunman attacked a primary school in France, killing a rabbi and three young children. In the aftermath of the Toulouse attack, British Jews were comforted by the knowledge that UK Jewish schools had security guards as part of long term security planning and infrastructure. This attack confirmed the need for stringent security measures, reminding the community that such attacks can occur at any time. We are pleased that the Government committed £13 million in 2016 to protect our schools, and we ask that this is maintained in the future.

POLICY ASK: Ensure the continuation of Government funding for security guards at Jewish voluntary-aided faith schools in England.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The Jewish community is committed to continual, positive, and authentic engagement with people of all faiths and none. Proactively promoting good relations between communities prevents tensions, racism and violence. Steps should be taken to educate people of different faith and belief backgrounds about each other, and proactive efforts and investment should be put into developing good interfaith relations in order to prevent tensions and promote cooperation. It is important that interfaith work is effective. It works mainly when engagement between groups is not superficial, nor overtly political, but focussed on bridging perceptual gaps between communities.

“

**COMMITMENT 2:
PROMOTE GOOD
RELATIONS,
UNDERSTANDING
AND COOPERATION
BETWEEN ALL OF THE
UK'S COMMUNITIES.**

”

While much of this work is driven from faith groups themselves at both local and national level, only Government has the resources to facilitate the strategic growth and direction of this work. The Jewish community – and the Board of Deputies in particular – prides itself on working with Government to enhance the interfaith encounter, producing joint research, projects and events. Organisations and projects like the Inter Faith Network for the UK and its regional and local affiliates, as well as national bodies like the 3FF, Mitzvah Day, the Council of Christians and Jews, the Christian Muslim Forum, the Christian Hindu Forum, the Joseph Interfaith Foundation, and Nisa-Nashim offer sustainable mechanisms and partners to deliver a more cohesive and integrated society. The Near Neighbours fund has been a welcome addition to these initiatives, creating positive encounters between faith communities at a local and national level.

POLICY ASK: Support initiatives which promote dialogue and understanding between different groups in society in order to prevent tensions and promote cooperation.

POLICY ASK: Outline a clear strategy to enhance community relations in the UK, supported by a clear, designated budget.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Under both Article 18 of The Universal Declaration for the Protection of Human Rights and Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), every person has the right “to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.” Religion and belief are ‘protected characteristics’ under the Equalities Act 2010.

A person’s religious observance may include performing ceremonial acts, specific customs, the displays of symbols, and the observance of the Sabbath (Shabbat) and Holy Days. Wherever there is not some compelling reason – such as infringing on the rights of others, or some demonstrable safety hazard – it is important that people of different faiths be allowed to manifest their beliefs. The accommodation of, and respect for difference is a fundamental British value.

RELIGIOUS CLOTHING

The wearing of religious clothing and symbols, in public and in private, is an important expression of religious observance, commitment and identity.

Examples for the Jewish community might include head-coverings, (including the kippah), tzitzit (fringes on garments), or jewellery (such as necklaces) which manifest religio-cultural imagery like the Star of David.

Many other faith communities have similar dress requirements. The right to freedom of religious expression was underscored by the January 2013 ruling of the European Court of Human Rights in *Eweida v the United Kingdom*. Ms Eweida was placed on unpaid leave by British Airways when she refused to remove or cover a crucifix-necklace marking her Christian faith. The Court ruled against the UK on the basis that its laws had not provided sufficient domestic law to protect the rights of Nadia Eweida.

POLICY ASK: Promote a culture of respect for diversity, including reasonable accommodation of individuals' rights to wear religious symbols.

FLEXIBLE WORKING AROUND SHABBAT AND HOLY DAYS

A key element of the Jewish faith is the observance of religious Holy Days and Shabbat. The Jewish calendar runs according to the lunar cycle, therefore Shabbat and Holy Days begin at sundown on the evening before the dates specified for them by most calendars. During Shabbat and Holy Days, observant Jews will refrain from work, and will not use money, electricity or transport.

Traditionally observant Jews will often seek to take a number of Holy Days as leave and may ask to leave work early on Fridays, particularly in the winter months when Shabbat can begin as early as 3.30pm on a Friday afternoon. Employers should seek to be as flexible as possible, making reasonable accommodation for these religious requirements. The same principles should apply to those who are legitimately claiming state benefits when their signing-on arrangements may coincide with Holy Days. The relevant agencies should understand that traditionally observant Jews are not generally available to work, or sign-on for benefits, on Shabbat or Holy Days.

In many professions, observant Jewish employees will come to an arrangement with their employer to make up the time that they wish to take off on a Friday afternoon during the rest of the week, and will take the Holy Days off as part of their annual leave. However, this is sometimes harder in the education sector, where holiday dates are much more prescriptive for both teachers and students. Schools and higher education bodies should be alive to the needs of teachers and students who require time off for religious observance, and seek to be as flexible as possible. The Board of Deputies will sometimes intervene where it feels a school or university is not making reasonable accommodation of requests for leave.

The Board of Deputies has produced The Employers Guide to Judaism, a pamphlet which outlines basic Jewish practice, and gives advice to employers on how to accommodate and support their Jewish employees

POLICY ASK: Establish better understanding and accommodation for employees, benefits' claimants, teachers and students of different faiths and beliefs who wish to take time off or make alternative arrangements to observe Holy Days, including Shabbat.

POLICY ASK: Endorse the Board of Deputies' Employers Guide to Judaism so that employers have greater awareness of issues Jews may face in the workplace.

CIRCUMCISION

Brit Milah is the Hebrew term used to describe neonatal male circumcision in accordance with Jewish law. It is regarded as a physical sign of male Jewish identity and is probably the most widely observed of all Jewish practices.

It is traditionally performed when a boy is eight days old, based upon the Biblical commandment (Gen. 17:10-14 and Lev. 12:3.). It is a minor procedure that has no negative impact on the child or on the rest of his life. It is against Jewish law to perform Brit Milah if the procedure could pose a danger to the child, and is always postponed if indicated on medical grounds.

By contrast, the Jewish faith strongly opposes Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), regarding it as humiliating and abusive to women, and an assault which is often performed under unsafe and unhygienic conditions, causing serious long-term damage. FGM and Brit Milah should not be conflated. In the UK, Brit Milah is performed by a highly-trained 'Mohel' (plural: Mohalim) who has undertaken both religious and practical instruction. The regulatory bodies for UK Mohalim are the Initiation Society (Orthodox communities) and the Association of Reform and Liberal Mohalim (Progressive communities). These organisations are responsible for training, audit and appraisal, and for ensuring that Brit Milah is carried out under the safest possible conditions. Milah UK provides information about the Jewish practice of circumcision.

Brit Milah forms a central part of the identity of a Jewish male. Article 8 and Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights are of particular relevance. Article 8 focuses on the protection of private and family life, and for a Jewish male, circumcision is a fundamental aspect of being part of the Jewish community. Article 9 provides a right to freedom of thought, conscience or religion: the right to perform Brit Milah according to Jewish tradition is a key part of this religious freedom that must be safeguarded.

POLICY ASK: Defend the right of Jews to practise circumcision according to their tradition.

“

COMMITMENT 3:
DEFEND THE RIGHT TO A JEWISH WAY OF LIFE, INCLUDING KOSHER MEAT, RELIGIOUS CLOTHING, CIRCUMCISION, AND FLEXIBLE WORKING TO ACCOMMODATE SHABBAT AND HOLY DAY OBSERVANCE.

”

KOSHER MEAT

Shechita is the Jewish religious method of slaughtering animals for food. As traditionally observant Jews can only eat meat slaughtered by the Shechita method, the practice is a key aspect of Jewish daily life. Shechita is a process that is based on Biblical commandments given to the Jewish people, which forbid cruelty to animals. For example, Jewish law prohibits the killing of animals for sport.

Jewish law does permit the slaughter of animals for food, but makes this subject to stringent religious regulations. The premise of the religious laws is to ensure that the animal has a swift death with as little pain as possible. Any individual act of slaughter that does not meet the high standards demanded will render the animal non-Kosher, and prohibited to Jews. The Shechita method is conducted by a specifically trained professional known as a Shochet (plural: Shochetim) who is experienced and learned in laws of Shechita, pathology and animal anatomy. The trainee Shochet will serve an apprenticeship with an experienced Shochet before becoming fully qualified.

In the UK, a Shochet must hold two licences, one issued by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and the other by the Rabbinical Commission for the Licensing of Shochetim. This Rabbinical Commission is a statutory body established by Parliament and governed by Schedule 12 to The Welfare of Animals [Slaughter or Killing] Regulations 1995. To satisfy the Rabbinical Commission, Shochetim must reapply and undertake examinations on an annual basis.

There are occasionally moves in some European countries to limit or ban religious slaughter. The Jewish community seeks to work with Government, MPs and other relevant authorities to foster understanding about this key facet of Jewish life in the UK and across Europe. Shechita UK leads the Jewish communal response on this issue, offering information on this central Jewish practice.

The Jewish community has long labelled its food products to inform consumers that food is Kosher. But there has been alarm at recent moves by some groups to introduce pejorative labelling on Kosher and Halal meat. Rather than genuinely informing consumers, this campaign tends to stigmatise religious forms of slaughter over common practices in the wider meat industry that are prohibited to Jews. Equally, while the moment of slaughter is important, labelling could helpfully inform consumers about other aspects of animal welfare, including how it was fed, housed and transported. The Jewish community would support comprehensive labelling that would allow consumers to know more about the lives of animals from which their meat had been sourced, and labelling which would inform consumers as to whether their meat had been killed via the Shechita method, or methods prohibited to Jews like captive-bolt, shooting, gassing, electrocution, drowning, trapping or clubbing.

POLICY ASK: Defend the right of Jews to practice Shechita (religious slaughter of animals for food).

POLICY ASK: Oppose the stigmatisation of religious minorities through pejorative labelling, and support instead non-pejorative labelling that lists all methods of stunning and slaughter, offering real consumer choice.

HOLOCAUST ISSUES

HOLOCAUST COMMEMORATION AND EDUCATION

Since 2005, the United Kingdom has officially marked Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January every year. The Day does not just commemorate the Nazi Holocaust of the Jews, but also the genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, Darfur and others. Like other Holocaust-related activities, the aim is not just to remember the past, but to create a consciousness that will prevent any other genocides happening in the future.

With each passing year there are fewer Holocaust survivors able to tell their stories. Therefore, it is important for schools across Europe to teach students about the Holocaust. Bodies like the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, the Holocaust Educational Trust, the Wiener Library, Yad Vashem, the Anne Frank Trust, Yom HaShoah UK, the Centre for Holocaust Education, and the Beth Shalom Holocaust Centre all merit support.

We welcome the establishment of the Holocaust Memorial Foundation and the commitment to build a 'Memorial to the Holocaust' in Central London.

The Board of Deputies' response to the 2014 Holocaust Commission made recommendations, including the following:

- Strengthen and broaden existing Holocaust modules within the National Curriculum.
- Educate children to become activists for human rights and social justice, and against prejudice.
- Formally designate Holocaust Memorial Day as a recognised day in mainstream schools.
- Increase the number of Holocaust Educational Trust trips to concentration camps.
- Support/fund a central Forum for Holocaust Education and Commemoration to offer a joined-up approach.
- Provide all schoolchildren in the UK with a copy of Anne Frank's Diary.
- Promote initiatives to enable young people to shadow survivors of the Holocaust.

“

**COMMITMENT 4:
SUPPORT EFFORTS
TO REMEMBER AND
UNDERSTAND THE
HOLOCAUST AND
STRIVE TO PREVENT
ANY FUTURE
GENOCIDE.**

”

POLICY ASK: Implement the Board of Deputies' recommendations to the 2014 Holocaust Commission.

POLICY ASK: Support Holocaust education, research, remembrance, and commemoration and survivor testimony.

POLICY ASK: Show solidarity with all the victims of Nazi persecution, including Jews, Gypsies, gay and bisexual people, disabled people and political opponents of Nazism, as well as the victims of other genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

POLICY ASK: Include and expand Holocaust education in schools to prevent ignorance which can in some cases lead to revisionism or denial.

POLICY ASK: Encourage other countries to introduce and expand existing programmes of Holocaust education, particularly those with high levels of antisemitism.

RESTITUTION

During the Holocaust, the Nazis used state apparatus to confiscate Jewish property, including both private property, such as homes, businesses, art and jewellery, and communal infrastructure including synagogue buildings, hospitals, schools and graveyards. To this day, much has not been returned and the property remains in the hands of modern states. Sadly, many Holocaust survivors now live in dire poverty and therefore the return of their property could give them a better quality of life in their final years, and provide a legacy for their descendants.

In 2009, 47 countries (including all 28 EU-member states) came together to support the Terezin Declaration, to accelerate the restitution of private and communal property to Holocaust survivors and their heirs. The following year, 43 countries endorsed a set of guidelines and best practices for the return of, or compensation for, confiscated property. It has become clear, however, that many countries are not on track, and in some cases the situation has even decelerated.

While some countries, such as Serbia, have taken steps to implement solutions through the introduction of legislation, in Croatia and Latvia the relevant legislation has been delayed. In Romania, the processing of claims and payments has been extremely slow. Recent legislation risks further delays and reductions in compensation payments. In Hungary, discussions continue about restitution for heirless and hitherto unclaimed property formerly owned by Jews. Poland has one of the worst records on restitution of private property. It back-tracked on some of the commitments it made at the 2009 Terezin Conference, and was the only one of the 47 countries not to send a delegate to the 2012 Prague Conference. The great injustice about the delays in restitution payments mean that some of the Holocaust's victims will pass away without ever seeing their property returned.

POLICY ASK: Call for a just and speedy conclusion to the issue of restitution across Europe.

HOLOCAUST REVISIONISM

Holocaust denial and revisionism is widely abhorred, but it continues – particularly in the context of opposition to Israel. The current Iranian Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, previously sought to question the veracity or extent of the Holocaust. In Greece and Cyprus, neo-Nazi parties have entered parliaments. In 2013, Golden Dawn MP Ilias Kasidiaris denied that the Holocaust happened. Former Mayor of London Ken Livingston has repeatedly promulgated abhorrent distortions of history.

In Europe, the 2008 Prague Declaration caused alarm among many Jewish communities by conflating crimes under Soviet Communism with Nazi crimes. The concern is that some countries have attempted to deflect attention from the complicity of their wartime governments in the Holocaust, cynically attempting to avoid liability for compensation to Jewish victims. The crimes that Communist governments committed against their people should be explored and the perpetrators prosecuted, but it is important that countries acknowledge their role in the Holocaust and do not attempt to gloss over a very troubled period in their history.

At times, a related trope is that many leading Communists were Jews and so – it is claimed – the Jews as a whole are complicit in the crimes of Communism. The rationale continues that, as such, Jews in general do not deserve sympathy or compensation for their suffering in the Holocaust. This argument is unacceptable. The actions of some Jewish Communists do not make all Jews complicit. The 'Jewish people' does not hold property confiscated by the Communists, but various states do hold Jewish property confiscated by the Nazis and must fulfil their obligation to return it.

POLICY ASK: Refute and confront individuals and political movements who seek to minimise or downplay the Holocaust.

UNMARKED GRAVES

One of the most urgent initiatives underway at the moment is the search for the unmarked graves of Holocaust victims. Across Europe, the Nazis and their accomplices murdered more than 2.5 million of their victims in mass executions, burying many of them in mass graves, many of them unmarked. Finding these graves to give the victims an appropriate memorial is a 'race against time' to get the testimony of local, older people, who might have information about the sites and the murders before the generation that knows first-hand what has happened passes away entirely. Organizations such as Yahad-In Unum do tremendous work in locating these grave-sites.

POLICY ASK: Support initiatives to find unmarked graves, including providing funding and working with other national governments to overcome some of the bureaucratic and political obstacles to this work.

ISRAEL AND THE MIDDLE EAST

The UK Jewish community is committed to peace, security, prosperity and equality for Israel, the Palestinians and the wider Middle East. The UK Jewish community has a very strong attachment to the State of Israel. A 2010 survey by the Institute of Jewish Policy Research (JPR) showed that 95% of UK Jews have visited Israel and that 90% view Israel as the "ancestral homeland of the Jewish people".

The Middle East is a region beset by conflict, characterised in recent years by civil war, uprisings against autocratic regimes, Islamist insurgencies, sectarian violence and the persecution of Muslim, Christian and other minorities.

In the short-term, it is incumbent on countries like the UK to seek to end the wanton slaughter of civilians, and deliver humanitarian relief for suffering populations. In the longer-term, the UK should be a leading player in helping to build a better future for all the countries in the Middle East.

POLICY ASK: Promote peace, security, prosperity and equality for Israel and its neighbours.

PEACE

According to the above-mentioned JPR survey, the UK Jewish community overwhelmingly supports a two-state solution, with 78% favouring this as the just solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict.

The UK undoubtedly has a role in assisting the peace process. In addition to facilitating high level diplomatic meetings, the UK could offer a variety of incentives that encourage both sides to make strides towards peace, including financial investment packages in both Israel and the Palestinian Territories, and the promotion of trade between the two sides, building trust and links between them. In addition, the UK should promote dialogue and reconciliation at the grassroots through both political and financial support. Through its conflict resolution pool, the UK can invest in a number of positive projects that seek to bring together Israelis and Palestinians. This should be continued and enhanced.

Furthermore, the UK could support exchanges of students between the UK, Israel and the Palestinian Territories, to build bridges and to offer the UK as a 'safe space' where future leaders can develop constructive relationships. Such projects support a political climate that assists the peace talks and enable a sustainable agreement where cross-border partnerships can flourish.

In this spirit, we urge resistance of calls for boycotts of Israel. By their very nature, boycotts attribute blame to only one side of the conflict, and through this stigmatisation they perpetuate a one-sided narrative. This in turn prompts intransigence from both sides. Moreover, the UK should be seen as a place to unite and not further divide: boycotts have a chilling effect on Jewish communities' sense of well-being and are harmful to community cohesion.

“

**COMMITMENT 5:
ADVOCATE FOR A
PERMANENT AND
COMPREHENSIVE
SOLUTION TO THE
ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN
CONFLICT, RESULTING
IN A SECURE ISRAEL
ALONGSIDE A VIABLE
PALESTINIAN STATE.**

”

Alongside the other issues that need to be resolved as part of a comprehensive agreement, one issue that does not get enough attention is that of the Jewish refugees from Arab countries. In the decades following the establishment of the State of Israel – and as a direct result of the conflict – over 800,000 Jews were displaced or forced to flee from lands they had inhabited for thousands of years, many without their possessions. Recently, the Canadian Parliament followed the United States’ House of Representatives in recognising their rights as refugees under international law.

POLICY ASK: Advocate for a permanent, comprehensive solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, resulting in a secure Israel alongside a viable Palestinian state.

POLICY ASK: Promote peace projects that unite communities, and resist boycotts that divide communities

SECURITY

Israel is of great strategic importance to the UK. As an ally, Israel offers stability in a region characterised by growing political uncertainty. With mounting extremist insurgency and the emergence of so-called Islamic State and other jihadist groups, Israeli military and intelligence cooperation with western states and regional partners is of great mutual benefit.

POLICY ASK: Promote awareness of the acute threats to Israeli and international security, and encourage further security cooperation between the UK and Israel.

IRAN

Following the deal reached with Iran on its nuclear programme, the world must watch very carefully to ensure that there is no backsliding towards an Iranian military nuclear capability. Years of obfuscation from the Iranian authorities should not be naively forgotten. It is also vital that Iran knows that there is a credible military option to end its pursuit of nuclear weapons if the deal should fail.

Secondly, it remains crucial that positive steps on the nuclear issue do not distract from other pressing topics. Iran continues to arm, fund and empower state and non-state actors, such as Syria and Hezbollah, to commit acts of violence against civilians. The UK and other world powers should take decisive steps to prevent Iran’s financing of global terrorism. Finally, we note that there is evidence that the human rights situation in Iran itself has deteriorated significantly since Hassan Rouhani was elected President.

The human rights situation in Iran continues to be a matter of serious concern. It has one of the most prolific rates of execution in the World. According to Amnesty International, Iran officially executed 694 people in 2015, an unprecedented spike. In addition, Bahá’ís have been reporting

increasing levels of persecution over recent years, while Christian, LGBT people and other minorities continue to suffer oppression and worse.

POLICY ASK: Prevent the weaponisation of Iran’s nuclear programme; counter Iran’s financing of international terror; and urge improvement to its human rights record.

HEZBOLLAH

The UK led the proscription of Iranian-backed Hezbollah’s military wing as a terrorist organisation in July 2013. This was an important step in restricting the fundraising scope of the organisation. Hezbollah has launched attacks against European and Jewish civilians worldwide and is an organisation that is of deep concern to the Jewish community. In 1994, Hezbollah attacked a Jewish centre in Buenos Aires, killing 85 people. The organisation has launched multiple attacks against Israeli civilians and has expanded its activities to European soil, killing six civilians in a bus bombing in Bulgaria in 2012. There is a growing concern that Hezbollah is using European dual-nationals to plot attacks against Jews and Israelis in Europe. This was evident in 2013 where a dual Swedish-Lebanese national, Hossam Taleb Yaacoub, was convicted in a European Court for looking for Israelis and Jews to attack in Cyprus. During the court case he stated “I was only collecting information on the Jews. That’s what the organisation [Hezbollah] does everywhere.”

The next step is for the UK to adopt a full proscription of the organisation, including its political wing. Senior figures within Hezbollah, including its Deputy Secretary General Naim Qassem, have openly admitted that there is no distinction between the military and political wing, stating “Hezbollah has a single leadership.” The political wing operates to assist the violent nature of Hezbollah, and further actions in disrupting this organisation’s ability to carry out terrorist activities are needed. Currently, allies such as the USA and Canada have fully proscribed Hezbollah, and we believe the UK should take the same, necessary steps.

POLICY ASK: Designate the entirety of Hezbollah as a terrorist organisation, thereby damaging its abilities to launch attacks in Europe, the Middle East and around the world.

POLICY ASK: Ensure that Hezbollah is unable to operate on British soil and that firm action is taken against public expressions of support, including the brandishing of flags.

HAMAS AND PALESTINIAN TERRORISM

The UK classifies Hamas as a terrorist organisation. Hamas is responsible for suicide bombings against civilian targets and the indiscriminate shelling of Israeli civilian populations, often while using Palestinian civilians as human shields. Hamas should not be given the legitimacy of engagement with Government or parliamentarians until it accepts the Quartet’s three conditions, namely recognising Israel; abiding by previous diplomatic agreements; and desisting from terrorist attacks.

POLICY ASK: Refuse to engage with Hamas politicians, officials or supporters until the movement agrees to recognise Israel, abide by previous diplomatic agreements, and desists from terrorist attacks.

PROSPERITY

Israel is a key trading partner for the UK. The total amount of bilateral trade between the UK and Israel was estimated at £3.9 billion in 2015, and it continues to grow. Israel has positioned

itself as a leader in technological advancements, placing a particular emphasis on the hi-tech industry and medical research. The UK-Israel Tech Hub is a great example of cooperation helping to promote economic growth in both countries by partnering British companies with the best of Israeli innovation. Israel also has a vibrant cultural and creative sector, with theatre groups, artists and musicians regularly coming to the UK and vice versa. As with all cultural exchanges, both societies gain from the interaction. Further cooperation in these fields and a greater trade network between the UK and Israel will be of great benefit to both societies.

POLICY ASK: Support, nurture and promote the growing trade and cultural links between Israel and the UK.

EQUALITY

Israel is a diverse and pluralistic society that seeks to guarantee equality to all its citizens. Exceptionally for the Middle East, Israel is a democratic state where there is freedom of religious practice and where women's rights, trades' union rights and LGBT rights are respected. However, like many advanced countries, there are challenges about integration between different sectors of the population that need to be addressed.

One particular example is Israel's Arab minority, which makes up around 20% of the country's population. According to a report published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in January 2010, 50% of the Arab population lives in poverty compared to 20% of Israelis overall, with widening socio-economic gaps. The complex issue of securing a successful resolution to the challenges facing the Bedouin requires particular and sensitive attention. The 2003 Or Commission report into inter-ethnic tensions emphasised the urgent need to take both immediate and long-term corrective measures to tackle socio-economic gaps and improve the situation of Arab citizens of Israel. It described these as the "most sensitive and important domestic issue facing Israel today." The report led to the establishment of a special authority for the economic development of the minority sectors in the Prime Minister's Office in 2007; and an investment of over NIS 3 billion by the Israeli Government in various initiatives to advance equal opportunities for Arab citizens of Israel to date.

The UK Jewish community is cognisant of these challenges, and has for some years supported a number of initiatives that promote equality between Israel's Jewish and Arab citizens, including through philanthropy and education. We would call on our parliamentary friends to support us in this work in constructive ways and the Board of Deputies would be happy to advise on effective charities to support in this sector.

POLICY ASK: Be constructive partners in the pursuit of greater integration and equality in Israel, including offering financial and political support to initiatives aimed at Arab-Jewish coexistence, and supporting projects that empower and advance the position of Arab citizens within Israeli society.

“

**COMMITMENT 6:
PROMOTE PEACE
PROJECTS THAT UNITE
COMMUNITIES AND
RESIST BOYCOTTS
THAT DIVIDE
COMMUNITIES.**

”



JEWISH

LIFE

CYCLE

“

**COMMITMENT 7:
AFFIRM THE
IMPORTANCE OF
FAITH SCHOOLS
WITHIN THE
EDUCATION
SYSTEM.**

”

EDUCATION

FAITH SCHOOLS

The popularity of faith schools with parents reflects their academic results, their ethos, their behavioural standards, and the contribution that their pupils go on to make in wider society. Currently, one in every three schools in Britain is a faith school, and around two thirds of Jewish children in the UK attend Jewish schools. While some faith schools operate in the private sector, there is a significant benefit to the relationship between public authorities and those faith schools that are part of the state sector. Many of them are models of best practice. As such, faith schools should remain an integral part of the state-sector offer.

POLICY ASK: Champion the success of faith schools within the state sector.

The success of faith schools is partly due to the sense of shared values and a shared purpose. Quotas or other interventions in schools' admissions criteria risk losing this benefit. Successful schools should be allowed to succeed as models for other schools.

POLICY ASK: Support the right of schools to continue to set their own admissions' criteria.

Successful faith schools teach to the national curriculum which includes a core focus on British Values and actively promoting community cohesion. Many Jewish schools create formal linking programmes with other faith and non-faith schools. This activity should be better supported and funded to ensure that good faith schools enhance good community relations, so that children continue to be familiar with others who have different backgrounds to their own.

POLICY ASK: Support formal linking programmes between schools of different faith and belief backgrounds.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Schools that make particular provision for children with Special Educational Needs should continue to enjoy sufficient Government funding, without an undue bureaucratic burden. Severe cuts in this field could leave the most vulnerable pupils in school without the support that they need to progress.

POLICY ASK: Provide adequate financial resources for pupils with Special Educational Needs, without an undue bureaucratic burden.

Where parents want to access a specialist Jewish school, but do not have one in their own local authority, their local authority should support the child in going to a school under a different authority which can provide adequately for their needs. Moving a child out of their local authority can cause significant issues for families as local authorities are sometimes reluctant to provide financial support however, in practice, there is little difference from sending children to other specialist schools.

POLICY ASK: Support the needs of local children and families to attend specialist Jewish schools, should they so wish.

MODERN AND BIBLICAL HEBREW AS FOREIGN LANGUAGES

For the Jewish community, Modern Hebrew (Ivrit) and Biblical Hebrew are heritage languages. The community, particularly through the Partnership for Jewish Schools, has invested much time and money into creating resources for the high quality teaching of Hebrew. Hebrew has a wider value. Biblical Hebrew was one of the first languages taught at British universities as a gateway to the Hebrew Bible in its original language. Meanwhile, Modern Hebrew is the language of one of the UK's most important trading partners in the Middle East.

The Jewish community welcomes the inclusion of Modern Hebrew in the list of modern foreign languages to be taught in primary schools. We also welcome the Government's support for the retention of Modern and Biblical Hebrew at GCSE and A level.

POLICY ASK: Support the continued provision of Modern and Biblical Hebrew, both at primary school and as an option at GCSE and A-Level.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS AND SPECIFICATIONS

The Jewish community and its schools are grateful to the Examination Boards for trying to avoid scheduling exams on Jewish Holy Days. The Examination Boards have also provided a good framework for making alternative arrangements when exams are on Holy Days. The Department for Education supports this through various policies and procedures.

This sensitivity to cultural and religious diversity is welcome, but must also extend to the content of examination questions. There have been incidents in which questions/specifications make default assumptions which have been problematic – for example a recent examination question assumed knowledge of the X Factor. This kind of question ignores the fact that not all children have televisions in their home, that not all children are allowed to watch all programmes, and that orthodox Jewish children do not watch television on Shabbat. We note that this is not an issue unique to Judaism but also applies to other cultural and religious groups.

POLICY ASK: Work with the Jewish community and Examination Boards to ensure that examinations are devised with appropriate religious and cultural sensitivity.

POLICY ASK: Encourage examination bodies to take a flexible approach when religious observance prevents candidates from taking exams on particular dates.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious Education (RE) develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of the principal religions, values and cultures. The Jewish community believes that the teaching of RE helps foster greater understanding and sensitivity between communities where there is considerable diversity and difference. RE can ultimately help to combat misunderstanding, discrimination and prejudice, including antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred.

By incorporating RE fully into the school syllabus, schools will be better placed to satisfy Ofsted's requirement to address students' in spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and to promote community cohesion.

The Jewish community is, therefore, very concerned by the erosion of the status of RE. It is not being listed as a core subject in the new English Baccalaureate, consequently resulting in a reduction of teacher training places, and placing the future recruitment of high quality teachers into doubt.

POLICY ASK: Pledge support for the continued teaching and existence of RE as a priority subject, including the allocation of appropriate resources, and the continuation of bursaries for RE teachers.

POLICY ASK: Train Ofsted inspectors to have sensitivity to the 'designated character' of each Jewish faith school.

YOUTH AND CAMPUS

FAITH AND CULTURALLY SENSITIVE YOUTH PROVISION

The Jewish community's provision for young people is highly developed and reaches at least 20,000 young people annually. This includes twelve youth groups, both denominational and cross-communal, which receive vital financial and strategic support from Jewish organisations such as the United Jewish Israel Appeal. There is also a large network of youth groups operating within the strictly Orthodox community.

These organisations are fundamental to our community's investment in young people by helping them to develop skills, confidence and leadership for the future. Over 2,000 Jewish young people sign up for national volunteering awards each year – a number that continues to grow. However, 65% of these young people say they struggle to find suitable volunteering placements, especially for the Duke of Edinburgh Awards, owing to the lack of options permitting participants to observe Jewish dietary laws, Shabbat, or Holy Days. This highlights the need to review such schemes to ensure they can embrace the diverse cultures within today's society.

The Jewish community welcomes the moves by the previous and current government to empower more young people to participate in social action, for example through its support for programmes such as the #iwill campaign and the National Citizens Service. We are proud that Jewish organisations such as the Jewish Lads' and Girls' Brigade and Mitzvah Day 365 have engaged with these programmes. Similarly, the Interlink Foundation leads a consortium of eight youth organisations to deliver youth activities commissioned by public and voluntary sector institutions for young people in the strictly Orthodox community. These activities ensure that religiously observant young people have access to high quality opportunities for personal development.

The need for religious and culturally-sensitive services is especially acute for vulnerable young people including those facing domestic abuse, drug and gambling addiction, debt and unplanned pregnancy. While these problems are common across society, interventions in the Jewish context may require sensitivity to the religious and cultural context of the young people concerned. Charities like Norwood, the Boys Clubhouse, and Noa have expertise in working with vulnerable young people while sensitive to their religious and cultural needs. Such religious and cultural sensitivity is particularly important for foster care. Foster agencies should seek to place Jewish children with families that can understand, respect and accommodate their individual levels of religious observance.

POLICY ASK: Support access to religious and culturally-sensitive services where appropriate, especially for vulnerable young people.

POLICY ASK: Offer financial assistance to faith charities whose interventions reach individuals which public bodies and secular charities cannot.

POLICY ASK: Maintain support for youth social action programmes including the #iwill campaign and the National Citizens Service.

POLICY ASK: Advocate for good quality youth provision for all in society.

HIGHER EDUCATION

There are 8,500 Jewish students studying at institutions across the UK and, as with the general Jewish population at large, they are hugely diverse and represent all aspects of Jewish life. The Union of Jewish Students (UJS) is the cross-communal, peer-led, and democratic body which represents them, providing support to over 60 Jewish Societies across the country. University Jewish Chaplaincy provides religious and pastoral care to Jewish students, and there are a plethora of organisations and movements which provide stimulating and exciting programmes to enhance the Jewish experience at university.

UK universities and colleges are, in the main, welcoming and inspiring places for Jewish students to attend. However, there are a number of issues which are of concern to the Jewish student community. There are sometimes antisemitic incidents, often, but not exclusively, related to anti-Zionist activism.

The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement has gained particular traction on university campuses, and it can create a divisive and uncomfortable atmosphere for Jewish students, many of whom have family in Israel and whose Jewish identity is intrinsically linked with Zionism. The language used in these political debates often spills into antisemitism.

The tactics used by BDS activists are often aggressive and intimidating. While UK law rightly protects the right to peaceful protest, this does not grant a license to infringe the right to free speech. There have been regular incidences of student events being targeted by protesters, therefore meaning that they were unable to go ahead or were severely restricted. These protests occur often simply because the speaker is an Israeli national, whatever their political views.

Hate speakers, however, operate outside the right to free speech due to the offence of incitement to hatred. They provide a particular challenge for Jewish students due to their antisemitic views. Speakers such as Azzam Tamimi, Aaidh al-Qarni, Haitham al-Haddad and Abdullah Hakim Quick have spoken at university campuses, despite having previously articulated views which are considered to be antisemitic and homophobic. We recognise and appreciate the work of the Home Office in refusing entry to some known hate speakers in the past. From time to time, UK citizens are implicated in preaching hatred on university campuses and at community venues. Under The Education (No.2) Act 1986, Section 43, British universities have a duty to ensure freedom of speech on campus within the law for its members and visitors. This means that there is no duty to allow known hate speakers onto campus in the name of academic freedom or free speech. Government must ensure that higher education institutions do not allow hate speakers a public platform.

The Board of Deputies, together with University Jewish Chaplaincy and UJS, seeks to help students in higher education navigate issues around the times Shabbat and Jewish Holy Days coincide with exams and classes. This is often mitigated by the sensitivity of examination boards, schools and universities which create procedures to accommodate various religious and cultural needs.

POLICY ASK: Be aware of the unique challenges faced by Jewish students, including antisemitism, the BDS campaign and Holy Days clashing with exams and class time.

POLICY ASK: Support community cohesion by ensuring that universities do not give hate speakers a public platform.

WOMEN

The Jewish community is focused on ensuring that the needs of women within our community and wider society are examined and supported. Organisations such as the League of Jewish Women, the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance and United Synagogue Women all support and further women’s advancement and safety, both in the Jewish community and wider society.

All-male panels are one example of where gender imbalance in leadership is demonstrated. In the Jewish community, the Board of Deputies’ Women in Jewish Leadership project has led the opposition to this challenge, and senior leaders from across the community have pledged to try to avoid convening, speaking on, chairing or moderating all-male panels at communal events, with the aim of ensuring that equally qualified women are included whenever possible. The community urges society at large to adopt this approach, particularly in the political sphere.

Women remain under-represented in public political life. We urge Government and political parties to do more to recruit and promote women at both national and local levels. Indeed, just 14.6%, or one in seven, of English local government leaders are women. In Parliament, just 29% of MPs are women, and this is the highest proportion in history. The way democracy is organised in the UK presents barriers to women standing for election, including a lack of family-friendly working policies.

As in all sectors of society, some Jewish women suffer from domestic violence and abuse. Jewish Women’s Aid is a charity that caters for the specific needs of Jewish women who have suffered, or are suffering, domestic abuse. The Jewish community commends all efforts to tackle domestic violence and other forms of violence against women.

POLICY ASK: Work with UK civil society, including faith groups, to advance opportunities for women – including in politics – voicing support for initiatives that take this forward.

POLICY ASK: Avoid convening all-male panels, particularly in the political sphere.

POLICY ASK: Support efforts to tackle abuse and violence against women and girls.

WELFARE

In some areas, particularly – but not exclusively – among the strictly Orthodox, the Jewish community is characterised by large families. This forms an integral part of their Jewish identity. When one or more principal earners in such a household become unemployed or incapacitated, the need and dependency on housing and welfare benefits can become acute. Caps on benefits, including housing benefit, disproportionately affect families on low incomes and large families. A majority of Jewish children (52%) grow up in households with three or more children, therefore caps on benefits, including housing benefit, disproportionately affect Jewish families, and can cause extreme hardship.

The policy intention might be that welfare-dependent families living in areas of high housing costs might relocate to cheaper areas. This is not practical or realistic for Jewish families in London who have longstanding ties to their communities and families and whose way of life necessitates close proximity to community infrastructure like Orthodox synagogues, schools and kosher food.

Campaigning organisations like the Child Poverty Action Group have highlighted this issue, and the unfairness of penalising children because of their household-size and the impact of homelessness, overcrowding, food poverty and debt. This has affected many Jewish children and it is clear that welfare reforms need to take better account of larger families, whose religious or cultural needs make them less adaptable to certain kinds of change.

POLICY ASK: Recognise the needs of larger families whose religious and cultural needs make them less adaptable to welfare reforms. The benefits system needs the flexibility to better accommodate this part of the population, and the impacts of changes should be explored fully with communal representatives before implementation.

HOUSING

In common with the wider UK population, there is a comprehensive spectrum of housing needs in Jewish communities. There are larger families seeking sufficient space within walking distance of the community infrastructure upon which they depend, especially when other forms of travel are not permitted on Shabbat or Holy Days. There are also young people looking to get on the property ladder, but struggling to find anything within their price range. For those who cannot yet hope to get on to the property ladder, there is the struggle and uncertainty of the unregulated rental market. Government intervention is necessary to help people with different housing needs to improve their circumstances.

POLICY ASK: Initiate an ambitious programme of house-building, including affordable and social housing. This should include provision for larger families within reach of Jewish communal infrastructure.

POLICY ASK: Impose greater regulation on the rental market to give protection to people in the private rented sector.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

SOCIAL CARE

Many Jews value the option of culturally-sensitive care when choosing a provider. For example, many Jews would prefer carers to offer meaningful experiences for Shabbat and other Holy Days, and the preparation of kosher food requires both sensitivity and understanding. The Jewish community has developed a market-leading care sector which embraces some of the best practices in social care. Examples are Jewish Care, Norwood, Agudas Yisroel, Nightingale Hammerson, Bikur Cholim, THE FED (Manchester), Langdon, Jewish Blind and Disabled, Birmingham Jewish Community Care, the Jewish Deaf Association, Merseyside Jewish Community Care, Kisharon, Jami and the Leeds Jewish Welfare Board.

The costs of these organisations can be higher than non-faith specific care organisations because of the increased costs of providing for Jewish observance, including kosher food. These organisations and their facilities are primarily funded by the Jewish community itself. However, local authorities often pay a significant share of the cost because these providers offer a service that no public body could supply.

POLICY ASK: Offer financial support to specialist care providers that cater for the religious and cultural needs of their clients.

Local authorities are sometimes reluctant to contribute to the care of a resident when the resident chooses to leave the local authority in order to obtain specialist, religious and culturally-sensitive care in a different local authority. Likewise the 'destination' local authority is frequently unwilling to assist funding a resident who has come from elsewhere.

This problem could potentially be resolved through the creation of a centrally-held funding source for citizens seeking to obtain specialist, religiously and culturally-sensitive care under the auspices of a different local authority.

POLICY ASK: Work with local authorities to ensure that people who need to obtain care from a specialist provider in a different local authority are able to do so, perhaps through the creation of a centrally-held funding source.

GENETIC SCREENING

Amongst the diseases known to be rare, and identified as genetic, there are several that are more common amongst Jews. The Jewish community welcomes the increased awareness of such diseases, and the emphasis given to the wide range of services needing to be taken into account when supporting the carriers of these diseases and their families.

Genetics and genetic testing is playing an increasingly prominent role in healthcare. From the Jewish perspective this has considerable impact – ranging from the increased incidence amongst them of infrequent lethal conditions, such as Tay Sachs disease, through to more common situations, such as in cancer screening, where Ashkenazi Jews are known to have a high frequency of mutations in the genes associated with breast and ovarian cancer.

The community believes that in addition to the support for long term care and treatment of those affected, preventive screening and research should be supported by the Government and the NHS.

POLICY ASK: Support the provision of appropriate care facilities for people with rare debilitating diseases and advocate for more extensive provision of appropriate genetic screening, and in particular for screening and support for populations at risk.

IMMUNISATION

Since the earliest days of vaccination in the UK, Jews have supported immunisation to prevent infectious diseases, particularly in children. There have, however, been some recent avoidable outbreaks in Jewish schools. These have been tackled swiftly and successfully as a result of collaborative initiatives between public health, local authority and Jewish community bodies. A key element was the social and cultural sensitivity with which this was handled. This sensitivity is crucial when working with Jews and other minorities.

POLICY ASK: Ensure that immunisation strategies are widely accessible, robust, and engaged with all religious and cultural groups.

AGEING

Judaism interprets the core Biblical commandment to 'honour and respect one's parents' (Exodus 20:12), and the instruction to "Stand up for an older person and show honour to the elderly" (Leviticus 19:32) as general standards for the treatment of older people. This has particular bearing now as the Jewish community is noticeably older on average than the wider population. Only 12% of the total population of England and Wales is over 70 years old, compared with 15% of Jews, who also have a longer average lifespan.

However, there is a concern that society increasingly sees older people as a 'burden' rather than as an asset. Particularly with the challenges facing

“

**COMMITMENT 8:
SUPPORT THE
PROVISION OF
RELIGIOUSLY AND
CULTURALLY
SENSITIVE
YOUTH AND
SOCIAL CARE
SERVICES.**

”

the National Health Service, there is concern that older people might be declined treatment or neglected, including their religious and cultural needs.

The Jewish community wants to see a concern for ensuring the inclusion of older people in terms of access to services, and also in terms of the social, cultural and spiritual life of our society, in partnership with the relevant agencies, organisations and community groups.

POLICY ASK: Ensure an affirmative attitude towards older people.

POLICY ASK: Ensure that elderly people receive the treatment and care that they need in a religiously and culturally sensitive way.

POLICY ASK: Seek the inclusion of older people in terms of both access to services, and to the social, cultural and spiritual life of our society.

QUALITY OF LIFE AND END OF LIFE

Judaism upholds the principle of sanctity of life. When confronted with a seriously ill patient, the default Jewish option is a presumption in favour of saving life. At the same time, Judaism is also sensitive to the very real issues of suffering, and endorses palliative care, as defined by the World Health Organisation. Jewish teaching does not support futile treatment; but does regard a failure to provide for basic needs, including hydration, as unacceptably cruel. This combination of values can directly influence patient care. They are of particular concern for people who do not have anyone to advocate for them; who have not signed advanced directives; or who do not have the capacity to give instructions. In these cases healthcare professionals may make decisions based on their subjective evaluation of "quality of life" without due consideration for patients' religious and cultural beliefs.

These questions are amongst the issues identified in the recent Department of Health report "More Care, Less Pathway: A review of the Liverpool Care Pathway". The highly-regarded report of the Leadership Alliance for the Care of Dying People, which aims "to secure high quality, personalised care for everyone in the last few days and hours of life in England", is to be commended for its approach.

POLICY ASK: Support the premise that religious, cultural and personal beliefs should be taken into account when making decisions in the final stages of life.

DEATH CERTIFICATION AND CORONERS' SERVICES

Jewish tradition requires that burial should take place as soon as possible after death, preferably within 24 hours. Funerals do not take place on Shabbat or on Holy Days, but rather as soon as possible afterwards.

Therefore, handling by the coroner – and death certification and registration by the local authority – should be concluded as expeditiously as possible. When there is any uncertainty about cause of death, and a death certificate cannot be issued, then in England and Wales the death is reported to the coroner who must decide whether or not to release the body for burial. Coroners may also order autopsies and initiate inquests.

This process can also be adversely impacted by no coroner being available 'out of hours', the absence of the appropriate doctor, or the lack of available facilities in local authorities for rapid registration. This can cause distress to bereaved families and can delay both the funeral and the traditional Jewish mourning process.

Standards across the country vary significantly, and the promised reform of the coroner system has not yet been fully implemented. The appointment of medical examiners will be able to expedite handling of registration and release of bodies for burial without undue delays.

POLICY ASK: Fully implement the Coroner Reform programme, and ensure that areas with high Jewish and Muslim populations have good 'out of hours' cover from all the necessary professionals.

AUTOPSY

Jewish tradition is that the body of the deceased should be buried without any undue interference. There is a strong preference for avoiding invasive autopsies, and consent is only given when there is clear evidence that the procedure will be of benefit. There is an exception when the requirement for autopsy is legal, i.e. ordered by the coroner. This can occur where there is uncertainty as to cause, as well as when there is suspicion of an offence.

Recently there has been considerable public interest in the use of minimal invasive autopsy – where a computerised tomography (CT) scan is used – which has been validated in Government funded studies. This technology is of value not only to Jews but also to the wider population, since the quality of this form of autopsy is as good – if not better than – conventional procedures.

However, minimal invasive autopsy is not available in many parts of the country. The costs are high and must be borne by the Jewish community, and in some jurisdictions, scans have not yet been accepted.

POLICY ASK: Support the drive to make minimal invasive autopsies more financially and physically accessible for investigations after death.

ORGAN DONATION

In principle, Judaism encourages organ donation in order to save lives. While, in Judaism, avoidance of interference with the dead body and rapid internment are prime concerns, each case is different. Where there is a possibility of organ donation it can be considered, particularly if these are the known wishes of the deceased.

Orthodox Judaism holds that organs may not be removed from a donor until death has definitely occurred, but there are varying views about what constitutes 'death'. Some traditionally-observant Jews accept the "brain stem death" criteria, and therefore the heart and lungs can be transplanted as well as other organs. Other Orthodox authorities will only agree to removal of organs from a "non-beating heart" donor, which reduces the range of usable organs.

In 2013, the Welsh Assembly passed a bill to introduce an 'opt-out' system of organ donation. The Jewish community expressed considerable concern about protecting the role of family consent throughout the development of this legislation. In order to make it easier for Jews, and members of other faiths with similar beliefs, to donate their organs, a short statement has been drafted which commits to the principle of donation but clarifies that the potential donor and their family should be entitled to consult with their particular personal religious adviser before consenting. The Board of Deputies prefers the continuation of an 'opt-in' process, with regular encouragement, to an 'opt-out' process. This is because the latter risks a person having their organs taken against their and their families' wishes, which could cause very grave distress to families of the deceased.

POLICY ASK: Support a process whereby the religious and cultural rights of Jews should be respected before organs are taken for transplantation.



A photograph showing three men in white shirts and kippot (skullcaps) working together to pack food into cardboard boxes. They are outdoors, with a corrugated metal wall on the left and a concrete floor. The boxes are filled with various food items, including cans, bags of snacks, and other packaged goods. The men are focused on their task, with one man in the foreground holding a box and another in the background also packing. The scene conveys a sense of community service and charity.

JEWISH VALUES AND CULTURE

SOCIAL ACTION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

The Jewish community has a vibrant social action and social justice sector, committed to making the world a better place for everyone. Whether through international development and relief charities like World Jewish Relief, Tzedek, and World ORT; or through human rights charities like René Cassin and the Jewish Council for Racial Equality (JCORE); or through volunteering charities like the Jewish Volunteering Network and Mitzvah Day, the UK Jewish community strives to stand at the forefront of the global movement for change.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN RELIEF

The Jewish community supports the UK's commitment to 0.7% of Gross National Product (GNP) expenditure to go on international development work, as called for by the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. The UK Jewish community is proud of the generosity of our country and its leadership in this field, including its extensive support of international and local NGOs.

In this complex field there is a need to continually review where taxpayer money is going, to ensure both value for money and that the funds are being targeted at genuinely beneficial causes. We are concerned at regular reports of NGOs in the Palestinian Territories using their budgets to send funds to terrorist organisations, such as Hamas, particularly when these NGOs are funded by the Department for International Development.

POLICY ASK: Maintain an expenditure of 0.7% of GNP on overseas development.

POLICY ASK: Review development and aid expenditure, to ensure the best value for money and that funds are being targeted at genuinely beneficial causes.

POVERTY IN THE UK

The Jewish community shares the wider public concern about the scale of poverty, including food poverty, in the UK. The Trussell Trust estimates that 13 million people live below the poverty line in the UK, and that more than 910,000 people (including more than 330,000 children) used a food bank last year.

The challenges facing Britain have inevitably affected the Jewish community in much the same way as it has the rest of the population. There are a number of Jewish food charities servicing both the Jewish and wider community. Charities, such as GIFT, deliver food parcels to families in need of assistance. In the meantime, the Jewish Social Action Forum takes a lead role in influencing national policy around food poverty.

POLICY ASK: Adopt policies which reverse the growing number of UK citizens living below the poverty line.

POLICY ASK: Seek support for institutions like food banks and other emergency food suppliers.

POLICY ASK: Ensure that there is provision for breakfast clubs in schools so that vulnerable children are supported.

THE ENVIRONMENT

In many Jewish religious texts, we are told that we are responsible for the earth and that therefore we are responsible for ensuring that its health is maintained. Humankind should enjoy the world, but must take care not to destroy it. More than that, we should nurture it. Individuals must play their part, but only world governments can effectively tackle the threat posed by human-made climate change and other forms of environmental degradation and pollution; protecting water resources, reducing carbon emissions and encouraging the use of renewable energy.

POLICY ASK: Advocate and act for individual, nationwide and international efforts to tackle climate change; protect our environment and ensure the habitability of our planet for future generations.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Numerous Jewish texts speak about the importance of caring for others and upholding their rights. One of the most important lines in Jewish scripture is Genesis 1:27, which tells us that all people are created "in the image of G-d". It therefore follows that all human beings have an equal, innate dignity which must be respected.

Jewish thinkers, biblical ethics and the experiences of the Jewish people have been crucial to the development of human rights. René Cassin, a principal author of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, was profoundly influenced by the ethics of his Jewish background and the Jewish experience of the Holocaust. UK Jewish NGOs René Cassin and the Jewish Council for Racial Equality (JCORE) continue to articulate Jewish human rights concerns.

The Jewish community applauds the UK for its actions to promote and protect human rights and making them part of its international agenda. As a community, we feel it is important for the UK to continue to advocate universal human rights both inside and outside its borders.

“

COMMITMENT 9:
**PROMOTE A MORE JUST
 AND SUSTAINABLE
 FUTURE IN THE UK AND
 ABROAD, SUPPORTING
 EFFORTS TO TACKLE
 POVERTY, CLIMATE
 CHANGE AND HUMAN
 RIGHTS ABUSES.**

”

To give a few examples of human rights issues that particularly concern Jews:

- Jews and Roma were persecuted together during the Second World War, and continue to face abuse from extremists, especially in Hungary, but in other places too. Victimisation of the Roma needs to be tackled urgently.
- Every year, Jews across the world commemorate the experience of slavery through the Holy Day of Passover. However slavery is not consigned to the past. Modern slavery, including human trafficking, continues and must be stopped.
- Human rights abuses in conflict situations must be stopped.

The UK's human rights and equalities legislative framework protects the rights of all people, particularly vulnerable people and minorities. The Jewish community urges policymakers to prioritise the protection of the most vulnerable in our society, when seeking to update or amend legislation.

POLICY ASK: Advance the cause of human rights in the UK and across the world.

POLICY ASK: Ensure that any change to the UK's human rights and equalities legislative framework advances the protection of the most vulnerable in our society.

IMMIGRATION

The UK's Jewish population is largely an immigrant community, having arrived in the UK as either economic migrants, or refugees fleeing persecution. As such, the Jewish community takes a particular interest in the plight of immigrants and asylum seekers, and shares a discomfort in loose, pejorative language that stigmatises new arrivals in this country.

The imperative to identify with the migrant is not new to Jews. In Leviticus 19:33-34 it is written, "If a stranger comes to live in your country, do not mistreat them...You shall love your neighbour as you love yourself, for you too were strangers in the Land of Egypt".

JCORE, René Cassin and the Jewish Museum London all have further resources and information about the Jewish migrant experience, and communal concerns about the language about, and treatment of, new migrant groups. The New North London Synagogue, the New London Synagogue, the West London Synagogue, Alyth (North Western Reform Synagogue) and the Liberal Jewish Synagogue are among those Jewish communities running monthly drop-in centres for asylum seekers.

Jews know what it is like to be treated as the 'other' in societies across the world. Our political leadership must therefore be careful not to promote

hatred or baseless suspicion towards migrants or asylum seekers, many of whom are vulnerable in a new and unfamiliar country.

POLICY ASK: Promote fair policies towards migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, taking pains not to encourage hatred or baseless suspicion towards these groups.

VOLUNTEERING

Charities like the Jewish Volunteering Network and Mitzvah Day are leading examples of how to manage and mobilise volunteers. Volunteers are a valuable asset to any charitable endeavour, but it is sometimes assumed that charities can fill budget gaps by using volunteers. However, those who successfully manage volunteers know that, while volunteers may save on costs, they are not 'cost neutral', because the training, managing and equipping of volunteers all require resources. Any public or private sector funding into the field of volunteering is extremely worthwhile, because it has a clear 'multiplier effect'. We urge for there to be greater governmental support given to charities to fully utilise their resources.

POLICY ASK: Support charities to improve and develop volunteering to enhance their capacity to achieve their desired results.

CULTURE AND HERITAGE

The flourishing UK Jewish cultural scene is testimony to a thriving and integrated community. Flagship cultural centres like JW3, the Jewish Museum London, the Manchester Jewish Museum, the London Jewish Cultural Centre, the Ben Uri Gallery and the Jewish Music Institute as well as festivals like Limmud, Jewish Book Week, the UK Jewish Film Festival, Gefiltefest, Klezmer in the Park, and Chanukah in the Square are a means of both celebrating the UK Jewish experience, and opening it to the wider community.

The Jewish Museum London, for example, plays a vital role in educating the wider, non-Jewish public and promoting good community relations through education about Judaism and the comparative experiences of the UK's migrant populations. The museum welcomes about 35,000 non-Jewish visitors each year, including 13,500 non-Jewish school children. However, in stark contrast to other museums in London and other Jewish museums in Europe, it receives no Government core-funding.

However, there are often incidences when Jewish culture is threatened. In particular, we are concerned about cultural boycotts which are directed at Jewish events, including the Jewish Film Festival, as well as protests which have occurred at sporting events, particularly at football matches. The rhetoric and motivations surrounding these protests are often extremely concerning and distressing for members of our community, especially when the events are non-political. Recent examples include the London Tricycle Theatre refusing to host the UK Jewish Film Festival in 2014, aggressive protests at the Wales vs Israel football match in 2015, as well as protests at the Celtic vs Hapoel Beersheva football match in 2016.

The Board of Deputies' Jewish Living Experience is an exhibition which travels the country giving schoolchildren and the wider public information about the Jewish way of life, often in places where few Jews live. The Board of Deputies always welcomes the opportunity to bring the exhibition to new places, and MPs should feel free to inquire about bringing it to their own constituencies.

POLICY ASK: Support Jewish cultural institutions, raising their profile through prominent visits.

POLICY ASK: Make funds available to faith-based cultural bodies and events which promote knowledge, understanding, good relations and integration between different religious and ethnic groups.

POLICY ASK: Make efforts to protect Jewish cultural events from intimidation to support Jewish cultural life in the UK.

JEWISH CEMETERIES

Jewish Law prohibits interference with burial grounds or graves except in very limited circumstances. Accordingly, there is significant importance placed on the preservation, maintenance and protection of Jewish burial grounds. This is sometimes threatened by developers or geological issues, such as subsidence.

The Board of Deputies of British Jews, through designated-charity BOD Heritage, holds the titles of twelve disused UK Jewish cemeteries. In this role, it protects these cemeteries and ensures they are safeguarded from both desecration and physical dereliction.

The Committee for the Preservation of Jewish Cemeteries in Europe, which campaigns for the protection of cemeteries in the UK and other European countries, continues to have serious concern regarding the desecration and destruction of Jewish cemeteries and mass graves, especially in jurisdictions which no longer have significant Jewish communities to advocate for communal cemeteries.

POLICY ASK: Advocate for the protection and preservation of Jewish cemeteries, both in the UK and in Europe, including through legislation and the safeguarding of funds.

“

**COMMITMENT 10:
CELEBRATE AND
SUPPORT JEWISH
HERITAGE AND
CULTURAL
INSTITUTIONS.**

”

**THE BOARD OF DEPUTIES
OF BRITISH JEWS IS
THE DEMOCRATIC AND
REPRESENTATIVE BODY FOR
THE UK'S JEWISH COMMUNITY.
WE ARE THE FIRST PORT OF
CALL FOR GOVERNMENT, THE
MEDIA AND OTHERS SEEKING
TO UNDERSTAND THE JEWISH
COMMUNITY'S INTERESTS AND
CONCERNS.**

CONTACT

The Board of Deputies of British Jews

T +44 (0)20 7543 5400

E info@bod.org.uk

W www.bod.org.uk

🐦 [@BoardofDeputies](https://twitter.com/BoardofDeputies)

THE BOARD 
OF DEPUTIES OF BRITISH JEWS
PROUD TO REPRESENT THE COMMUNITY

