

# THE JEWISH

# MANIFESTO

# FOR LOCAL

# GOVERNMENT



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.

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# INTRODUCTION

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## **THIS MANIFESTO IS AIMED AT INFORMING UK COUNCILLORS, COUNCIL CANDIDATES AND LOCAL AUTHORITY OFFICERS ABOUT THE INTERESTS AND CONCERNS OF JEWISH RESIDENTS.**

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In each section, the Manifesto outlines 'Policy Asks' on which the Board of Deputies would like support from local authorities. As a summary, we have also highlighted 'Ten Local Commitments' that capture the essence of the needs of local Jewish communities.

The 2011 census reported that Jewish residents live in every local authority in England and Wales. The UK Jewish community is diverse in terms of religious and cultural affiliation, as well as in socio-economic terms.

Founded in 1760, The Board of Deputies of British Jews prides itself on its representative and democratic structures, which have contributed to the formulation of this Manifesto. While there is no uniform 'Jewish view', the Board of Deputies has sought to represent within this document as much of a consensus as possible.

Through a community-wide consultation, which involved the participation of more than 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 spectrums.

Larger Jewish communities in the United Kingdom are served by Jewish Representative Councils. Councillors and local authority officials should engage with these important organisations to ensure they are aware of the issues facing their Jewish residents. Contact details for the Jewish Representative Councils are included in this publication.

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

# THE TEN LOCAL COMMITMENTS

## WE ASK LOCAL POLICYMAKERS TO:

1

**Oppose antisemitism, anti-Muslim hatred and all forms of racism. Adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of antisemitism and its appended examples to provide guidance to elected officials and public servants about this persistent form of prejudice.**

2

**Make resources available to promote good interfaith and intercommunal relations and joint social action projects.**

3

**Take care not to exacerbate communal tensions over conflicts in the Middle East. Promote reconciliation projects to unite communities and oppose boycotts that divide communities.**

4

**Promote rigorous Religious Education about Judaism and other faiths and support Jewish schools where they exist in your local authority area. Assist children who wish to access Jewish schools in other local authority areas, especially where they wish to do so for culturally-sensitive SEN provision.**

5

**Help to secure adequate financial and other support for specialist Jewish care providers where they exist in your local authority. Where they do not, ensure that residents who wish to be able to access these specialist services in other local authority areas can be funded to do so.**

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

**6**

**Support the needs of diverse communities in public health and related provision. For example, when appointing coroners, stipulate that they should be prepared to offer an 'out of hours' service and minimally invasive autopsies to ensure quick burials when required by faith communities.**

**7**

**Ensure that local planning guidance and procedures can help facilitate the development of Jewish communities, such as the construction or expansion of synagogues, Mikva'ot (ritual baths) or eruvs (see definition on page 23) where these are requested by the local Jewish community.**

**8**

**Ensure adequate provision of housing, taking into account larger families, first-time buyers and vulnerable members of the community in need of culturally and religiously appropriate sheltered accommodation.**

**9**

**Celebrate local Jewish culture and heritage by holding civic events with the Jewish community, supporting the preservation of historic synagogues and cemeteries, and contributing to Jewish cultural projects and institutions.**

**10**

**Pay attention to the needs of smaller Jewish communities, who may feel especially vulnerable to increases in anti-Jewish rhetoric and need particular support to promote viable, ongoing Jewish life in their areas.**

# COMMUNITY SAFETY

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## ANTISEMITISM AND RACISM

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The prevalence and spread of antisemitism remains a threat to the British Jewish community and a challenge to the moral character of British society. Antisemitism may begin as an attack on Jews, but history shows us that this hatred mutates and affects other minorities before attacking the very fabric of wider society. Therefore, fighting antisemitism is not for Jews alone, but a common effort for the common good.

There is widespread concern at the proliferation of antisemitic discourse in UK politics, where politicians and activists have employed antisemitic narratives and stereotypes in their language and actions.

The report, *Antisemitism in Contemporary Great Britain*, from the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR) and the Community Security Trust (CST), stated that while the number of identifiable antisemites is small, when antisemitic ideas and concepts enter national and local conversation, they cause anxiety for many Jews.

This should be understood in the wider context of nearby Jewish communities in countries such as Belgium, France and Denmark having suffered antisemitic terrorist attacks in recent years. The increase in the antisemitic discourse in mainstream politics over the last decade is taken as an indicator by many Jews that such an attack or other forms of hostility are more likely to happen in the UK. Locally elected representatives, therefore, have a special responsibility to ensure they give no quarter to antisemitic language or behaviour.

The increase in British antisemitism is borne out by figures compiled by the CST, which works closely with the police to monitor antisemitism and protect Jewish communities. It recorded 767 antisemitic incidents in the first six months of 2017, the highest six-month total since the CST's records began in 1984.

Previously, there have been spikes in anti-Jewish hate incidents 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-August 2014, for example, was the worst period of antisemitism on record, with the CST recording more antisemitic incidents in those two months than during the entirety of the previous year.

However, in the years following that record high, the previous pattern of reduced tensions in the Middle East leading to a reduction in antisemitic incidents has been not repeated. Despite a relative détente between Israelis and Palestinians, antisemitic incidents in the UK did not fall back to previous levels.

Some of the clearest forms of antisemitic expressions, which should not be tolerated, include:

- Repeating 'Jewish conspiracy' theories, such as accusing Jews of manipulating government and society by media or financial power;



**COMMITMENT 1:  
ADOPT THE  
INTERNATIONAL  
HOLOCAUST  
REMEMBRANCE  
ALLIANCE’S WORKING  
DEFINITION OF  
ANTISEMITISM AND ITS  
APPENDED EXAMPLES.**



- Holocaust denial or minimisation; indicating sympathy for the Holocaust;
- Holocaust inversion – i.e. identifying Israel or Zionists as Nazis;
- Giving support to, or failing to oppose, terrorism directed at the Jewish community inside and outside Israel;
- Theological antisemitism, such as accusing Jews of killing Jesus.

Actions which may or may not be considered antisemitic – depending on the circumstances – but which could create a sense of fear among Jews can include:

- The waving of flags of terrorist organisations such as Hamas and Hezbollah at demonstrations;
- Protests against events hosting Israeli or Jewish speakers;
- Targeted boycotts of, or vandalism against, Israeli or kosher products; and
- Delegitimisation of Israel, the only Jewish state.

Politicians and officials from all parties and institutions must lead by example, use responsible language, and call out others when they do not.

A clear way in which your local authority can take a stand against antisemitism is to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of antisemitism and its appended examples as part of your equalities policies. It has already been adopted by the UK Government, the Official Opposition, the Scottish Government, the Greater London Authority, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and over a hundred local authorities.

**POLICY ASK: Adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s working definition of antisemitism, including its appended examples.**

**POLICY ASK: Publicly support all efforts to combat antisemitism.**

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

**POLICY ASK: Be responsible in your language and behaviour, and call out others when they are not.**

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## EXTREMISM

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The Jewish community has long been the target of extremist rhetoric and violence from the far right, the far left and Islamist sources.

Jewish communities worldwide have been a focal point for terrorist attacks by supporters of the so-called 'Islamic State', Al Qaeda, and other terrorist groups in cities such as Paris, Brussels and Copenhagen. For this reason, Jewish institutions, particularly synagogues and schools, employ a rigorous approach to security procedures which can be costly and require additional support.

The far right's disdain for a diverse society is often focused against the Jews. Some elements of the far right, Islamists and the far left – the latter often on the basis of extreme hostility to Israel – can be 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, up to and including violence.

We therefore ask local authorities to play their part in countering extremism, as part of their wider safeguarding strategy, working with national government and developing local approaches.

We also ask for local authorities to be mindful of events they hold, and organisations and individuals they host. Local authority-supported venues should not provide a platform for hate speakers or extremists, and we commend local authorities who have blocked or cancelled events that were likely to undermine community cohesion.

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**POLICY ASK: Challenge extremism wherever it is found.**

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**POLICY ASK: Do not host organisations or individuals that spread hatred or extremism.**

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**COMMITMENT 2:  
MAKE RESOURCES  
AVAILABLE TO PROMOTE  
GOOD INTERFAITH  
AND INTERCOMMUNAL  
RELATIONS AND TO  
JOINT SOCIAL ACTION  
PROJECTS.**



# COMMUNITY COHESION

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## INTER-COMMUNAL RELATIONS

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Promoting good relations between communities can proactively prevent tension, racism, and violence.

Members of the Jewish community are committed to positive engagement with people of all faiths and none, through participation in organisations and projects. These include the Inter Faith Network for the UK and its regional and local affiliates, national bodies such as 3FF (Three Faiths Forum), Mitzvah Day, the Council of Christians and Jews and the Joseph Interfaith Foundation. Important work is also carried out by local organisations such as The Muslim Jewish Forum of Greater Manchester, Nottingham Inter Faith Council and Brighton and Hove Inter-Faith Contact Group.

The Board of Deputies continues to lead on interfaith engagement for the Jewish community. In 2017 we embarked on our Invest In Peace programme, which brings together local churches and synagogues to support Israeli-Palestinian peace-building. We have also worked to deepen and broaden links between Jewish and Muslim communities. We look to local authorities to support us in this work.

While much of this work is driven by the faith groups themselves at a local and national level, local authorities have resources that could facilitate its strategic growth.

We know that small amounts of well-directed local authority funding can have a large impact. The support of local authorities is crucial to ensuring the future of intermediary, umbrella, and community organisations, such as local faith forums, which promote good community relations and a spirit of cooperation and mutual support.

For example, the Board of Deputies is working with human rights organisation René Cassin to raise awareness of challenges faced by the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in Britain. Local authorities have an important role to play in addressing the concerns of these communities, particularly with respect to planning policy for authorised sites. A lack of these often leads to the proliferation of unauthorised sites, which can be a source of friction between communities.

The UK's Jewish population carries a communal memory of the immigrant experience, with families sharing stories of parents, grandparents and great grandparents arriving in the UK as economic migrants or refugees fleeing persecution. As such, the Jewish community is particularly sensitive to the plight of immigrants and asylum seekers, and often

highlights and condemns pejorative language that stigmatises new arrivals to this country. In many parts of the UK, Jewish communities have been active in establishing support networks for refugees by helping with housing and the needs of daily life in a new country, and in particular campaigning for local authorities to accept and house Syrian refugees.

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**POLICY ASK:** Support initiatives at a local level that promote dialogue and understanding between different groups in society, to prevent tension and encourage cooperation.

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**POLICY ASK:** Promote a strategy to enhance community relations in your local authority area, supported by a clear, designated budget.

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**POLICY ASK:** Ensure that adequate local provision is made for authorised Gypsy, Roma and Traveller sites.

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**POLICY ASK:** Designate a specialist community cohesion officer/team to work with different communities and faith groups.

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**POLICY ASK:** That local authorities act sympathetically, speedily and proactively to assist refugees to settle in the borough and receive support to enable integration.

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**POLICY ASK:** : Engage with local Jewish Representative Councils, where they operate, on issues relating to intercommunal relations.

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## SOCIAL ACTION

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The Jewish community has a vibrant social action and social justice sector, contributing to making our shared society and the world a better, fairer place.

The Jewish community supports international development and relief charities such as World Jewish Relief, Tzedek, and World ORT; human rights charities such as René Cassin and the Jewish Council for Racial Equality (JCORE); and volunteering charities such as the Jewish Volunteering Network (JVN). Local social action is taken through groups such as The Friendship Circle in Salford and Bury and the Jewish Lads' and Girls' Brigade (JLGB) Leeds Action Squad.

The Jewish community engages in an annual day of focused communal social action under the banner of Mitzvah Day, working with local authorities across the country to support local causes. Check out [www.mitzvahday.org.uk](http://www.mitzvahday.org.uk) to find your local activity or register an activity for your local authority.

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**POLICY ASK:** Support faith-based social action projects by supporting food banks and homeless shelters in your area, including by taking part in Mitzvah Day.

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# ISRAEL

Israel is the only country where Jewish people can exercise their right to self-determination. Recent research reports have shown that the overwhelming majority of the Jewish community identifies in some way with Israel, or sees Israel as part of their Jewish identity. Between 40 and 50 per cent of the world's Jewish population live in Israel, and many UK Jewish citizens have parents, siblings or children living there. Whatever their individual views on the tragic conflict with the Palestinians, they are often personally affected by events that occur in the region.

Positive examples of local government engagement with Israel include twinning arrangements which send an inclusive signal to Jewish residents.

Legitimate criticism of the policies and actions of Israel, or indeed any other state, have a place in public discourse. However, local government representatives can sometimes use rhetoric that subjects Israel to discriminatory or disproportionate criticism that is unsettling to the community. This is especially true when the more substantial shortcomings of other states, including democracies, do not appear to attract similar attention.

Support for antisemitic terrorist organisations such as Hezbollah, which promotes Holocaust denial and has targeted Jewish communities outside Israel, or Hamas, whose founding charter contains a call for Muslims to kill Jews, is unacceptable. Under no circumstances should criticism of Israel be used as a pretext for promoting antisemitic tropes such as Jewish conspiracies about political or media control.

There is empirical evidence, including the Community Security Trust's (CST's) Antisemitic Incidents Report, that there was a substantial increase in antisemitic incidents during the 2014 war in Gaza. Much of this activity directly targeted the Jewish community, including attacks on Jewish communal buildings, disruption of Jewish student society meetings, and the destruction of kosher food in supermarkets. This was particularly worrying in areas with smaller Jewish communities as there may not have been alternative sources of kosher food.

As a result, the members of the community felt anxious and vulnerable.

Some of these activities undermined freedom of speech, including artistic and academic freedom, freedom of association, and community relations in general. The intimidation of people wishing to attend a production at a festival, or to purchase items at particular shops, should be of concern to everyone.

Motions which support the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement (BDS) against the Jewish state, as passed in some local authorities, serves

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## COMMITMENT 3:

**TAKE CARE NOT TO EXACERBATE COMMUNAL TENSIONS OVER CONFLICTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST.**

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only to heighten this intimidation and make smaller Jewish communities feel particularly vulnerable. This is especially true when no similar policy exists against any other state. At times when the conflict escalates into military violence, local authorities which display support for one side by, for example, flying the Palestinian flag, will likewise heighten fears among their Jewish population. We recommend flying neither flag during such episodes.

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**POLICY ASK:** Ensure that the tone and language of statements do not unwittingly cause divisions between communities in your area.

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**POLICY ASK:** Oppose divisive boycotts, and instead promote projects that unite communities in your area, including interfaith and inter-communal initiatives and coexistence projects.

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**POLICY ASK:** Make efforts to protect Jewish and Israeli cultural events from intimidation.

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**POLICY ASK:** At times of heightened tension, do not fly the flag of any party to the conflict, make statements, or pass resolutions that appear to blame only one side. If a local authority believes that it must make a statement in favour of peace, they should consult community representatives to ensure a sensitive approach is adopted. A vigil for peace, with representatives from diverse faiths and communities involved, should be considered.

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**POLICY ASK:** Support Israel's right to live in peace and security alongside a viable Palestinian state.

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# EDUCATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE

## FAITH SCHOOLS

The popularity of faith schools reflects their excellent academic results, ethos, 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 approximately two-thirds of Jewish children in the UK attend Jewish schools. These are clustered in areas of significant Jewish population. In many families, members of consecutive generations have attended the same school. These schools form cornerstones of Jewish communities around the country.

The Jewish schools sector is growing in parts of London and Manchester. Jewish schools within the state sector are keen to have a positive working relationship with their local authority. If a new Jewish school is proposed in your area, we hope that the local authority will welcome it as a new educational partner.

Successful faith schools teach the national curriculum and promote community cohesion. Many Jewish schools establish formal linking programmes with other faith and non-faith schools. This activity should be better supported and funded to ensure that children continue to be aware of those of different backgrounds to their own.

The need to promote community cohesion is incumbent on all schools and not just faith schools. For example, mono-ethnic and mono-cultural schools areas should be supported in developing links with schools with more diverse intakes.

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**POLICY ASK:** Work with existing Jewish faith schools in your local authority and welcome any new ones.

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**POLICY ASK:** Support formal linking programmes between schools of different faith and non-faith backgrounds.

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**COMMITMENT 4:**  
PROMOTE RELIGIOUS  
EDUCATION ABOUT  
JUDAISM AND OTHER  
FAITHS, AND SUPPORT  
JEWISH SCHOOLS WHERE  
THEY EXIST IN YOUR  
LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA.

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## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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Religious Education (RE) develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of religions, values and cultures. The Jewish community believes that the teaching of RE helps to foster better relations in communities where there is diversity. RE can help to combat misunderstanding, discrimination and racism, including antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred.

It is more important than ever for children to be knowledgeable about other faiths, so that tolerant communities can be sustained where people of all faiths and none feel secure.

The Board of Deputies' Jewish Living Experience is an educational, interactive mobile exhibition which travels around the country, often to places where there are few or no Jewish residents. It provides schoolchildren and the wider public with accurate information about the Jewish way of life.

Jewish Living Tours are arranged in predominantly Jewish areas of London for high school groups, in particular for those taking Religious Studies GCSE exams in Judaism. These bespoke tours include a guided visit to a synagogue, a kosher meal, visits to Jewish high street shops and the opportunity to meet members of the local Jewish community.

The Board of Deputies is keen to work with local authorities who are interested in hosting the Jewish Living Experience Exhibition or sending their schools on a Jewish Living Tour, as a means of promoting community cohesion. For further information about the Board of Deputies Jewish Living programmes, see: <https://www.bod.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Jewish-Experience-Leaflet.pdf>

Maintaining a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) is a statutory duty for local authorities in England and Wales. SACREs, comprised of councillors, teachers and faith leaders, set the Locally Agreed Syllabus for local authority schools and make decisions about collective worship. However, despite this important role, many SACREs are under-resourced. We would urge you to ensure that your SACRE is regularly convened and well-supported.

The Board of Deputies maintains a network of Jewish representatives on SACREs, offering them support and guidance. This gives reassurance to local authorities that their Jewish representatives are aware of the best practice to enhance religious education in their area. If your local authority has difficulty filling a vacancy for a Jewish representative on your SACRE, please contact the Board of Deputies, who will be able to help identify a suitable candidate.

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**POLICY ASK: Encourage schools to incorporate religious education into their syllabuses, to assist pupils' social development and promote community cohesion.**

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**POLICY ASK: Consider hosting the Jewish Living Experience Exhibition in your local authority, and whether schools in your area might benefit from a Jewish Living Tour.**

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**POLICY ASK: Ensure that your SACRE is supported. Please contact the Board of Deputies to help identify a suitable representative from the Jewish community if there is a vacancy. Encourage existing Jewish SACRE representatives to contact the Board of Deputies as we maintain a network that offers support and opportunities to share best practice.**

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## AUTHORISED ABSENCE FOR RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

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For many Jewish families, observing the Sabbath (which occurs from before sunset on Fridays until after sunset on Saturdays) and festivals is an important commitment. In most observant families, no work is done on Sabbath and festivals, and activities such as writing, travelling by car or public transport and the use of electronic devices are forbidden.

Dates of festivals are based on the lunar calendar and fall on different Gregorian calendar dates each year. Sabbath and festivals commence at sunset the evening before each calendar date, and can begin as early as 3pm in northern parts of the UK during the winter.

When festivals fall during the week, children from observant families will not attend school on those days. When festivals fall at weekends or bank holidays, such pupils may also struggle to complete the amount of homework teachers would expect on a normal weekend. During the winter, pupils from observant families may require authorised absence on Friday afternoons to enable them to reach home before the commencement of the Sabbath.

Parents should supply schools in advance with the dates of religious festivals and Friday afternoons that are affected by the early commencement of the Sabbath. The Board of Deputies also maintains a list of festival dates on its website.

The way Jewish festivals interact with the school calendar means that local authority employees and teachers should refrain from encouraging schools to set arbitrary limits on the number of days pupils may take authorised leave for festival observance. Some local authorities allow a fixed number of days that can be taken as authorised leave for religious observance with notification from parents, and request a written statement from a religious leader for any further days of absence. This can serve as an alternative policy.

The understanding shown to schoolchildren should be extended to council employees and teachers who wish to observe the Sabbath and festivals.

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**POLICY ASK: Local authorities should generate an authorised leave policy appropriate for the residents and communities they represent.**

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## HOLOCAUST COMMEMORATION AND EDUCATION

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Since 2005, the United Kingdom has officially marked Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) on 27 January each year. HMD does not just commemorate the Holocaust, but also subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. The aim of HMD, as with other Holocaust commemorative and educational activity, is to remember the past, and also create an awareness of how the dehumanisation of others can lead to hate, violence and atrocities. Such an awareness is critical to maintaining a humane and pluralistic society. As the number of Holocaust survivors dwindles, this task becomes even more important in the face of incipient Holocaust denial.

Many local authorities already mark Holocaust Memorial Day and encourage appropriate local public bodies, particularly schools, to do likewise. The Board of Deputies commends this and urges other local authorities to do similarly. The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust has a wide range of resources for educators, and are happy to receive enquiries as to how best to mark and teach the subject. The Holocaust Educational Trust, similarly, offers resources through its website. It also runs Lessons From Auschwitz, a programme which facilitates school students to visit Auschwitz and educate their peers about what they have learned on their return.

The UK has experienced rising hate crime in recent years. Reminding ourselves and teaching our young people the lessons of the Holocaust is more vital than ever.

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**POLICY ASK: Local authorities should mark Holocaust Memorial Day.**

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**POLICY ASK: Local authorities should encourage local schools to mark Holocaust Memorial Day and teach the lessons of the Holocaust.**

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**POLICY ASK: Encourage local schools to participate in the Holocaust Educational Trust's Lessons From Auschwitz programme.**

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## CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

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Schools making particular provision for children with Special Educational Needs should continue to enjoy sufficient funding, without any undue bureaucratic burden. Severe cuts in this field could leave vulnerable pupils in school without the support that they need to progress. Local authorities should do what they can to continue to fund Special Educational Needs education.

When parents want to access a specialist Jewish school catering for Special Educational Needs that is not available in their own local authority area, their particular local authority should support the child to attend a school in a different local authority area. Moving a child out of its local authority area can cause significant issues for families as local authorities are sometimes reluctant to provide financial support. However, there should be little practical difference for the local authority if parents decide to send children to an out-of-area specialist school.

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

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**POLICY ASK: Support the needs of local children with Special Educational Needs and their families by helping them to attend specialist Jewish schools, if necessary in a different local authority area.**

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## FAITH AND CULTURALLY-SENSITIVE YOUTH PROVISION

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

Meanwhile, the Jewish Lads' and Girls' Brigade (JLGB), among other activities, offers the opportunity to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and National Citizen Service in a religiously and culturally-sensitive way.

These organisations are fundamental to our community's investment in young people by helping them to develop skills, confidence and leadership experience for the future. However, 65 per cent of Jewish young people who have signed up to national volunteering schemes say they struggle to find suitable volunteering placements owing to the lack of options permitting participants to observe Jewish dietary laws, the Sabbath or festivals. We would ask that any local volunteering schemes become more culturally accommodating to make it easier for Jewish young people to engage with them.

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 may be common across society, interventions in a Jewish setting may require adaptivity to the religious and cultural context of the young people concerned. Charities such as 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 awareness is particularly important for foster care. Foster agencies should seek to place Jewish children with families who can understand, respect and accommodate their individual levels of religious observance.

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

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

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**POLICY ASK:** Provide culturally-sensitive good quality youth provision for all in society, by both making mainstream provision accessible, and supporting specialist culturally-sensitive provision.

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**POLICY ASK:** Seek to place Jewish children in care with Jewish families wherever possible.

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# SOCIAL CARE AND WELFARE

Many Jews value the option of culturally-sensitive care when choosing a provider, and it is widely accepted that culturally specific care is a necessity for a person's wellbeing. For example, many Jews would prefer carers to offer meaningful experiences for the Sabbath and festivals, and the preparation of kosher food requires both knowledge and understanding. Celebrating Jewish festivals, Sabbath services and the warmth of community are important factors in ensuring people continue to lead meaningful lives and enjoy a good quality of life.

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, The Fed (Manchester), Langdon, Birmingham Jewish Community Care, Merseyside Jewish Community Care, Kisharon, and the Leeds Jewish Welfare Board.



**COMMITMENT 5:  
HELP TO SECURE  
ADEQUATE AND OTHER  
SUPPORT FOR SPECIALIST  
JEWISH CARE PROVIDERS  
WHERE THEY EXIST IN  
YOUR LOCAL AUTHORITY.**



The costs of these organisations are higher than non-faith specific care organisations because of the increased costs of providing for Jewish observance. The Jewish community is very fortunate to have a supporter infrastructure of volunteers and a fundraising base which enables it to subsidise services which, in the current economic climate, many people could not afford for themselves.

Local authorities are sometimes reluctant to contribute to the care of a resident when they choose to leave the local authority area to obtain specialist, religious and culturally-sensitive care in a different local authority area. Likewise the 'destination' local authority is frequently unwilling to assist funding a resident who has come from elsewhere. A client and their family may find themselves caught between the bureaucracies of two local authorities, and, as a result, experience distress. It is important that local authorities work collaboratively and creatively to resolve such situations.

It is understandable that after almost a decade of many local authorities experiencing year-on-year cuts, social care funding has come under pressure. We are aware that there is a reduction in social care places. Providers in the Jewish social care sector for older people now estimate that the gap between the amount that a local authority is willing to fund for a residential care place and that which a provider must spend is now £400 per week per resident, which the community has to find from its donor base.

Jewish social care providers are currently fundraising in the community to meet this shortfall, to ensure that no one is turned away from a care home due to an inability to pay, but there is a limit to how far voluntary income can continue to bridge an ever-widening gap.

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**POLICY ASK:** Local authorities should consider the provision of culturally-sensitive care and welfare services as an important factor in ensuring the wellbeing and mental health of people who require support.

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**POLICY ASK:** Local authorities should ensure that people who need to obtain care from a specialist provider in a different local authority are able to do so, through creative and collaborative partnerships and the use of direct payments to enable people to find appropriate services.

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# PUBLIC HEALTH

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## SPECIALIST SERVICES

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When commissioning specialist public services for Jewish residents with physical disabilities, mental ill-health or learning disabilities, working with organisations that offer culturally-Jewish services leads to better outcomes for both residents and the local authority.

Such services not only support residents to live a Jewish life in accordance with their level of desired observance, but they can also ensure that such residents continue to be part of their community, avoiding the isolation that can be so damaging to mental health.

**POLICY ASK:** Local authorities should consider funding culturally specific and specialist services as an important investment in the mental health and wellbeing of service users from minority religious and ethnic backgrounds, whose needs are often not met by generic providers.

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## IMMUNISATION

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Since the earliest days of vaccination in the UK, Jews have supported immunisation to prevent infectious diseases, particularly in children. Local authorities should build on these foundations by engaging with their local Jewish community, with the support of local doctors and Rabbis, to ensure a high take-up of immunisations. Materials used should be culturally and religiously sensitive.

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 local authorities and Jewish community bodies. A key element was the social and cultural tact 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 in your local authority area.

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**COMMITMENT 6:**  
**SUPPORT THE NEEDS OF  
 DIVERSE COMMUNITIES  
 IN PUBLIC HEALTH AND  
 RELATED PROVISION.**

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## DEATH CERTIFICATION, CORONERS' SERVICES AND AUTOPSIES

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

Therefore, handling by a coroner in the English and Welsh system – 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, 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.

The anxiety caused to bereaved families, by a delayed process whether they be Jewish or of another faith or belief, is being taken seriously by the Chief Coroner for England and Wales, who is now promoting an out-of-hours service as best practice.

While coroners are not employed by local authorities, they are appointed and funded by them. Therefore, councils can help ensure a culturally-sensitive coroner service in two ways. Firstly, when appointing a coroner, they should ask candidates what efforts they would make to provide an out-of-hours service. Secondly, council scrutiny committees should investigate the extent of out-of-hours provision in the local authority areas.

Autopsies are also an area of concern for the Jewish community. Jewish tradition decrees that the body of a deceased person 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 the cause of death, as well as when there is suspicion of an offence.

Recently there has been considerable public interest in the use of minimally 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. The Chief Coroner is now promoting as best practice the minimisation of the invasiveness of autopsies, using CT scanning where possible.

While minimally invasive autopsy has been adopted by many coroners, it is still far from universal practice. As it involves expense, the Jewish community may consider how it might contribute to meeting the cost.

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**POLICY ASK:** When appointing new coroners, specify the need for an out-of-hours policy and a willingness to use minimal invasive autopsies where appropriate.

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**POLICY ASK:** Council scrutiny committees should monitor out-of-hours practice and use of minimally invasive autopsies.

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**POLICY ASK:** Support the drive to make minimal invasive autopsies more financially and physically accessible for bereaved families.

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# PLANNING AND COMMUNAL INFRASTRUCTURE

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## PLANNING

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The Jewish community is constantly evolving and requires a fair and flexible planning system. The Jewish population is fast-growing in areas such as Hertsmere and Manchester. The community is experiencing a comparative baby boom, particularly in the Strictly Orthodox community in parts of London, Manchester and Gateshead. As such, and as mentioned before, Jewish schools are ever more popular with parents.

For Jews who follow Orthodox practice and do not use transport on the Sabbath or festivals, living within walking distance of communal facilities such as synagogues is very important.

Therefore, as families grow, such families will often seek to extend or renovate the home in which they already live, rather than move away from their community.



**COMMITMENT 7:  
ENSURE THAT LOCAL  
PLANNING GUIDANCE  
AND PROCEDURES  
CAN HELP FACILITATE  
THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
JEWISH COMMUNITIES.**



Local Plans often positively support residents in creating the conditions for sustainable development. Planning in general has an important role in ensuring, for example, that new building and extensions do not create geological risks. However, it is also critical that Local Plans do not create extra unnecessary barriers or bureaucratic obstacles to home extensions needed by parts of the Jewish community.

This is also true of synagogue extensions, new synagogues and ritual baths (mikva'ot) which are vital for communal life. In recent years, the Jewish community has breathed new life into buildings that previously had different uses, such as public houses or industrial units. These spaces are now vibrant community hubs, where they were once empty and in possible danger of becoming derelict.

Local authorities should ensure that Local Plans do not obstruct such conversions and help the Jewish community make this vital contribution to enlivening the wider area for the benefit of the population. While every development must be taken on its individual merit, we would recommend creating a 'presumption in favour' of development for faith infrastructure, all other things being equal.

Some of the larger Jewish communities have been engaged with local authorities in recent years over the issue of Eruvs (Eruvim). The Eruv is a boundary demarcation, virtually unnoticeable to the wider population, that allows observant Orthodox and Masorti Jews to carry and push buggies and wheelchairs on Shabbat, making a significant difference to the lives of families. A constructive, thorough and positive consultation led by the local authority will reassure the wider community and help produce an Eruv which serves the Jewish population.

If the Jewish community in your area proposes the erection of their own Eruv, the support of a local authority is crucial and not just to guide the community in complying with planning requirements. Local authorities are also vital in signalling to non-Jewish residents how inconspicuous an Eruv will be and how much benefit it will be to their observant Jewish friends and neighbours.

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**POLICY ASK:** Local planning regimes should not be overly bureaucratic, to allow the expansion of existing homes, as well as the building of new Jewish communal facilities.

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**POLICY ASK:** If a Jewish community in your area proposes to build an Eruv, please support them and help to dispel any misconceptions among the wider population.

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**POLICY ASK:** Engage with your local Jewish community and Jewish housing associations when developing planning policies.

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# HOUSING

In common with the wider UK population, there is a comprehensive spectrum of housing needs in Jewish communities. Larger families seek sufficient space within walking distance of community infrastructure, especially when motorised travel is not permitted on Shabbat or festivals.

There are also young people looking to become owner-occupiers for the first time, but struggling to find any appropriate affordable property. For those who cannot yet hope to get on to the property ladder, there is the struggle and uncertainty of the lightly-regulated rental market. Government intervention is necessary to help people with different housing needs to improve their circumstances.

Social housing plays an important role in the Jewish community, both as a supplier of affordable homes and in overcoming isolation, particularly for elderly residents. Jewish housing associations provide supported and independent living for older Jewish residents that combats loneliness in two critical ways: They are organised in a religiously and culturally-sensitive context, and are located in close proximity to the synagogues, shops and social venues that are the heart of Jewish communal life.

Allocations should be granted so that Jewish residents can be connected to their community and the organisations that provide these facilities should be supported, especially when seeking to expand.

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**POLICY ASK:** Ensure adequate provision of housing, especially for larger families and first-time buyers, within reach of Jewish communal infrastructure. This should of course include sufficient affordable and social housing. Consider local Jewish housing associations as key partners when developing your housing policies.

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**COMMITMENT 8:**  
**ENSURE ADEQUATE  
PROVISION OF HOUSING,  
TAKING INTO ACCOUNT  
LARGER FAMILIES, FIRST-  
TIME BUYERS AND  
VULNERABLE MEMBERS OF  
THE COMMUNITY.**



# CULTURE AND HERITAGE

## CIVIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF JEWISH HERITAGE AND CULTURE

When local authorities acknowledge Jewish religious and cultural events throughout the year, Jewish residents feel a greater sense of pride – both in their own faith community and the wider community in which they live. Such events also provide a prompt and a forum for Jews and their neighbours of different faiths and none to discuss their traditions together, leading to greater understanding and a sense of a wider shared community.

Local authorities can support a range of events that celebrate Jewish religion and culture, from Hanukkah candelabra (Hanukkiah) lighting in December, to hosting a Sukkah in September/October, meetings for the community in the mayor's parlour and civic services. Often such events require minimal support from the local authority, potentially as little as a location and publicity. Jewish communities will try to provide financial and material resources towards the event.

**POLICY ASK:** Mark Jewish religious and cultural events throughout the year and engage with your local Jewish community to work together to produce such events.

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**COMMITMENT 9:**  
CELEBRATE LOCAL JEWISH CULTURE AND HERITAGE BY HOLDING CIVIC EVENTS WITH THE JEWISH COMMUNITY.

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## JEWISH CULTURE

The flourishing UK Jewish cultural scene is a testimony to a thriving and integrated community. Flagship cultural centres such as JW3, the Jewish Museum London, the Manchester Jewish Museum, the Ben Uri Gallery and the Jewish Music Institute provide a means of both celebrating the UK Jewish experience, and opening it to the wider community. These are worthy of council engagement and support.

However, too often there are incidents that seek to disrupt Jewish events which involve a connection to Israeli society, a major aspect of Jewish life.

In particular, we are concerned about cultural boycotts and intimidatory protests which are directed at Jewish events.

The rhetoric and motivations surrounding these protests are often extremely concerning and distressing for members of the Jewish community, especially when the events themselves are not 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, and protests at the Celtic vs Hapoel Beersheva football match in 2016. Local authorities should be proactive in opposing boycotts of Jewish and/or Israeli events that happen in their area and be mindful of the impact these can have on local residents. They should seek appropriate reassurances from relevant authorities and the police and work to put plans in place to reduce tensions.

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**POLICY ASK: Support Jewish cultural institutions, raising their profile through holding prominent civic events there.**

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**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.**

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**POLICY ASK: Support Jewish cultural life in the UK and protect Jewish cultural events from intimidation.**

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## JEWISH HERITAGE BUILDINGS AND CEMETERIES

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There are many beautiful Jewish synagogues and other buildings around the UK, including in areas where the Jewish community has now depleted and may not be able to maintain them. Local authorities should look at what support they can give to the upkeep of these important elements of Jewish and local heritage. This includes supporting security arrangements and local education to safeguard against desecration.

The same is true of Jewish cemeteries. Jewish religious 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 or development.

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 works with local authorities and others to seek to protect these cemeteries from both desecration and physical dereliction. Local Jewish Representative Councils are also key stakeholders in communal efforts to maintain disused Jewish cemeteries.

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**POLICY ASK:** Support the preservation of Jewish heritage in your area, including synagogues and other Jewish buildings.

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**POLICY ASK:** Work with the Board of Deputies to protect Jewish cemeteries from damage from vandalism or the geological impact of nearby development.

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## SMALLER COMMUNITIES

Smaller Jewish communities are extremely varied in their resilience, how they engage with their Jewish identity, and the issues they face.

Some historically larger communities have shrunk over time and may be struggling to maintain their local institutions such as synagogues or cemeteries, whereas other newer communities that are just starting out may not yet have a physical footprint. In some areas, the Jewish 'community' will be as small as a handful of individuals, without any physical infrastructure.

Smaller communities can struggle with viability, whether in terms of accessing kosher food, what happens if communal buildings are damaged or managing council fees for burial. These communities may feel particularly vulnerable at times of increased antisemitism or tension in the Middle East. Such communities would particularly appreciate contact, support or recognition from their local authority.

The Board of Deputies of British Jews is happy to advise about the local communities in your area. Many areas are also covered by a local Jewish Representative Council, which would tend to be based in the nearest city with a sizeable Jewish community. A contact list of Jewish Representative Councils is included in this Manifesto and they will be happy to advise on the needs of local communities. The smallest communities are supported by the Jewish Small Communities Network, which can also be contacted directly at [www.jcsn.org.uk](http://www.jcsn.org.uk).

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**POLICY ASK:** Pay particular attention to the needs of smaller Jewish communities, who may feel particularly vulnerable to increases in anti-Jewish rhetoric and may need particular support to promote viable, ongoing Jewish life in their areas.

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**COMMITMENT 10:**  
**PAY ATTENTION TO THE NEEDS OF SMALLER JEWISH COMMUNITIES.**

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## LOCAL JEWISH REPRESENTATIVE COUNCILS

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### **LONDON**

London Jewish Forum  
E: [info@ljf.org.uk](mailto:info@ljf.org.uk)  
W: [www.londonjewishforum.org.uk](http://www.londonjewishforum.org.uk)  
T: 020 7042 8684

### **NORTH EAST**

Representative Council of North East Jewry  
E: [repCouncil@northeastjewish.org.uk](mailto:repCouncil@northeastjewish.org.uk)  
W: [www.northeastjewish.org.uk](http://www.northeastjewish.org.uk)

### **NORTH WEST**

Jewish Representative Council of Greater Manchester and Region  
(including Blackpool, Lytham St Annes, Preston and Stoke-on-Trent)  
E: [office@jewishmanchester.org](mailto:office@jewishmanchester.org)  
W: [www.jewishmanchester.org](http://www.jewishmanchester.org)  
T: 0161 720 8721

Merseyside Jewish Representative Council  
(including the Wirral and Chester)  
E: [sara@liverpooljewish.co.uk](mailto:sara@liverpooljewish.co.uk)  
W: [www.liverpooljewish.co.uk](http://www.liverpooljewish.co.uk)  
T: 0151 733 2292

### **SOUTH EAST**

Berkshire Jewish Representative Council  
E: [mdaniels@globalnet.co.uk](mailto:mdaniels@globalnet.co.uk)

Sussex Jewish Representative Council  
W: [www.sussexjewishrepresentativecouncil.org](http://www.sussexjewishrepresentativecouncil.org)  
T: 07881 887 589

### **SOUTH WEST**

Bournemouth Jewish Representative Council  
W: [www.bournemouthjrc.co.uk](http://www.bournemouthjrc.co.uk)

**WEST MIDLANDS**

Representative Council of Birmingham and West Midlands Jewry  
E: [jewishbirmingham@talktalk.net](mailto:jewishbirmingham@talktalk.net)  
W: [www.jewishbirmingham.org](http://www.jewishbirmingham.org)

**YORKSHIRE AND HUMBER**

Hull Jewish Representative Council  
E: [westernmans@gmail.com](mailto:westernmans@gmail.com)

Leeds Jewish Representative Council  
(covering Bradford, Harrogate and York)  
E: [info@ljrc.org](mailto:info@ljrc.org)  
W: [www.ljrc.org](http://www.ljrc.org)  
T: 0113 218 5869

**SCOTLAND**

Glasgow Jewish Representative Council  
E: [office@glasgowjewishrepcouncil.org](mailto:office@glasgowjewishrepcouncil.org)  
W: [www.jewishglasgow.org](http://www.jewishglasgow.org)

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities  
E: [scojec@scojec.org](mailto:scojec@scojec.org)  
W: [www.scojec.org](http://www.scojec.org)  
T: 0141 638 6411

**WALES**

South Wales Jewish Representative Council  
E: [swjewishrepcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:swjewishrepcouncil@gmail.com)

**NORTHERN IRELAND**

Belfast Jewish community  
E: [belfastjewishcommunity@gmail.com](mailto:belfastjewishcommunity@gmail.com)

**SMALL COMMUNITIES**

Jewish Small Communities Network  
W: [www.jscn.org.uk](http://www.jscn.org.uk)

**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.**

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## **CONTACT**

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