

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Marie van der Zyl
President
The Board of Deputies of British Jews
1 Torriano Mews
London
NW5 2RZ

4 April 2020

Dear Marie,

I hope that you, your team at the Board of Deputies and all your families are keeping well in the context of the Coronavirus pandemic.

I have been saddened to learn of the particularly high death rate in the Jewish community. Please be assured of my sympathy and solidarity at this time and if there is anything the Labour Party can do to help, please let us know.

I was today elected Leader of the Labour Party. I wanted personally to write to you as soon as I took office to reiterate my commitment to stamping out antisemitism within the Party and to extend an invitation to meet me to discuss this further.

Today, in my acceptance speech - the earliest opportunity for me to do so - I have apologised unequivocally on behalf of the Labour Party for our failure to stamp out anti-semitism. I now repeat that apology to you. As I said in my speech:

“Anti-semitism has been a stain on our party. I have seen the grief it's brought to so many Jewish communities.

On behalf of the Labour Party, I am sorry.

And I will tear out this poison by its roots and judge success by the return of Jewish members and those who felt that they could no longer support us”.

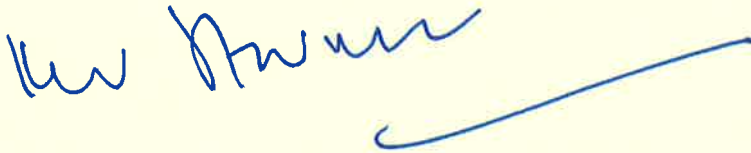
I realise there is a long way to go to rebuild trust and that words now need to be accompanied by decisive action. I will be speaking with the Jewish community on this in the coming days and setting out the steps we will take to root out anti-semitism once and for all.

I hope you will always feel able to speak candidly and honestly with me, and I hope I will have your support and guidance. I adopted the Board of Deputies' Ten Pledges on tackling antisemitism on the day that they were released and now want to work with you make sure that they are delivered as soon as possible.

To that end, I should like to hold a video conference with you and other Jewish leaders from the Jewish Leadership Council, the Community Security Trust and the Jewish Labour Movement. My office will be in touch shortly with the arrangements.

I look forward to discussing further then to building a strong relationship between us.

Yours sincerely,

All very best


Keir Starmer MP
Leader of the Labour Party