

After the Heaton Park attack

Towards a comprehensive
government strategy on
antisemitism

After the Heaton Park attack

Towards a comprehensive government strategy on antisemitism



PHOTO: PA / ALAMY

This document is a consolidated summary of urgent policy priorities of the Jewish community, following the antisemitic terrorist attack on the Heaton Park Hebrew Congregation on Yom Kippur (2 October 2025), the holiest day of the Jewish calendar. This attack was not just an attack on British Jews, but on British society and British values.

These priorities are based on consultations within and between leading community organisations, including the Board of Deputies, JLC, CST and UJS, and reflect the focus of our engagement with government and others since the attack.

We have seen a series of welcome announcements from government in response, and we are actively seeking further action and implementation across these priorities.

However, these measures on their own will not be sufficient to meet the long-term society-wide challenge of confronting antisemitic hatred as it has manifested itself in recent years. What is needed is a Comprehensive Government Strategy on Antisemitism, and this paper reflects what that might encompass.

Building on existing initiatives, including the recent report of the Board of Deputies Commission on Antisemitism, we will continue working with partners and experts, with government, and with all parts of our diverse community, to seek input on these priorities and to integrate them into a wider strategy that addresses the problem at its deepest roots. This includes ensuring the relevance of these priorities for the whole of the UK, taking account of administrative and legal variations in devolved nations and regions.

Policy Priorities

Policing and Security

1. Physical security: The attack on the Heaton Park Hebrew Congregation could be followed by others. In that light:

- We seek the ongoing reassurance of additional and visible police presence in the vicinity of Synagogues, Jewish schools and other institutions.
- We welcome the commitment of additional resources for Jewish community security, administered by CST.
- We support government and community-led trauma response work.

2. Hate speech on marches: We welcome the Home Secretary's commitment to give police new powers to put conditions on repeat protests by considering the 'cumulative impact' of previous protest activity, and the intention to review public order legislation. In that context we seek further action to ensure enforcement against any individual or group which incites violence or hatred against Jewish people and/or commits public order offences during marches. Clear action is needed in relation to various slogans including those calling for global Intifada, celebrating "resistance"; threatening Zionists, e.g. calling for "Zionists off our streets"; or threatening Jews directly, whether in English or in other languages, e.g. chants of "Khaybar, yaa Yahood". Government should make clear publicly that action will be taken and ensure police make full use of existing powers under the Public Order Act (1986). If necessary, government must be prepared to surge court capacity as occurred in response to riots following the attack in Southport in 2024 and after riots in 2011. We seek assurance that the review of public order legislation will be attuned to the Jewish community's concerns in this area.

3. Prosecuting hate speech: Government must ensure determined, effective and consistent prosecution of antisemitic hate speech and incitement wherever it appears. This includes providing guidance and creating alignment between Police, CPS (or COPFS in Scotland) and the College of Policing regarding grounds for criminal proceedings. We call for a new Hate Crime Action Plan. Areas of particular concern regarding antisemitic hate speech include:

- Hate speech from some mosques and clerics: We know the perpetrator of the Manchester attack followed extremist preachers. There can be no more reticence to prosecute antisemitic hate speech preached by clerics, whether online or in a mosque.
- Online including social media: There is a need to clamp down on the growing phenomenon of "grass roots" antisemitic incitement on social media platforms large and small.
- Performances: Examples include music acts showing support for banned terrorist groups. There is a need to redress procedural failures exposed by the failed prosecution of a Kneecap band member over support for the proscribed terrorist group Hezbollah.

Extremism

4. Naming the ideological threat of Islamist antisemitism: The Manchester attack was an act of Islamist antisemitic terrorism. We welcome the Prime Minister's clear identification of "Islamist ideologies of hatred towards Jews." There must be a clear and consistent naming of this ideological threat from ministers, and commensurate policy responses to confront it.

5. Prevent must focus on antisemitic radicalisation whether it is Islamist, far right or far left. This includes through an expansion of training for Prevent officers on antisemitism and its various ideological sources, whether by the Commission for Countering Extremism or another suitable body.

6. Authorities must intervene to address extremism propagated by ideological activist groups, especially those propagating Islamist extremist antisemitic hatred including state-backed groups. The Charity Commission must have powers and support to close charities associated with extremism. Government must act on its commitment to confront state backed threats such as the IRGC, and the new FIRS scheme must be enforced with rigour, in particular regarding Iran-linked groups.

7. Government must step up research on antisemitism as part of a wider challenge to understand national security threats posed by ideological extremism. Centralised government research must address how antisemitic ideas are evolving in far-right, Islamist and far-left spaces and their wider cultural context. The Commission for Countering Extremism (CCE) should be reinvigorated with a new commissioner with expertise in this area. Research priorities include:

- Islamist threats in the UK and the role of groups propagating this ideology and associated with the Muslim Brotherhood.
- The evolving intellectual climate surrounding antisemitism on the left including ideas relating to race and power (influential in universities and in EDI training) that are problematic for grasping antisemitism as racism, and which frequently distort understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

8. Expand training on antisemitism in the civil service and public sector.

9. Protect young people from disinformation and extremism on social media.

Working with Ofcom, there must be comprehensive implementation of the Online Safety Act and a review of gaps based on the evolving nature of the threats, with greater pressure on social media operators including smaller platforms.

Civil Society

10. Implement all ten recommendations of the Board of Deputies Commission on Antisemitism in full (see annex) in relation to government and public sector as well as wider civil society. These include recommendations to stop anti-Jewish discrimination in the workplace; trade unions; public services (especially the health service); and the arts and other cultural spaces (including sport); as well as recognising Jewishness as an ethnicity.

11. There must be clear government directives to ensure public bodies including regulators, and their office holders, have robust codes of conduct with explicit reference to antisemitism. Certain actions may fall short or be borderline in terms of criminality but nonetheless be clearly unacceptable for persons in a position of responsibility. The recent high-profile decision of the Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service (MPTS) is a red flag. The IHRA definition of antisemitism should be used consistently.

12. Promote social cohesion programmes that build resilience against tensions and the spread of extremism within local communities, underpinned by affirmation of shared British values. This should include supporting programmes to promote a positive understanding of Jewish identity and history across communities, such as Jewish Culture Month, and bridge-building initiatives between Jews and Muslims, such as the Optimistic Alliance.

13. Show solidarity with the Jewish community through visits and engagement to institutions including synagogues and schools, as well as Jewish campus events.

14. Address issues in broadcast media and especially the BBC. This includes the need for antisemitism training, as indicated by failures around the broadcast from Glastonbury, and addressing shortcomings in coverage of the Middle East. This may also include additional enforcement powers for Ofcom in respect of the BBC and other broadcasters.

15. MHCLG guidance to local government on community cohesion should include avoiding importing international conflict into local communities. Local politicians should reject divisive gestures and focus on dialogue and bridge building within communities. Local authorities should adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism.

Schools and Universities

16. Provide specific and actionable guidance for universities on hate speech and harassment: Government and the Office for Students must clarify what constitutes unacceptable harassment of Jewish students and staff, with clear guidance including examples of threatening or exclusionary language (e.g. “Zionists not welcome here”).

17. Demand full enforcement of student and staff codes of conduct: University leaders must be enabled to take disciplinary action in response to antisemitic harassment whether by students or lecturers, with reports of hate crime responded to within a maximum timeframe set by the regulator. Clear public warnings around harassment and incitement must be issued by universities, with backing from the Office for Students.

18. Protests around universities: There should be clear directives for police to work with universities to stop protests that include hate speech and interrupt university activity in areas around campuses, whether from students or others.

19. Boosting education and training about antisemitism and Jewish life in schools and universities, including adding the study of contemporary antisemitism into the national curriculum, and continuing to promote the UJS’s DfE-backed antisemitism awareness training for universities.

20. OFSTED should require schools to categorise antisemitic incidents in their reporting on safeguarding, and expand on this in KCSIE guidance.

Appendix 1:

Summary of recommendations of the Board of Deputies Commission on Antisemitism

Chaired by Lord John Mann & Dame Penny
Mordaunt, July 2025

Summary of recommendations of the Board of Deputies Commission on Antisemitism

Chaired by Lord John Mann & Dame
Penny Mordaunt, July 2025

1. Recognition and support for Jewish staff networks.
2. Recognise Jewishness as an ethnicity as well as a religion.
3. Creation of an 'Antisemitism Training Qualification'.
4. Education on antisemitism should be required in all Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training.
5. Evaluate and roll out initiative to teach primary school teachers how to avoid passing on antisemitism and anti-Jewish tropes in their lessons, particularly focussing on Christian sources.
6. A summit should be held with NHS leaders across the UK to address antisemitism in the NHS, including basic training across every NHS Trust.
7. Activities, associations and attire that undermine trust in the universality of welfare, safety or security services should not be permitted for persons providing those services.
8. Professional organisations and trade unions must ensure that all Jewish members are treated equally and with respect. Either the professional bodies and trade unions are required to act appropriately towards their members, or a third-party support and indemnity should be provided in professions where that is required.
9. Contract compliance should be leveraged wherever public sector organisations or companies in the private sector are financially involved with a venue placing barriers to Jewish involvement in the arts.
10. Police Chiefs Council and the College of Policing should come forward with proposals on how consistency can be embedded in dealing with antisemitic crimes, including groups planning to cause damage to buildings, property and people.

