
London Jewish Forum Manifesto 2016

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THE POSITIVE VOICE OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

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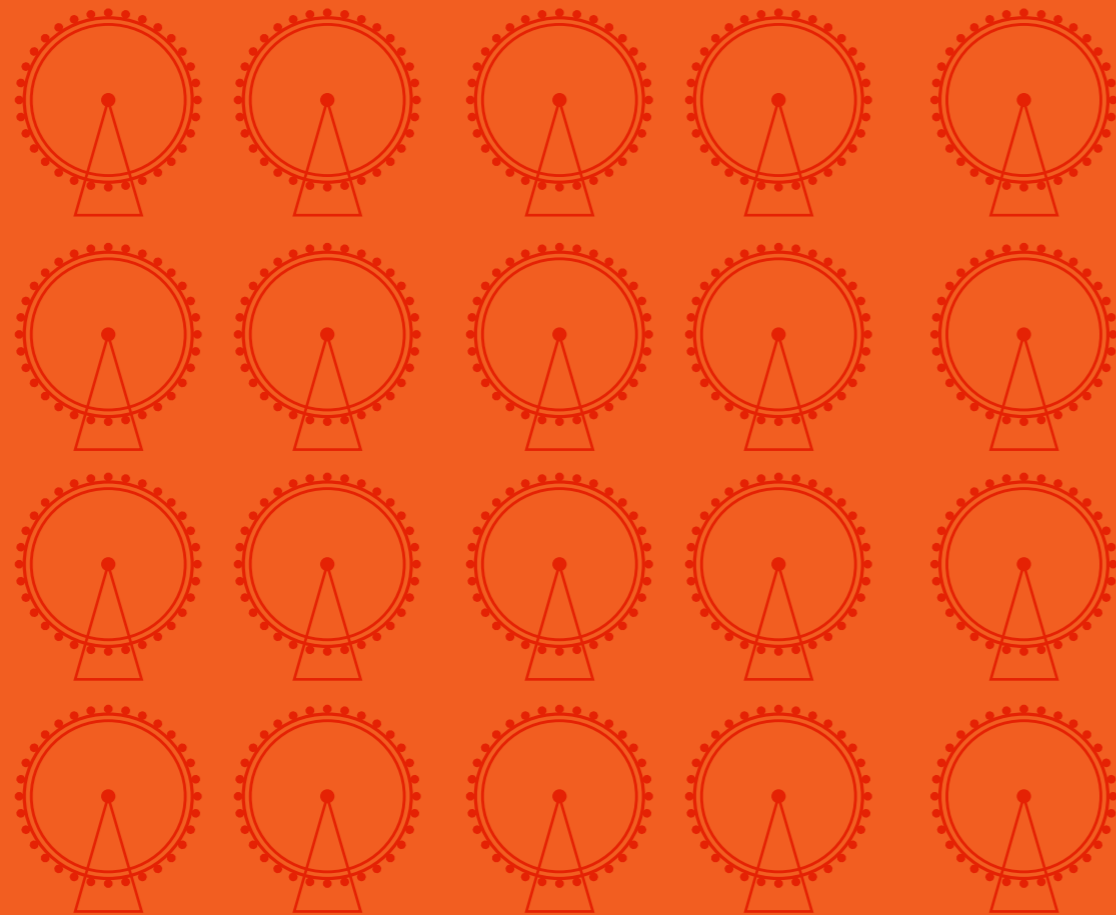
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Foreword

The London Jewish Forum, founded in 2006, is an advocate for the capital's Jewish community, campaigning and influencing change in Parliament, City Hall and the local borough councils, institutions that make decisions affecting the lives of Jewish Londoners every day. Rooted within Jewish values, we work across the community regardless of religious, cultural or political affiliations or beliefs, ensuring that Jewish Londoners have a say over the great city in which they lead their lives.

Led by our steering group of Jewish leaders from across the community, since our inception we have worked closely with politicians and stakeholders to improve the lives of Jewish communities across London. Through projects such as Golders Green Together, the 2012 Olympics Jewish Organising Committee and events such as 'Think Jewish London', for ten years we have ensured that Jewish Londoners are represented across the capital.

The London Mayoral and Assembly elections on Thursday 5th May 2016 will mark the beginning of a new era in the capital's politics. With the Mayor standing down after eight years, whoever is elected in May promises to bring a new agenda to City Hall, and one which will shape London for many years to come.

Working with the relevant communal agencies we have identified the issues and concerns of London's Jewish community. Moreover, we have created this manifesto to inform both incumbent and prospective politicians and wider stakeholders of the issues and concerns of the capital's Jewish community, both inside and outside the remit of City Hall.

With pressures on housing, community cohesion and the social care sector to name a few, this manifesto seeks to build upon the crucial relationship between decision makers in London and their Jewish constituents, ensuring our elected officials and public servants are understanding and responsive to those challenges.

Some of these issues and concerns are shared with London's wider community. Our wellbeing is tied to that of our neighbours, so working with communities across the city, we strive to deliver a cohesive, inclusive and tolerant London that all communities can enjoy.

The issues raised in this manifesto will nevertheless require work in partnership with politicians and community leaders for years to come, and we hope it serves as a foundation of the work to be done during the election and beyond.



Adrian Cohen
Chair, London Jewish Forum



London's Jewish Community

Jews have lived in London since medieval times where they played a prominent role in the city prior to their expulsion in 1290, and since their return in 1657, have developed strong and enduring communities.

According to the latest census data, there are 263,346 Jews living in England and Wales today, with three out of five living in London alone – although this figure may be higher. The Institute of Jewish Policy Research estimates that figure is closer to 284,000 as some members of the community do not identify themselves in census data.¹

The London Boroughs of Brent, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, Harrow, Islington and Redbridge are all home to significant Jewish populations, ranging from 10,000 – 20,000 residents in each borough. The London Borough of Barnet alone is home to 54,084 Jews, accounting for one in five Jews living in the UK.

Between 2001 and 2011 the average size of Jewish households increased from 2.17 to 2.31. Jewish households remain smaller than those in the general population (2.36) but the gap is closing.

However, despite the geographical concentration of the Jewish population in particular London boroughs, the community itself is diverse, with Jews active in a wide variety of employment sectors and socio-economic groups across the capital.

Furthermore, the way in which individuals define as Jewish and observe Judaism is varied. A quarter (26%) of Jews describe themselves as being 'Traditional'; a similar proportion (24%) as 'Secular/Cultural'; and a minority (16%) as 'Orthodox' or 'Haredi'. 18% describe themselves as 'Reform/Progressive'.²

Similarly, 57% of the Jewish Community regularly attend a Friday night meal, and 52% observe kashrut (Jewish dietary laws) inside their home.³

¹ Jewish Historical Society of England

² Census 2011

³ 2013 NJCS national survey

Our Priorities and Pledges

Our Priorities and Pledges

The manifesto sets out the areas of priority identified by the London Jewish Forum through consultation with its stakeholders and these have been distilled into pledges. We ask the candidates to endorse these pledges, and to work with the Jewish community to achieve them.

Education, Employment and Young People

Pledge 1: To support and champion Jewish schools in London, planning for future population growth and greater numbers of Jewish school places.

Pledge 2: To recognise the role of Jewish youth organisations in their contribution both to the Jewish community and through social action to wider society, and to encourage their continued support by local government and agencies within the city.

Community Safety, Cohesion and Antisemitism

Pledge 1: In light of the increased security threat level for the Jewish community, ensure that combating antisemitism and hate crime in London remains a priority for City Hall, that there is a continued focus on terrorism prevention and community resilience, and that MOPAC continues to support the work of CST in providing services to support victims of antisemitic hate crime.

Pledge 2: To engage with London Jewish Forum and its relevant stakeholders in projects that deliver inter-community and interfaith strategies, such as Golders Green Together, encouraging tolerance and promoting cooperation.

Health and Social Care

Pledge 1: To ensure that the increased costs associated with specialist Jewish social care

provision are recognised and supported in relation to state funding.

Pledge 2: To monitor and ensure that all councils who choose to raise a 2% social care precept on local council tax use the additional funds for the purpose of social care and none other.

Culture, Heritage and Social Action

Pledge 1: To ensure faith-based bodies and events that celebrate Jewish culture and history in London, such as Chanukah in the Square, are fully supported by City Hall through the continuing provision of funds and GLA endorsement.

Pledge 2: To endorse and encourage Jewish charities engaged in promoting inter-community, interfaith relationships and social action within the city and where appropriate their funding and other support by local government and other agencies within the city.

Housing and Transport

Pledge 1: To commit to and provide for the specific housing needs of the Jewish community alongside the needs of our non-Jewish neighbours, with affordable new housing for purchase and rent, including homes for larger families located in areas close to community amenities.

Pledge 2: To ensure Transport for London commits to reviewing and investing in transport infrastructure across the capital, and addresses the specific needs of the Jewish community, for example providing for a direct bus route from Stamford Hill to Golders Green.

Education and Young People

Lifelong learning is a concept that perhaps unites all streams of Judaism and Jewish communities. It manifests itself in London's 51 Jewish schools, through multiple youth movements and religious institutions and across organisations such as Limmud. It's no surprise therefore that education, skills and employment are consistently amongst the community's key concerns.

Similarly, the Jewish community's provision for young people is highly developed and reaches at least 20,000 young people annually, including over 12 denominational and cross-communal youth groups.

Equally, around 60% of Jewish children, 26,000 nationally, attend a Jewish school – giving them the opportunity to enjoy a Jewish education, rooted in British values and the national curriculum. While some of these operate in the private sector, the vast majority receive state support, many of which are in fact models for other schools, promoting links between schools of all faiths and none, ensuring children understand others with backgrounds different to their own.^{1 & 2}

However, the demand on Jewish school places continues to outstrip supply, and a clear commitment to funding Jewish-based education is needed from local authorities and central government to ensure that the growing population of Jews have the opportunity to attend a Jewish school.

Pledge 1: To support and champion Jewish schools in London, planning for future population growth and greater numbers of Jewish school places.

Pledge 2: To recognise the role of Jewish youth organisations in their contribution both to the Jewish community and through social action to wider society, and to encourage their continued support by local government and agencies within the city.



¹ Jews in the United Kingdom in 2013, JPR

² Jewish Leadership Council Report on the Future of Jewish Schools

Community Safety, Cohesion and Antisemitism

London is a vibrant multicultural capital, in which all components of the Jewish community rightly play an integral and confident part. The Jewish community is well established across the capital and by and large is integrated into the wider fabric of society.

The Jewish community is committed to promoting good relations between different groups in London – proactively preventing tensions, racism and violence, and encouraging tolerance and understanding.

Despite the confidence of the community shown through a multitude of religious and cultural expressions, the community has longstanding legitimate concerns regarding its security and levels of antisemitism.

The primary threat to London's Jews comes from terrorism. This affects all Londoners, but as was shown in Copenhagen (February 2015), Paris (January 2015), Brussels (May 2014) and Toulouse (March 2012), there is a specific terrorist threat to Jewish communities.

Since 2010, government has supported the Jewish community by providing funding for security at grant maintained Jewish schools. In 2015, this funding was extended to include all Jewish schools and an additional provision was made for the cost of security guarding at sensitive communal buildings. Since 2014 The Mayor's Office of Policing and Crime (MOPAC) has partially funded CST's (Community Security Trust) work in supporting victims of antisemitic hate crime in London.¹

CST's monitoring of antisemitism has recorded a long-term rise of incidents since 2000, which includes specific increases associated with antisemitic responses to 'trigger' incidents usually occurring in the Middle East.

This increase is keenly felt in London and its surrounds due to the large proportion of Jews and Jewish institutions based in the capital. It is exacerbated by the emotional impact of extreme anti-Israel activity, such as boycott, divestment and sanction campaigns, that can negatively impact Jewish communal life, including on London's university campuses and transport networks.

For example, in February 2016, London Jewish Forum played a leading role in combating anti-Israel subvertments on London's tube network. We would like to see a continued effort within City Hall and Transport for London to tackle these types of divisive actions.

Pledge 1: In light of the increased security threat level for the Jewish community, ensure that combating antisemitism and hate crime in London remains a priority for City Hall, that there is a continued focus on terrorism prevention and community resilience, and that MOPAC continues to support the work of CST in providing services to support victims of antisemitic hate crime.

Pledge 2: To engage with London Jewish Forum and its relevant stakeholders in projects that deliver inter-community and interfaith strategies, such as Golders Green Together, encouraging tolerance and promoting cooperation.

¹ CST Annual Report 2015

Health and Social Care

London's Jewish community is considered one of the most vibrant and well-established faith groups monitored in the capital, but over 40% of the community are over 50, significantly higher than the London average, with twice the number of people over 60 compared to the general UK population. The effects of an ageing population are therefore disproportionately felt by the Jewish community and its social care providers.^{1&2}

The majority of Jewish Londoners entering long-term care prefer to access services from Jewish providers such as Jewish Care, Norwood and Nightingale Hammerson, ensuring they can enjoy care that provides for and is in tune with their religious and cultural sensitivities.²

However, Jewish social care, adult and learning disabled support including mental health services continue to be under-funded by local authorities in London, with some showing little understanding for the importance of culturally specific services.

Other local authorities are reluctant to contribute to the care of a resident when he or she chooses to leave local authority social care in search of a culturally sensitive provider.²

The community itself continues to fundraise and provide the largest supplementary source of income for social care providers, as well as a significant volunteer base, but a combination of ever increasing costs and dwindling state support has nonetheless caused severe funding issues for the community's social care providers.

The Local Government Association estimates that gap between social care funding and demand will reach nearly £6 billion nationally by the end of 2015/16.³

Pledge 1: To ensure that the increased costs associated with specialist Jewish social care provision are recognised and supported in relation to state funding.

Pledge 2: To monitor and ensure that all councils who choose to raise a 2% social care precept on local council tax use the additional funds for the purpose of social care and none other.



¹ Jews in the United Kingdom in 2013, JPR

² An agenda for aging well in the Jewish Community, Jewish Care

³ Adult social care funding: 2014 state of the nation report, LGA

Housing and Transport

The pressure on housing in London continues to be a significant and diverse issue for the capital's population, and this affects Jewish communities in common with their non-Jewish counterparts.

Many young Jews, in common with their non-Jewish counterparts, have become priced out of owning their own home in the community they grew up in - evidenced by the increasing number of Jews who have now moved to the surrounding local authorities just outside of the capital. Similarly, the cost of renting a home in London continues to increase at a faster rate than increases in pay, putting pressure on some Jews to live a considerable distance away from their local synagogues, eruv and most importantly their families.

This problem is exacerbated for Orthodox Jews who cannot travel on the Sabbath and other Jewish festivals, as their families and communities are not within walking distance of their home.

Similarly, larger families in the community continue to struggle to find accommodation that can house all of their relatives, with recent changes to welfare provision adding further challenges for some families.¹

Transport infrastructure is also key to ensuring Jewish communities can travel to work, visit their families and enjoy London's cultural offering. It is therefore crucial that Transport for London continues to review and invest in transport infrastructure projects across the capital,

particularly in parts of North London that continue to experience growing populations, such as Barnet, Brent, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, Harrow, Islington and Redbridge.²

For example, extending the 210 bus route so that it terminates at Stamford Hill, without requiring a change at Finsbury Park station, continues to be a priority for the community.

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Pledge 2: To ensure Transport for London commits to reviewing and investing in transport infrastructure across the capital, and addresses the specific needs of the Jewish community, for example providing for a direct bus route from Stamford Hill to Golders Green.

¹ Jewish families and Jewish households, JPR
² Census 2011

Culture, Heritage and Social Action

Jewish culture in London continues to thrive and makes a significant contribution to the lives of those both inside and outside of the community.

With organisations such as JW3, The Jewish Museum London, The Ben Uri Gallery, Jewish Book Week and the UK Jewish Film Festival, the Jewish community remains passionate in its desire for public celebration of Jewish culture, festivals and the Jewish calendar events, such as Chanukah in the Square.

We therefore welcome recognition within City Hall's cultural strategy, including support for Chanukah in the Square, and support the assembly's desire for public events and festivals to deliver community engagement and strengthen the visitor economy.

2016 also marks the 80th anniversary of the battle of Cable Street, when an attempted march by Sir Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists (BUF), through largely Jewish areas of the East End of London in October 1936, was prevented by huge numbers of anti-fascist protestors including many Jews from across London. The anniversary presents many opportunities for collaboration with other faith groups, political organisations and residents of East London to strengthen our common goal of defeating fascism and racism.

Despite this, many historic centres of Jewish life have been lost as communities have gradually moved away from East London and into other parts of the capital. It is of paramount importance that a co-ordinated effort is made by

City Hall and the respective Local Authorities to preserve these key historical sites, such as current and past synagogues, monuments and blue plaques celebrating Jewish individuals in East London.

Jews also have a long history of playing an integral part in supporting both religious and cultural aspects of the Jewish faith through volunteering. This commitment to volunteering presents a great opportunity to adopt a larger focus on the idea of a shared volunteer community made up of many different faiths - promoting greater understanding of other faiths and a greater appreciation of how faith-based organisations enrich the community culture.

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