

**Committee:** Council

**Date:**

**Title:** International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism

Tuesday, 25  
February 2020

**Report Author:** Dawn French, Chief Executive  
dfrench@uttlesford.gov.uk  
Tel: 01799 510400

---

## Summary

1. The Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government has written to all local authorities encouraging them to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism.
2. The definition is not designed to be legally binding but is intended to demonstrate a commitment to engaging with the experiences of Jewish communities.
3. Members are invited to debate the matter and propose to adopt the definition. If members are not minded to adopt the definition, the reasons for not doing so should be clearly set out.

## Recommendations

That the Council adopts the following non-legally binding working definition of antisemitism:

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

## Financial Implications

3. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## Background Papers

4. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report:

Letter from Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government – 15 October 2019.

## Situation

5. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), founded in 1998, is an inter-governmental body that unites governments and experts to

strengthen, advance and promote Holocaust education, research and remembrance and to uphold the commitments to the 2000 Stockholm Declaration. The United Kingdom has been member of the IHRA since it was founded in 1998.

6. In October 2019, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government wrote to local authorities expressing an urgent need to take action which includes adopting the definition. The letter is attached at Enclosure 1. It should be noted that no trace can be found of the letter of 2017 referred to in the 2019 letter.

7. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) adopted the following, non-legally binding, working definition of antisemitism:

“Anti-Semitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

8. The IHRA has published examples to guide organisations on the implementation of the definition, these are set out in Enclosure 2 and are considered to be essential supporting elements of the working definition.

9. There is no recent data recording the number of residents identifying as Jewish in Uttlesford but the 2011 Census reported 0.29% of the Uttlesford population was Jewish.

10. The Council's equality policy seeks to ensure people are treated with dignity and respect and the causes of unfairness are understood and addressed. A hate crime is defined as a crime which is committed against someone due to their race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability. Tackling hate crime – which includes antisemitism - is important for the Council, not just because of the devastating consequences it can have for victims and their families, but also because it can divide communities.

11. Whilst the IHRA definition of Anti-Semitism is not legally binding its adoption will support the Council's obligations under the Equality Act 2010, and its responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty, to demonstrate due regard and to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

12. The IHRA definition serves as a complementary measure that addresses equalities issues though seeking to deepen the understanding of anti-Semitism.

13. Members are advised that despite the request from the Secretary of State not all councils have adopted the IHRA definition, although the actual number is as yet unknown. The Secretary of State is intending to publish lists of adopting and non-adopting Councils. At the end of January 2020, he was quoted as saying:

*“I have been clear that all universities and local councils that have not already done so must adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of anti-Semitism. It is shocking that some still haven’t, demonstrating a serious lack of respect for this issue. I will shortly publish the list of those councils that have told my department that they will adopt the definition and those that have explicitly refused to do so. Organisations like these should not expect to receive public money if they cannot demonstrate that they are fighting antisemitism.”*

## Risk Analysis

1.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
There is a risk on the Council’s reputation and relationship with the Jewish community if the definition is not adopted	3 – whilst the population of Jews in Uttlesford may not be high, the issue of anti-semitism is of concern to the wider community	3 - whilst the population of Jews in Uttlesford may not be high, the issue of anti-semitism is of concern to the wider community	Adoption of the IHRA definition or a clear explanation of why the Council is not supportive of the definition.

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.