

## **National Executive Committee Report, 7 December 2020**

Two special meetings were held to consider Labour's response to the EHRC (equality and human rights commission) report on anti-semitism in the party. The equalities committee met on Friday 4 December: together with NEC members this committee is attended by stakeholders from affiliated organisations who bring a wider perspective. The full NEC then met on Monday 7 December and endorsed the draft action plan. This covers all the EHRC's recommendations and was agreed as an important step towards rebuilding trust and confidence with our Jewish members and the Jewish community. It will be submitted to the EHRC on 10 December and because it is still a draft, I will not comment on its contents until it is accepted and published. There will then be a great deal to do at both the operational and the strategic level to ensure that the party complies with its legal requirements.

Neither will I comment on discussions in either meeting, as I respect confidentiality and the serious situation in which the party finds itself. However anyone who has read the EHRC report will be aware that the party is held legally responsible for the actions of its agents, including postings on social media, and that the definition of "agent" is drawn very broadly. As far as Labour (and other political parties) is concerned, it may cover MPs, NEC members, councillors and other elected representatives, candidates, and branch and constituency officers when they are acting in their party roles. The implications for local activists and volunteers are considerable.

### **Equalities Committee, 4 December 2020**

A few other items were taken at this meeting. As it was the first opportunity after the NEC awayday the committee elected officers for the year ahead. All were unopposed. James Asser, the socialist societies, representative, was elected as chair, and thanked his predecessor Ann Henderson for her work. The following were then elected as vice-chairs: Lara McNeill for youth, Ellen Morrison for disability, Carol Sewell for BAME members, Nick Forbes for LGBT+ members, and myself and Jayne Taylor of Unite, jobsharing as vice-chair for women. Jayne was formerly on the conference arrangements committee and we worked together with comrades on the interim women's CAC to get the 2019 women's conference in Telford up and running. We will be meeting the national women's officer early in the New Year to discuss priorities for the year ahead, so please get in touch.

Under minutes of previous meetings, the committee agreed that the Labour Women's Network should be fully involved in continuing to take the Jo Cox leadership programme forward. Members requested that participants in the Bernie Grant programme should be asked for feedback, and followed up after completion. There was also a desire to introduce independence into processes for handling complaints about all protected characteristics.

### **National Policy Forum Update**

As the returning chair of the NPF, I shall be meeting the head of policy development before Christmas. An email will go to CLP officers shortly, including the interim policy commission reports and an update on the timetable for the next stage. I am stressing the need to engage members more fully, and to make visible progress on themes such as the green new deal and the future after Covid, as well as key campaigning points around which everyone can unite, such as maintaining the uplift to universal credit, protecting tenants from eviction and opposing public sector pay freezes. I would be grateful for thoughts on policy development, and indeed on anything else.

Finally local parties will also be consulted on a review of policy-making processes, the fifth since I was elected to the NPF more than 20 years ago. I hope that it will be more productive than its predecessors.

With all good wishes for the New Year, as we move forward into an uncertain future.

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