

# The Forde Inquiry

Independent investigation into the circumstances and contents of the report entitled "*The work of the Labour Party's Governance and Legal Unit in relation to antisemitism, 2014-2019*"

## Call for Evidence

We have been appointed by the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party to undertake the above investigation into the circumstances and contents of the report entitled "*The work of the Labour Party's Governance and Legal Unit in relation to antisemitism, 2014-2019*" ('the Report').

### Investigation scope

The full terms of reference of the investigation are enclosed. In relevant part:

*The Panel shall investigate and report on:*

- 1. The truth or otherwise of the main allegations in 'the Report' (the Panel shall determine which are the most significant allegations which require investigation but they shall include the extent of racist, sexist and other discriminatory culture within Labour Party workplaces, the attitudes and conduct of the senior staff of the Labour Party, and their relationships with the elected leadership of the Labour Party);*
- 2. The background and circumstances in which the Report was commissioned, written and circulated within the Labour Party, with its advisers and any other individuals external to the Labour Party, including the question of the purpose for which the Report was commissioned and prepared, and the circumstances in which the Report was put into the public domain; and*
- 3. The structure, culture and practices of the Labour Party organisation including the relationship between senior party staff and the elected leadership of the Labour Party, as the Panel think appropriate having regard to their investigation as a whole.*

*And the Panel shall make such recommendations as it considers appropriate concerning the organisation and structures of the Labour Party, arising out of its investigation, recognising that Labour Party structures are covered in rule.*

### Background and nature of the investigation

We understand the importance of this investigation to all those affected by the leaking of the Report. In order to ensure the integrity of the investigation, the Panel intends to conduct the investigation in a manner entirely independent of the Labour Party. As such, the Panel has appointed an independent Secretariat to assist with the day to day management of the investigation.

# The Forde Inquiry

The Panel recognises that this investigation has been set up in response to allegations of the Party's failure to deal appropriately with accusations relating to antisemitism, and by extension other forms of racism, offensive or inappropriate behaviour. We intend to carry out our investigation diligently and without preconceptions.

In making our recommendations, the Panel intends to focus on paragraph three of the Terms of Reference. We intend to draw out the problems in the culture of the UK Labour Party including the effects of internal factionalism and to recommend changes needed in its future structure, management organisation, rules and disciplinary procedures.

In launching the investigation, we note the following:

- We are undertaking this investigation in parallel with three other ongoing processes:
  - An [investigation](#) by the UK Equality and Human Rights Commission under the Equality Act into antisemitism in the Labour Party;
  - An investigation by the UK Information Commissioner into possible breaches of data and privacy law resulting from the leak of the Report; and
  - An internal investigation by the Labour Party into the leaking and content of the Report.

We intend to take into account relevant outcomes of those investigations but we do not intend to duplicate those investigations. The timing of the conclusion and reporting of the above investigations means that the Panel will not be able to meet the original deadline of 15 July 2020 set out in the Terms of Reference. We intend to work as quickly as possible to deliver the Panel's final report in a timely and efficient manner.

- Although we are aware that copies of the Report may now be in the public domain, the Panel will not provide copies of the Report during the course of the investigation. This is because the leaking of the Report is currently subject to legal proceedings, including the investigations mentioned above.
- This investigation is not a statutory inquiry and we have no power to summon witnesses if they do not wish to appear or submit evidence. Nevertheless, we encourage all interested persons to contribute to the investigation.
- Whilst we may be critical of individuals or organisations in our findings, the Panel is not a disciplinary body. Any proceedings against individuals arising from our findings or otherwise would therefore be a matter for Labour Party disciplinary procedures or for the NEC as employer in relation to staff.

# The Forde Inquiry

## Call for evidence

The Panel now invites evidence and views from individuals affected by the Report as well as any other individual or organisation which may wish to make a submission in respect of our Terms of Reference. We would wish to hear from individuals or Labour Party members and affiliated organisations, Party staff (both former and present), and any other interested parties.

All submissions will be held confidentially by the Forde Inquiry Secretariat on an independent and secure server, which can only be accessed by the Panel and the Secretariat. Submissions will be used only for the purpose of the investigation. Individuals and organisations will not be named in the Panel's final report without prior notification by the Secretariat.

If the Panel wish to share proactively any names, contact details or evidence, for purposes not directly linked to the Inquiry, it will only do so where it has the prior consent of the individual who made the submission.

**Evidence should be submitted to the Secretariat to the Forde Inquiry via email to [info@fordeinquiry.org](mailto:info@fordeinquiry.org) by 5pm on Friday 24 July 2020.**

26 June 2020

Martin Forde QC  
Baroness Wilcox of Newport  
Baroness Lister of Burtersett  
Lord Whitty