

# The Forde Inquiry

David Evans  
General Secretary  
The Labour Party

By email only

Martin Forde QC  
Chair  
The Forde Inquiry

25 June 2020

Dear David

## Forde Inquiry – Acceptance of appointment as Chair

I am writing further to my appointment by the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party on 1 May 2020 as the chair of a panel (the '**Panel**') to conduct an independent investigation into the circumstances and content of the report entitled *'The Work of the Labour Party's Governance and Legal Unit in Relation to Antisemitism, 2014-2019'* (the '**Report**').

I am extremely pleased to accept this appointment and I look forward to leading a full and thorough investigation over the coming months. As the Panel starts to progress its work I thought it would be helpful to set out some key details of the process we will follow and the timelines we will work to.

## Next steps in the investigation

As the Panel now commences its work, I wish to set out my expectations as to the next steps in the investigation:

1. The Panel has appointed an independent secretariat (the '**Secretariat**') to assist it with the day to day management and running of the investigation. The Secretariat's role will be to provide administrative support to the Chair and Panel; collate and review documents received in response to the call for evidence; identify potential witnesses and arrange witness interviews; and assist with drafting and finalising the report. The Secretariat is solely instructed by the Panel and is not led by, nor responsible to, the Labour Party.
2. The Panel has determined to call its investigation the Forde Inquiry ('the **Inquiry**'). A website of this name has been created for the Inquiry and will be used to publish information relating to the investigation, including the Terms of Reference,

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biography details of the Panel members, and to direct the public to where they can contact the Secretariat or find out more information.

3. The Panel will be issuing a call for evidence via the website. There will be a public announcement regarding this event. The Panel will invite evidence and views from individuals affected by the Report as well as any other individual who may wish to make a submission in respect of the Terms of Reference.
4. Once the call for evidence material is received, it will be reviewed by the Secretariat and the Panel for the purpose of the investigation. 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.
5. The Panel may wish to conduct oral interviews with witnesses. Witnesses will be contacted directly by the Secretariat to arrange interviews. Interviews will be attended by the witness, the witness' legal representative or individual in support, and the Panel and Secretariat only.
6. The Panel will prepare a report at the conclusion of its investigation. The Terms of Reference set out that the Panel will use best endeavours to deliver the report by 15 July 2020. We anticipate that the report will not be available by this date. This is due in part to the timing of the conclusion and reporting of the concurrent investigations being run by the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Information Commissioner's Office, alongside other parallel inquiries being conducted by the Labour Party into the leaking and content of the Report. The Panel wishes to confirm that despite these other investigations, it intends to work as quickly as possible to deliver the final report in a timely and efficient manner.

## Relationship between the Labour Party and the Panel

I understand the importance for all involved that this investigation is, and is seen to be, as independent from the Labour Party as possible. The Terms of Reference state that *'the Panel shall be independent of the Labour Party but the Labour Party will provide the support and resources for it to investigate and report effectively, including access to all information the Panel deems necessary to complete the investigation'*.

In order to achieve this independence, I propose the following measures are now set in place for the duration of the investigation:

1. All correspondence between the Labour Party and the Panel in relation to the investigation will be received by the Secretariat and may be considered relevant evidence in the investigation;

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2. Any requests for documents by the Panel to the Labour Party will be made in writing, as formal requests for disclosure in the investigation;
3. All documents provided by the Labour Party in response to such requests will be received by the Secretariat and held confidentially for the purpose of the investigation. Labour Party documents will not be shared beyond the Panel and the Secretariat without agreement with the Labour Party; and
4. The Panel will provide updates periodically to the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party on the progress of the investigation. These updates will also be made available on the Forde Inquiry website.

Yours sincerely



**Martin Forde QC**  
**Chair**  
**The Forde Inquiry**

Copied to:

**Andi Fox**  
Chair  
National Executive Committee  
The Labour Party