

The Forde Inquiry

26 June 2020

Forde Inquiry Launches Call for Evidence

The Forde Inquiry today called on individuals and organisations affected by the leak of the Labour Party Report into antisemitism, or concerned by its implications, to submit evidence to its investigation.

The Inquiry Panel headed by Martin Forde QC has launched a comprehensive consultation to build the fullest possible picture of the content and circumstances of the report that was leaked over the Easter weekend, including the problems that exist in the culture of the party.

Panel members want to hear from individuals, Labour Party members and affiliated organisations as well as former and present members of staff and other interested groups to support its investigation. Information should be submitted to info@fordeinquiry.org and the deadline for submissions is 5pm on Friday 24 July.

The Inquiry was appointed by the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the Labour Party to investigate 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* and make recommendations for change.

Chair Martin Forde said: "I was very pleased to be invited to chair this important investigation as I believe it is important to our democracy that the UK has a thriving and effective Official Opposition. The Panel has been carrying out important preparatory work and has now reached the stage of calling for information and evidence from interested parties.

"My fellow panel members and I are dedicated to working diligently and energetically on this investigation. Our pledge is that we will carry out our work independently of the Labour Party.

"As well as dealing with important organisational and cultural questions concerning the Labour Party we understand the personal element involved. We know this investigation is important to those affected by the leaking of the antisemitism report.

"We cannot force anyone to bring information to us but I hope all those with an interest in the issue will see the value of contributing. That way we can build the fullest picture of the circumstances and content of the leaked report as well as the current culture and practices of the Labour Party. The more information we receive the better we can frame recommendations for the party's future culture, organisation and structures.

"This investigation will be carried out professionally and impartially as well as independently. We do need time to consult widely and to allow those wishing to respond to collate and send their evidence to us and we need to ensure that our work is aligned with other related investigations into the Labour Party, both internal and external.

The Forde Inquiry

"I have told the Labour Party that its original proposal for a 15th July timescale is impractical and we are aiming to publish our final report in September."

The additional members of the Panel are Labour peers Baroness Lister, Baroness Wilcox and Lord Whitty. They have issued the following joint statement:

"As committed members of the UK Labour Party we were pleased to accept the invitation to be a panel member for this Inquiry chaired by Martin Forde QC. We have served the party in a wide range of capacities for many years and we want to see it flourish, prosper and return to power.

"We are approaching our work with a desire to identify the problems in the culture of the Labour Party, including the impact of internal factionalism, and to recommend changes designed to resolve current challenges and promote future success.

"Each of us is carrying out our role with no preconceptions and no set of ready-made solutions. We will approach this work independently and be impartial at all times; we will consider all the evidence before making our recommendations."

In order to ensure it operates independently of the Labour Party, the Panel has established an independent Secretariat and website, plus a robust and secure platform for holding evidence and information received.

As well as collating information from interested parties the Panel intends to take into account the findings of three relevant inquiries:

- The Equality and Human Rights Commission's investigation into antisemitism in the Labour Party,
- An investigation by the Information Commissioner into possible breaches of data and privacy law resulting from the leak of the report, and
- The Labour Party's internal investigation into the leak.

The Panel, assisted by its Secretariat, will review all evidence submitted to the Inquiry. From these submissions, the Panel will determine key figures it wishes to interview to obtain further information on a case-by-case basis.

Notes to editors

- The Forde Inquiry website is www.fordeinquiry.org
- The terms of reference for the Forde Inquiry can be read [here](#)
- The call for evidence is available [here](#)
- Media inquiries should be directed to the Forde Inquiry's media adviser Sheree Dodd at media@fordeinquiry.org