

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL ADOPT THE IHRA WORKING DEFINITION OF ANTISEMITISM

After many months of quiet behind-the-scenes work with Daniel Yates, the leader of Brighton and Hove Council, on Thursday the council voted by 47-0 (with one abstention) to adopt the full International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition on Antisemitism with all 11 illustrative examples. The motion was cross party and brought by the leaders of the three political parties - Tony Janio for the Conservatives, Phelim MacCafferty for the Greens and Dan Yates for the Labour group. The adoption of IHRA by the Council was requested on behalf of the Sussex Jewish Representative Council. Below is the statement that was read on behalf of the SJRC at the full Council meeting.

I speak on behalf of the Sussex Jewish Representative Council and the vast majority of the 3000 people who make up the Jewish community in Brighton, Hove and Sussex.

We fully support and encourage the adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition on Antisemitism and all its examples by this Council, bringing them in line with the 143 other councils across the country.

The adoption of the IHRA definition gives my community the protection it needs against the growing tide of antisemitism we are seeing in this country. The latest hate crime figures once again show that antisemitism hate crimes, along with all religious hate crimes, have risen.

We, like all minority communities and those with protected characteristics, are fully entitled to self-define hate against us. We do not seek to tell other minorities what is or is not an attack on them. We see no reason why others feel better equipped to tell us what is or isn't antisemitism.

We stand shoulder-to-shoulder with other faith groups and minority communities against all hate, racism and bigotry.

The IHRA definition in no way limits an individual's freedom of speech and is equally clear that robust, legitimate criticism against the government of Israel is perfectly permissible. But as MP Gareth Snell so clearly stated last weekend, 'If you're not able to criticise Israel without breaching IHRA, it isn't IHRA stopping you, it's probably that you're an antisemite.'

We welcome the strong and principled stand taken by the leaders of all three parties here in Brighton and Hove in doing what is right. This in no way affects any other minority community or the people of Brighton and Hove or any causes they wish to support and champion. The decision today to adopt the IHRA without any amendments or caveats will be welcomed by the majority of our 3000 strong community. Brighton and Hove's Jewish community has thrived and contributed to this city for more than 250 years. This motion demonstrates that we are valued, heard, respected and protected by this Council in our welcoming City of Sanctuary. We are grateful for your support and solidarity.

Fiona Sharpe
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