



THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

Listening to British Jews

Shani Orgad



July 2026

Table of contents

3	Executive summary
7	Introduction
9	Methodology
11	“The pillars of society are letting us down”: Institutional failures
12	The police
15	The education system
17	The media
19	The legal system
20	“Our world turned upside down”: The consequences for British Jews’ lives
21	A climate of fear and vulnerability
22	Denying Jews’ pain
23	Exclusion, ostracisation and hypervigilance
26	Concealing Jewish identity
27	Resilience and pride
29	Conclusion: Creating a climate of safety and confidence
31	Listening now!
32	Specific recommended actions
36	Acknowledgements
36	About the author
37	References

Executive summary

Since the 7 October 2023 attacks on Israel and the ensuing war in the Middle East, British Jews have experienced a sharp and alarming rise in antisemitism. Drawing on six focus group discussions with British Jews held between December 2025 and March 2026, this report discusses how participants perceive key institutions as failing to protect them and treat them fairly, and the impact of these failures on their daily lives and wellbeing. It concludes with recommendations shaped by participants' own proposals for addressing the institutional failures they identified.

Institutional failures

Across all focus groups, participants expressed profound feelings of abandonment and of being unheard, dismissed and betrayed by “the pillars of society”. As a result, they reported weak trust in Britain's major institutions, particularly the police, the education system, the media and the legal system.

The police

- Participants appreciated supportive individual officers and visible policing after attacks but reported inconsistent protection across different parts of the UK, weak responses to antisemitic abuse at protests, and limited understanding of antisemitism among some officers.
- The 2025 West Midlands Police ban on Maccabi Tel Aviv supporters, which was based on erroneous evidence, was repeatedly cited as emblematic of institutional exclusion and discrimination.

Schools and higher education

- Schools and universities were described as failing in their safeguarding duties, with antisemitic abuse against children and students often mishandled.
- Many participants were appalled and deeply concerned by schools withdrawing from Holocaust Memorial Day events, experienced as erasure of the Jewish community.
- Universities were seen as increasingly hostile, with antisemitism normalised, harassment tolerated, complaints ignored, and both Jewish and Zionist perspectives marginalised and informally cancelled.

The media

- Participants felt Jewish experiences were largely invisible or misrepresented.
- Participants voiced the strongest concern about the BBC, citing reporting that they felt erased Jews' experiences, blurred distinctions between Jews, Israel, and the Israeli government, and contained repeated inaccuracies. These failures were viewed as symptomatic of a broader institutional problem, significantly undermining British Jews' confidence in the broadcaster's impartiality and fairness.

- Social media platforms were seen as encouraging misinformation, sensationalism and antisemitic abuse, with younger participants noting that online antisemitism was seeping into and shaping how people talk about and interact with Jews offline.

The legal system

- Participants expressed deep frustration with the legal system's slow and weak prosecution of antisemitic hate crimes, and Parliament's failure to proscribe the Muslim Brotherhood and Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).¹

Consequences for British Jews' lives

A climate of fear and vulnerability

- Participants noted a profound shift in their sense of safety and wellbeing since 7 October 2023. Many recounted feeling exposed, anxious and profoundly aware of their Jewish identity. They described living in "a climate of fear", marked by feelings of being constantly unsafe, intimidated and exposed, with fears centred on everyday harassment rather than large-scale attacks. This climate severely affected wellbeing, with several participants reporting fragility, distress and exhaustion.

Denying Jews' pain

- Participants felt their grief and hurt were routinely minimised and dismissed by institutions, especially the media and their workplaces, as well as by some friends. They noted that their concerns about antisemitism and safety were often dismissed as exaggeration, fabrication or "playing the victim", echoing stereotypes of Jews as neurotic or deceitful, thus constituting a form of antisemitism in itself.
- When participants' pain was recognised, it was frequently made "conditional" by bundling it with other forms of racism; for example, in settings like the workplace, participants often felt they could not raise issues related to antisemitism unless they also mentioned Islamophobia.

Exclusion, ostracisation and hypervigilance

- Many participants experienced growing isolation and ostracisation as a result of increased security and being excluded in settings such as the workplace or university.
- As a consequence, some participants have increasingly withdrawn from social or professional spaces and become hypervigilant, which, in turn, exacerbates their sense of isolation and ostracisation.
- While increased policing around Jewish sites and events offers short-term reassurance, participants expressed deep unease about long-term heightened security, and resisted responses to antisemitism that rely on creating "safe spaces" and adding protective measures for Jews. Such responses were seen as counterproductive and likely to deepen feelings of intimidation and ostracisation.

¹ On 13 July 2026 the government announced that it will proscribe IRGC as a threat to national security.

Concealing Jewish identity

- Participants reported adopting concealment strategies, including removing Jewish symbols such as Stars of David and mezuzahs, changing surnames, using false names when booking Uber journeys, and hiding or downplaying their Jewish identity when meeting new people. For some, this alarmingly echoed darker times when Jews were persecuted.

Resilience and pride

- Despite fear and exhaustion, participants emphasised collective resilience, taking pride in their Jewish identity and refusing to be intimidated. However, they also acknowledged that sustaining this resilience was extremely exhausting and emotionally taxing.

Conclusion: Creating a climate of safety and confidence

Participants saw antisemitism as enduring and inevitable yet insisted the state must do far more to protect British Jews and treat them fairly. Their accounts highlight an urgent need to listen to and gain a comprehensive and consistent understanding of the views, experiences and concerns of the UK Jewish community in all its diversity.

The report offers specific recommended actions based on participants' proposals and stresses the need for further research to inform policy and practice.

Enhancing policing, law enforcement and criminal justice

- Commission an independent review to examine antisemitism and the relationships between police services and the Jewish community across the UK.
- Strengthen direct, proactive and regular police engagement with Jewish communities.
- Ensure police officers have the capacity to protect the Jewish community and enforce the law against antisemitic incidents in a consistent manner.
- Strengthen investigation and prosecution of antisemitic hate crimes.
- Introduce urgent legislation proscribing the Muslim Brotherhood following the very recent proscription of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

Schools and higher education

- Provide educators and school staff mandatory training on antisemitism.
- Ensure safeguarding frameworks address antisemitism as a distinct concern, that they protect Jewish children from discrimination, harassment and exclusion, and that Jewish children's mental health, wellbeing and cultural and/or religious identities are actively supported in the school environments.
- Improve reporting, investigation processes and implementation of actions responding to reports of antisemitic incidents in schools.
- Make Holocaust education in schools mandatory and consistent.
- Recognise schools as primary sites for providing understanding of Jewish life and embed engagement with Jewish culture, Judaism, the Holocaust and antisemitism across the curriculum and school culture.

- Strengthen policies, reporting and enforcement in higher education institutions to ensure Jewish students and staff are protected from exclusion, hostility, marginalisation and discriminatory informal practices.
- Create clear reporting mechanisms, independent oversight of antisemitism complaints and accountability for the actions taken.
- Ensure academic freedom and freedom of speech in higher education institutions are maintained in academic and social settings, including legitimate expressions of connection to Israel or Zionism.
- Promote fact-based inquiry, intellectual curiosity and respectful engagement by ensuring that teaching and debate on Jewish history, life and culture, as well as on Israel and the Middle East, draw on a broad range of rigorously grounded scholarly perspectives.
- Make training on antisemitism mandatory for academic and professional services staff in higher education institutions.

Media industry

- Ensure that editorial and news reporting guidelines call for accurate and consistent distinctions between Israel, the Israeli government, Israeli citizens and Jews.
- Ensure that journalism standards are adopted which avoid reinforcing historical antisemitic narratives in news reporting, including those that dismiss or pathologise Jews' concerns about safety.
- Ensure that social media companies adhere to UK legislation, making identification, removal and prevention of antisemitic content mandatory in line with the Online Safety Act 2023.
- Improve the BBC's complaints-handling processes and commission a review of BBC coverage of the war in the Middle East and of antisemitism, Jewish history and Jewish communities.

Jewish community organisations

- Expand and promote initiatives, spaces and programmes that strengthen the resilience and civic participation of British Jews in all their diversity, ensuring these opportunities are accessible and inclusive across different locations, denominations, political perspectives, ages and genders.
- Equip young Jewish people with the knowledge, skills and confidence to navigate and respond to antisemitism by ensuring clear guidance on incident reporting, access to support mechanisms and preparation for effective participation in academic and professional environments.

Private and public sector employers

- Improve reporting and investigation processes related to antisemitism in the workplace and ensure formal protocols for reporting antisemitic attacks are in place and adequate responses are implemented.
- Ensure that workplace Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) policies, training and interventions reflect the historical and contemporary manifestations of antisemitism.

Introduction

“By virtue of our numbers, we’re not a big enough problem to warrant being listened to. No one cares.” *Woman, 30s, Leeds*

Since the 7 October 2023 attacks on Israel and the subsequent war in the Middle East, Jews in Britain have experienced a growing tide of antisemitism. Over the course of 2025, 3,700 instances of antisemitic hate were reported in Britain, up 4 per cent from the previous year and only 14 per cent lower than the highest ever annual total of 4,298 antisemitic incidents reported in 2023.²

The most severe incidents include the 2025 terrorist attack on Manchester’s Heaton Park Synagogue, which occurred in October, on Yom Kippur, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar, killing two Jewish people and seriously injuring three others, the April 2026 Golders Green attack in which two men were stabbed, and several incidents of arson attacks and arson attempts on Jewish sites and organisations. There have also been physical assaults on people that were not life-threatening, attacks directed towards Jewish-owned or Jewish-associated property, threats, abusive behaviour and the distribution of large quantities of mass-produced antisemitic literature.³

The alarming rise in antisemitism has left many British Jews shaken and afraid, but also frustrated, let down and angry. Despite repeated warnings about rising Jew hate, exclusion, hostility and volatility, especially since 7 October 2023, members of the Jewish community express a profound feeling of being ignored, dismissed and not listened to.⁴ While public responses focus largely on the physical safety of the UK Jewish community,⁵ attention to what British Jews think and feel is notably scant.

This report is based on listening to British Jews in the wake of rising antisemitism in the UK. It draws on a qualitative study of six focus groups in the UK with Jewish participants from a range of age groups, genders, denominations and political outlooks. The report complements existing surveys by offering an evidence-based representation and understanding of the views, feelings, responses and experiences of Jews in the current environment in Britain. It offers a detailed account of participants’ views of how key institutions fail to protect and treat British Jews fairly and the consequences of these failures for their lives and wellbeing. The report concludes with recommendations based on proposals made by focus group participants for how some of the failures they identify could and should be addressed.

2 CST (2025)

3 CST (2025)

4 See, for example: Chesterton (2025); Halliday (2025); ITV (2025); Kirka and Ha (2025); Rich (2025a).

5 Following the sharp rise in antisemitic incidents in the UK after 7 October 2023, the government significantly increased funding to boost protection for synagogues, Jewish schools and across the Jewish community.

This report aims to inform national political and policy debates as well as discussions within local communities and the Jewish community in the UK. It seeks to ensure that Jews in the UK are properly protected and fairly treated, based on a better understanding of the experiences of British Jews in today's volatile times. In order to uphold the legal right of everyone in Britain to fair and equal treatment, and in the interests of social justice, it is imperative to learn from the experiences of British Jews. Only by doing so can the concerns and needs of the Jewish community and other marginalised and vulnerable groups be properly addressed through better, stronger and more effective law enforcement, support and protection processes, structures and policies.

Methodology

Between December 2025 and March 2026, we conducted six focus groups, involving a total of 43 self-identifying Jews, aged 18 or over, living in the UK.⁶ The focus groups were designed as spaces where participants could share their views and feelings, be listened to and listen to one another, in their local context. Given the sharp decline in the feeling of safety among Jewish people in the UK,⁷ we paid special attention to ensuring that the discussions provided welcoming, safe, dialogical spaces that would encourage the participants to share their experiences and opinions and express their disagreement. The discussions focused on what people felt and were concerned about and why. They also explored the impact that changes in the wider social, cultural and political climate in the UK have had and are continuing to have on participants' lives and what they expect should change.

The research design sought to achieve as diverse a representation as possible in terms of:

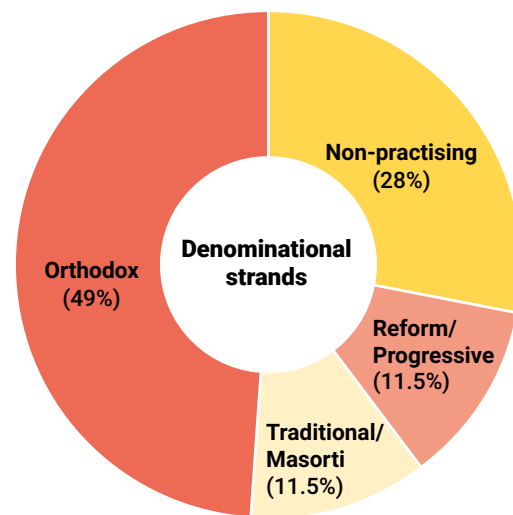
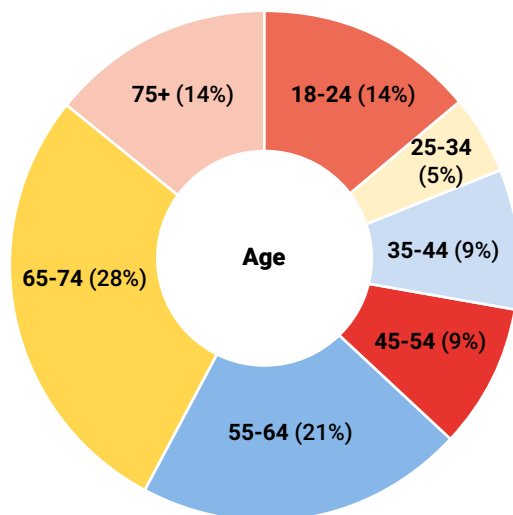
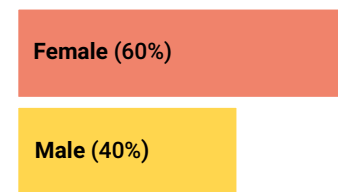
- **Location:** two focus groups were held with people living in London, which is home to the majority of British Jews; one group was held in Manchester, home to the second largest UK Jewish community; one group was held in Glasgow, which has the largest Jewish concentration in Scotland; one group was convened in Leeds and another in Birmingham, each city having a small but active Jewish community.



⁶ The research was approved by LSE Ethics Review Board and is in accordance with LSE Research Ethics Policy and Procedure.

⁷ Boyd (2025)

- **Gender:** 60% of participants were female and 40% male.
- **Age:** participants spanned seven age bands: 18-24 (14%), 25-34 (5%), 35-44 (9%), 45-54 (9%), 55-64 (21%), 65-74 (28%) and 75 and over (14%).
- **Denominational strands:** Orthodox (49%), Reform/Progressive (11.5%), Traditional/Masorti (11.5%) and non-practising (28%).⁸

Gender

We sought to capture a wide variation of feelings and opinions, including from those active in Jewish communal life and those who were not, and from people with different political views. A degree of self-selection bias was inevitable, since those who responded to the recruitment messages were those individuals most willing to share their views on the topic. Also, outside London, recruitment was facilitated by gatekeepers, resulting in a sample that, to some extent, comprised those connected to established Jewish communal networks.

The focus groups were held in local community centres and advertised through community leaders, social media and the researchers' own networks.⁹ Following a brief introductory activity,¹⁰ the conversation moved into a discussion of participants' experiences of and feelings about being Jewish in the UK in contemporary times.

All the focus group discussions were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analysed thematically using NVivo software to manage, organise and inductively code the data. In a later phase, quotes from the transcripts were selected to illustrate the broader themes that were identified.

⁸ Ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) people are not represented in the study, due to the difficulty recruiting from this exceptionally close-knit and self-contained community.

⁹ a) The Glasgow focus group was the only one held online, due to difficulties in securing a sufficient number of participants for an in-person meeting.

b) Prior to each session, participants received an information pack including a study description, a demographic information form and a consent form. In line with the NIHR guidelines for public involvement, participants received a £35 voucher as a recognition of their time and willingness to share their experiences.

¹⁰ At the start of the focus group, each participant received a piece of paper containing a headline or a sentence from a newspaper article or social media post published after the October 2025 Heaton Park synagogue attack. The texts reflected feelings expressed by some British Jews. Participants were invited to read their text aloud and reflect on whether the quote resonated with them, and why.

“The pillars of society
are letting us down”

Institutional failures



“ Unfortunately, I think every institution in this country is now institutionally antisemitic. The government, the police, civil service, NHS even. Everything. And I’m finding that, more and more, no one listens.

Woman, 50s, Birmingham

Across all the focus groups, there was a palpable and stark sense among participants of being unheard, let down and betrayed by the state and its institutions. Participants stressed that whilst they were fulfilling their side of the bargain – complying with the law, paying taxes and contributing to civic life – the state was failing increasingly to protect them and treat them fairly.

“The pillars in the society we live in”, bemoaned a man in his 70s from Birmingham, “are letting us down”. “I’m feeling genuinely let down by the institutions I relied on all my life”, a London participant in his 20s said, echoing a similar sense of betrayal. Overall, the focus group discussions revealed severely weak trust in Britain’s major institutions, particularly the police, the education system, the media and the legal system.¹¹

The police

Participants’ attitudes to the police varied. On the one hand, there was a strong sense of appreciation for the efforts being made by the police to keep the Jewish community safe, especially following the Heaton Park synagogue attack in Manchester in October 2025. For example, a Glasgow group participant in his 70s said he felt reassured seeing police near his synagogue following the Manchester attack and a month later, on the day of the Bondi attack in Australia. Similarly, a man in his 60s who resides in Birmingham commended police officers for their swift response to an incident at his synagogue. Several participants in the Leeds focus group noted the regular presence and support of police officers during pro-Palestinian demonstrations in Leeds city centre.

Nevertheless, many participants felt that the police did not do enough to protect them day to day, beyond Jewish holidays, demonstrations, or in the aftermath of major antisemitic incidents. A woman living in Glasgow noted that “even straight after Manchester, the police have not really been evident at various events that took place in the Jewish community in Glasgow, which I don’t feel is right. They just keep saying that it’s not going to happen here because we’re such a small community”. Indeed, the experiences of the focus group participants suggest disparities in the visibility and engagement of the police in different parts of the UK. Outside London, participants in Birmingham, Glasgow, Leeds and Manchester referred to what they considered to be an insufficient and inconsistent police presence. Other participants highlighted the vulnerability of Ultra-Orthodox communities, who are significantly more exposed because they are visibly Jewish and, therefore, warrant additional protection – as later demonstrated in the tragic Golders Green attack in April 2026. While critical of what

¹¹ a) See also Boyd (2025, p. 13; p. 14)

b) Incidents of antisemitism in the NHS and institutional failure to address and punish those involved were also reported by participants who experienced them either as patients or NHS employees. However, references to the NHS were less prevalent than the other institutions on which this report focuses.

they perceived as inadequate protection of British Jews, most participants recognised that this reflected the broader national problem of increased pressure on police forces and insufficient and shrinking resources. They stressed that these issues are affecting all minority and vulnerable communities and need to be urgently addressed in a context of rising threat levels and evolving risks at the national level.

“When I grew up, there was a constant reinforcement of safety. Every institution in the city backed you. What I saw over time was that no one had actually bolstered these institutions with the capacity to deal with an increased threat level. It’s not that the police officers have changed, but the institution’s strength...that’s completely gone... I just don’t think there is any capacity ... It’s not just me as a Jew that has these concerns. My friends who are Sikh, who are Hindu, who are Muslim, who are worried about the increasing things like the far right; who are worried about the increase of incel culture. I have female friends who are worried about gendered violence. No one feels safe.

Man, 20s, London

One of the contexts most frequently cited by participants who criticised the police was the pro-Palestinian protests that have taken place in many cities across Britain since 7 October 2023. Participants described incidents when protesters had used antisemitic language and incited violence, which, according to them, were witnessed by police officers, but not acted upon, even when Jewish participants raised concerns on the spot. Examples cited included NHS doctor Dr Rahmeh Aladwan, who stood on Leeds’ streets, wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with the words “Anti-Semite Semite Club”, calling for Jewish communities to be “held accountable” for their Zionism;¹² a protester delivering a blood libel speech; a protester who threw coffee over a Jewish participant; and keffiyeh-clad protesters shouting at an elderly Jewish man that he should be gassed. When this last incident was reported to the police, a participant in the Leeds focus group said angrily, the police’s response was that “there’s no context, so it’s not a hate crime”. Although some of the protesters were later convicted, participants highlighted that, despite their unlawful actions being witnessed by police officers, no action was taken at the time of the offences. While some participants spoke positively about individual officers who showed sympathy, they noted also that many had a very limited understanding of antisemitism and its contemporary manifestations – a point highlighted by the Jewish Board of Deputies’ 2025 Commission on Antisemitism.¹³ The focus group participants expressed frustration over the fact that many police officers had admitted that “their hands were tied”. “They say that there’s no point in arresting these protesters because they won’t get anything anyway, because the CPS will blow it out. What’s the point of anything?” said an exasperated Leeds participant in her 70s.

12 JC Reporter (2025)

13 Board of Deputies of British Jews (2025)

Another frequent criticism, exemplified by a comment made by a participant in one of the London groups, was that the police were “trying to shoo out the Jews and keep them away, rather than actually protect them”. Many participants expressed their shock at a story reported in the news about a Jewish lawyer wearing a Star of David who was arrested in October 2025 after police alleged the symbol had “antagonised” pro-Palestinian protesters.¹⁴

While considerable discussion in the focus groups and in wider public debate has centred on the need for better police protection for Britain’s Jews, focus group participants highlighted an issue that many found far more appalling, unsettling and alarming: the police’s careless handling of flawed evidence and failure to engage directly with members of the Jewish community, resulting in discrimination against and exclusion of British Jews.¹⁵ In November 2025, based on erroneous evidence provided by Birmingham’s Safety Advisory Group, West Midlands Police decided to ban Israeli football club Maccabi Tel Aviv supporters from attending an Aston Villa match in Birmingham, a decision for which they later apologised.¹⁶ This incident was mentioned repeatedly, unprompted, and participants expressed shock and fury at the police conduct. “Previously we would have believed that the police were a group of people that we could rely on”, said a Glasgow participant, “but actually, it turns out that the police were lying and making up evidence to suit their agenda, and that I find very frightening: the state manipulating the facts in order to exclude us! My personal confidence that the police are doing their best trying to protect us and balance conflicting priorities is very dented”. While the Aston Villa incident had expectedly caused grave upset and anger among the Birmingham participants, its extremely negative impact was criticised by participants in five of the six focus groups.

“ People that we thought we could trust at the head of the police, when we realised that we were being fed downright antisemitic lies ... and the main officer in charge being able to take retirement, rather than being dismissed! It upset a lot of people. Man, 60s, Birmingham

14 Mendick and Sawyer (2025)

15 Home Office (2026)

16 Home Affairs Committee (2026)

The education system

Schools

In all the focus groups, participants felt they were fundamentally underserved by schools. They described painful antisemitic incidents experienced by their children and grandchildren at schools that are failing to honour their legal safeguarding duty to protect children from harm and abuse, promote their welfare and support their mental health and wellbeing. The mother of an eight-year-old living in Leeds complained to the school that some classmates had told him that all Jews should be dead, an incident which was met by the school's response that it could not tell parents what to teach their children. Another mother said that her 12-year-old son was told by a kid in his class that he should be gassed. The school promised to investigate but never followed up or checked on her son. Several participants reported their children, grandchildren or other Jewish children they knew had moved schools because of antisemitic abuse suffered in the former school. Others reported schools' lack of responses, or inappropriate and inadequate responses, to reports of antisemitic abuse. For example, a participant from Leeds, who reported an incident at her son's primary school in which he was verbally abused by classmates, said: "it was followed up clumsily in that the initial response was, 'Okay, leave this with me; I will take this further'. But nobody checked on my son, and then the person who said it claimed that they didn't, and therefore, it wasn't taken any further, but still, nobody came to speak to my son about it".

Participants were also highly critical of and appalled by decisions by their children's and grandchildren's schools to withdraw from events commemorating Holocaust Memorial Day in 2026. Indeed, since the October 7 attacks on Israel, the number of UK schools commemorating the Holocaust has more than halved.¹⁷ "This is erasure of us", said a woman in her 50s from Leeds, with evident distress.

There was a general sense that, in primary and secondary education, students receive very limited knowledge of and exposure to Jewish life, Judaism and antisemitism. Given the very small size of the Jewish population in the UK – less than 0.5 per cent of the UK population – participants noted that many children never meet a Jewish person and are ignorant about Judaism and Jewish history. A London focus group participant gave the example of a Reform synagogue that had hosted an educational visit by non-Jewish schoolchildren: "They came to the shul [synagogue], and they asked how many Jews died in the Holocaust, and the kids' response was 70".

Universities

Universities were another major institution that was mentioned repeatedly as systematically failing to protect and support Jewish students and staff.¹⁸ University student participants in all six focus groups shared first-hand experience of antisemitism at their universities, including jokes about Jews, chants on campus about "globalising the intifada", lecturers singling them out when discussing the Israel-Gaza war, and student unions using antisemitic language and/or conflating Jews with Israel and the Israeli government.

The weak or insufficient responses of schools to antisemitism seem to apply also to universities. Participants described various instances of reporting antisemitic incidents, to which the university

¹⁷ European Jewish Congress (2026)

¹⁸ See also: Union of Jewish Students (2026); icpg.org.uk/publications

either failed to respond or responded only after a long delay, taking no effective action. They cited examples of academic and non-academic staff who had expressed public support for Hamas but were not held accountable despite submission of formal evidence-backed complaints to the university. One participant described being shouted at “Get over what happened in Germany!” when giving a talk about antisemitism in a higher education national Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) conference. “This is antisemitism”, she lamented, but “nobody said this is not acceptable” and nothing was done about it. A student participant in Leeds commented with frustration: “the university really doesn’t seem to care about antisemitism at all”.

“After giving a lecture about antisemitism, a colleague told me ‘you know you’ve got a chip on your shoulder, your dad got kicked out during the *Shoah* [the Holocaust] and then your mother and your grandmother survived the concentration camps, so you got a chip on your shoulder!’ Woman, 50s, London

Participants expressed deep concern about the trend of increasing polarisation in universities and the shrinking space for diversity and plurality of ideas. They reflected that, on a one-on-one level, on campus, interactions between Jewish and non-Jewish students do take place and differing points of view are sometimes discussed, although this is happening much less frequently. However, they felt strongly that at the broader institutional level, there was an intensifying informal marginalisation and cancellation of Jewish students and Jewish culture and history, including aspects relating to Israel, the Middle East and Zionism. One participant gave the example of a Jewish Experience Week (similar to the Islam Discovery Week and Christian Union Week) that he had helped to organise at his university through the Jewish Student Union. He noted that, in contrast to the latter two events, attendance at the Jewish Experience Week had been extremely low. He had specifically asked classmates to visit the stall during the week, but none of them did so. Likewise, several other participants shared instances exemplifying the significant challenges involved in and, in some cases, the impossibility of organising events that included Zionist speakers or perspectives. The hurdles included universities citing the high and unmanageable costs involved in coping with security threats if Israeli speakers and/or speakers supportive of Zionism are hosted. Other examples included informal boycotts, where academic units refused to host or found ways to avoid hosting events whose speakers and/or ideas they did not support.

The media

The focus group discussions highlighted social media and the news – particularly BBC news – as letting down British Jews in two major ways. First, participants highlighted the media's very limited interest in British Jews' experiences and views. Second, they referred to what they perceived as the media's profoundly skewed and potentially dangerous misrepresentation of Jewish people.

Many focus group participants talked about their frequent use of social media, especially since October 7, in an effort to stay informed about events and to share personal perspectives and experiences. While some appreciate that social media platforms exposed them to similar as well as radically different viewpoints, the overall tone of the discussions was highly critical and alarmed. Participants understood their experiences on social media as British Jews as inseparable from broader worrying trends; in particular, the amplification of misinformation and sensationalism and what a Manchester focus group participant described as "hand-wringing celebrities who want to burnish their social justice credentials". Resonating with growing evidence that social media platforms enable and contribute to the proliferation of antisemitism and hate,¹⁹ several participants reported suffering antisemitic abuse online, including calls to "kill the Jews". Younger participants emphasised that the increase in hateful online discourse towards Jews was seeping into and shaping how people talk about and interact with them offline, especially in university settings. In all focus groups, participants felt that tech platforms should be better regulated and should be held accountable, as should those individuals who engage in antisemitic or otherwise unlawful speech on these platforms.

In addition to social media, participants highlighted what they saw as the systematic invisibility and marginalisation of British Jews' experiences in the news. A woman in her 70s in the Birmingham group noted that British Jews were "not media ready". She explained that since the Jewish community in Britain is an extremely small minority and many of its members are not visibly Jewish, we are "not easy to find", and so the voices of people in the Jewish community have very limited visibility in the news. A university student observed that when Jews finally make it into the news, they are often "at the bottom page of the news". Participants were critical also of the way news media seem to selectively and sometimes exploitatively use their stories – something a few had experienced personally.

However, it was the BBC that had most angered, upset and disappointed participants.

“We have a national broadcaster, a state-sponsored broadcaster, whose agenda seems entirely antithetical to the needs of the Jewish people in this country.” Woman, 40s, Manchester

Previous research indicates British Jews' declining levels of trust in the BBC and its characterisation of Israel in its coverage of the Israel-Gaza war.²⁰ While the focus groups corroborated this waning confidence in the BBC, they expressed a deeper, more expansive and multifaceted criticism of the institution.

¹⁹ Ancis (2025); Center for Countering Digital Hate (2024)

²⁰ Boyd (2025, p. 13)



First, while many participants were indeed judgemental about what they regarded as the BBC's biased reporting of Israel and the Israel-Gaza war, what concerned and upset them the most was the lack of a clear distinction in this reporting between Israel, the Israeli government, Israeli people and Jewish people. Many felt that the way the BBC covered the Israel-Gaza war depicted British Jews as implicitly responsible for Israel's conduct, or at least did not make a sufficiently clear distinction. As a London participant exclaimed vehemently while discussing the BBC coverage: "the Jewish people in Britain are Jews. They're just Jewish people who live in Britain. So, we're not responsible for it!"

Second, rather than its perceived bias against Israel, participants' gravest concerns focused on what they regarded as the BBC's collusion in and contribution to antisemitism in the UK. For example, many cited the broadcasting of Bob Vylan's chant at the 2025 Glastonbury Festival, calling for Israeli soldiers to be killed, which was ruled to have broken editorial guidelines in relation to harm and offence.²¹ Those types of repeated breaches and errors amplify antisemitism and, a Manchester participant said angrily, "end up on our doorstep in Heaton Park". Participants also noted with dismay the BBC's January 2026 coverage of Holocaust Memorial Day, which several times made reference to "6 million people" rather than "6 million Jewish people" murdered by the Nazi regime.²² The BBC later corrected and apologised for its incorrect wording, but apologies do little to repair trust or undo the erasure and betrayal that British Jews experience. "The Holocaust is bandied around like anything. We have lost control of the key words that should relate singularly to antisemitism, and don't", commented another Manchester participant.

Finally, people expressed frustration and disillusionment with the BBC complaints system. While many had repeatedly submitted complaints about inaccuracies, lack of balance and offensive content, their experience was of largely defensive and generic responses and the broadcaster's failure to engage meaningfully with the concerns raised or to admit fault when it patently was due.

²¹ Rich (2025b); Youngs and Saunders (2025)

²² BBC (2026)

The legal system

Participants felt the legal system was failing them significantly. They were particularly angry about the weak and slow prosecution of antisemitic hate crimes. A London group participant said that, at most, offenders “get a little slap on the wrist”, but “nothing happens to them”. There was a widespread view that antisemitic crimes are too often met with impunity and inadequate enforcement, reflecting a longstanding problem that predated 7 October 2023. In both London focus groups, participants referred, indignantly, to the case of the men who in May 2021 had driven in a convoy in north London on the way to a pro-Palestinian rally, and had shouted antisemitic abuse from their cars, yet racial hatred charges against them had been dropped.²³ Leeds participants described cases of racially aggravated assault they experienced during pro-Palestinian marches and the multiple hurdles they had to clear (including securing non-Jewish witnesses) to obtain convictions.

Crucially, participants emphasised that they saw these not as isolated failures, but as part of broader structural challenges facing the justice system nationally, where, as a London participant described, “people [are] queuing for what they call justice for ten years” due to court backlogs, underfunding and insufficient numbers of judges, barristers and court staff. This has severely undermined confidence in the justice system.

“Our government, especially the legal system, is failing in its duty of care towards the Jewish community because they’re leaving us isolated. They’re leaving us fighting for our own rights.” Woman, 50s, London

Finally, participants voiced their continued frustration at Parliament’s failure to proscribe Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and the Muslim Brotherhood (Iran’s IRGC was subsequently proscribed). They perceived this failure as testifying to the state’s unwillingness to confront state-backed antisemitism and to its preparedness to compromise British Jews’ security for political or diplomatic considerations – a failure that deepens the sense of betrayal felt by British Jews.

23 BBC (2022)

“Our world turned upside down”

The consequences for British Jews' lives



“The minute October 7 happened, I got ostracised, was treated like absolute dirt, and had to leave my job. Woman, 50s, Leeds

While public discussion has focused largely on the implications of the rise in antisemitism for British Jews’ physical safety, the focus groups revealed that the consequences of institutional failures to address antisemitism extend far beyond physical insecurity. Participants described extremely alarming and harmful psychological, mental, social, cultural and legal effects.

People repeatedly referred to their world being “turned upside down” since 7 October 2023, despite the Hamas attacks and subsequent war in the Middle East taking place miles from the UK. While they all acknowledged that antisemitism was an age-old problem, its scale, intensity and lack of proper redress in the UK since October 7 were being experienced as unprecedented and extremely unsettling. “I just feel the ground wobbling for me since”, said a London woman in her 50s. “Two days before October 7, I was saying to a friend, I feel really blessed that I was brought up here, and that has all changed”, said another London woman in her 70s.

A climate of fear and vulnerability

A major consequence of multiple institutional failures to properly protect and support British Jews is what a Glasgow participant described as “living in a climate of fear”. While the direct sources of this “climate” may not always be easily identifiable, the notion of a climate of fear captures the prevailing atmosphere of fear and vulnerability experienced by the participants post October 7.²⁴

The sense of ambient fear was shared by participants across locations, ages, genders and denominations. They described constantly feeling “unsafe”, “intimidated”, “exposed” and “uncomfortable”. A student in a London Jewish secondary school described the impact of living in this climate on his daily life:

“I feel unsafe wearing a kippah outside of school, when I walk from the bus stop. I don’t even feel safe trying to speak out about what I think about antisemitism, even online... I just don’t feel comfortable trying to speak out because I don’t know what’s gonna happen. I don’t know what’s gonna happen to me if I speak out in person or speak out online. It’s very difficult”.

Rather than fear of large-scale organised terror attacks, participants described their main fears as relating mainly to more minor and sometimes more subtle threats, such as verbal abuse, being spat on, being assaulted, experiencing damage to their property and being ostracised, cancelled and excluded. The comment of a Manchester participant in his 70s captures this

24 The notion of a climate of fear corresponds with what Boyd (2025, p. 11) terms “ambient antisemitism”, which manifests itself in more subtle and indirect ways, rather than necessarily physical assaults, verbal attacks and other forms of harassment, vandalism and discrimination. However, unlike Boyd’s (2025, p. 11) definition of these incidents as “not directed at any individual”, almost every single focus group participant described antisemitic incidents which were directed at them and/or their family members personally.

neatly: “I’m not so worried about counterterrorism foiling a big plot like the Heaton Park [synagogue attack], because they have the capabilities and they hone in on those things. What I am more upset about is that in my own family, my daughter doesn’t have a mezuzah anymore on the door, out of fear”.

“ I’ve got vulnerable people in my family that I don’t want them to go out with a Magen David on, or God forbid, a bag with a kosher butcher on ... I really would like to wear the biggest Magen David I have and just go, but I don’t want to be assaulted. I’m just sitting on the tube and they’re going ‘Zionist, baby killer!’ shouted at me. Woman, 50s, London

This climate of fear has severe impacts on wellbeing and mental health. Several participants broke down in tears during the focus group discussions, when admitting having felt extremely fragile and distressed and not coping well since October 7. Women in particular reported severe exhaustion, stress, weariness and depression, which they had not felt before October 7: “I don’t feel that’s a comfortable way of living anymore”, said a Glasgow participant in her 70s.

Several older participants expressed their grave concern that this climate of fear meant British Jews have regressed to what one participant described as “a pre-war Jewish community”. They drew parallels between their own feelings of unsafety and vulnerability and the coping strategies they adopt (discussed below) and those their parents described in relation to their pre-war experiences. Some of the younger participants had similar concerns: “I think we’ve ceased to be a protected group”, lamented a Birmingham participant in his 20s.

Denying Jews’ pain

“ Jews are not allowed to own their pain. We were allowed it for about half a day on October 7 2023... There are conditions. [Our pain] is always predicated on something else. Even after the Heaton Park [synagogue] attack ... because we’re Jews.

Woman, 40s, Manchester

Compounding the climate of fear was an acute sense that British Jews’ pain is systematically denied, minimised and dismissed. Participants described how, in different contexts and domains – including the workplace, education settings, political discourse, policy and even friendships – they felt that they were not allowed to grieve or express pain as Jews. “The hurt [of Jews] is not heard. It’s not acknowledged. It’s not seen” commented a London participant. On the rare occasions that Jews’ pain is acknowledged, it is often “conditional”. Participants said how on different occasions they were seen as being expected to express guilt for the discrimination and suffering of others, in particular, Palestinians and Muslims, although they have had no part in causing this harm.

The focus group participants recognised that racism is a problem in the UK and that antisemitism should be understood and addressed as part of this problem. However, they felt that at the

same time the specificity and gravity of antisemitism were being denied by its regular bundling with other forms of racism, thereby diminishing or dismissing antisemitism. For example, in the focus groups, respondents reflected on how, in the workplace, they could no longer raise issues related to antisemitism unless they also mentioned Islamophobia.

A major concern raised by participants was the denial of their hurt and their fears for safety and wellbeing, by dismissing them as exaggerated or even fabricated. In a culture that emphasises the obligation to believe all victims of oppression and discrimination, participants noted that Jews are frequently accused of “playing the victim” – a response which is itself a form of antisemitism. A Glasgow participant observed:

“A pattern, when we, the Jewish community, complain about antisemitism, is to dismiss it, which is really genuinely antisemitic. There’s a slightly dismissive, ‘oh, well, that’s just the Jews complaining’. They use antisemitism as an excuse for everything”.

Indeed, the notion that Jews perceive themselves as unsafe or hurt rather than genuinely at risk evokes historically familiar stereotypes, at best of the neurotic, anxious Jew, and at worst, of the deceitful Jew. As the above quote suggests, it also echoes frequently repeated allegations that when Jews talk about antisemitism, they do so in bad faith.²⁵

Finally, in all the focus groups, participants mentioned that since October 7, employers, colleagues and even some they considered to be friends, had shown little or no interest in their emotional wellbeing. Many mentioned the lack of sympathy or enquiries about their wellbeing following the October 7 attacks in Israel and subsequent antisemitic atrocities, despite colleagues knowing they had family members in Israel, Manchester, Sydney or Golders Green, where attacks had taken place. “It just feels like there’s a huge amount of not thinking about us. Not thinking about what we might need and how we might be feeling”, said a Birmingham participant with profound sadness.

Exclusion, ostracisation and hypervigilance

One of the major effects of a climate of fear and the denial of pain is the increasing isolation and ostracisation of British Jews. Participants repeatedly described their lived experience as citizens in the UK as increasingly “isolated”, “ostracised” and “lonely”, a reality that contrasts starkly with the way they felt before October 7. A London artist in her 50s confessed:

“I’ve never lived in a bubble in my life. I’m totally adrift in the art world now. I’ve retreated into the Jewish community of artists...We [Jewish artists identifying as Zionist] can’t speak anymore because, we’ve been shut out... I don’t want, I don’t want to, I don’t want to, become living in a bubble, but I’m forced to”.

Crucially, while British Jews may find increased security and police presence in Jewish sites and events reassuring in the short-term, participants were extremely apprehensive about the

25 Julius (2024)

implications of the increased security measures for Jewish communities in Britain. They resisted the tendency to respond to antisemitism by creating “safe spaces” and adding protection for Jews – measures they considered dangerous and counterproductive that would only deepen feelings of intimidation and ostracisation. Some noted that such a response feeds into negative views of British Jews as self-segregating and as exploiting public resources supposedly at the expense of others.

“ Obviously, I want to be safe, I want to be comfortable in showing my Judaism when I’m walking around the area that I live in. I want my parents to be able to tell me: ‘you can wear your kippah; you can wear your Magen David. You can do that and you can feel comfortable’. But I think being boxed in and having walls around us, it just makes us more isolated, even though it makes us more safe. And it’s just going to add something else for people to criticise, like: ‘oh, look at them! They don’t even want to interact with anyone else. They don’t care about anyone else, they only care about themselves’.

Man, 18, London

Several participants described not being believed, and being excluded, ostracised and silenced in the workplace since October 7, a trend identified also in other research.²⁶ For example, a woman participant and public sector employee who lives in Manchester had reported workplace antisemitic incidents and raised with her employer the need for antisemitism training. However, she lamented, she was consequently labelled a “troublemaker” and ceased to be invited to take part in EDI-related discussions. Another woman who is an NHS employee in Birmingham was shockingly told by her team’s Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) lead that “EDI spaces didn’t work when Jews were included in them. It simply didn’t work to have Jews in the same space”.

Older participants expressed a profound sense of grief over the isolation and ostracisation they were experiencing. “When we were growing up”, said one London participant in her 80s, “I was so proud to be British”. She described being involved in, and integrated into, the society to which she felt she belonged. “But this is not our country anymore”, she bemoaned. Some of the younger participants shared a similar sense of exclusion and alienation. “I don’t see myself as British, personally, but I am Jewish. This is how I now feel in my country”, said a secondary school student.

A 2025 Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR) report noted that hostile social environments in which British Jews feel uncomfortable and excluded lead to “an inward social turn among British Jews towards fellow Jews and away from non-Jews”.²⁷ The focus group discussions strongly confirmed this trend. There was a sense that, as one Leeds participant described it, “nobody is supporting us, so we are having to support ourselves”, which consequently brings Jewish communities closer together and reinforces individuals’ sense of Jewish identity and belonging to a community. However, at the same time, as described by the artist cited above, most participants were resistant to the idea of living in a Jewish bubble.

Participants noted that, as a consequence, they had become hypervigilant and suspicious and this was causing them alarm and discomfort. A woman in her 40s in the Birmingham group lamented:

²⁶ Edwards (2026)

²⁷ Boyd (2025, p. 26)

"I feel like now I constantly have in my head this kind of second guessing what would they think if they knew that you were Jewish...that kind of scanning for danger, feeling uncomfortable walking around particular areas.. I feel like my radar is way higher now. And that makes me feel really sad because I think that's a huge loss. I feel really sad about the fact that I have experienced a shift in my... vigilance and scanning and thinking".

Finally, people described avoiding even formerly familiar places and spaces that since October 7 have made them feel fearful or very uncomfortable. Frequent mention was made of avoiding going into the town centre on a Saturday to avoid encountering a pro-Palestinian march, which many said made them feel unsafe, uncomfortable and unwelcome. University student participants talked about not going to the campus and not participating in academic and social activities to avoid protests, hostile lecturers and abuse.²⁸

The focus group participants clearly recognised that intensified vigilance, self-exclusion, suspicion and avoidance – responses to a climate of fear and vulnerability – were exacerbating their isolation and ostracisation. However, these features, they reflected, have become part of the "new normal" for British Jews and cannot simply be wished away. Tackling this dire "new normal", they said, would require serious and sustained institutional action.

“ It’s the case of weighing every single word that you say. I don’t think anyone should have to weigh the words they say, unless it goes too far. When walking down the streets or on campus, at any time during the day, I’m on guard walking up because I don’t know if anyone’s going to stand up for me. Man, 20s, Birmingham

28 See also Union of Jewish Students (2026)

Concealing Jewish identity

Another very concerning effect described by British Jews is that they feel forced to adopt strategies and practices, which, throughout history, persecuted minorities – including Jews – have developed when state protection was absent or weak. Almost all participants spoke with pain and sadness about how concealment and withdrawal have become defining features of their own and their community's everyday lives in today's Britain.

Some of the younger participants reported having changed their surname, fearing that an identifiably Jewish last name would jeopardise job applications. Many described not wearing or concealing "visibly Jewish" signs, such as Star of David pendants and kippahs, turning shopping bags of Jewish shops (e.g., Kosher butcher) inside out, removing mezuzahs from their doors and hiding the Hanukkahs traditionally displayed in windows on the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah.

“My approach is not to go looking for trouble. You might say I shouldn't have to think that way, but that's the way of the world now, so I wouldn't go looking for trouble. So, for example, in many circles, there's a tradition of putting the Hanukkah in the window for people to see. We don't do that now. My father, who was a refugee who arrived in this country in the late 1930s, used to go apoplectic about that. He used to feel that that was looking for trouble and one should be discreet and you might be better off being discreet.

Man, 60s, Glasgow

Across locations and age groups, participants reported using false names when booking Uber journeys and students living in Jewish student halls said that they go off-site to pick up an Uber; they had had their booking requests repeatedly rejected when the pick-up point was their Jewish student hall.

Participants also shared examples of their efforts to conceal their Jewish identities at work and in social interactions with strangers. One university student confided that:

“I actually have to trust someone before I tell them that I'm Jewish. Especially coming to university and meeting a lot of new people. If I tell someone I'm Jewish on the first meeting, there've been quite a few times, they'll just start shouting about stuff going on [in the Middle East]. I'm just a Jew from North London, I've got nothing to do with it!”



Resilience and pride

There was a profound sense that although the rise in antisemitism has made British Jews feel unsafe, anxious and hypervigilant, it has brought the Jewish community closer together and made it more vocal and proud.²⁹ Participants emphasised the importance of collective resilience, pride and strength, and instilling these qualities in their children and grandchildren, precisely at a time when the environment is becoming more hostile towards Jews. However, expressions of resilience have manifested mostly in individuals, not institutions; the latter were seen as failing to challenge antisemitism, discrimination and hatred experienced by British Jews in their everyday lives. Across the focus groups, participants expressed the strong conviction, based on experience, that since no one else will stand up for them, they must stand up for themselves and be resilient and proud.

People talked about becoming more resolutely active against antisemitism on social media, although this has intensified the abuse they receive. They also spoke about challenging their workplace, their local council and their children's schools over actions they deemed discriminatory.

Notably, men more often than women, expressed a refusal to be led by fear and a resolve to remain defiant in the face of the rise in antisemitism and institutional failure to address it. A university student in Birmingham described his bold response to abuse to which he has been regularly subjected:

"I get shouted at. It's not right that I get shouted at because I'm walking around in my kippah. I get stares. I get pointed at ...but I can take that. If that's what God wants to chuck at me, He can chuck that. I mean, I'll go fight when I can".

29 This finding resonates with the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR) survey which found an increased need among some British Jews for solidarity from their local Jewish community and increased involvement in Jewish community life since October 7 (Boyd, 2025, p. 27).

A London participant in his 50s described a similar response:

“The whole notion of safety and fear makes me really angry because I am not scared and I refuse to be scared. And excuse my language, I couldn't give a fuck about the antisemites! It's their problem, not mine. I never used to wear a Magen David and after October 7 I have one there [pointing at the pendant on his necklace]. And I always keep a kippah in my pocket, though I'm not religious in the slightest. And on odd occasions, post-October 7, I put it on. We've got to grow a skin. I'm not going to try and force it on my kids. I just say to them: don't think you should hide because I do not ever want to live my life as a frightened Jew. I don't think your individual capacity to withstand and tolerate antisemitism is a good precursor or indicator of how well a society is going”.

Crucially, participants saw defiance and refusal of fear as an active rejection of ostracisation and exclusion from British society. They were adamant about continuing to be an integral and important part of the fabric of this society and contribute positively to it.

However, even participants who expressed their determination not to be intimidated by hostility, silence or fear and expressed an unapologetic pride in their Jewish identity, admitted that all these efforts were extremely exhausting and emotionally taxing. A London woman in her 40s captured this when she said: “I want to shout out of the rooftops that I'm Jewish and I don't care! But I don't want to need to be brave all the time. It is very exhausting”.

“ If we're recognising antisemitism has become a pattern, then being Jewish in this country now, more and more, is an active decision. It's not a passive one to be Jewish. But if we are going to stay here, then we need to have a community that does the exact opposite of becoming inward looking. We need to be encouraged and supported to go and occupy and progress in every kind of major part of society as possible. Our response to antisemitism can't be to go inward, even though it's hard. Man, 20s, London

Conclusion

Creating a climate of safety and confidence



“ I’d like institutions to hear what I say, to understand the hurt that we are going through, to know we don’t feel safe. And then start to change. We have the right, we have the duty to change society. Woman, 50s, London

The notion coined by Irish writer and politician Conor Cruise O’Brien that “antisemitism is a light sleeper” was conveyed repeatedly in the focus groups. Participants generally viewed the existence and endurance of antisemitism as inevitable. Yet they were unanimous in the conviction that the state and its institutions ought to be doing far more to tackle antisemitism and to protect British Jews and treat them fairly. They strongly believed that investing in the creation of an environment of safety and confidence for British Jews is essential to protecting their legal right to fair and equal treatment and would benefit not only the Jewish community but also other minority, marginalised and vulnerable groups, and the strength of British democracy more broadly.

Closely drawing on participants’ accounts and proposals, in this final section we offer recommendations for action at the national level. These are intended to guide policymakers, educators, regulators, media, EDI bodies and Jewish organisations. Given the limited sample size (43 participants across five geographical locations and six focus groups) these recommendations are indicative. They suggest ways in which existing guidance and frameworks could be adapted to provide safer and just environments for British Jews in this country. Further research is essential on British Jews’ lived experience and views to enable the representation of the diverse voices of the UK Jewish community and to inform policy and practices.

Listening now!

There is an urgent need to achieve a comprehensive and consistent understanding of the views, experiences and concerns of the UK Jewish community in all its diversity.

This requires a serious commitment from government, institutions and Jewish leadership to listen carefully, systematically and continuously to the diverse voices of British Jews and to use this information to introduce meaningful change.³⁰ In this study, participants were appreciative of times they had been listened to, but they felt that those occasions were mostly ad hoc, related only to extreme antisemitic incidents, were rarely followed up and were often perceived as performative. In their view, responses mostly focused on increasing British Jews' physical safety, failing to address other serious concerns and harms.

Listening to British Jews should apply to all domains and institutions, enabled by existing mechanisms, such as independent parliamentary reviews (e.g., Lord Mann's 2026 review of antisemitism and other forms of racism in the NHS, the Department for Education's independent review into antisemitism in schools and colleges in England), as well as new forms.³¹ In particular, participants expressed strong interest in regular listening surgeries where members of the community could report their experiences and propose solutions, emphasising the need for clear responses to issues raised.

30 In this context, participants expressed disappointment with previous reviews and reports concerning antisemitism, arguing that these had resulted in little meaningful change.

31 <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2026-06-04/hlws93>;
<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/independent-review-into-antisemitism-in-schools-and-colleges>

Specific recommended actions

Policing, law enforcement and criminal justice

Commission an independent review to examine antisemitism and the relationships between police services and the Jewish community across the UK.

An independent review should examine the extent to which current policing systems and practices facilitate and support the effective identification, reporting and legal enforcement of antisemitism. It should also undertake a comprehensive assessment of the relationship between police services and the Jewish community across the UK, and set out clear, evidence-based recommendations to strengthen institutional capability, improve the tackling of antisemitism, and, crucially, strengthen Jewish community confidence in law enforcement and the legitimacy of policing.

Strengthen police direct, proactive and regular engagement with Jewish communities.

Before taking decisions that may directly affect Jewish individuals, communities or organisations, police forces and relevant partner agencies should undertake direct, timely and proactive engagement with the communities concerned, ensuring that decisions are informed by accurate evidence and an understanding of potential impact on the community.

Ensure police officers have the capacity to protect the Jewish community and enforce the law against antisemitic incidents in a consistent manner.

Allocate sufficient resources to ensure a reliable and continuous police presence in areas with Jewish communities and at events. This should apply to all community sizes. It requires comprehensive training on manifestations of antisemitism, including how antisemitic abuse may manifest during protests and in other settings.³²

Strengthen investigation and prosecution of antisemitic hate crimes.

This requires improved training, clearer charging guidelines and improved monitoring of case outcomes. Ensuring consistent enforcement and reduction of attrition in the legal process, antisemitic offences should be treated with the same urgency as other serious hate crimes.

Introduce urgent legislation proscribing the Muslim Brotherhood, following the recent decision to proscribe Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a national security threat.

This would significantly help to build trust in the state's willingness to confront state-backed antisemitism.

32 See also Board of Deputies of British Jews (2025)

Schools and higher education

Provide educators and school staff mandatory training on antisemitism.

This requires ensuring consistent understanding of contemporary antisemitism and its manifestations.

Ensure safeguarding frameworks address antisemitism as a distinct concern.

Safeguarding frameworks must ensure that Jewish children are protected from discrimination, harassment and exclusion and that their mental health, wellbeing and cultural and/or religious identities are actively supported in the school environments.

Improve reporting, investigation processes and implementation of actions responding to reports of antisemitic incidents in schools.

Provide a clear mechanism to allow children and parents to report antisemitic incidents in schools and/or involving school children.

Recognise schools as a primary site for developing understanding of Jewish life through embedding engagement with Jewish culture, Judaism, the Holocaust and antisemitism across the curriculum and wider school culture. This should include making Holocaust education in schools mandatory and consistent, rather than an optional topic.

This should also include creating opportunities for school children to meet Jewish children and adults who reflect the diversity of the UK Jewish community, across denominations and including non-practising Jews.

Strengthen policies, reporting and enforcement in higher education institutions to ensure Jewish students and staff are protected from exclusion, hostility, marginalisation and discriminatory informal practices.

Create clear reporting mechanisms, independent oversight of antisemitism complaints and accountability for the actions taken. Put formal protocols in place to respond to reports of antisemitic incidents and implement corrective mechanisms. Communicate with Jewish students and staff about what, if any, action has been taken.

Uphold academic freedom and freedom of expression in higher education institutions by fostering fact-based inquiry, intellectual curiosity and respectful engagement on Judaism, Jewish life and culture, Israel, and the Middle East.

Teaching and debate on Jewish history, life and culture, and on Israel and the Middle East, should be informed by a broad range of rigorously grounded scholarly perspectives, while ensuring that Jewish identity, culture and legitimate expressions of connection to Israel or Zionism are not subject to informal exclusion or “cancellation”.

Make training on antisemitism mandatory for academic and professional services staff in higher education institutions.

This requires ensuring consistent understanding of contemporary antisemitism and its manifestations.

Media industry

Enhance news editorial guidelines.

This requires ensuring that editorial and news reporting guidelines call for accurate and consistent distinctions between Israel, the Israeli government, Israeli citizens and Jews. Ensure that journalism standards are adopted that avoid reinforcing historical antisemitic narratives in news reporting, including those that dismiss or pathologise Jews' concerns about safety.

Ensure that social media companies adhere to UK legislation.

This requires making identification, removal and prevention of antisemitic content mandatory in line with the Online Safety Act 2023.

Improve the BBC's complaints-handling processes and commission a review of BBC coverage.

This process should provide clear explanations of editorial decisions, offer meaningful engagement with complainants' specific concerns, acknowledge errors and issue corrections whenever appropriate. An independent review of BBC coverage of the war in the Middle East and of antisemitism, Jewish history and Jewish communities should be commissioned.

Jewish community organisations

Expand and promote initiatives, spaces and programmes that strengthen the resilience and civic participation of British Jews in all their diversity.

This requires a proactive effort to build and foster spaces and tools that support reflection, mutual support and collective action, building capacity and creating opportunities for Jewish individuals across different locations, denominations, political perspectives, ages and genders, so they can contribute fully to wider society.

Equip young Jewish people with the knowledge, skills and confidence to navigate and respond to antisemitism.

This includes guidance in primary, secondary and higher education settings on reporting antisemitic incidents and hate crimes, understanding support mechanisms and engaging with institutional processes. Young Jewish people must be equipped with knowledge and tools to participate effectively in academic and professional environments. These skills can foster resilience, a strong sense of Jewish identity and belonging and the confidence to report antisemitism to institutions that should tackle it.

Private and public sector employers

Improve workplace reporting and investigation processes related to antisemitism and ensure that formal protocols for reporting antisemitic incidents involving employees are in place and consistently implemented.

These processes should include wellbeing checks, access to counselling and support services, and clear managerial responsibility for ensuring affected employees feel safe, included and supported.

Ensure that workplace Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) policies, training and interventions reflect the historical and contemporary manifestations of antisemitism.

This includes addressing specific manifestations of antisemitism and addressing antisemitism within broader anti-racism frameworks.

Acknowledgements

This research was funded by the LSE Urgency Fund. The author is extremely grateful to the participants and to community organisers who helped facilitate the focus groups in different locations. Special thanks to Tia Mitchell for excellent research assistance and to Lee Edwards, Lesley Klaff, Robin Mansell and Christina Scharff for their valuable advice and helpful feedback.

Finally, the author would like to thank Cynthia Little for proofreading this report and to LSE Design Unit for their creativity, care and professionalism in designing this report.

About the author

Shani Orgad is Professor of Media and Communications at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). Her research focuses on media representations and people's lived experience in the context of inequality. She has authored six books and numerous articles and reports and has conducted more than 250 interviews and focus groups across various research projects.

Please cite this report as: Orgad, Shani (2026). *Listening to British Jews*. The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE).

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Images

Cover: Child with a placard, "We don't Feel Safe Anymore". March against antisemitism. London, UK. 26 November 2023. *Bjanka Kadic/Alamy*

p11 Massive March Against Antisemitism threads through central London, London.UK, 7 September 2025. *Shutterstock*

p18 Participants holding an anti BBC banner aloft, at the March Against Antisemitism, held in central London during the Israel Gaza conflict. London UK. 26 November 2023. *Lois GoBe/Shutterstock*

p20 Crowds holding banners and flags aloft, at the March Against Antisemitism, held in central London during the Israel Gaza conflict. London UK. 26 November 2023. *Lois GoBe/Shutterstock*

p27 Crowds holding banner saying 'Jewish and Proud', at the March Against Antisemitism, held in central London during the Israel Gaza conflict. London UK. 26 November 2023. *Lois GoBe/Shutterstock*

p29 London, England, UK - November 26, 2023: Protestors attend the March Against Antisemitism. London UK. 26 November 2023. *Loredana Sangiuliano/Shutterstock*

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