

To: ICB, NHS Trust and Foundation Trust:

- Chairs
- Chief Executives
- Chief People Officers

NHS England
Wellington House
133-155 Waterloo Road
London
SE1 8UG

cc. NHS England regional directors
Commissioning support units

16 October 2025

Dear colleagues,

Request for action on racism including antisemitism

We write to ask for your assistance in implementing important initiatives that support our shared commitment to fostering an inclusive, respectful, and professional environment – for colleagues, patients and visitors – across the NHS and assuring our communities of our commitment to tackling hatred in all its forms.

We want to reiterate our zero tolerance stance to all forms of hatred, antisemitism, Islamophobia, racism and to any form of discriminatory behaviour. We reiterate our commitment to creating workplaces and services where everyone feels safe, valued and supported, regardless of their background, faith or identity.

In line with this, NHS England is formally and actively adopting the [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance \(IHRA\) working definition of antisemitism](#).

The UK Government adopted the definition in 2016 and the Secretary of State has today reaffirmed the Department of Health and Social Care's commitment to it. The Secretary of State has asked that other DHSC Executive Agencies and Arms-Length Bodies adopt this.

The definition includes illustrative examples of how antisemitism may manifest in contemporary settings, including but not limited to denial of the Holocaust, accusations of Jewish conspiracy, and the targeting of Israel as a proxy for Jewish people. Criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country, however, cannot be regarded as anti-Semitic.

We strongly encourage all NHS organisations to adopt this definition and to note the associated commitments to free speech in order to reinforce our collective stance against antisemitism – whether experienced by our colleagues, our patients, our communities or partners.

We need to demonstrate equal rigour in tackling all other forms of hatred and racism. During the race riots of 2024, local NHS organisations acted as beacons of hope in their local communities – supporting staff in taking an active stance against racism, in particular at that time against Islamophobia.

The current climate in some of our communities means we need to redouble our efforts to create workplaces where our staff and patients alike feel safe and welcome.

The government is also reviewing the recommendations of the independent working group on Islamophobia.

Uniform and workwear guidance update

Ensuring everybody feels safe to present for care and treatment when they need it and in working environments for our colleagues is a patient safety matter.

Working with stakeholder groups, we will update our existing uniform and workwear guidance, drawing on the policies developed in Manchester, UCLH and other good practice. The guidance will continue to uphold the principles that underpinned its creation including freedom of religious expression, ensuring patients feel safe and respected at all times, and that staff political views do not impact on patients' care or comfort.

Antiracism including antisemitism training

We are also updating the existing NHS Core Skills Framework module on Equality, Diversity and Human Rights, extending the section on discrimination and content on antisemitism and Islamophobia, and including new questions on this in the assessment. We are working to ensure all NHS organisations are aligned to the Framework to ensure that all 1.5m NHS staff are required to complete this training as part of their mandatory training.

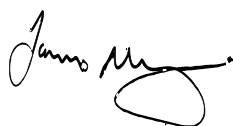
Working with Lord Mann, we will update the content developed with EDI, racism, antisemitism and Islamophobia subject matter experts and aligned to the core skills training framework.

The existing training is completed by staff every three years, but we are asking for your help and support to ensure that all staff in your organisation refresh their EDI training as soon as this content is available rather than waiting for the prompt in the current three-year cycle.

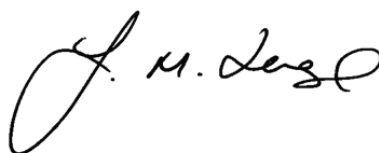
Separately, work is underway to draft a new Statutory and Mandatory Training competency framework which will replace the Core Skills Training Framework (CSTF) – setting out all nationally recommended subjects to be mandated and is due to go live by April 2026.

We appreciate your leadership in implementing these changes and we ask you to support all staff in feeling safe and valued at work and also to support our communities accessing NHS services. We also recognise the importance of supporting NHS organisations in implementing these important initiatives and look forward to working with you to do this.

Yours sincerely,



Sir James Mackey
Chief Executive
NHS England



Jo Lenaghan
Chief Workforce Officer
NHS England