

Valerie Vaz responds to the Gemma White QC report

Valerie Vaz MP, Shadow Leader of the House of Commons, responding to the publication of The Bullying and Harassment of Members of Parliament Staff report led by Gemma White QC, said:

“There is no place for sexual harassment or bullying in any workplace. The accounts it contains are shocking and totally unacceptable.

“The House of Commons has introduced an independent complaints process to deal with cases of bullying and sexual harassment under the supervision of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards. Labour has supported the scheme being accessible to those with historic complaints as well as those no longer working in Parliament.

“It is clear that more must be done to ensure that the culture of Parliament is one where those with complaints feel supported and able to challenge those in a position of power and authority.

“There is also a clear role for political parties which do not directly employ Members of Parliament’s staff, but have a pastoral care role. That is why in 2014 Labour MPs changed their standing orders to allow staff to bring cases through the Parliamentary Labour Party as well as being able to access the party’s complaints procedure.

“Labour thanks Gemma White QC for her report and will look seriously at the detail of the recommendations. We will continue to work on a cross-party basis to make parliament a modern workplace with zero tolerance of any form of bullying or harassment.

“Labour calls on the government to ensure the necessary time in the House of Commons to debate and implement changes to the independent complaints process before the summer recess.”

[Jonathan Ashworth responds to the latest NHS performance data](#)

Jonathan Ashworth MP, Labour's Shadow Health and Social Care Secretary, responding to the latest NHS performance data, said:

"While the Health Secretary plays Tory leadership games, patients continue to suffer deteriorating care.

"Patients will find it staggering that this summer A&E performance so far has actually been worse than it was in the run up to Christmas and those stranded on trolleys in overcrowded hospitals is up 376% compared to last June.

"What's more, the waiting list for treatment is at a record high with patients waiting longer in pain and distress for treatment.

"This is an NHS in a year round crisis thanks to years of cutbacks and understaffing. The Health Secretary must park his obsession with gimmicks, gizmos and gadgets and get a grip of the plummeting standards of patient care happening on his watch."

[Review of social security for the terminally ill – Marsha de Cordova responds](#)

Marsha de Cordova MP, Labour's Shadow Minister for Disabled People, commenting on the announced review of social security for the terminally ill, said:

“It is welcome the Tories are finally acknowledging that their ‘six-month rule’ is cruel, arbitrary and outdated, but we do not need a review to know it should be scrapped. The longer the government delays, the more needless suffering and anxiety is inflicted on ill and disabled people with terminal illnesses.

“Shamefully, between 2013 and 2018, 17,000 terminally ill people died while waiting for a decision on their Personal Independence Payment claims. This means people spent their last days waiting for the outcome of a cruel assessment without the financial support they needed.

“The government must now adopt a definition of terminal illness based on sound clinical judgements and scrap all unnecessary assessments for terminally ill people.”

[Imran Hussain responds to the Prison Inspector’s report into HMP Berwyn](#)

Imran Hussain MP, Labour’s Shadow Justice Minister, responding to the Prison Inspector’s report into HMP Berwyn, said:

“These problems are a direct consequence of brutal staff and budget cuts made by the Tories and, in Coalition, by the Lib Dems.

“Sadly, there are many other prisons also suffering from this staffing crisis. The number of frontline prison officers who have resigned has more than tripled since the Coalition government began, and that’s left our prison staff, prisoners and the public vulnerable.

“This crisis is the government’s fault, and it must end it fast. We need a retention strategy to end the exodus of experienced staff in our prisons. That’s the only way to make sure everyone is safe. You can’t keep people safe on the cheap.”

Labour Party response to Panorama programme

A Labour Party spokesperson, responding to BBC Panorama's programme, said:

"We completely reject any claim that Labour is antisemitic. We stand in solidarity with Jewish people, and we're taking decisive action to root out antisemitism from our movement and society.

"The Panorama programme was not a fair or balanced investigation. It was a seriously inaccurate, politically one-sided polemic, which breached basic journalistic standards, invented quotes and edited emails to change their meaning. It was an overtly biased intervention by the BBC in party political controversy.

"An honest investigation into antisemitism in Labour and wider society is in the public interest. The Panorama team instead pre-determined an answer to the question posed by the programme's title.

"No proper and serious attempt was made to understand our current procedures for dealing with antisemitism, which is clearly essential to reach a fair and balanced judgement. And Panorama distorted and manipulated the truth and misrepresented evidence to present a biased and selective account.

"We complained in advance to the BBC over the way the programme was put together and its choice of a presenter who has expressed overt personal and political hostility to Jeremy Corbyn's politics. We will be pursuing complaints at every level.

"The Labour Party will fully investigate any complaints concerning the antisemitic incidents reported by party members in interviews in the programme.

“Labour stands in solidarity with Jewish people and is fully committed to the support, defence and celebration of the Jewish community and its organisations.

“Despite claims made in the programme, Labour is taking decisive action against antisemitism. Since Jennie Formby became General Secretary the rate at which antisemitism cases have been dealt with has increased more than four-fold.

“We will build on the improvements to our procedures made under Jennie Formby, and continue to act against this repugnant form of racism.”