

Founding Statement for Hackney Independent Socialist Group

We have established this independent group of now former Hackney Labour councillors to campaign for residents by promoting policies to reduce poverty and inequality and improve the health and well-being of the Borough. We have found it increasingly difficult to work in Hackney Labour Group, which is stifled by a lack of internal democracy, transparency and scrutiny and by an absence of progressive thinking at national leadership level.

We can no longer in good conscience continue campaigning for a Labour Party which nationally:

- Refuses to call out the genocide in Gaza, continues to support arms sales to Israel and seeks to clamp down on pro-Palestinian protests.
- Refuses to commit to essential additional funding for local council services.
- Abandoned the pledge to invest £28 billion in the Green Economy.
- Fails to call for the public ownership of utilities and key services.
- Offers no route map out of the housing crisis.
- Provides no opposition to further NHS privatisation.
- Offers no meaningful conversation about migration or migrants' contribution to the UK.
- Adheres to the poverty-inducing two-child policy benefit cap.
- Refuses to support industrial action and commit to full repeal of anti-Trade Union Laws.
- Refuses to implement recommendations in full made in the Forde Report.

We are deeply troubled by Labour's racist treatment of the Hackney North MP, Diane Abbott, showing disrespect for her political bravery and immense contribution to public life (and to her electorate and Labour Party). Diane Abbott's continued suspension after more than a year is in stark contrast to the exoneration and welcome extended to a hard-right Tory.

Hers is just one of many cases of the Labour Party abusing its own processes with a disregard for natural justice in a toxic and unacceptable culture of expulsions and exclusions. By contrast, our Group aims to foster a collaborative and listening culture, working with trade unions and learning from community campaigns and initiatives. We will act independently when necessary but work collaboratively with other groups on the Council and will support the incumbent Hackney administration where it furthers the aims outlined above or other progressive causes.

We pledge to continue to work hard WITH residents to fight for the best services possible from the Council and other public bodies. **We commit to campaigning on issues including:**

- **Climate:** Air quality, circular waste economy, improved public transport, biodiversity.
- **Ethical investment:** Hackney Council to divest from arms and fossil fuels.
- **Health:** GP access, better mental health and sexual health provision, increase screening and vaccine take up.
- **Education:** Challenge school exclusions, champion SEND and Sure Start provision.
- **Housing:** Decent repairs, no more damp and mould, more social housing, quality and fully accessible homes for all.
- **Poverty:** Rent controls, food security, tackling precarious work, abolish the two child benefit cap.
- **Community:** Co-design of public spaces to ensure they are well used by groups and businesses.

We will lead our work with a focus on collective responsibility, genuine inclusion and kinder politics.