

24 November 2021**כ' כסלו תשפ"ב****United Synagogue announces creation of new Centre for Rabbinic Excellence**

The United Synagogue is delighted to announce today that Rabbi Nicky Liss has been appointed the first Director of the newly-created Centre for Rabbinic Excellence (CRE).

The new Centre seeks to create exceptional United Synagogue Rabbis and Rebbetzins by providing ongoing professional development opportunities through partnerships with training providers, mentors, coaches and academic institutions.

Rabbis and Rebbetzins will benefit from customised training plans as part of the Rabbinic review and goalsetting process. The Centre will also play a key role in talent-spotting and the nurturing of interns and potential rabbinic candidates.

Rabbi Liss will establish and lead the new Centre, set its strategic direction, oversee its programmes and manage the professional team.

Rabbi Liss recently served as the Chair of the Rabbinical Council of the United Synagogue for five years and is Senior Rabbi of Highgate United Synagogue. Rabbi Liss will combine this new part-time role with his current position at Highgate.

The Centre has made two more key appointments to catalyse its work: Rabbi Mordechai Ginsbury will become Associate Director of the CRE in addition to his duties as Senior Rabbi of Hendon United Synagogue and Judy Markovic has been appointed the Centre's Programme Manager. They both bring significant experience having worked for P'eir, the United Synagogue's current training arm.

As Associate Director, Rabbi Ginsbury will lead and develop the review and goalsetting process, manage a broad team of facilitators and ensure that all development needs are built in to the CRE's future programming. He will also be a support and liaison to the Rabbinat.

As Programme Manager, Judy will be the liaison for United Synagogue Rebbetzins and organise tailored training and programmes for them. She will also provide financial management and coordination of the review and goalsetting process.

The team will meet with Rabbis and Rebbetzins to better understand their needs and then build a broad programme of continuous professional development. The Centre will launch in early 2022.

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The Chief Rabbi said: "The creation of the Centre for Rabbinic Excellence is a significant development for the British Jewish community. The CRE will enhance the capacity of the United Synagogue to support our wonderful Rabbis and Rebbetzins in their quest to care for, educate and inspire their communities. In Rabbi Nicky Liss, the new centre has a truly inspirational leader to take the CRE from vision to reality. Rabbi Liss has himself set the highest standard of Rabbinic achievement through his outstanding stewardship of Highgate United Synagogue and the Rabbinical Council of the United Synagogue. I look forward to working closely with him and his team and wish the new centre every success."

Professor Andrew Eder, United Synagogue Trustee lead for CRE, said: "The Centre for Rabbinic Excellence marks a new era for Rabbinic development in the United Synagogue. The new Centre will enable the United Synagogue to recruit and retain the very best spiritual leaders. They in turn will continue to inspire our communities and members resulting in more people doing more Jewish things, more of the time – and so the timing of the opening of the new Centre is very appropriate as we look to welcome growing numbers of people back to shul. After an extremely thorough recruitment search which attracted a strong field of candidates from the UK and abroad, we are delighted that Rabbi Liss has accepted our invitation to lead the Centre and look forward to working closely with him and his team as they begin their important work."

Debbie Fox and Leigh Perl, co-chairs of Highgate United Synagogue said: "We are delighted but not surprised that Rabbi Liss has been offered this senior position which will run in tandem with his ongoing commitment as our Rabbi. We have every confidence that Rabbi Liss will bring enormous value to the role and wish him a hearty *mazal tov*."

Rabbi Nicky Liss said: "Having had the privilege of working with my colleagues as Chair of the Rabbinic Council of the United Synagogue, I am humbled and delighted to accept this new role. The Centre for Rabbinic Excellence is a very exciting opportunity for United Synagogue Rabbis and Rebbetzins to continue our development and become the best leaders for our communities."

****ENDS****

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