

Independent Workers Union of Great Britain



www.iwgb.org.uk

12 September, 2017

Dear Professor Sir Adrian Smith,

I am writing in my capacity as General Secretary of the [Independent Workers' Union of Great Britain \(IWGB\)](#) to notify you that we are today launching a campaign to bring the [University of London's](#) outsourced workers back in house.

When we started organizing at UoL in Spring of 2011 (first in Unison then in IWGB), the situation for outsourced workers was somewhat akin to the Wild West: the contractor didn't appear aware of the existence of employment law, cleaners were sacked without due process, workers' wages routinely went unpaid, even when cleaners were paid the correct amount was only a hare above the minimum wage at £6.15 per hour, the workers had no pensions, and had the statutory minimums for holidays and sick pay. As you know, things have changed quite dramatically since then, albeit no thanks to you.

After a number of [employment tribunal claims](#), and loads of grievances, we have been able to educate the ignoramuses masquerading as proper contractors in the basics of employment law. In 2011/12 we won the London Living Wage campaign. As part of that campaign victory the [University of London promised to maintain the pay differentials among different outsourced workers](#) so that all workers would get a roughly proportionally equal pay rise. In the summer of 2012 we then launched the [3 Cosas Campaign](#) which a year and a half later went on [to win improvements in sick pay, holidays, and pensions for outsourced staff](#). It is important to note that in both of these campaigns we targeted the University of London, not your contractor. And in both examples it was the University of London- not the contractor- who paid for the improved wages and terms and conditions.

Today we are back to finish the job once and for all. We are no longer prepared to accept that you have one class of workers receiving grossly inferior pay, treatment, and terms and conditions. The only way to end these injustices is to bring your outsourced staff back in house so that they benefit from the same payroll and HR departments, the same maternity pay, the same pensions, sick pay, and holidays, and the same standards of management as those found at the University of London. This type of security, decency, and fairness will not be found by using the incompetent contractors you routinely use. We therefore call on the University of London to immediately:

1. Bring the outsourced workers back in house;
2. Reinstatement the pay differentials promised to the outsourced workers with appropriate back pay;
3. Ban 0 hours contracts at the university.

We of course remain open to dialogue and negotiations on these matters. However, given that at every past opportunity you have chosen the masochistic path to defeat by ignoring your workers' demands until they had exerted enough public pressure to force you into humiliating backpedaling and concessions, we can only assume you will do the same this time. So let me take this opportunity to be perfectly clear about what will follow should you choose to ignore these reasonable demands:

1. We will build support for the campaign among other trade unions, politicians, NGO's and other organisations. Indeed you can expect public letters from a number of them in the coming days calling on you to accept the workers' demands.
2. We will publicise on [social media](#) the ills of outsourcing and the stories of the workers who suffer the consequences of not enough holiday, sick pay, and maternity pay.
3. We will make and distribute videos where workers and supporters articulate the exploitation of being outsourced at the University of London. For the first video, released today, see [here](#).
4. We will be [contacting press](#) to tell them about the two tier workforce at University of London, where predominantly BAME migrant workers are on one set of terms and conditions and work without the respect of the university, and another set of predominantly white British workers operate in the same building but a different world. For today's press release, see [here](#).
5. We will be holding protests. Indeed the first one will be [on the 27th of September, and should see a few hundred people outside Senate House](#).
6. The outsourced workers will be going on strike over their various demands. Indeed also on the 27th some of the outsourced workers will be striking over the pay issue on the back of a 100% YES vote.
7. We will be flyering University of London events to inform the public of the university's exploitative practices.

Although you may not be able to admit this publicly, I think privately at least you will have to admit that we are bound to win this campaign. Not only has the IWGB already beaten UoL in the major breakthrough that was the 3 Cosas victory, as well as in the tribunals, but momentum and history are now on our side. After the decisions of the [London School of Economics \(LSE\)](#) and the [School of Oriental and African Studies \(SOAS\)](#) to bring their cleaners back in house after similar campaigns, I fear you will struggle to justify the exploitation that is outsourcing to the rest of the University of London community and to the public.

Now given that you must be a pretty smart guy (otherwise why would [UoL pay you more than £170k a year?](#)) maybe just take a minute to think this one through. Do you want to bring workers in house, pay them what you promised them, and end the absurdity of 0 hours contracts now? Or would you prefer to do so after the University's reputation is dragged through the mud yet again?

Thank you very much in advance for your consideration.

Kind regards,

Dr. Jason Moyer-Lee
General Secretary
IWGB

Ps. In case you want to ease some of your guilt and are looking for a good investment for that fat salary of yours, why not chuck a few quid into the [strike fund](#)?