

Dear Professor Latchman,

We write to you as Birkbeck staff, students and alumni, and representatives of Birkbeck Unison, Unite, UCU and the Students' Union, to request that Birkbeck commits to bringing all of its outsourced workers back in-house (on equal terms and conditions as directly employed staff and without any reduction in jobs or services) at the earliest possible opportunity, and we request that the College makes a positive announcement to this effect in the Spring term.

'Insourcing' has long been a demand of the College trade unions, and the tide is turning against outsourcing in Higher Education: you will no doubt be aware of the decision of SOAS in August to bring all its outsourced workers in-house, and the decision of LSE to do so for cleaning staff, earlier in the year. Birkbeck now has the opportunity and duty to do the same for its economically vulnerable outsourced cleaning, catering and security staff.

Birkbeck's Mission Statement states that: "the College provides an inclusive working and learning environment for its students and staff so that all may develop to their full potential." Our Equality and Diversity Statement states that: "Birkbeck is committed to providing the highest quality academic and working environment, where all staff, students, visitors and contractors are employed, welcomed, respected and treated in a fair manner that is free from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation." We believe that the entire Birkbeck community is responsible for the delivery of the world-class education our students are entitled to expect, and that our outsourced cleaning, catering and security staff are as much part of that community as any of us, and should also be treated fairly and justly. This means they should receive the same terms and conditions as in-house staff: pay, sick leave, holiday and pension, but also access to the library, IT services, the study assistance scheme, family leave, and an end to the presence of zero-hours contracts in catering. In other words, equality and parity with other Birkbeck staff is necessary.

Baroness Amos in her announcement at SOAS stated: "We already guarantee the London Living Wage for all our staff whether contracted externally or not. Now putting our whole workforce on the same terms and conditions reflects our values of social justice and equality." We believe the same applies at Birkbeck. We should be just as committed to our values of social justice and equality as SOAS – perhaps even more so given our particular mission, which has been highlighted again recently by preparations for the celebration of our 200th anniversary. Indeed, we think the insourcing of staff to advance equality and justice would be an excellent part of those celebrations.

We do not believe there is any moral or financial justification for the continuation of the two-tier workforce that has been allowed to persist at Birkbeck for too long. The case studies at SOAS and LSE show that the financial argument for outsourcing does not stand up, and there is no moral argument for continued outsourcing. Indeed, the transaction costs of outsourcing and costs in managing and monitoring contracts have often proved greater than in-house services, where staff may be more committed to high quality services. The collapse of Carillion, and the subsequent damage to public services, shows that outsourcing puts at risk that which our institution should have at its core: provision for a cost effective and dependable level of service for our students and staff.

We would hope that Birkbeck as a progressive institution committed to equality will make this commitment without the need for the Trade and Student unions to engage in a, no doubt popular, campaign that would be unnecessarily damaging to Birkbeck's reputation.

We look forward to hearing your response in the Spring term,

Birkbeck UNISON
Birkbeck University and College Union (UCU)

Birkbeck Unite the Union
Birkbeck Students' Union

If you would like to add your name to this open letter, please email bbk.inhouse@gmail.com, mentioning your relationship to Birkbeck.

John Kelly, Joint President, UCU

Mike Berlin, Joint President, UCU

Simon Deville, Secretary, UCU

Steven Ellis, Branch Secretary, UNISON

Jane van de Ban, Joint Chair, UNISON

Paul McGowan, Joint Chair, UNISON

Jacqueline Bell, Catering staff representative, UNISON

Emilse Ocampo, Cleaning staff representative, UNISON

Absalom Sanclemente, Cleaning staff representative, Birkbeck UNISON

Edwin Clifford-Coupe, Campaigns Officer, UNISON

Louise Lambe, Education Officer, UNISON

Maz Iqbal, workplace representative, Unite the Union

Nicholas Baker, Student Leader, Students' Union, *ex officio* Birkbeck Governor

Eliyahu Goldsobel, Student Leader, Students' Union, *ex officio* Birkbeck Governor

Sophia Moreau, Women's Officer, Students' Union

Ryan Auernigg, LGBTQ+ Officer, Students' Union

Mike Best, International Students' Officer, Students' Union

Belinda Brooks-Gordon, Assistant Dean (Equalities), School of Science

Maura Patterson, Assistant Dean (Equalities), School of Business, Economics and Informatics

Paul Turnbull, Assistant Dean (Equalities), School of Law

Karen Wells, Assistant Dean (Equalities), School of Social Sciences, History and Philosophy

Jo Winning, Assistant Dean (Equalities), School of Arts

John McDonnell MP, Birkbeck Fellow, Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer

Naomi Bain, Communications Officer, Birkbeck UNISON

June Molloy, Assistant Management Accountant, Birkbeck

Richard Carabine, Health & Safety Officer, Birkbeck UCU

Alex Rendall, Equality and Diversity Officer, Birkbeck UNISON

Tom Dillon, Birkbeck UNISON

Liz Drew, Birkbeck UNISON

Ashok Kumar, Lecturer in International Political Economy, Birkbeck

Kalpana Wilson, Lecturer in Geography, Birkbeck

Kerry Harman, Learning representative, Birkbeck UCU

Tom Travers, Birkbeck UCU

Christina Delistathi, Joint President, UCU

Sophie Hope, Birkbeck UCU

Danny Millum, Independent Workers Union of Great Britain

Dimitri Cautain, Co-President Welfare & Campaigns, SOAS Students' Union

Sandy Nicoll, Branch Secretary, SOAS UNISON

Lydia Hughes, United Voices of the World