



Cleaners and Allied Independent Workers Union
c/o 88 Fleet Street, London EC4Y 1DH
Tel: 075 900 98084 / 079 045 52106 Email: office@caiwu.org.uk

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

London, UK – October 1st 2021

- **Facebook Cleaners to vote on strike action after dismissal of supervisor**
- **Cleaners approach Facebook about being brought in house**
- **Cleaners say excessive workloads are making them unwell**
- **Further Protests Planned for October 1st and 8th**

Cleaners at Facebook's London offices are to vote on the possibility of strike action.

The cleaners, who have been campaigning about excessive workloads and the dismissal of their union rep, approached CAIWU this week and asked the union to begin the official dispute necessary for a strike to take place.

The strike ballot is expected to be held in mid-October, and if industrial action is approved it is expected to take place in early December.

In May 2021, Churchill Group, the cleaners' employer, began to impose workloads the cleaners describe as impossible. The company added five entire floors to the cleaners' duties, effectively doubling the area that had to be cleaned. Churchill also began placing time limits on every cleaning activity. In one example, cleaners say they have to clean a washroom containing five toilet cubicles and a shower in just ninety seconds.

The extra workloads led to cleaners reporting a series of health issues, including exhaustion, severe back pain, stress, deteriorating mental health, and — in one case — internal bleeding. As a result, the cleaners began a campaign with the active involvement and support of their supervisor and union rep, Guillermo Camacho. Despite his seven unblemished years at Facebook, Camacho was removed from the site following the second campaign protest at the request of JLL, Facebook's facilities management contractor. The request was allegedly the result of Camacho's poor work performance, but such allegations do not stand up to scrutiny. Each of the alleged issues was the direct

result of either the increase in workloads and/or conflicting and contradictory instructions issued to the cleaners by Churchill and JLL. In addition, after a thorough investigation into JLL's allegations Churchill concluded that no further action was required – in essence an acknowledgment that Mr Camacho's performance was satisfactory. Nevertheless, Camacho received confirmation of his dismissal on September 22nd, ostensibly due to Churchill's failure to find him suitable alternative employment.

CAIWU intends to take Camacho's case to employment tribunal. Meanwhile, the cleaners continue to campaign for reasonable workloads. They have also this week taken the significant step of approaching Facebook with a request to be brought in house.

CAIWU organiser Bruce Coker is clear about the source of the problems at Facebook. 'It doesn't take a genius to see that outsourcing is the problem,' he says. 'If Facebook brought the cleaners in house it would be cheaper for the company and better for the workers. Outsourcing means the cleaning has to be done at the cheapest price possible, and that means making the cleaners work harder all the time for less and less money.' Coker believes the tide is gradually turning against outsourcing. 'It's starting to change,' he says. 'Look at all the colleges who've brought staff back in house lately. Goldsmiths, Birkbeck, Queen Mary, LSE. It's only a matter of time before these tech giants start doing the same.'

The cleaners are determined to continue their campaign for as long as necessary, until they are given reasonable workloads and their former colleague gets the justice he deserves.

Further protests are planned for Friday 1st October at Facebook HQ in Rathbone Square and Friday October 8th at 10 Brock Street.

Protests:

Friday October 1st, 4pm: 1 Rathbone Square, W1T 1FB

Friday October 8th, 4pm: 10 Brock Street, NW1 3FG

END

About CAIWU: The Cleaners & Allied Independent Workers Union is a registered trade union representing over a thousand workers mainly in London's cleaning industry. We believe that every human being is entitled to dignity and respect in the workplace, and it is our mission to help our members fight for this basic right, along with others like fair pay, terms and work conditions.

Notes to editor:

For more information, please contact the CAIWU communications office:

communications@caiwu.org.uk

Tel: 07927 451 462

<https://caiwu.org.uk>