



Cleaners and Allied Independent Workers Union
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For immediate release

Lies, damned lies and redundancies — Doubt increases over Facebook's claim that no London cleaning jobs are at risk — Facebook says it will keep paying for contingent workers, but cleaners' employer continues with restructuring plan

London, UK — 28th October 2020

Confusion is mounting over Facebook's claim that none of its London cleaners' jobs are at risk.

Up to fifteen cleaners at Facebook's London offices are facing the threat of redundancy.

This is in direct conflict with Facebook's public statement that the company "will pay contingent workers that cannot work due to reduced staffing requirements during voluntary work from home, when we close an office, when we choose to send an employee home, or when they are sick".

CAIWU has learned of internal communications within Facebook that reveal a high level of concern within the company for the cleaners' plight. However, these communications also reveal the internal distribution of misinformation which, deliberately or otherwise, appears to minimise the very real threat of redundancies.

This threat cannot be minimised. The cleaners are currently involved in a consultation process with their employer, Bidvest Noonan, over a restructuring plan which the company states 'would constitute a redundancy situation'.

The internal memos received by CAIWU strongly indicate that Facebook is committed to paying for its cleaners during the pandemic. This raises the question of whether Facebook is complicit with Bidvest Noonan and facilities management company JLL in implementing the cost-saving cuts whilst publicly denying this, or whether the two contractors are attempting to cut staff numbers behind their client's back.

The original business case for the restructuring process cited the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic as the key reason for the restructuring. When CAIWU pointed out that this contravened Facebook's contingent worker policy, Bidvest Noonan simply rewrote the relevant paragraph to remove any reference to the pandemic. This potentially invalidates the legality of the consultation process, which continues regardless and is due to conclude on Friday October 30th. At a consultation meeting today (October 28th) attended by CAIWU officials and representatives from the cleaning workforce along with Bidvest Noonan HR personnel, the company once again refused to rule out the possibility of redundancies.

One thing is clear amid all the confusion: there is a strong likelihood of a number of critical key workers being made redundant despite Facebook's public opposition to this.

CAIWU spokesperson Danbert Vanzetti said, 'It's a case of the tail wagging the dog. Facebook says it wants no redundancies, yet when its service supplier decides to rid itself of surplus staff anyway it does literally nothing to stop them. Someone at Facebook knows what's going on and someone at Facebook is in a position to do something about it. They've simply chosen not to get involved.'

The cleaners have at least been buoyed by a number of supportive messages for the cleaners from within Facebook. One Facebook employee says: 'The right thing to do here would be to support core members of our family who need it more than ever,' while another states 'it's not really a good look for us.'

What all this concern will amount to remains to be seen. Meanwhile, time is running out to save the Facebook cleaners' jobs.

Protest against the restructuring: Friday 30th October – 2pm – 1 Rathbone Square, London W1T 1FB

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.

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Notes to editor:

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