

Adrian Smith  
Vice-Chancellor  
University of London  
Senate House  
Malet Street  
London - WC1E 7HU

25 October 2017

Dear Adrian Smith,

I am writing to express War on Want's support for the **Independent Workers' Union of Great Britain's (IWGB)** "Back in House" campaign. War on Want's *Stand With Migrant Workers: End Precarious Contracts* campaign is seeking to ensure that all workers, including migrant and those on precarious contracts, have their rights at work respected without discrimination.

Outsourcing and the use of precarious contracts are both a cause and an effect of discrimination within the UK's labour market. They are an effect because marginalised workers are more likely to be outsourced and on precarious contracts. Far too often this is due to the work that marginalised groups do being undervalued. It is also a cause of discrimination when the conditions which black, women, and migrant workers face when outsourced and on precarious contracts are worse than equivalent in-house staff on permanent contracts.

The power imbalance that precarious contracts and outsourcing create further contributes to discrimination through the difficulties they create for workers in challenging abuses such as illegal deduction of wages, bullying and discrimination.

We have learnt from the IWGB, which represents outsourced workers at the University of London, that this type of discrimination is reflected in the conditions that workers there face: with largely BME and migrant outsourced staff having worse pension, holiday and sick pay entitlements than largely white British in-house staff.

We have worked for many years to ensure those with the power to shape labour conditions are held accountable for their human rights impacts throughout their supply chains. The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human rights are unequivocal that the responsibility to respect human rights is not limited to in-house staff. They require organisations to: "Seek to prevent or mitigate adverse human rights impacts that are directly linked to their operations, products or services by their business relationships".

Our work on the living wage has always been clear that a living wage is a fundamental human right that must act as a floor not a ceiling in setting wages.

I urge you to meet with the IWGB, which represents affected workers, and resolve their demands that outsourced workers – including cleaners, post room workers, security officers, receptionists and porters – be made in-house, that the university implement pay rises which were promised six years ago and that the university abolish zero-hours contracts at the university.

Yours sincerely,

Asad Rehman – Executive Director, War on Want