

# Letter from Zack Polanski about Rooted Finance

## Key information

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## Dismissed workers from GLA-supported charity Rooted Finance

Dear Tunde and Navprit,

### Dismissed workers from GLA-supported charity Rooted Finance

I am writing to you urgently regarding an issue with GLA-supported debt charity, Rooted Finance, raised with me by the Independent Workers Union of Great Britain (IWGB).

It was recently reported that four of the six frontline workers of Rooted Finance, a debt advice charity, were fired on International Women's Day.

[Union says charity sacked staff hours after strike plans were announced \(civilsociety.co.uk\)](#)

The move to sack the workers came a few hours after the workers publicly announced that they had successfully balloted to strike. This follows 100% of the front-line work force sending an open letter to management several months earlier simply requesting union recognition, fair pay and adequate training.

The former workers have told me that there are now no Debt Advisors employed at Rooted Finance and that, excluding management, only one Advice Assistant remains.

I share the concern of the workers on how one remaining Advice Manager will be able to support an estimated 120 vulnerable existing service users.

Fair pay and workplace wellbeing are two of the four pillars that make up the Mayor's Good Work Standard, which also includes working with trade unions as a benchmark for good work.

[The Good Work Standard \(GWS\) | London City Hall](#)

The GLA regularly provides funding, via the Financial Hardship Team in the Communities and Skills Directorate, to Rooted Finance. I am concerned that this organisation's recent conduct has not been in-keeping with the Mayor's values, as illustrated by their contravention of the principles of the Good Work Standard.

I would like to propose a meeting between yourselves and the representatives of former Rooted Finance workers, and IWGB, to better understand the specifics of the situation and to use your influence to create the path to an amicable settlement.

I am happy to meet to discuss further and help convene this meeting.

Yours sincerely,

**Zack Polanski**

**Green Party Member of the London Assembly**

Dear Zack,

Thank you for your recent letter and apologies for taking so long to reply to you.

As part of the Advice in Community Settings Programme, the GLA funds Rooted Finance to coordinate a local partnership of organisations providing community-based debt and welfare advice for Londoners in financial hardship – particularly Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority Londoners.

We are aware of the dispute between Rooted Finance and former employees who worked as frontline advisors at the charity, and we have monitored the situation since the dispute first came to light. We are satisfied that, to date, the issue has not affected the organisation's ability to meet its requirements, and we are confident in Rooted Finance's continued ability to lead a partnership providing advice to Londoners in financial hardship.

We can confirm that officers at the GLA have been contacted directly by members of the Independent Workers Union of Great Britain who are supporting the advisors the IWGB requesting a meeting. We have declined that request. This is on the basis that: a) we understand that a claim for early conciliation has been lodged by the former employees and it is important that the GLA does not interfere with or unduly influence that process; and b) as a funder of a specific project, rather than Rooted Finance's general operations, it is not for the GLA to intervene in or arbitrate industrial disputes between them and their employees.

It is also important to be clear that the GLA has not been funding the roles occupied by the advisors in question.

Otherwise, we understand that Rooted Finance's management have responded to your letter directly, addressing the allegations made by the IWGB.

Thank you again for raising your concerns, which we take seriously.

Yours sincerely,

Navprit Rai Tunde Olayinka

Assistant Director, Communities and Social Policy

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Executive Director, Communities and  
Skills

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