

# **Letter from Zack Polanski AM: Support for cleaners, porters and caterers strike at St Helier and Epsom Hospitals**

## **Key information**

Publication type: General

Publication status: Adopted

Publication date: Monday 30 June 2025

## **1. Letter from Zack Polanski AM: Support for cleaners, porters and caterers strike at St Helier and Epsom Hospitals**

Dear Board Members, Trustees, and Executives of Epsom and St Helier NHS Trust,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the treatment of hundreds of essential workers directly employed by your Trust, including cleaners, porters, ward hosts, caterers, and housekeepers.

I urge you to engage with these staff and take immediate steps to bring them onto full NHS Agenda for Change (AfC) contracts.

These workers are the backbone of your hospitals.

They ensure wards are clean, meals are delivered, patients are supported, and services run smoothly, and yet they remain excluded from the basic pay and conditions afforded to their NHS colleagues.

Bringing staff in house means nothing if they are not given the same terms and conditions as other workers, it implies there is a two-tiered hierarchical work structure, which is unfair and unjust.

Despite doing work that is every bit as essential as other NHS staff, they are paid significantly less, receive no enhancements for nights and weekends, have fewer days of annual leave, limited sick pay, and are enrolled in an inferior pension scheme.

It is particularly troubling that this inequality overwhelmingly affects Black, brown, and migrant workers – those already more vulnerable to systemic discrimination. Maintaining this two-tiered workforce sends the message that their labour is valued less, and that they are expected to do the same vital work for less pay and fewer protections.

Many other NHS Trusts across the country have already done the right thing by bringing their support staff onto full AfC contracts. I urge you to follow their lead. The workers at your hospitals are not asking for special treatment – they are asking for equal treatment.

I understand your next board meeting is scheduled for the 3rd of July.

I strongly encourage you to use this opportunity to discuss and agree to the very reasonable demands made by your workers.

**Zack Polanski**

**Green Party Member of the London Assembly**