

Lance McCarthy
Chief Executive Officer
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25 March 2019

Dear Lance



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I write with reference to the letter I sent to you on 28 February 2019 where UNISON expressed its disappointment that the Trust had embarked on the market testing exercise of the domestic service at Princess Alexandra Hospital and set out the reasons why UNISON views this as a precursor to the outsourcing of this service to a private company. We also set out why the outsourcing of this service would be bad for staff and patients at PAH.

In the letter, UNISON put you on notice that if you did not withdraw from the market testing exercise within 10 working days then I would notify you of a formal trade dispute.

The Trust has not withdrawn from the exercise, so today I am notifying you of a formal trade dispute between UNISON and Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust. We will now begin the process of balloting our members for industrial action.

The domestics have called for this course of action. We are a member-led union and our members have mandated the union to communicate with the Trust their own disappointment and frustration that the Trust started the market testing exercise without looking to put the investment, new equipment and training back into its own staff, before courting private companies to run the service.

As I communicated in my meeting with Jim and Gech on Friday, UNISON will now be stepping up its campaign and will be taking it to the public and patient groups in the local Harlow area.

We had a stall in Harlow town centre on Saturday and were overwhelmed by the public support for the campaign and the domestics themselves showed up en-masse to collect signatures. We collected over a 1,000 signatures in two hours. I hope this goes some way to represent to the Trust board that the outsourcing of these services is not popular with the public (or the taxpayer).

It is unfortunate that at a time when the people of Harlow should be proud of their local Trust for daring to be ambitious in the pursuit of building the new hospital they so desperately need, the public are talking to members of your domestic staff who feel completely undervalued and betrayed for putting them through this exercise.

As I expressed in the meeting on Friday, the lines of communication are firmly open if the Trust wants to engage with UNISON on an exit strategy from the market testing exercise. I also stated that I would be willing to go to ACAS if you feel that would be beneficial.

Yours sincerely

Caroline Hennessy
UNISON Regional Organiser – Eastern Region