

Croydon Labour Group

908 London Road,
Thornton Heath,
CR7 7PE

26 July 2023

David Phoenix and Jerry Cope
London South Bank University
103 Borough Rd
London SE1 0AA

Redundancies and outsourcing at LSBU

Dear David and Jerry,

We write to express our deep concern that LSBU is placing staff at risk of compulsory redundancy and plans to outsource essential Estates and Academic Environment staff to a private company. We call on LSBU to commit to no compulsory redundancies and to immediately withdraw its plans to outsource staff.

Many of those identified for outsourcing risked their lives to work on LSBU's campuses throughout the COVID-19 lockdowns but are now being told by the University's senior managers that, having taken such risks for the Institution, the University no longer wishes to retain them in direct employment. Outsourcing invariably drives down terms and conditions, entrenches poverty and disproportionately impacts BAME and women workers. Given that LSBU's campuses are embedded in ethnically diverse communities like Southwark and Croydon and in communities that are becoming far more diverse, like Havering, these plans run directly opposite to what existing LSBU staff and local communities deserve and expect from a major local employer.

Proposals to make redundant dedicated staff, who are the bedrock of the University's success, will throw people out of work and place them and their families in financial peril during the worst cost of living crisis in recent memory. The University's plans also include proposals to make redundant existing staff on permanent contracts and to replace them with graduate trainees on fixed-term contracts. While trainee schemes can be positive, we see it as a crucial requirement that trainees supplement rather than replace existing staff and that traineeships are not used to introduce greater casualisation and short-term employment.

As such, the University's proposals do not accord with our commitment to high quality, well-paid jobs and secure employment – especially at an institution that was able to spend at least £1.3 million in one year (2021-22) on just its nine most senior employees. The support staff trade union, UNISON, has now lodged a formal dispute with LSBU over a failure to meaningfully consult and has strong grounds to believe that the actual number of staff at risk of redundancy is in fact higher than the number originally declared. Given this, the University risks significant reputational damage if it continues to push ahead with redundancies and outsourcing.

We ask you to instead withdraw the current proposals and to work with UNISON and the University's other trade unions to realise LSBU's objective of social justice for all. Compulsory redundancies and outsourcing will not bring that goal closer to hand, but there are other futures for the University, and LSBU's trade unions are ready and willing to work with you to achieve social justice on the University's campuses and in our communities.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Stuart King, Cllr Janet Campbell, Cllr Callton Young, Cllr Leila Ben-Hassel, Cllr Chris Clark, Cllr Nina Degrad, Cllr Amy Foster, Cllr Chris Herman, Cllr Chrishni Reshekaron, Cllr Kola Agboola, Cllr Tamar Barrett, Cllr Sherwan Chowdhury, Cllr Stuart Collins, Cllr Patsy Cummings, Cllr Sean Fitzsimons, Cllr Alisa Flemming, Cllr Clive Fraser, Cllr Brigitte Graham, Cllr Matt Griffiths, Cllr Patricia Hay-Justice, Cllr Maddie Henson, Cllr Mohammed Islam, Cllr Karen Jewitt, Cllr Humayun Kabir, Cllr Stella Nabukeera, Cllr Eunice O'Dame, Cllr Ellily Ponnuthurai, Cllr Manju Shahul-Hameed, Cllr Catherine Wilson