



CENTRAL OFFICE

Open letter to the Chair and board of St Mungo's
Monday 27 January 2020

Dear Mr Napier and board trustees,

It is a shame that we find ourselves balloting the charity's staff for strike action for the second time in less than six months. It shouldn't be this way.

Contrary to what the CEO Howard Sinclair has said, this decision has not been taken because our union, Unite, is hell-bent on striking - far from it. It has been taken because we have faced an intransigent employer, unwilling to address issues of very serious concern for our members.

We are disappointed that Mr Sinclair and his senior management team are more interested in whipping up division and destroying trust, than working with us to find a sensible solution.

This dispute has dragged on long enough. It has been nearly a year and our members still worry that the changes to the junior staffing cap are the thin end of the wedge and will lead to restructuring.

They are unhappy at the draconian use of disciplinary procedures, which are disproportionate and unfairly applied, and of a sickness policy which is so punitive it is making people sicker with stress. None of these issues have been addressed.

We are also disheartened by the CEO's hostile handling of the dispute. This is between staff and senior management and is best resolved through face-to-face negotiation. It is not a publicity stunt, and the CEO should not be spending donor's money on hiring an expensive London PR firm to trash the union, or to use his own words "*stop more people joining and erode support.*"

It is this kind of heavy-handed and frankly bullying management style that is destroying morale.

We provide support to some of the country's most vulnerable people, and we are proud of what we do. But we've had enough of the threats to our jobs, union and professionalism.

Rebuilding trust will take time but it can be done if senior management is prepared to listen and work with our union.

Unite's door remains open but we would urge Howard Sinclair to step aside, so that negotiations can restart in good faith.

We very much hope the board will use its influence to encourage senior management to return to the table, so that our members can get back to what they do best; helping homeless people rebuild their lives.

Yours sincerely,

Unite staff reps at St Mungo's
Anonymous to protect identity

Unite's industrial action ballot closes on Monday 3 February 2020