CSSA
CLEANING & SUPPORT SERVICES ASSOCIATION

Manifesto 2013

The CSSA's promise – making cleanliness matter

The cleanliness of the UK is of vital importance. It touches our lives in so many ways.

Around one million people work in cleaning, as cleaners, in the supply sector, or in the manufacturing of cleaning products. Cleaning is one of the largest business sectors in the UK. The cleaning industry is also one of the UK's success stories. UK firms are the suppliers of choice to global facilities managers all over the world.

Cleaning has a direct impact on all our lives:

- Clean hospitals reduce the rate of healthcare related infections such as MRSA and C. Diff.
- Clean schools help prevent our children from picking up coughs and colds and stomach upsets
- Clean places of work improve productivity in the workplace and reduce the risk of slips and trips leading to injury
- Clean public spaces and hotels promote the UK as a tourist venue and bring much needed foreign exchange into the UK

The cleaning and support services association is the trade association for the UK contract cleaning sector. We believe passionately that a clean and hygienic country is a prerequisite for a civilised, prosperous and content society.

When you vote in the local elections, please consider how the candidates would support the cleanliness of our nation. Challenge them to do more to ensure that the UK is a clean and hygienic country.

If it matters to you how clean the UK is, make it matter when you vote.

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The Record

The recent record on prioritising cleaning in the UK is mixed. There have been some successes, but there are other areas where the situation leaves much to be desired.

The introduction of the National Minimum Wage, the London Living Wage and the Agenda for Change in the NHS have been broadly positive, lifting the take home pay of many cleaning workers without damaging the competitiveness of the cleaning sector.

The creation of the Sector Skills Council, Asset Skills, continues to bring a welcome employer focus to training, which had previously been absent.

In the 2012 PEAT (Patient Environment Action Team) assessment of NHS hospital environments (including cleanliness), of the 11 acute NHS hospitals with a 100% score, 10 were cleaned by contracted services and 1 was cleaned by an in-house provided, showing the continued worth of outsourced cleaning contractors in the NHS

Health and safety regulation has been conducted in a broadly positive spirit, although the tendency to look for problems where none exist remains within the HSE and Environmental Health Officer community.

However, the failure to properly resolve the system governing non-UK workers has condemned many thousands to live in limbo and fall prey to the unscrupulous. The overly complex illegal working system places unfair burdens on employers who are expected to act as unpaid immigration workers.

The transfer of workers' rights under TUPE continues to be fraught with uncertainty and information passes slowly between the parties. In April 2013 the government closed a consultation period on TUPE during which the CSSA and its members reiterated these concerns. We urge the Government to listen carefully to the views expressed in the consultation and not to hastily legislate without proper consideration of the impact the proposed amendments will have on businesses. In particular the CSSA recommends the provision including service provision changes within the scope of TUPE should remain.

There has been a general lack of recognition that the cleaning industry can make a tremendous contribution to the sustainability of the UK economy as a whole, and not just its own operations.

Worst of all however, the cleaning industry still labours under a poor reputation. Too many people continue to equate contract cleaning with low pay and insecure employment. Altering that public perception, so that the general public sees the value of cleaning to the UK as a whole, remains the major challenge for the cleaning industry.

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Our Values

The CSSA and its members subscribe to a particular set of values and beliefs that underpin our actions in the real world.

We believe that full compliance with the law is just the starting point for ethical behaviour in the marketplace.

We believe in a professional cleaning service, provided on the basis of quality and value, not lowest price.

The cleaning industry offers the opportunity for all to excel regardless of their background. It is one of the most diverse sectors in terms of who it employs and how they can progress. A cleaner joining the workforce at 16 can become a senior manager in a large firm of the owner of their own business. The range of opportunities is vast.

The cleaning industry passionately believes that is has an enormous amount to offer the rest of the UK as an enabler of every other activity that we all do.

Imagine a world where nobody cleaned up. It doesn't bear thinking about.

Our World

The cleaning industry is vital to our well being and to the quality of the environment in which we are schooled, work and are treated in hospital.

In the run up to the election, ask your candidates, whoever they may be, how their policies would benefit the cleaning industry and the cleanliness of the built environment. The following points are a guide to the issues that are important for the cleaning industry.

WE BELIEVE IN A PROFESSIONAL CLEANING SERVICE, PROVIDED ON THE BASIS OF QUALITY AND VALUE, NOT LOWEST PRICE.

Employment

The cleaning industry is one of the UK's largest employers. Around 1 million people work in the sector, including cleaners, the manufacturers of machines and chemicals and their distribution.

The government should alter its tax and benefits policy to ensure that there is a real benefit to working. According to the CSSA's calculations, the cost of employing a cleaner has increased by 10% since the last election. That trend should be reversed. This includes ensuring the increases in the National Minimum Wage, however well intentioned, do not result in cuts in jobs or cleaners hours of work.

The CSSA supports the Living Wage. We believe that the business benefits of training and development outweigh up-front costs. The Government could set a strong example to the rest of the country by ensuring that all cleaners employed on Government contracts receive the Living Wage.

We also support clearer guidance on the transfer of employees when cleaning contracts change hands. In too many cases, the unscrupulous seek to evade their obligations under the law. When the current consultation on amendments to TUPE has published its final proposals, the CSSA will again develop a best practice guide, along with the government, to be promoted and used as widely as possible.

The cleaning industry offers it employees the opportunity to attain their true potential. Many well paid senior managers and owners of businesses started life as cleaners. The potential benefits of this career need to be more widely heard.

THE CLEANING INDUSTRY IS ONE OF THE UK'S LARGEST EMPLOYERS. AROUND 1 MILLION PEOPLE WORK IN THE SECTOR, INCLUDING CLEANERS, THE MANUFACTURERS OF MACHINES AND CHEMICALS AND THEIR DISTRIBUTION.

Training

The CSSA and its members support the training of cleaning workers to improve their vocational skills and achieve qualifications.

We believe that employer leadership is vital in the skills arena and as a result we support Asset Skills, the employer led sector skills council. Asset Skills has recently launched an apprenticeship programme including cleaning and the Government should support and encourage employers who wish to employ apprentices.

The British Institute of Cleaning Science has a number of longstanding qualifications which the CSSA believes should attract public funding. The CSSA has its own management training courses and qualifications as well which it would also like to see attract public funding.

Outsourcing and Public Services

The outsourcing of public sector cleaning contracts, especially in the health service, has been a source of great controversy.

However, the facts should be permitted to speak for themselves.

In December 2012, the Patient Environment Action Team (PEAT) released their annual results of hospital inspections. Of the 11 acute hospitals that scored 100% in Environment (including cleanliness), 10 are cleaned by outsourced cleaning contractors and only one is cleaned by an in-house team.

The Care Quality Commission report for 2011/12 also showed that MRSA and c. diff infection rates were continuing to fall, 25% and 17% respectively. The continuing extra effort put into cleaning in is clearly paying off. The CSSA calls on all political parties to promise not to cut NHS cleaning budgets and put thousands of lives back at risk.

One of the effects of the TUPE legislation and Agenda for Change is that cleaners' wages are sacrosanct, regardless of the service provider. Even within this context, outsourced service providers can deliver savings of 10%-15% through better management, transfer of knowledge from other sites and economies of scale.

The CSSA therefore calls on the Government to continue the outsourcing of all public sector cleaning, enabling the UK general public to benefit from the higher standards it generates, as shown within the NHS, and also the better value for money that comes from outsourced contractors. The CSSA also calls on the government, building on the success of the reduction of HCAI's, particularly MRSA and c. diff, to initiate a new round of deep cleans of hospitals and healthcare environments to take the next step towards the eradication of these debilitating diseases.

Driving up Standards

The CSSA, along with its members, is very concerned that quality and ethical standards should make progress within the cleaning sector.

That is why the CSSA has itself developed and promoted management training. We have also encouraged members to work to the environmental management standard ISO 14001.

However, while cleaning clients continue to regard cleaning as a commodity to be purchased at the lowest price, radical change in the market place will not be possible.

The CSSA calls on the Government to use its power as a purchaser to ensure that all of its contracts are let on the basis of best value and not lowest price, so that quality cleaning businesses have the opportunity to show what they can do to the widest possible market.

Pandemics

The CSSA has been at the forefront of coordinating the cleaning industry's response to the challenges of pandemic influenza.

Good quality hygiene, and especially hand washing, is a fundamental part of slowing the spread of any infectious disease.

Recent pandemics do not appear to have hit the UK as badly as first feared. However, we must not be complacent. The next time we may not be so lucky.

Over and above any advertising campaigns, the government should fund the development of a UK wide hand washing standard based on the World Health Organisation's '5 moments for Hand Hygiene' campaign and ensure through the Building Regulations and Environmental Health Officers that washrooms in offices, schools and hospitals are of an adequate standard to keep hands clean and infections to a minimum.

As well as this, with the World Federation of Building Service Contractors (WFBSC) Cleaning for Health report and campaign, the CSSA calls on the government, together with the CSSA, to promote the role of the cleaning industry in the promotion and protection of public health against outbreaks of infectious diseases, viruses and 'super bugs'. Bacteria are becoming increasingly resistant. Properly cleaning environments used by many people is now more vital than ever before. Reducing the risks of transmission and infection require good standards of personal hygiene with good standards of environmental cleanliness to prevent initial contamination from unclean surfaces. This can only be done with proper awareness and understanding about the best cleaning practices and equipment available in schools, offices and healthcare environments.

THE CSSA HAS BEEN AT THE FOREFRONT OF COORDINATING THE CLEANING INDUSTRY'S RESPONSE TO THE CHALLENGES OF PANDEMIC INFLUENZA.

A safe working environment

The CSSA and its members strongly support the establishment of a safe working environment for both cleaners and members of the public who may be affected by their work. We work closely with the HSE to ensure that policy is directed towards the highest risk activities, such as work at height, manual handling and slips and trips.

The CSSA calls on the Government to increase the amount of inspection resource available so that who flout health and safety law are more likely to be caught and punished. It also calls on the HSE and Local Authority Environmental Health Officers to work more closely together to ensure a consistency of approach. Too often, different regulators take different approaches to the same issues and this inconsistency places a significant burden on businesses.

We also call on the government and the Courts to give more weight to the behaviour of individuals in the causation of accidents. Too often, individuals fail to act in a safe manner, cause incidents, and the employer gets the blame. In cases where a safe system of work has been ignored, it is only just that the individual who has disregarded that system should be forced to pay the price of that decision.

A Sustainable Britain

The cleaning industry is a vital agent in the growth of sustainable business in the UK.

As the front line waste disposers we have a key role in driving up recycling rates from offices, shops and other business premises. The cleaning sector also promotes social and economic sustainability by providing flexible employment to many who might otherwise be forced onto benefits, because of family or other commitments. Good cleaning means good hygiene and that is an integral part of the fight against infections and disease.

However, too much cleaning is undertaken at night for the sector to be truly sustainable.

Daytime cleaning is a more sustainable approach to cleaning. It minimises energy use in buildings by enabling them to shut down at night. It is more socially sustainable as it enables a better integration of work and family life and it is better business as it creates a more harmonised team that includes all building occupants and does not exclude cleaners.

The CSSA calls on the Government to ensure that as many Government buildings as possible are cleaned during the day, to demonstrate to the wider client base the benefits of such a move.

An Open Workforce

The cleaning industry in the UK has relied for many years on non-UK labour for its employees. The UK needs a coherent approach to the supply of labour that ensures the right people with the right skills are available to employers.

The new Government should reform the current right to work system as it is too complex and relies heavily on employers acting as unpaid immigration officials. The cleaning industry supports the concept of a path to citizenship, but it must be open to all in the UK, not just new arrivals. Biometrics is not the full answer as they impose significant additional costs on business and would still rely on a flawed photo identification process in most cases.

Currently there are an estimated 500,000 to 850,000 undocumented migrants in the UK. They too need to be provided with a route into legitimacy, otherwise they will continue to be exploited by rogue traders, which frustrates the ability of legitimate businesses to grow and develop. The CSSA supports an honest debate about the merits of earned regularisation for non-UK workers currently in the UK.

Conclusion

The cleaning industry is a vital part of the UK economy. It employs many hundreds of thousands of people, enables the smooth functioning of our offices, schools and hospitals and directly enhances the UK's sustainability credentials.

To the voters of the UK, we ask you to challenge your candidates on how they propose to support this vital industry. We also ask you to think about the cleanliness of the nation when you cast your vote.

To the candidates, we ask that you think of the number of cleaning workers in your constituency. Think of the benefits to society as a whole of a cleaner country and pressurise your parties to adopt policies that support this goal.

To the new Government, the CSSA and the cleaning industry at large wants to work with you to improve the cleanliness, the hygiene and the appearance of our nation. Make that call, and join us on the path to a cleaner UK.

THE CSSA AND THE CLEANING INDUSTRY AT LARGE WANTS TO WORK WITH YOU TO IMPROVE THE CLEANLINESS, THE HYGIENE AND THE APPEARANCE OF OUR NATION. MAKE THAT CALL, AND JOIN US ON THE PATH TO A CLEANER UK.

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