

Hello everyone,

As you may or may not be aware City of Edinburgh Council's (CEC) Facilities Management (FM) department are carrying out a Janitorial Review at the moment. This review affects all properties whose janitorial support is provided by FM including, Schools, Nurseries, Community Centres, Nursing Homes etc...

Under the new proposals all schools will be affected, the lucky few will see an increase in janitorial hours, however even these will not have the same level of cover as they have now.

For example a school retaining a 36 hour janitor will see a change of

Current – Mon – Fri 6am to 6pm (incorporating a split shift)

Proposed – Mon – Fri 7am to 3:15pm

Whereas a school reducing from 36 to 24 hour janitor will see a change of

Current– Mon – Fri 6am to 6pm (incorporating a split shift)

Proposed– Mon – Fri 7am to 11:45pm

Out with the new hours of cover each of the 3 areas within Edinburgh will have access to 2 mobile janitors to cover any necessary needs. Each of these mobile janitors will be expected to cover approximately 30 premises.

It is also proposed that a janitors core functions will be decided by FM not the premises they are based at. Any task over these core functions will be classed as a 'rechargeable'. This means that if the school wants the task to be completed they will be charged an additional fee by FM.

As the Chair of St Ninians Primary School Parent Council and a parent I am concerned about the implications of this for the health and wellbeing of my children and their standard of education.

As a PC we have already tried to get our questions answered by CEC but they have been vague and dismissive. I am writing to you in the belief that you and the parents you represent will be just as concerned as we are.

I would like to propose that we do three things:

1. E-mail our local councillors and ask for an urgent response to a number of questions (please see draft e-mail below)
2. E-mail the FM team at CEC - a note of dissatisfaction from as many PC's as possible.
3. E-mail as many individual responses / questions / objections as we can all manage. Encouraging any interested parents to get involved too. I think the best route is via local councillors. You can enter your postcode and see who yours are at <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/councillors/search>

I would appreciate it if you could reply directly to stninianspc@outlook.com to let me know that you have received this letter and would be willing to participate.

I look forward to hearing from you
Karen

Here is an example of the e-mail I'd like us to send to our local councillors ASAP

Dear Councillors,

I am contacting you as the Chair of St. Ninians Primary School Parent Council. We have become aware of a review of Janitorial Services being carried out by the Facilities Management department at the City of Edinburgh Council. As parents, we have not received any information about the proposed reductions to our janitorial provision and therefore question how transparent and effective this consultation period is.

- Our janitorial provision is proposed to be cut from 36 hours to 24 hours, this is extremely concerning and raises some important questions, which I will outline below.
- What were the selection criteria for the schools targeted for a reduction in janitorial provision?
- Why specifically has St. Ninians been selected as a school to have 12 hours of janitor time cut and on what basis has this reduction been calculated?
- A new start time of 7am is proposed, where 6am is the current start time for our school janitor, according to his contracted hours. St. Ninians offers a breakfast club, which pupils can access from 7.30am onwards. How will the janitor be able to complete all routine opening and safety checks to take place before children are on site?
- In the proposed janitorial review, St. Ninians janitorial provision is due to end at 12:45 each day, with a 1 hour unpaid break. Realistically this means our janitorial cover will cease at 11:45 where the school day continues until 15:05 (for P1 / P2 pupils) and 15:20 (for P3+). This does not take into account our after-school activities or evening lets.
- It is our belief that 2 mobile janitors have been proposed to cover all 'out of hours' call-outs between 50/60 premises in the North / East of Edinburgh. What research or industry expertise has been applied to come up with this proposed model, to ensure that it is practical and effective?

Communication

As parents involved in a partnership with our school, we are extremely disappointed that this review of janitorial services has not been communicated to parents. It would also seem that head teachers have not been involved in the consultation either, since our school is due to lose 33% of its janitorial provision and yet our head teacher was only informed indirectly that this review was underway. It is our belief that this cannot be called a meaningful consultation, since it is not including all relevant stakeholders – particularly where provision is proposed to be reduced.

Practical Concerns

As you will know, St. Ninians is an ageing building, with many minor defects that our skilled and dedicated janitor works hard to keep in great condition for the benefit of our pupils and the staff. It therefore makes no sense that our school has been selected to have 33% of its regular janitorial provision cut – particularly since there has been no transparent formula for this proposal.

Reducing the availability of a full-time, dedicated janitor in our school could also have a number of other consequences. For example a reduced window for contractors to attend our school and carry out repairs or servicing – unless this responsibility (meeting them, showing them to the area where work is required, issuing permits for work to begin) will be passed on to other members of staff within the school. If that is the plan, no information has been communicated to the school.

School Community

Our janitor, is a vital asset to our school. His hard work and dedication ensure that many small maintenance issues do not escalate into more costly and time-consuming problems. He is a recognised face around the school and very highly regarded by pupils and by staff. We are particularly concerned by the proposal to fill the reduction of his time with 'Locality Technicians' – or mobile janitors who, as already mentioned above, will have around 60 premises to be responsible for. Removing a full-time janitor from the school's community is absolutely not supported by our community of parents and we would like our objection to be acknowledged. A shift to janitorial provision being seen as a 'service' to be transferred between buildings and premises makes for uncomfortable reading, when the reality is that schools need an effective management team and staff working together to succeed, with clear communication and reassurance that each member of the team is valued and contributes to the success of our school, rather than viewed as a 'service' or 'resource' to be used when needed. Our janitor is a key part of our school life and any attempt to reduce him to a part-time 'service provision' will be detrimental to our school.

Yours Sincerely

Karen Smith
St Ninians RC Primary School Parent Council (Chair)