

Labour leader's words about cleaning staff 'need to be backed by action'

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Labour Party leader Sir Keir Starmer's speech at the party's conference yesterday, in which he referred to "No more cleaners mocked, as they scrub mess off the walls of illegal parties in Westminster", has been responded to by the [British Cleaning Council \(BCC\)](#).

The association's chair, Delia Cannings, said: "While it is pleasing to hear Mr Starmer highlight the shocking way cleaning staff were treated at Downing Street during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, his words need to be backed by action should his party win the next election, or they risk being empty political posturing.

"Our industry is calling for recognition for the vital, frontline work that skilled and professional cleaning staff do in keeping the public safe, health and well and for cleaning and hygiene to be made a national priority in order to save lives.

"We want the Labour Party to commit to adopting the recommendations of last year's MPs' report, *Embedding Effective Hygiene for a Resilient UK*, should they come to power, or they are gambling with people's lives.

"The report's recommendations will make the UK more resilient to current common infections such as flu and also better prepared for future public health emergencies – like a future pandemic. The recent rise in Covid cases highlights how hugely important it is that we learn the lessons of the pandemic.

"We have written to Mr Starmer's office previously to ask to discuss key industry issues, but without success, and we will ask again for an urgent meeting with his team."