

Putting People First: Why Cleaners' Wellbeing Must Be at the Heart of FM

5 months ago



By Caroline Hutchins, Operations Director, [Julius Rutherford & Co](#)

In every clean, well-run building, there's a team of people working before most have arrived and long after the last person has left. These are the cleaners—often unseen, often unsung, but never unnoticed.

But what happens when those vital team members feel undervalued, unsupported, or stretched too thin? The answer is simple: standards slip, consistency crumbles, and you're left managing a problem rather than working with a proactive partner.

At JR&Co, we believe the solution is to put people first. We know that the quality of our service starts with the people who deliver it. They're the ones who maintain hygiene, protect reputations and ensure environments feel safe and ready, every single day.

It's a moral essential, but also a business essential.

Great cleaning doesn't start with a checklist; it starts with people—the unsung heroes who bring consistency, care, and undivided attention to the spaces our clients rely on.

When our people are well looked after, they can look after your sites with the focus and pride that long-term partnerships are built on.

A Culture That Prioritises People

Cleaner wellbeing is not just about ticking boxes. It's about building a culture where people are respected,

supported and seen — not as just “labour,” but as essential contributors to a client’s success.

That begins on the ground, and it all links back to the quality you receive:

- We pay our teams fairly and on time. This stability means less staff turnover for us and a consistent, familiar team on your site.
- We offer stable shifts that allow people to plan their lives, giving them peace of mind to focus fully on their work.
- We invest in training with monthly ‘Toolbox Talks’ and refresher sessions, which keeps skills sharp and confidence high, guaranteeing a professional standard of work for you.
- And we make sure our operations managers have time to support our cleaners properly, without being stretched across too many sites.

The truth is simple: when our people are well looked after, they can look after your spaces with focus and pride. That’s what makes every hour of cleaning worth more.

Building Community: Celebrating 1,200 Stars

Our service is only as good as the people who deliver it. That’s why we treat events like our annual Summer Party as a genuine celebration of our ‘stars’—a vital part of our culture and a way of saying thank you for all they do.

In July, we gathered in Battersea Park for our 31st anniversary. The weather tried its best to ruin the day, but it didn’t! Our teams came together, bringing the energy, the laughter, and a strong sense of community, belonging and recognition—things that can be hard to come by in a job that’s often done in the background.

Above all, there was the sense that every person there mattered. Because they do.

Recognition That’s Built Into the Job

While events like the Summer Party create joyful moments, recognition at JR&Co doesn’t begin and end there.

We’ve built it into our day-to-day culture through the JR&Co Stars Awards, where individuals and teams are nominated by clients and colleagues for going above and beyond.

It’s a way of shining a light on the quiet effort and care that often goes unnoticed, whether it’s a cleaner who trains others with patience or someone who quietly takes on extra responsibilities to ensure a site runs smoothly.

Recognition also takes place throughout the year, with initiatives like Thank Your Cleaner Day and Christmas rewards, where we take the time to show appreciation for the consistency, reliability and pride our teams bring to their work.

This culture of appreciation has a clear impact: our clients notice too. People remember how a space made



them feel—clean, safe, calm. That’s what our teams deliver every single day.

Empowering the People Behind the Work

We don’t just aim to retain good cleaners, we aim to help them thrive.

That’s why we offer access to our in-house training academy, support career development, and constantly look for ways to help our teams grow. It’s not a theory; it’s a fact we see play out across our 350+ sites in London every day.

In this industry, it’s too easy to treat frontline cleaners as an afterthought. But we’ve chosen a different approach because we believe that cleaner wellbeing is a business essential. It underpins consistency, boosts retention, and helps us maintain high standards long term.

Why This Matters

Ultimately, facilities management is built on trust. Our clients rely on us to maintain environments that are clean, safe, and professional, and that trust is earned by the people on site every day.

By giving them the respect and support they deserve, we empower them to deliver their best work.

That’s what we mean when we say we give spaces our undivided attention. And it starts by giving that same level of attention to our people.

Because when they thrive, so do our clients.