

The Rt Hon Liam Byrne MP
Chair, Business and Trade Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

27 February 2026

Dear Liam,

MAKING WORK PAY: GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE CALL FOR EVIDENCE ON UNPAID INTERNSHIPS

The Government's Plan to Make Work Pay is a core part of our mission to grow the economy, raise living standards across the country, and create opportunities for all. This will help tackle low pay, poor working conditions, and poor job security, all of which have been holding our economy back.

In our Plan we committed to banning unpaid internships, unless they are part of a formal educational or training course. I want to stress what we have previously said to your committee, a fair day's work deserves a fair day's pay and employers must pay their workers the pay they are entitled to.

This is why we conducted a Call for Evidence on unpaid internships, as well as roles which may be being used incorrectly to avoid paying workers. The Call for Evidence ran from 17 July to 9 October 2025, and I am proud to advise that today we are publishing the Government's response to this Call for Evidence: <https://www.gov.uk/government/calls-for-evidence/making-work-pay-call-for-evidence-on-unpaid-internships>

The evidence highlighted that whilst many employers are doing the right thing, there are still some who believe the law does not apply to them. This means there is still more work to do eradicate these unfair practices which put workers, especially young people as they start to embark on their careers, in difficult situations.

I know the issue of unpaid work and unfair treatment of young people is a concern to members of your committee. It is a concern which cuts across party lines and can affect our young people across the country. This is why we are taking practical steps to tackle these issues and give our young people the best chance to succeed.

The Government will:

- **Review and expand the National Minimum Wage guidance.** This will help workers understand their rights and the steps they can take if they believe they are not receiving the pay they are legally entitled to. We will work with stakeholders to ensure the guidance is refreshed with examples and scenarios which target the sectors this issue is most prevalent in to make it more relevant to workers.
- **Enforcement and cracking down on unscrupulous employers.** Whilst the majority of employers do the right thing, there are still some who believe they can flout the law. This is unfair on workers and also on employers who are doing the right thing. The Fair Work Agency will deliver a much-needed upgrade to the enforcement of workers' rights. The Fair Work Agency will bring existing enforcement functions together into one place, so employment rights are enforced more effectively and efficiently.
- **Raising awareness of rights.** By bolstering existing communications campaigns from within and outside of Government, we will help young people understand their rights and what action they can take if they are not paid what they are legally entitled to. Changing the legislation will not necessarily lead to individuals being aware of or understanding their rights so we need to do more to instil a culture of tackling unfair practices.

I am confident that through these actions we will tackle these unfair practices which disadvantage our workers and good employers.

With best wishes,



Kate Dearden MP

Minister for Employment Rights and Consumer Protection
Department for Business and Trade