

Press release: Unpaid internships are damaging to social mobility

An overwhelming majority of the UK public support the introduction of a legal ban on unpaid internships lasting 4 weeks or more.

New polling data released by the Social Mobility Commission, found that 72% of the public back a change in the law – with 42% ‘strongly supporting’ a ban.

The survey also reveals that 80% of people want companies to be required to openly advertise internships and work experience opportunities, rather than organise them informally.

YouGov polling of nearly 5,000 people has been released ahead of the second reading of [Lord Holmes of Richmond’s Private Members’ Bill](#) in the House of Lords on Friday 27 October, which proposes a ban on unpaid work experience or internships lasting more 4 weeks.

The Social Mobility Commission, an independent public body which monitors progress towards improving social mobility, has repeatedly called for a ban in its successive [State of the Nation reports](#) to Parliament.

Many interns fall under the definition of ‘worker’ under the [National Minimum Wage Act 1998](#) and are already legally entitled to be paid the national minimum/living wage. But the law, as it stands, is not being enforced effectively. A lack of clarity means many companies exploit the loophole or are unaware of the legal requirements to pay interns.

A broad consensus of support for a ban has emerged in recent years:

- the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Social Mobility called for a ban on unpaid internships over 4 weeks after hearing evidence on barriers to social mobility
- in April, the Institute for Public Policy Research published a report which provided new evidence that internships have increased to around 70,000 a year and also recommended a ban after 4 weeks. Many times this number – up to half – are locked out of these opportunities because they are unpaid and/or restricted to networks
- leading businesses and trade bodies support a 4-week limit. The Institute of Student Employers, Arts Council, UK Music, Creative Skillset, The Royal Institute of British Architects, Business in the Community, Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion and Trust for London all oppose long-term unpaid internships
- The Matthew Taylor review into employment practices recently concluded: “It is clear to us that unpaid internships are an abuse of power by employers and extremely damaging to social mobility.”
- A 4-week limit is supported by two-thirds of businesses, with only 1-in-8 opposing the legislation (YouGov 2014)

The Rt Hon Alan Milburn, Chair of the Social Mobility Commission, said:

Unpaid internships are a modern scandal which must end. Internships are the new rung on the career ladder. They have become a route to a good professional job. But access to them tends to depend on who, not what you know and young people from low-income backgrounds are excluded because they are unpaid. They miss out on a great career opportunity and employers miss out from a wider pool of talent. Unpaid internships are damaging for social mobility. It is time to consign them to history.

Lord Holmes of Richmond added:

Unpaid internships leave young people in a catch-22 situation; unable to get a job because they haven't got experience and unable to get experience because they can't afford to work for free. The practice is clearly discriminatory, crushes creativity and competitiveness and holds individuals and our country back. It's time we consigned them to the past, to the novels of Dickens.

Sir Peter Lampl, Chairman of the Sutton Trust and of the Education Endowment Foundation, said:

Unpaid internships are a major obstacle to social mobility. Our research has shown that it costs an intern with no roots in the capital approximately £1,000 a month to live there. Unpaid internships prevent young people from low- and moderate-income backgrounds from getting into some of the most competitive sectors like the media, city and the arts.

It is no surprise that a majority of the public want to see an end to them. We welcome the commission's call to ban unpaid internships that last for more than 4 weeks. There also needs to be greater transparency in recruiting for these positions, so that young people without professional networks are not at a disadvantage.

Ben Lyons, Chair of Intern Aware, added:

The government needs to show that it cares about the next generation, and crack down on long-term unpaid internships which exclude young people who can't afford to work for free for months on end.

1. The Social Mobility Commission is an advisory, non-departmental public

body established under the Life Chances Act 2010 as modified by the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016. It has a duty to assess progress in improving social mobility in the United Kingdom and to promote social mobility in England. It currently consists of 4 commissioners and is supported by a small secretariat.

2. The commission board currently comprises:
 - Alan Milburn (Chair)
 - Baroness Gillian Shephard (Deputy Chair)
 - Paul Gregg, Professor of Economic and Social Policy, University of Bath
 - David Johnston, Chief Executive of the Social Mobility Foundation
3. The functions of the commission include:
 - monitoring progress on improving social mobility
 - providing published advice to ministers on matters relating to social mobility
 - undertaking social mobility advocacy
4. Lord Holmes Private Members' Bill seeks to limit unpaid internships specifically by amending the National Minimum Wage Act 1998 to make provision for the prohibition of unpaid work experience exceeding 4 weeks. The bill was given its first reading on 27 June 2017 and second reading will be on 27 October 2017.

YouGov survey methodology

YouGov surveyed 4,723 UK adults and fieldwork was conducted between 6 to 9 March 2017. The survey was carried out online and figures have been weighted and are representative of UK adults aged 18+. YouGov ensured the survey was made representative based on several criteria:

- age and gender
- political attention
- region
- education level
- general election vote in 2015
- EU referendum vote in 2016

YouGov is a member of the British Polling Council.

Headline YouGov survey results

Would you support or oppose a requirement for companies to openly advertise internships and work experience opportunities, rather than organise them informally? %

Strongly support	40
Tend to support	40
Total support	80
Tend to oppose	4
Strongly oppose	1
Total oppose	5
Don't know	14

Would you support or oppose a ban on unpaid internships of longer than 4 weeks?	%
Strongly support	42
Tend to support	30
Total support	72
Tend to oppose	8
Strongly oppose	2
Total oppose	10
Don't know	17

[Press release: Increased security measures to give prison officers right tools for the job](#)

- Investment of £2 million for 5,600 body-worn cameras.
- A further £1 million for the introduction of new 'police-style' handcuffs and restraints.
- Four prisons to trial the use of PAVA incapacitant spray to boost officer safety.
- Every prison officer in England and Wales now has access to body-worn cameras after 5,600 were rolled out as part of a security boost announced today by Prisons Minister Sam Gyimah.

With an investment of over £2million, the cameras will act as a visible deterrent against violence and will assist in prosecutions against those who commit crimes in jails.

A further £1million is being invested in new 'police-style' handcuffs and restraints, whilst four prisons will also trial the use of PAVA incapacitant spray, giving prison officers an additional tool when dealing with violent offenders.

The package forms part of a commitment by the Government to ensure prison officers have the right resources for the job and that strong evidence is available for use against those who are violent towards them.

Prisons Minister Sam Gyimah said:

I am absolutely determined to tackle head-on the issues that undermine the safety and security of our prisons and to ensure our dedicated officers have the tools they need to do the job.

That is why we have introduced a range of measures to boost security – bringing 300 sniffer dogs trained in detecting

psychoactive substances and putting in place technology to block mobile phones.

This latest investment underlines our commitment to transform our prisons into places of safety and reform and should send a clear message to those intent on thwarting our efforts to make progress that we will do everything in our power to stop them.

Following successful trials in 22 establishments, officers at every prison across England & Wales now has access to a body-worn cameras. These devices are being used to record incidents, acting both as a deterrent and evidence to aid prosecutions.

It follows the start of a rollout of body-worn cameras by the Metropolitan Police Service, which announced it would be issuing cameras to 22,000 frontline officers in October last year.

Together with the rollout of rigid bar handcuffs and restraints, these will provide prison officers the confidence they need to act swiftly and safely. The new restraints will reduce the need for staff to use physical holds to control aggressive prisoners, improving safety for both staff and prisoners.

In addition, four prisons are to trial the use of PAVA incapacitant spray. It will mean that regular, establishment-based officers will for the first time have the power to deploy PAVA when a prisoner is armed with a weapon and it is deemed the most appropriate way to subdue the offender without putting themselves at risk of serious injury.

Governors at priority prisons have already been given an additional £10 million to help promote safety and tackle the influx of violence. This funding has ramped up security measures by providing additional 24-hour patrol dogs, CCTV cameras, mobile phone detection technology, and metal detectors.

This is in addition to boosting staff numbers on the front line, and we have already brought in 1,290 extra officers – passing the halfway point of our target of 2,500. The Government is also backing a bill to increase sentences for those who attack emergency workers, including prison officers.

Notes to editors

- The four prisons that will trial PAVA are HMP Wealstun, HMP Risley, HMP Preston and HMP Hull
 - Staff are currently being trained in how to deploy the spray
 - Specialist National Tactical Response Group officers already have access to PAVA.
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Press release: Government acts to improve the home buying process

As part of a continued drive to make the housing market work better, we want to hear from everyone with an interest in home buying including estate agents, solicitors and mortgage lenders.

We want to ensure that we address issues across the whole sector, from ways to tackle gazumping and reduce time wasting to increase commitment to a sale.

Views will be taken on:

- Gazumping – Buyers are concerned about gazumping, with sellers accepting a higher offer from a new buyer, we will look at ways this could be tackled.
- Building trust & confidence – Mistrust between parties is one of the biggest issues faced, we want to look at schemes including ‘lock-in agreements’. Although 1 million homes are bought and sold in England each year, around a quarter of sales fall through and hundreds of millions of pounds are wasted, we want to increase confidence in the housing chain
- Informing customers – How to provide better guidance for buyers and sellers, by encouraging them to gather more information in advance so homes are ‘sale ready’
- Innovation – You can now search for a home online, but the buying process is too slow, costing time and money so we’re looking for innovative digital solutions including making more data available online

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid said:

We want to help everyone have a good quality home they can afford, and improving the process of buying and selling is part of delivering that. Buying a home is one of life’s largest investments, so if it goes wrong it can be costly. That’s why we’re determined to take action to make the process cheaper, faster and less stressful.

This can help save people money and time so they can focus on what matters – finding their dream home. I want to hear from the industry on what more we can do to tackle this issue.

Today’s (22 October 2017) announcement will build on recent proposals to cut out abuses of leasehold, protections for renters and a crackdown on unfair managing agents, now we are looking at modernising the home buying process.

The Housing White Paper set out plans to fix the broken housing market, getting the right homes built in the right places and measures to improve affordability and protections for renters and home purchasers.

This exercise isn't about adding extra work for buyers and sellers or seeing a return to Home Information Packs, this [call for evidence](#) will look at how we can further improve the home buying experience.

The government manifesto committed to reforming and modernising the home buying process so it is more efficient and less costly.

This is important as [research published today](#) sampling more than 2,000 people who have bought or sold a home recently shows that some of the key issues are:

- of those that experienced delays, 69% of sellers and 62% of buyers reported stress and worry as a result of the delay
- 46% of sellers had concerns about a buyer changing their mind after making an offer
- 24% of sellers would use a different estate agent if they were to go through the process again; and
- 32% of sellers and 28% of buyers were dissatisfied with the other party's solicitor

Research from [Which?](#) shows that people find moving house more stressful than having children, as part of research on life events.

The [call for evidence](#) will run for 8 weeks from Sunday 22 October

We have also looked to other countries, such as Denmark and the USA where it's perceived that home buying and selling works much more smoothly.

[Press release: UK aid provides lifeline to defenceless and wounded Syrians to help them return to a liberated Raqqa](#)

The International Development Secretary Priti Patel called for urgent international action to end the "death sentence" that innocent people of Raqqa city still face from explosive booby-traps and wounds inflicted by war.

Ms Patel's plea came as she announced UK support to clear deadly landmines and restore hospitals and medical treatment for victims of this bloody conflict, helping them to return home safely.

As Raqqa is set to be liberated from Daesh, the first steps are being taken to make the city safe, with UK aid support giving a "glimmer of hope" to the people of Raqqa that one day they will be able to return home and rebuild

their lives.

Hundreds of thousands of defenceless men, women and children have fled Daesh brutality and fighting in Raqqa. Many have been forced to leave with nothing and have been left suffering from life-threatening injuries and trauma from years of relentless violence, bombing and landmines planted across the city. Others have been held hostage by the Daesh regime or forced into hiding within the city itself.

Ahead of liberation, Ms Patel announced that the UK is stepping up to:

- clear lethal landmines and explosives, to allow families to return unharmed to their homes, and ensure that humanitarian experts and aid agencies can reach those in desperate need
- restock hospitals and mobile surgical units in the area with essential medicines and equipment to help restore crippled health facilities
- provide 145,000 medical consultations, including for those that have been wounded or starved, and psychological support for 1,600 people who have been traumatised by the horrors of war
- provide immediate relief for innocent people who have been displaced, with 31,000 relief kits including cooking equipment and blankets to keep them warm for winter
- improve access to clean water for 15,000 people, with jerry cans and water-purifying tablets to prevent the spread of deadly disease and sickness
- help pregnant women with 1,000 clean delivery kits to ensure safety for mothers and babies during childbirth.

International Development Secretary Priti Patel said:

Daesh's iron grip on the city of Raqqa has stolen the lives of too many innocent people and now that this evil regime has been driven out, it is absolutely crucial that the international community actively helps them rebuild their lives.

After years of barbaric and indiscriminate violence by Daesh, the liberation of Raqqa offers a glimmer of hope – but defenceless men, women and children still face a brutal death sentence from lethal landmines or wounds inflicted by the conflict.

UK aid is providing a lifeline for countless Syrians who have lost absolutely everything, giving life-saving medical treatment, water and blankets to those that have escaped and destroying deadly explosives to ensure people can return safely once Raqqa has finally been freed.

Today's announcement comes as liberation of Raqqa city is set to be declared.

The brutal Syrian civil war, now in its seventh year, has already cost an estimated 400,000 lives, with over 11 million people displaced by conflict and causing a severe shortage of food, clean water and healthcare.

Britain has been at the forefront of the response to the Syria crisis and already we have delivered 20.9 million food rations every month, 8.8 million relief packages, 3.3 million vaccines against deadly diseases and 8.1 million medical consultations for those in need in Syria.

Notes to Editors

Today's £10 million package of support is a new allocation from the UK's response to the Syria crisis and will be provided to partners already working in the region, including UN agencies and the World Health Organisation working on the frontline within and around Raqqa governorate.

This includes £5 million for the World Health Organisation and £5 million for other NGOs. For safety and security reasons, DFID does not name a number of our partners operating in Syria.

The UK is a leading donor in the humanitarian response. To date we have committed over £2.46 billion in humanitarian funding to the region.

For more information on the UK's humanitarian response to the Syria crisis, visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/factsheet-the-uks-humanitarian-aid-response-to-the-syria-crisis>

[Press release: Chemical event at Sellafield, 21 October 2017](#)

Following a chemical inventory audit in a laboratory, we took the decision to dispose of a number of chemicals which are no longer used in our operations and have been stored since 1992.

In line with best practice and established procedures, we alerted the relevant partner agencies and sought advice on managing this material in accordance with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health regulations.

Update at 10:40 Saturday 21 October

- This is not a radiological event
- The chemicals are contained within a small number of canisters. These need to be removed and disposed of appropriately.
- The materials involved are solvents which are widely used in industry.

- They will be disposed of in a controlled manner.
- An area of the site is cordoned off as a precaution – but the rest of the site is operational and the majority of our staff who would be in at the weekend are at work and working normally.
- The army's Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team deal with hundreds of these issues every year, recovering chemicals from science laboratories in places like schools and universities.
- These chemicals are used extensively in many industries and are well understood.
- Because this is happening on the Sellafield site we exercise extreme caution and leave nothing to chance.

Background

As is usual in these scenarios, a specialised unit was invited to attend the Sellafield site to assess the material and advise on its safe disposal.

That team, from the army's Explosives Ordnance Disposal Team, will dispose of the material safely.

They will dig a trench, bury the canisters using sandbags, and detonate them in a controlled manner. This will create a noise that will be audible off-site, but there is no need for alarm.

The chemicals involved are solvents, such as Tetrahydrofuran, which are potentially flammable in liquid states and can crystallise and become unstable when exposed to air (oxygen) Crystallisation takes a number of days.