16 September 2013

Robin Webb
Secretary to the Low Pay Commission
6th Floor, Victoria House
Southampton Row
London
WC1B 4AD

Dear Mr Webb,

National Minimum Wage Consultation

I am writing to you on behalf of the Newcastle Youth Council and as a member of the British Youth Council, in response to the Low Pay Commissions' (LPC) consultation on the National Minimum Wage.

Over the past 9 years the gap between the National Minimum Wage paid to 16 - 17 year olds, and that paid to those 21 years old and over has increased from 33.3% to 40.5%. The announcement of the new rates, made in April of this year, sees this trend continue with the gap now at 41.1%.

The new rates for the National Minimum Wage will see the rate for Apprentices rise 3p to £2.68 (1%); for 16 – 18 year olds rise 4p to £3.72 (1%); for 18 – 20 year olds rise 5p to £5.03 (1%) and for 21 years old and over rise 12p to £6.31 (1.9%).

I, along with the other members of The British Youth Council, firmly believe that pay is a human rights issue and for workers to be paid a different wage for the same work, based solely on their age, is simply discrimination. We also believe that the current minimum wage, across all bands, is failing to meet the main aims that were outlined when it was first introduced: to provide "decent minimum standards and *fairness* in the workplace", (emphasis added). As such, we are campaigning for the introduction of both an Equal and Living Minimum Wage. The Living Wage is calculated according to the basic cost of living in the UK and is £8.55/hr for those in London and £7.45 for those outside. In order for the minimum wage to be both *fair* and provide *decent minimum standards,* this is the rate that employers must be paying their workers.

We therefore urge you to reconsider the small, incremental and unequal increases to the current wage bands and instead look at introducing a flat, equal living wage for all.

Yours sincerely,

Matthew Otubu MYP
Member of Youth Parliament for Newcastle upon Tyne
[Youth Councillor, Newcastle Central]