



Department for
Business & Trade

Making Work Pay: Call for evidence on unpaid internships

17 July 2025

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Ministerial foreword

The government is clear that economic growth is a core part of the plan for national renewal. A fundamental aspect of growth will be modernising the UK labour market, strengthening our foundations to ensure that our workers have the right protections and the skills needed to deliver this mission.

The plan to Make Work Pay will help more people to stay in work, improve job security, boost living standards and create opportunities for all. We have been clear, through our Employment Rights Bill and our published next steps to Make Work Pay, that we are committed to rebuilding the economy in a way that serves both workers and businesses, ensuring that all work is fairly compensated and valued.

An important aspect of our commitment to tackle low pay, poor working conditions, and poor job security is to ban unpaid internships, except when they are part of an educational or training course. Internships can be an invaluable stepping stone for individuals, especially young people, to future opportunities. Whether this is in their preferred field of work, or to expand their network and horizons.

Despite efforts to clamp down on unpaid internships, we are concerned too many people may be expected to work for free. The government believes in the vital importance of equality of opportunity. This commitment to ban unpaid internships reflects our vision for a fair and inclusive labour market where everyone has the opportunity to succeed based on their talent and not their financial circumstances.

This call for evidence builds on our engagement with stakeholders on the plan to Make Work Pay. We recognise there is limited evidence on these key issues and this call for evidence will help us make informed decisions as we continue with our workplace reforms in this area.

By creating a labour market that works for everyone, we will ensure that work pays, and that the UK remains the best place to live and work.

Rt Hon Jonathan Reynolds MP, Secretary of State for Business and Trade

Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP, Deputy Prime Minister

1. Background

1.1 Government objectives

The government is committed to make work more secure, support working people to thrive, and to help boost the economy. This was outlined in the Make Work Pay: Delivering a New Deal for Working People plan¹, published in May 2024.

The government recognises that internships can provide individuals, and young people in particular, with opportunities that will set them up with the skills and experience to help succeed in their careers. Access to these opportunities should not be curtailed because of where the individuals live or whether they have the financial support enabling them to work for free. It is already a legal requirement for interns to be paid at least the National Minimum Wage if they are classed as 'workers'. However, we are concerned about examples of some employers who not complying with this requirement. We know that there are unpaid internships where interns are performing tasks that benefit the organisation and the work being done is indistinguishable from that of workers, but they are not being treated as such. These individuals should be classed as workers and entitled to full employment rights, including qualifying for the National Minimum Wage. The law is clear on the circumstances where a worker is entitled to the National Minimum Wage or the National Living Wage, and they should be paid as such.

This call for evidence seeks to understand in which circumstances interns are not paid or are paid below the National Minimum Wage and the reasons for this. Ensuring interns are appropriately remunerated will enhance social mobility and help interns get the vital skills and experience they need to succeed.

There are other types of roles, similar to internships, where workers are not entitled to the National Minimum Wage or the National Living Wage, such as volunteering, voluntary work, and unpaid work trials. These are separate to internships, but we are aware organisations may be conflating these in the way individuals are engaged and deployed. The government wants to take this opportunity to understand how some of these roles operate in practice and whether further work is required by the government to ensure organisations comply with the law.

1.2 The National Minimum Wage and the National Living Wage

The National Minimum Wage was introduced in April 1999 and has been one of the most successful economic policy interventions over the last quarter of a century.

The National Minimum Wage age is the legal minimum hourly rate of pay for workers over the compulsory school age, generally 16 years of age. There are different minimum wage rates for workers depending on their age. The top rate (called the National Living Wage) applies to workers aged 21 and over. Other rates are known as the National Minimum Wage rates. For ease of reference, the remainder of this guidance uses 'minimum wage'

¹ [LABOUR'S PLAN TO MAKE WORK PAY.](#)

as a collective term to refer to both the National Minimum Wage and the National Living Wage (NLW).

This government is absolutely clear that anyone entitled to be paid minimum wage should receive it. The minimum wage and living wage rates for April 2024 and recommended rates for April 2025 are:

Age	April 2025 (current rate)
21 and over	£12.21
18 to 20	£10.00
Under 18	£7.55
Apprentice	£7.55

The government is concerned that some workers who are entitled to minimum wages may be placed in roles that have been incorrectly classified as being exempt from needing to pay individuals.² The government is clear that all workers who are entitled to at least the National Minimum Wage are paid accordingly and wants to understand what is needed to clamp down on non-compliance with the law.

This call for evidence seeks to specifically gather evidence on:

- unpaid internships and internships which are paid below the National Minimum Wage
- paid and unpaid work trials
- voluntary work
- volunteers
- work shadowing

When responding to this call for evidence, it is important that views are supported by specific evidence and data wherever possible, such as examples of practices and statistics.

1.3 What is the problem we are trying to solve?

The legislation is clear that all workers (excluding the clear list of exemptions) are entitled to at least the National Minimum Wage. Some employers are engaging interns, but they are not paying them the correct pay, or in some cases paying them at all. The government will continue to crack down on non-compliance of the National Minimum Wage legislation,

² List of workers who are not entitled to the National Minimum Wage can be found here - <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage/who-gets-the-minimum-wage>.

including instances where interns are not paid the correct amount they are due. This call for evidence is the first step to stamping out these non-compliant practices.

1.4 The call for evidence

This call for evidence contains the following sections:

- unpaid internships and internships paid below the National Minimum Wage (see page 8)
- unpaid work trials (see pages 9 to 10)
- voluntary work (see pages 11 to 12)
- volunteers (see pages 13 to 14)
- work shadowing (see page 15)
- Annex A for questions for employers and businesses (see pages 16 to 23)
- Annex B for questions for individuals and workers (see pages 24 to 32)
- Annex C for questions for all other stakeholders (see pages 33 to 35)

The following is an indicative timeline for the call for evidence:

1.5 Call for evidence timeline:

Call for evidence launches: 17 July 2025

Call for evidence concludes: 09 October 2025

Call for evidence response published: January/ February 2026

1.6 Who should respond to this call for evidence document?

We are seeking views from anyone who has an interest, expertise, or experience in any or all the topics contained in this document. We would particularly welcome views from:

- individuals who are, have been, or intend to engage in:
 - internships
 - work trials
 - voluntary work
 - volunteering
 - work shadowing
- businesses and employers of all sizes
- trade unions and trade union representative organisations
- enforcement agencies
- educational institutions

- non-profit organisations and charities
- employment law experts
- human resources experts and career advisers
- employment or recruitment agencies

2. Unpaid internships and internships paid below the National Minimum Wage

2.1 Summary

An internship is a period of work experience offered by an organisation, typically undertaken by young people looking to gain relevant skills. Internships can vary in duration, from a few days to over a year, and may involve tasks similar to those performed by paid employees.

The term 'intern' has no legal definition under UK law. Under National Minimum Wage legislation, unpaid work is generally prohibited. Interns must be paid at least the National Minimum Wage if they are performing duties that qualify them as "workers" under employment law.

The National Minimum Wage regulations set out that UK and international students at a higher or further education institution in the UK who are required to undertake a mandatory work experience placement of up to one year as part of their course are exempt from being required to be paid the National Minimum Wage. Students from further and higher institutions from outside of the UK are not included within this exemption. This means UK and international students are entitled to National Minimum Wage if the internship is part of their educational course based outside the UK.

We have limited data on internships, including those that are unpaid or paid below the National Minimum Wage, so it is difficult to gauge the scale of any issues related to internships, much less whether these are endemic or limited to certain sectors.

Stakeholders have raised concerns that there are existing roles within the job market, and new roles being advertised as unpaid internships or other types of unpaid roles, which they believe should be paid jobs.

According to the Department for Education's Employer Skills Survey (ESS),³ around 5% of employers offered internships in 2022 and there were around 200,000 internships. The majority (88%) of the internships were over 2 weeks and just under one in 3 (29%) over 6 months. Most (73%) employers that offered internships of 2 weeks or more reported that all individuals on the placement were paid (although the data does not tell us whether individuals were paid at least the relevant minimum wage rate).

The data from this call for evidence will help to inform the government's next steps on this policy.

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/employer-skills-survey-2022>

3. Unpaid work trials

3.1 Summary

As part of a recruitment process, an individual may be asked by a prospective employer to carry out tasks, without payment, to help the employer to decide whether the individual has the skills and qualities required for the job. Often this will be a legitimate practice, but some employers may use unpaid trial work periods to obtain work or services for which at least the minimum wage should be paid. Current law does not define a “trial work period” or state precisely when at least the minimum wage must be paid.

Government guidance is clear that where an employer asks an individual to carry out a ‘trial’, ‘test’ or ‘recruitment exercise’, the individual may nevertheless be a ‘worker’ and entitled to the minimum wage.⁴

Whether a work trial results in a contract requiring the minimum wage to be paid will depend on the circumstances of the case. There are currently no definitive rules or tests; however, a court or tribunal is, in the government’s view, likely to take account of the following factors:

- whether a ‘work trial’ is genuinely for recruitment purposes (if it is not, it will generally be considered work and the individual will be eligible to be paid the minimum wage)
- whether the trial length exceeds the time that the employer would reasonably need to test the individual’s ability to carry out the job offered (in the government’s view an individual conducting work in a trial lasting longer than one day is likely to be entitled to the minimum wage in all but very exceptional circumstances)
- the extent to which the individual is observed while carrying out the tasks
- the nature of the tasks carried out by the individual and how closely these relate to the job offered (where the tasks are different from those which the job would involve, this may indicate that the employer is not genuinely looking to test the individual’s ability, but rather to get the tasks carried out)
- whether the tasks carried out have a value to the employer beyond testing the individual (where the tasks are carried out in a simulated rather than real environment, this will normally indicate that they do not have such a value and that the individual is not ‘working’)
- whether trial periods are important (aside from recruiting) to the way the employer runs its business (for example, where trial periods are being used by the employer as a means to reduce labour costs, this is likely to indicate that the individual is ‘working’)

⁴ [Calculating the minimum wage - Eligibility for the minimum wage - Guidance - GOV.UK](#)

There are reports of some unpaid trial work periods extending across more than one full shift or several days. Unpaid trials of this sort of length in a real (not simulated) work environment are likely to create an entitlement to minimum wage in all but very exceptional circumstances – especially in sectors where workers are paid at or close to the minimum wage. This is because what is done by the individual would almost certainly have substantial value to the employer rather than testing the individual's ability. This could mean that there is a contract under which the individual would be a worker entitled to the minimum wage.

However, in some cases an unpaid trial work period lasting a few hours may be reasonable and not create an entitlement to minimum wage. This is because the main purpose would likely be to test the individual, and what is done would probably have little or no other value to the employer: the substance of the arrangement would therefore concern recruitment rather than providing work under a contract. The individual would therefore probably not be entitled to the minimum wage.

A key consideration is that the longer a trial period continues, the more likely it is that it results in a contract to provide work and that the minimum wage becomes due.

Ultimately, work trials have to be assessed on a case-by-case basis by HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) enforcement officers and where necessary by courts and tribunals, taking account of the precise detail of the arrangements, including the duration and also what the worker is being asked to do. HMRC officers consider every complaint they receive and will take enforcement action where they consider workers are being exploited under the cover of recruitment.

In addition, the National Minimum Wage legislation permits a very limited number of exceptions for particular schemes which permit unpaid work trials. These include the government's Work Trial scheme⁵, which aims to help disadvantaged benefits claimants try work in a risk-free environment and which provides a job guarantee if both the jobseeker and the employer are satisfied following the trial.

There is limited government data on paid and unpaid work trials, and whether any participants are paid at least the National Minimum Wage. Insights from the Educational Skills Survey suggest that around 10% of employers offered unpaid work trials in 2022 and there were around 860,000 work trials. Most (85%) employers that offered work trials of 2 weeks or more reported that all individuals on the placement were paid (although the data does not tell us whether individuals were paid at least the relevant minimum wage rate). These placements tended to be reasonably short, with around half under 2 weeks and the majority (93%) under 6 months.

Given the number of work trials and the potential for detriment, the government is keen to understand any potential issues with paid and unpaid work trials, including the scale of any issues, and the types of jobs and sectors affected by these issues. The government is keen to hear from stakeholders who have direct and indirect experience of work trials.

⁵ [Jobcentre Plus help for recruiters: Work trials - GOV.UK.](#)

4. Voluntary Work

4.1 Summary

The term 'voluntary worker' has a specific meaning for minimum wage purposes. They are workers and have an employment contract or a contract to personally perform work or provide services, which can be written, oral or implied. However, a voluntary worker generally does not qualify for the minimum wage.

As set out in the National Minimum Wage legislation, voluntary workers must work for:

- a charity - a body of persons, or the trustees of a trust, established for charitable purposes only
- a voluntary organisation - a body of persons, or the trustees of a trust, which is established only for charitable purposes but may not be a charity by definition, for example a local community group
- an associated fundraising body - a body of persons, the profits of which are applied wholly for the purposes of a charity or voluntary organisation, for example, a charity shop
- a statutory body - a body set up by an Act of Parliament to carry out given functions, such as local authorities, many schools and hospitals, and bodies such as English Heritage
- Community Amateur Sports Clubs registered with HM Revenue and Customs under the Finance Act 2002, schedule 18 are treated as being charities for the purposes of minimum wage enforcement

Not every worker who works for one of these organisations is automatically a voluntary worker and thus exempt from the minimum wage. For someone to be classed as a voluntary worker they cannot be paid more than a reimbursement of expenses incurred or expected to be incurred. Also, they must not receive any benefit in kind other than reasonable subsistence or accommodation. If they are paid for the work they do or receive any benefit, the person is probably a worker and entitled to the minimum wage.

Voluntary workers might not be given this title by the organisation that engages them. There may be people who consider themselves 'volunteers' but who are in fact workers due to the arrangements under which they work.

Expenses incurred in the performance of duties are expenses incurred while the person is undertaking their work. They could include, for example, having to travel from one site to another while performing duties, being sent to purchase something as part of the duties, or having to pay for a hotel while performing duties at a conference.

Expenses incurred in order to enable a voluntary worker to perform their duties are expenses which occur outside of the voluntary work, but which are needed to enable the voluntary worker to undertake it. These expenses must be both necessary to undertake the voluntary work and reasonably incurred.

Examples might be:

- expenses to cover the cost of care of dependants needed to enable the voluntary worker to do the voluntary work
- expenses to cover the cost of a lunch during a break in the voluntary work - although the cost of the lunch should be reasonable and not excessive, otherwise it would not be reasonably incurred
- expenses to cover the cost of travelling to and from the voluntary work.

The circumstances where workers are required to be paid at least the National Minimum Wage is clear. We are unaware of any specific issues related to voluntary workers, but we want to ensure that all workers who are entitled the National Minimum Wage receive it. Given the limited evidence in this area, the government is using this call for evidence to understand how organisations engage and deploy voluntary workers.

5. Volunteers

5.1 Summary

Volunteers do not qualify for the minimum wage because they are not workers. They do not have any employment contract or contract to perform work or provide services.

Typically, a volunteer:

- can provide their time and effort completely freely
- can come and go as they please
- is under no obligations to provide services
- cannot be made to perform specific duties
- does not suffer any sanctions if they do not perform their duties

Some organisations may reimburse volunteers for reasonable expenses, such as travel costs and meals. Such reimbursements are not considered payment, so they do not affect the volunteers' status. However, if volunteers receive more money on their driving expenses than they have spent, they may need to pay tax on their driving expenses.

Volunteers often perform tasks that resemble paid employment. A volunteer might be classed as a worker if they receive payment, reward, or benefit in kind. This includes any promise of a contract or paid work in the future. As a worker they would be entitled to National Minimum Wage.

Volunteers do not have a contract of employment or form of contract to perform work, and do not enjoy the same legal protections as paid employees. They are under no obligation to volunteer, and they provide their time and effort freely. This means that organisations cannot compel volunteers to perform certain duties, and they can choose whether they perform the duties asked of them, as well as when and how they perform these. Although some organisations use volunteer agreements, which set out expectations of the nature of the duties a volunteer is expected to perform and the location and hours of volunteering, this is not compulsory and not legally enforceable. Volunteer agreements generally outline the following:

- the ethos of the organisation
- opening hours or attendance expectations
- what is expected of the role
- the organisation's rules and procedures
- insurance indemnity provisions for them

As long as these agreements are intended to clarify the reasonable expectations of the volunteer and the organisation and are clearly not intended to amount to a legally binding

employment contract or a contract to personally perform work or services, they will not make the person a worker and entitled to be paid the minimum wage.

Imposing a requirement on a person to comply with a statutory obligation such as health and safety, or providing health and safety training, would not, on its own, result in the person being classed as a worker and entitled to the minimum wage. However, if a legally binding employment contract arises, the person would be entitled to the minimum wage unless a specific exemption applied.

The circumstances where workers are required to be paid at least the National Minimum Wage is clear. Volunteers do not qualify for the National Minimum Wage and we are unaware of specific issues relating to volunteers. Sometimes volunteers can be conflated with other, similar roles, such as internships but given the limited evidence in this area, the government is using this call for evidence to understand how organisations engage and deploy volunteers.

6. Work Shadowing

6.1 Summary

Work shadowing is not defined in legislation. Someone who is doing a placement that does not involve any work being performed, such as work shadowing, is not entitled to the National Minimum Wage (NMW). Someone who is work shadowing should only be observing others perform work (or observing other duties as agreed between the individual who is work shadowing and the employer) but they should not perform work. If conducted correctly, work shadowing can be a valuable, informal learning experience.

Individuals who are engaged in work shadowing are not entitled to the National Minimum Wage as they are not a worker for National Minimum Wage purposes. We are unaware of specific issues related to work shadowing but we want to ensure that all workers who are entitled to the National Minimum Wage receive it. Given the limited evidence in this area the government is using this call for evidence to gather data on how work shadowing operates in practice, and the potential benefits and drawbacks of these arrangements.

Annex A: Questions for employers and businesses

To respond to this survey online, please follow this link:

https://ditresearch.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5gpsT0Raa6hHwiY

Questions on unpaid Internships and internships paid below the National Minimum Wage:

1. Has your organisation hired or plans to hire interns? [Yes/ No/ Do not know/ Prefer not to say]
2. Approximately, how many internship placements does your organisation offer or has offered per year?
 - 0
 - 1
 - 2
 - between 3 to 5
 - between 6 to 10
 - between 11 to 20
 - between 21 to 50
 - over 50
 - do not know
 - prefer not to say
3. Which types of roles do interns typically perform within your organisation? (Select all that apply)
 - clerical or administrative
 - policy development
 - data analysis
 - finance or accounting
 - human resources (HR)
 - marketing or communications
 - IT or technical support
 - research
 - project management
 - customer service
 - training and development
 - legal support
 - hospitality
 - other (please specify)
 - do not know
 - prefer not to say

4. What is the average duration of a typical internship at your organisation?
- up to 1 week
 - between 1 and 2 weeks
 - between 2 and 4 weeks
 - between 1 and 3 months
 - between 3 and 6 months
 - between 6 months and 9 months
 - between 9 months to 1 year
 - over 1 year
 - other (please specify)
 - do not know
 - prefer not to say
5. Were or are interns at your organisation paid for their roles? [Yes / No / Do not know/ Prefer not to say]
6. Were or are interns are your organisation paid at least the National Minimum Wage? [Yes / No / Do not know/ Prefer not to say]
7. If the interns were paid less than the National Minimum Wage, how much did they receive per hour for their roles at your organisation?
8. If your organisation pays interns below the National Minimum Wage, what is the reason for this?
- organisation was not aware that the interns were entitled to receive at least the National Minimum Wage
 - internship is considered a voluntary position
 - internship is part of an educational programme or course requirement
 - interns receive other forms of compensation (e.g., meals, travel expenses)
 - interns are engaged in purely observational or shadowing roles
 - financial constraints of the organisation prevent paying the National Minimum Wage
 - other (please specify)
 - do not know
 - prefer not to say
9. Currently the term 'intern' is not defined in legislation. Would it be helpful to define interns within legislation? [Yes / No / Do not know/ Prefer not to say]
10. How should internships be defined in legislation?

Regulation 53 of the National Minimum Wage Regulations 2015

Under Regulation 53 of The National Minimum Wage Regulations 2015, if a learner on a higher or further education course is required to complete an internship or work experience placement of up to one year, they are exempt from being required to be paid the National

Minimum Wage. This exemption does not apply to learners of higher or further education institutions from outside of the UK.

11. Should learners from higher and further education institutions from outside of the UK continue to be entitled to the National Minimum Wage for the period they are on an education or training related internship or work experience placement? [Yes / No / Do not know/ Prefer not to say]

12. Would removing the exemption affect your organisation? [Yes / No / Do not know/ Prefer not to say]

13. Could you explain how removing this exemption this would affect your organisation?

Worker protection and fairness

14. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Unpaid internships or internships which are paid below the National Minimum Wage should be banned if they are not related to an educational or training course.

- strongly agree
- agree
- neither agree nor disagree
- disagree
- strongly disagree
- do not know
- prefer not to say

15. Could you please provide more detail for your response to the previous question?

16. Which of the following types of compensation should the interns be entitled to receive during their internship? (Select all that you think should apply).

- National Minimum Wage or higher
- reimbursement of expenses (e.g., meals, travel expenses)
- professional certification
- free or subsidised accommodation
- other (please specify)
- none – I do not think any compensation should be provided
- do not know
- prefer not to say

17. Are there any additional measures or safeguards you believe should be introduced to protect interns from potential exploitation? [Yes / No/ Do not know/ Prefer not to say]

18. Please explain which additional measures or safeguards should be introduced.

19. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about internships?

Questions on unpaid work trials

20. Does your organisation currently offer work trials, or has it done so in the past? [Yes / No/ Do not know/ Prefer not to say]

21. Are these work trials paid or unpaid?

- paid work trials (paid at least the National Minimum Wage)
- unpaid work trials (including work trials paid below the National Minimum Wage)
- both (Some paid work trials and some unpaid work trials)
- do not know
- prefer not to say

22. Does your organisation have guidance or processes on how work trials (paid/ unpaid) operate? [Yes / No/ Do not know/ Prefer not to say]

23. Approximately how many unpaid work trials does your organisation conduct per year?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- between 3 to 5
- between 6 to 10
- between 11 to 20
- between 21 to 50
- over 50
- do not know
- prefer not to say

24. For what purpose/s does your organisation use unpaid work trials? Select all that apply.

- test the general suitability of a potential candidate
- test the specific skills of a potential candidate which are essential for the role
- other - please specify
- do not know
- prefer not to say

25. What is the average duration of a typical unpaid work trial at your organisation?

- Up to 1 day
- between 1 day and 7 days
- between 1 and 2 weeks
- between 2 and 4 weeks
- between 1 and 3 months
- between 3 and 6 months
- between 6 months and 9 months
- other (please specify)
- do not know

- prefer not to say

26. Would banning unpaid work trials affect the likelihood of you offering employment?
[Yes / No / Do not know/ Prefer not to say]

27. If your organisation offers unpaid work trials, are you trialling one potential candidate for the role at any one time? [Yes/ No/ Do not know/ Prefer not to say/ Other – Please specify]

28. If your organisation offers work trials, do individuals receive at least the National Minimum Wage? [Yes / No / Do not know /Prefer not to say/ Other – Please specify]

29. If you offer compensation to individuals participating in work trials, please can you specify the compensation offered during your work trials. (Select all that apply)

- travel expenses
- meal expenses
- discounts or benefits
- accommodation expenses
- equipment and material expenses
- uniform and work clothing
- training and development
- other (please specify)
- do not know
- prefer not to say

30. If your organisation offers work trials, and individuals do not receive at least the National Minimum Wage, what are the reasons for not paying the National Minimum Wage?

31. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Individuals participating in work trials should be compensated at least the National Minimum Wage.

- strongly agree
- agree
- neither agree nor disagree
- disagree
- strongly disagree
- do not know
- prefer not to say

Impact of banning unpaid work trials

32. Would banning unpaid work trials affect the way you conduct work trials? [Yes / No / Do not know /Prefer not to say/ Other – Please specify]

33. In what way would banning unpaid work trials affect the way you conduct work trials?

Worker protection and fairness

34. Are there any additional measures or safeguards you believe should be introduced to protect individuals participating in work trials? [Yes / No/ Do not know/ Prefer not to say]

35. Please specify what these should be.

Questions on voluntary workers

36. Has your organisation hired or plans to hire voluntary workers? [Yes/ No/ Do not know/ Prefer not to say]

37. Which types of roles do voluntary workers typically perform within your organisation? (Select all that apply)

- clerical or administrative
- policy development
- data analysis
- finance or accounting
- human resources (HR)
- marketing or communications
- IT or technical support
- research
- project management
- customer service
- training and development
- legal support
- hospitality
- other (please specify)
- do not know
- prefer not to say

38. If your organisation engages voluntary workers, do participants receive any compensation? [Yes/ No/ Do not know/ Prefer not to say]

39. What type of compensation does voluntary workers receive. (Select all that apply)

- travel expenses
- meal expenses
- discounts or benefits
- accommodation expenses
- equipment and material expenses
- uniform and work clothing
- training and development
- other (please specify)
- do not know
- prefer not to say

Impact of paying voluntary workers

40. Should reimbursing all voluntary workers' expenses (including but not limited to travel, meals) be mandatory?

[Yes/ No/ Do not know/ Prefer not to say/ Other – Please specify]

Worker protection and fairness

41. Should organisations be required to provide a clear, written description of voluntary workers' roles and responsibilities?

[Yes / No / Do not know/ Prefer not to say / Other – Please specify]

42. Do you have any other comments or suggestions regarding voluntary work? If yes, please state these below.

Questions on volunteers

43. Does your organisation currently engage volunteers, or has it done so in the past?

[Yes/ No/ Do not know/ Prefer not to say]

44. Which types of roles do volunteers typically perform within your organisation? (Select all that apply)

- clerical or administrative
- policy development
- data analysis
- finance or accounting
- human resources (HR)
- marketing or communications
- IT or technical support
- research
- project management
- customer service
- training and development
- legal support
- hospitality
- other (please specify)
- do not know
- prefer not to say

45. If your organisation engages volunteers, do they receive any compensation? [Yes/ No/ Do not know/ Prefer not to say]

46. Please select all forms of compensation volunteers receive (Select all that apply)

- travel expenses
- meal expenses
- discounts or benefits
- accommodation expenses

- equipment and material expenses
- uniform and work clothing
- training and development
- other (please specify)
- do not know
- prefer not to say

47. There is no single statutory definition of 'volunteer' should this be introduced in legislation? [Yes / No / Do not know/ Prefer not to say/ Other – Please specify]

Impact of paying volunteers

48. Should reimbursing all volunteers' expenses (including but not limited to travel, meals) be mandatory?
[Yes / No / Do not know/ Prefer not to say/ Other – Please specify]

Volunteer protection and fairness

49. Should organisations be required to provide a clear, written description of volunteer roles and responsibilities?
[Yes / No / Do not know/ Prefer not to say/ Other – Please specify]

50. Do you have any other comments or suggestions regarding volunteering? If yes, please state these below.

Questions on Work Shadowing

51. Does your organisation currently offer work shadowing opportunities, or has it done so in the past? [Yes / No / Do not know/ Prefer not to say]

52. What is the average duration of a typical work shadowing opportunity at your organisation?

- up to 1 day
- between 1 day and 7 days
- between 1 and 2 weeks
- between 2 and 4 weeks
- between 1 and 3 months
- between 3 and 6 months
- between 6 months and 9 months
- other (Please specify)
- do not know
- prefer not to say

53. Does your organisation ensure that the individual who is work shadowing is limited to only observing others perform work or tasks? [Yes / No / Do not know/ Prefer not to say/ Other – Please specify]

54. Could you tell us about the activity or activities someone work shadowing in your organisation might be involved in?

- observing daily actions
- participating in meetings
- assisting with projects
- learning administrative tasks
- customer or stakeholder interaction
- other (please specify)
- do not know
- prefer not to say

55. Work shadowing is currently not defined in legislation. Should work shadowing be defined in legislation to ensure clarity and consistent approach? [Yes / No / Do not know/ Prefer not to say/ Other – Please specify]

Work shadowing protection and fairness

56. Should there be a maximum duration for any allowed work shadowing? [Yes / No / Do not know/ Prefer not to say]

57. What should be the maximum duration?

- up to 1 day
- between 1 day and 7 days
- between 1 and 2 weeks
- between 2 and 4 weeks
- between 1 and 3 months
- between 3 and 6 months
- between 6 months and 9 months
- other (Please specify)
- do not know
- prefer not to say

58. Should organisations be required to provide a clear, written description of the roles and responsibilities for work shadowing?
[Yes / No / Do not know/ Prefer not to say/ Other – Please specify]

59. Do you have any other comments or suggestions regarding the regulation of work shadowing?

Annex B: Questions for individuals and workers

60. What is your sex?

- male
- female
- other – please specify
- do not know
- prefer not to say

61. What is your ethnic group?

- Arab
- Asian / Asian British/Asian Welsh
- Black / Black British/ Black Welsh/ African / Caribbean
- Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups
- White
- other ethnic group (Please specify)
- prefer not to say
- do not know

62. What is your religion?

- no religion
- Christian
- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- any other religion (Please specify)
- prefer not to say
- do not know

63. Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more? [Yes / No / Do not know/ Prefer not to say/ Other – Please specify]

64. What size workplace are you employed in?

- micro (Fewer than 10 Employees)
- small (11 – 50 Employees)
- medium (51 – 250 employees)
- large (251+ Employees)
- do not know
- prefer not to say

65. Where is the business you are employed by located?

- England
- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- Wales
- do not know
- prefer not to say

66. Which of the following age brackets do you fit into?

- 15 or below
- 16-17
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75+
- prefer not to say
- not applicable

67. Which type of secondary school did you attend for the most time between the ages of 11 and 16?

- a state-run or state-funded school
- a state-run or state-funded school that selected on the basis of academic ability, faith, or other grounds
- independent or fee-paying school, for example private schools
- independent or fee-paying school where I received a bursary covering 90% or more of my tuition
- attended school outside of the UK
- do not know
- prefer not to say

68. If you finished school after 1980, were you eligible for free school meals at any time between the ages of 11 and 16?

- yes
- no
- not applicable (finished school before 1980 or went to school overseas)
- do not know
- prefer not to say

69. When you were aged about 14, was the main or highest income earner in your household an employee, self-employed, or not working?

- employee
- self-employed with employees
- self-employed or freelancer without employees
- they were not working
- do not know
- prefer not to say

70. When you were aged about 14, what was the occupation of the main or highest income earner?

- professional occupations, such as teacher, nurse, physiotherapist, social worker, welfare officer, artist, musician, software designer, accountant, solicitor, medical practitioner, or engineering professions

- managers, including senior, middle, or junior, such as finance manager, chief executive, office manager, retail manager, bank manager, restaurant manager, warehouse manager
- clerical and intermediate occupations, such as secretary, personal assistant, clerical worker, office clerk, call centre agent, nursing auxiliary, or nursery nurse
- routine, semi-routine manual or service occupations, such as postal worker, machine operative, security guard, caretaker, farm worker, catering assistant, sales assistant, HGV driver, cleaner, porter, packer, labourer, waiter or waitress, bar staff
- technical and craft occupations, such as motor mechanic, plumber, printer, electrician, gardener, train driver
- do not know
- prefer not to say

71. When you were about 14, what was the highest level of qualification achieved by either of your parents or guardians?

- degree level or degree equivalent or above, for example first or higher degrees, postgraduate diplomas, NVQ/SVQ level 4 or 5
- qualifications below degree level, for example an A-Level, SCE Higher, GCSE, O-Level, SCE Standard/Ordinary, NVQ/SVQ, BTEC
- no qualifications
- do not know or cannot remember
- prefer not to say

Questions on unpaid internships and internships paid below the National Minimum Wage

72. Are you an intern, or have you been one, or do you intend to be one?

- I am an intern
- I have been an intern in the past
- I intend to become an intern
- do not know
- prefer not to say
- not applicable

73. What was, or what is your intended reason for taking up an internship?

- part of a formal educational or training course

- learning or training experience not part of a formal educational or training course
- as a stepping stone into paid work
- general interest in the subject matter or industry
- other (please specify)
- do not know
- prefer not to say

74. Which type of role or roles did you perform or expect to perform? (Select all that apply)

- clerical or administrative
- policy development
- data analysis
- finance or accounting
- human resources (HR)
- marketing or communications
- IT or technical support
- research
- project management
- customer service
- training and development
- legal support
- hospitality
- other (please specify)
- do not know
- prefer not to say

75. How long did your internship last? For respondents who have not commenced their internship, how long do you expect your internship to last?

- up to 1 week
- between 1 and 2 weeks
- between 2 and 4 weeks
- between 1 and 3 months
- between 3 and 6 months
- between 6 months and 9 months
- between 9 months and 1 year
- over 1 year
- other (please specify)
- do not know
- prefer not to say

76. Were you, or do you expect to be paid during the period you were, are, or will be an intern? [Yes / No / Do not know/ Prefer not to say]

77. If you were, are, or expect to be paid, is this amount at least the National Minimum Wage? [Yes / No / Do not know / Prefer not to say/ Other – Please specify]

78. If you were, are, or expect to be paid above the National Minimum Wage, how much is this per hour?

79. If you were, are, or expect to be paid below the National Minimum Wage, what is the reason for this?

- organisation was not aware that the interns were entitled to receive at least the National Minimum Wage
- internship is considered a voluntary position
- internship is part of an educational program or course requirement
- interns receive other forms of compensation (e.g., meals, travel expenses)
- interns are engaged in purely observational or shadowing roles
- financial constraints of the organisation prevent paying the National Minimum Wage
- other (Please specify)
- do not know
- prefer not to say

80. Currently the term 'intern' is not defined in legislation. Would it be helpful to define interns within legislation? [Yes/ No/ Do not know/ Prefer not to say/ Other – Please specify]

81. If you said 'yes' to the previous question, how should internships be defined in legislation?

82. What do you think are the economic and social implications of maintaining the current approach to unpaid internships?

Worker protection and fairness

83. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Unpaid internships or internships which are paid below the National Minimum Wage should be banned if they are not related to an educational or training course.

- strongly agree
- agree
- neither agree nor disagree
- disagree
- strongly disagree
- do not know
- prefer not to say

84. Could you please explain the reason for your response to the previous question?

85. What type of compensation do you think interns should be entitled to receive during their internship? (Select all that you think should apply).

- National Minimum Wage or higher

- reimbursement of expenses (e.g., meals, travel expenses)
- professional certification
- free or subsidised accommodation
- other (please specify)
- none – I do not think any compensation should be provided
- do not know
- prefer not to say

86. Are there any additional measures or safeguards you believe should be introduced to protect interns from potential exploitation? [Yes / No/ Do not know/ Prefer not to say].

87. If yes, please explain which additional measures or safeguards should be introduced.

88. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about internships?

Questions on unpaid work trials

89. Have you ever participated in, or do you plan to participate in, a work trial?

- I am currently taking part in a work trial
- I intend to take part in a work trial
- not applicable
- do not know
- prefer not to say

90. If you answered yes, did the organisation have guidance or processes on how work trials operate? [Yes / No / Do not know/ Prefer not to say/ Other – Please specify]

91. What reason did the organisation give when they asked you to participate in a work trial?

- they wanted to test your general suitability for the role
- they wanted to test the specific skills you have which are essential for the role
- do not know
- prefer not to say
- other (please specify)

92. How long did your work trial last?

- up to 1 day
- between 1 day and 7 days
- between 1 and 2 weeks
- between 2 and 4 weeks
- other (please specify)

93. When you were taking part in a work trial, were there other potential candidates the organisation was trialling at the same time as you? [Yes/ No/ Do not know/ Other – Please specify]

94. For the work trial you took part in, are currently taking part in, or plan to take part in, did you or do you expect to receive payment? [Yes / No/ Do not know/ Prefer not to say]
95. If you answered yes, were you paid at least the National Minimum Wage? [Yes / No / Do not know/ Prefer not to say]
96. If you were not paid at least the National Minimum Wage, did you receive any other incentives, such as travel expenses, meals etc.? [Yes / No / Do not know /Prefer not to say/ Other – Please specify]
97. If you were not paid at least the National Minimum Wage, what were the reasons for this? Please specify
98. Should individuals participating in work trials be compensated at least the National Minimum Wage? [Yes / No / Do not know /Prefer not to say/ Other – Please specify]

Impact of banning unpaid work trials

99. Would banning unpaid work trials affect the likelihood of you being offered employments? [Yes / No / Do not know /Prefer not to say/ Other – Please specify]
100. Could you provide us with more detail or examples of how banning unpaid work trials could impact the likelihood of you being offered employment?
101. If you took part in an unpaid work trial, or in a work trial that paid below the National Minimum Wage, how did this impact you?

Worker protection and fairness

102. Are there any additional measures or safeguards you believe should be introduced to protect individuals participating in work trials? [Yes / No / Do not know /Prefer not to say/ Other – Please specify]
103. If you answered 'yes' to the previous question, please specify what these should be.

Questions on voluntary workers

104. Have you been involved in, are you currently involved, or do you plan to get involved voluntary work?
- I am currently a voluntary worker
 - I have been a voluntary worker in the past
 - I intend to become a voluntary worker
 - not applicable
 - do not know
 - prefer not to say
105. Which types of roles have you performed, or performing, or intend to perform as a voluntary worker? (Select all that apply)
- clerical or administrative
 - policy development

- data analysis
- finance or accounting
- human resources (HR)
- marketing or communications
- IT or technical support
- research
- project management
- customer service
- training and development
- legal support
- hospitality
- other (please specify)
- do not know
- prefer not to say

106. Did you receive, are you receiving, or do you expect to receive any compensation?
[Yes / No / Do not know /Prefer not to say/ Other – Please specify]

107. If compensation is, was, will be offered, what compensation did you receive or expect to receive for your voluntary work?

- travel expenses
- meal expenses
- discounts or benefits
- accommodation expenses
- equipment and material expenses
- uniform and work clothing
- training and development
- other (please specify)
- do not know
- prefer not to say

Impact of paying voluntary workers

108. Should reimbursing all voluntary workers' expenses (including but not limited to travel, meals) be mandatory? [Yes / No / Do not know /Prefer not to say/ Other – Please specify]

Worker protection and fairness

109. Should organisations be required to provide a clear, written description of voluntary workers' roles and responsibilities? [Yes / No / Do not know /Prefer not to say/ Other – Please specify]

110. Do you have any other comments or suggestions regarding voluntary work? If yes, please state these below.

Questions on volunteers

111. Have you been, are you currently, or do you plan to get involved in volunteering
- I am currently a volunteer
 - I have been a volunteer in the past
 - I intend to become a volunteer
 - none of the above
112. Which types of roles are you, have you, or intend to perform as a volunteer? (Select all that apply)
- clerical or administrative
 - policy development
 - data analysis
 - finance or accounting
 - human resources (HR)
 - marketing or communications
 - IT or technical support
 - research
 - project management
 - customer service
 - training and development
 - legal support
 - hospitality
 - other (please specify)
 - do not know
 - prefer not to say
113. Did you, do you, or will you receive any compensation as a volunteer? [Yes / No / Do not know / Prefer not to say/ Other – Please specify]
114. If compensation is, was, will be offered, what compensation did you receive or expect to receive?
- travel expenses
 - meal expenses
 - discounts or benefits
 - accommodation expenses
 - equipment and material expenses
 - uniform and work clothing
 - training and development
 - other
 - do not know
 - prefer not to say

Impact of paying volunteers

115. Should reimbursing all voluntary workers' expenses (including but not limited to travel, meals) be mandatory? [Yes/ No/ Do not know/ Prefer not to say]

Volunteer protection and fairness

116. Should organisations be required to provide a clear, written description of volunteer roles and responsibilities?
[Yes / No / Do not know / Prefer not to say]

117. Do you have any other comments or suggestions regarding volunteering? If yes, please state these below.

Questions on work shadowing

118. Have you been involved in, are you currently involved, or do you plan to get involved work shadowing?

- I am currently work shadowing
- I have work shadowed in the past
- I intend to participate in work shadowing in the future
- not applicable
- do not know
- prefer not to say

119. How long did your work shadowing last or how long do you expect it to last

- 1 – 7 days
- 8 – 13 days
- 2 weeks or longer
- other
- do not know
- prefer not to say

120. When you were work shadowing did you or do you expect to receive payment? [Yes / No / Do not know/ Prefer not to say]

121. Was the payment you received at least the National Minimum Wage? [Yes / No / Do not know/ Prefer not to say]

122. Did you, are you, or will you expect to perform work or tasks? [Yes / No / Do not know/ Prefer not to say]

123. If you answered yes or unsure to the previous question, could you please explain your response.

124. Work shadowing is currently not defined in legislation. Should work shadowing be defined in legislation to ensure clarity and consistent approach? [Yes / No / Do not know/ Prefer not to say]

125. Please could you provide additional information to explain your previous response

Worker protection and fairness

126. Should reimbursing all voluntary workers' expenses (including but not limited to travel, meals) be mandatory? [Yes / No / Do not know/ Prefer not to say]

127. Should there be a maximum duration for any allowed work shadowing? [Yes/ No/ Do not know/ Prefer not to say]

128. If yes, what should be the maximum duration?

- up to 1 day
- between 2 day and 7 days
- 8 - 13 days
- 2 weeks or longer
- other (please specify)
- do not know
- prefer not to say

129. Should employers be required to provide a written agreement outlining the terms and expectations of the work shadowing arrangement? [Yes / No / Do not know/ Prefer not to say]

130. Do you have any other comments or suggestions regarding the regulation of work shadowing? If yes, please state these below.

Annex C: Questions for all other stakeholders

Questions on Unpaid Internships and internships paid below the National Minimum Wage

131. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: Internships which are not part of an educational or training course should be paid at least the National Minimum Wage.

- strongly agree
- agree
- neither agree nor disagree
- disagree
- strongly disagree
- do not know
- prefer not to say

132. What compensation do you think is fair?

- travel expenses
- meal expenses
- discounts or benefits
- accommodation expenses
- equipment and materials expenses
- uniforms and work clothing
- training and development
- other
- do not know
- prefer not to say

133. How long should internships which are not part of an educational or training course last?

- up to 1 week
- between 1 and 2 weeks
- between 2 and 4 weeks
- between 1 and 3 months
- between 3 and 6 months
- between 6 months and 9 months
- 1 year
- over 1 year
- other (please specify)
- do not know
- prefer not to say

134. Do you have any other comments or suggestions regarding internships? If yes, please state these below.

Questions on unpaid work trials

135. Do you believe all work trials should be compensated? [Yes / No / Do not know/ Prefer not to say]

136. If you believe work trials should be compensated, what level of compensation do you believe is fair?

- travel expenses
- meal expenses
- discounts or benefits
- accommodation expenses
- equipment and material expenses
- uniforms and work clothing
- training and development
- paid at least the National Minimum Wage
- other
- do not know
- prefer not to say

137. How long should work trials last?

- up to 1 week
- between 1 and 2 weeks
- between 2 and 4 weeks
- other (please specify)

138. Do you have any other comments or suggestions regarding work trials? If yes, please state these below.

Questions on voluntary workers

139. Do you believe all voluntary workers should be compensated? [Yes / No / Do not know/ Prefer not to say]

140. If you answered yes, what level of compensation you think is fair?

- travel expenses
- meal expenses
- discounts or benefits
- accommodation expenses
- equipment and material expenses
- uniforms and work clothing

- training and development
- other (please specify)
- do not know
- prefer not to say

141. Do you have any other comments or suggestions regarding voluntary workers? If yes, please state these below.

Questions on volunteers

142. Do you believe all volunteers should be compensated? [Yes / No / Do not know/ Prefer not to say]

143. If you answered yes, what level of compensation you think is fair?

- travel expenses
- meal expenses
- discounts or benefits
- accommodation expenses
- equipment and material expenses
- uniforms and work clothing
- training and development
- other (please specify)
- do not know
- prefer not to say

144. Do you have any other comments or suggestions regarding volunteers? If yes, please state these below.

Questions on work shadowing

145. Do you believe all work shadowing opportunities should be compensated? [Yes / No / Do not know/ Prefer not to say]

146. If you answered yes, what level of compensation you think is fair?

- travel expenses
- meal expenses
- discounts or benefits
- accommodation expenses
- equipment and material expenses
- uniforms and work clothing
- training and development
- other (please specify)
- do not know

- prefer not to say

147. How long should work shadowing opportunities last?

- up to 1 week
- between 1 and 2 weeks
- between 2 and 4 weeks
- other (please specify)
- do not know
- prefer not to say

122. Do you have any other comments or suggestions regarding work shadowing? If yes, please state these below.

Stakeholder response information

About you

148. Please indicate whether you are responding as:

- an academic
- an employer
- an employee, worker or individual
- a Legal representative
- a business representative organisation or trade body
- a trade union or staff association
- other (please specify)
- do not know
- prefer not to say

149. What sector or industry do you operate in?

- manufacturing
- construction
- wholesale, retail and repair of motor vehicles
- transport and storage
- accommodation and food services
- information and communication
- financial, insurance and real estate activities
- professional, scientific and technical activities
- administrative and support services
- public admin and defence; social security
- education
- human health and social work activities

- other services
- do not know
- prefer not to say

150. If responding as an employer, business, business owner, business representative, what is the size of your business? If responding as an individual or worker, what size workplace are you employed in?

- micro (fewer than 10 staff)
- small (11 to 50 staff)
- medium (51 to 250 staff)
- large (251+ staff)
- do not know
- prefer not to say

151. If responding as an employer, business, business owner, business representative, where is your business located? If responding as an individual or worker, where is the location of the workplace are you employed in?

- England
- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- Wales
- do not know
- prefer not to say

How to respond

Online: https://ditresearch.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5gpsT0Raa6hHwiY

Email to: unpaidinterns&worktrials@businessandtrade.gov.uk

Write to:

National Minimum Wage Team
Department for Business and Trade

Old Admiralty Building
Admiralty Place
London
SW1A 2DY

A response form is available on the GOV.UK consultation page:

When responding, please state whether you are responding as an individual or representing the views of an organisation.

Your response will be most useful if it is framed in direct response to the questions posed, though further comments and evidence are also welcome.

Confidentiality and data protection

Information you provide in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be disclosed in accordance with UK legislation (the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please tell us but be aware that we cannot guarantee confidentiality in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not be regarded by us as a confidentiality request.

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We will only process your personal data for purposes which are compatible with those specified in this privacy notice. This may include archiving in the public interest, or scientific, historical or statistical research, in accordance with Article 89 UK GDPR.

Where your data is further used for research purposes, appropriate safeguards (including anonymisation, pseudonymisation and data minimisation techniques) will be used to ensure that your personal data is only processed where it is necessary for us to do so, and that it is processed lawfully and securely.

Compatible research purposes may include analysis to further DBT policy development, or to analyse public consultation responses or similar requests for information from the public.

We are trialling Artificial Intelligence (AI) solutions to support the delivery of our functions. Unless made expressly clear to you, we will not use AI to either make or inform decisions about you. We will apply effective data minimisation techniques to all such uses of your data.

Quality assurance

This consultation has been carried out in accordance with the government's [consultation principles](#).

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