

08/01/10

Cope 5

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to you to respond to only a very small section of the MPs expenses consultation document. I am currently an intern in Parliament, although I would rather not say who I work. I value my time here and have been able to learn an awful lot. Unfortunately, I only receive a very small weekly sum as reimbursement for my expenses and not anything like the national minimum wage. The MP I work for and his staff are apologetic about this; they would like to pay me more but they simply do not receive adequate funds to be able to afford to give any interns a wage. As a consequence, of course, they make sure I have reasonably flexible working hours, to allow me to do other things and find part-time employment.

However, in your consultation you mention that this practice goes against the House's guidance (paragraph 8.10, page 48). Unfortunately, the Speaker does not seem to concur with your views and is slow in his actions to change the situation. According to W4MP, he recently stated "Whilst shying away from directly committing himself to putting the issue [of interns' pay] on the agenda for the Committee [the Members' Estimates Committee], The Speaker stated that he was very happy to raise it 'through the appropriate channels' although 'this will take time'. He acknowledged that '*This will not go away, it cannot be brushed under the carpet... I am listening*'." (Link: [http://www.w4mp.org/html/eni/2009q4/20091013\\_interns\\_summit.asp](http://www.w4mp.org/html/eni/2009q4/20091013_interns_summit.asp))

As there is no one really representing us interns and as we do not wish to rock the boat too much, as the opportunities to intern are most valuable for our careers, it would be great if you could make a much stronger statement in your final report. Many people can currently not afford to intern for a few months. The current system is thus a barrier to a truly diverse intern force and a barrier to give everybody equal opportunities to work in Parliament. It would be great if you could call for a special fund to be established as an addition to normal staffing allowances, which provides funds for MPs to pay their interns the National Minimum Wage.

Many thanks for taking this into consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Henk van Klaveren