

19th March 2018

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about unpaid work and the Private Member's Bill on this issue.

Trial periods can offer many benefits to employers and potential employees, and generally an employer does not have to pay for a trial shift so long as it is truly a trial. However, businesses are encouraged to agree payment or expenses, if any, for a trial shift in advance. This way potential employees can enter into a contract with the employer and thus have the right to be paid anything that is agreed.

The UK's flexible labour market gives our businesses a competitive advantage internationally, and works for the majority of the population. That said, exploitation is unacceptable and the Government has provided more support to crack down on unfair practices.

More broadly, I am encouraged that, in response to the Matthew Taylor review, new measures will be introduced to prevent undercutting by unscrupulous employers who try to game the system, by clearly defining who is employed and who is not. I also welcome that the Government will take further action to ensure unpaid interns are not doing the job of a worker, as well as requiring employers to clearly set out written terms from day one of the employment relationship, and to extend that to all workers.

Unfortunately, due to prior commitments, I was not able to attend the hearing of the Unpaid Trial Work Periods (Prohibition) Bill but I will follow the debate as set out in Hansard.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Alok Sharma MP