

# Standard attacked for offering London Live unpaid internship as prize

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Fri 1 Aug 2014 14.09 BST

The London "Evening Standard" is under fire for carrying an advert that offers an unpaid internship at its London Live TV channel as a competition prize.

Graduate Fog, the website that offers careers advice to graduates, has complained about the "fashion happy film competition", which the Standard has been running jointly with the Westfield shopping group.

Readers are asked to enter short films that explain what makes them "#fashion happy". The winning film-maker will get a £2,000 Westfield gift card plus an unpaid four-week internship "within the production team of London Live in 2015."

Graduate Fog has campaigned against unpaid internships in the belief that they are unfair to those who take them up. Aside from the fact that they are not compensated for the valuable work they often perform, they rarely, if ever, lead to paid employment.

It is particularly exercised by an internship being offered as a prize. Of the London Live offer, Graduate Fog says:

"What's really disappointing is that the Evening Standard – and its sister title the Independent – has a long track record of publishing brilliant editorial that is supportive of interns' fight for a fairer deal on pay, as well as the challenges facing young people who are either unemployed, or earning crummy salaries and wondering how they'll ever pay off their debt or afford to move out of their parents' home."

Fog's founder, Tanya de Grunwald, has written to the Standard about its competition offer to say:

"Please tell us it was a misprint and the internship is in fact paid for? The national minimum wage is £6.31 an hour for those aged 21 and over. The London living wage is £8.30 an hour."

Several people have also complained about the contest on Twitter, such as the one featured here by Hayley Gullen.

A Standard spokesman said: "We were promoting what we thought was a great opportunity for someone with an interest in fashion to win clothes and accessories... plus the chance to have their short film showcased on mainstream TV and to spend some time in our offices, shadowing London Live staff to gain an insight into the channel, the broadcasting industry and the world of fashion.

"Whether the winner decides to take up the chance to come to the offices here (as opposed to just the other elements of the prize) is entirely for them. They can come and go as they wish and don't have to stay for the maximum four-week period."

**NB:** I write a weekly column for the Standard