



Research Seminar

Honoured in the breach: unpaid wages as a business model

Wednesday 18th October 2017

15:30 - 17:00 Hrs (coffee and tea at 15:15)

AMBS Precinct Room 1.1, Crawford House

Speaker:

Nick Clark

Middlesex University Business School



Abstract

The seminar will present some of the results of a two-year investigation into unpaid wages (the Unpaid Britain project). The various research methods used will be described, including the use of several novel data sources, and what they have revealed about the abuse of workers' rights in certain sectors, as well as the use of litigation strategies and the abuse of limited liability by some employers. Enforcement (or otherwise) by workers, their unions and the state will be examined and evaluated, as will the extent of non- or under-payment. Evidence will suggest that the recent attention focussed on the "gig economy" may be a distraction from more fundamental failings in the labour market. Future research, policy development and pedagogy arising from the research will also be discussed.

About the Speaker

Currently leading a two year project examining unpaid wages in Britain (with a particular focus on the London labour market) Nick Clark's background is in practice. He held several trade union research and policy posts over 26 years before joining the Working Lives Research Institute in 2009, moving on to Middlesex University in 2015. His academic research has built on practical knowledge of wage bargaining, labour markets, migrant workers and employment rights, using mixed methods of documentary and legal case research, primary and secondary data analysis, and interview. He is an experienced user of the ASHE, LFS and Family Resource Survey datasets. Lately, his work focuses on various groups of workers' lived experience of the employment contract, as distinct from its form, and on employer strategies for increasing the rate of exploitation. Other recent work has included studies of EU migration to the UK for the Friederich Ebert Foundation, approaches to combatting forced labour for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, and labour market intermediaries and trafficking for labour exploitation for EuroFound. He was a member of the Gangmasters Licensing Authority Board for the first four years of the GLA's existence.