

Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002

DATE RECEIVED	31/03/2022	SUBJECT	Trade Union Facility Time		
PASSED TO	HR	DATE PASSED	31/03/2022	RESPOND BY	21/04/2022
CATEGORY	Union		FoI NUMBER	2022-120	

Question/s to be Answered

This FoI request refers to trade union facility time as defined in the Trade Unions and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 and the associated ACAS Code of Practice. I have accessed the quantitative data you will have submitted to the UK Government under your statutory reporting duty. This FoI seeks copies of specific agreements and qualitative data.

Please supply the following information:

- A copy of any agreement with your recognised trade unions on trade union facilities time. In the absence of a specific agreement, a copy of a recognition or other agreement that references facilities time.

See attached APF Terms of Reference

<https://www.shb.scot.nhs.uk/board/policies/hr-FacilitiesArrangements.pdf>

It is intended that both these documents will be reviewed and updated during 2022.

- With reference to the amount of facility time reported under Trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) Regulations 2017 for the year 2020-21. If you didn't make a return for that year please provide a link to your publication. Where there any particular factors (negotiations, projects etc.) that influenced the amount of facility time that year?

We completed our return via the HMRC portal as required and it was published in our Annual Accounts.

<https://www.shb.scot.nhs.uk/board/documents/AnnualAccounts2021.pdf>

- List up to three ways how you believe union facility time has benefitted the organisation.

We agree with the Nat Cen study that highlighted the benefits of facilities time being:

1. Provision of a ready-made structure for meaningful consultation and negotiation saves money and reassures members that their views are valued in decision making.
2. Facilitation of partnership working with trade unions improves workplace relations and the reputation of an employer as 'a good place to work'.
3. Earlier intervention in relation to complaints, grievances and disciplinary action prevents escalation into more serious problems and saves organisations (and taxpayers) money by reducing the impact on staff time and possible legal costs

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4. Better communication during restructuring and redundancy processes improves understanding of decisions, minimises negative impacts and reduces the number of working days lost through industrial action.

- List any issues or challenges that have arisen as a result of facility time for your organisation. For example, what works well, or doesn't work well and any solutions you have applied.

We ask that Facilities time is recorded on our online timesheet system (SSTS). Regular reminders are provided to staff side representatives and Heads of Departments to help ensure that it is recorded accurately.

- List any disputes with your recognised trade unions or employment tribunal claims over facility time in the last five years not covered above.

There have been none.

- Any specific facilities time agreed for union representatives engaged in national bargaining/partnership forums and similar, or any funding contribution for this purpose.

Staff are supported as required and facilities time off agreed between the individual and their manager/Executive Management Team - aside from Employee Director meetings and Job Evaluation training there is no local staffside colleagues that has been asked to support national workstreams as outlined above

- Any other views on facility time arrangements in your organisation not covered by the above.

None