

TIME OFF FOR TRADE UNION DUTIES AND ACTIVITIES

Purpose

The aim of this policy is to provide managers, employees and trade unions with a set of guidelines for granting appropriate periods of time off for all trade union members and officials required to undertake various duties and activities related to the operation of the Council. This policy is designed to simplify the rules relating to time off for trade union duties and activities as laid down in the ACAS Code of Practice No 3. The Code of Practice should be referred to and takes precedence over other interpretations of the policy.

Scope of the Policy

These guidelines apply to all Chief Officials, Single Status, Teaching and Craft employees who are members of a trade union recognised by the Council for the purposes of collective bargaining.

Time off to be granted to the Branch Secretary of UNISON is the subject of a separate agreement.

Registration of Trade Union Officials

The Branch Secretary of each recognised trade union should inform the Corporate Human Resources Manager in writing, of the names, designations and work locations of their union's service and Health & Safety representatives and branch office bearers. In addition, an outline of the duties and responsibilities of each union representative or office bearer should be provided. Any changes of representatives or office bearers or associated information should be reported to the Corporate Human Resources Manager as soon as possible following the change.

Trade Union Duties

Any employee elected or appointed as representative or office bearer of a recognised trade union has the right to be granted reasonable paid time off during working hours to carry out certain official duties and to undergo training relevant to the duties of the post to which the employee has been elected.

Paid time off will be granted for duties which the Council has agreed are necessary to maintain good employee relations. Paid time off will not be granted for duties relating to the internal management or administration of the union.

Examples of matters for which it may be appropriate to grant paid time off:

- > Consultation on terms and conditions of employment including policies and procedures and other contractual entitlements at corporate or service level.

- > Representation of individual members in matters relating to formal procedures of the Council, eg fairness at work, achieving and maintaining standards etc.
- > Attendance at meetings relating to any other aspect of consultation or collective bargaining, eg Joint Consultative Committees and Health & Safety meetings.
- > Undertake the functions of the safety representative within the specific workplace(s) where they represent employees.

Union Training

Union officials required to participate in any of the above duties are also entitled to paid time off to attend related training approved by their trade union branch. Approval on the amount of paid time off to be granted will be determined with regard to the role of the official within the union structure and the relevance of the training to the maintenance of good industrial relations within the Council.

Trade Union Activities

Trade union members may also be involved in activities relating to the operation of their union. Examples of general trade union activities include:

- > Attendance at workplace meetings for discussions with their full-time officials and elected representatives.
- > Voting in properly conducted ballots relating to the internal democratic processes of the Branch.

There is no automatic entitlement to paid time off to participate in these activities. It will be at the discretion of the Head of Service or nominated representative to consider allowing paid time off during the normal working day for involvement in these functions. Factors to be considered will be operational requirements of the Service, length of absence, the frequency of previous requests and the number of employees involved in the activity. Employees are expected to take account of their working responsibilities when requesting time off. Employees participating in the [flexi scheme](#) are required to clock out while attending such activities unless in exceptional circumstances with prior agreement from Senior management.

Applications for Time Off

In order that time off for both trade union duties and activities can be assessed for approval, the following conditions will apply:

- > All individual requests for time off should be made to the employee's Head of Service or nominated representative giving reasonable notice (requests from Heads of Service must be made to the Chief Executive).

- > You must state for what reason the time is required and how long the duty/activity is expected to last.
- > In the event that a group of employees from one Service requires time off, the recognised service representative or shop steward must make the request on their behalf.
- > Requests for time off to undertake trade union duties will not normally be refused provided that adequate notice has been given and cover arrangements are available.
- > Time off for trade union activities will be considered in light of the factors listed previously.
- > Requests for a group of employees from various Services to attend organised trade union events such as national conferences or training events must be made in writing by the trade union branch to the Corporate Human Resources Manager . After liaison with affected services, the Corporate Human Resources Manager will confirm approved time off arrangements directly to the Branch.
- > In the event that a request for time off has been refused, an appeal may be lodged by the trade union branch on behalf of the employee(s) concerned and will be considered by the Corporate Human Resources Manager.

Definition of Pay

When paid time off has been granted, the amount of pay an employee is entitled to will be calculated in accordance with the Council's standard pay calculation as laid down by the Head of Finance.

No payments will be made or time off in lieu granted for duties undertaken outwith normal working hours.

Use of Council Facilities

The Council is prepared to provide support for trade union meetings by allowing the use of meeting rooms or other appropriate premises. Space should be provided on serviceal noticeboards for union information, etc. Provision of such facilities will be dependent on availability and will not take priority over normal Council business. The use of noticeboards for communication of trade union business to members is also acceptable provided that prior approval has been received.