

# Trade Union Facilities Agreement

June 2024



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**Reading**  
Borough Council  
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- 1) The Council recognises the value of maintaining and developing good industrial relations practices. In line with this, the Council supports the practice of collective bargaining when dealing with issues that affect its employees. It recognises that in order to do this, the employee representatives require certain facilities together with time in which to carry out their Trade Union duties.
- 2) The Council and the trade unions recognise that it is in their joint interests to work in partnership, and to see their agreements and undertakings they enter into are upheld. To achieve this, trade unions should be fully representative, and the Council therefore encourages its employees to join a recognised trade union.
- 3) The Council recognises the right of the employees to have a reasonable number of representatives appointed on a function, directorate or geographical basis to act on their behalf in accordance with the terms of this Agreement.
- 4) The representatives shall be known as trade union representatives.
- 5) The appointment of such trade union representatives shall be determined by the trade unions concerned. Each trade union shall have union representatives in line with national and provincial agreements.
- 6) Each union representative shall be subject to the control of their trade union and should comply with the rules and regulations of that trade union and agreements arrived at by national and provincial councils, so far as these affect the relationship between the Council and the employees concerned.
- 7) Each trade union will inform the HR Services Manager in writing of the names of newly elected representatives and ask that they will be allowed the facilities necessary to represent their members.
- 8) A representative will only act on behalf of members within the work area for which they were elected to represent. Each representative should seek permission from their manager to take time off, giving reasonable notice of the need for time off and the purpose of the request. Managers will not unreasonably withhold permission.
- 9) In the event of the absence due to sickness / annual leave of a representative, cover arrangements will be made by common consent as appropriate.
- 10) Actions taken by union representatives in good faith in performing their duties as defined in this agreement shall not in any way affect their employment with the Council.
- 11) In all other respects, union representatives shall conform to the normal working conditions of the Council.

- 12) In affording trades union representatives' reasonable facilities to carry out their trade union duties, the Council recognises the principle of comparability of treatment in providing facilities to all unions recognised under the national and provincial agreements.
- 13) The terms of reference of Local and Directorate Joint Forums (LJF and DJF) allow representatives reasonable facilities to carry out LJF and DJF business including paid time off to attend meetings (ie pre-meetings) and consult with their members. The terms of reference for the new Directorate Joint Forums will be based on the same principles.
- 14) Reasonable time off is to be regarded as paid time off during working hours as long as it does not interfere with service provision. Time off will be for such duties as:
  - attending meetings with management
  - discussing individual grievance and disciplinary matters
  - consultation and negotiation with management
  - reporting the outcome of consultation with members
  - meeting with other representatives and full-time officials to discuss industrial relations matters
  - explaining union policy to members
  - delivering union literature
  - collection of monies.
- 15) This is a list of examples of union duties and should not be seen as exhaustive.
- 16) It is not intended to set a limit to the amount of time off allowed for trade union duties. However, both the Council and the trade unions recognise the need to ensure that such time off is not detrimental to the service provided by the Council.
- 17) If managers believe too much time is being taken off for such duties, they should report this to the HR Services Manager. Equally, if a trades union representative believes they are being denied time off unreasonably they should report this to the HR Services Manager who will arbitrate on the matter.
- 18) The Council agrees to fund the following full-time appointments:
  - Staff Side Secretary (Unison Branch Secretary)
  - Joint Shop Stewards Committee Secretary (Unite Branch Secretary)
  - Education and Community Panel Secretary (NEU Branch Secretary)

<https://intranet.reading.gov.uk/section/me-work/trade-unions>

- 19) Trade Union office facilities will be provided, with appropriate office equipment and adequate lockable filing facilities. Trade unions will have access to printing, reprographic, electronic meetings such as Microsoft TEAMS and stationery services, and be able to use the Council's internal post system for the circulation of union literature to members. Additional facilities, such the provision of transport to meetings, may be agreed at the discretion of local management.
- 20) Trade union notice boards and will be provided in each workplace for the display of material concerning trade union business. A union web page will also be available on the Council's intranet.
- 21) The Borough Council agrees that no trade union representative should suffer any loss of pay while undertaking the duties and responsibilities in accordance with the terms of this Agreement.
- 22) The Trade Unions will be given the opportunity to meet all new employees as part of the induction process.
- 23) Union representatives will be given agreed paid time off to attend appropriate training courses and conferences. These will include:
  - internal training courses for newly appointed union representatives
  - organised courses on relevant topics
  - attendance by branch nominated representatives at appropriate annual conferences.

This is a list of examples of courses and conferences and should not be seen as exhaustive.

- 24) Requests for time off will be considered against the needs of the service, but permission will not be unreasonably withheld.
- 25) The Council and the trade unions recognise that in addition to industrial relations functions, it is in the interests of the effective and democratic operation of the unions that representatives or officers participate in other activities of the trade union, including those set out below:
  - Participation, as a representative, in meetings of official policy making and consultative bodies of the trade union such as annual conferences or regional or district meetings (normally subject to a maximum of two representatives).

- Representing the unions on external bodies such as committees or working parties within the official trade union structure.
  - Holding office on official bodies of the trade union (e.g. National Executive Committee).
  - Health and Safety representatives
  - Union Learning representatives
- 26) No local agreements will be entered into without consultation with, and the signed agreement of all recognised trade unions, the AD for HR & OD and the Executive Director of DoR.