

## TU FACILITIES - [DRAFT] DETAILS FOR PUBLICATION

### The requirement

- total number (absolute number and full time equivalent) of staff who are union representatives (including general, learning and health and safety representatives)
- total number (absolute number and full time equivalent) of union representatives who devote at least 50 per cent of their time to union duties
- names of all trade unions represented in the local authority
- a basic estimate of spending on unions as a percentage of the total pay bill (calculated as the number of full time equivalent days spent on union activities multiplied by the average salary divided by the total pay bill).

### INTRODUCTION

Reading Borough Council has a proud tradition of ensuring that it has good industrial and employee relations with its staff. The Council believes that is only by working in positive partnership with staff at all levels in the organisation that we can deliver the highest quality services to the people who live and work in the Town.

Trades Unions represent over 6 million workers across the UK - and the Council believes they are as important today as they have ever been. In our experience they provide a key role in the achievement of good industrial and employee relations - proving an independent voice for workers across an organisation and within the wider local and national environments.

The Council is required by law to allow reasonable time off for trades unions to represent their members - at consultations, negotiations and at hearings. Union officials also need time off for training to do this efficiently and effectively.

During times of rapid change, such as now, access to independent advice, support and advice is a critical and an essential means of ensuring that there is fairness and equity and that employees have a voice. In addition, the majority of union officials are volunteers and give up considerable periods of their own time in representing their members.

The Following Trade Unions are represented in the Council.

Unison, Unite, GMB, NUT, NASUWT, ATL, NAHT, ASCL, AEP, ASPECT

The Council, in common with other large local authorities (and elsewhere in the public and private sector) favours an arrangement whereby the time off to represent staff is focused around 4 secondees (3 FTE) who represent different sectors of the workforce - teaching staff (where the secondment is specifically agreed by the Schools Forum), white collar staff and manual workers. These secondees represent circa 0.1% of the total pay bill, and provide support to all the Council's 5000 staff. Other workplace trade union representatives, of which there are 56, require significantly less time off to undertake local representation. In our experience the amount of time they spend on TU duties has an insignificant impact on their ability to undertake the full range of duties required in their substantive posts. The Council believes that this is an effective way to conduct its employee and industrial relations and also saves wider disruption across the services that the Council provides.