

29 October 2024

Trade Unions: Office Accommodation, Subscriptions, Facility Time & Costs

1. **The details of any office accommodation your organisation provides to staff to carry out trade union business. Please include details of:**

- **Space measured in square feet**

2,995 sq. feet

- **How much of this space is contained within entirely separate buildings (i.e. occupied solely by staff carrying out trade union business)**

Approx. 800 sq. feet

- **Whether a professional valuation of the market rental value of the space has been sought either in-house or externally and, if so, what the valuation of the space was**

There are no formal lease arrangements, therefore no rent is charged. These are areas set aside by Belfast Trust for staff to meet with colleagues regarding Trade Union matters.

- **Any charges the council levy for office space given to trade unions.**

Belfast Trust does not charge for this space.

2. **Do you deduct trade union subscriptions for any of your employees via payroll (sometimes known as the "check off" system)? If so, do you charge a fee to the trade unions concerned for providing this service?**

Belfast Trust has four Trade Unions that we have deductions coming out against and there are currently no charges. The Unions are UNISON, GMB, UNITE and NIPSA.

3. **With regard to trade union facility time, please provide the total cost of facility time from your pay bill for the financial year 2023/24 and the budget for the current financial year. Please also advise the current number of employees that you fund to be union officials, measured as full time equivalents? (For guidance on definitions please refer to the Government's Transparency Code for local government: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-government-transparency-code-2015/local-government-transparency-code-2015>)**

Belfast Trust does not centrally hold this information at this time.

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The Trust considers that the cost of retrieving the information would be above the 'Appropriate Limit', as defined by the Freedom of Information Act under Section 12. Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit. The limit has been specified as £450 for public authorities such as Belfast Trust. This represents the cost of one or more persons spending 18 hours in determining whether we hold the information, locating, retrieving and extracting this information.

4. Please advise any estimates for other costs met for those staff on trade union facility time apart from salaries - including travel expenses, office supplies, telephone expenses and energy bills.

As above, Belfast Trust does not centrally hold this information at this time.

The Trust considers that the cost of retrieving the information would be above the 'Appropriate Limit', as defined by the Freedom of Information Act under Section 12.