

15/04/2015

BY EMAIL

Tel: 028 9536 3863
Email: FOI.BSO@hscni.net

Our Ref: FOI 33-2015

Dear [REDACTED],

Your request for information was received on March 17th 2015 and was dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please be advised that the Business Services Organisation (BSO) has now completed its search for the information you requested with regards to the total amount of money paid to trade unions by your organisation, the amount of staff time spent on trade union duties and/or activities and the payment of subscriptions.

Please see below your specific queries and the relevant response to each.

- 1. A list of trade unions which received payments from your organisation and the total amounts paid to each union for financial years i) 2011-12, ii) 2012-13, and iii) 2013-14. If it is not possible to list the amount paid to each union, please provide a total amount paid to all unions. Please do not include membership dues or salary costs. Please only include direct payments.**

The BSO Human Resources Directorate provides a HR service to the following HSC bodies:

- Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) – 554.45 WTE
- Public Health Agency (PHA) – 319.24 WTE
- Patient Client Council (PCC) – 31.8 WTE
- Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) – 141.39 WTE
- NI Social Care Council (NISCC) – 59.77 WTE
- NI Guardian Ad Litem Agency (NIGALA) – 62.71 WTE
- NI Practice and Education Council (NIPEC) – 17.10 WTE

The cost of trade union activity can only be identified in the following organisations:

- BSO – The BSO does not pay trade union officials. However as part of the facilities agreement with the trade unions a member of staff has permission for release for one day per week from her normal duties. This



costs £5,266.42 per annum inclusive of employer costs. The BSO has a WTE of 1,262.63.

- HSCB – The HSCB also does not pay trade union officials. However as part of the facilities agreement with the trade unions a member of staff has been seconded on a temporary basis from her full time duties to carry out trade union duties on a full time basis. This costs £40,558 exclusive of employer costs.

There are employees in some of the organisations listed above that are trade union representatives, who have ad hoc release from work to undertake their representational duties however, it is not possible to estimate these costs. There may also be occasions when some trade union representatives may have to support employees in other organisations where no trade union representatives are present.

2. **Please state:**

a) Which trade unions your organisation provide staff time to work on trade union duties and / or activities (sometimes called 'Trade Union facility time') in i) 2011-12 ii), 2012-13, and iii) 2013-14.

There are a number of trade unions that the listed organisations in question 1 above provide staff time off to work on trade union duties. These are as follows:

- NIPSA
- UNISON
- GMB
- RCN
- BMA

All the HSC organisations listed above have been working with these trade unions for a number of years and we are therefore unable to break this down over the years you have requested.

b) The number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff that were provided for each trade union in i) 2011-12, ii) 2012-13, and iii) 2013-14. For example, if a member of staff spends 2 days per week on union business, this is equal to 0.4 FTE.

As mentioned above, with the exception of those costs already indicated, there are employees in some of the organisations listed above that are trade union representatives who have ad hoc release from their work duties to undertake their representational duties.

However, based on the information extracted from the new HRPTS system, we can provide information on the time spent on trade union duties as follows:

BSO	2013/14 – 24 days
	2014/15 – 77.5 days
PHA	2014/15 – 1 day
HSCB	2014/15 – 1 day
NIGALA	2013/14 – 1 day

3. **a) Does your organisation provide the facility to deduct trade union subscriptions from staff salaries in the payroll process?**

All the organisations listed above provide the facility to deduct trade union subscriptions from staff salaries via the HSC Payroll Shared Services.

b) If so, for each union please state what your organisation charged for this service (whether as a fixed amount per employee or a percentage), and the total amount collected in i) 2011-12, ii) 2012-13, and iii) 2013-14

The HSC does not charge trade union organisations for this service.

To date, the BSO or the HSC organisations it provides services to have not yet agreed a Learning Agreement with the relevant Trade Unions and to date Trade Union Learning has not been separately identified.

I hope that the information provided assists you. If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter.

In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to

Administrative Services Manager,
2 Franklin Street,
Belfast,
BT2 8DQ

If, following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision making panel, you remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request, you may make a complaint under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to the Information Commissioner's Office and ask that they investigate whether the BSO has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act.

You can contact Information Commissioner at:

Website: www.ico.org.uk

Phone: 0303 123 1113

Email: casework@ico.org.uk

Post: Information Commissioner's Office, 3rd Floor, 14 Cromac Place, Belfast, BT7 2JB

In most circumstances the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out. However the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at his discretion.

Yours Sincerely,

David Bingham
Chief Executive