



1 November 2024

Dear [REDACTED],

Freedom of Information request: FOI2024/00898

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 4 October in which you requested the following:

Your request:

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*
 - *how much of this space is contained within entirely separate buildings (i.e. occupied solely by staff carrying out trade union business)*
 - *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*
 - *any charges the council levy for office space given to trade unions.*
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?*
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>)*
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.*

Our response:

I can confirm that UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) holds some information relevant to your request. Please see the information below and attached.

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

A fully enclosed, lockable office is provided for trade union business at Polaris House. This office measures 172 square feet (16 sqm) and is dedicated to trade union business only, no other staff occupy or use the room. No valuation of this room has been undertaken and no charges are levied by UKRI to the trade unions for its use.

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?*

UKRI recognises 9 trade unions. Some of these use the “check off” service, while others receive subscription payments directly from employees by direct debit. UKSBS, who administer payroll on behalf of UKRI, do not charge administration fees to the trade unions that use the “check off” service.

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?

Trade union facility time is self-recorded by staff, therefore the total cost of facility time to UKRI is not held. UKRI do not allocate a budget allowance for trade union facility time.

However, we can confirm that during financial year 2023/24, a total of 225.29 days were recorded by staff as absence due to “trade union duties”. For further information on facility time, please refer to the attached “UKRI TUS Recognition Agreement - Annex 2”.

UKRI does not hold information on the current number of staff that are union officials.

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.

UKRI do not hold this information. Travel and subsistence costs to UKRI are not recorded as being specific to trade union business and most trade union business is conducted virtually and so the costs are small. Any other trade union related expenses are claimed directly from respective trade unions.

If you have any queries regarding our response or you are unhappy with the outcome of your request and wish to seek an internal review of the decision, please contact within the next 40 working days:

Head of Information Governance


Email: foi@ukri.org

Please quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are still not content with the outcome of the internal review, you may apply to refer the matter to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the review procedure provided by UKRI. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: www.ico.org.uk.

If you wish to raise a complaint regarding the service you have received or the conduct of any UKRI staff in relation to your request, please see [UKRI's complaints procedure](#)¹.

Yours sincerely,


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Information Rights Team
UK Research and Innovation
foi@ukri.org | dataprotection@ukri.org

¹ <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/contact-us/make-a-complaint/#skipnav-target>