

FOOD STANDARDS SCOTLAND

Trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) Regulations 2017

The facility time data organisations are required to collate and publish under the new regulations are shown below. These figures relate to the period 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024.

- a) **Relevant trade union official** – the total number of employees who were relevant trade union officials during the relevant period.

<i>Number of employees who were relevant union officials during the relevant period</i>	<i>FTE employee number</i>
2	1.75

- b) **Percentage of time spent on facility time** - How many employees who were TU representatives officials employed during the relevant period spent a) 0%, b) 1%-50%, c) 51%-99% or d) 100% of their working hours on facility time.

<i>Percentage of time</i>	<i>Number of representatives</i>
0%	0
1-50%	2
51%-99%	0
100%	0

- c) **Percentage of pay bill spent on facility time** – Provide the figures requested in the first column of the table below to determine the percentage of the total pay bill spent on paying employees who were relevant trade union officials for facility time during the relevant period.

Total cost of facility time	£4,845.43
Total pay bill	£17,396,000.00
Percentage of the total pay bill spent on facility time, calculated as: (total cost of facility time ÷ total pay bill) x 100	0.03%

- d) **Paid TU activities** - As a percentage of total paid facility time hours, how many hours were spent by employees who were relevant trade union officials during the relevant period on paid TU activities.

Time spent on paid TU activities as a percentage of total paid facility time hours calculated as:	30.59%
(total hours spent on paid TU activities by relevant trade union officials during the relevant period ÷ total paid facility time hours) x 100	

Our data return covers only local Trade Union activity. As we are part of the Scottish Government Main Bargaining Unit, our pay bargaining is carried out centrally, therefore this activity is covered under the Scottish Government data return. Food Standards Scotland employed 291.9 FTE staff at 31 March 2024. The number of trade union representatives is therefore 0.6% of the total number of staff.

Food Standards Scotland are committed to working in partnership with our recognised trade unions and believes that a partnership approach to employee relations is at the heart of ensuring we are a fairer, more successful employer. Facility time provides a framework for constructive consultation and negotiation with trade unions, ensuring the effective voice of workers and improving workplace relations. It is an investment in the prevention of workplace disputes, providing savings to both the public sector and the public purse, through a reduction of negative impacts on staff time and the number of working days lost through industrial action. In addition, involving the trade unions as partners contributes to our success and the well-being of our employees and facility time is an essential part of achieving this.

FACILITY TIME STATEMENT

The Value of Facility Time

Facility Time generates benefits for employees, managers and the wider community from effective joint working between union representatives and employers.

A number of studies have shown that union workplaces tend to be safer and that trade unions help to promote skills and training in workplace. The Scottish Government recognises this through our support for trade union learning and equality initiatives, including: Scottish Union Learning, Close the Gap, Fair Work Convention, Partnership Working in the NHS and revised governance arrangements for Higher Education.

The NatCen¹ study highlighted four main benefits from the use of facility time:

¹ [NatCen Research](#)

- Provision of a ready-made structure for meaningful consultation and negotiation saves money and reassures members that their views are valued in decision-making.
- Facilitation of partnership working with trade unions improves workplace relations and the reputation of an employer as 'a good place to work'.
- Earlier intervention in relation to complaints, grievances and disciplinary action prevents escalation into more serious problems and saves organisations (and taxpayers) money by reducing the impact on staff time and possible legal costs.
- Better communication during restructuring and redundancy processes improves understanding of decisions, minimises negative impacts and reduces the number of working days lost through industrial action.

The Fair Work Convention² highlights these points through its 'Effective voice' principle. As they state: *"It is clear from international evidence that employees and workers want a voice, not only to resolve problems and conflicts (which is important) but also to engage and participate constructively in organisations."*

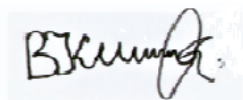
On organisational change, they say: *"There are many examples in Scotland and elsewhere of how collective voice through trade unions working with employers has addressed a wide range of organisational challenges and contributed to organisational improvements."*

It is the view of Food Standards Scotland that facility time data legally required by the Trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) Regulations 2017, should be set in the context of the vast benefits that facility time bring to the workforce and to the employer, as set out above. This is supported by the Scottish Government, the STUC and our affiliated trade unions.

² [The Fair Work Convention](#)



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