

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 NatCen study¹ highlighted four main benefits from the use of facility time:

- 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 the SPSO that facility time data legally required by the Trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) Regulations 2017, should be set in the

¹ <http://www.natcen.ac.uk/our-research/research/the-value-of-trade-union-facility-time/>

² <http://www.fairworkconvention.scot/>

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.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rosemary Agnew". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rosemary Agnew, **Scottish Public Services Ombudsman**
August 2019

Trade Union Reps
August 2019