

Report to Headteachers relating to Trade Union facilities time

In 2013/14 a decision was taken by schools forum to fund current trade union facilities time through DSG underspend to allow time for a longer term solution to be met for both maintained and Academy Schools. I previously wrote to schools setting out the potential costs and time implications related certain statutory responsibilities that schools would assume as a consequence of delegation of funding.

The DSG currently funds the cost of one day's salary replacement for trade union duties undertaken by three of the teachers' unions recognised for collective bargaining purposes at national level. This totals £22,100 and has been earmarked annually under the DSG however the level of support for each union does not relate to any formula based on membership numbers but instead funds relate to staffing costs.

From the start of 2013/14 the budget that was previously centrally held by the LA to fund Trade Union release time was delegated across schools in accordance with the requirements of the school funding reform programme. The Schools Forum agreed that the LA could continue to fund existing arrangements from the DSG balance brought forward for one more year but this ceases on 31st March 2014. The LA would be willing to establish a new approach whereby some or all schools/academies buy into some sort of pooling arrangement which could be by sector but the scope of the scheme and level of release time needs to be agreed so that costs can be established.

Prior to making decision on de-delegation/pooling we asked TU's to demonstrate that continuation of current arrangements reflect efficient ways of working and provide value for money. On this basis we have asked for some information supporting their work in schools. We also asked unions to provide current membership numbers broken down into maintained schools and academies together with average times spent in maintained and non-maintained schools.

Teacher Union	Maintained		Academy		Unattached	Total
	Members	Approx time spent	Members	Approx time spent	Members	Members
NUT	413	40%	439	60%	64	916
NASUWT	495	40%	321	60%		816
ATL	156	32%	154	68%		310
NAHT*	-					
ASCL*	-					

Trade Union membership as of September 2013

* At the time of writing ASCL and NAHT have not provided us these numbers. The NAHT have commented 'The membership number and density is not necessarily the most accurate reflection of

school leaders' demand for facilities time funds. Our members are leaders of schools, which brings its own specific challenges in being a trade union official and managing to represent other school leaders in their respective local areas. As a result, the volume of NAHT members doesn't represent the NAHT's need to access facilities funds in line with other larger teaching unions'.

To help inform a decision about the way forward in relation to trade union facility funding we have posed a number of questions to the teaching unions and have attached their combined response in Appendix 1.

Proposed Options for April 2014

1. Do not operate any de-delegation/pooling arrangements and schools/Academies develop their own facilities agreements with teacher unions. Schools that do not employ a trade union steward or representative could see delays in the union responding to requests for support from members, which in turn would cause delays in proceeding with investigations and hearings. There would also be an increased cost for individual schools to train and support their own representatives (see Trade union comments – Appendix 1)

2. Operate a new pooled arrangement for schools/Academies.

Assuming a new arrangement is required agree:

- Which unions should be included
- Levels of release time
- Which schools and/or Academies wish to join the scheme and pool funding
- De-delegate funding (ie. all maintained secondary or primary schools agree) otherwise set up individual traded services charges (if all settings (28,000 pupils) bought in at current costs of £23,000 = 0.82p per pupil)
- Arrangements to ensure that TU activity is confined to those schools/Academies funding the scheme.

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