
Meeting: Schools Forum
Date: 7 March 2011
Subject: Teachers Union and Professional Association
Report of: Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services
Summary: To seek approval for the continuation of DSG funding for facilities release time for trade unions and professional associations.

Contact Officer: Vikki Oakes, Head of HR Operations / Catherine Jones, Head of HR Strategy, Technology House, Bedford
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council
Reason for urgency (if appropriate)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To approve the continued funding for facilities release time for Teachers Unions and Professional Association for 2011/12

Background

1. Trade union representation is required by law and there is a need for schools to consult with the trade unions in accordance with School Teachers Pay and Conditions.
2. It is recognised that trade unions and professional associations make a significant contribution to the smooth running of schools, both locally and nationally. The funding system for schools should include full recognition of school workforce trade unions and should enable the effective engagement of school workforce trade unions in local consultation and collective bargaining.
3. The School Finance Regulations Schedule 2 allows an amount of funds to be retained centrally to fund expenditure in making payments to, or in providing temporary replacement for, persons:
 - carrying out trade union duties or undergoing training under section 168 and 168A of the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act 1992
 - taking part in trade union activities
 - performing public duties under Section 50 of the Employment Rights Act 1996
 - jury service

4. Currently £97k of DSG funding is allocated to fund facilities time for the Teacher Unions and Professional Associations.
5. The Facilities Agreement details the volumes and eligibility of Trade Unions and Professional Associations to claim payment in order that Schools be able to adequately cover staff time lost. Six Trade Unions and Professional Associations are formally recognised as part of this agreement. Associated costs are set at £97k per annum (see spreadsheet attached at Appendix B).
6. At present, Union and Association representatives submit claims to confirm their time spent on facilities and seeking reimbursement to relevant schools budgets. This is facilitated through HR.
7. Not all representatives claim monthly or at regular intervals and therefore spend against budget is sporadic.
8. For two of the recognised Trade Unions and Professional Associations payments are made directly to the elected representatives rather than reimbursed via a school as they have retired from schools since they were elected as representatives.
9. It is requested that the Schools Forum continue to agree to support the work with Trade Unions and Professional Associations by continuing the allocation of DSG funds for 2011/12.

Appendices

- A** Facilities for Representatives of Recognised Unions and Professional Associations (Teachers & School Based Staff).
- B** Volumes and Eligibility of Trade Unions and Professional Associations