

Freedom of Information Request – Amount of funding and staff time given to Trade Unions

Thank you for your request dated 2nd August 2011 and made under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. For ease of reference our response to your individual questions is given below:

Q1) *The total amount of money paid to all trade unions for financial periods a) 2009-10 and b) 2010-11 broken down by trade union.*

A1) SEEDA has made no payments to any trade unions in relation to their general activities. However, during the period in question, SEEDA has made payments to one trade union, the South East Region Trades Union Congress, as they were a delivery partner for the Social Dialogue Forum project, which explored how workplace practices could lead to benefits to the South East's productivity and economy. Details of payments to this organisation are detailed in the table below:

	2009/10 Financial Year	2010/11 Financial Year
South East Region Trades Union Congress (SERTUC)	£53,352	£0

2) *For each trade union for which it applies, please provide the number of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff working for the union (this is sometimes called 'Trade Union facility time') in a) 2009-10 and b) 2010-11.*

Please note that I will not accept any refusal to provide this information on the grounds that it is not recorded. The guidelines issued by ACAS state that "An employee who is a member of an independent trade union recognised by the employer in respect of that description of employee is to be permitted reasonable time off during working hours to take part in any trade union activity. An employee who is a member of an independent and recognised trade union is also permitted to take reasonable time off during working hours for the purposes of accessing the services of a Union Learning Representative (provided those services are services for which the Union Learning Representative is entitled to time off)." – If the information is not recorded, it cannot be possible to ascertain whether time-off provided is reasonable. If a formal record is not kept then I will accept a reasonable internal estimate.

2) The only recognised trade union at SEEDA is the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) and there is no formal facilities time agreement in place at SEEDA. SEEDA staff who act as union representatives are permitted paid time off during working hours to carry out duties that are concerned with the collective bargaining and representation of union members. I can confirm that, during the period in question, two members of staff spent time on trade union activities - these were the Branch Chair and the Branch Organiser. As the hours spent on trade union activities are not formally recorded we are unable to provide you with an accurate full time equivalent (FTE) figure for the amount of staff time spent on trade union activities. However we would estimate

that in the case of the Branch Chair this amounted to less than 10% of a FTE post and in the case of the Branch Organiser, less than 5% of a FTE post.