

TIME TO ACT

negotiating time off for trade union duties and activities



BRANCH GUIDANCE

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Start here!

Few people have enough time on their hands – and certainly not UNISON stewards. On average UNISON stewards spend four hours a week of their own time on union business. Almost a quarter are not given paid time off and a further fifth only receive an hour a week or less.

The union wants to give our representatives the resources they need to do their jobs. As a branch secretary or officer of the union, it is up to you to negotiate time off with their employer.

This guide offers information and advice to UNISON branches on how to get a good time off agreement that will help the branch develop and grow. Then you will be better able to recruit and represent your membership, negotiate on their behalf and build participation in the branch.

The guide is not just for branches that are developing new agreements - it will help any branch make sure members have support when and where they need it. If you have an existing agreement, does it leave some workplaces under-represented or concentrate time off among a few? This guide will help you find out.

The first section “Preparing the ground” is a step-by-step guide for collecting the information you need to negotiate a good time off agreement.

This is followed by “Developing your proposals”, which goes through the main elements of your claim, looking at the legal position, while also including case studies showing best practice and helpful negotiating points.

It concludes with a model agreement and a list of further reading and resources.

Section 1: Preparing the ground

Trade union workplace representatives in recognised workplaces have a right to time off with pay to carry out their trade union duties or take part in union training. Until recently this right only applied to workplace representatives and health and safety reps. The right to time off has now been extended to cover union learning representatives. These rights also apply to UNISON's lifelong learning advisors.

These rights come from the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, which sets out the basic rules governing the rights of trade union representatives to paid time off for union duties. Practical guidance on how the law should apply is laid down by the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) in their Code of Practice on Time Off for Trade Union Duties and Activities which was revised in 2003.

Workplace reps are entitled to paid time off for all trade union duties related to collective bargaining and individual representation, such as terms and conditions of employment, redundancies, job evaluation, family friendly policies, discipline, trade union facilities and negotiating machinery. Duties covered include meetings with management, preparation for these meetings, and keeping members informed about negotiations, discussions with management and terms and conditions.

Learning reps/advisers are allowed time off for analysing training needs; arranging, promoting and advising on learning or training, consulting with the employer and undergoing relevant training.

Safety reps are allowed time off in order to perform their function and to undergo training.

From March 2005 information and consultation representatives will have a right to reasonable time off with pay to perform their functions as an information and consultation representative or run for election to be such a representative.

All trade union members are also permitted reasonable unpaid time off during working hours to take part in trade union activities, such as attending union meetings, voting in union elections and speaking to a learning rep/advisor.

But having a legal right to time off does not guarantee a satisfactory arrangement with your employer. For that you will need to negotiate an agreement on time off for trade union duties and activities.

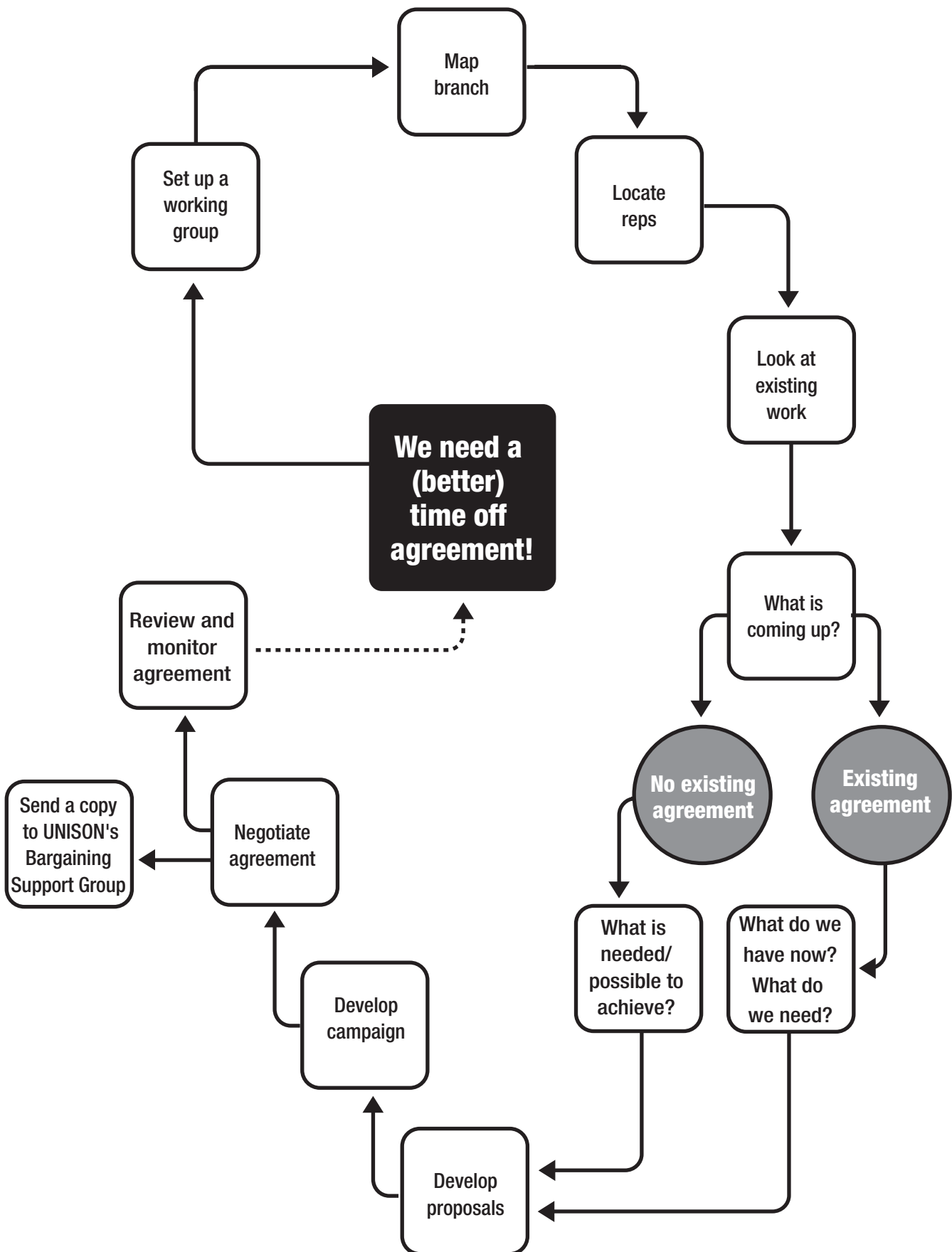
Get reps involved in the negotiations

There is no one time off agreement that will suit every organisation - what you negotiate depends on what is best for your branch.

Bargaining for facility time is an ideal opportunity to raise members' awareness of their rights to time off. It is also a chance to improve your branch's organisation and recruit new members.

The most important thing is to ask members and reps to get involved in the process. Conduct a survey or set up a working group of interested members. You may be surprised at how many people come forward, especially if you make sure you include the views of members from all areas of the branch. A working group is also a good place to discuss the different options and plan your campaign. And it can encourage more people to get involved in the union, develop new activists, and spread the workload.

Steps to negotiating a time off agreement



Doing your research

There are really two elements in winning an effective time off agreement. The first is to secure enough time to do the work of the branch. The second is getting time off organised in a way that meets the needs of all members.

Below is a step-by-step guide for collecting the information you need to negotiate a good time off agreement. You might want to hold a discussion in your working group or branch committee about the way time off operates in the branch. The main aims of the discussion would be to:

- get an overview of your reps – who are they, where do they work and how do they carry out their trade union work?
- review the general state of time off in the branch – how much do you get, how is distributed and what is it used for?
- plan how you want to negotiate a new or improved time off agreement

The questions below will help you guide the discussion. Don't worry if you can't find answers to every one. But try to collect as much information as you can. It will help you decide on the best arrangement for your branch and give you the evidence you need to argue your case with your employer.

If you have recently engaged in a branch mapping exercise you may be able to go straight to step 2 or even step 3.

Step 1: Map your branch

To develop an effective campaign for time off, the first step is to map your branch. You want to find out exactly what work needs to be done by workplace reps, and where that work takes place. A good branch map will give you a broad overview of the main workplaces and employers. This will help to build a picture of the amount of time off you need to carry out the branch's work and the way it should be distributed amongst your reps.

Some branches will have already carried out this exercise. If not, this is the time to start. Talk to your regional officer or organiser about how to begin the process. Advice on how to map your branch can be found in the Branch Toolkit, which the branch should have. If not a replacement can be ordered from UNISON Communications, stock no 14273, or downloaded from the UNISON website: <http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/14273.pdf>

What is a constituency?

A constituency is a group of members who are represented by one or more stewards. A constituency might be defined geographically as all those members working in one location (department, floor, site, office, depot, kitchen, ward) or in similar workplaces across several locations. Constituencies can also consist of members linked together by some common factor such as shift, occupation, or contract type. Constituencies should be defined by the branch in a way that best meets the needs of its members.

Step 2: Know your reps

Once you have a picture of the branch itself, the next step is to find out more about your workplace reps and how their work is organised.

Where are your stewards, health and safety reps, and learning reps?

- How many are there in each constituency?
- How many members and potential members are in each constituency?
- Are there areas, shifts or work sites that have no workplace reps?
- Are reps allowed to represent members in all constituencies?

Who are your reps?

- What branch offices do they hold?
- What is the breakdown by gender, ethnic group and occupation?
- How many are on part-time, term-time only or temporary contracts?
- How many work shifts?
- Are any of your reps disabled?

What work do they do?

- What are the tasks covered by those with time off?
- What activities make the heaviest demands on reps time?
- How many hours do people spend on representation of members, meetings, training, negotiations and recruitment?
- What are the most frequent problems raised by members?
- How does that differ from constituency to constituency?
- How many hours do they spend keeping members in scattered workplaces informed?
- Do they cover members outside their own workplace?
- Do they do trade union work outside the branch at regional or national level?
- Where are the gaps? Are there areas of work not getting done?

This is your chance to look carefully at the way the branch is currently working and whether it is the best way to carry on. Are you spending too much time on individual representation when effective negotiation might solve the problem for a larger group of people? Are there areas of work which are not getting done? Do reps need extra training to deal with issues more effectively? How can you use health and safety and learning reps/advisors to contact members who have no steward?

You might want to ask current reps to keep diaries of how they spend their time over a month or two. This would give a picture of how time is being spent. The information could also back up your claim that more time off is needed.

Step 3: Work out how good existing arrangements are

Armed with a map of the branch and the work it generates, you can now assess how well your current time off arrangements meet those needs. Look at the terms of your existing written agreement if you have one, but make sure you know what is actually happening in the branch too.

How do the current time off arrangements work?

- Are your arrangements agreed in writing, or are they based on verbal understanding with your managers?
- How are your constituencies organised? Is this the best way to provide representation for your members?
- How much time off does the branch currently have?
- Are reps entitled to a specific number of hours per week or month, or are they allowed 'reasonable' time off?
- How is time off organised by the employer? Are secondments arranged for particular branch officers? Are there a set number of hours allocated to particular branch posts? Or are you entitled to blocks of time off, to be divided at the branch's discretion?
- Does your employer set a maximum ratio of workplace reps to members (eg one steward per every 50 members)?
- What trade union duties and activities are covered by paid time off? Are there restrictions on time off for certain types of work?
- Are reps allowed to represent members in worksites other than their own? Are they allowed to represent workers employed by other employers?
- Are reps able to exercise the time off rights they are entitled to? Do reps have trouble getting permission to take time off? Are reps victimised for taking time off?
- Is cover or backfill provided? If not, how does reps' work get done while they are away? If cover or backfill is provided, how is it funded?
- What changes would make the work more effective?

What others have

Along with investigating the situation in your own branch, try to collect information on agreements held by other branches. A full report on time off agreements in your sector, region or service group can be produced using the Bargaining Information System (BIS), accessible through your region or the Bargaining Support Unit. More information on the BIS can be found on <http://www.unison.org.uk/bargaining/bis.asp>

Thinking about the distribution of time off

Before you begin to develop your proposals, you may want to give some thought to different ways of distributing time off. There are three things to consider:

- The best way to get the work done
- How to build participation in the branch
- How to represent all sectors of the membership

Reps need paid time off in order to carry out trade union work during working time. But the same task can be done by arranging full-time secondment for one or two branch officers, or shared by a number of reps across the workplace, or a combination of the two.

All of these arrangements have their advantages. Full-time secondment can give a branch officer time to concentrate on trade union work. They will have the time to develop their skills, build relationships with the employer's side and develop a thorough understanding of the workplace. Employers may also prefer dealing with a rep on full-time secondment because it gives them one point of contact.

On the other hand, having all the work done by seconded branch officers can put too much responsibility on the shoulders of a small number of people and limit the opportunities for other members to play a larger role in the union. Long years of secondment can also make it impossible for branch officers to return to their original jobs when they leave their positions. This may make them reluctant to hand on their role to new reps.

Having reps with time available during working hours gives members (and potential members) access to a union rep if they have issues to raise or problems at work. If all time off is concentrated amongst a small number of branch officers, members who most need access – those working shifts or in remote sites – will be less likely to benefit.

Sharing time off also allows the branch to spread the responsibility for union work amongst a range of people. Even with full time release, few branch officers can cope with every type of problem that the average branch encounters. Employers are also tempted to load more responsibilities onto officers with full time release, since extra work does not mean more time away from their normal duties. Dividing time off amongst a range of reps lets people take on the tasks that they are good at and allows them to develop specialist skills. Time can be transferred from one rep to another as the skill base improves. This is good for the branch and helps prevent branch officer 'burn out'.

Another important reason to spread time off as widely as possible is to ensure that union reps reflect the make up of the membership. Proportionality and fair representation are important principles in UNISON. Proportionality means that the number of female and male reps should be roughly in proportion to their numbers in the membership. In other words, if two third of the members in your branch are women, approximately two thirds of your reps should be women.

Fair representation means that UNISON representatives should include members from a broad spectrum of the membership, taking into account the balance between part-time and full-time workers, manual and non-manual workers, different occupations, skills, qualifications, responsibilities, race, sexuality and disability. For example, the union has recently prioritised the need to get more young members involved in the union.

A fair distribution of time off across all groups of workers will encourage participation in the branch and help the branch achieve proportionality and fair representation. Importantly, it will also help to ensure that issues of equality in the workplace are adequately addressed. The branch should look carefully at the barriers that might prevent particular groups of members from qualifying for paid time off, and develop plans for tackling them.

Paid time off helps to 'grow' new branch officers. Few people are willing to leap from handing out leaflets and updating notice boards to full-scale negotiation and representation. A few hours a week of paid time off to carry out a specific role for the branch, is an excellent stepping stone to greater responsibilities. You may even want to negotiate some time off for workplace contacts. An hour a week to do notice boards or speak to potential members could encourage more members to take their first step into union activity.

Thinking about how to organise time off

| How is time off organised? | Pros | Cons |
|--|--|---|
| Full-time secondment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Seconded reps have time to concentrate on trade union work ● Time to develop their skills ● Builds relationship with employer's side ● Thorough understanding of the workplace ● Single point of contact with employer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Too much responsibility placed on small number of people ● Discourages wider participation ● May be difficult to return to job ● Not possible to deal with all problems and membership groups ● Can lead to branch officer burn out |
| No full time secondment — wide distribution of time off | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All members have access to rep ● Spreads workload ● Calls on wide range of skills ● Encourages participation from under-represented members ● Grows' new reps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No rep has full time to devote to trade union work ● May be difficult to get cover for particular reps at key times ● Reps' skills may not be interchangeable ● No single point of contact for employer |
| Mixture of full-time secondment and distribution of time off | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Full-time rep(s) can oversee work and be reliable point of contact ● Wide range of skills used and developed ● Workload divided, participation encouraged ● Flexible system which can respond to changing demands | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Needs careful thought to get the right balance ● Full-time reps need to be willing to share work with many others ● Employer may need to be persuaded to accept this arrangement |

Section 2: Developing your proposals

Having done your research, you are now ready to develop proposals to put to your employer. This is a good time to involve your working group, stewards committee or branch self-organised groups in discussing ideas for how to take the proposals forward. It is also a good idea to involve your regional officer or organiser, if you have not already done so.

While no one pattern will fit all branches, there are a few basic negotiating principles to keep in mind.

- Remember that paid time off for trade union duties is one of the most important resources the branch has. It is not reps' personal time; it belongs to the branch and reps are accountable to the branch for how they use it. Ensure that you set up good systems for recording and analysing how that time is used.
- Keep the agreement flexible. Circumstances can change a great deal from one year to the next. Changes in the way the workplace is organised, new legislation or major campaigns can put new demands on workplace reps. Allow for the agreement to be reviewed so that increases in workload can be accommodated.
- Try to establish the principle of partnership working with your employer. Much of the work reps do benefits the employer as much as it does the union. Joint work is often vital to implementing major changes in the workplace. While time off is a cost to the employer, you can make the case that additional facility time will bring benefits to the organisation.

What should your agreement contain?

The ACAS code of practice on trade union duties suggests that agreements on time off should specify:

- The amount of time off permitted
- The occasions on which time off can be taken
- In what circumstances time off will be paid
- To whom time off will be paid
- The procedure for requesting time off
- The procedure for resolving grievances about time off.

It is important to think through how you want to structure each of these elements in your proposals. This chapter will take you through the key elements in an agreement, outlining the legal position where necessary, suggesting options and offering examples of best practice.

How much time is permitted and when it can be taken

The law

The law does not lay down a minimum or maximum amount of time off which can be taken. Employers are expected to allow reps 'reasonable' time off to deal with issues related to collective bargaining listed below. While the duties qualifying for time off are set out in the ACAS code of practice, it is a good idea to list them in your agreement so there is no misunderstanding about reps' entitlement.

Trade union duties as listed in the ACAS code

Trade union duties cover all matters relating to collective bargaining and individual representation, including:

- terms and conditions of employment, or the physical conditions in which employees are required to work, for example, rates of pay, hours of work, holidays, sick pay scheme, pensions, staff development and training, equal opportunities, travel and subsistence, notice periods, safety, occupational health.
- engagement or non-engagement or termination or suspension of employment or the duties of employment of staff, for example: recruitment and selection policies; workforce planning; grievance procedures; redundancy and dismissal arrangements.
- allocation of work or the duties of employment as between employees or groups of employees, for example: job evaluation; job descriptions; working practices
- matters of discipline or grievance, for example: disciplinary procedures; internal appeals; external bodies (ie employment tribunals); grievance procedures.
- trade union membership or non-membership, for example: involvement in staff induction; provision of the names of new staff to trade unions; deduction of subscriptions.
- facilities for officials of the unions, for example: time off facilities; access to equipment including communications media; notice-boards; accommodation.
- machinery for negotiation or consultation and other procedures; procedures for collective bargaining, disputes, joint consultation, communicating with members and other trade union branch officers.

Negotiating points

Based on your research, you should have an idea of the total number of hours of facility time the branch needs to do its work effectively. But remember that it is always a good tactic to ask for more than the branch needs now. There are many ways of increasing the branch's total entitlement to time off.

Try to build in some leeway to deal with new areas of work and demands on reps time which may arise. Think about major changes that might be coming up before the next review period. If your workplace is about to go through a major reorganisation or job evaluation exercise, for example, you will need extra time off to deal with it. You may want to negotiate extra chunks of time for certain reps to deal with specific issues that need to be negotiated.

Make sure you include additional time needed by those reps whose working conditions differ from the norm, such as shift workers, part time workers, those employed in dispersed locations and workers with particular domestic commitments. For example, many agreements give shift workers additional time to attend meetings outside of their shift hours. Shift workers also need compensatory rest periods to allow a minimum period away from work between the end of their trade union duties and the start of their next shift, and may need to be paid in lieu.

University of York

"In the case of employees who work shifts, the University will allow reasonable time off for trade union duties and normally will make suitable arrangements when the duties fall outside their shift hours."

You should also consider what additional time might be needed by disabled members. Disabled reps with particular access needs may need more time to prepare for their trade union work. Some processes such as appeals may require more time if either the rep or member is disabled. Disabled members should experience no disadvantage in carrying out trade union duties or activities.

Try to negotiate an agreement for the ideal number of stewards, not the number you have now. If you cap the numbers of stewards eligible for time off at the current level, your agreement will be less effective in improving the organisation of the branch and increasing the number of workplace reps.

Think creatively about branch positions to maximise the amount of time off you receive. For example, in larger departments or work areas you might want to develop negotiating teams supported by a convenor who can secure more time off. A little extra time for a number of people is often easier to achieve than a lot more time for one. You may be able to make the case for time off for posts which are largely concerned with internal branch development - such as branch treasurer or welfare officer - by stressing their usefulness in keeping the branch functioning and dealing with problems at an early stage. Extra time off for additional officers will take some of the burden off existing seconded officers.

Nottingham Trent University

The employer provides for half time (17.5 hours) secondment for the branch secretary, who also gets 17.5 hours as the chair of the service group. The welfare officer receives 3 hours of facility time a week, while both the branch chair and membership officer are entitled to 2 hours a week. A rep on an isolated campus gets an additional 1.5 hours a week. A further 600 hours per year is shared by health and safety reps.

How is time off allocated?

Do you want a specific number of hours for each union rep, two hours a week for instance, or access to 'reasonable time off'? Both have their advantages. Set hours can be helpful in that the rep and their line manager are clear about how much time can be taken, without having to wrangle over what is 'reasonable'.

On the other hand it may create difficulties when issues arise that require greater flexibility. You may want to negotiate a combination of set hours with a commitment to allow 'reasonable' time off in situations where more flexibility is needed. Another possibility is to ask for a set amount of time off for some branch positions and 'reasonable' time off for others whose workload is likely to be more unpredictable. The best arrangement will depend on your own circumstances and preferences. Most important, ensure that your agreement allows for the amount of time off to be reviewed from time to time.

Wolverhampton City Council

The employer provides full-time release for the UNISON branch secretary and branch chair. Service group or workplace representatives receive "up to sixteen hours per calendar month paid time off during normal working hours to carry out functions related to their representational responsibilities in their own service group."

When time off will be paid

The law

Union reps are entitled by law to be paid when they take time off to fulfil their trade union duties. The ACAS code of practice says that it is reasonable to ask for paid time off to do things such as:

- prepare for negotiations
- inform members of progress
- explain outcomes to members
- prepare for meetings with the employer, even in cases where there are no negotiating rights, but only representational rights

Learning reps/advisors have a legal right to time off for analysing training needs; providing information and advice about learning or training matters; arranging learning or training; promoting the value of learning or training; consulting the employer about carrying on any such activities; preparation to carry out any of these activities and undergoing relevant training.

Safety reps have a legal entitlement to paid time off to carry out their functions or undergo reasonable training. Safety representatives have similar rights as other reps, with one important distinction. Their right to time off is not limited by the concept of 'reasonableness'. The law is quite clear. Health and safety reps must be given time off to carry out their duties, including training, carrying out inspections, reading relevant papers, meeting enforcement officers and attending safety committees. The number of reps needed will depend on the type of workplace, the number of members covered and how reps fulfil their duties.

From April 2005, the European Information and Consultation Directive will give the right to paid time off for information and consultation representatives who are elected or appointed by the workforce. More can be found in the Bargaining Support Factsheet *European Information and Consultation Directive*.

Negotiating points:

While the ACAS code of practice sets out the conditions under which time off should be paid, it is a good idea to list them in your agreement so there is no misunderstanding about reps' entitlement.

Going beyond the law

Some duties and activities are not listed by ACAS as qualifying for time off. Nevertheless, it is worth trying to negotiate additional time off for them. They include:

Time off for recruitment

One of the most important activities a rep can perform is the recruitment of new members. In drafting your proposals, try to include the right for time off to attend induction days and meet with new staff. The right to receive information on new starters should also be included in your facilities agreement.

Another approach might be to negotiate time off for "general representational duties" which can be used for recruitment-related activities.

Grosvenor House Facilities Management

UNISON's recognition agreement states that one of the functions of representatives is "to seek full union membership amongst all employees of GHFM".

Time off for self-organised groups

Wherever possible you should try to negotiate paid time off for trade union duties and activities for self-organised groups representing women, black, disabled and lesbian, gay and transgendered members. The law requires public bodies to promote race equality. Women, disabled workers and lesbian and gay workers also have statutory protection from discrimination.

UNISON puts very high priority on encouraging participation by members from all under-represented groups. It is vital, therefore, that workplace reps have the time off necessary to work with these members to ensure that they are fully represented in the union and protected in the workplace. Paid time off may be necessary for meetings of members, individual case preparation or consultations with the employer. Representatives dealing with equality issues often receive the least paid facility time.

London Probation Service

The branch has successfully negotiated 14 days off for the four lead self-organised group reps representing lesbian and gay members, disabled members, women and the black members. This means the four reps in question will be able to spend just over a day each month dealing with and promoting issues specific to their groups. This will be over and above any other paid release they have to undertake other union duties. The management originally said that by law they didn't have to recognise these groups, as their activities were not trade union duties, but the branch kept on arguing and eventually a new head of employee relations was more understanding of what they wanted to do.

The black members' lead organiser is using the time to attend meetings where before she had to use time-in-lieu or unpaid leave. Now she can use the time to communicate with her members and she also plans to undertake some training on how to produce a newsletter. The gay and lesbian lead organiser, feels the 14 days will make an enormous difference to the way he works. "I am able to use the time for any meetings I take externally which included two days at the TUC conference where I could just focus on gay and lesbian issues," he says.

UNISON Focus 210

Time off to represent employees of a 'related' employer

Reps often have difficulty getting time off to represent members employed in workplaces other than their own. Try to convince your employer to allow a certain amount of time off to represent workers employed by 'related' employers, such as community and voluntary organisations or private contractors. This will allow the branch to recruit reps from amongst the staff of the related employer, so that they will be able to represent themselves.

Manchester City Council

UNISON's facility time agreement provides full time release for 9 officers (Branch Secretary, plus eight Assistant Branch Secretaries) all of whom must be employed by Manchester City Council. However, the UNISON branch has negotiated an agreement with Serco, the private contractor running the local leisure trust, that allows branch officers to represent workers not employed by the council. The City Council charges Serco on a per capita basis for providing trade union representation to UNISON members working in the leisure trust. Serco pays for a proportion of the time of Manchester City Council branch officers, based on the number of outsourced employees as a proportion of the total workforce.

Time off for training

The law

Trade union reps also have the right to paid time off during working hours to receive training which is “relevant to their duties”. The ACAS code of practice stresses the importance of employers giving paid time off for stewards to be trained as soon as possible after they have been elected, for further updating training in specialist areas and where legislative change may affect industrial relations. Training must be approved by UNISON or the TUC to ensure that it meets accredited standards.

Negotiating points

Decide whether you want your agreement to specify the number of days off available for training (for example, ten days in the first year, five in the second) or to keep the time open.

Try to agree a relatively broad definition of ‘relevant training’. There are a wide range of issues that have an impact on work in the public services. These might not all be considered as directly related to industrial relations. Encourage the employer to consider applications for time off for training on their merit, rather sticking to a narrow list of approved courses.

National Care Standards Commission

“The Commission supports the need for newly appointed trade union officials to be granted additional reasonable time off for initial training in basic representational skills as soon as possible after his or her appointment. Following this, reasonable time off should be considered:

- for further training, particularly where the rep has special responsibilities
- to deal with changes in the structure of topics of negotiation, or where significant changes in the organisation of work are contemplated
- where legislative changes affect the conduct of negotiations.”

You might also want to include the right to time off for training for prospective trade union reps. This would ensure that new reps would be fully prepared to fulfil their function as soon as they have been accredited. Advance training might also encourage more people to volunteer to be stewards.

Training for part-time workers

In 1996 the European Court ruled that when exercising time off rights, a part-time worker should be paid for the same number of hours as a full-time employee. This means that if a part-time employee takes part in a course with hours that are longer than their contractual hours, then he/she is still entitled to the same level of pay as full-time employees.

Time off to accompany workers at disciplinary or grievance hearings

The law

Since 1999 workers have had the legal right to be accompanied to grievance or disciplinary hearings by a category of workplace rep known as a “workers companion”. A “workers companion” can be either a paid trade union official or a workplace rep who has been certified by the union as being capable of representing a worker. A rep has the right to reasonable paid

time off to accompany workers to disciplinary or grievance hearings. This right operates even where the union is not recognised.

A reasonable amount of paid time off should be available for:

- the hearing;
- time for the companion to become familiar with the case;
- time for the companion to confer with the worker before and after the hearing.

Negotiating points

A recent survey of branch experience with the right to be accompanied found that some branches—particularly in private and community and voluntary sectors—had difficulty getting time off to prepare for hearings. Ensure that your agreement spells these rights out clearly.

See *Resources* on page 33 for more information on the right to be accompanied.

Time off for trade union activities

The law

Any employee who is a member of an independent trade union recognised by the employer is entitled to ‘reasonable’ unpaid time off during working hours to take part in any trade union activity.

Examples of trade union activities include:

- taking part in branch or regional meetings, or meetings of official policy making bodies
- attending workplace meetings to discuss issues relevant to the workplace
- branch, area or regional meetings of the union where the business of the union is under discussion
- meetings of official policy making bodies such as executive committees or annual conferences
- consulting union officials
- voting in union elections.

Union members also have the right to unpaid time off to talk to a learning rep or advisor.

There is no right to time off for taking part in industrial action. Nonetheless, the ACAS code notes that time off may be permitted to use agreed procedures to settle problems and avoid industrial action, and to represent members involved in industrial action.

While there is no statutory right to payment for time off for participation in union activities, the ACAS code encourages employers to consider granting paid time off to support the effective and democratic operation of the union. The ACAS code notes that employers might want to consider paid time off in certain circumstances, for example to ensure that workplace meetings are fully representative or that employees can make use of the services of a union learning representative.

Negotiating points

Employers should be asked to consider granting unpaid time off in all reasonable circumstances and paid time off for participation in at least some trade union activities. This will help encourage the widest possible participation. In drawing up your proposals, think about

the activities where paid time off will have the biggest impact on participation levels in your branch. For example, some members may wish to attend UNISON self-organised group conferences. Branches should seek to negotiate appropriate time off which is fairly allocated.

How much pay?

The law

There are different ways of calculating how much is to be paid, depending on how wages are normally calculated.

If the employee's pay does not vary with the amount of work done, then the employee should be paid as if they had worked. If the employee's pay does vary, then their pay should be averaged to obtain an average hourly rate. Regulations for safety reps whose pay varies say that it should be based on the employee's average hourly earnings or the average hourly earnings of comparable workers.

The employer is not required to pay for a rep's time if they carry out trade union duties in a period when they would not normally be at work. But staff who work part-time are entitled to be paid if staff who work full-time are entitled to be paid. For example, a full-time worker and a part-time worker called to the same meeting would have to be paid, even if this fell outside the part-time worker's working hours.

Negotiating points

Try to secure an agreement that includes overtime and other normal premium pay in the calculation. Some employers may attempt to pay only basic rates for time off, which can mean a serious loss of pay for workers – predominantly those at the bottom of the pay scale – who depend on additional pay. In local government, for example, research found that additional payments and enhanced rates made up 25% of the salary of workers in home care and residential care. Failure to include additional payments is discriminatory, and discourages women, black and minority ethnic workers from participating in the union.

When negotiating a full-time secondment for a trade union rep, ensure that they receive the full package they would have received if they were performing their normal duties. This should include any rights to professional training and the retention of all allowances.

The principle in paying for time off for trade union duties is that a rep should neither lose pay, nor make a profit from their paid time off.

North Yorkshire County Council

In calculating payment for time off for trade union duties “the normal hours of work will include any overtime hours required by the contract of service and pay will include bonus payments.”

Who will be paid?

The law

The law is completely silent on who should be paid for time off, apart from stating that trade union reps must be members of an independent union recognised by their employer. The allocation of paid facility time is an issue for discussion within the branch as well as negotiation with the employer.

Negotiating points

Try to negotiate an agreement that allows for the widest possible distribution of payment for time off. In a larger branch you may want to combine full or part-time secondments for a small number of branch officers with wide distribution of paid hours for other branch officers and stewards.

Paid time off can be negotiated for a wide range of branch officers including: branch secretary; branch chairperson; senior steward; departmental convenor; service conditions officer; equalities officer; departmental or sectional stewards, or workplace contacts. Special allocations can be made for reps involved in specific projects.

If you do make proposals that include secondments, consider developing election and redeployment procedures which encourage regular rotation of seconded posts. You might also want to look at support and training opportunities for people on substantial time off arrangements. Paid activists sometimes miss out on important career development opportunities and valuable training. They should not have to choose between union activism and career advancement.

Wolverhampton City Council

“At the end of a period in office, the branch secretaries/branch chairperson/senior representatives shall either:

Return to their substantive posts subject to:

Some other arrangement having been agreed either prior to or during a term in office; and the availability of the post, eg. in circumstances where the parent Service Group has been restructured, in which case prior consultations will have taken place.

Or: be redeployed to some other suitable post subject to availability and budgetary considerations at that time.”

Adequate funding for cover and backfill

Try to ensure that sufficient funds are made available to provide for cover and backfill. Problems arise when employers do not adequately fund facility time to cover the absence of representatives on trade union duties. The resulting conflict between the needs of the service and the need for adequate time off can lead to disputes with management. Tension may also arise amongst staff, as colleagues are left to cover the work of absent trade union reps. It is therefore important that sufficient funds be made available to support staff representatives' role.

There are a number of ways in which cover and backfill can be provided, including:

- the allocation of funds in departmental or corporate budgets to pay for extra staff to cover time off
- a budget to cover trade union side functions
- a special allocation for joint projects

The exact solution to the problems of cover and backfill will depend on the workplace and the nature of the work. Discuss the issue with your committee or working group and consider the best options.

NHS Agenda for Change

“Management recognise that staff and their representatives must have protected time away from their place of work to facilitate the work on Agenda for Change and recognise the significance of backfill to ensure that both sides can dedicate their time to this important piece of work.”

Procedures

Notifying management of the hours allocated to individual reps

The law

Only reps elected according to union rules will qualify for time off. The ACAS code says that trade unions should inform management in writing as soon as possible about appointment and resignation of officials. The union should also provide details of the functions of union officials where they carry out special duties.

Negotiating points

It is essential that you agree a procedure by which you provide the employer with a list of accredited reps, their responsibilities and workplaces. Procedures should also be in place for advising the employer of any changes to the list of accredited reps.

Remind the employer that reps are chosen according to UNISON rules. The employer may want to limit the number of reps that can be chosen from any one department or site. While you should make every effort to minimise inconvenience to the employer, ultimately members have the right to choose their reps according to union rules.

Procedures to be used in requesting time off

The law

The law only requires employers to act ‘reasonably’ in response to requests for time off. This means that the employer may legitimately turn down requests for time off if, for example, it is felt that insufficient notice was given; that safety, security or the service might be negatively affected; or the activity is not relevant to trade union organisation.

Negotiating points

It is important to negotiate an agreement which sets out the procedures for requesting time off as clearly as possible, and makes arrangements to deal with many of the common causes of time off being refused.

In drafting your proposals you should take account of:

- the size of the employer;
- the type of work being done;
- the need to maintain a service to the public;
- the need to ensure safety.

Your procedure should ensure that reps requesting time off provide employers with as much notice as possible and supply details of the purpose, location and amount of time required. If

time off is being requested for training, the ACAS code recommends that reps give at least a few weeks notice.

Agree forms to be used in applying for time off. This will ensure that employers receive proper notice, as well as helping the union keep track of where time off has been refused. A rep who is regularly refused time off should report the matter to their Branch.

Pressure of work and staff shortages are the most common reasons employers give for refusing time off. Try to agree that refusal to allow time off due to pressure of work and staff shortages can only be in response to temporary or emergency situations. A tribunal ruling in the case of *Barnes v. Scarborough Hospital Trust* [1996] found that it was not reasonable for an employer to continually refuse requests for time off on these grounds. If staff shortages or pressure of work become a persistent problem, the employer should take measures to address staff shortages and make changes to provide sufficient funding and resources to allow reps to take time off.

North Yorkshire County Council

“All requests for time off from work will be considered with a view to giving approval whenever possible, having proper regard to the operational needs of the service in which the employee works. If time off would mean that an adequate level of service could not be maintained, or that there would be unreasonable disruption of work, such a request for time off will be deferred. But approval for time off should not be unreasonably withheld and reasonable alternative service arrangements should be made where possible. However, failure to submit properly completed application or time recording forms may be regarded as sufficient grounds to refuse time off.”

Employment Relations Agreement, Ofsted

“Where reps are responding to the employer’s timetable, for example in response to an emergency meeting or disciplinary, they should not be refused time off. When emergencies arise which require the urgent attention of the union official, managers will be encouraged to be as flexible as possible, and officials should make every attempt to minimise the amount of time they require at short notice.”

Procedures to be used by reps in accounting for their time

Negotiating points

Agree a simple method by which reps account for the time off they are taking, including the amount and purpose of time off and where the work takes place. A formal monitoring process will record authorisation given by the line manager. It requires the line manager to record the reason when authorisation has been withheld, and helps to build an accurate picture of the amount of time invested in the role of staff representatives.

This has several advantages for the branch and the reps themselves. It allows branch officers to analyse the work being done, in order to see where more resources may be needed or different solutions to problems developed. It also protects reps from any charge by the employer that time off is being misused. Finally, if a rep is on trade union business with the approval of the employer, they are covered by the employer’s insurance. Should an accident or other problem take place, time sheets would prove that the rep was covered during time away from their workplace.

Procedures for dealing with disputes over time off

The law

The ACAS code encourages unions and employers to make every effort to resolve disputes in relation to time off for trade union duties and activities. Ultimately, an individual refused permission to take time off, or refused pay for time off to which they feel they are entitled, has the right to take a claim to an employment tribunal. The claim must be lodged within three months of the employer's refusal of time off.

Reps also have a legal right not to be victimised for exercising their right to time off. This includes protection from direct victimisation and less obvious forms of disadvantage – such as failure to win promotion – as a result of time spent on trade union work.

Negotiating points:

Inevitably there will be disputes over the allocation or granting of time off. Aim to negotiate a procedure by which these disputes can be resolved. The procedure should include the right to an explanation for the refusal of time off. It is useful to begin with an informal approach first. Intervention by the convenor, branch secretary or regional officer or organiser can be helpful in resolving the problem. You might want a clause which allows the branch secretary and head of human resources (or other appropriate manager) to investigate problems, such as repeated refusal of time off to the same reps. If problems cannot be resolved informally, there should be a right to appeal the decision to a higher level of management and, where possible, to the joint negotiating committee or other appropriate body.

To ensure that the legal rights of reps are well understood by management, try to include wording in your agreement stating that reps will not suffer detriment as a result of taking time off for trade union duties. Note that if internal procedures fail, the rep has the right to claim to an employment tribunal that they have been victimised.

The business case

Your employer will want to know how they will benefit from agreeing improvements in time off. The list below outlines the general advantages to the employer. Your branch should, however, collect concrete examples of ways in which time off improves the functioning of your workplace.

- Reps provide expertise in industrial relations vital to the employer. Paid time off allows reps to access union training in equal opportunities, job evaluation, health and safety and many other areas – expertise which the employer may lack themselves. This knowledge may prevent the employer from making costly mistakes in industrial relations practice and ensure the smoother running of the workplace.
- Local reps help to sort out problems before they become serious. Reps with sufficient time will be able to tackle grievances or disputes at a local level before they mushroom. This will often save time and money by preventing the need for cases to go to a higher level of management or Employment Tribunal. It also removes the need for full time officer intervention and over-reliance on costly, time consuming formal procedures.
- Union reps make a big contribution to the management of change. Large scale re-organisation, major new agreements or changes to legislation put big burdens on HR

departments. Working with a team of skilled union reps can ease the workload and improve the results. Union reps can facilitate change by explaining the procedure, supporting members and ensuring that the process is carried out correctly.

- Reps are aware of best practice in other workplaces. Allowing reps time off to attend regional and national meetings lets them acquire knowledge about developments in other sectors and workplaces which can be of advantage to the employer.
- UNISON reps have access to a huge pool of resources that may be beyond the capacity of any one employer (particularly in small workplaces). The union at both regional and UK level provides information on industrial relations practices, national legislation, public service standards, equal opportunities, health and safety, learning opportunities, policy trends, pensions and occupationally specific issues. Employers benefit from access to these resources, via their union reps.

UNISON model time off and facilities agreement

The following model provides a framework for drafting a comprehensive agreement on time off for trade union duties and activities. It can be adapted to reflect the size and nature of the organisation.

Agreements on time off and facilities vary widely. Some are no more than general statements of principle outlining flexible time off arrangements. Others are highly detailed, laying out exact amounts of time off for named union officers. This model charts a middle course. It covers all of the areas which should be included in a time off agreement and suggests contract language based on 'best practice'. (Almost all of the provisions of the model agreement were drawn from real UNISON agreements.)

Your branch will need to decide how much of the model to use and how to adapt it to your own circumstances. In some places the model sets out choices of options. Text in square brackets note places where the branch will need to 'fill in the blanks' with their own information or adjust paragraph numbering.

UNISON model time off and facilities agreement

between

[The Organisation]

[Address]

and

UNISON

[Address]

1. Definition of terms

In this Agreement:-

The Organisation refers to [the organisation]

The Union refers to the [named] Branch of UNISON

Staff refers to all employees of the Organisation

2. Commencement date

This Agreement commences on [date]

3. Introduction

- 3.1 The Organisation supports the system of collective bargaining and the principle of solving employee relations problems by discussion and agreement.
- 3.2 All parties recognise that it is vital to good employee relations for the workforce to be properly represented by the recognised union. Furthermore all sides believe that a truly representative and effective union will enhance workforce employee relations.
- 3.3 The Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (S168(1) and (2)) makes provision for employees to be given the right to time off under various circumstances. The following sets out these provisions as agreed by the Trade Union and the Organisation in this respect.

4. Representation

- 4.1 The provisions of this agreement shall apply to accredited representatives of the Union, who have been duly elected or appointed in accordance with the rules of the Union.
- 4.2 The Union will determine the appropriate number of representatives they wish to appoint, having regard for the size and location of its membership. [You may want to agree a ratio of reps to union members.] The Union agrees to inform the Organisation in writing of the names of all elected representatives at the earliest possible opportunity and to notify the Organisation of any subsequent changes. Persons whose names have been notified to the Organisation shall be the sole representatives of the UNISON membership.
- 4.3 The Union will issue written credentials and notify the Organisation of the number and location of constituencies for which each representative will be responsible.

5. Time off for general trade union representation

- 5.1 This agreement seeks to establish a formal policy and procedure on trade union duties and activities in accordance with the legislative framework. It is recognised that it is not possible to be prescriptive about all duties, activities and the time required to carry them out. It is agreed that requests for time off will not be unreasonably refused.
- 5.2 Accredited representatives will be permitted paid time off during working hours to carry out duties that are concerned with any aspect of collective bargaining and representation of individual members, including:
- terms and conditions of employment including physical working conditions
 - engagement, termination or suspension of employment and the duties of employment
 - allocation of work or the duties of employment as between employees or groups of employees
 - discipline and grievance
 - activities associated with trade union membership
 - facilities for officials of the union
 - machinery for negotiation or consultation and other procedures; procedures for collective bargaining, disputes, joint consultation, communicating with members and other trade union branch officers.

6. The function of representatives and officials

- 6.1 The Organisation and the Union recognise that the industrial relations functions of representatives and officials are important duties in additions to their duties as employees of the Organisation. Their functions and responsibilities are as follows:
- To be responsible to and for a group of members;
 - To undertake industrial relation duties operating within the policies of the Union. Issues may include members' grievances, discipline, learning, health and safety, equal opportunities, service conditions, and any matter listed in [section 5.2] of this Agreement;
 - To seek full Trade Union membership amongst all employees of the Organisation;
 - To communicate with members and to communicate with Management, the Joint Negotiating bodies and with the relevant Union bodies;
 - To represent the Union in the joint negotiating and joint consultative machinery at local, regional and national level;
 - To meet with other representatives, officials or full-time union officers on matters covered by this Agreement;
 - To attend meetings of the Union of which the person is a representative or of which he/she is an official, (such as Branch or Branch Committee Meetings);

- To seek to ensure that agreements are adhered to;
- To organise meetings of members during working hours in accordance with the ACAS code of practice and any prevailing local agreements.

7. Time off for Health and safety representatives

7.1 The trade union is responsible for the appointment of health and safety representatives. The organisation has the duty to permit safety representatives such time off with pay as necessary for the purposes of:

- Performing their functions under health and safety legislation;
- Undergoing such training as is reasonable;
- Attending health and safety meetings at local, regional and national levels where appropriate.

8. Time off for UNISON lifelong learning advisors/ union learning representatives

8.1 Accredited UNISON lifelong learning advisors/learning representatives are entitled to take reasonable paid time off for the following specific purposes:

- analysing learning or training needs;
- providing information and advice about learning or training matters;
- arranging learning or training;
- promoting the value of learning or training;
- consulting the employer in relation to such activities;
- preparation in relation to such activities;
- undergoing relevant training.

[This right comes into force in March 2005]

Time off for information and consultation representatives

Information and consultation representatives are entitled to take reasonable paid time off during working hours to perform their functions as a representative.

Information and consultation representatives are protected against unfair dismissal or detriment under the regulations for actions related to the regulations, the only exception being where they have breached the confidentiality of the employer.

9. Time off for trade union activities

9.1 To ensure that workplace meetings are fully representative, paid time off for trade union representatives and members may be considered for:

- attending workplace meetings to discuss and vote on the outcome of negotiations;
- meeting full time officials to discuss issues relevant to the workplace;
- conducting Union elections.

9.2 The Organisation and Union also recognise that it is in the interests of the effective and democratic operation of the Unions that representatives or officials participate in other activities of the Trade Union. Reasonable time off during working hours will be granted for these purposes which may include:

- Participation, as a representative, in meetings of official policy making and consultative bodies of the Union such as annual conferences or regional meetings;
- Representing the Union on external bodies such as committees or working parties within the official Union structure;
- Holding office on official bodies of the Union;
- The Union will notify the Organisation at the beginning of each year of the anticipated calendar of such events wherever possible and the likely number of representatives who will be required to attend.

10. Time off for branch secretaries and senior representatives of UNISON

10.1 The [list senior branch officers] of UNISON will be allowed to spend their whole contractual employment time [or the proportion agreed] on trade union duties.

10.2 Facilities time for other UNISON branch officers (in addition to existing entitlement to time off where those Branch Officers are also accredited representatives) will be subject to agreement between the Branch Secretary and [the appropriate management representative].

10.3 At the end of a period in office, the Branch Secretaries/Branch Chairperson/Senior Representatives shall:

10.3.1 EITHER return to their substantive posts subject to: some other arrangement agreed either prior to or during a term in office: and the availability of the post, e.g. in circumstances where their work area has been restructured, in which case prior consultation will have taken place.

10.3.2 OR: be redeployed to some other suitable post.

[Depending on whether you want allocation of time off to be flexible or tightly defined, chose one of the following]

10.4 **(a)** Representatives appointed as described in paragraph [4.1] will be given reasonable paid time off during normal working hours to carry out functions related to their representational responsibilities.

OR:

10.4 **(b)** Representatives appointed as described in paragraph [4.1] will be allowed up to [number of hours] per calendar [week/month/year] paid time off during normal working hours to carry out functions related to their representational responsibilities.

[If adopting defined hours of time off, as in 10. 4(b) you might want to add this paragraph]

10.5 Meetings called by management where representatives other than those referred to in paragraph [10.1 above] are required to attend, will fall outside of the allocation of representational time.

11. Special arrangements for time off

11.1 In the case of employees who work shifts or unsocial hours, the Organisation will allow reasonable time off for trade union duties and normally will make suitable arrangements when the duties fall outside their on-duty hours.

11.2 Where representatives attend meetings called by management, management will always try to ensure that the meetings take place while the appropriate representatives are on duty, either by adjusting dates of meetings, amending rotas where possible by agreement with the individual concerned.

11.3 When representatives, other than those with full-time secondment, attend meetings called by management during their normal working hours which extend beyond normal finishing time, they will be paid at plain time rates for the additional hours worked, except that, where earnings vary with the work done, the amount will be calculated by reference to the average hourly earnings for the work they are employed to do, including average bonus or contractual overtime payments.

11.4 **(a)** Where representatives attend meetings called by management which occur in their off-duty time, they will be reimbursed for the hours spent at the meetings at plain time rates.

[If you are unable to secure payment for duties performed during off-duty time, an alternative would be the following:]

11.4 **(b)** If a meeting is to take place on the representative's day off or while the representative is not on duty and [11.2] above is not possible then an equivalent amount of time off in lieu will be given at a time agreeable to both parties, subject to the contingencies of the service. If it is impossible to arrange time in lieu then payment for this time will be made.

11.5 In the case of disabled representatives, the Organisation will allow additional time and facilities, if necessary, and make suitable arrangements to allow them to carry out their responsibilities.

12. Time off to cover related workplaces

12.1 Any extension of representational rights to cover employees outside of the Organisation, will be subject to agreement on a case by case basis.

13. Payment for time off

- 13.1 Trade Union representatives engaged on recognised duties as indicated above, will be paid either the amount they would have earned had they worked during the time taken or, where earnings vary with the work done, an amount calculated by reference to the average hourly earnings for the work they are employed to do. This amount will include average bonus or overtime payments where these are contractual.
- 13.2 Senior branch officers who spend the whole of their contractual time on trade union duties will be entitled to the full package of pay and conditions which they would normally have received had they been working, including all allowances and any rights to professional training or registration.
- 13.3 Travelling and subsistence costs will be reimbursed to accredited representatives for periods of work approved in accordance with this agreement.

14. Cover and backfill

- 14.1 During the approved absence of UNISON workplace representatives carrying out their duties under this agreement, the Organisation will endeavour, wherever necessary, to provide alternative cover at the representative's workplace.
- 14.2 Where major projects [such as Agenda for Change in the NHS or Single Status in local government] require sustained time off for workplace reps, the project plan will take account of and fully fund backfill for the duration of the project to ensure that representatives can direct the full weight of their expertise throughout the process. The Organisation and the union will jointly agree the numbers of trade union representatives involved in each aspect of work and allow sufficient funds to be made available to facilitate the work as part of the project plan.

15. Training

- 15.1 Reasonable time off with pay will be granted to attend training courses approved by the TUC or UNISON. The Organisation supports the need for newly appointed trade union officials to be granted reasonable time off for initial training in basic representational skills as soon as possible after his or her appointment. Following this further reasonable time should be considered:
- For further training, particularly where the official has special responsibilities
 - To deal with changes in the structure or topics of negotiation, or where significant changes in the organisation of work are contemplated;
 - Where legislative changes affect the conduct of employee relations.
- 15.2 The Trade Unions must give adequate advance notice of course dates in writing to relevant line-mangers and co-operate in making arrangements to cover jobs during the absence of Representatives on courses. Details of the course should be provided, upon request.
- 15.3 Part-time employees who are required to attend recognised training courses as detailed above will be paid for the whole of their attendance time, even if it exceeds their normal working hours.

16. Procedures

- 16.1 Before taking time off, the accredited representatives must obtain the permission of their manager, informing the manager of the general purpose of the time off, the intended location, the expected timing and duration of time off required.
- 16.2 Representatives will be required to complete and submit facility time-recording sheets on a regular basis to the relevant Branch Secretary/Senior Representative who will forward the recording sheets to the [appropriate manager].
- 16.3 The employer will ensure that management at all levels are familiar with agreements and arrangements relating to this agreement.

17. Trade union facilities

- 17.1 The Organisation agrees to provide defined facilities to the Union representatives to enable them to discharge their duties including: provision of secure office space; a notice board; access to confidential telephone, fax, internal mail and email; reasonable use of equipment such as telephones, franking machines, photocopiers, and PC's; reasonable accommodation for meetings and trade union education, and reasonable access to administrative support and secretarial services.

18. No detriment

- 18.1 Individuals will not be discriminated against during the course of their employment for membership of a trade union or activities as a union representative.

19. Disputes

- 19.1 The Organisation and the Union agree to make every effort to resolve disputes in relation to time off for trade union duties and activities.
- 19.2 Where permission to take time off is withheld, an explanation for the reason(s) will be given by the appropriate representative of management.
- 19.3 If the UNISON official is dissatisfied with the decision, the matter may be referred to the [appropriate senior manager].
- 19.4 If agreement cannot be reached, the matter may be referred to the [appropriate negotiating body].
- 19.5 The Organisation recognises that individual union representatives have the right to take a claim to an Employment Tribunal if internal procedures fail to resolve a dispute related to time off for trade union duties.

20. Amendment or termination of agreement

- 20.1 Either side may submit proposals in order to amend this agreement. Such proposals will be in writing to the sides concerned, and will be the subject of joint discussions.
- 20.2 Both parties agree to review this Agreement in twelve months and annually thereafter.

Resources

More help and information is available on UNISON's website:

Bargaining Zone – www.unison.org.uk/bargaining

Activists' Zone – www.unison.org.uk/activists

Publications available from UNISON Communications:

Branch Guide to Lifelong Learning, stock number 2098

Organising for Learning, getting involved, stock number 2336

Recruiting new starters – branch guidance, stock number 2275

Safety representatives and safety committees, Stock number 1819

Publications available from UNISON Bargaining Support:

Statutory Recognition: a guide, June 2004

Negotiating recognition agreements: a guide, July 2004

The right to be accompanied, October 2000

Bargaining Support guides and factsheets are available directly from Bargaining Support Group, UNISON, 1 Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9AJ or the Bargaining Zone www.unison.org.uk/bargaining

Publications available from other organisations:

Advisory and Conciliation Services

ACAS Code of Practice, Time off for trade union duties and activities, April 2003,
<http://www.ecacas.co.uk/acaslink/cp03.htm>

Labour Research Department

Time off for trade union duties and activities, July 2003

