



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

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Your ref:
Our ref: RFI 5685
Date: 23 August 2013

Dear,

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: TRADE UNION ACTIVITY

Thank you for your request for information about staff working full time and part time on Trade Union activity during 2011/12 and 2012/13 to the organisations listed in your letter, which we received on 26 July 2013. As you know, we have handled your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

You asked:

“1. How many employees of the following bodies work (a) full-time as trade union representatives in (i) 2011/12 and (ii) 2012/13 and (b) part-time as trade union representatives in (i) 2011/12 and (ii) 2012/13:

- a) The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA);
- b) The Forestry Commission;
- c) The Marine Management Organisation (MMO);
- d) The Rural Payment Authority (RPA);
- e) The Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency (AHVLA);
- f) The Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS);
- g) The Food and Environment Research Agency (FERA); and
- h) The Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD)

2. For each body listed above, what was the total cost of trade union facility time in (a) 2011/12 and (b) 2012/13.”

The information you requested is as follows:

1. Facility time is taken as the total amount of paid time-off used by individual representatives to carry out their Trade Union (TU) functions. This response covers spend on TU Duties and/or TU Activities.



2. The table below shows, by organisation, the numbers of full and part-time trade union representatives and the total cost of TU facility time. The table shows information broken down by financial year. Approximated figures have been used in some cases and the data for 2012/13 has been extrapolated from the quarterly reporting data provided to the Cabinet Office for the period January to March 2013:

	2011/12				2012/13		
	Full Time Reps	Part Time Reps	£k		Full Time Reps	Part Time Reps	£k
DEFRA	6	10	483		6	13	406
Forestry Commission *	2	32	200		2	31	186
MMO	0	10	43		0	4	11
RPA	3	103	305		2	40	148
AHVLA	2	56	332		2	53	339
CEFAS	0	0	0		0	0	0
FERA	0	28	103		0	16	38
VMD	0	0	0		0	0	0

* Figures are for the whole of the Forestry Commission.

3. In October 2012, the Cabinet Office announced plans to reduce the amount of facility time provided to TUs in the Civil Service. Defra served notice on its Facilities Agreement in November 2012. For core Defra and Executive Agencies our transition to reducing facility time began in April 2013. We implemented changes following our review from 1 July 2013, including management of individual TU allocations within 0.1% of the paybill. From this point TU representatives will work in a Civil Service job for at least 50% of their time.

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the FOIA, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless exempt. Therefore, the information released to you may now be published on our website together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context.

I attach Annex A, which explains the copyright that applies to the information being released to you.

I also attach Annex B giving contact details should you be unhappy with the service you have received.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

**Direct Line
Email.**

Annex A

Copyright

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Annex B

Complaints

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request you may make a complaint or appeal against our decision under section 17(7) of the FOIA or under regulation 18 of the EIRs, as applicable, within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to Mike Kaye, Head of Information Standards, Area 4D, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR (email: requestforinfo@defra.gsi.gov.uk) and he will arrange for an internal review of your case. Details of Defra's complaints procedure are on our [website](#).

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, section 50 of the FOIA and regulation 18 of the EIRs gives you the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Please note that generally the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted Defra's own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF