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## INFORMATION RELEASED UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

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Information released title	Office accommodation and costs for trade union activity
Original request	<p>1. Please provide details of any office accommodation your organisation provides to staff to carry out trade union business. Please include details of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• space measured in square feet</li> <li>• how much of this space is contained within entirely separate buildings (i.e. occupied solely by staff carrying out trade union business)</li> <li>• whether a professional valuation of the market rental value of the space has been sought either in-house or externally, and if so, what the valuation of the space was</li> <li>• any charges the council levy for office space given to trade unions.</li> </ul> <p>2. Please advise any estimates for other costs met for those staff on trade union facility time apart from salaries - including travel expenses, office supplies, telephone expenses and energy bills.</p>
Date of release	05/03/2014
Requester type	Journalist

### Information released:

#### 1. Details of office accommodation

The UK Commission for Employment and Skills does not provide distinct office accommodation for staff to carry out trade union activities. Following a thorough search of our records, I can confirm that no information is held in relation to elements 1, 3 and 4 of your request. In relation to element 2, no separate buildings are occupied solely by staff carrying out trade union business.

To advise and assist you in relation to questions 1 and 2, extracts from the Partnership Recognition Agreement between the UK Commission and the Public Commercial Services Union are included below. The latter is the trade union recognised by the UK Commission.

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**Extracts from the Partnership Recognition Agreement between the UK Commission for Employment and Skills and the Public Commercial Services Union**

The UK Commission will provide elected representatives with the following facilities:

- Access to safe and secure internal and external telephones, work station and e-mail facilities for Union business.
- Access to private rooms (the normal room booking facilities should be used)
- Union area on the UK Commission intranet and notice boards for the posting of Union information.
- Photocopying and hard copy distribution facilities for Union business.
- Access to video conferencing facilities
- Lockable storage space for confidential files and documents

The Commission will allow meetings of Union members to take place on business premises and normally during working hours providing prior notice has been given in writing to the Head of HR.

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**2. Estimates for other costs met for those staff on trade union facility time apart from salaries**

In relation to office supplies, telephone expenses and energy bills, UK Commission employees permitted to undertake approved duties in relation to PCS may make reasonable use of the same facilities that they are entitled to use for UK Commission business. Please see the relevant extracts from the Partnership Recognition Agreement between the UK Commission and the Public Commercial Services Union, set out above. These costs are absorbed in a corporate budget: there is not a separate budget for this use. We must therefore advise that no information is held in relation to these specific costs.

However, we are able to estimate travel and subsistence expenses which are paid by the UK Commission for staff undertaking duties as PCS representatives. In line with our statutory duty to provide advice and assistance, we can provide an approximate estimate of a maximum cost of £1000 associated with these duties.

Apart from travel expenses and payment of salaries to cover time spent by staff to discharge their duties as elected trade union representatives, no direct subsidies or other payments are made.

If you are unhappy with the way your request has been handled, you can request a review by writing to Secretariat Services at the following address:

UK Commission for Employment and Skills  
Renaissance House  
Adwick Park  
Wath upon Dearne  
South Yorkshire  
S63 6DT

If you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have a right of appeal to the Information Commission at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF. Or telephone, 08456 30 60 60 or 01625 54 57 45 or visit the ICO website: [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk).