



Department
of Energy &
Climate Change

Department of Energy & Climate Change

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www.gov.uk/decc

Our ref: 14/0238

28 February 2014

Dear

RE: Freedom of Information request

Thank you for your email of 6 February 2014 where you requested the following information:

1. Please provide details of any office accommodation your organisation provides to staff to carry out trade union business. Please include details of:

- *space measured in square feet*
- *how much of this space is contained within entirely separate buildings (i.e. occupied solely by staff carrying out trade union business)*
- *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*
- *any charges the council levy for office space given to trade unions.*

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.

I can confirm that the Department holds the information you have requested. The information you requested is as follows:

1. DECC makes available to trade union representatives the facilities necessary for them to perform their duties efficiently and communicate effectively with their members, colleague union representatives and full-time officers.

In London, DECC provides a dedicated space consisting of two workstations for staff to carry out trade union business. The space is approximately 12.2m². No dedicated space is provided in our Aberdeen location.

Meeting rooms, on DECC premises, can be used for union meetings with the agreement of management, subject to normal room booking procedures.

None of this space is contained within entirely separate buildings (i.e. occupied solely by staff carrying out trade union business).

No professional valuation of the market rental value of the space has been sought either in-house or externally.

The local authority for DECC premises in London is Westminster City Council. The local authority for DECC premises in Aberdeen is Aberdeen City Council. These local authorities do not levy any charges for office space given to trade unions.

2. The facilities DECC makes available to trade union representatives include payment of reasonable travel expenses incurred through attending trade union duties. There is a budget of £840 per annum.

In addition, trade union representatives have reasonable access to office facilities including telephones, email, internet, fax facilities, notice boards and photocopying. DECC does not discriminate these costs from our overall spend.

To monitor its spend on facility time, DECC implemented the new Cabinet Office facility time framework in June 2013. DECC adopted the guide figure set by the Cabinet Office where facility time costs should not represent more than 0.1% of the paybill. A standardised set of information monitoring and reporting on the use of facility time is submitted to the Cabinet Office on a quarterly basis and is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/trade-union-facility-time>.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be sent to the Information Rights Unit at:

Information Rights Unit
Department for Business, Innovation & Skills
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET
E-mail: foi.requests@bis.gsi.gov.uk

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely,