

30 June 2010
Our ref: 0012.10

Your request was as follows:

I am writing to obtain information about the total amount of money paid to trade unions by Forensic Science Service and the amount of staff time spent on union activities by Forensic Science Service employees.

To outline my query as clearly as possible, I am requesting:

1. The total amount of money paid to all trade unions for financial periods 2008-09 and 2009-10. Where possible this should be broken down by the individual payments to each trade union by name, however if this disaggregated information is not available please continue to provide a total figure for union payments.
2. The amount of paid staff time, in terms of full-time equivalent staff numbers (FTE), spent working on behalf of a trade union – this is sometimes called 'Trade Union facility time' - in the financial periods 2008-09 and 2009-10. Where possible this should be broken down by each trade union by name, however if this disaggregated information is not available please continue to provide a total figure for staff time.

Thank you for your FOI request. Firstly please let me apologise for the delay in responding to you it has taken me some time to establish the picture with regard to Trade Unions (hereinafter TU) funding at the Forensic Science Service Ltd (hereinafter FSS).

In response to question 1:

The employees of the FSS Ltd, if in a TU at all, are members of either Prospect or the PCS. I understand that the FSS does not fund either TU directly and members pay their subscriptions by Direct Debit from their personal accounts.

In response to questions 2:

I have established that the TU representatives are given reasonable time off their duties for meetings with FSS Management and time spent on getting feedback from their constituents within the FSS. Similarly, employees are accorded reasonable time off to attend union meetings. There appears to be no formal system of time recording for this 'facility time' nor employee abstraction time and so we do not hold the information that you require.