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Paper for Schools Forum

Trade Union Facility Time

UNISON has an agreement with LBWF to facilitate a Schools Convenor on a 2.5 day per week basis. This has previously been on a 5 day per week full time basis but was restricted to a part-time post in 2011. Under this agreement the School employing the Convenor is compensated by LBWF for that element of their salary.

Without a facility agreement it would be impossible to provide the basic support, representation and organisation that is required to cover around 1000 UNISON members across all of the schools in Waltham Forest.

A number of schools are currently converting to Academy Status and a small number have already converted. On transfer staff and union members employed in those schools are protected under TUPE. Furthermore, on transfer, the existing Trade Union recognition agreements, DOCAS arrangements and Policies and Procedures transfer as is to the new Academy.

UNISON would argue that an element of the facility time, and therefore the resource to fund it, does transfer to each Academy. That furthermore the Academy is under a TUPE obligation to fund their share of that resource to provide that facility time from the date of transfer.

There are gains to be had all around in establishing this principle.

UNISON will continue to be able to provide a UNISON Schools Convenor for UNISON members.

The Academies will benefit from the support that is given to union members from an external source and will have a dedicated point of contact for all employment relations matters.

The schools that remain with the Borough will also continue to enjoy the support the Convenor can give to its staff and a dedicated contact for industrial relations matters.

The Borough will continue to benefit from a dedicated contact on education matters and will reduce its commitment to funding the secondment as more schools opt out of Council control.

We would suggest that to calculate the resource that each Academy will need to provide to LBWF the resource allocation to provide the secondment is divided by the total number of school support staff employed in the borough to give a figure for each school support staff member this is then simply multiplied by the number of school support staff in any school/Academy to indicate their contribution to this resource.

For example if the budget for the Convenor is £10,000 and there are 1,000 school support staff then the figure per head is £10 and if an Academy employs 30 School Support staff then their annual contribution would be £300. I would suggest that this figure would need to be adjustable to allow for variations in cost of secondment (depending on the basic salary of the Convenor) and to reflect any variation in pay over time.

UNISON presents this paper to the Schools Forum in order to establish the principle of all schools in Waltham Forest contributing to the cost of the provision of trade union representation to the UNISON members who work as non-teaching support staff in Waltham Forest schools.

Dave Knight
Branch Secretary