

## **Facility Time – East Midlands Task and Finish Group**

During 2016 members of the SPF worked collectively to develop the following protocols and guidance to inform the arrangements for facility time. Noting that all organisations and Trade Unions vary considerably, the following protocols can be used to inform local discussions between organisations and trade unions if both parties wish. It was accepted that the overriding principle of effective early communication was fundamental to ensuring locally agreed systems worked in practice.

### **Model Principles on Facility Time for East Midland NHS Organisations**

1. Where NHS organisations recognise locally accredited trade union representatives it is accepted that they represent their members across the organisation not just their specific area of work. It is acknowledged that this requires reasonableness and flexibility on both the part of the organisation and the Trade Union.
2. NHS organisations will provide appropriate mechanisms for their local trade union representatives to be released for work related trade union activity, for example:
  - a. Dedicated reasonable time off for organisational staff side leads, chairs and secretary roles as is appropriate, to facilitate their roles
  - b. Funding to support back fill arrangements. For example where a particular representative may be required but their release necessitates covering clinical duties.
  - c. If a situation occurs where additional hours are worked, then the representative should be compensated. In principle however, reasonable time off should be given in the first instance.
3. Trade union representatives (with the exception of 2a) will record their time off through locally agreed recording mechanisms via their NHS organisation.
4. Trade union representatives will pro-actively manage their time off by seeking agreement with their NHS organisation on the amount of time to be released and this will be discussed and agreed on a case by case basis. At the time of accreditation or when an individual is considering becoming a trade union representative, the amount of available release time should be discussed with the manager.
5. NHS organisations and trade unions commit to annual activities/campaign on promoting and encouraging local staff side representation from staff.
6. NHS organisations will proactively manage large transformation projects in conjunction with their local representatives, for example;
  - a. Dedicated short term release time
  - b. To amend Organisational Change policies to ensure appropriate release time is reflected
7. NHS organisations recognise that accredited training for trade union representatives is an essential component of facility time. It is also acknowledged however, that levels of training vary and some organisations support specific training for specific roles. Reasonable time off for training should therefore be discussed as part of the overall approach towards facility time arrangements.
8. Organisations and Trade Unions will utilise telephone conference calls and ICT technology to ensure time is used effectively and efficiently.

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