



Trade Union Facility Time



Business Plan 2023/24

and



Activity Reports 2022/23



1.0 Introduction

Union facility time in Dudley has been scrutinised in a number of ways in recent years, from national interest (Department for Education), to local scrutiny. In 2017 the Trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) Regulations came into force to allow national benchmarking of Trade Union Facility Time expenditure through annual reporting by 31st July in relation to the previous financial year.

Unions in Dudley are fully aware of and signed up to the need for accountability and transparency. Representatives have worked with the Council to develop a business planning approach that aims to ensure transparency and demonstrate value for money as well as developing a guide to provide clarity on the statutory position and the services that unions provide to schools (See Appendix 1). Through this process unions provide information relating to their duties and how their facility funding is utilised.

Many employee enquiries result in union support that prevents escalation through the management hierarchy. Representatives also continue to work in partnership with the Council to ensure that policies and processes affecting staff are fair, acting as a source of intelligence and working to achieve the best possible outcomes for the significant workforce that Dudley employs and the taxpayers of Dudley.

The following Business Plan is intended to set out what each of Dudley's recognised unions represent, their intended achievements and the value that their recognition and presence provides. It is also intended to provide information about the work of the unions in the coming year and be available to audiences associated both with Schools' Forum and the Council's Leadership.

The Business Plan is supplemented with a report on work undertaken against the previous year's Plan.

2.0 Funding arrangements for union facility time in Dudley

There are two main sources of funding for trade union facility time in Dudley, namely Council Directorate salary budgets and the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

In addition, acknowledgement is given to the continued support of retired members working voluntarily and the flexible approach of representatives who work outside of funded facilities time.

Dudley operates a “pooled” arrangement to fund the release of key union officials to undertake union duties i.e. facility time. Schools choose to buy back either via de-delegation, or through individual buy back. The fund is administered through a central budget providing an efficient way to deploy representatives’ time, rather than individual schools or council teams creating a plethora of arrangements and duplication at local level, which has the potential to be at a much greater cost.

The budget used to manage Trade Union facility time contains that equivalent to salaries, on costs and in some cases, accommodation and technology necessary to undertake the role.

Council budgets fund facility time for GMB, UNISON and UNITE. NAHT, ASCL, NASUWT, NEU and a proportion of GMB are funded through the Dedicated Schools’ Grant and Academy buy back.

In January 2020, Schools’ Forum agreed a new charging model which streamlined and simplified facility time using the Trade Union Recognition Agreement as a basis for the allocation of funding. Facility time was reduced along with charges to schools and prices were harmonised to remove the differential between the primary and secondary sectors.

3.0 The Strategic Aims of Dudley’s Recognised Trade Unions

Union colleagues provide an additional (internal) resource bringing skills, expertise and knowledge in a range of areas and providing constructive challenge to practice and decisions taken at all levels within the Council. Challenge at the earliest opportunity often prevents unnecessary escalation of issues just as early involvement and the provision of clarity to members can save management time in responding.

Unions play a key role in promoting the environment as a learning organisation, in part through the statutory role of Union Learning Representative (ULR). The ULR assists in the identification of learning needs and responds through the offer of union led events, as well as proactively providing development on key issues facing members. In some cases, events are also open to non-union members.

Unions are committed to supporting and promoting the equality and diversity agenda and will seek to work alongside the Council and schools to improve the life chances of the people of Dudley by creating resilient and empowered communities, as far as their work allows.

4.0 DSG and Academy Funded Union Statements

NEU

Through its campaigning on education issues, such as assessment, funding, the fragmentation of the education system, child poverty, workload and professional unity, the NEU is at the forefront of pursuing a world class education system. It is also committed to providing first class training tailored to the needs of education professionals at different stages of their career development and to maintaining and protecting their terms and conditions of employment. In addition, the NEU supports its members by providing information and advice on employment issues and attending meetings with members where this support is requested.

NASUWT

The NASUWT Dudley Association philosophy of putting teachers first means that we will campaign on their behalf, support and represent to ensure they are recognised and rewarded as highly skilled professionals and have working conditions which enable them to focus on the core roles of teaching, leading teaching and learning. In addition, members will have access to local professional advice and guidance, a wide range of opportunities for professional development and training and many other benefits.

NAHT

The NAHT is a union for school leaders: Heads, Deputy Heads, Assistant Heads and School Business Managers. The association offers professional advice and legal support and a range of other services for school leaders. It is influential in negotiating on pay, conditions and pensions. The NAHT influences educational policy-making, as well as providing professional advice and legal support and a range of services.

ASCL – (No current local representative)

The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) is a leading professional body representing more than 18,000 school, college and system leaders across the UK. Our members work in more than 90 per cent of secondary schools, academies and colleges of all types, and are responsible for the education of more than four million young people. ASCL works to shape local and national education policies, provide advice and support to members and deliver first class professional development across the sector. Inspired by a vision of high quality education for all young people, ASCL aims to be a professional body for all secondary school, college and system leaders.

We will achieve this through:

- offering advice, guidance and best practice
- providing members with personal support, legal support and full trade union representation
- shaping and influencing policy in Dudley and nationally
- delivering high quality professional development for the education sector

GMB

Our aim is to protect our member's terms and conditions and maintain good industrial relationships with all community schools and academies, providing members and employers with up to date information on all relevant workplace issues.

5.0 Council Funded Union Statements

GMB

Our aim is to protect our member's terms and conditions and maintain good industrial relationships for all Council employees. To provide members and employers with up to date information on all relevant workplace issues.

UNISON

UNISON's aim is to represent, act and negotiate on behalf of its members in a range of public services. We campaign for better working conditions and pay for public service workers. We also seek to promote and protect good quality, well funded public services. We aim to maintain good and constructive industrial relations with our employers, with a view to achieving the best possible outcomes for our members.

UNITE

Unite is dedicated to serving the best interests of its members, protecting workers rights and improving the quality of life by negotiating with employers and Government. Unite is a fighting back union, winning in the workplace, a campaigning union, making our voice heard, a growing union, organising for strength, a members' union, open and democratic, a progressive union, a force for a fairer society and a united and tolerant union, which treats people with dignity and respect.

Unite's vision is of a prosperous society in which employers and employees work together to build successful businesses and safe, healthy working environments. All those who contribute to their success receive the rewards, respect and recognition they deserve.

It exists to maintain and improve the working and wider social lives of its members. It brings together all members in contributing to one common purpose in the workplace. By fostering positive industrial relations with employers UNITE aims to achieve by negotiation a safe, just and properly rewarded package of pay and working conditions for its members. UNITE assists its members in achieving these objectives by offering professional support, advice and representation in the workplace.

6.0 Overarching Union Purpose

Unions seek to achieve the above through:

- Shaping and influencing policy in Dudley and nationally;
- Delivering high quality professional development through ULRs;
- Offering advice and guidance;
- Sharing best practice;
- Providing members with personal support, legal support and full trade union representation.

7.0 Ongoing Trade Union Duties that support the Council and Union Members

More specifically, union duties include:

- **Consultation/negotiation** on the development of new and the revision of existing model policies, including challenge relating to equality, providing schools with an off the shelf document to implement;
- **Collective views** – explaining to members the application and interpretation of model policies. This is enhanced through their “pooled” activity and therefore understanding of these. This particularly applies in relation to matters such as redundancy, restructures, pay and appraisal;
- **Employee relations** – union representatives are informed through centrally held discussions and can prevent disputes arising through explanation of decisions;
- **Disputes resolution** – providing a representative voice for staff where discussions can be prolonged without the influence of the union representative;
- **Informal negotiations** – usually undertaken with HR when an employee exit strategy is needed. The absence of these negotiations may prolong matters in school.
- **Responding to staff queries** - that would otherwise be directed to schools, on multiple issues such as redundancy, TUPE, pay;
- **Professional advice** on matters relating to their members’ roles;
- **Informal advice** on matters relating to their members’ roles;
- **Personal support** where members experience difficulties in their roles;
- **Signposting** to relevant training, development, support, advice sometimes provided by unions and made available to employees who are not union members;

- **Representing staff** who are facing procedures such as discipline or performance issues which might otherwise fall to a colleague within school. This may be particularly important where there is a prolonged or highly complex case;
- **Internal challenge** to the school in their role of budget controller for public funds;
- **Continuous Professional Development** – through the Union Learning representative role, where staff are signposted to or given access to training and development, subject to the needs of the service;
- **Health and Safety concerns** – providing an internal route for queries that might otherwise be raised with external agencies.

8.0 Regular Meeting Attendance/Activity

In order for the Council and Schools to fulfil their statutory duties and to maintain and promote good employee relations as well as to effectively provide the services set out above, unions are required or invited to attend a number of scheduled meetings or undertake regular activity including:

- **HR/Trade Union Meetings**
- **Policy Consultation**
- **Council Consultation and Negotiating Group**
- **Budget Briefings**
- **Directorate Joint Consultative Meetings**

9.0 Additional meetings attended

- **Extraordinary meetings for the purpose of specific topics e.g. changes to terms and conditions;**
- **Casework meetings including Grievance, Disciplinary, Attendance;**
- **Restructure consultation meetings;**
- **TUPE consultations meetings;**
- **1:1 member support including support to managers as union members.**

10.0 Trade unions work expected in the forthcoming year

- Working in partnership with the Council to progress equality matters
- Further high-level discussions relating to budgets
- Consultation on restructures, some involving job losses
- Consultation on the TUPE transfer of staff, e.g. academy conversion
- Supporting members in relation to Covid-19

11.0 Activity reporting against the 2022/2023 Business Plan

GMB	Appendix 2
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Union Facilities Time

Statutory position and return on Investment for Schools

1. The majority of public services are traditionally unionised environments. Historically, Dudley has enjoyed good working relationships with unions to the benefit of employee relations generally.
2. The ACAS Code of Practice is the key document that provides guidance in relation to trade union representation, roles and time off. A copy of the full code is attached for your information.



ACAS Time off for
Trade Union Duties.p

3. Status of the Code

The provisions of the Code are admissible in evidence in proceedings before an Employment Tribunal relating to time off for trade union activity. **Any provisions of the Code which appear to the Tribunal to be relevant shall be taken into account.** However, failure to observe any provision of the Code does not of itself render a person liable to any proceedings.

4. Benefits of union representation (Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)):

In 2007, the DTI estimated that union representation brings a number of benefits nationally including:

- Lower voluntary exit rates
- Lower dismissal rates
- Fewer Employment Tribunal cases
- Fewer workplace related injuries
- Fewer workplace related illnesses

It has been estimated that for every £1 spent on facilities time, between £2 and £9* is returned in accrued benefits (*2007 BERR & TUC) on the measures of the costs of dismissal and exit rates.

5. Union roles in Dudley

The majority of the Council's liaison with unions is through **Branch Secretaries**. These are also known as union officers, conveners or officials. In addition, there is a statutory role of **Union Learning Representative** which is currently incorporated into general funded for trade union facility time.

6. There is no separate funding earmarked for **Health and Safety** representatives in Dudley as it is considered to be covered through general facilities time.

7. **What do Dudley's unions bring to the table for schools?**

A simple but not exhaustive list would include:

- **Consultation/negotiation** on the development of new and the revision of existing model policies, including challenge relating to equality, providing schools with an off the shelf document ready to implement;
- **Collective views** – explaining to members the application and interpretation of model policies. This is enhanced through their “pooled” activity and therefore understanding of these. This particularly applies in relation to matters such as redundancy, restructures, pay and appraisal;
- **Employee relations** – union representatives are informed through centrally held discussions and can prevent disputes arising through explanation of decisions;
- **Disputes resolution** – providing a representative voice for staff to avoid situations where discussions can be prolonged without the influence of the union representative;
- **Informal negotiations** – usually undertaken with HR when an employee exit strategy is needed. The absence of these negotiations may prolong matters in school;
- **Responding to staff queries** - that would otherwise be directed to schools, on multiple issues such as redundancy, TUPE, pay;
- **Professional advice** on matters relating to their members' roles;
- **Informal advice** on matters relating to their members' roles;
- **Personal support** where members experience difficulties in their roles;
- **Signposting** to relevant training, development, support, advice;
- **Representing staff** who are facing procedures such as discipline or performance issues which might otherwise fall to a colleague within school. This may be particularly important where there is a prolonged or highly complex case;
- **Internal questions/queries** to schools in their role of budget controller for public funds;
- **Continuous Professional Development** – through the Union Learning representative role, where staff are signposted to or given access to training and development, subject to the needs of the service;
- **Health and Safety concerns** – providing an internal route for queries that might otherwise be raised with external agencies.

8. **“Pooled” arrangements**

Dudley operates a “pooled” arrangement for union facility time in schools. In the main this has meant that Branch Secretaries are elected and released, for some or all of their contracted hours to perform union duties. Below are some examples of the benefits attached to these arrangements:

9. Schools can adopt model policies that have been negotiated and agreed or consulted upon with all unions. In the absence of pooled arrangements, schools would need to undertake this consultation and/or negotiation at local level with each union that has members in the establishment. Schools would need to elect representatives of each union locally, giving rise to duplication in discussions of this kind and the possibility of an overall increase in expenditure on facility time.
10. The election of union representatives at individual school level also gives rise to potential disruption to timetabling as these representatives will be afforded the same statutory right to reasonable time off for union duties, training, health and safety duties and the Union Learning Role as detailed in paragraph 5.
11. Policies that are developed negotiated and/or consulted upon on behalf of Schools include those relating to:
 - Pay – teaching and support staff
 - Appraisal - teachers
 - Performance Management – support staff
 - Recruitment, Selection & Equality
 - Restructure, Redundancy and Redeployment
 - Capability
 - Discipline
 - Grievance
 - Disclosure and Barring checks
 - Contracts
 - Work Life Balance
 - Attendance/Absence/substance misuse
 - Smoking at Work
 - Special Leave arrangements
 - Health and Safety (not a HR policy)
 - Family Friendly
12. HR currently consults on and/or negotiates model policies on behalf of all schools (even though some schools may choose not to adopt the resulting model). HR is not resourced to replicate these discussions in multiple individual establishments. Negotiations would therefore need to be led by the head teacher or a senior staff member. As this sits outside of the current traded services arrangements, HR support required is likely to be chargeable as a bespoke piece of work.
13. Branch Secretaries represent employees (through one voice) in relation to particular elements of the workforce with common issues i.e. all teachers, a group of classroom-based support staff, technicians, bursars, school leaders. They liaise with HR who act on behalf of schools to find a solution. In the absence of pooled arrangements, these discussions would need to be held by each individual school, with all affected unions. These issues might include:

- Matters related to collective bargaining
 - Changes to terms and conditions of employment (including those which may have evolved through custom and practice)
 - Policy development and review
 - Restructures
 - Redundancies
 - Transfer of undertakings (TUPE – e.g. change of school status)
14. It is recognised that schools have varying levels of autonomy to act individually in relation to employment matters according to their status and/or style and approach. However, where consistency is appropriate, this is enhanced through “pooled” arrangements, particularly where the Council is the ultimate employer. This can also avoid local disputes for schools where the Governing Body is the employer.
15. **Time off for union duties explained**
- In order to judge the benefit that trade unions provide to our working lives and those of our employees, there should be a level understanding of the provisions set out by statute. These are summarised below.
16. There are three types of union activity:
- Union **Duties** - these attract reasonable time off with pay
 - Union **Training** - this attracts reasonable time off with pay
 - Union **Activities** - these attract reasonable time off but there is no entitlement to pay
17. Union **Duties** fall into 4 main categories:
- a. **Negotiations with the employer including:**
 - Collective Bargaining
 - Redundancy
 - TUPE
 - b. **Representing members**
 - c. **Health and Safety Representatives**
 - d. **Union Learning Representation including:**
 - Analysing learning or training needs
 - Providing information and advice about learning or training matters
 - Arranging and supporting learning and training
 - Promoting the value of learning and training
18. Union **Training** attracts paid time off for Representatives to undergo training in aspects of industrial relations relevant to the carrying out of their trade union duties in areas such as:
- Negotiations related to collective bargaining
 - Any other function related to section 178(2) of TULR(C)A
 - Matters associated with information and consultation concerning redundancy or TUPE.
19. Union **Activities**, where there is a right to reasonable time off for representatives and members, but no statutory entitlement to pay might include:
- Attending meetings to discuss internal union business
 - Attending meetings of union policy making bodies

- Attending workplace meetings to discuss union negotiations with employers
- Meeting with union officers to discuss workplace issues
- Voting in union elections

20. Although there is no statutory entitlement to pay, the ACAS code sets out that employers may want to consider payment in certain circumstances to ensure that workplace meetings are fully representative or to ensure that employees have access to services provided by Union Learning representatives.

21. **The Legal Framework**

Union representatives have had a statutory right to reasonable paid time off from employment to carry out trade union duties and to undertake trade union training since the Employment Protection Act 1975. Union representatives and members were also given a statutory right to reasonable unpaid time off when taking part in trade union activities. Union duties must relate to matters covered by collective bargaining agreements between employers and trade unions and relate to the union representative's own employer, unless agreed otherwise in circumstances of multi-employer bargaining, and not, for example, to any associated employer.

All the time off provisions were brought together in sections 168 – 170 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992. Section 43 of the Employment Act 2002 added a new right for Union Learning Representatives to take paid time off during working hours to undertake their duties and to undertake relevant training. The rights to time off for the purpose of carrying out trade union duties, and to take time off for training, were extended to union representatives engaged in duties related to redundancies under Section 188 of the amended 1992 Act and to duties relating to the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006.

The above report attempts to demonstrate the return on investment made by schools for the funding of trade union facilities time as well as provide an understanding of the rights provided to unions by statute or good practice.

I hope that the above is informative but should any further information be required, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or the relevant trade union.

Trade Union Activities April 2022 to March 2023.

The period from April 2023 to March 2024 has continued to be busy. GMB activity has now moved to face to face meetings again. These have included Attendance Management meetings, Grievance and Disciplinary Hearings, Appeal Hearings, JCC's, Health and Safety meetings, corporate management meetings and supporting members at TUPE transfer meetings and through the TUPE process, along with various restructure meetings.

GMB now operates with 2 full time representatives, Gordon Gibbs and Viv Smart. Providing support to members throughout the Authority and Schools.

The largest directorate for GMB continues to be Children's Services, which covers schools. There are 105 schools/academies in Dudley in which GMB are well organized in 95%. The remaining 5% have a smaller GMB membership. GMB also has a membership within the remaining Council Directorates.

Along with the 2 full time representatives, GMB has 20 workplace representatives working across directorates and schools. These are Trade Union Accredited and afforded paid release for training and representation of members. In addition, GMB has school contacts who do not receive paid facility time, but they receive information from GMB and ensure that this is shared and posted on notice boards. They have direct contact with full time representatives ensuring that matters are dealt with quickly and as their role is voluntary, there is no cost to the facility time budget. School contacts now stand at 150, creating additional work for full time representatives. In 2022 2023, we increased school contacts by 11, particularly in academies that choose not to buy back into the pooled funding arrangement.

Full time representatives also represent staff across the range of Council Services. It is important to have these on hand to deal with issues that can and do arise at short notice and require immediate attention. These are mainly suspensions but can relate to other matters. GMB full time representatives also represent members at all levels of the disciplinary, grievance and appeals procedures so that GMB Officers do not have to attend the workplace. This local representation provides a better understanding of workplace issues at grass roots level.

GMB full time representatives are also involved in all restructures which take place corporately and within schools, attending consultation meetings, meetings with members and responding to any consultation as a trade union and on behalf of individual members, encouraging them to engage with the process. Support to members continues after the consultation through to the redeployment and redundancy processes.

Full time representatives also work in an agile way, enabling them to respond to emails when not in the office and mobile phone numbers are known to GMB members, managers and HR.

It is important that the Council recognises that having a large workforce will always present employee relations issues. The unions play a key role in dealing with and resolving these, always being on hand to deal with workplace issues, avoiding or minimizing adverse impact on service delivery. Representatives also work closely with HR on resolving workplace issues which benefits both the Council and its schools.

GMB currently operates with. 2 full tme representatives, 1.3 FTE is funded by the Council and 0.7 FTE is funded by the dedicated schools' grant.

During the year of 2022-2023, the position of Branch Secretary for NAHT was vacant. As such, there is no report on the use of facilities time.

NASUWT Dudley Association Facility Time – 2022/23

Appendix 4

This information is a basic outline account of how facility time for NASUWT Dudley Association union duties has been utilised from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024. Please note this is not a comprehensive list as not all casework (dependant on its nature) is logged in the way that formal cases and associated meetings are recorded, these include disciplinary, grievance, staff re-structure and attendance management. Please be aware that many hours of unpaid time are spent communicating and advising our members over actions, instructions or reactions from the employer.

These out of school hours are in addition to the time allocated via our de -delegated amount from the facility time budget. It also should be noted that a significant amount of time is spent on telephone calls or electronic mail to Dudley HR, heads of schools or various other organisations within Dudley in order to resolve issues prior to escalation, (much of this communication has had a positive cost saving for the employer where costly formal procedures have been concluded early for not only the benefit of our members but also the employer).

These negotiations play a vital part of our daily work and to show how much actual time in minutes or hours is very difficult to demonstrate unless we log all calls, emails and meetings, if this was to be the case then the time spent on our duties would be eroded by time needed to log all communication in which ever form it took.

The NASUWT Dudley Association has, continually worked with maintained and academy schools. We have supported employees and employers seeking resolution and favourable outcomes. This is essential for the well-being of our members, ensuring excellent workplace relationships. This can only be achieved if facility time remains the core foundation of achieving good interconnections between employer and employee.

Levels of casework continue to remain constant. With a variety of formal and informal procedures. Many of these are where our members are stressed, anxious and exhausted. The need to maintain the facility time arrangement through de-delegation and buy back has never been as important as it is presently.

The budget is now at a point where any further reductions would have a devastating impact on the support our members receive. Therefore, it is vital that employers see the benefit of recognising and contributing towards the mechanism that allows local union officers to support their members in an effort to achieve a better work life balance which in turn will aid in the improvement of recruitment and retention within the teaching profession.

Dave Allchurch

Negotiating Secretary NASUWT Dudley Association

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During the academic year of 2021-2022, the position of Branch Secretary for Dudley NEU was vacant. A new candidate took on the position as of 1st September 2022. As such, the below report pertains only to the use of facilities time between 1st September 2022 to 31st March 2023.

Since taking facilities time again from September, caseloads have steadily increased throughout the year. Some of these are individual issues, others are related to collective issues such as academisation, restructuring, or workload. Some cases are solved quite quickly with advice via email or over the phone, and equally, some can be protracted affairs which take countless hours of meetings, calls, and/or emails before a conclusion can be reached. These cases include, but are not limited to, disciplinaries, attendance management, and capability proceedings, as well as policy consultation.

Every minute of our time allocated by the facility time budget is used effectively to support members in need. Many hours outside of school hours are also provided, completely unpaid, advising members on actions needed or further advice regarding their case.

A considerable amount of time is also spent negotiating with Dudley HR, headteachers, HR officers within MATs who buy into the facilities pooled funding, and other elements of the Dudley education structure. The purpose of these communications is to ensure everything that can possibly be done before escalation, has been done. This has multiple benefits, for example less distress to members, reduction of need for formal proceedings which are often costly to all involved, and an efficient use of facility time by the NEU Branch Secretary.

All of these meetings, negotiations, communications are pivotal to how we support our members. To break this down into hours, minutes, or days spent on each element would be counterproductive and an inefficient use of our facilities time. As such, I hope the explanation given in this report will suffice. However, should anyone wish to discuss this further, please feel free to contact the Dudley NEU Office on the contact details below.

Casework trends are continuing to rise. These show an increase in stress, anxiety, exhaustion, and burn out amongst the Borough's teachers. These teachers **need** to be supported. The best way to do that is through maintaining the facility time arrangement through de-delegation. Participation by all schools, including our colleagues in academies, has never been more vital to protecting a workforce who are feeling the brunt of a workload crisis.

I urge all employers to recognise the benefits of contributing to the facility time arrangement and allow union officers to support members through these turbulent times. Any reduction could drastically impact the support our members receive.

Victoria Turner

Dudley NEU Branch & District Secretary

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During the year of 2022-2023, the position of Branch Secretary for ASCL was vacant. As such, there is no report on the use of facilities time.

The Period from April 2022 to March 2023 has continued to be busy.

UNISON General Branch, which represents members in both Dudley MBC and schools in the Borough, has sought to maintain constructive working relationships with employers. Branch Officers continue to attend the Council Consultative and Negotiating Group and corporate policy development groups, as well as local Joint Consultative Committees and departmental liaison groups. We also maintain constructive communication with elected members.

UNISON representatives have continued to be involved in re-organisations taking place across the Council, and we will continue to be active in all areas of business affecting our members. We have spent time at numerous meetings, at all levels. Time has also been spent supporting members at discipline, grievance and capability matters.

A particular commitment has been supporting members in absence management meetings as a result of employees' sickness. In this area, we have taken up issues such as the impact of work-related stress, menopausal symptoms among female employees, and the treatment of disability within the workforce.

We continue to represent members in areas concerning Health, Safety and Welfare, and we have a dedicated branch Health and Safety Officer who maintains positive and constructive relationships in this area, as well as local Health and Safety representatives. We have also elected dedicated welfare and equalities officers who have specialist training and support our members as required.

We seek to recruit and train members and representatives across the Council with the goal of having a representative in every workplace. All new activists receive training so they can act as an accredited representatives. However, training opportunities are not limited to newly active members, and experienced representatives are also encouraged to update their knowledge. More widely, members are also encouraged to attend life skills training provided by UNISON.

Unite have been busy during the year commencing April 2022 to March 2023

We as a union have maintained a professional relationship at Corporate Directive and local levels.

Unite have been very productive in helping our members. Supporting them in Disciplines any Grievances and Capability matters

We are here to help our members before and after any problems.

As a union we are here to listen and advise

Our door as they say is always open to our members and future members.

After all the uncertainty in the past two years with covid. Unite have helped our members.

Here at lister road and at the leys depot, also had an input with how social services worked in covid.

We nearly all have come through it and are now pushing forward to some normality. A hard time for everyone, Ian, myself and all the reps have worked hard to get here during this year and every year unite have attended council and corporate consultations.

We have been there to help and pay apart in any negotiation groups.

As a union we maintain lines off contact with Directors and all elected members

In November of 2022, with Dudley Councils Leader, Chief executive, and Unite, Unison, and GMB there was a collective signing of Unites Unity at work Charter.

The signing of this charter, just 11 months after the release of the BRAP report, showed the continued dedication of the unions with Dudley councils HR Leadership team, to continue to tackle Racial inequality.

Unite's Unity Over Division charter is part of the union's campaign with employers to tackle racism and intolerance in the workplace, alongside challenging head on a narrative of hate and division developing within local communities with the support of far-right groups.

The signing of the charter demonstrates that ensuring racial equality is at the heart of our combined agenda and demonstrates the union's and Dudley councils commitment to stamp out racism.

The first cohort of training was undertaken on show racism the red card day, and the planning phase for the continued roll out is scheduled for February 2023 – March 2023.

The charter demonstrates our combined commitment to:

Ensure that all staff members are given training on how to adhere to the company's equality and diversity policy and will ensure that this document is reviewed annually.

- Unite and the employer will provide informative and up to date materials aimed at helping to promote equality and harmony within the workplace
- Where there are examples of hate crime and discrimination Unite, Unison, GMB and the employer will stand together to condemn such incidents

Health and Safety

Attendance at all HMT Health and Safety committee meetings.

Attendance at all Environmental Services co-ordinators meetings.

Attendance at corporate health and safety management group

These meetings provide the basis for consultation and negotiation on a broad range of health and safety policy and practice for the directorate in a high risk area.

Member Specific

In addition to high level activity a significant amount of time is as expected spent on member specific cases. A summary for the reported time frame is as follows:

- Support for members involved in sickness in relation to stress and anxiety has increased again this year.
- Support for members around COVID19
- Support for members involved in formal grievance/appeals process
- Support and representations for members involved in disciplinary process including interviews and hearings
- Settlement agreements successfully negotiated for mutual benefit of the member/employer
- Numerous informal grievance/dispute resolutions
- Pay and grading
- Responding to Emails, letter and telephone queries
- Signposting
- Attendance Management meetings/appeals

We note for the third year the fact that despite a large increase in our membership our available hours to complete the work remains limited and HR will agree that timescales are difficult to adhere to once under the pressure of our professional responsibilities. Additionally, with various suspension's and departures we are limited on numbers in terms of reps therefore we hope to increase our representatives in the near future.

The material specified in the report is a summary of high level activity that has been coordinated and achieved via the current pooled arrangements for Trade union Facilities time. The union remains committed to these time honoured arrangements and aims to provide high quality professional representation of its members through negotiation, internal challenge and representation.