

Facilities Management from A to Z



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U nions

Many staff in frontline facilities roles choose to join a Trade Union. Trade Unions exist to protect and advance the interests of their members by negotiating with employers on pay and conditions of work. Most Unions also provide legal advice, financial assistance, sickness benefits and education facilities to their members.

Individuals have specific legal rights related to trade union membership including the right not to be refused employment because they are or are not a member of a trade union. An employer must not treat employees unfairly on the grounds of trade union membership or non-membership, or because they are included on a prohibited list which contains information about trade union members or activists.

Trade union officials and members have rights to time off under certain circumstances which may or may not be paid. All union members are entitled to a reasonable amount of unpaid time off for carrying out union activities such as voting in union elections, meeting full-time officials to discuss issues relevant to the workplace or attending workplace meetings to discuss and vote on the outcome of negotiations

An employee who is an official of a recognised union will also reasonable paid time off for training related to union duties or to carry out union duties including recruiting, organising and representing members, attending meetings with members of the workforce and management, accompanying workers to disciplinary and grievance hearings and negotiating with the employer on terms and conditions of employment or matters of discipline.

Union representatives can be useful allies to facilities managers particularly in the field of health, safety and welfare where a common desire for compliance and a safe and healthy workplace can be harnessed.

While there is no statutory right for facilities for union representatives, except for those engaged in duties related to collective redundancies and the transfer of undertakings, employers should, where practical, make available to union representatives the facilities necessary for them to perform their duties efficiently and to communicate effectively with their members, other representatives and full time officers.

Where resources permit the facilities should include accommodation for meetings, access to a telephone, email and internet, the use of noticeboards and, where the volume of the union representative's work justifies it, the use of dedicated office space

Useful employer's advice on Trade Union representation can be found at www.acas.org.uk