



Ein cyf/Our ref HB PO 394 23

December 2023

Dear Chief Executive,

As we approach the establishment of the Social Partnership Council and the commencement of the Social Partnership Duty, I am writing to you to emphasise the value of trade union facility time.

We share a commitment to making Wales a fair work nation, and I am grateful for the part Welsh public bodies are playing in leading by example as employers. This includes the constructive relationships across our public bodies with recognised trade unions. Every worker has a legal right to join a trade union and we expect our devolved public bodies to provide trade union access, so workers have the opportunity and choice to be represented collectively. We would like you to remind your staff about the benefits of joining a trade union by urging them to use: [Join a union | TUC](#) and we would encourage you to promote trade union access in organisations you work with.

Our social partnership approach is underpinned by the benefits of employers and trade unions working as partners in a spirit of collaboration, shared commitment and mutual respect. For this to happen, there should be provision of appropriate, sufficient and agreed facility time. Whilst I appreciate the pressures facing public bodies, I encourage you to approach facility time as an investment which benefits you as an employer, as well as your workforce.

The Welsh Government considers the benefits of facility time to be far-reaching and include:

- Assisting the early identification and resolution of issues.
- Enhancing employee engagement and collaborative workplace cultures.
- Supporting health and safety and reducing the risk of work-related injuries and occupational illnesses.
- Aiding training and workforce learning and development.
- Facilitating effective negotiation processes.

I urge you to keep these benefits in mind when taking decisions on facility time and expect that you will discuss and agree any changes with your trade unions.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

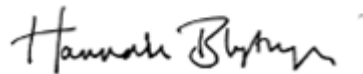
We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Collectively, we have worked hard to embed the social partnership way of working and this includes Workforce Partnership Council agreements and joint statements. These agreements, developed in Social Partnership, include the Partnership and Managing Change Agreement. It is crucial for all public bodies to apply these agreements at local level to ensure the benefits to public services are felt across Wales.

Difficult times such as we currently face should deepen our commitment to social partnership and shared decision-making rather than undermine relationships between employers and trade unions.

I continue to appreciate your support.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Hannah Blythyn". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small mark at the end.

Hannah Blythyn AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Partneriaeth Gymdeithasol
Deputy Minister for Social Partnership