

AGREEMENT ON CONVENOR FUNDED BY ST HELENS COUNCIL

1. Introduction

The aim of this agreement is to assist with the promotion of good employee relations by providing clear guidelines on the provision of funded time off and facilities for Convenors.

The term Convenor is a commonly used term and is designed to reflect a senior representative of the workforce at St Helens from a recognised Trade Union. Any alternative terminology will also be acceptable.

The agreement is intended to embrace all recognised Unions at the Council including Teaching Unions.

2. Employment Status of the Convenor

The Council will expect to be notified of the appointment or election of the appropriate nominee. Subject to service considerations, and the business need, efforts will be made to release the nominated individual as soon as is reasonably practicable. In certain exceptional circumstances release may not be able to be facilitated, and the reasoning behind such a decision will be provided.

For the avoidance of doubt the Convenor will remain a Council (or Governing Body) employee for the tenure of the appointment.

All applicable Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Conditions of Service, Policies and Procedures (including Human Resource, Financial and Health and Safety) will remain extant and the nominated person will be expected to comply.

The Council will pay as a minimum the appropriate contractual salary for each full time or part time Convenor in accordance with their current Conditions of Service. There may be occasions where the contractual remuneration of the secondee does not reflect the level of responsibility held as Convenor. In such circumstances, a personal remuneration level appropriate to the level of responsibility held, will be agreed between the Council, Trades Union and individual involved.

The Council would expect that the Convenor would undertake the role within the contracted normal working time as dictated by their contract of employment and facilities offered under this agreement. A flexible approach to the distribution of those working hours may be required. Casual overtime will not be funded by the Council as part of this agreement, but where, with the prior agreement of the Human Resource Manager, additional hours are accrued, time off in lieu may be awarded, at a subsequent convenient time. The Convenor would be expected to comply with the Council's policy in relation to the Working Time Regulations.

It is reiterated that the Convenor facilities are funded by St Helens Council in order that the workforce is fully represented. For the avoidance of doubt as an employee of the Council, the Convenor will be paid for Trades Union duties and activities which involve him/her representing the St Helens Council element of the Trades Union Branch only. The Council will not fund Regional or National Officer posts, but will permit reasonable paid time for representation at these levels, provided that it is St. Helens Council Branch that is represented and in a lay capacity.

The Convenor as an employee will remain under the auspices of the Council's employer liability policy and as such the Council does not abdicate its liability, provided Convenors are engaged on authorised Council activities.

3. Facilities Provided

The Council will provide reasonable facilities to allow Convenors / Branch Secretaries to conduct their Trade Union business. This will include telephone facilities (excluding mobile phones) furniture and reasonable typing and copying facilities. All personal telephone calls from Convenors' facilities must be paid for by the employee concerned. All monies should be paid to the Human Resources Manager.

The Council will permit access to its Intranet and Internet facilities for the purposes of communication between the Unions and Management. Access to the system and e-mail facilities should be purely for the benefit of communication with individuals within the Council on matters which relate to Council business or operation of Council's procedures. It should not be used in connection with the promotion of union activities, trades union recruitment or circulation of trades union materials. It is intended that access is provided as a Council employee, and as such Convenors are required to adhere to the Council's policies on E-mail and Internet use. Such use is the subject of regular monitoring by the Internal Audit Section.

The Council will bear the cost of the Licenses and training for the software needed, which must also be located on equipment provided by the Trade Union.

The Council will not be responsible for the payment of expenses incurred by Convenors in the pursuance of their role.

4. Time Recording / Accountability

As representatives of the workforce Convenors are free to pursue the objectives of their respective Trade Unions. However as employees, the Council (or Governing Body) owes, and is required to provide, a duty of care. As Council (or Governing Body) employees, then accountability to the employer is required. All Convenors either full time or part time, should regard the Human Resources Manager within the Chief Executive's Department or the Personnel Manager in the Education Department as their line manager during their facility time. All general employment queries during facility time should be directed via this route. This is not intended to usurp any management relationship the Convenor may have during normal working time in their substantive post.

All Convenors will complete the approved timesheet on a weekly basis. This will include time in work, and any absences e.g. annual leave, sickness, special leave etc. There will be no requirement to detail the actual activities undertaken by the Convenor.

In the case of absence though either short term or long term sickness, this will be monitored by the Human Resources Section within the Chief Executive's Department or the Personnel Section of the Education Department. Return to work/welfare interviews etc. will be carried out by the appropriate manager or if appropriate, the Human Resource Manager within the Chief Executive's Department or the Personnel Manager within the Education Department.

5. Relationship with the Council / Management

The objective of providing funded time off facilities is to allow appropriate representation of the workforce whilst liaising with management to resolve issues and problems quickly and effectively. Convenors are expected to cooperate with the Council and regard it as a high priority in order to accommodate initiatives, meetings, consultations etc.

5. Amount of Convenor Time Off to be Granted

Below are the stipulated amounts of time approved by the Council. This takes into account all Unions and the numbers of members employed at St Helens Council.

<u>Name of Union</u>	<u>Time Off Granted</u>
UNISON	Up to 10 days per week
GMB	Up to 5 days per week
UNITE	Up to 3 hours per week
NASUWT	Up to 3 days per week
NUT	Up to 3 days per week
NAHT	Up to 1 day per week
ATL	Up to 2 days per week

6. Termination of Agreement

The Council reserves the right to amend or terminate this agreement in consultation with the appropriate Unions, and may withdraw the use of facilities contained herein at any time if the agreed basis of use is usurped in any way.

St Helens Council
Convenor Time Sheet
(Non Teaching Unions)

Name:

Union:

Week Commencing: Monday

Day	Attendance Hours		Hours Worked
	To	From	
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			
Total Hours			

Signed:

Date:

Certified:

Date:

Time sheets should be completed and submitted on a weekly basis to:

Debbie Bradford
Central Personnel Section
Chief Executive's Dept.
Town Hall
Victoria Square
St Helens
WA10 1HP

St Helens Council
Convenor Time Sheet
(Non Teaching Unions)

Name:

Union:

Amend Previous
Week Commencing: Monday

Day	Attendance Hours		Hours Worked
	To	From	
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			
Total Hours			

Signed:

Date:

Certified:

Date:

St Helens Council
Convenor Time Sheet
(Teaching Unions)

Name:

Union:

Week Commencing: Monday

Day	Attendance Hours		Hours Worked
	To	From	
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			
Total Hours			

Signed:

Date:

Certified:

Date:

Time sheets should be completed and submitted on a weekly basis to:

Ste Rigby
 Personnel Section
 Chief Executive's Dept.
 Town Hall
 Victoria Square
 St Helens
 WA10 1HP

St Helens Council
Convenor Time Sheet
(Teaching Unions)

Name:

Union:

**Amend Previous
Week Commencing:** Monday

Day	Attendance Hours		Hours Worked
	To	From	
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			
Total Hours			

Signed:

Date:

Certified:

Date:

