

FOI DOF/2026-0463

Request

RE: NICS Employees, NIPSA Facility Time and Demonstrations

I would like information concerning Northern Ireland Civil Service employees who are members or representatives of NIPSA and their attendance at demonstrations, rallies, protests or public campaigning events organised, supported or promoted by NIPSA.

Please provide the following recorded information for the period **1 January 2021 to the present**:

1. The total number of hours of **paid trade-union facility time** granted to NICS employees for attendance at demonstrations, rallies, protests or public campaigning events organised, supported or promoted by NIPSA.
2. A breakdown of this information by year.
3. The total estimated cost to the Northern Ireland Civil Service of salary and associated employment costs relating to this facility time.
4. Whether NICS employees may use paid trade-union facility time to attend demonstrations, rallies or protests organised, supported or promoted by NIPSA.
5. If so, please provide the relevant policy, agreement, guidance or rules governing this.
6. Whether NICS employees attending such events are permitted to claim **mileage, public transport, parking, subsistence or any other expenses** from the NICS.
7. If expenses may be claimed, please provide the relevant policy or guidance and the total amount of such expenses paid during the requested period.
8. Please provide the total number of NICS employees who have been granted paid facility time to attend such events, where this information is held.
9. Please provide any recorded information showing whether NIPSA reimburses, contributes towards, or otherwise compensates the Northern Ireland Civil Service for the salary or employment costs associated with employees attending such events on paid facility time.
10. Please provide any records of agreements or arrangements between the NICS and NIPSA concerning paid facility time for attendance at demonstrations, rallies, protests or campaigning events.

I am particularly interested in establishing whether **publicly funded NICS employees can attend political, social or campaigning demonstrations during paid working time and whether any associated travel or other expenses are funded from public money.**

I am requesting recorded information only and am not asking the Department to create information or provide an opinion.

If any part of this request is considered too broad, please provide the information that can reasonably be identified and advise me how the request could be refined.

If any information is withheld, please identify the relevant exemption and provide the reasoning for applying it.

DoF response

I can confirm the Department holds some of the information requested.

1.Information not held. [6.08 NICS Trade Union arrangements policy](#) Annex 3 lists approved trade union duties for the purposes of facility time.

2.Not applicable (see 1. above)

3.Not applicable (see 1. and 2. above)

4. The information requested is exempt from disclosure under Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, as it is reasonably accessible by other means. See link to the relevant policy [6.08 NICS Trade Union arrangements policy](#)

5. The information requested is exempt from disclosure under Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, as it is reasonably accessible by other means. See link to the relevant policy [6.08 NICS Trade Union arrangements policy](#)

6. There is no provision in the [NICS Travel & Subsistence policy](#) for NICS employees to claim mileage, public transport, parking, subsistence or any other expenses for attendance at such events.

7. Not applicable (see 6. above)

8. Information not held

9. The information requested is exempt from disclosure under Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, as it is reasonably accessible by other means. See link to the relevant policy [6.08 NICS Trade Union arrangements policy](#)

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ANNEX B – INTERNAL REVIEWS

An Internal Review request examines the response based on applied exemptions, search adequacy, or response timeliness.

It is not the following, which will be treated as specified:

- Questions asking for clarification on information provided: Will be treated as part of the original FOI request.
- Additional questions about the information in the response: Will be treated as a new FOI request.
- Questions about the subject not related to the original request: Will be treated as new FOI request.
- Questions regarding how a service operates or why a decision was made: Will be treated as normal business and responded to accordingly.
- Complaints or concerns raised in response to information provided: Will be treated in line with relevant complaints procedure.

To make an Internal Review request:

- **Clearly state:** That you want an internal review of a previous FOI response and provide the necessary details.
- **Follow the timeline:** Be sure to submit your request within 40 working days of receiving the original response. If the Department has not responded at all, you have 40 working days after the original 20-day response period has passed.
- **Wait for a response:** The review is typically completed within 20 working days but can take up to 40 working days in exceptional circumstances. The Department should inform you of any delays.

What the review includes

- A fresh decision based on a reconsideration of all relevant factors.
- An assessment of whether the request was handled correctly and if exemptions were applied appropriately.
- The review will be conducted by someone who was not involved in the original decision.

If you wish to request an internal review, please email foi@finance-ni.gov.uk or write to FOI/EIR Team, Department of Finance, 2nd Floor, Craigantlet Buildings, Stoney Road, Belfast, BT4 3SX.