

Interim joint statement by UUK and UCU with respect to the USS dispute

The latest information provided by the USS Trustee suggests that the forthcoming 2023 valuation is likely to reveal a high probability of being able to improve benefits and reduce contributions. Should this be confirmed, this would allow for a return to a comparable level of future benefits as existed before the April 2022 changes, as well as achieve a reduction in costs for members and employers. We jointly agree to prioritise the improvement of benefits in this way, where this can be done in a demonstrably sustainable manner.

We are committed to working together so that this, and future, valuations are undertaken on a moderately prudent and evidence-based basis, taking account of the open and long-term nature of the scheme. We will explore together a long-term solution for managing risk which can provide more stable and sustainable defined benefits and contributions, whilst protecting scheme members' long-term interests, and so that we do not return to dispute at each valuation. We agree, in relation to these aspects, to work together on a constructive dialogue with the Pensions Regulator and the DWP.

We agree to working in partnership on USS governance reform.

We agree to continue working in partnership on low-cost options and aim to consult employers and members, once it is confirmed that the priority of improving main scheme benefits can be achieved. Any such low-cost option should not undermine the viability of the main scheme, and will be subject to analysis and review.

We agree on the urgent need, with the USS Trustee, to examine the case more fully for divestment from fossil fuels and that a greater visibility of climate crisis action and mitigation should be a feature of long-term USS planning.

Our negotiations have been constructive, and we commit to joint collaboration through the 2023 valuation process to achieve the optimum outcome for all stakeholders after appropriate consultation.

