

JNC Enhanced Report, 22 February 2022

Attendees

Committee members	Observers
Judith Fish (Chair)	Dr Jo Grady, UCU observer
Phil Harding (UUK)	Professor Michael Otsuka, UCU observer
Stuart McLean (UUK)	Nicola Lee, UCU observer
Anthony Odgers (UUK)	Mike Shore-Nye, UUK observer
Margaret Monckton (UUK)	
Dr Carol Costello (UUK)	
Dr Justine Mercer (UCU)	
Dr Deepa Driver (UCU)	
Paul Bridge (UCU)	
Dr Marion Hersh (UCU)	
Dr Sam Marsh (UCU)	

Meeting governance

The legal adviser to the JNC Chair provided the group with a summary of the advice they have provided to the Chair around the conclusion of the 2020 valuation.

Stakeholder updates

UCU

A UCU representative provided an overview of the strike and action short of a strike [UCU members are currently taking](#). Branches will take five further days of strike action in late March/early April.

They provided the group with an overview of motions tabled by branches for consideration at the 25 February UCU Higher Education Committee meeting;

They noted that UCU wish to find a resolution with UUK, and expressed their disappointment that this has not been possible so far;

UCU representatives asked if the [covenant support](#) agreed for the UUK proposal could be extended to the UCU proposal. A UUK representative explained that the [mandate from employers on covenant support](#) would not cover the potential contribution increases outlined in the UCU proposal;

A UCU representative went on to provide a summary of the UCU proposal and the group discussed the scope for employer covenant support for it in detail. The group discussed if the proposal is considered implementable without agreed covenant support.

UUK

A UUK representative talked through the UUK proposal and the [recent consultation](#) to defer the 2.5% cap on inflationary increases, noting that most employers supported deferring the cap, although some were supporting with a degree of caution;

The group went on to discuss HE sector finances and levels of net debt, and staff costings;

The group had a detailed discussion on the [Trustee Financial Management Plan](#);

Non-restricted (NR)

A UCU representative asked if UUK may consider lowering contribution rates or restoring benefits to current levels at a future valuation should the position improve. A UUK representative told the group this is something UUK are actively considering;

Update from the Trustee

The group received an overview of the Seventeenth Deed of Amendment, and the supporting material provided to the JNC. The Deed will implement the benefit changes agreed at the 31 August 2021 JNC.

Evaluation and decision making on the submitted benefit change proposals

A UCU representative asked if the UCU proposal could be tabled given that the Trustee has not formally confirmed it is implementable. A Trustee representative explained that the UCU proposal is implementable, but the pricing of the proposal must be reviewed if employer covenant support has not been given. It could be tabled, and if carried, will go to the Trustee Board for consideration;

UCU tabled their proposal, stressing that they would like employers to consider providing covenant support;

The committee cast their votes on the UCU proposal, and the UUK proposal (including the implementation of the Seventeenth Deed of Amendment). The votes for both were tied and the JNC Chair was asked to make their casting vote;

The Chair expressed disappointment the committee has reached an impasse and the matter could not be resolved by negotiated outcome. The Chair voted in favour of the UUK proposal, and it was carried;

UUK representatives took an action to formally commit to restoring benefits to current levels at the next valuation if the position improves adequately.