

Annual Member Statement

Assumptions and further information



This factsheet accompanies your Annual Member Statement and provides more information about how we work out what your Investment Builder benefits could be worth when you want to retire. We use assumptions to calculate these and make other projections about your pension.

Statutory money purchase illustration (SMPI)

If you save in the Investment Builder (the defined contribution part of the scheme), your Annual Member Statement includes a summary of your savings up to 31 March 2026, and a projection of how much your savings in the Investment Builder could be worth when you retire. This projection is required by law. It's called your statutory money purchase illustration (SMPI). If you had Money Purchase Additional Voluntary Contributions with Prudential (MPAVCs) in this statement period, you'll receive a separate annual statement and pension illustration from Prudential. You can contact Prudential on 0845 6000 343 for support on MPAVCs with them.

The assumptions we use for your projection in the Investment Builder

The value of your savings in the Investment Builder is made up of some or all of the following:

- Any contributions (including additional contributions) you and your employer made up to 31 March 2026;
- Amounts transferred from other pension schemes or switched from Prudential up to 31 March 2026;
- Any investment returns that you receive, minus relevant charges, if applicable.

When we estimate what your savings might be worth in the future, we make some general assumptions. In particular, we need to assume how much you'll contribute in the future and what the investment return might be on your savings. Some of these assumptions are dictated by law, and others are chosen by us based on experience and industry practice. The amount of pension payable from the Investment Builder will depend on a number of considerations including the performance of your investments, the cost of buying an annuity when you reach your Target Retirement Age, and how you choose to use your fund. These may be different from any assumptions we make. The assumptions can change from time to time.

At a glance assumptions

How much you contribute

We've assumed you and your employer will continue contributing to the Investment Builder at the same level you were on 1 April 2026.

Where you're invested

We've assumed you remain invested in the same investment options you were invested in on 31 March 2026.

When you will retire

We've assumed you will retire at your Target Retirement Age which, unless you have told us otherwise, is your Normal Pension Age at the time of you joining the Investment Builder.

How your investments could grow

We make assumptions about the future growth of different investment options over set time periods.

What you'll do with your savings when you retire

We've assumed you will use your savings to purchase a guaranteed income for life (an annuity) at retirement, although this may not be how you use your fund.

The fees that you pay

We've assumed that investment management charges apply, even though your employer currently subsidises some or all of the fees that you pay for investing in the Investment Builder. We've taken this approach because there's no guarantee that your employer will continue the subsidy in the future so it provides a more prudent estimate of your savings at retirement.

Assumptions about your future contributions

We've assumed you will continue to contribute to the Investment Builder at the rate you were contributing on 1 April 2026.

The contributions you're paying could include:

- Normal contributions, which are contributions from your salary in excess of the salary threshold; and
- Additional monthly contributions.

If you've made lump sum contributions in the past, we do not assume these will continue, even if you elected to do so at the date of the statement.

We assume your employer continues to pay contributions to the Investment Builder at the same rate they were on 1 April 2026.

Assumptions about your investments

Assumptions have been made about the nature of the investments made and their potential performance. These are assumptions and may not correspond with your future investment choices or your actual investment returns.

We've assumed that you remain invested in the same investment options as you were invested in on 31 March 2026.

There are two Do It For Me investment options: the Default Lifestyle Option and the Ethical Lifestyle Option. Within these options, your investments are managed for you and automatically change over time to reflect the point you are at in your working life. As you approach your Target Retirement Age (TRA), the mix of investments will move towards a more cautious approach. If you have not made any investment choices, your savings are likely to be invested in the Default Lifestyle Option. If you're invested in either of our Do It For Me investment options, we assume your investments will change automatically as you approach your TRA in line with the automatic movements that are built into these options.

There is also the Let Me Do It option, which lets you choose any mix of funds from the 10 available. With this option, you are responsible for managing your own investments. If you have different investment options for different types of contributions, we take that into account in your calculation.

You can review and/or change what investment options you're invested in at any time by logging in to My USS, where you can find the Quarterly Investment Report for the Investment Builder showing the performance of each fund over the previous quarter and years, along with information about each fund.

Investment growth assumptions

We are required by law to use a prescribed methodology from the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) to calculate your projections. The methodology is based on the historic volatility (one measure of investment risk) of the USS Funds over a five year period, this means that the rates we must use for fund growth assumptions can change from time to time. This methodology does not necessarily reflect the Trustee's or USSIM's long term return assumptions for the USS Funds. The FRC reviews the methodology regularly.

The FRC guidance requires that an inflation rate of 2.5% per year is assumed within the projection methodology, regardless of the current level of inflation.

The assumptions that we've used for the future growth of the Investment Builder's funds are set out below.

Fund option/investment funds	Fund growth assumption per year (gross of fees)
	2026 AMS
Default Lifestyle Option	
USS Growth Fund	4.0%*
USS Moderate Growth Fund	4.0%
USS Cautious Growth Fund	4.0%
USS Liquidity Fund	2.0%
Ethical Lifestyle Option	
USS Ethical Growth Fund	6.0%
USS Ethical Moderate Growth Fund	4.0%
USS Ethical Cautious Growth Fund	4.0%
USS Ethical Liquidity Fund	2.0%
Other Investment Funds	
USS Bond Fund	4.0%
USS Global Equity Fund	6.0%
USS UK Equity Fund	6.0%
USS Emerging Markets Equity Fund	6.0%*
USS Ethical Equity Fund	6.0%
USS Sharia Fund	6.0%

*The rates used for the fund growth assumptions for the USS Growth Fund and the USS Emerging Markets Equity Fund were reduced in 2026. This may result in a decrease in the projected retirement pot from that shown on the 2025 statement.

Assumptions about the fees you pay

Your employer currently subsidises the investment management charges for investing in the Investment Builder, apart from on any savings you have transferred into your Investment Builder pot. However, in your projection, we assume that the subsidy does not apply because it is not guaranteed to remain in place all the way to your retirement.

The investment management charges for each of the USS Funds can be found in the Quarterly Investment Report for the Investment Builder available across the USS website and on My USS, and further information on the costs of buying and selling units and embedded costs and transaction charges (including net investment returns) can be found in the "Chair's defined contribution statement" in the Governance section of our **Annual Report and Accounts**.

Assumptions about how you use your savings when you retire

There are a number of different ways you can take your savings from the Investment Builder. For the purpose of illustrating what you could receive as an income in retirement, we've assumed you will not take any of your Investment Builder savings as tax-free cash, instead using the entire amount to purchase an annuity, which is a guaranteed income for life. We're not suggesting this is the most appropriate course of action for you and we recommend that you carefully consider your choices and their implications and take financial advice, if you're unsure. There's more information on our [website](#), and you can get impartial help and information, backed by the government and free to use from MoneyHelper at [moneyhelper.org.uk](#).

Assumptions about your retirement date

We've assumed you will retire at your Target Retirement Age (TRA). If you have not chosen a TRA, it has been set at the scheme's Normal Pension Age (NPA), that was applicable at the time you joined the Investment Builder.

Assumptions about the pension (annuity) your Investment Builder savings can buy at retirement, including survivor benefits and pension increases

If you decide to purchase an annuity, you'll have a number of different choices. You may be able to get a higher level of income, depending on your health status and the options you decide to include within your annuity. For example, you may prefer to purchase a dependant's pension.

	Assumptions used
Age	The age at which you purchase the annuity is your TRA.
Guarantee	The annuity includes a five year guarantee on your pension so that if you die within five years of your annuity starting, your beneficiary will continue to receive your pension for the remainder of that five year period.
Survivor benefits/dependant's pension	It's assumed you purchase an annuity which will not pay an income to your spouse or partner – the annuity income will stop when you die (subject to any remaining Guarantee).
Annual increases to your annuity income (pension increases)	It's assumed that your annuity will not receive any annual increases.
Expenses	It's assumed that 4% of your savings at retirement are used to meet the expenses of buying an annuity.

These assumptions are not guaranteed as future conditions will change.

FRC guidelines

When we calculate your SMPI, we have to comply with the standards set out by the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) in its Actuarial Standards Technical Memorandum 1. Most of the assumptions we use are prescribed by the FRC so we have no flexibility over them. The assumptions that we have adopted in relation to your SMPI this year were set by FRC for calculations performed between 6 April 2024 and 5 April 2026. The assumptions are reviewed regularly by the FRC. Whilst a revised standard has been published by the FRC for SMPIs with an illustration date from 6 April 2026 (i.e. not applicable to this year's SMPI), the FRC has not prescribed any new assumptions in that revised standard. You can find out more about the FRC guidelines on [FRC website](#) ([www.frc.org.uk](#)).

Other important information

The scheme will maintain its tax registration under section 153 of the Finance Act 2004. All amounts quoted throughout your Annual Member Statement are expressed in today's prices and calculated as at 31 March 2026. The information given in the statement is given only for the purposes of illustration and does not represent any promise or guarantee as to the amount of benefit that may be received by you or any beneficiaries of the scheme from USS.