

# Bereavement benefits for death in retirement or deferment

## Applying for a spouse's or a civil partner's or a dependant's pension

If you are the legal spouse or registered civil partner of a USS member at the time of his or her death, you will automatically receive a spouse's/civil partner's pension. Any dependent children may also receive a pension.

This factsheet sets out who might be eligible for such payments and how to go about applying for them.

## Application for spouse's/civil partner's/dependant's pension

If you are the legal spouse or registered civil partner of a USS member at the time of his/her death, you will automatically receive a spouse's/civil partner's pension.

Alternatively, if you were dependent on a USS member at the time of his/her death, and the member was not married or in a registered civil partnership, you may be eligible to receive a dependant's pension. A dependant is someone who, in the opinion of Universities Superannuation Scheme Ltd (the trustee), is either wholly or in part, at the time of the member's death (whether or not a relative), either financially dependent on the member or dependent on the member because of a physical or mental disability.

To enable us to set up payment of this pension, please complete the 'Application for spouse's/civil partner's/ dependant's pension' form which is sent to you from USS. Please provide your bank details in full to ensure that prompt payment is made.

If you were not married to the member but are claiming a dependant's pension, the trustee will need to establish that you were dependent/interdependent on the member. If you are unsure about your eligibility, please contact us.

You will note on the form that we require sight of both your original birth certificate and marriage/civil partnership certificate, or certified copies. If your birth certificate is not available, please send a certified copy of your passport. If your civil partnership/marriage certificate is not available, we are able to accept a letter of confirmation signed by an appropriate professional person (e.g. solicitor or doctor).

## Application for dependent child's pension

If the member had a child (born or unborn) who was his/ her lawful or adopted child or dependent natural child, stepchild or lawful, natural or legally adopted child of a surviving civil partner, or accepted as a member of the family (but also dependent) and is:

- Under the age of 18; or
- Over the age of 18 but:
  - (a) unable, owing to ill-health, to be in full-time education or self-supporting; or
  - (b) up to the age of 23 and in full-time education or training that is approved by the trustee.

To enable us to set up payment of this pension, please complete the 'Application for dependent child's pension' form which is sent to you by USS. To ensure prompt payment, please provide the bank details in full.

If a child is over age 18 then the pension must be paid to his/her own bank account unless there is any reason why this would be inappropriate.

You will note on the form that we require sight of either the original birth certificate(s), or a certified copy. If the birth certificate is not available, please send a certified copy of the child's passport(s), if available, for date of birth verification.

If the eligible child for whom you are making the pension application is over the age of 18 but in full-time education, you will also need to complete the 'Verification of full-time education course' form which is sent to you by USS. This form needs to be signed by the course tutor responsible for the course at the institution (school/college/university) where the course is taking place.

If the child was not the member's lawful child, i.e. was not born within a marriage or is the lawful, natural or legally adopted child of a surviving civil partner, then USS will need to be informed of the extent to which the child was financially dependent on the member.

## **Pension payments**

### **When will my pension be paid?**

Your monthly pension will be paid on the 21st day of the month. If the 21st day falls on a weekend or bank holiday then your pension will be paid on the preceding working day.

### **How will my pension be paid?**

Your pension will be paid directly into a UK bank or building society account that is solely or jointly maintained by you. If you are considering moving abroad, please see the section below titled 'Moving Abroad' for payment options.

### **How often will I receive a payslip?**

Payslips are not produced every month. They are only issued when your net pension payment differs by £1 or more from the amount received in the previous month. Therefore normally you will only receive a payslip:

- Annually each April when any pension increases are applied; or
- When an instruction from HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) is processed to amend your tax code.

## **Income tax deductions**

### **How will income tax deductions be applied to my pension?**

HMRC determines the income tax deductions from your pension. Details are as follows:

- If USS is in receipt of a valid tax code when your pension payments commence, it will be applied to your monthly pension payments;
- If USS is not in receipt of a valid tax code when your pension payments commence, an emergency tax code will be applied to your monthly pension payments.

USS does not play any part in the calculation of your tax code, nor is it able to alter your tax code without an instruction from HMRC. Any queries regarding the calculation of your tax code should be addressed to:

### **HM Revenue & Customs**

#### **Pay as You Earn and Self Assessment**

**BX9 1AS**

Telephone number: **0300 200 3300**

Please quote tax office reference **428/U168** together with your National Insurance number.

## **Changes in personal details**

Any changes to personal details or queries relating to your monthly pension payments should be forwarded in writing to:

### **Pensions Payroll Section**

#### **Universities Superannuation Scheme Ltd**

**Royal Liver Building**

**Liverpool**

**L3 1PY**

Always quote your pension number from your payslip and sign and date your letter before sending it to us. Changes should be received no later than the 5th working day of the month in which the change is to be made.

Please note that you should also notify the tax office of any change to your address.

Alternatively, if you have access to the internet, you may wish to complete our online 'Notification of change in details' form. This is available in the 'Forms' section of our website at [www.uss.co.uk](http://www.uss.co.uk)

### **Moving abroad?**

Should you move abroad all your USS benefits would remain unchanged. However, if you are considering moving abroad please advise the pensions payroll section as soon as possible and information will be provided on the overseas pension payment options and HMRC contact details in order to claim tax exemption (if this is applicable).

### **General information about pension increases**

#### **What are pension increases?**

The USS fund has two sections, namely a main section of the fund and a supplementary section. The main section of the fund provides the principal benefits (pension and cash lump sum), whilst the supplementary section of the fund provides additional benefits payable in the event of retirement on grounds of total incapacity or on death.

Pensions from the main section of the fund, including those for surviving spouses, civil partners, children and other dependants of deceased USS members, are reviewed each year and increases are linked to increases in 'official pensions' paid to public sector employees such as teachers, civil servants or NHS employees.

Currently, the annual increases, usually effective from each April, are linked to changes in inflation over the 12 months up to the previous September. Your pension will not be decreased during periods of negative inflation.

USS will match increases in official pensions for the first 5%. If official pensions increase by more than 5%, then USS will pay half the difference up to a maximum increase of 10%. So if official pensions increased by 15% or more, the USS increase would be 10% in that year.

Pensions from the supplementary section of USS are increased periodically to the extent that the finances of that section permit. To date, these increases have been the same as those for the main section, but no guarantee can be given that this will continue.

#### **Will I receive prior notification of increases to my USS pension?**

Yes, we will write to let you know the increase to your gross monthly USS pension, usually in early April each year.

#### **Are these increases taxable?**

Yes. If you are liable to pay tax, it will be deducted at the appropriate rate. In addition, following each increase to your basic state retirement pension (if you are receiving it), your income tax PAYE code will be altered by HMRC.

If you have a Guaranteed Minimum Pension (GMP) component as part of your USS pension, pension increases will be applied differently to this element as the responsibility for inflation proofing the GMP is shared between the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) and USS.

This publication is for general guidance only. It is not a legal document and does not explain all situations or eventualities. USS is governed by a trust deed and rules and if there is any difference between this publication and the trust deed and rules the latter prevail. Members are advised to check with their employer contact for latest information regarding the scheme, and any changes that may have occurred to its rules and benefits. Any references to the trustee or USSL in this document means Universities Superannuation Scheme Limited, the trustee company of Universities Superannuation Scheme and any references to the scheme or USS means Universities Superannuation Scheme.

For a glossary of our terms please see more information on our [important terms](#) page.