



New JNCHES trade union side statement

The joint trade unions have been consulting their national committees with respect to the four sets of draft terms of reference on pay-related matters. That process is not complete. When it is complete, we will be responding to UCEA to let them know the joint trade union response.

We note that UCEA has put out a statement in relation to their position, including their attitude to further industrial action. The joint unions wish to make it clear that we will not agree to any cessation of industrial action up front for the next 12 months and that the unions and UCEA must respect our trade union democratic processes. The requirements of the Trade Union Act 2016 on trades unions are onerous and require trade unions to give advance notice of ballots, run postal ballots, be open to challenge on the details of those ballots, achieve a 50% turnout threshold and a positive majority vote in favour of action and then give advance notice of any planned action, so the whole process requires a huge amount of work and takes months. Without a mandate for industrial action our industrial power is significantly weakened, so the unions will not give up their right to run ballots to obtain that mandate up front for a period of 12 months, and believe it is unreasonable of UCEA to expect them to do so. Whether or not any action goes ahead at any particular time will be subject to a democratic decision at that time.

We are committed to seeking a negotiated settlement on pay and the four pay-related elements and we are happy to meet again at Acas once the unions have completed their consultation processes.

A joint statement agreed by all five HE trade unions, 23 March 2023.