

# Engagement Policy Implementation Statement for the Year Ended 31 December 2023

## Knorr-Bremse (UK) Pension Scheme (“the Scheme”)

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This Engagement Policy Implementation Statement (the Statement) sets out the Trustees' assessment of how, and the extent to which, they have followed their engagement policy and their policy with regard to the exercise of rights (including voting rights) attaching to the Scheme's investments during the one-year period to 31 December 2023 (the “Scheme Year”). The Trustees' policies are set out in their Statement of Investment Principles (SIP) dated July 2023. A copy of the Trustees' SIP is available [here](#).

This Statement has been produced in accordance with the *Occupational Pension Schemes (Investment and Disclosure) (Amendment and Modification) Regulations 2018* and the *Occupational Pension Schemes (Investment and Disclosure) (Amendment) Regulations 2019* along with guidance published by the Department for Work and Pensions.

The Trustees appoint Mercer Limited (Mercer) as a discretionary investment manager and the Scheme's assets are invested in a range of specialist pooled funds (the Mercer Funds). Management of the assets of each Mercer Fund is undertaken by a Mercer affiliate, Mercer Global Investments Europe Limited (MGIE).

The relevant Mercer affiliate is responsible for the appointment and monitoring of suitably diversified portfolio of specialist third party investment managers for each Mercer Fund's assets.

The publicly available [Sustainability Policy](#) sets out how Mercer addresses sustainability risks and opportunities and considers Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance (ESG) factors in decision making across the investment process. The [Stewardship Policy](#) provides more detail on Mercer's beliefs and implementation on stewardship specifically. Under these arrangements, the Trustees accept that they do not have the ability to directly determine the engagement or voting policies or arrangements of the managers of the Mercer Funds. However, the Trustees have reviewed these policies and note an awareness of engagement topics that are important to the Scheme. Mercer's Client Engagement Survey seeks to integrate the Trustees views on specific themes by assessing the level of alignment between Mercer's engagement priority areas and those of the Trustees, while highlighting additional areas of focus which are important to the Trustees. The Trustees review regular reports from Mercer with regard to the engagement and voting undertaken within the Mercer Funds in order to consider whether the policies align with those of the Trustees.

Section 2 of this Statement sets out the Trustees' engagement policy and assesses the extent to which it has been followed over the Scheme Year.

Section 3 sets out the Trustees' policy with regard to the exercising of rights (including voting rights) attaching to the Scheme's investments and considers how, and the extent to which, this policy has been followed during the Scheme Year. This Section also provides detail on voting activity undertaken third party investment managers appointed within the Mercer Funds during the Scheme Year.

**Taking the analysis included in Sections 2 to 3 together, it is the Trustees' belief that their policies with regard to engagement and the exercise of rights attaching to investments has been successfully followed during the Scheme Year.**

## 2. TRUSTEES' POLICY ON ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, AND GOVERNANCE (ESG) ISSUES, INCLUDING CLIMATE CHANGE

### Policy Summary

Section 10 of the Scheme's SIP outlines the Trustees ESG beliefs. The Trustees keep these policies under regular review.

Should the Trustees consider that the engagement policies of Mercer, MGIE or the third party asset managers, do not align with those of the Trustees, the Trustees will notify Mercer and consider disinvesting some or all of the assets held in the Mercer Funds and/or seek to renegotiate commercial terms with Mercer.

### How the Policy has been implemented over the Scheme Year

The following work was undertaken during the year relating to the Trustees' policy on ESG factors, stewardship and climate change.

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#### **Policy Updates**

The Trustees consider how ESG, climate change and stewardship is integrated within Mercer's, and MGIE's, investment processes and those of the underlying asset managers within the Mercer Funds, in the monitoring process. Mercer, and MGIE, provide reporting to the Trustees on a regular basis.

The Mercer [Sustainability Policy](#) is reviewed regularly. In August 2023 the governance section was updated, and the climate scenario modelling section is now detailed the standalone Task Force on Climate Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) report.

In line with the requirements of the EU Shareholder Rights Directive II (SRD II), Mercer has implemented a standalone [Stewardship Policy](#) to specifically address the requirements of SRD II.

The most recent [UN Principles of Responsible Investment](#) results (based on 2022 activity) awarded Mercer 4 stars out of 5 for Policy Governance and Strategy.

#### **Approach to Exclusions**

Mercer and MGIE preference is to emphasise integration and stewardship approaches, however, in a limited number of instances, exclusions of certain investments may be necessary based on Mercer's Investment Exclusions Framework. Controversial weapons and civilian firearms are excluded from active equity and fixed income funds, and passive equity funds. In addition tobacco companies (based on revenue) and nuclear weapons are excluded from active equity and fixed income funds.

In addition, Mercer and MGIE monitors for high-severity breaches of the UN Global Compact (UNGC) Principles that relate to human rights, labour, environmental and corruption issues.

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## Climate Change Reporting and Carbon Foot-printing

Consideration of the impacts of climate change has been central to Mercer's global investment beliefs since 2014. Mercer and the Trustees believe climate change poses a systemic risk, with financial impacts driven by two key sources of change:

1. The physical damages expected from an increase in average global temperatures
2. The associated transition to a low-carbon economy

Each of these changes presents both risks and opportunities to investors. Mercer therefore considers the potential financial impacts at a diversified portfolio level, in portfolio construction within asset classes, and in investment manager selection and monitoring processes.

In early 2021, Mercer announced its aim to achieve net-zero absolute portfolio carbon emissions by 2050 for UK, European and Asian clients with discretionary portfolios and for the majority of its multi-client, multi-asset funds domiciled in Ireland. To achieve this, Mercer set a 2030 target to reduce portfolio carbon emissions by 45% from 2019 baseline levels and is on track to achieve this aim. Mercer's approach to managing climate change risks is consistent with the framework recommended by the Financial Stability Board's Task Force on Climate related Financial Disclosures (TCFD), including the [Mercer Investment Solutions Europe - Investment Approach to Climate Change 2022 Status Report](#).

As at 31 December 2023, Mercer are on track to reach our long-term net zero portfolio carbon emissions target. There has been a notable 33% reduction over the 4 years since 2019 baseline levels, resulting in the 45% baseline-relative reduction by 2030 being within range.

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## ESG Rating Review

Where available, ESG ratings assigned by Mercer are included in the investment performance reports produced by Mercer on a quarterly basis and reviewed by the Trustees. ESG ratings are reviewed by MGIE during quarterly monitoring processes, with a more comprehensive review performed annually - which seeks evidence of positive momentum on ESG integration and compares the Irish domiciled Mercer Funds overall ESG rating with the appropriate universe of strategies in Mercer's Global Investment Manager Database (GIMD). Engagements are prioritised with managers where their strategy's ESG rating is behind that of their peer universe.

As at 31 December 2022, in the Annual Sustainability Report provided by Mercer, the Trustees noted over 20% of Mercer's Funds have seen an improved ESG rating over the year and the vast majority have a rating ahead of the wider universe. Due to the nature of certain strategies, they do not have an ESG rating (i.e. are N rated) and are therefore excluded from this review.

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## Diversity

Mercer's ambition to promote diversity extends beyond its own business through to the managers it appoints. This is partly assessed within the manager research process and documented in a dedicated section within research reports.

Mercer considers broader forms of diversity in decision-making, but currently report on gender diversity. As at 1 April 2023, 35% of the Key Decision Makers (KDM's) within Mercer Investment Solutions team are non-male, and Mercer's long term target is 50%.

Within the Fixed Income universe, the average fund has 13% non-male KDM's and within the EMEA Active Equity universe, the average is 17%. Figures relating to Mercer Fixed Income and Active Equity Funds are currently slightly ahead or aligned, at 15% and 17%.

Over the year to 31 December 2022, there has been an increase across both active equity and fixed income multi-client funds and their respective universes and across both active equity and fixed income multi-client funds, the representation of females KDMs is higher than the broader universe of 13.7%. Mercer expect this number to grow over time both across our funds and the industry as a whole, supported in part through our engagements with managers on the topic and participation in industry initiatives.

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## Engagement

The 2023 Stewardship Report highlights the engagement objectives which have been set, examples of engagement and the escalation process and participation in collaborative initiatives. Mercer's annual Global Manager Engagement Survey on sustainability and stewardship topics, now in its third year, was distributed to over 200 managers. The survey seeks to gather information from each manager appointed in the Mercer Funds on their broad approach to stewardship as part of their investment integration, as well as gain insights and examples of voting and engagement activities. The results from the survey provides an important source of information for tracking and measuring our managers' stewardship efforts to assess effectiveness and to identify potential areas for improvement. Results and insights from the survey will be shared in Mercer's Annual Stewardship Report.

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## 3. TRUSTEES' POLICY ON EXERCISE OF RIGHTS (INCLUDING VOTING RIGHTS) ATTACHING TO SCHEME INVESTMENTS

### Policy

The Trustees' policy is to delegate responsibility for the discretionary investment management of Scheme assets to Mercer, and to invest the Scheme's assets in a range of Mercer Funds for which MGIE or relevant Mercer affiliate acts as investment manager. In order for the Trustees to discharge its obligations with respect of voting and engagement, it requires reporting on the engagement and voting undertaken within the Mercer Funds in order to consider whether the policies align with those of the Trustees.

Voting rights that apply with respect to the underlying investments attached to the Mercer Funds are, ultimately, delegated to the third party investment managers appointed by MGIE. In delegating these rights, MGIE accepts that managers are typically best placed to exercise voting rights and prioritise particular engagement topics by security, given they are expected to have detailed knowledge of both the governance and the operations of the companies and issuers they invest in. However, Mercer has a pivotal role in monitoring their stewardship activities and promoting more effective stewardship practices, including ensuring attention is given to more strategic themes and topics. As such, proxy voting responsibility is given to listed equity investment managers with an expectation that all shares are to be

voted in a timely manner and a manner deemed most likely to protect and enhance long-term value. Mercer and MGIE carefully evaluates each sub-investment manager’s capability in ESG engagement and proxy voting, as part of the selection process to ensure it is representing Mercer’s commitment to good governance, integration of sustainability considerations. Managers are expected to take account of current best practice such as the UK Stewardship Code, to which Mercer is a signatory. As such the Trustees do not use the direct services of a proxy voter.

**Voting:** As part of the monitoring of managers’ approaches to voting, MGIE assesses how managers are voting against management and seeks to obtain the rationale behind voting activities, particularly in cases where split votes may occur (where managers vote in different ways for the same proposal). MGIE portfolio managers will use these results to inform their engagements with managers on their voting activities.

Given the nature of the Scheme’s fixed-income oriented Cashflow Driven Investment strategy, the bulk majority of the underlying assets have no exercisable voting rights to report, although it is noted that a small portion of the Mercer Multi-Asset Credit Fund invests in equity linked securities. Set out below is a summary of voting activity for the year to 31 December 2023 for the Multi-asset Credit Fund, in which the Scheme is invested. The statistics set out in the table below are drawn from the Glass Lewis voting system (via Mercer’s custodian). Typically, votes exercised against management can indicate a thoughtful and active approach. This is particularly visible where votes have been exercised to escalate engagement objectives. The expectation is for all shares to be voted.

Fund	Total Proposals		Vote Decision					For/Against Mgmt		Meetings	
	Eligible Proposals	Proposals Voted On	For	Against	Abstain	No Action	Other	For	Against	No.	Against
Mercer Multi-Asset Credit Fund <sup>(1)</sup>	17	17	94%	6%	0%	0%	0%	94%	6%	6	17%

<sup>(1)</sup> Voting Activity figures for the Mercer Multi-Asset Credit fund relate to a small number of equity holdings within the fund’s underlying segregated mandates. Please note this does not include voting activity from any underlying pooled strategies within the fund over the period

- “Eligible Proposals” reflect all proposals of which managers were eligible to vote on over the period
- “Proposals Voted On” reflect the proposals managers have voted on over the period (including votes For and Against, and any frequency votes encompassed in the “Other” category)
- “No Action” reflects instances where managers have not actioned a vote. MGIE may follow up with managers to understand the reasoning behind these decisions, and to assess the systems managers have in place to ensure voting rights are being used meaningfully
- “Other” refers to proposals in which the decision is frequency related (e.g. 1 year or 3 year votes regarding the frequency of future say-on-pay).
- “No. of meetings” represents meetings were eligible to vote at.
- “Against\*” represents in what % of meetings voted at least once against management.
- “Meetings No.” refers to the number of meetings the managers were eligible to vote at.
- “Meetings Against” refers to the no. of meetings where the managers voted at least once against management, reported as a % of the total eligible meetings.

**Significant Votes:** The Trustees have based the definition of significant votes on Mercer’s Beliefs, Materiality and Impact (BMI) Framework. Significant proposals are determined using the following criteria:

1. The proposal topic relates to an Engagement Priority (climate change, human/labour rights, and diversity). This is classified in the “Proposal Description” column below, referenced as Environmental, Social, and Governance respectively.
2. The *most* significant proposals reported below relate to the three companies with the largest weight in each fund (relative to other companies in the full list of significant proposals).

None of the votes within the Mercer Multi-Asset Credit Fund related to Engagement Priority topics and thus did not constitute significant votes to be reported.