

No. 10/26

9th January 2026

Dear Colleagues,

Member Status on CWU OLS Membership System

The purpose of this LTB is to clarify the membership status displayed in the membership system for members.

The system has several status labels, the most common being pre-pending, pending, current, lapsed and stopped.

Pre-pending (Online Joiners)

This is the first stage. The membership department must assign a branch and check that all the correct details have been provided. If completed correctly (no missing details), this can take up to 5 days, depending on working days and the department's workload, including a high number of new joiners or leavers. If details are missing, for example, workplace names, NI numbers, Payroll numbers, or Direct Debit details, the department will contact either the branch or the member directly to obtain the details and set them up. To avoid unnecessary delays, please ensure you check application forms before submitting and that your reps have been trained to support new members in completing them.

Pending

The new member has now been assigned a branch and will have received an automated email confirming their membership and branch contact details. There are two subscription methods: deduction at source (DAS) and Direct Debit (DD). This will impact how long they remain pending.

DAS – Depending on the employer, these files are sent to their payroll departments once a month to add details to the individual's pay record, and deductions will usually begin in the next pay run. Due to how our membership system and their payroll systems transfer and share this information, this can only be done once a month (either on the 3rd/8th or 15th depending on the employer). Therefore, if someone joins after the files are shared, their request will remain pending until the next run. Once the file has been sent to the employers it will change from Pending Awaiting to Pending Sent.

For Royal Mail members paid weekly, these files are shared with the employer weekly, but the main file transfer that collects the money at the employer's end and pays the subscriptions to us still occurs monthly.

Once the incoming file is received from the employer and processed it will change any Pending Sent members who have paid to Current. Sometimes this happens on the following month's payroll depending on the employer.

Sometimes this can take longer due to the individual employer's payroll departments; reasons can include workload, sickness, holidays, or year-end. However, most new joiners are set up within one to two months.

DD – Provided the details are correct, these will be added to the direct debit confirmation file. If they join after the confirmation file has been sent, they will be added to the next file.

Other Pending Members

When a member changes their membership, their status can change from current to pending or from leaver to pending. For example, if someone opts in or out of the political fund or rejoins the union. Equally, if someone is a member and changes employer to another one of our recognised employers. Therefore, pending status can also indicate that a change is taking place within their membership.

Current

This signifies that the membership is live and that subscriptions are being collected either by deduction at source or by direct debit.

Subsidised Status

When a member goes on maternity/paternity or adoptive leave, this status can be set up for the duration of their leave. They will remain a current member, without paying subscriptions. The membership department must be informed either directly by the member or the branch. The branch must ensure the local representative or member informs them of their return date. If set up correctly, when they return to work, the reactivated membership will not trigger an attempt to collect all of their missed subscriptions. It is important to note that the branch must keep the membership department updated of the return date. Usually this is set at 6 months, before being reactivated with the employer, if they have not returned then the member's status would change to stopped.

If a member goes on long-term sick leave and is no longer receiving pay, then they can also be set up as a subsidised member. There are other exceptional circumstances in which this status can apply, and if unsure, it is best to contact the membership department to find out whether their circumstances make them eligible.

The branch must inform the membership department to re-activate their membership once they return to work.

Lapsed

If a member pays by Direct Debit and the payment doesn't collect, their status changes to lapsed. This is often because they have changed their bank details and not informed the union, or because there are insufficient funds. The membership department will contact the individual to inform them what has happened and will attempt collection three times; this will be the total missed, so up to 3 months of subscriptions. If, after this time, no collection is made, their status will change to stopped - no payment.

Stopped – no payment or permanent

If paying by DAS, then this could be either because the member has informed the union or their employer that they wish to leave the union. Equally, it could mean that they have left employment. Some members will move from pending to stopped if they have left employment before subscriptions were collected. To note, the employer no longer informs us of the reason for leaving the union.

If paying by DD, then this is either because they have informed the union that they wish to leave the union. If they have cancelled their DD with their bank but have not informed the union, the membership department will attempt to collect 3 times (lapsed status) before changing their status to stopped.

Other statuses include deceased and duplicate, which are self-explanatory (they show in Inactive Members).

Branches are advised:

- To ensure that membership records are up to date and to inform the membership department of any relevant changes to members' details that cannot be amended at the branch level in the OLS system.
- Ensure members are aware that they need to keep the union informed of changes to their employer, workplace and contact details. The members themselves can make a number of these changes by logging onto the membership portal: www.cwu.org/cwu-member-portal

If you have any questions or require further assistance with any of the details above, please contact:

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Yours sincerely,



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