

**Understanding
DOCAS Processing
and Direct Debits**

A GUIDE

UNISON North West

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UNISON

the public service union



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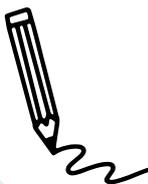
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KEY GUIDE



**USEFUL
FACT**



**TO
DO**



**IMPORTANT
INFO**



JARGON BUSTING

DOCAS - Deduction of subscriptions at source, i.e. subs taken directly from salary

DMJOL - DOCAS method join on line.

IMPS - Income & Membership Processing Services) team in Manchester who process core subscription income, new members who join online (over 1 million since 2019) and DOCAS cleanse our largest employers.

JOL - Join on line – members who JOL rather than completing paper forms.

DD - Direct Debit – subs taken from member's bank account.

RMS - Replacement Membership System

WARMS - (Web access RMS) used by branches but regions/organising staff do not have access to this system.

MAC - (Membership Audit Certificate) since 2017 it has been a legal requirement for UNISON to pass this annual audit, in the same way UNISON must pass its annual financial audit.

MATs - Multi Academy Trusts (usually in Local Gov branches)

ORSD - The Organising Recruitment Strategy Development (project)

NWM - The Northwest Membership Team N.MembershipServices@unison.co.uk



What is DOCAS cleansing?

DOCAS Cleansing checks that members paying subscriptions through their salary are up-to-date with their subscriptions.

The IMPS Unit is responsible for checking all regional employers where there are 200 or more DOCAS payers and all national employers. This may also include any smaller employers which are within those DOCAS schedules, except for Multi Academy Trusts.



In industrial action ballots this threshold is 100 DOCAS payers where IMPS staffing levels permit.

Regional RMS teams are responsible for checking all regional employers where there are 199 or fewer DOCAS payers.

Branches are encouraged carry out this work in addition to regional RMS to aid with retention of members within the union, this is to be done in coordination with the regional membership team and this should be recorded as having been carried out. This is known as manual DOCAS cleansing which involves checking the listing manually rather than using IMPS to do the checking and lapsing of members' records.

All DOCAS employers should be checked at least annually to comply with MAC.

Frequency – Imps will aim to process files with 750+ members bi-monthly, and files with 200-749 DOCAS paying members quarterly and reports send to the designated email recipients in the branch.

*Sometimes files are not processed within these parameters, if for example there has been a high number of JOL, and the team are deployed in actioning these.

Please note these reports can be sent to multiple recipients but are generally sent to the WARMS user(s), Membership Officer/Branch Secretary and your Regional Organiser for their information.

The reports are sent by IMPS to the contact who the region/branch have added as a contact (by adding Activist code 105 to the individual on warms) Please note the Branch Secretary will only receive the reports if they have Activist Code 105 added in WARMS.



Check the right people in your branch are receiving the reports.

To add an additional recipient to receive these reports, you can add Activist position code 105 to the desired members record on WARMS, similarly, to remove a recipient close (end) the position code 105 on WARMS.

Actioning the reports – when you receive the reports you will also find attached the following explanations and you need NOT make any amendments yourself, all will be done by the IMPS team.

- **‘Members to be lapsed’** – this lists the members who we have been unable to match to a subscription on this file for the month stated. This could be because there was insufficient information to match the record and they may be listed on the ‘Members unmatched to RMS Report’ (see below). It may also mean they haven’t paid a subscription for this period. If you are aware of any reason why this has happened, then please add a note to the report and amend the member subcategory if relevant.

**This could be if someone is on long term sick leave, maternity leave etc.*

- **‘Leavers not lapsed’** – this lists the UNISON members who did not make a DOCAS payment in this period but will be excluded from the lapsing procedure. The reason for excluding them from the procedure is listed on the report.
- **‘Members to be reinstated’** – this lists members who are currently lapsed on RMS/WARMS but appear to have made a payment within the period mentioned. They will all be reinstated when we update the system. If you are aware of any reason that they should not be reinstated, then please advise.
- **‘Lapsed Members by workplace’** – this contains all members to be lapsed listed by workplace. This is for information but may indicate where there are new payroll providers or TUPE transfers. If there are significant numbers of leavers in a workplace then you may want to investigate the reason why – see above *

- **‘Members unmatched to RMS’** – lists members where we have been unable to confidently match to a current record on WARMS/RMS. This could be because they have not been added to the system or because there is insufficient information to make a definite match. If you are able to supply the membership number, then please add it to the reports.



To aid retention and as part of the ORSD project and the NW Retention strategy it is imperative that these reports are checked and amendments returned to IMPS within the 1 week period given*.

Divide the lists between colleagues, stewards etc and please pick up the phone to ensure the leavers (in particular) are conscious leavers and not just “fallen” off the list.

**If you are unable to comply within this date period, and require an extension, then please contact the IMPS team with the email address provided on the originating email and they will advise you on this.*



The most productive way to check these reports is by contacting the members directly and you are urged to make every effort to do so!

Branches who undertake in checking their DOCAS reports regularly and make every effort to contact potential leavers not only have a robust and more accurate membership system but also have proven to retain up to 35% of the members that would have otherwise been lapsed.



UNISON have identified trends through the ORSD that have shown DOCAS members tend to remain in membership for longer than Direct Debit. Around 95% of joiners now join online of which UNISON now give an option for members to pay via DOCAS online (DMJOL).

 It is therefore vital that branches working with their Regional Organiser urgently reach DOCAS online agreements with all major recognised employers to ensure that new joiners can pay via DOCAS wherever possible.

The employer will receive an email from IMPS at the frequency that they've requested with the list. However, if no JOL applicants opt to pay via DOCAS that month, no email will be sent.

You need to contact the employer just after the first email is sent to the payroll department. This is to ensure the employer was expecting the email and has processed the UNISON Members via this new process – you can run a movements report within WARMS to clarify these.

 The online application process updates overnight so DMJOL will be available for new joiners the day after we set the employer up on RMS/WARMS.

If a JOL applicant opts to pay Political Fund, they will not get the option to pay via DOCAS.

 You must get the Employer's authority to set up DMJOL. If the employer acts as a payroll provider for other employers, you cannot set them up for DMJOL unless you have that employer's permission.

Please ensure that when DOCAS reports are received from IMPS that they are rigorously checked to prevent members from being lapsed!

We can only send the email notification of DMJOL members to one recipient of the employer. We cannot copy others in. If you are unsure of who the email of who to set up to is being sent please contact your RO who can obtain this information from our UNISON intranet "Pearl".

Issues and solutions – As with any recently new system there have been incidents whereby large employers, e.g. local authorities, have accepted DOCAS online applicants, but some applications have not been processed effectively due to payroll fragmentation. Schools are a prime example. We have now developed a solution to handle this issue. IMPS can currently flag an employer to accept DOCAS applicants, but you can now prevent (suppress) specific workplaces i.e. Schools, offering the DOCAS option when applicants join online by contacting NWM and asking them to perform this function.



DIRECT DEBITS

The simplest and UNISON's preferred method to pay subs is via direct deduction from wages, however certain employers do not offer this service and some members prefer to pay via their bank.

How we check the payment status of DD members –



To aid with retention of members who elect to pay via this method branches can access WARMS reports of members with ceased or suspended Direct Debits. These members are potential leavers who will lapse 12 weeks after ceased payment unless they reinstate their DD or start DOCAS payments.

To do this please use the exception reports within the WARMS report suite. For further information use the help guide or contact W.Support2@unison.co.uk for help.



Direct Debit suspensions are due to insufficient funds.

Branches may wish to follow up these members with information regarding There for You (UNISON Welfare) and pay campaign information.

Direct Debit cessations follow the member contacting the bank to cancel payment. They are not generally due to error. However, with real time cessation information on the WARMS and weekly joiner / leaver reports, there is a 12-week window to contact these members to attempt retention.

The member can re-instate DD payments via UNISON Direct or via My UNISON. In recent pilots, some DD payers did welcome contact and the option to change their DD payment date* (via My UNISON or UNISON Direct) or re-join via DOCAS (where applicable).

*Current direct debit dates are 1st, 15th, and the last working day of the month. If members are struggling to pay on one of these dates you can also offer to switch to DOCAS (if applicable) – a new mandate (form) will be required.



FINAL STEPS

Weekly leaver reports (emailed centrally to all Branch WARMS users) show levels of leavers – i.e. those who have reached the end of the 12-week period and whose membership has been lapsed - by branch and employer.

Every leaver will have previously appeared as a potential leaver on a DOCAS cleanse or DD cessation / suspension report and should have been contacted at that point.

Leaver reports must be scrutinised by each Branch and every effort must be made to contact, e.g. via telephone calls to identify any concentrations of leavers that could be due to payroll error, TUPE transfer, or deterioration of local union organisation etc.



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