

Non-payment of membership fees – change to the process

IChemE members pay an annual membership subscription with payment becoming due on 1 January each year. The subscription notice is sent in November of the previous year. In accordance with the By-laws, those who have not paid their dues by 31 March, will have their membership suspended, which is the first step in the membership lapsing process.

Suspended members are still members of the Institution and can continue to use their IChemE post-nominals (but not their Engineering Council ones) until they are removed from the membership Register (the final step in the lapsing process). However, they will have no access to member benefits (*The Chemical Engineer*, member rates for events and training, online resources such as *Knovel* and *Interface*) and, if they are a Voting Member, will not be able to vote at General Meetings or in elections.

Current process

The Institution's By-laws (36) state that:

If any member's subscription shall fall in arrears for one year, and the member shall fail to pay such arrears within three months after the Chief Executive has sent a written application to the member, the member's name may be removed from the Register of members by the Council, and the member shall thereupon cease to be a member of the Institution.

(correct at time of writing: 26 April 2018)

Over the years, IChemE has adopted a process that retains suspended members on the Register for a further year, in addition to the year allowed for in the By-laws. This decision was taken to provide time for the subscriptions team to communicate with and attempt to persuade suspended members to re-engage with the Institution. However, experience has shown that those who have not paid within twelve-months are unlikely to do so subsequently.

Following my appointment as Chief Executive, I commissioned a detailed review and rationalisation of the Institution's membership processes.

One of the areas that caused me concern was the efficiency of the process for lapsing members. Allowing members to remain on the Register without payment beyond the year in which payment is due adds cost and complexity to the accounting procedures. For example, it can lead to disputes with the bodies that licence IChemE to award titles such as Chartered Engineer, Environmentalist and Scientist. It also means that the total membership number reported externally could be construed as misleading, some would even argue that the headline figure should only reflect members in good standing.

Members whose account is in arrears for over two years are now progressively being removed from the Register. As we move forward, this will ensure that the membership numbers we report will offer a more accurate picture of the active IChemE community. This will not affect the Institution's finances (as the arrears were being written off in any case). Some of this work is reflected in the numbers that are reported in the Annual Review 2017 – which is available to download [here](#).

Process for 2018

As part of my review, Council agreed that we should act more expediently to remove non-paying (suspended) members from the Register. This makes it a much fairer situation for our paying members.

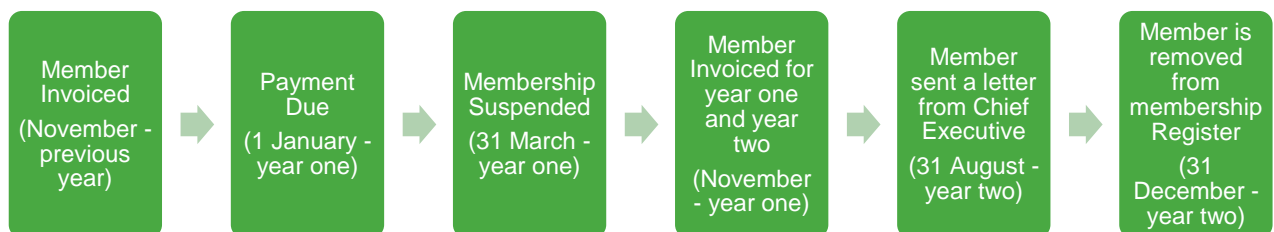
Therefore, all members that have not paid their membership subscription for 2017 (due 1 January 2017) have been sent correspondence from me this week (25 April 2018), informing them that if they continue to be in arrears, then their membership will be lapsed within three months (by 25 July 2018). If they are removed from the Register, they will have to reapply for membership if they wish to be re-instated. If they are professionally qualified (Chartered) and do not reinstate their membership within three years from the date that the fees became due, then they will be required to undertake a fresh professional review, in order to demonstrate how they have maintained their competence during the intervening period, before they can be re-instated.

Further, if a member is removed from the Register, they will lose all entitlement to use post-nominals letters (MIChemE, FIChemE etc.) including those of the Engineering Council (CEng), Science Council (CSci) and Society for the Environment (CEnv), as appropriate. All other membership benefits will also be lost.

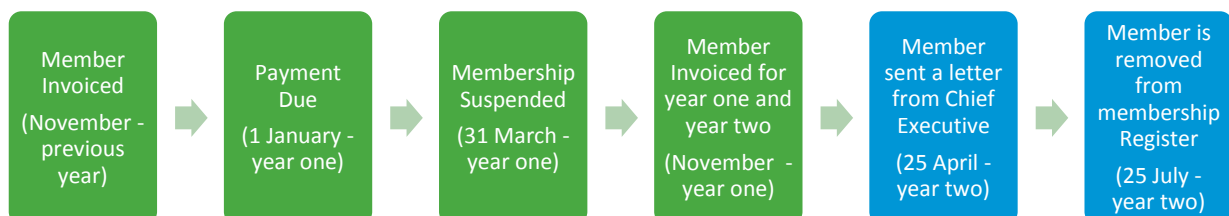
The model below shows the process we have had in previous years, to what we are implementing in 2018. As you will see the timeline has reduced slightly.

Comparison

Previous years – two-year arrears cycle:



Now – reduced arrears cycle:



(blue indicates where the process has changed)

Future changes

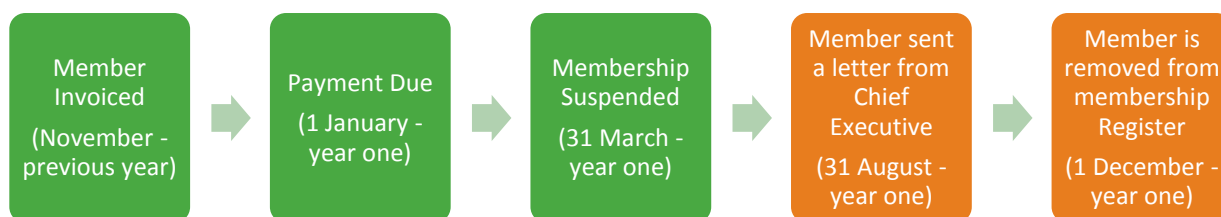
In addition, as you will have seen in our [recommendations for change to the By-laws](#), new wording has been proposed to bring the arrears process within a twelve-month period in line with the majority of our sister Institutions.

The new wording to the By-law is as follows:

If any member's subscription shall fall in arrears for eight months, and the member shall fail to pay such arrears within three months after the Chief Executive has sent a written application to the member, the member's name may be removed from the Register of members by the Board, and the member shall thereupon cease to be a member of the Institution.

The reason for this change is to ensure that the removal of non-paying members from the Register can be undertaken within a twelve-month period, in order to ensure that the membership Register more accurately reflects membership in any given year. This also creates a fairer situation for paying members. I do not believe that any member who wishes to remain in membership will be disadvantaged by this change.

If the change is voted in favour at the Annual General Meeting on 21 May 2018, the subscriptions process for year-end 2018 will be as follows:



(orange indicates where process will change, if the Charter and By-law changes are approved at the AGM in May 2018)

I trust this note has clarified the process for you. However, if you have any further queries on this topic, please contact members@icheme.org.

Kind Regards,

Jon Prichard
Chief Executive

26 April 2018