Support Group Member FAQ

Updated 26th November 2026

About the change

Why are you introducing membership?

Until now, our support groups have been free to attend. For many years they were funded by large trusts, but this funding came to an end last year. Access to large trust funding has reduced significantly and we haven't been able to replace it. Without a change, we would have had to cut our groups from over 45 a month to 10 at most. Moving from a free service to a paid membership means we can keep all our groups running.

Why not just run more fundraising appeals?

Thank you to everyone who has donated to our appeals. We'll keep fundraising, but appeals on their own can't keep over 45 groups running - we never know how much an appeal will raise, and things like staff time and volunteer training have to be planned months ahead. Membership means we have money coming in that we can plan around, and fundraising helps cover the rest.

Will the support groups close if not enough people sign up?

We're introducing membership because we want our groups to be here for the long term. This change is about protecting them.

We completely understand why some of you would like more certainty, especially after such a big change. The honest answer is that no charity can promise what the future holds, but we can promise that we're fully committed to making the groups work. We've already taken big steps to strengthen our finances, including reducing our costs and finding new sources of income, and membership is one part of that. Our trustees chose to introduce membership, in part, because it gives the groups a regular income we can plan around.

There are no financial figures or membership targets we could share that would be informative, out of their wider context. They're based on planning assumptions that change as sign-ups come in, so on their own they could give a misleading picture. What we can tell you is that it's early days, but the signs are really encouraging, and sign-ups are slightly ahead of what we expected.

Is OCD Action making money from the groups?

No. Every penny of membership goes straight back into running our support groups. Membership covers part of what the groups cost to run, and we fundraise for the rest.

Why £9?

Each place at a session costs us £5 to provide, so three sessions cost £15. We've set membership at £9 to keep it as affordable as we can, while giving the groups a steady income. We encourage all members to attend 3 groups a month if you can, to get the most out of your membership.

Why was the timeline so short?

We know we asked you to make a decision in a short time, and some of you have told us how hard that felt. We're sorry.

Decisions about large grants can take a long time, and we can't always predict how many trusts and foundations will fund us or when they'll let us know. This year, more funders than expected turned

down our applications, and many of those decisions came at the same time. We needed to act quickly to keep all our support groups running.

If you haven't signed up yet, there's still time. We'll keep your membership on hold until 28th February 2027 (see "Signing up and deadlines" below).

Will my groups change?

Your groups will keep running on the same days and at the same times. Membership doesn't change how the groups work.

Will my groups be quieter from December?

It's possible some groups will feel a little quieter for a while. Our groups always have people coming and going - every month some members move on, and new members join and take their places. While we bring existing members onto the new membership, we've paused new registrations on our website, so we're not seeing the new members who would usually be joining.

Some members have also told us they're doing well and don't need a place anymore, and this change has given people a natural moment to take stock. We expect most groups to keep healthy numbers, and once we reopen to new members in the new year, numbers will build back up.

Are the groups for under-18s changing?

No. Groups for 14- to 17-year-olds stay free.

How do I know your emails are genuine?

Some of you have asked whether our membership emails could be a scam. That's a sensible question, especially as we've never charged for our groups before.

Our membership emails come from groups@ocdaction.org.uk, and you can read about the changes on our website at ocdaction.org.uk/changes-to-ocd-action-support-groups. Direct debits are set up on GoCardless' secure page.

If you're unsure about anything you've received, please email groups@ocdaction.org.uk.

Your membership

What does membership include?

Membership gives you up to three group sessions each month. Each support group meets once a month, so you can attend up to three different groups. You'll still need to book each session through our booking system to confirm your place.

Why does membership include up to three sessions?

We based this on how members use the groups now, as most people attend three sessions a month.

What if I only go to one session a month?

Membership is the same monthly fee whether you attend one, two or three sessions. To get the most from your membership, we'd encourage you to book all three if you can.

Could there be other options, like paying per session, a family membership or a taster session?

We've heard this question from a few members, including people who go to one group, couples or parents attending together, and partners who'd like to try a group first. We can't change the

membership options right now while everyone is moving over, but all your feedback will go into our review of membership. Please share your thoughts at groups@ocdaction.org.uk.

Will I keep my place?

Yes. As a current member, you'll keep your current groups when you set up your membership. If you'd like to change them, email groups@ocdaction.org.uk and we'll let you know within 10 working days whether there's space. If a group is full, we'll add you to its waiting list.

Will I lose my place if I miss a session?

- If you pay £9 or £15, there's no minimum. Your membership continues as long as your payments do. If you book a session and can't make it, it would be really helpful if you could let us know.
- If you have a reduced or waived fee, please attend each of the groups you're registered for at least once every three months. This helps us make sure reduced and free places go to the people who need them, and that people waiting for a place can join. If you haven't attended one of your groups for a while, we'll get in touch to remind you and invite you to its next session. If you don't attend that session, we'll remove you from that group.

If you're unwell or can't attend for a while, get in touch and we can pause your membership instead.

What if one of my groups is cancelled?

We'll do our best to give you notice of any changes and we'll offer you a place in another group. Your membership fee won't normally change if suitable alternative groups are available.

What if I'm unwell, or away for a while?

If you can't attend for a while, for example because you're unwell or travelling, you can pause your membership for up to two months. You won't be charged while your membership is paused. Just email groups@ocdaction.org.uk to arrange it.

Will I get a refund if I miss sessions?

Membership fees aren't normally refunded for missed sessions. If you're unwell or something has changed for you, please get in touch. We'll always listen and look at what we can do, including pausing your membership.

Can someone else use my membership?

No. Membership is personal to you and can't be passed on to someone else.

Paying

How do I pay?

By direct debit, through GoCardless, the company that handles our payments. Payments come out on the 1st of each month.

What if I can't pay by direct debit?

Please get in touch at groups@ocdaction.org.uk and we'll talk you through other ways to pay.

Is it safe? Will you see my bank details?

All payments are processed securely by GoCardless, which is widely used and trusted. OCD Action never sees or stores your bank details.

Why does setting up a direct debit ask for so much information?

GoCardless asks for the standard details banks need to set up a direct debit securely. OCD Action never sees or stores your bank details.

What will appear on my bank statement?

Payments will show as GoCardless, usually with OCD Action in the reference. If this causes you any concern, please get in touch at groups@ocdaction.org.uk.

When will my first payment come out?

If you have already set up your membership - by the 23rd of November deadline - your first payment will be taken on 1st December. After that, payments are taken on, or shortly after, the 1st of each month. If the 1st falls on a weekend or bank holiday, it may take a little longer to leave your account.

If you were unable to set up your first payment by 23rd November, please email groups@ocdaction.org.uk to arrange your new membership. Once this has been set up, our team will confirm which month your first payment is scheduled for, with payments taken on the 1st of each month.

Can I change the date my payment is taken?

All payments are requested on the 1st of the month. This means everyone's membership starts at the same time, and our team can see who has joined and plan the right number of group sessions, places and volunteer shifts for the month ahead. If paying on the 1st is difficult for you, please get in touch.

How do I know it's worked?

GoCardless will send you a confirmation email once your direct debit is set up. Once you have that, you're all set and don't need to do anything else. If it hasn't arrived within a day, please check your junk folder. If there's still no email, please get in touch.

Can someone else pay for me, like a family member?

Yes. They can set up the direct debit for you and then fill in this short form so we can match their payment to your membership.

What is the £15 option?

It's an optional way to cover the full cost of your place, as three sessions cost us £15 to provide. Only choose it if you'd like to and you're able to.

Can I add Gift Aid?

Gift Aid can't be added to membership, because it's a fee for a service rather than a donation.

What happens if a payment fails?

GoCardless will try to collect the payment again, up to three times. If it still hasn't gone through, we'll get in touch to see whether you'd like to keep your membership and talk you through other ways to pay. If you're finding it hard to pay, please let us know.

Can I change my mind after signing up?

Yes. You can cancel within 14 days of setting up your direct debit and get a full refund. If you've attended groups during that time, we may make a small deduction for the sessions you've used.

How do I cancel?

Email groups@ocdaction.org.uk at least seven days before your next payment date and we'll cancel your direct debit for you. If you prefer, you can cancel your direct debit yourself with your bank, but we would ask you to also email us to tell us you have cancelled your membership.

Reduced and waived fees

Who can apply for a reduced or waived fee?

As a guide, a reduced fee of £4 a month is for anyone whose household income is roughly £20,000 to £40,000 a year. It's also for anyone who is studying, full or part time, and anyone who looks after a family member, partner or friend without being paid for it.

A waived fee (so your membership is free) is for anyone whose household income is under £20,000 a year, anyone who can't work because of illness or disability, and anyone who is looking for work.

These are examples, not a complete list. If you're not sure, please get in touch. Even if one of these examples applies to you, it's up to you to decide whether a reduced or waived fee is right for you. If you can comfortably afford £9, we'd ask you to choose standard membership, so reduced and waived places can go to those who need them most.

I qualify for a reduced or waived fee, but I'd like to pay £9. Is that OK?

Absolutely. Thank you.

I'm retired. Which option is right for me?

Everyone's circumstances are different, so we haven't set a separate option for people who are retired. Please choose based on your own household income and situation and get in touch if you'd like to talk it through.

What does household income mean?

The combined yearly income, before tax, of the adults in your household who share financial responsibilities.

Do I need to provide evidence?

No. We trust you to choose what's right for you. The form asks you to tell us a little about your circumstances, and to tick a box confirming you could provide evidence if we ever needed to ask. We'd only ask in rare cases, and that decision would always be made by two members of staff, including a senior manager.

Will anyone else know I've applied?

No. Everything you share is kept confidential, and only the staff and the small number of volunteers who handle applications and manage membership can see it. Group members and facilitators won't know which membership rate you're on.

How long will my application take?

Our groups team will look at your application and get back to you within 15 working days, though we expect to be much quicker. Once we've looked at your application, we'll either confirm that your fee has been waived or send you a link to set up your £4 direct debit.

I've applied for a reduced or waived fee. Can I keep coming to groups while I wait?

Yes. If you applied by 23rd November, you can keep going to your groups while we look at your application, even if our decision comes after 1st December.

What if my application isn't accepted?

This would be rare. If it happens, we'll explain why. You can ask us to look at it again within 14 days, and two staff members who weren't involved in the first decision will review it.

What if my circumstances change?

Just let us know and we can change your membership. We'll also ask everyone with a reduced or waived fee to reconfirm their circumstances once a year.

Are reduced and waived places limited?

To make sure we can put all our support groups on a firmer financial footing, we do have to limit the number of reduced fee and waived fee places we can offer, but we take our responsibility seriously to make sure cost alone isn't a barrier to support. We have a meaningful number of reduced fee and waived fee places, and we'd encourage anyone who feels they need one to apply, so we can fully understand the need.

Signing up and deadlines

I haven't signed up yet. Is it too late?

No. The 23rd of November deadline has passed, but you can still join. Please email groups@ocdaction.org.uk by 10am on Friday 11th December, and we'll help you set up your membership and, where we can, get you into your groups in December.

After 11th December, we won't be able to add anyone to groups in December or January, as our team takes a break over Christmas. If you haven't decided by then, that's fine. We'll get in touch in mid-January to see if you'd like to start attending groups from February onwards.

If we haven't heard from you at all by 28th February 2027, we'll take it that you don't wish to continue, and we'll remove you from our support group lists.

I've missed the deadline, but I'd like to keep coming to my groups before my membership starts. Can I?

Please email groups@ocdaction.org.uk by 10am on Friday 11th December. We'll send you a link to make a one-off payment for December, and help you set up your membership from January.

What if I don't want to join the new membership?

If you've decided that membership isn't right for you, please let us know using this short form or email groups@ocdaction.org.uk. We'd really like to hear from you either way.

Which email address should I use to sign up?

Please use the email address our email was sent to, as that's how we'll match your membership to you. If you'd like to use a different one, just let us know.

Questions and support

I'm finding this change hard. Who can I talk to?

We understand this is a big change. You can email groups@ocdaction.org.uk at any time and we will get back to you on weekdays, during working hours.

You're also very welcome to join our online member briefing on Thursday 3rd December, 6:30pm to 7:30pm, where Keira (Groups, Youth and Communities Manager) and Leigh (CEO) will answer your questions. There's no need to book. If you have a group that evening, you're welcome to join the briefing first and then go to your group, as we'll keep groups open for you to join late.

Join using this link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87963246610
(Meeting ID: 879 6324 6610, Passcode: OCDAction)

How do I stop receiving emails about this?

If you no longer want to receive emails about our support groups and membership, please email groups@ocdaction.org.uk with "unsubscribe" in the subject line. Please note that we need to be able to email you to run your membership, so unsubscribing will also end your membership and your place in our groups.

Will the price go up?

Our trustees will review membership fees regularly. If anything significant changes, we'll always let you know in advance.

I know someone who wants to join. Can they?

New sign-ups are paused for now while we put everything in place. They can join our waitlist on our website, and we'll let them know as soon as we reopen.

I have ideas for how membership could be improved. Where can I share them?

We'd love to hear them. Please email groups@ocdaction.org.uk. Your experiences and ideas will help us keep improving our support groups and membership.