

# Information note

A guide for mutual societies registered under the  
Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014

January 2026

## Who we are

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) is the authority that mutual societies must register with. This includes societies registered under the **Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014** or **1969 in Northern Ireland**.

We provide oversight to assess and drive compliance, including submitting annual returns and accounts. Mutual societies' committee members are responsible for ensuring their societies comply with these rules.

## Tips for staying compliant

- Check the [Mutuals Public Register](#) to see when you last submitted.
- Use the [Mutuals Society Portal](#).
- Make sure you have more than 1 portal user (you can have up to 5).
- Know who submits returns.
- Submit within 7 months of your financial year end.

### Why annual returns matter

All societies must submit annual returns and accounts to us within **7 months of their financial year end**. This is a legal requirement.

If a society does not meet their legal obligations, the FCA can cancel their registration.

## What happens if you're de-registered

- The society loses legal status.
- It loses licenses – this could affect alcohol licenses/premises linked to your registration.
- Members lose protection – members no longer benefit from limited liability and could be personally responsible for the society's debts or legal obligations.
- No re-registration. You would need to apply as a new society with a new name.
- You might have to operate as an unincorporated association.
- Possible disputes over assets.

**See the next page for links**

## Case Study – ABC Society



The treasurer of the society resigns due to poor health and is not replaced.

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The accounts are prepared and presented at the annual general meeting. But no one sends the annual returns and accounts to the FCA.

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The FCA sends a letter to the society notifying them that their annual returns and accounts have not been submitted. The secretary reads the letter but takes no action.

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The FCA issues a notice to the society telling them their registration will be cancelled in 2 months' time if they do not submit their annual returns and accounts. The society takes no action, so their registration is cancelled.

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The society contacts the FCA as they realise they are no longer registered, and asks for their registration to be restored. The FCA explains they will need to apply to register a new society.

This means they will need to choose a new name, submit outstanding annual returns and accounts and provide sufficient evidence that they will comply in the future.

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## Further information

- Mutuals Public Register ([mutuals.fca.org.uk](https://mutuals.fca.org.uk))
- Forms and applications: Mutuals Society Portal ([societyportal.fca.org.uk](https://societyportal.fca.org.uk))
- Guidance for Societies: FCA Handbook ([handbook.fca.org.uk/handbook/RFCCBS](https://handbook.fca.org.uk/handbook/RFCCBS))

## Contact Us

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