

Retirement Policy

Effective from **12 February 2021**
Approved by the Executive Team on **12 February 2021**

Applies to all employees of NHS Cheshire CCG

This document will be read in conjunction with:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Attendance Management Policy
- Other Leave Policy

Policy Revisions and Amendments			
Date	Section	Reason for Change	Approved By
Feb 21	5.5	<i>must work less than 16 hours per week within one calendar month of retirement</i> changed to <i>and work no more than 16 hours per week in the first calendar month</i> as per the NHS Pensions Employer Guidance	
Feb 21		<i>Following a two-week break between employments including the 24 hour break on retirement</i> changed to <i>Following a 24 hour break on retirement</i> as per the NHS Pension Employer Guidance	

Policy Obsolete		
Date	Reason	Approved By

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1. Introduction

This policy is designed to assist employees who are considering or have taken the decision to retire from service and outlines the options available and support that can be expected from management.

This policy will be applied equally to all staff covered by the policy and in accordance with the CCG Equal Opportunities Policy. The fair and equitable implementation of this policy will be monitored by Human Resources.

2. Principles

- 2.1 The CCG does not operate a compulsory retirement age.
- 2.2 When considering their retirement options, employees should bear in mind the potential impact on their pension.
- 2.3 The provisions of Section 16 of the NHS Terms and Conditions will apply to employees retiring early on grounds of redundancy.
- 2.4 The Minimum Retirement Age for members of the NHS Pension Scheme – 1995 section is 50, except for staff who joined on or returned to the scheme after 6 April 2006 for whom the Minimum Retirement Age is 55. The minimum retirement age for members of the 2008 section and the 2015 Pension Scheme is 55.
- 2.5 The Normal Retirement Age for members of the NHS Pension Scheme 2015 is the same as their State Pensionable Age which can be calculated here - <https://www.gov.uk/calculate-state-pension>. Members of the 1995 section of the NHS Pension Scheme have a Normal Retirement Age of 60 (55 For Special Class Status) and members of the 2008 section have a Normal Retirement Age of 65.
- 2.6 Employees considering retirement, particularly flexible retirement, should discuss their plans initially with their line manager.
- 2.7 Information on retirement options and benefits is available from the HR Team or the NHS Pensions website www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/pensions.
- 2.8 Employees should bear in mind that NHS Pensions require up to 4 months notice of any request for payment of pension benefits.
- 2.9 Flexible retirement requests will be considered in line with the procedure set out in the Other Leave policy.
- 2.10 Advice, guidance and support will be provided to Line Managers during the implementation and application of this policy by the Human Resources Team.

3. Scope

This policy will apply to all staff employed by the CCG with the exception of Medical and Dental staff who should refer to the Terms and Conditions for Hospital, Medical and Dental Staff and Doctors in Public Health Medicine and the Community Health Service.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Responsibilities of the CCG Executive Team

To ensure that the Retirement Policy is fairly and consistently applied to all staff irrespective of their protected characteristics.

Communication via appropriate mechanisms to inform staff about any changes to terms and conditions relating to pension entitlements.

4.2 Managers

To ensure that the Retirement Policy is fairly and consistently applied to all staff irrespective of their protected characteristics.

Ensure that employees are made aware of the procedure for retiring within their own team.

4.3 Staff

To discuss their retirement with their line manager at the appropriate time, particularly in relation to the flexible retirement option.

4.4 CCG Human Resources Business Partner

Provide advice, support and training to managers in the application of the policy.

5. Process

Employees who have decided that they wish to retire or are considering retirement, particularly flexible retirement, should discuss their plans with their line manager.

5.1 Normal age retirement

Employees wishing to fully retire from work must resign from their employment, giving the appropriate contractual notice. They will be expected to take all accrued annual leave prior to their leaving date.

5.2 Flexible Retirement

Flexible retirement provides flexibility regarding the age at which an employee retires, the length of time it takes to retire and the nature and intensity of work in the lead up to final retirement. It assists the Organisation by retaining the skills of key employees who are approaching, or are at, retirement age and provides a greater choice for employees.

5.3 Pre-retirement wind down (existing post)

An employee approaching their retirement may wish to gradually reduce the number of hours they work leading up to their actual date of retirement.

The employee should put their request in writing to their line manager, clearly outlining their proposed work pattern, start date and retirement date.

Requests will be considered in line with the procedure in the Other Leave policy and judged on the basis of business needs.

If a reduction in hours is agreed, the employee will be paid pro rata to the reduced hours worked. Annual leave entitlement will also be calculated on a pro rata basis

5.4 Pre-retirement step down (lower banded role)

An employee approaching retirement may request to continue working in a less demanding role.

The employee should put their request in writing to their line manager, clearly outlining their proposed role, hours of work, start date of the arrangements and retirement date.

Requests will be considered in line with the procedure in the Other Leave policy and judged on the basis of business needs.

If a change in role is agreed, the employee will be paid the appropriate rate for that post. If there is a reduction in working hours, the employee will be paid pro rata to hours worked. Annual leave entitlement will also be calculated on a pro rata basis.

Members of the NHS Pension Scheme 1995 and 2008 Sections who are over the minimum retirement age, and whose pay reduces by at least 10% for a minimum period of 12 months, may apply for the higher rate of pay to be voluntarily protected for pension purposes. The application via SMR9 Form must be made within 15 months of the date the rate of pay is reduced.

When the employee leaves, their pension up to the date they stepped down will be based on the higher rate of pay, and their pension earned after the step down date will be based on the reduced rate of pay. Cost of living increases will be applied to the protected higher rate of pay and both pensions will be added together for payment.

If a lower banded and suitable post is not readily available there is no obligation on the CCG to create a role.

5.5 Retire and Return

Under the provisions of the NHS Pension Scheme, employees have the option to retire from service and take all their pension benefits before returning to NHS employment.

Employees considering this option, who have NHS Pension Scheme membership prior to 5th April 1997, must request the Guaranteed Minimum Pension (GMP) check from the Pensions Officer in the first instance. Retirement cannot go ahead unless the GMP check has been passed.

Employees considering this option, and who wish to return to employment with this Organisation, must make their request in writing, to their line manager, as far in advance as possible. The request must include the proposed retirement date and when, and in what capacity, the individual would like to return to work afterwards.

Updated guidance in relation to retiring and returning to work was issued by the Department of Health in July 2017. A full copy of the guidance is available at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/634529/NH_Sretireandreturnguidance.pdf

Requests to return to work will be considered in line with the procedure in the Special Leave policy and considered against factors identified in the above guidance. Applications should be considered on their own merits and requests should not be automatically approved or declined. The CCG will specifically consider:

- The requirement for the post to be filled through 'retire and return' in light of cost improvement pressures
- Equality requirements
- Value for money
- The standard of the employee's work and attendance
- The employee's competence (skills, knowledge and experience) against the essential requirements of the post
- Whether the hours proposed can be accommodated / meet service needs
- Succession planning and the potential impact the employee's return will have on their team
- Whether it is in the best interests of the service to accommodate the 'retire and return' request
- Longer term workforce / service plans for the post and team and how the 'retire and return' request fits with this

The above factors will need to be summarised in writing by the line manager of the employee requesting to 'retire and return', using Appendix 1. This will then need to be submitted to the relevant Director to sign the section entitled 'Decision' on Appendix 1. The exception to this is where the application for 'retire and return' is from a Director – in this case, the application will need to be considered by the CCG Remuneration Committee.

If the request is agreed, there must be at least a 2-week break between employments, to include a minimum 24-hour break in pensionable employment to satisfy the requirements of the NHS Pension scheme.

More information can be found at: <http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/Pensions/4217.aspx>.

Members of the 1995 section, whether above or below normal retirement age and work no more than 16 hours per week in the first calendar month of retirement, and/or be under the normal retirement age, to avoid their pension being suspended. This restriction does not apply to members of the 2008 section or the 2015 Pension Scheme.

Employees who are in receipt of any earnings related protection will lose that protection on their return to work following the break in service.

Once an employee retires and receives their pension benefits in relation to their NHS service, this service will no longer be counted as 'reckonable' for redundancy purposes (para 16.6 of NHS Terms and Conditions). Where an employee takes their pension

benefits and returns to work at the Organisation, reckonable service will begin from the date of return to employment after the break in service.

Employees who retire and take pension benefits from the 1995 Section of the NHS Pension Scheme before returning to work will not be able to re-join the NHS Pension Scheme.

Employees who retire and return will retain entitlements that are related to and dependent on 'reckonable' service such as annual leave and occupational sick pay, as outlined in agenda for change. However, entitlements that are subject to continuous service, such as redundancy, will be dependent on the member of staff accruing the relevant length of service in their new role as any previous service accrued prior to the date of retirement will no longer be considered 'continuous'.

5.6 Draw down (partial retirement)

This option is not available to 1995 Section members

Members of the NHS Pension Scheme – 2008 section and 2015 Pension Scheme may elect to partially retire and take some of their benefits. To do this the employee must have reached at least the minimum retirement age of 55 and have reduced their pensionable pay by at least 10%.

Between 20% and 80% of pension entitlement may be taken and pension membership will continue to build up. Pensionable pay must remain reduced for at least a year otherwise eligibility to a pension will cease. Benefits can be drawn down twice before final retirement.

5.7 Voluntary early retirement (VER)

An employee may opt to take VER at any time from the minimum pension age applicable to the scheme they are, or have been, a member of provided they have at least 2 years membership. The minimum retirement age is 50 for members of the NHS Pension Scheme - 1995 section, and 55 for members of the NHS Pension Scheme - 2008 section and 2015 Pension Scheme. For employees who joined the NHS Pension Scheme – 1995 section for the first time on or after 6th April 2006, or previously left the Scheme before 31st March 2000 with deferred benefits & re-joined on or after 6th April 2006, the minimum retirement age is 55.

An estimate of pension benefits can be requested from a Pensions Officer however, final figures will be calculated by NHS Pensions. Employees considering VER, who have NHS Pension Scheme membership prior to 5th April 1997, must request the Guaranteed Minimum Pension (GMP) check from the Pensions Officer in the first instance. VER cannot go ahead unless the GMP check has been passed.

To leave employment due to voluntary early retirement the employee must resign from their employment, giving the appropriate contractual notice. They will be expected to take all accrued annual leave prior to their leaving date.

5.8 Late retirement

Employees who remain in employment beyond the normal retirement age, and remain in the NHS Pension Scheme, may continue to earn benefits to age 75 or until they reach 45 years membership. There are no provisions to increase benefits for members of the 1995 section if they are paid late. Members of the 2008 section will have any pension earned

before age 65 increased to take account of the fact that it is being paid later than the normal retirement age. There is no limit on the maximum number of years membership in the 2015 scheme.

5.9 Ill Health Retirement

When an employee becomes incapable of carrying out their duties on a permanent basis, and no reasonable adjustments can be made or suitable alternative employment secured (see Redeployment policy), the employee may wish to apply to NHS Pensions for retirement on the grounds of ill-health. This option is only available to employees who have two years continuous pensionable NHS service.

If an application for ill-health retirement is made, this constitutes a mutual decision that the employee is unable to fulfil their contractual obligations due to their ill-health condition and therefore a termination date will be agreed between the individual and their line manager.

Where ill-health retirement is identified as an option, the employee will be provided with an estimate of pension benefits via Human Resources or from the Pensions Officer. The application must be made on the appropriate form which is available from the NHS Pensions Agency.

Medical advisers, appointed by NHS Pensions, will assess the available medical evidence and will confirm whether the employee is permanently incapable of carrying out either their present NHS duties or any regular work. A Tier 1 or enhanced Tier 2 pension may be paid dependent upon this decision. Further information may be obtained from an HR Adviser in the first instance.

6. Monitoring

The policy and procedure will be reviewed periodically by Human Resources in conjunction with operational managers and Trade Union representatives. Where review is necessary due to legislative change, this will happen immediately.

Retire & Return Assessment

Employee Name	
Line Manager	

Please provide information in relation to the following factors:

The requirement for the post to be filled through retire and return in light of cost improvement pressures
Value for Money
The standard of the employee's work and attendance
Competence, skills, knowledge and experience required for the post
Can the requested hours be accommodated / meet service needs?
Succession planning and the potential impact of the employee's return to the team

Longer term workforce / service plans for the post and how the request fits with this

Decision – To be completed by the appropriate Director

Request approved (please tick)	YES		NO	
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Summary of rationale for decision

Signed	
Name	
Date	