# Flexible Retirement Policy

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<tr>
<th>CATEGORY:</th>
<th>Policy</th>
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<tr>
<td>CLASSIFICATION:</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PURPOSE</td>
<td>To provide knowledge, to all staff, relating to flexible retirement</td>
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<td>• Essential Reading for:</td>
<td>All staff</td>
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<td>All staff</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paragraph</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Policy Statement</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Scope</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Framework</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Duties</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Implementation and Monitoring</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 References</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Associated Policy and Procedural Documentation</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Appendices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A</td>
<td>Monitoring Matrix</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B</td>
<td>Advice for staff</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Policy Statement

1.1 The purpose of this Policy is to outline the framework within which Flexible Retirement may be considered and achieved.

1.2 A growing number of staff in the NHS are over 50 and the majority of these staff are in good health and able to continue working for many years. Extending the contribution of staff pre- and post-retirement is an essential part of Trust strategy to manage vacancies, expand the workforce, retain knowledge and skills, and succession plan. There are benefits to the Trust and staff in offering flexible working to those who are nearing retirement or have recently retired.

1.3 When staff retire, it can have a negative effect on the service. Mature and experienced staff have a great deal to offer the NHS later in their careers. Therefore, offering more flexible routes to retirement, such as part-time work or a chance to wind down, can help extend their contribution. Being flexible about retirement is often not considered because staff and managers believe that this can reduce pension entitlement. This is rarely the case. This Policy explores the available options and explains the benefits and financial effects of flexible retirement.

1.4 NB: The examples provided within this Policy must be used only as a guide. When considering Flexible Retirement, staff must seek advice from the Trust's Pensions Officer. Advice may also be sought from their Trade Union representative or from an Independent Financial Adviser regarding their own personal circumstances.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all staff of the Trust who are aged 50 years or over and contemplating flexible retirement.

3. Framework

3.1 This section describes the broad framework for flexible retirement. Detailed instructions are provided in the associated Flexible Retirement Procedure.

3.2 The Executive Director of Delivery shall approve all procedural documents associated with this Policy, and any amendments to such documents, and is responsible for ensuring that such documents are compliant with this Policy.

3.3 This Policy sets out a range of choices staff can make. Further support and advice services for staff are listed in Appendix B.

3.4 Application of this policy will be in accordance with the principles of the Trust's Equal Opportunities Policy, Flexible Working Policy and in line with NHS Pension Agency regulations and any subsequent amendments.

3.5 Normal and Flexible Retirement
3.5.1 There are options for part-time, full-time, limited period working after retirement, or flexible retirement. Any member of staff considering retirement must discuss this with the NHS or Trust Pensions Office.

3.5.2 The Application/Request form (see Flexible Retirement Procedure) enables individuals to explore the range of options available on approaching retirement, which they must discuss with their manager, as detailed below:

i. **Normal Retirement**
   This is where the member of staff chooses to take retirement at state pension age.

ii. **Wind Down**
   This is where the member of staff wishes to wind down to full retirement by working fewer days or hours in their current post i.e. part time.

iii. **Step Down**
    This is where the member of staff chooses to step down into a less demanding role on lower pay whilst still making good use of their skills and experience, and with preservation of NHS Pension rights at the higher level.

iv. **Retire and Return**
   This option is where the member of staff retires, takes all of their NHS Pension benefits and, after a short break of 14 calendar days, then returns to work in the NHS for an agreed period after a short break. With this option an individual is resigning in order to take their pension and as such there is no automatic right to return to either the original or another role.

v. **Draw Down (2008 and 2015 section members only)**
   This is where a member of staff takes part of their pension benefits whilst continuing in NHS employment.

3.5.3 The decision will be either agreement or refusal, with the reason for not being able to accommodate the request being stated on the form.

3.6 **Pension Provisions**

Pension members must approach the Trust’s Pensions department to discuss options and implications of flexible retirement. It is advisable to seek independent financial advice from an advisor who is registered under the Financial Services Act 2012.

3.7 **Training**
3.7.1 A Pre-retirement Programme is organised by the Trust’s Training and Development department. It is recommended that staff attend the programme at least five years before their intended retirement. This will allow staff time to put their financial affairs in order and to make decisions which will impact on retirement. Staff can book on to the programme via the Trust intranet.

3.7.2 The pre-retirement programme will include coverage of the superannuation scheme, the financial implications of taking retirement including equity release, and more informal topics such as health and fitness in retirement, education and hobbies.

3.7.3 Where financial advisers are involved, they will be registered under the Financial Services Act and will be genuinely independent and not tied to a particular product provider.

3.8 Grievances

3.8.1 Where there is any dispute regarding a decision staff must contact HR First Contact in the first instance.

3.8.2 HR First Contact will refer any formal grievances related to refused requests for investigation.

4. Duties

4.1 Executive Director of Delivery

The Executive Director of Delivery is responsible for the policy implementation, and the approval of all associated procedures.

4.2 Director of Human Resources

The Director of Human Resources will be responsible for:

- ensuring the maintenance, regular review and updating of this Policy. Revisions, amendments or alterations to the policy may be made sooner the review ‘due date’ where there are changes in employment law or the NHS Pension Scheme.

- address any potential age discrimination arising from refused requests.

4.3 HR Manager Governance

The HR Manager Governance will be responsible for advising managers and staff informally on age discrimination and equality rights under the Policy and the Equality Act 2010.

4.4 Learning and Development/Nurse Education/Medical Education Lead
The Learning and Development/Nurse Education/Medical education Lead will provide consistent advice and guidance to managers and staff on the application of this policy and its procedures.

4.5 **Managers**

Anyone who has a responsibility for staff must ensure that:

- They advise and inform their team to increase awareness and understanding of the policy;
- Conduct exit interviews with staff prior to their retirement date; and
- they will consider all requests made via a Request Form, meet with the member of staff to discuss, and update the form with a record of the decision reached.

4.6 **Staff (including contractors and volunteers)**

All staff must:

- Raise any queries on the application or interpretation of this Policy be discussed with Human Resources’ First Contact prior to any action being taken;
- Inform their manager at least 12 months prior to retirement age;
- Participate in an exit interview; and
- Complete the Application/Request form (see Flexible Retirement Procedure and send a copy of to the Pensions department.

5. **Implementation and Monitoring**

5.1 The Policy and the associated procedural documents will be available on the Trust intranet. The policy will also be disseminated through the management structure within the Trust and staff will be made aware at Corporate Induction.

5.2 Appendix A provides full details on how the policy will be monitored by the Trust.

6. **References**

Equality Act 2010

Financial Services Act 2012

7. **Associated Policy and Procedural Documentation**

Equal Opportunities Policy
Flexible Retirement Procedure

Work-Life Balance Policy
### Appendix A

### Monitoring Matrix

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONITORING OF IMPLEMENTATION</th>
<th>MONITORING LEAD</th>
<th>REPORTED TO PERSON/GROUP</th>
<th>MONITORING PROCESS</th>
<th>MONITORING FREQUENCY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of flexible retirement applications approved</td>
<td>Director of HR</td>
<td>Strategic Workforce Group</td>
<td>HR requested audit of patient data</td>
<td>Annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure to adhere to Equality: number of requests requiring investigation to address potential age discrimination, and number of grievances upheld</td>
<td>Director of HR</td>
<td>COOG</td>
<td>HR and Equality report</td>
<td>Annually</td>
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Advice for staff

Each individual case may vary, so it is advisable before finalising any retirement arrangements to seek advice from the following:

- **NHS Pensions general helpline**
  Telephone: 0300 330 1346 (08:00 – 18:00, Monday – Friday. Calls are charged at local rates)
  Email: nhsbsa.pensionsgeneral@nhs.net

- **NHS Pensions Choice 2 member helpline**
  Telephone: 0300 123 1601 (08:00 – 18:00, Monday – Friday. Calls are charged at local rates)
  Email: nhsbsa.choice2member@nhs.net

- **UHB Pensions Team**
  if you still need further assistance, the Trust's Pensions Team may be able to help. (Open 09:00 – 17:00, Monday – Friday.)
  Telephone: ext. 17497 (surnames A – J)
  Telephone: ext. 17495 (surnames K – Z)

- **Staff may also seek advice from their Trade Union Representative.**