

## Freedom of Information Request

### Request:

Details of the average age of retirement for members who are consultants within the NHS.

**Status:** Complete

**Response Date:** 24/09/2008

### General Data Information

It is not possible to identify the requested information from the NHS Pension Scheme's computer systems. Retirement data is maintained for scheme valuation purposes and does not lend itself to identify each individual request separately.

The average age in the table below refers an actuarial group of pensions scheme members, including consultants in England and Wales. This group includes Hospital Medical Staff (consultants, registrars, junior doctors), Part Time Specialists, MHOs and Nurses without special class status, these employment groups cannot be identified separately.

This is the latest information available from scheme valuation reports produced by the Government Actuaries Department (GAD) on a 4 yearly cycle. The information latest available information is contained within the GAD reports covering the period 2000 to 2004. A copy of the latest valuation report can be found on NHS Pension website under the FOI tab. [www.pensions.nhsbsa.nhs.uk](http://www.pensions.nhsbsa.nhs.uk)

Description of employment group	Men	Women
Hospital medical staff and part-time specialists 2000 to 2004	63.4	62.4

Source: GAD Valuation Report 2000 – 2004 – based on age retirements grounds

## Background

GAD signed off the valuation report for the period 1 April 2000 to 31 March 2004 on 17 December 2007.

GAD collects retirement information primarily to support the periodic valuation. This means that data tends to relate to members with common pension rights rather than to particular employment groups.

The Scheme has over one million active members and general membership activity, for example those joining and leaving the scheme, including retrospective pension awards and corrections, mean that any retirement data can only represent a "snap shot" in time.

The average age figure quoted in the scheme valuation report includes assumptions of the average retirement age that this group will experience in the future, which takes into account the actual experience between the period of each report. The table noted above does not reflect the assumptions.

The data will only include NHS employees who are working in the NHS and are members of the pension scheme.

## Consultants Retirement Ages

1. There is no set retirement age for NHS staff. The NHS Pension Scheme is available to all NHS employees from age 16 to age 70 (75 for employees who join the pension scheme for the first time after 1 April 2008) but the usual NHS Trust retirement age is 65.
2. The normal retirement age for all doctors in the NHS Pension Scheme is 60 (although this will change as more employees join the new pension scheme). Some doctors can retire from age 55 with unreduced benefits (see point 4 below). There is no distinction between the retirement ages of male and female doctors.
3. Doctors, and indeed all NHS staff, can retire from age 50 onwards under the NHS Pension Scheme Voluntary Early Retirement provisions. However, benefits are actuarially reduced, unless the employer agrees to meet the cost of early payment.

## Mental Health Officer Status

All members of the Scheme with Mental Health Officer status, not just doctors, can retire from age 55 providing they have accrued 20 years pensionable membership as a Mental Health Officer (MHO) and hold MHO status at retirement.

Mental Health Officer status may have been granted to staff who devote all, or almost all, of their time to the treatment or care of persons suffering from mental disorder. The right to retire at 55 for those members with at least 20 years of mental health officer service was introduced because at that time it was considered that caring for mentally disordered patients may be more arduous than other NHS posts. Mental Health Officer status was

abolished from the NHS Pension Scheme for new entrants on or after 6 March 1995 as part of a scheme restructuring programme.

Any consultants qualifying for retirement early under Mental Health Officer status are not included within the table above.