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# NHS Pensions Online Guide

## 6. Site Update

This provides information on any changes made to Pensions Online and other important information and therefore you should check this link regularly.

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### Pensions Online Downtime

I am pleased to report that normal service has now been resumed. Here at the Agency we endeavour for Pensions Online to be available to all employers during normal office working hours. Routine maintenance is always conducted 'out of office' hours or at weekend.

However, as with all e-business web sites, security is our prime concern and any potential breach in security is treated seriously and action is taken with immediate effect.

The decision to bring the site down immediately on 4 September was because one site had reported an apparent breach in security. After prompt investigation and analysis we are now confident that we have resolved this potential breach, which was down to how the particular organisation had configured its local network, by bolstering our own performance monitoring software.

I sincerely apologise on behalf of the Agency for the inconvenience this has caused for some, if not all of you and hope it is of some consolation that we do treat matters of security this seriously and will continue to do so.

**\*\*Please see point 5 as users should be aware of the new issue number 5 which affects the 'Increasing Your Benefits' facility.**  
**\*\*Important information to consider when using MemberZone.**

#### 1. Concurrent periods of membership with at least one period attracting special class status.

\*For the purposes of this 'special class' means that the member must have spent the last five years up to date of retirement in a special class post - this can be either whole time or part time\*

If a member has 2 concurrent periods of part time membership, one of which is special class status, member will be able to retire from both periods of membership anytime from age 55 without incurring any reduction. Currently, Pensions Online will only calculate retirement benefits from age 60, as it does not recognise member's special class status.

#### 2. Additional Voluntary Contributions

Members can only purchase additional membership to the value of that they will accrue at age normal retirement age. For example, if a member's ordinary Scheme membership at age 60 (55 for the special classes) is 10 years 100 days, they can buy up to 10 years 100 days additional membership, providing their contributions stay within the 15% threshold.

Pensions Online does not restrict amount to be purchased to that of the potential to normal retirement age. In the example above, if there is scope within the 15% threshold to purchase more than 10 years 100 days Pensions Online will calculate the cost when in fact it should be restricting the amount of additional membership to 10 years 100 days.

#### 3. Additional Voluntary Contributions

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#### 4. Mental Health Officer (MHO)

MHOs attain the right to retire at age 55 once they have completed 20 years Scheme membership. Until such time Mental Health Officers have a normal retirement of age 60.

When projecting benefits Pensions Online will take into account when a MHO attains 20 years MHO membership and will include 'doubled years' in the benefit projection. However, it does not recognise the change to a 55 normal retirement date and will incorrectly advise the user that member is not eligible to receive their benefits until age 60.

#### 5. Increasing Your Benefits:

The facility for working out how many additional years and days can be purchased should no longer be used in respect of members working part time sessions (i.e. a hospital doctor working 10/11ths), as we have found an error in the calculation process. The facility should therefore only be used for members working full time or part time on an hourly contract.

**Users can now use this facility for sessional doctors. However, you must first convert the sessions into hours worked e.g. session is 3.5 hours in length and member works 10 sessions per week. Therefore the number of hours you would input would be 35. This is explained on the 'Paying for additional membership by extra contributions screen'**

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