

Guidance on Applying for Retention of Mental Health Officer Status

Mental Health Officer (MHO) means a person, male or female; who is working in an approved place used for the treatment of patients suffering from mental disorders, and is employed for the whole or almost the whole of their time in the direct treatment of care of those patients.

A MHO with at least 20 years MHO membership may retire with benefits from age 55, provided they are still in a MHO job, and count each year of MHO membership over 20 years as 2 years for benefit purposes.

If a member of staff contacts HR expressing an interest in having their current (if start date within one month) or new employment assessed for MHO Status, HR should check that the member meets the criteria to apply for MHO Status by checking their employment record against the [MHO Decision Tree](#). HR should also advise the member to read the [MHO FAQ](#) factsheet available on the [Scheme Website](#).

If the member's employment record entitles them to apply for MHO Status for this employment the Retention of [MHO Status Application Form](#) must be completed by the member and their line manager and signed off by the appropriate Director of Mental Health and Director/Assistant Director of Human Resources relating to that employment. A copy of the job description and Job Specification for the employment being assessed should accompany each application.

If a member is applying retrospectively for posts held previously the member must apply using the HSC Pension Service Internal Disputes Resolution process. HSC Pension Service will review the SS10 form submitted at commencement of said employment to ascertain if MHO Status was approved at that time.

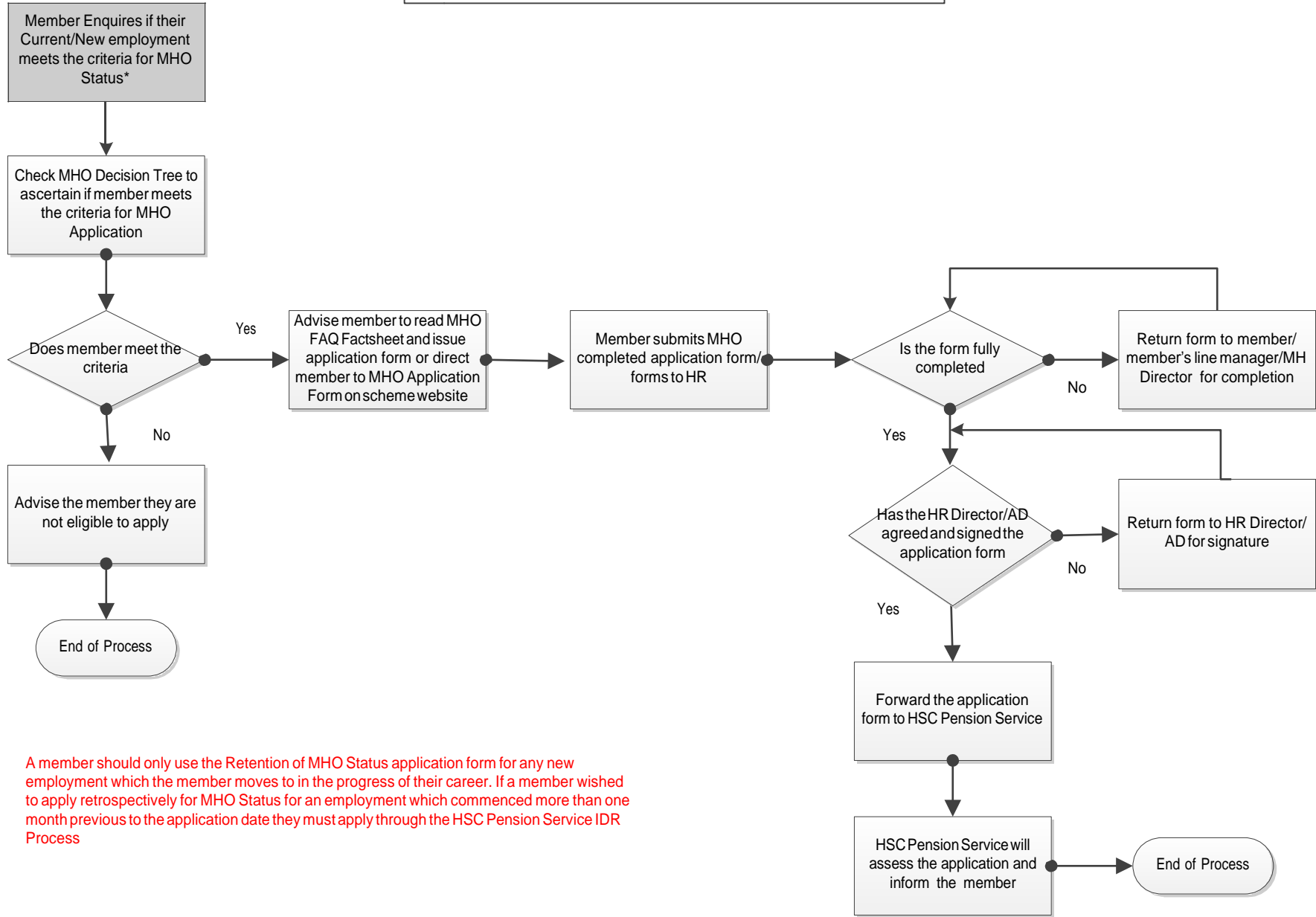
The completed form should be forwarded to HSC Pension Service where each application will be judged on its own merit. It is not sufficient to submit a signed application form with a job description/supporting evidence and not complete page 2 of the form. HSC Pension Service requires a percentage breakdown of the direct treatment and care time spent per week on the various duties carried out. Failure to complete any section of the form will result in the application being rejected.

HSC Pension Service will assess the application on the evidence provided and write to the member to inform them if MHO Status has been awarded.

If a member is transferring internally within your organisation to another designated MHO Post then the application process is not required.

If a member is transferring internally to a non MHO post, HR should e-mail HSC Pension Service immediately at hscpensions@hscni.net

Retention of Mental Health Officer Status
Application Process



A member should only use the Retention of MHO Status application form for any new employment which the member moves to in the progress of their career. If a member wished to apply retrospectively for MHO Status for an employment which commenced more than one month previous to the application date they must apply through the HSC Pension Service IDR Process