

Managing People

LCBB5004

Report

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Introduction

The loss of nurses is becoming an increasingly serious problem for the National Health Service (NHS) in the United Kingdom, which could have serious consequences for patient care (Urwin et al. 2010). This essay investigates the present state of nurse turnover, delving into the factors that contribute to this issue and the effects of this high turnover rate. The NHS's current monetary and non-monetary retention tactics are also assessed and rated for their success. Short-term and long-term recommendations are provided in the final section of the report to increase nurse retention, boost employee happiness, and safeguard the healthcare system's long-term viability and efficiency.

The Causes and Effects of Employee Attrition

The loss of younger, non-retired nursing practitioners in the UK is a major source of concern due to the country's ageing population. As of the previous June, the departure rate had reached a maximum of 11.5% (Palmer and Rolewicz, 2022). Workload stress, burnout, low pay, and a shortfall of advancement chances are just a few of the many causes of such high turnover rates.

Causes of Employee Attrition

Pressures at work and burnout are not uncommon for nurses to experience physical and mental tiredness as a result of their long hours, erratic shift schedules, and high-stress workplaces. A considerable increase in duties throughout public health emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic may have contributed to the escalation of these problems. Community providers and healthcare organisations are especially vulnerable to this issue because they have the greatest attrition rates. This is likely because of the stress involved in working in these fields and the level of patient engagement that is expected of staff.

Discouraging Pay is another cause of employee attrition. In the United Kingdom, the stress and demands of working as a nurse are not often reflected in the salary that one receives, especially when first entering the field. However, in large urban areas where numerous hospitals are located, the cost of living might easily exceed the salary that is paid. Nurses may be compelled by this pay disparity to seek employment in the private healthcare industry or entirely new fields.

Younger nurses, in particular, may also leave the NHS due to a lack of professional growth prospects within the field. Sometimes it feels like there's no room for advancement in the healthcare system because of the rigid hierarchies within it. Those who feel they have nowhere to advance in their careers inside the NHS may become dissatisfied and look elsewhere for work.

It also appears from the data that younger nurses are leaving in higher numbers than older nurses (Holmes, 2022). One possible cause is that work expectations have changed significantly between generations. Traditional nursing employment within the NHS may not provide the work-life balance, flexible scheduling, and employee wellness programmes that are highly valued by Millennial and Gen-Z workers.

Effects of Employee Attrition

There is a plethora of interrelated factors that contribute to the high turnover rate among nurses in the UK. To solve this problem effectively, management must take a systemic approach that addresses the fundamental difficulties that nurses encounter on a daily basis.

This high turnover rate has resulted in several significant issues in the UK nursing industry, which has a negative effect on service quality and continuity, organisational costs, and employee morale.

Treatment consistency and safety is one of the major effects of employee attrition. Staffing shortages caused by high turnover may hurt patients in terms of both the quantity and quality of service they receive. Overworked nurses are less likely to provide each patient with the individualised attention they require, which could negatively impact both patient satisfaction as well as effectiveness. Continuity of care can be jeopardised by high turnover rates, particularly in local healthcare trusts where familiarity with patients and their histories are essential.

Budgetary expenditures are another effect caused by employee attrition. The cost to the NHS due to turnover is high. Attrition is costly since it increases the need to recruit and train new employees. These costs include not just the upfront investment of finding and hiring new people, but also the hidden costs of lost productivity during the transition, potential overtime payments to current employees, and time spent teaching the new workers the ropes. An already problematic situation may become even more so if an elevated rate of turnover gives the industry a bad name due to the perception that working there is unsatisfying.

When hospitals have fewer nurses on staff, those who remain face increasing patient loads, which can increase stress, lower job satisfaction, and eventually lead to burnout. As a result, exhausted employees may look elsewhere for work, contributing to already high turnover rates.

Particularly in underserved or rural areas, attrition may reduce access to healthcare services. Longer wait times for care, less available services, and more work for the existing healthcare staff are all possible outcomes of a nursing shortage.

Retention Schemes Used by NHS

The healthcare system as a whole feels the effects of the UK nursing industry's high turnover rate (digital.nhs.uk, 2022). It has ramifications for patient care excellence, worker well-being, and overall access to healthcare, in addition to the immediate setting of work and financial viability of the NHS.

Monetary Retention Schemes Used by NHS

The National Health Service (NHS) uses monetary and non-monetary incentives to keep nurses working for the organisation. There has been some success with these, but they all need to be assessed closely in light of the present rates of attrition. In the case of monetary retention schemes, the NHS has used a number of these types of programmes in an effort to keep nurses on staff i.e., the NHS Pay Structure (Agenda for Change), the London Weighting Allowance, the High-reCost Area Supplement, the Reimbursement of Training Costs, and the Return to Practise financing.

The first one is the NHS Pay Structure (Agenda for Change) which aims to provide non-medical personnel with equitable compensation in accordance with the demands of their jobs. Unfortunately, considerable turnover persists despite these well-defined wage levels. Nurses may be tempted to quit if their pay isn't competitive with those offered by commercial healthcare companies or with international chances (Buchan and Ball, 2011).

Weighting adjustment for London is the second scheme. Because of the high cost of living in the city, London-based employees will get this supplemental compensation package. Nevertheless, London has a problem with a high turnover rate among its nursing staff. Entry-level or junior nurses may find it difficult to make ends meet with just the stipend because of the high cost of living.

The Third one is High-Cost-Area Addendum. In recognition of the higher cost of living outside of London, this addition is designed to compensate employees accordingly. However, it might not be sufficient to avert attrition, just as the London Weighting Allowance, indicating the need for a more holistic strategy to address regional living expenses and pay discrepancies (Williamson and Williams, 2011).

Cost-of-Study reimbursement is the fourth one. The NHS will pay for nurses' education so that it can keep its employees happy and healthy. But the numbers show that a disproportionate

number of younger nurses are leaving the profession, suggesting that the promise of subsidised education may not be enough to keep them around.

Finally, financial assistance is also available through this programme for nurses who have taken a sabbatical from their profession and are interested in returning to patient care. Although the scheme's benefits are clear, excessive turnover suggests that a financial reward may not be sufficient to keep employees who are experiencing burnout or other stressors on the job.

Non-Monetary Retention Schemes Used by NHS

Improving work satisfaction and lowering turnover can be greatly aided by non-monetary retention programmes. The NHS has implemented a number of non-monetary strategies to retain nurses. Flexible work schedules, mentoring programmes, career advancement chances, wellness programmes, and reward and recognition programmes are five that will be evaluated in depth here.

The NHS allows employees to set their own schedules, which helps with work-life harmony. This provision may not be sufficient, however, due to the significant turnover rate among nurses, especially those in their early careers. This perk may be less useful due to scheduling challenges and shift work requirements, especially in high-stress fields like community provider trusts (Hemmings et al., 2023).

Nurses can get advice and encouragement from seasoned experts through these programmes. However, mentorship programmes may not be as successful at retaining employees as they may be since mentors may be too busy to devote adequate time and energy to training their mentees due to staffing constraints.

The National Health Service (NHS) provides chances for professional growth, such as access to advanced degrees and specialised training. However, the high turnover rate raises questions about whether or not there is a misalignment between what is provided and how it is viewed or reached by nurses.

The National Health Service (NHS) also offers numerous approaches to health and wellness. However, burnout and stress remain common explanations for quitting the profession, suggesting that these efforts may not be reaching the root of the problem.

Methods of Appreciation and Reward is another non-monetary retention scheme through which nurses' hard work and devotion are recognised through these programmes. Stress, tough work

conditions, and a perceived lack of proper financial recompense may be enough to drive people away, notwithstanding these attempts.

For these programmes to be more successful in retaining nurses, a deeper knowledge of their needs and goals is necessary, especially among younger nurses.

Recommendations to Improve Nurse Retention

Short-term and long-term solutions are needed to combat the rising rates of nurse turnover plaguing the NHS. The following suggestions are made to lessen the impact of the primary causes of the high turnover rate in the nursing profession.

Short-Term Recommendations

In the case of short-term solutions, compensation plans should be re-evaluated and updated. In light of the current economic climate, nurses' pay can be reviewed and adjusted across all pay bands as soon as possible. The current wage scale and any adjustments for high-cost regions may need to be reconsidered. Nursing positions in the NHS might become more appealing with increased compensation, which may prevent qualified individuals from leaving in search of higher wages elsewhere (Ocean and Meyer, 2023).

Steps to Manage Stress and Improve Health must be taken. Nurses' access to mental health services has to be prioritised immediately. Increasing the availability of counselling services and hosting seminars on stress management are two possible ways to achieve this goal. Employees who are showing signs of stress or burnout could be given short-term mental health breaks.

Work Schedules can be streamlined. A more thoughtful scheduling system might be implemented to ease the burdens of inconsistent and exhausting shift work. Possible solutions to this issue include reducing the number of nurses required to work overnight hours, allowing for more time off in between shifts, and giving nurses more say in their work schedules.

Longer Term Recommendations

The NHS also needs a long-term strategy to improve nurse retention. The National Health Service (NHS) can become a more attractive and rewarding place for nurses to build careers through immediate improvements in compensation, psychological assistance, and shift scheduling, as well as through persistent attempts to support professional development, improve the working setting, and engage nurses in decision making (Bimpong et al., 2020).

Professional development is needed to be facilitated in order to lower the nurse attrition rate in the UK. Improving the nursing profession as a whole can be accomplished by making it easier for nurses to move forward in their chosen fields. There could be a variety of roles and specialisations available, a clear promotion mechanism, and regular opportunities for skill development and training. To back up this effort, mentoring initiatives should be improved.

Secondly, Morale at the Office must be boosted. Staff retention can be improved by creating a pleasant and supportive workplace (Buchan et al., 2019). Long-term efforts need to get rid of red tape, get people working together, and make sure that everyone on staff feels like they matter. Strict enforcement of anti-harassment and anti-bullying policies is essential.

Nurses should be involved in decision-making. A long-term goal for the NHS should be to increase the role of nurses in policymaking. Increased job satisfaction may result from this strategy since it empowers nurses to shape their workplaces in ways that best suit them. Nurses should have a place to air their grievances and make proposals, and initiatives need to be made to address the comments they provide.

Conclusion

The NHS's high turnover rate of nurses has serious consequences for patient care, financial stability, employee morale, and access to medical services. The rising attrition rate implies the current financial and non-financial retention techniques need to be evaluated and revised. The situation might be greatly improved by adopting both immediate and long-term solutions. Immediate action is required to improve the environment of work, compensation, and well-being assistance, while longer-term policies should emphasise career advancement, a supportive work culture, staff involvement, and the nursing profession. The National Health Service (NHS) can maintain its robustness, sustainability, and provision of high-quality care services with an all-encompassing, dynamic strategy for retaining its employees.

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