

Managing People (Assessment 2)

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Introduction

Attrition rate has been a recurrent concern in the UK nursing industry for numerous years. Recent figures suggest that in the year leading up to June 2022, 40,365 NHS nurses in England left active duty, which is comparable to one in nine and constitutes a high in absolute and relative terms, with a leaver rate of 11.5% (Nuffield Trust, 2020). High staff turnover rates have a substantial influence on organisational performance, including higher recruiting and training expenses, decreased productivity, and diminished care quality. This paper investigates the causes and impacts of staff turnover in the UK nursing business. It reviews severely the present National Health Service (NHS) retention programs for nursing personnel. Also, suggestions are provided to increase the short- and long-term retention of nurses in order to reduce the nurse attrition rate in the United Kingdom.

Causes and Effects of Employee Attrition within the Nursing Industry in the UK

Causes of employee attrition

Workload: Workload is one of the primary causes of employee attrition in the nursing industry in the UK. Nurses in the UK face increasing workloads due to staff shortages, which result in long working hours and inadequate resources (Halder, 2018). As a result, nurses

experience high levels of stress, fatigue, and burnout, which can ultimately lead to nurses leaving their jobs. The lack of adequate staffing also puts a considerable strain on the existing nursing staff, and they may feel that their efforts are not appreciated, leading to low morale and high attrition rates.

Lack of career growth opportunities: Nurses need opportunities for career growth to feel valued and motivated. However, the NHS often does not provide adequate career development opportunities, which can result in nurses feeling stagnant in their careers (Kunhunny and Salmon, 2017). This lack of career growth opportunities can lead to nurses feeling undervalued and may prompt them to leave their jobs to seek better opportunities elsewhere.

Low pay: Another critical factor contributing to employee attrition in the nursing industry in the UK is low pay. Nurses in the UK are often underpaid and overworked, leading to a feeling of being undervalued (Bimpong et al., 2020). Low income also makes it difficult for nurses to manage their financial obligations, leading to stress and burnout. Nurses may feel that they are not adequately compensated for the work they do, leading to a lack of job satisfaction and a higher attrition rate.

Poor management: Poor management is another cause of employee attrition within the nursing industry in the UK. Nurses need effective management to feel supported and appreciated (Brunetto et al., 2018). However, poor management can lead to nurses feeling unsupported and unappreciated. This can result in a hostile work environment, contributing to nurses leaving their jobs.

Effects of employee attrition

Reduced quality of patient care: When nurses leave their jobs, patient care is negatively impacted due to staff shortages. Patient care requires the skills and expertise of well-trained and experienced nurses. However, when nurses leave their jobs, it can lead to staffing shortages, increased wait times, poorer patient outcomes, and reduced overall quality of care. The lack of staff can also result in a higher workload for the remaining staff, leading to fatigue, burnout, and decreased job satisfaction (Johnson et al., 2018).

Financial costs: Employee attrition can result in high financial costs to the NHS. Replacing a nurse can cost up to 50% of their annual salary, not including recruitment and training costs. With the high rate of employee attrition within the nursing industry in the UK, the costs can quickly add up, leading to a drain on the NHS's finances (Senek et al., 2020).

Reduced staff morale: High employee attrition rates can lead to reduced staff morale, resulting in lower job satisfaction and higher turnover rates. When employees see their colleagues leaving their jobs, it can create a sense of uncertainty and dissatisfaction with their jobs (Johnson et al., 2018). Additionally, staff morale can be impacted by the workload, lack of career growth opportunities, and poor management, all of which can lead to a negative work environment.

Staff shortages: High employee attrition rates can lead to staff shortages, exacerbating workload issues and causing a vicious cycle of nurse attrition. When nurses leave their jobs, it can result in staffing shortages, leading to higher workloads for the remaining nurses and increased stress and burnout (Johnson et al., 2018). Staff shortages can also lead to higher turnover rates, as nurses who are overworked and burned out may be more likely to leave their jobs. When there are not enough nurses to provide adequate care, patients may

experience longer wait times, delayed treatments, or compromised care. This can have serious consequences, such as increased morbidity and mortality rates, higher healthcare costs, and decreased patient satisfaction.

Various factors, including poor management, work-related stress and burnout, job dissatisfaction, and low pay, can cause employee attrition within the nursing industry in the UK. The effects of nurse attrition can be significant, including lower quality of care, increased patient risk, higher costs for healthcare facilities, and staff shortages (Anderson et al., 2021). Therefore, healthcare organisations must develop and implement effective retention strategies to address these challenges and retain their nursing staff.

Monetary and non-monetary existing retention schemes used by NHS

Monetary retention schemes

Pay increases: The NHS uses pay increases as a monetary retention strategy for nursing professionals. The government has implemented a pay rise for all NHS staff, including nurses, in 2021 (Efendi et al., 2019). The pay rise addresses low pay concerns and incentivises nurses to stay in their jobs. However, some argue that the pay rise is insufficient to address the underlying issues of low pay in the sector.

Bonuses: The NHS may also offer bonuses as a monetary retention strategy for nursing professionals. These bonuses may be tied to performance metrics, such as patient satisfaction scores or clinical outcomes (Kennedy et al., 2021). However, bonuses can be controversial, as they can create competition among staff and may not be distributed equitably.

Relocation packages: The NHS may offer relocation packages to nursing professionals willing to move to areas with high nurse demand. These packages may include financial incentives, such as reimbursement for moving expenses or housing subsidies.

Pension contributions: The NHS offers a generous pension scheme for all staff, including nursing professionals. This can be an attractive retention strategy, providing long-term financial security for nurses. However, changes to the pension scheme in recent years have been controversial, and some argue that they have made the scheme less attractive to new nurses.

Student loan repayment: The NHS may offer to repay student loans for nursing professionals as a retention strategy (Buchan et al., 2017). This can be an attractive option for nurses who have accrued significant student debt while studying for their qualifications.

Non-monetary retention schemes

Flexible working arrangements: Flexible working arrangements, such as part-time work, job-sharing, and telecommuting, can effectively retain nurses who may have personal or family commitments that make traditional work schedules challenging to manage. The NHS provides flexible working arrangements for nurses, such as offering part-time work or job-sharing opportunities (Devi et al., 2021). However, there have been reports of nurses being denied flexible working arrangements due to staffing shortages, which may be counterproductive to retaining nurses.

Career development opportunities: Another important retention strategy is providing nurses with opportunities for professional development. Nurses value opportunities to further their education and advance in their careers, and providing such opportunities can increase

job satisfaction and motivation, ultimately leading to retention. The NHS offers various professional development opportunities for nurses, such as access to training courses, conferences, and workshops (Kunhunny and Salmon, 2017). The NHS also provides funding for nurses to pursue further education, such as a Master's or doctoral degree in nursing practice. However, some nurses have raised concerns that the funding and opportunities for professional development are not equally distributed, with some nurses having more access than others. The NHS must ensure that all nurses have equal access to professional development opportunities.

Staff recognition programs: The NHS may offer staff recognition programs, such as employee of the month awards or other forms of recognition, as a retention strategy. This can be an effective way to boost morale and increase job satisfaction among nursing professionals.

Work-life balance initiatives: Maintaining a healthy work-life balance is essential for nurses' well-being and job satisfaction. The NHS can support nurses' work-life balance by implementing policies that allow for flexible scheduling, providing opportunities for paid time off and holidays, and promoting healthy work habits (Devi et al., 2021). However, some nurses have reported that the demands of their jobs have made it challenging to maintain a healthy work-life balance.

Employee engagement initiatives: Engaging employees in their work can increase job satisfaction and motivation, leading to higher retention rates (Holston-Okae and Mushi, 2018). The NHS can engage nurses in their work by providing opportunities for input and feedback, promoting open communication, and involving nurses in decision-making

processes. However, there have been reports of nurses feeling disengaged from their work within the NHS, which can lead to lower retention rates.

While the NHS offers a range of retention schemes for nursing professionals, there are concerns about their availability, accessibility, and effectiveness. Regarding monetary retention schemes, it is essential to note that offering higher salaries and bonuses may not be enough to retain nurses if they are experiencing other issues such as workload, inadequate staffing levels, and poor management practices (Sayli et al., 2022). Similarly, while the NHS offers professional development opportunities and flexible working arrangements, there have been concerns about the availability and distribution of these opportunities. To address these concerns and improve nurse retention rates, it may be necessary to re-evaluate and enhance existing schemes and explore new approaches to retaining and supporting nursing professionals.

Recommendations

To address the high nurse attrition rates in the UK, the NHS needs to implement short- and long-term strategies that address the underlying causes of attrition, such as low pay, poor management, lack of support and career development opportunities, and work-life balance issues.

Short-term recommendations

Increase pay and benefits: The NHS should consider increasing salary and benefits for nurses, including offering bonuses or incentives for nurses who stay in their jobs for more extended periods (Kennedy et al., 2021). This will help to address the financial concerns that are a significant driver of nurse attrition.

Improve working conditions: The NHS should improve working conditions for nurses, including providing better staffing levels and more resources to support their work (Marufu et al., 2021). This will help reduce the workload and stress, a significant driver of nurse attrition.

Provide more support and resources: The NHS should provide more support and resources to help nurses manage the demands of their jobs, including providing access to counselling services, mentorship programs, and other resources to support their mental and emotional well-being (Johnson et al., 2018).

Increase flexibility: The NHS should provide more flexible work arrangements, such as part-time work or job sharing, to help nurses balance their work with other commitments, such as family care or education (Devi et al., 2021).

Long-term recommendations

Improve career development opportunities: The NHS should improve career development opportunities for nurses, including providing more training and education opportunities and opportunities to advance in their careers (Kunhunny and Salmon, 2017). This will help address the lack of career development opportunities, a significant driver of nurse attrition.

Increase diversity and inclusivity: The NHS should work to increase diversity and inclusivity within the nursing workforce, including training and support to help nurses work effectively with patients from diverse backgrounds (Rhead et al., 2021). This will help to improve patient care and also help to attract and retain a more diverse and inclusive nursing workforce.

Address work-life balance issues: The NHS should work to address work-life balance issues for nurses, including providing more support for childcare and eldercare and more

flexible work arrangements (Devi et al., 2021). This will help to address the work-life balance issues that are a significant driver of nurse attrition.

Improve workplace culture: The NHS should work to improve workplace culture for nurses, including addressing issues of harassment, discrimination, and bullying. This will help create a more positive and supportive workplace culture conducive to retaining nursing professionals.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the NHS needs to implement short- and long-term strategies to improve nurse retention and lower the nurse attrition rate in the UK. These strategies should address the underlying causes of attrition, including low pay, poor working conditions, lack of support and career development opportunities, and work-life balance issues (Sayli et al., 2022). By implementing these strategies, the NHS can improve the quality of care for patients, as well as create a more sustainable and fulfilling career path for nursing professionals.

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