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**Certificate of Higher Education Skills for the Workplace (Health and Social Care)
Digital Skills and Research Methods**

SAMIRA-FLORENTINA SERBANA [2514813]
LCHS4007



First Task: Determining the Problem

The Fundamental Issue

There is a general lack of nurses, general practitioners, social workers, and care assistants; we are not only seeing a few open positions here and there. This is not taking place in a vacuum. The COVID-19 pandemic's aftereffects, persistent underfunding, and an ageing population requiring more sophisticated care are the "perfect storm" (NHS England, 2023). High levels of burnout create a revolving door where employees depart more quickly than they can be hired (The King's Fund, 2022).

The pressure is being felt by whom?

There are repercussions from this issue throughout the whole system:

Patients and service users: For them, the scarcity is more than just a statistic; it's a shortened home care visit, a postponed surgery, or a four-hour wait for a GP call. Safety and quality of life are directly harmed (Care Quality Commission, 2023).

The Workforce: The remaining employees are overworked. Increased workloads cause stress and moral harm, which frequently compels even the most committed professionals to resign for their own mental well-being (Royal College of Nursing, 2022).

Organisations: Because they depend on pricey agency workers to fill up the gaps, hospitals and care facilities are caught in a cycle of high turnover and skyrocketing prices (NHS Providers, 2023).

Why This Research Matters

We can't fix what we don't fully understand. Researching this isn't just an academic exercise; it's a necessity for patient safety. As our population ages and chronic conditions become more common, the demand for care is only going to climb (Office for National Statistics, 2023). We need evidence-based strategies—not just "sticking plaster" solutions—to recruit and, more importantly, *retain* the talent we have.

The Source of the Information

The "big picture" sources are government reports like the DHSC. They provide us with official estimates and hard data on vacancy rates (Department of Health and Social Care, 2023).

Academic journals are the source of the "why" and "how." Peer-reviewed research provides a more thorough and critical examination of the root causes of burnout and the efficacy of policies (Buchan et al., 2022).

Reports from professional bodies (such as the NHS and CQC) provide the "boots on the

ground" viewpoint, connecting policy with actual care delivery (Care Quality Commission, 2023).

Task 2: Methods of Research

Selecting the Proper Lens

You can look at the stories (qualitative) or the numbers (quantitative) when conducting research. Quantitative data provides information on the situation, including the number of departing individuals and the locations of the largest gaps. By capturing motivations and lived experiences, qualitative data explains why (Creswell, 2018).

My Method of Choice: Mixed Techniques

I have chosen to use a mixed-methods approach. Why? Because while a spreadsheet can show you that 10% of nurses departed last year, it is unable to convey the psychological impact of that choice. We can obtain a more comprehensive picture of the problem by integrating statistical data with surveys or interviews (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2017). This method enhances conclusions by providing actual data to back up individual experiences.

Task 3: Gathering Information

Primary versus Secondary Information

Secondary data—re-analyzing previously published reports and scholarly studies—will be used for this project's hard lifting. This is an effective and trustworthy basis because the UK has an abundance of high-quality datasets (NHS England, 2023).

But it's crucial to add primary data, like healthcare worker interviews, to this. First-hand knowledge guarantees that the research represents contemporary difficulties because existing studies might not accurately reflect current realities (Royal College of Nursing, 2022).

Conclusion

Ultimately, the staffing shortage in health and social care is one of the biggest challenges facing the UK today. It is a complex issue affecting everyone from policymakers to vulnerable patients. This report demonstrates that while the problem is significant, it is not unsolvable. By combining statistical evidence with human experience, we can move beyond identifying issues and begin developing sustainable workforce strategies for the future (The King's Fund, 2022).

Reference List (Harvard Style)

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