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Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

BA Business Management
Managing People
LCBB5004

Assessment 2

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Introduction

The loss of good employees is a huge problem for any business, since it undermines their capacity to keep their staff happy and well-trained. With a rising demand for nurses and a lack of certified professionals with the required skills and experience, employee turnover within the UK nursing sector has become increasingly alarming. High recruitment costs, chronic staffing gaps, and worse patient care quality are only some of the financial and operational consequences of nurse attrition (Akhtar et al., 2016). Poor working conditions or atmosphere, interpersonal problems amongst workers, or simply a general lack of credit for hard work and successes are all factors that can contribute to employee turnover. This report will first examine the causes of employee turnover in the UK nursing industry, then list and describe five financial and five non-financial retention programmes currently in use by the National Health Service (NHS) for nursing professionals, evaluate these programmes, and offer both immediate and long-term suggestions for reducing the turnover rate among nurses.

Nursing Industry in the UK

Overview

The field of nursing in the United Kingdom is a significant and essential element of the country's healthcare infrastructure. More than 690,000 registered nurses are now employed by the country's various healthcare institutions and private practices. The nursing profession has seen one of the largest 10-year growth rates, at 22 percent (Greenhalgh et al., 2022). As medical science and technology progress, nurses are being challenged to expand their scope of practice. They are now expected to manage patient care programmes, counsel patients on preventative health measures, and deliver treatments in addition to providing physical care. To adapt to these shifting needs, the government of the United Kingdom has launched a number of programmes to better assist and educate nurses. Improved compensation for skilled workers is one component of this strategy, along with increased investment in training and education (including graduate school). As a result of these reforms, the United Kingdom is once again at the forefront of healthcare across the world.

Causes of Employee Attrition

Attrition, often known as turnover, refers to the process through which employees leave an organisation. High employee turnover is problematic for firms because of the time and money it takes to replace departing workers. More and more nurses are leaving the National Health Service (NHS) in England, with over 40,000 leaving in the year leading up to June 2022. (Palmer and Rolewicz, 2022). This is approximately one-ninth of all nurses now employed in England, and is the greatest number of departures since records began.

Financial constraints, a lack of professional advancement opportunities, and discontent with one's current position all play a role in the high turnover rate. As healthcare employees see their wages either remain stagnant or fall behind the rate of inflation, they face mounting financial stress. As a result, nurses may be tempted to leave the NHS for better-paying employment elsewhere or even abroad if they are unable to make ends meet on their present salaries. The lack of opportunities for advancement in nursing is another source of worry. Many nurses report feeling blocked from advancing in their current organisation, and instead dealing with overwhelming workloads that can easily lead to burnout (Campbell, 2022). Long shift patterns that isolate workers and make it difficult to prioritise personal obligations like family and hobbies above work can also contribute to workers' feelings of unhappiness with their jobs (Iliffe and Manthorpe, 2019). This high rate of personnel turnover has far-reaching consequences for both patients and employees. When there are fewer qualified nurses on staff, the remaining nurses are overworked, which can have a negative impact on patient care and even pose a threat to their safety. If this is allowed to continue, it might severely harm public confidence in the NHS. It is evident that if patient safety and satisfaction with services offered by the NHS in England are to improve, nurse retention rates must be increased.

Impact and Effect of Employee Attrition within the Industry

In recent years, the loss of skilled nurses has become a major problem in the health care sector of the United Kingdom. Between June 2021 and June 2022, a record number of 40,365 English nurses left their jobs. (Palmer and Rolewicz, 2022). The effects of this high rate of turnover on health care in the country could be terrible. One of these effects is that there are less skilled workers available. Two-thirds of the nurses who left their jobs in the last year were younger than 45, which means that they are leaving before they can contribute to the knowledge management systems. So, new staff members have less chance to learn from more experienced ones. This could make it hard for hospitals and clinics to give the same level of care to everyone. Because of this, it also surges the cost to find and train new nurses. Finding replacements for employees who leave their jobs on their own or are fired usually takes two of the most important organisational resources, time and cost money. Because of this, it may be even harder for hospitals to fill open jobs (Lefosse et al., 2022). Lastly, employee turnover can make people less happy at work. When a lot of people leave their jobs, it might look like staying put isn't in anyone's best interest. This could make other people wonder if they should stay put or look for better opportunities elsewhere (Johnson et al., 2022).

Retention Schemes

Monetary

- The first monetary scheme that will be discussed implemented by the NHS is the Allied Health Professionals Fund. Under this scheme, there is funding granted for enthusiastic nurses and health professionals (Collazo, 2016). . The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Training Hub (Training Hub) has made it increasingly evident that those employed in health professions and nursing may realise their full potential via sustained investment in learning and development. There is a promise in this training centre that every nurse and AHP would be given a personal CPD budget of £1000 to use as they see fit (Training Hub, 2019).

- As there were nearly 60,000 applicants in the NHS for nurse positions in consecutive years of 2016 and 2017, the NHS had established a fund that covered nearly 2000 pounds for attracting lost employees with further incentive.
- As part of reducing attrition, the NHS in 2013-14 had increased the nurses' pay scales. In that time nursing professionals earned around £21,176 and £27,625. But in 2014 it was increased to nearly 3000 as part of union savings which was 1000 previously (Campbell, 2011). This was a result of NHS staff's challenge to the government's payment freeze which was announced to end in April of 2013.
- Learning Support Fund (LSF). All sorts of nursing and midwifery positions were eligible for this program. Under this scheme, the eligible professionals were able to gain access to a training grant of 5000 pounds per academic year, additional two thousands pounds of parental support and allowance for excess travel and accommodation costs (www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk, 2021). However, this was introduced for students continuing their course from September 2020 and still in enrollment.
- When the National Health Service (NHS) foots the bill for a resident's nursing care, it is called "NHS-funded nursing care." The NHS contributes to the cost of providing nursing care by paying a fixed fee directly to the care facility (GOV.UK, 2022). Through this, nurses are directly paid via the NHS framework which formalises the caregiving of patients. There are also official review boards regarding the eligibility of patients.

Overall these five monetary existing retention schemes used by the NHS offer support and financial assistance to help retain nursing professionals within the NHS workforce while encouraging new entrants into its services through various incentives.

Non-Monetary

- Revalidation ensures that licenced physicians are up-to-date and competent in their field, which benefits both patients and the public, as well as employers and other healthcare professionals. It's an important part of a package of reforms meant to raise the bar for patient care. As a result, nurses were able to speak out

more generally about doctors' competence, leading to increased job stability and a stronger feeling of accountability across the medical field.

- Those who have left the field of nursing for whatever reason might find help through the Return to Nursing Programme. The program includes individualised mentoring in addition to educational packages and clinical rotations. This program helps reunite seasoned nurses with exciting new opportunities in the field. Through this, there will also be counselling and childcare support to emotionally support the reappointed nursing professional upon passing the test. There is also a 1000 pound additional monetary incentive to support studies (Returning to nursing, 2015).
- Another major non monetary incentive is Nurse Associate Apprenticeship Scheme which is in motion since 2017. This is a two-year, full-time apprenticeship with a focus on paid work and supplementary academic study. Apprenticeship programs are only open to those who are already working full-time in health care support or a related social care position. The internships will be outside of the regular workplace (Taylor and Flaherty, 2020).
- E-learning modules on infection control and leadership development courses designed exclusively for nurses are just two examples of the many professional development programs that can be found online. These programs are designed to help nurses advance in their careers inside the NHS while they continue to work there.
- NHS places great emphasis on emotional support for its employees through initiatives such as counselling services or employee assistance programmes which provide advice on money management or mental health issues amongst other topics. These initiatives offer additional assistance which can significantly contribute to nurse retention rates within NHS settings.

Recommendations

Short Term

Raising pay is often mentioned as a solution to the problem of nurses leaving their jobs. Inflation has outpaced salary increases in recent years, leaving many nurses struggling financially and making them feel underappreciated by their employers. Raising nurses' pay would improve their job stability and entice more qualified people into the field. One more idea is to make workplaces safer and better for employees. Stressful situations are common for nurses, who frequently work lengthy shifts. Maintaining morale among nurses who are on call 24/7 might be aided by the provision of support systems including counselling, mental health services, and regular breaks. Reducing the number of patients or adding more nurses would also help ease stress and make the workplace safer for nurses. Lastly, nurse education and advancement programs need more funding. Courses, conferences, and seminars geared at nurses can help both entry-level workers and seasoned professionals keep up with the latest developments in nursing practice and gain valuable new skills. This may reduce the likelihood of them leaving the industry owing to exhaustion from overwork or ignorance of recent developments in their field. Together, these three suggestions have the potential to lower nurse turnover by boosting wages, improving working conditions, raising safety standards, and expanding educational and career options. If the United Kingdom wants to keep its important nursing staff in the future, these steps must be put into place as soon as possible.

Long Term

The long term plans are quite tricky for the UK government to consider due to the current economic situation of the country. In the previous few years, the country has suffered from severe economic issues due to both covid pandemic and Brexit. Together, these two have forced the government to reduce expenses which has seen the NHS to decrease funds. Besides, the excessive workload during the pandemic has also taken a negative toll on healthcare professionals. Providing nurses in the UK with a better work-life balance is an important step toward retaining more of them. One way to do this is to give nurses more leeway in determining when and how frequently they take vacations and breaks from work. Stress and burnout may be greatly reduced by implementing shift patterns that

are adapted to the requirements of individual nurses rather than asking all nurses to conform to a common template. The National Health Service (NHS) should consider raising nurses' pay to compete with private hospitals. Paying nurses more will increase their appeal as a career and alleviate some of the stress that comes with providing constant care to patients. Nursing staff job satisfaction may rise if the company invested more in their education and career advancement opportunities. Furthermore, nurses and other frontline healthcare workers in the NHS should have access to better mental health support services. It's important for businesses to offer their employees access to mental health care both in-house and through referrals to outside providers. Employees could feel secure in their physical well-being if they were provided with benefits like private healthcare. Last but not least, fostering an environment where employees feel valued is crucial for keeping good nurses in the NHS. Implementing recognition methods that reward strong performance or even just saying "good job" on a bad day can go a long way toward this goal. Employee loyalty and motivation may be greatly increased by demonstrating appreciation for workers' hard work.

Conclusion

Despite several key measures, it is still unsure how the new generation of workforce for the NHS will react to the challenging job of being a nurse and other healthcare professions. Even though there are consistent efforts, it goes without saying that the adverse economic situation is hampering the rigorous funding for the NHS which directly impacts the attrition rate. Thus, there needs to be a reform in payment structure to inject more funding into NHS along with putting focus on increasing workforce.

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