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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Causes and effects of employee attrition within the Nursing Industry in the UK.....	4
Retention schemes used by NHS for nursing professionals	6
Five monetary retention schemes	7
Five non-monetary retention schemes	8
Recommendations	10
References	12
References	13

Introduction

An organisation can experience employee attrition when the size of its workforce decreases over time. Employees leave their job faster than they were hired. The nursing industry of UK is encountering excessive employee attrition since 2022 which is the highest across the decade (Crasii and Nawar, 2022). This is not the regular retirement that is increasing the attrition rate instead the young nurses are leaving work. Several reasons might be there influencing the nurses in leaving their job. NHS has been using multiple retention schemes for motivating the nursing professionals to continue their job role. This report will be analysing the causes and effects of employee attrition along with the retention schemes undertaken by NHS for finding out what needs to be done to tackle the situation.

Causes and effects of employee attrition within the Nursing Industry in the UK

The number of nurses leaving their job is continuously increasing in United Kingdom which might reach to an unpredictable rate. It is necessary to make the healthcare workers satisfied with leisure time and income (Singh, 2019). Unfortunately, the satisfaction rate is lower for the healthcare workers in UK than any other public sector workers which is why more and more workers are becoming dissatisfied and leaving their job. Different reasons can be the cause of such dissatisfaction. Such as

- **Lack of buffering factors:** According to majority of nurses, higher workload as well as health factors are impacting their intention of leaving the hospital unit. They demand to have a comfortable atmosphere in the workplace, stimulating practices, varying job, good relationship with colleagues and serving as a buffer (Marufu et al., 2021). But these are not available at most of the hospitals. The lack of such buffering factors reduces worker's intention of working and stimulate their intention of leaving.
- **Workload and stress:** The job roles of the healthcare workers are very heavy and tiring. They have to perform long working hours which creates stressful situations. They easily get burnout and exhausted from continuous workload which prompt them in leaving their position.
- **Not feeling valued and heard:** The upper management don't pay any attention to the nurses which has become a recurrent theme influencing employee's intention of leaving and quitting job (Ocean and Meyer, 2023). The rationalization decision made by the hospital management has influence on such attitude. It can be either a strategy for cutting down number of employees or ignorance of the upper management. Apart from the reason, employees get frustrated and demotivated when they are not listened or heard by their supervisor. The lack of direct communication with the upper management leaves the employee feeling not valued. They don't want to work at a place where they are not valued and eventually make the decision of leaving the job.
- **Not owning spare time:** Individual nurses don't own any spare time for their personal life. Their personal life become intertwined with professional life. Several nurses agreed that the irregular working hours results in conflict while their workings hours can't coordinate with their personal life (Fasbender et al., 2019). The regional decision stipulating that nurses need to work night shift has worsened the issue even more. They are not capable of balancing their work life and personal life. Besides, the staff shortage at many hospital

units has increases the workload for the existing workers which is why most of the nurses became incapable of balancing their work and have taken the decision of leaving.

- **Pay and benefits:** Based on the heavy workload, it is very natural that the nurses will demand higher pay along with multiple facilities. But most of the time their hard work doesn't pay off well. When they feel that they are not compensated adequately they lose interest of working. Moreover, the lack of flexibility in work, paid time off, leaves, lack of recognition, motivation etc. can influence employees in leaving their job (Quek et al., 2021).
- **Lack of career advancement opportunities:** There are very limited opportunities for development for the nurses in many healthcare organizations in UK. Ambitious nurses don't want to seat back and continues doing the same job for a long time. They want to take themselves into higher position which is why they might think of switching their job. Besides, the lack of professional support, training and development opportunities make them even less interested in working as a healthcare worker.

The increasing employee attrition can affect the overall quality of healthcare. It can lead to having inexperienced workforce, increasing costs due to frequent recruitment of new employees and their training, increasing workloads for remaining employee which can influence the risks of staff burnout (Poon et al., 2022). The healthcare plan can be disrupted due to frequent employee turnover which can lead to potential decline in productivity. Patient can be dissatisfied over decreasing service quality. When more and more employees will be leaving thru job only the unexperienced and new employees will be remaining at the hospital who are not able to provide quality services for the already admitted patients. It will take huge time for the new employees to adapt with everything which might delay services to the patients.

Retention schemes used by NHS for nursing professionals.

Improving employee retention is very cost-effective solution for minimizing staff shortage compared with hiring and training new employees (Marufu et al., 2021). Healthcare is mostly a labour-intensive sector where nurses play a vital role. It is crucial for healthcare organization to limit the excessive workforce turnover for efficient functioning. More and more NHS nurses are leaving active services since 2022. Considering the situation, NHS has taken several retention schemes including both monetary and non-monetary for retaining the nursing professionals.

Five monetary retention schemes

- I. **Recognising and rewarding staff:** NHS motivates its employees by providing meaningful recognition and setting holistic reward package based on the need of the staffs. Employees are made aware of the benefits and value of the overall reward package which they can't take advantage of when looking for moving into another job (Moscelli et al., 2022). It offers money saving deals and vouchers, top hotel discounts, travel and holiday deals and access to huge range of NHS discounts.
- II. **Salary increase:** Employees working at NHS get pay raise based on their serving years at the organization. Their significant contribution on achieving organizational objectives of providing quality services makes them worthy of receiving monetary incentives, retention bonus and so on.
- III. **Special pay scale:** The healthcare professional might deserve special pay scales for working in high demand as well as in the position that are hard to fill (Alhmoud and Rjoub, 2020). NHS organizes high pay scales for those employees that are significant for the organization and their supports are crucial. Extra financial incentives are provided to them so that they remain in the organization for a long time.
- IV. **Overtime pay:** Employees that work more than regular working hours are considered to get competitive overtime pay rates (Okwakpam, 2019). NHS keeps the employee motivated by paying overtime pay so that they don't feel dissatisfied in working additional hours.
- V. **Loan repayment assistance:** The students of nursing professional get assistance from NHS for repaying their student loans. This is very helpful for them to reduce their financial burden while continuing to work with NHS.

Five non-monetary retention schemes

- **Retention Direct Support Programme:** NHS has introduced Retention Direct Support Programme (RDSP) in 2017 which has significantly contributed to improving nursing retention and in decreasing exits from public hospital sector (Kirby, 2023). The focus of the program is evidence-based intervention for having greatest impact over the employees. Considering this there are two major principles for helping in retaining the nurses and midwives. One is targeted interventions for several career stages and another one is bundles of high impact actions. Nurses experience different challenges based on the career stages. NHS has targeted the nurses for improving their job satisfaction to retain them for a long term in their position by providing tailored support. For delivering sustained gains, a bundle approach is required.
- **Light touch initiatives:** This is an initiative undertaken by NHS for ensuring enough flexibility at work and for improving employee training and professional development. According to research conducted by the University of Surrey, Light Touch initiative has helped NHS in retaining almost 1700 nurses and midwives (Moscelli et al., 2022).
- **Transfer window scheme:** This scheme has helped in staff movement from one area to another within NHS for developing their skills. This is such a scheme which has contributed to keeping more than 1000 nurses, midwives as well as other clinicians in the NHS. According to analysis, almost 800 fewer full-time nurses of NHS have left the organization since the implementation of the scheme (Bimpong et al., 2020). They are enjoying the practice of shifting from one area to another which is helping them in learning diverse skills and knowledge and in personal development.
- **Shaping organisational culture:** For delivering effective, safe and high-quality patient care, a healthy culture is crucial for NHS (Weyman et al., 2019). An inspiring, ambitious, and forward-looking vision which is focused on offering high-quality and compassionate care influences employees to work more passionately for being a part of such effective services. NHS leaders focus on understanding employee's perspectives towards organization culture and try to implement a collective leadership strategy for developing a fair, compassionate, and inclusive working environment which can be a safe zone for the employee to work comfortably.
- **Communicating with staff:** seeking and paying attention to the views and opinion of the employees illustrates that the organisation values its employees. NHS seeks and listen to its employees for increasing the likelihood of employee retention. Line managers play

significant role for improving employee engagement. This helps in reducing lack of communication between upper management and the nurses at NHS.

Recommendations

Healthcare organisations are labour incentives organization where nurses play crucial role (Adams et al., 2021). The healthcare sector of United Kingdom has been experiencing severe nurse attrition for some period. To keep a balance in the offering of quality services for the patients, nurses need to be kept motivated so that they stay with the hospital unit for a long time and provide quality services. Healthcare organizations need to consider both short term and long-term plans for improving nurse's retention rate and for lowering their attrition rate.

In the short term, UK healthcare sector can implement some strategies such as

- **Competitive compensation:** The job role of a nurse is very challenging which requires hard work and perform long-time duty hours (Poon et al., 2022). Based on their effort and performance they need to be paid well. They should also be provided rewards and incentives for better performance.
- **Wellness program:** Wellness program is recommended for helping the nurses in managing their stress and mental health. Nurses go through lots of pressures all day and can't make time for personal care which makes them stressed and anxious. Wellness program can help them in calming themselves and in playing their role efficiently and productively without thinking of leaving the job.
- **Flexible schedule:** Nurses are also human. They need time for personal care and for their family. Nonstop work schedule can make their life imbalanced which is why a flexible schedule need to be maintained for all the nurses.

In the long run, healthcare organisation needs to follow different strategies such as

- **Career advancement opportunity:** Nurses have ambition of being promoted to higher level and in receiving higher salary (Adams et al., 2021). Healthcare organizations should focus on creating clear and structured career pathway for the nurses so that they can capture available opportunities for professional development. Training and development program should be organized for developing skills of the nurses.
- **Staffing and workload management:** Any staff shortage needs to be addressed quickly and then staffing should be done following a thorough procedure. This need to be done effectively and efficiently so that the remaining staff don't feel pressurized due to additional workload. Adequate nurses need to be hired for balancing the workload.
- **Promoting positive work culture:** A supportive and comfortable work environment need to be fostered where nurses can work freely and feel valued. They need to be heard and

kept engaged with the upper management. Open communication is beneficial for keeping the employee motivated.

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