



# Understand the issue for an effective response

**In this briefing we share learning which will help organisations review and refresh their approach to staff retention. This will help support the NHS to provide high-quality care, reduce spending on agency staff and meet the aims outlined in the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan.**

To have the most impact, action should be data driven. There is now a greater range of useful data on retention, including [NHS England's Model Health System](#) which provides insightful trend and benchmark data on leavers, including their demographic and occupation data.

A detailed understanding of retention data at a local level is essential to take effective action. Turnover rates can be compared with NHS Staff Survey data, other national staff survey data, staff feedback, wider HR indicators and local level intelligence. This helps identify whether staff are thinking of leaving, the most challenged departments and areas of good practice which could be learned from. It's important to evaluate the impact of initiatives and adapt solutions to tackle local issues and meet the needs of particular staff groups.

Listen to staff to better understand the reasons why they may be thinking of leaving. Use a range of tools to identify quick wins, which organisations can implement in short term. Feedback to colleagues on issues raised, even where it may not be possible to resolve them all immediately. For example, overall pay structure related issues

need to be addressed at national levels, although local reward packages can assist with retention.

Wherever possible, talk with staff before they leave. Stay interviews are recommended in the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan, they can be a useful tool to understand the pull factors that help staff to stay in the organisation and the push factors that lead to them leaving. NHS Employers has produced a summary of approaches to retention discussions/stay conversations. Exit interviews with leavers are also an invaluable source of insight. The national exit survey has been enhanced in recent years and many trusts now supplement this with their own additional data collection.