

To:

- NHS trust and foundation trust:
  - Chief executives
  - Medical directors
  - Chief nursing officers
  - Chief people officers/HR directors

NHS England  
Wellington House  
133-155 Waterloo Road  
London  
SE1 8UG

cc.

- ICB:
  - Chief executives
  - Chief people officers/HR directors
- Regional directors
- Regional directors of workforce

27 November 2023

Dear colleague

### **Support available to improve staff retention**

As you will be aware, a key ambition of the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan (LTWP) is to increase the retention of our current staff, in part by making the NHS a better place to work.

We are already seeing progress across the country thanks to the work you are doing locally; the national all-staff leaver rate has fallen from a peak of 9.4% in August 2022 to 8.1% in August 2023, and the overall nursing leaver rate in August was 6.1%, lower than immediately before the pandemic in February 2020. Staff engagement has also improved over the last two quarters (April and July 2023) for the first time in 18 months.

While this aggregate level improvement is welcome, even more encouraging is that the leaver rate has improved faster in the 23 NHS trusts which have been participating in the People Promise Exemplar programme over the past year, delivering a suite of interventions reflecting the People Promise and based on the needs of local staff groups. Some examples of the approaches being taken locally are set out in [a recent blog from Em Wilkinson-Brice](#).

In order to help accelerate the spread of best practice and sustain the improvement in the leaver rate – so we can benefit from retaining more of our skilled and experienced staff – we are inviting expressions of interest for a second cohort of exemplars.



## Further details and how to apply

Funding will be made available to exemplar organisations to help co-ordinate, embed and manage the delivery of People Promise interventions. Exemplar organisations will benefit from a systematic and structured quality improvement-based approach, using evidence-based tools and guidance. This will include peer learning from other organisations, with support from dedicated regional retention teams.

Key considerations for organisations interested in being part of this second cohort include their chief executive's demonstrable personal commitment, a stable executive team, a strategic approach across the organisation to improving culture, and appetite for and recognition of the need to improve staff experience and retention.

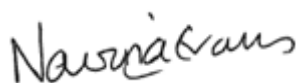
Please submit your expression of interest (see Annex 1 provided alongside this letter), reflecting how your organisation meets the key considerations, to your NHS England regional director by **5pm on Monday 4 December 2023**. Once received, your regional team will be in touch with you to share details of the onboarding process.

Thank you again for your ongoing commitment to support NHS staff and to make the NHS a better place to work.

Yours sincerely



**Professor Sir Stephen Powis**  
National Medical Director  
NHS England



**Navina Evans**  
Chief Workforce, Training  
and Education Officer  
NHS England



**Dame Ruth May**  
Chief Nursing Officer,  
England

