

July 2024

NMC Register Leavers' Survey Summary 2024

NMC Research & Evidence

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Objectives



We maintain the register of professional nurses, midwives and nursing associates eligible to practise in the UK.

We monitor the number of people joining and leaving the register

We offer professionals leaving the register a chance to tell us why, and we supplement this with a survey

We have conducted the leavers' survey since 2017 and refreshed this in 2022/23 to try and better understand why people leave our register

We will explore the data to understand:

- The factors driving why people leave the register
- If demographics and experiences are linked
- How insights have changed since last year

Methodology

A **short online survey** was sent to those who left the register between January 2023 and March 2024

Survey links were shared via email 2 months after a professional left the register (e.g. people leaving the register in March were contacted in May)

32,950 professionals left in this period. We **invited 26,715** to the survey (removing those who do not wish to take part in research for example) and received **7,647 responses** (29% response rate)

Questions covered topics such as reasons for leaving, their likelihood to return and what they were doing now

Sample representation on key demographics such as age and education region were consistent vs. last year

As these questions were updated in 2023, results are not directly compared with previous leavers' survey reports prior to 2022/23



Executive Summary



In 2023/24, **retirement, poor health and burnout** are the **top 3 reasons** why professionals leave the register – this is consistent with 2022/23

While the top reasons for leaving are similar for nurses and midwives, **concerns** around **staffing levels and quality of care** are more common negatives among **midwives**

Disabled leavers are **more likely to leave due to poor health** – they're also significantly more likely to leave due to **bullying** and **lack of support** than those who do not declare a disability

Likelihood to recommend a career as a nurse, midwife or nursing associate **remains low** but has improved since last year – with midwives, Under 55's, UK educated and NHS workers giving the lowest endorsement

Half of leavers are **leaving earlier than they expected** (consistent with 2022/23) - those retiring leave when expected, whilst **poor colleague support and bad health particularly lead to an early exit**

Poor health driving people to leave the register is **both physical (75%) and mental (62%)** - **4 in 5** who leave due to **mental health** report that their **role negatively contributed to this**

Early leavers typically leave the register **5 years earlier than planned** – **those who do stay** on the register longer than expected stay around **an extra 3.5 years**

Likelihood of returning to a career in nursing or midwifery amongst leavers **stays low (8%)** – for **those likely to return, 1 in 3** would consider working outside the UK

Section 1

Retirement remains the dominant reason for professionals leaving the register – poor health and burnout the next most influential factors

The leading reasons why professionals leave the register are broadly consistent with 22/23



What was your main reason for leaving the NMC Register

All respondents – Top 10 reasons selected

= change in rank vs. 2022/23

23/24 Rank	Reason	vs. 22/23
1	Retirement	=
2	My physical or mental health	=
3	Burnout or exhaustion	=
4	A change in personal circumstances	=
5	Concern about meeting the revalidation requirements	
6	I am leaving/have left the UK	
7	Other	=
8	Quality of care provided to members of the public and people who use services	
9	Lack of support from colleagues or senior members of staff	
10	Experiences of bullying, harassment, or discrimination	=

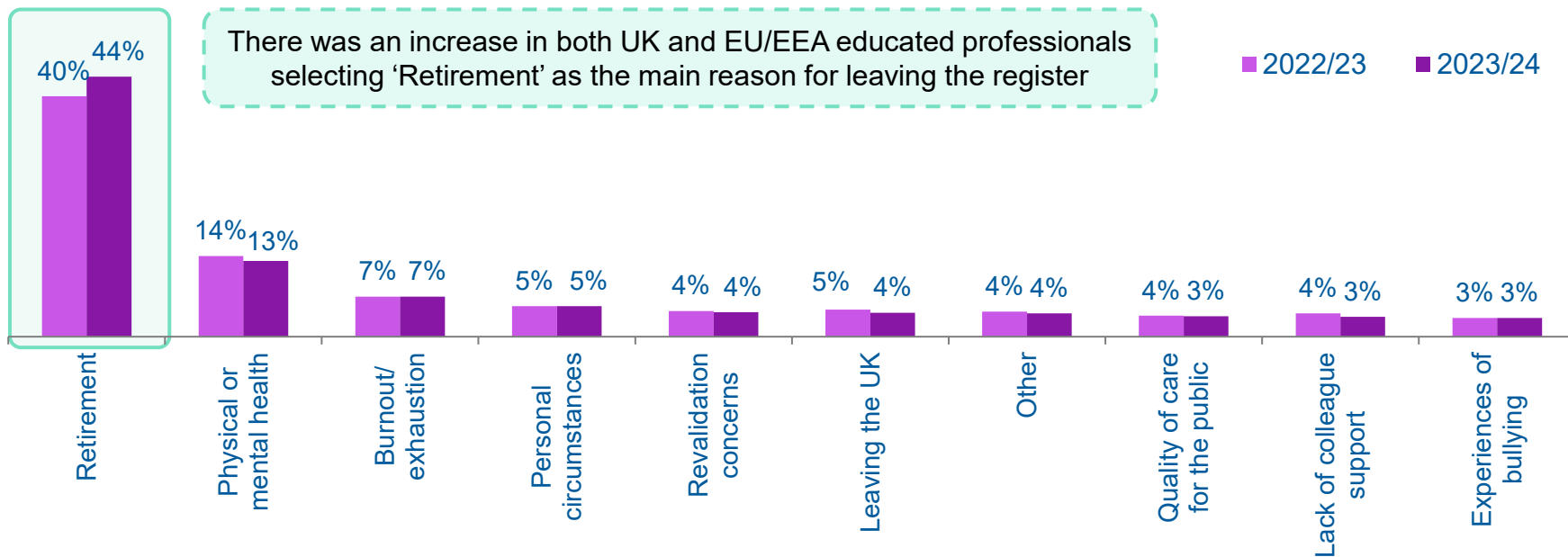
Fall in 'leaving the UK' driven by EU/EEA educated professionals - they were less likely to select this vs. last year

Retirement dominating as the top motivation – little significant movement among other factors



What was your main reason for leaving the NMC Register?

2022/23 vs 2023/24 survey results – Top 10



“ *I chose to retire following my official retirement date. I’ve worked as a nurse for 48 years. I’ve no regrets regarding my retirement, I feel my general health was finally taking its toll on me* ”

Nurse, England, aged 65+

Motivations for leaving the register show the biggest shift amongst EU/EEA leavers....



What was your main reason for leaving the NMC Register?

Top 5 reasons 2024 – By education region

= change in rank vs. 2022/23

	UK Educated	EU/EEA Educated	Internationally Educated (beyond-EU/EEA)
1.	Retirement	I am leaving the UK	I am leaving the UK
2.	My physical or mental health	Retirement	Retirement
3.	Burnout or exhaustion	My physical or mental health	Pay and benefits
4.	A change in personal circumstances	Burnout or exhaustion	My physical or mental health
5.	Concern about revalidation requirements	Other	Other

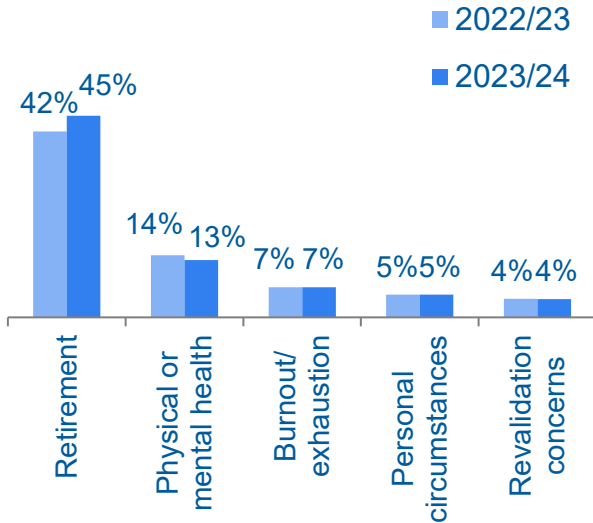
...‘Leaving the UK’ remains the top reason for EU leavers – but retirement and health increase



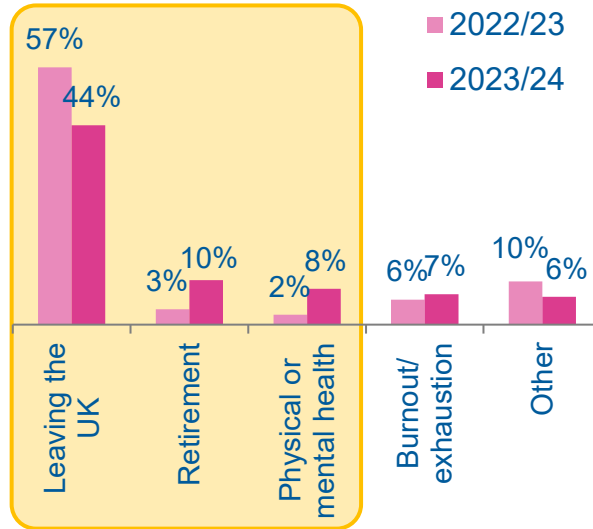
What was your main reason for leaving the NMC Register?
2022/23 vs 2023/24 survey results – By education region: Top 5



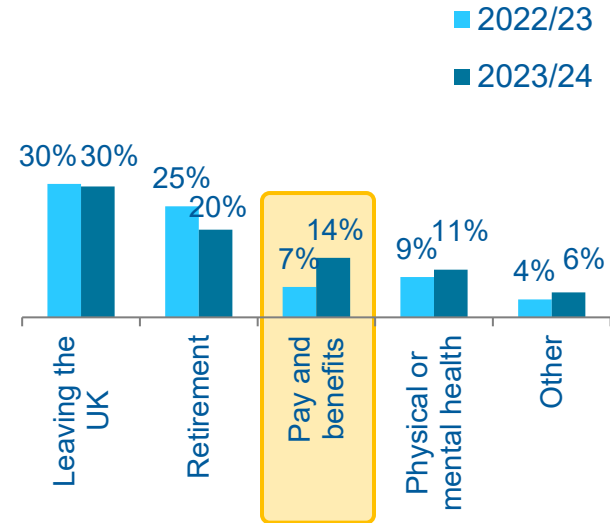
UK educated



EU/EEA



Internationally educated (beyond-EU/EEA)



Q13: Now can you tell us which of these was your main reason [for leaving]? **Base:** 2022/23 UK educated N=6,810 EU/EEA educated N=178, Internationally educated N=218 2023/24: UK educated N=7,174, EU/EEA educated N=162, Internationally educated N=296

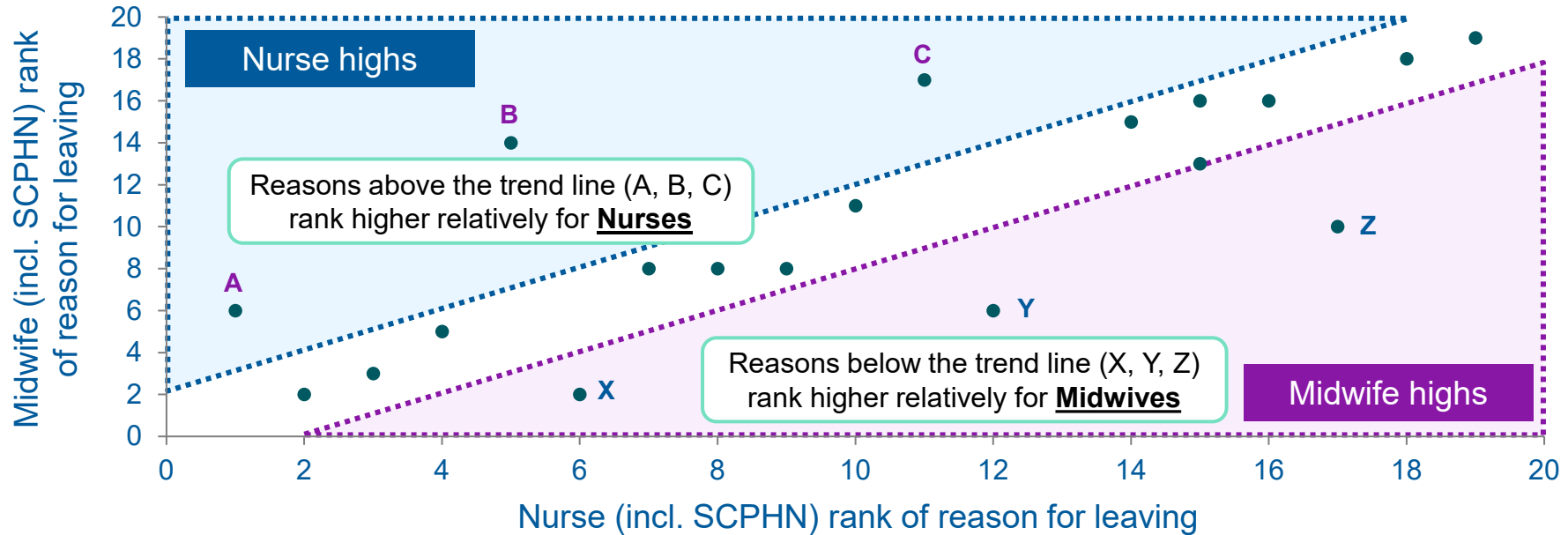
We can compare relative importance of motivations between registration types



What was your main reason for leaving the NMC Register?

Main reasons for leaving - Ranked – Nurses vs. Midwives

EXAMPLE DATA

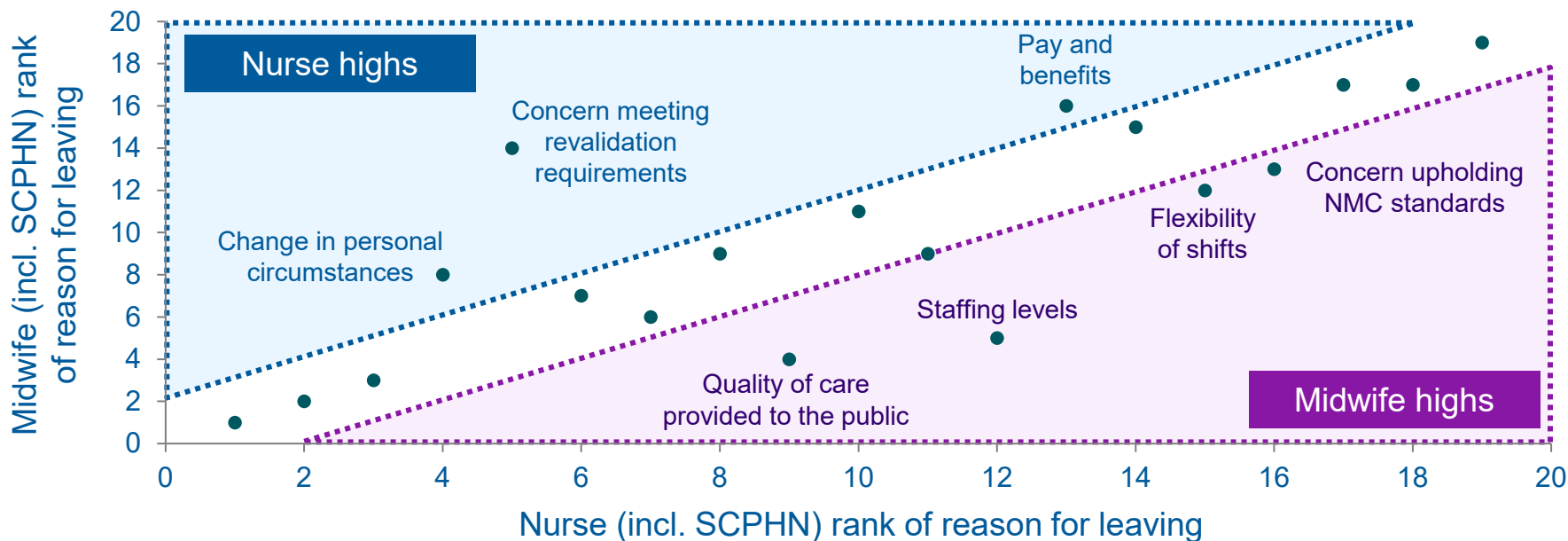


Workplace concerns more likely to rank higher as main reason for leaving amongst midwives



What was your main reason for leaving the NMC Register?

Main reasons for leaving – Ranked - Nurses vs. Midwives



...midwives are also more likely than nurses to select multiple reasons for leaving

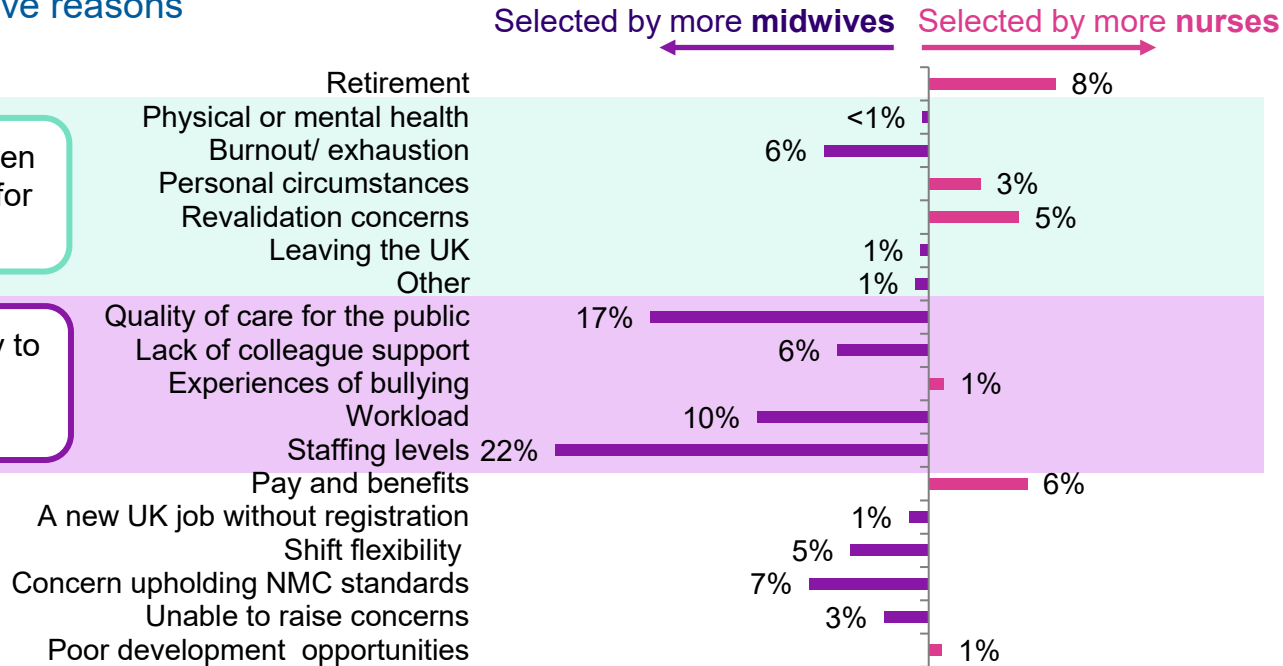


Which of these were reasons for you leaving the NMC Register?

Nurses vs. Midwives – up to five reasons

Nurses and midwives are broadly even in selecting top ranking motivations for leaving (outside of retirement)...

...but midwives are much more likely to report some other motivations for leaving alongside these



NOTE: %= %pts difference between nurses and midwives

Q12: Using the list below, please tell us the reasons why you left the NMC register: You can select up to five reasons: Base: Nurses (incl. SCPHN) N=6,720; Midwives (incl. SCPHN) N=430

“ The staffing crisis in midwifery influenced my decision. It made me anxious before going in to work, not knowing how many midwives would be on the shift, and if it would have been juggled with agency staff ”

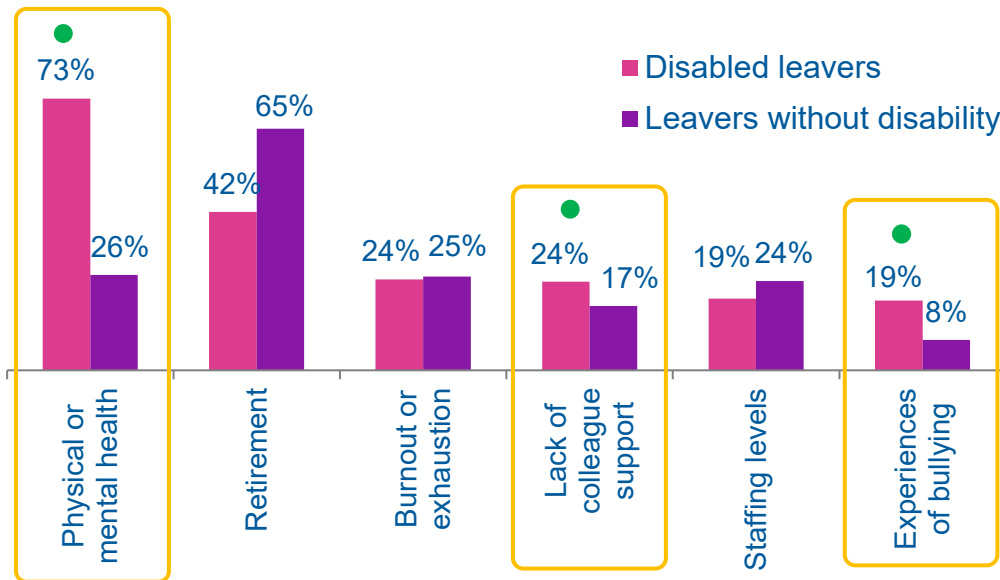
Midwife, England, aged 51-60

Health the lead driver for disabled leavers – bullying and lack of support also high



Which of these were reasons for you leaving the NMC Register?

Disabled professionals and those not reporting a disability



● = statistically higher for disabled professionals at 95% sig. level

“ A big part of why I left was due to bullying in the workplace over a number of years. Unfortunately it got to the point where I no longer chose to tolerate it as was having a negative impact on my mental health. I retired from my post with a very heavy heart as I had a genuine passion for my job ”

Nurse, Scotland, aged 51-60

Q12: Using the list below, please tell us the reasons why you left the NMC register: You can select up to five reasons? **Base:** Disability N=556, With no disability N=6,844

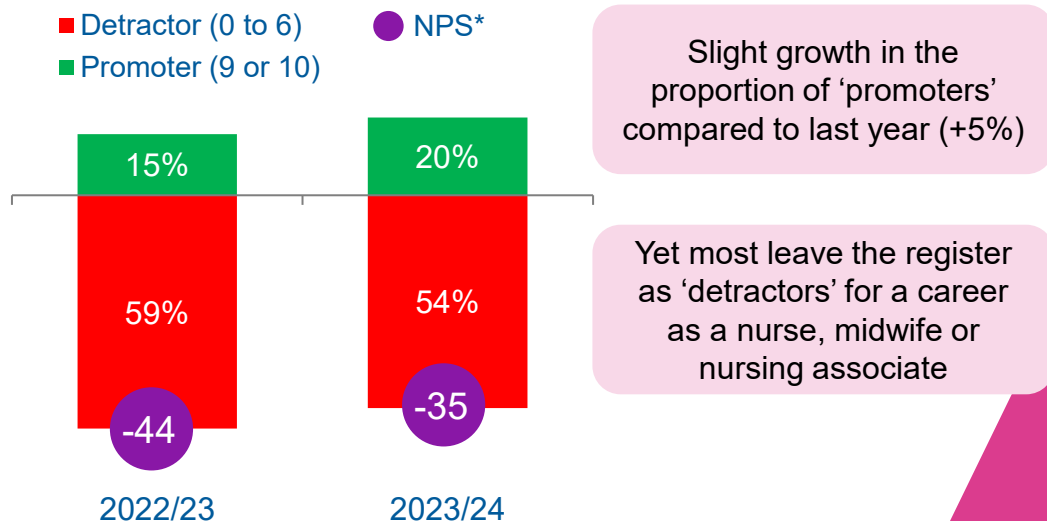
Section 2

Professionals continue to leave the register earlier than planned – doing so with poor endorsement of the sector

Despite a slight uplift, recommendation for a career in the role remains low

Likelihood to recommend a career in nursing or midwifery

All respondents – Net Promoter Score



*NPS= NET promoter score: Proportion of detractors subtracted from the proportion of promoters

Q6: On a scale of 0-10 where 0 is not at all likely and 10 is extremely likely, how likely would you be to recommend a career as a nurse, midwife or nursing associate in the UK to friends or family? **Base:** 2022/23 N=7,226; 2023/24 N=7,647



“ I loved my 40 years as a nurse, but couldn't recommend it as a career now...how sad ”

Nurse, Wales, aged 61-65

“ I've had a happy 37 year career but it was time to leave. The job was not as it was when I started, and the change is not for the better sadly ”

Midwife, Scotland, aged 51-60

Midwives, Under 55's, UK educated and NHS workers hold the lowest career endorsement

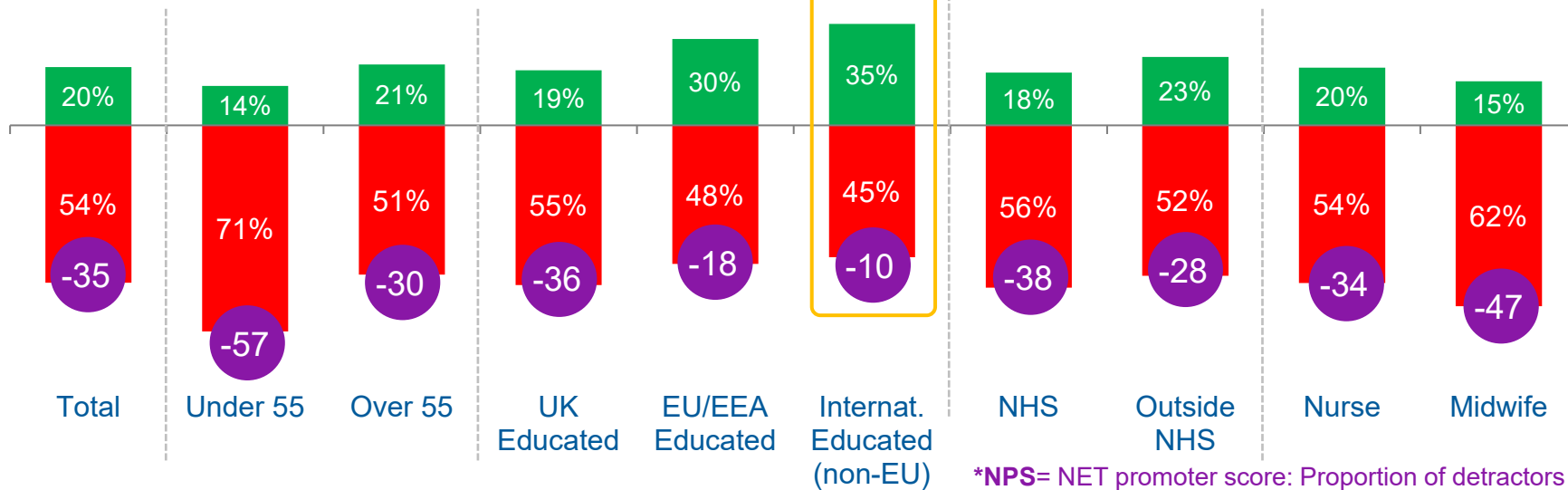


Likelihood to recommend a career in nursing or midwifery

All respondents – Net Promoter Score

■ Detractor (0 to 6) ■ Promoter (9 or 10) ● NPS*

Most audiences see a marginal uplift in NPS vs. last year - internationally educated professionals an exception to this



*NPS= NET promoter score: Proportion of detractors subtracted from the proportion of promoters

Q6: On a scale of 0-10 where 0 is not at all likely and 10 is extremely likely, how likely would you be to recommend a career as a nurse, midwife or nursing associate in the UK to friends or family? Base: Total N=7,647, U55 N=1,185; 55+ N=6,462; UK educated N=7,174, EU/EEA educated N=162, Internationally educated N=296; NHS N=5,356; Outside NHS N=1,536; Nurses (incl. SCPHN) N=6,720; Midwives (incl. SCPHN) N=430

NPS score consistent across nations in 2023/24 – with less variation across the UK

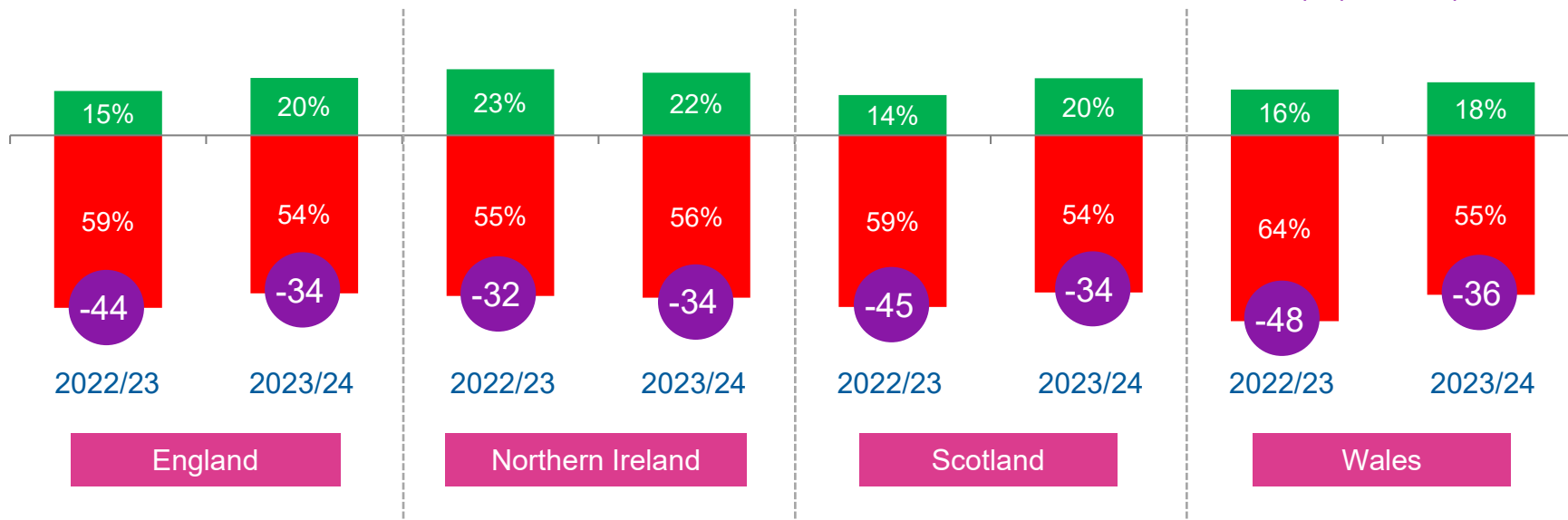


Likelihood to recommend a career in nursing or midwifery

All respondents – Net Promoter Score

■ Detractor (0 to 6) ■ Promoter (9 or 10) ● NPS*

*NPS= NET promoter score: Proportion of detractors subtracted from the proportion of promoters



Q6: On a scale of 0-10 where 0 is not at all likely and 10 is extremely likely, how likely would you be to recommend a career as a nurse, midwife or nursing associate in the UK to friends or family? **Base:** 2022/23 England N=5,483; N. Ireland N=198; Scotland N=865; Wales N=425; 2023/24 England N=5,721, N. Ireland N=237; Scotland N=980; Wales N=455

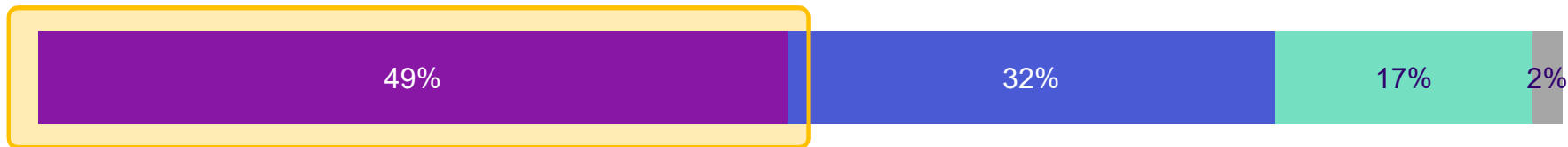
Half of leavers are leaving earlier than expected – this is consistent compared with last year



Have you left the register earlier than planned?

All respondents

■ Earlier than expected ■ Roughly when expected ■ Later than expected ■ Don't know



Half of professionals are leaving the register earlier than expected in 2023/24 – this in line with 2022/23

Disabled professionals in particular leave earlier than planned (72%) - as do midwives (54%)

Only 1 in 3 people leave the register when they expected

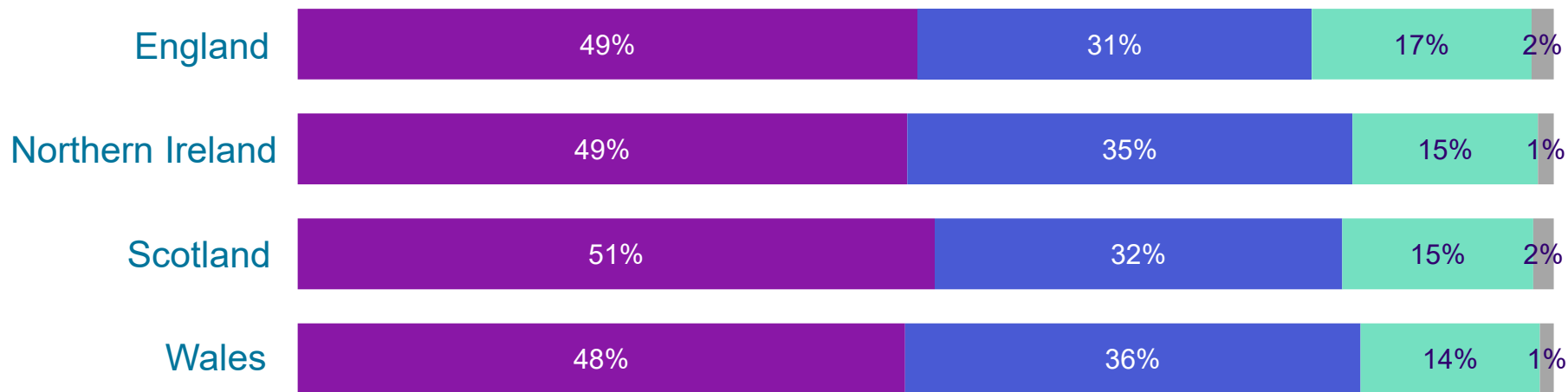
Proportion of 'early leavers' is also consistent across nation



Have you left the register earlier than planned?

All respondents – By Nation

■ Earlier than expected ■ Roughly when expected ■ Later than expected ■ Don't know



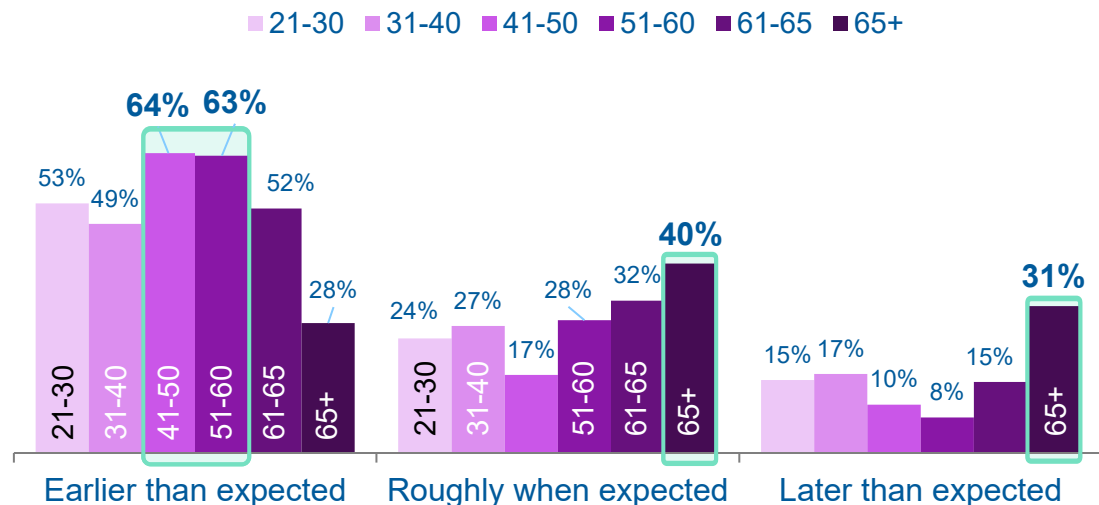
*Don't know not listed

Most people aged under 65 are leaving early – this particularly peaks for those aged 41-60



Have you left the register earlier than planned?

All respondents – By age group



Almost **two thirds** of leavers aged between **41-60** are leaving earlier than expected

Those early leavers aged 41-60 are more likely to be leaving **due to their health (25%)** - (compared with 41-60 year olds who are not leaving earlier than planned (6%))

They also **more commonly report burnout** than those 41-60 year olds who leave when expected/later than planned (12% vs 6%)

EU educated professionals more likely to stay on the register longer than planned

% of professionals on the register longer than expected
By Education Region

EU/EEA



UK



International
(beyond-EU/EEA)



23%

17%

17%

EU professionals are most likely to stay on the register longer than planned, compared to others

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“ I stayed longer because of Covid. It felt the wrong time to leave and not share my much needed skills. I couldn't face revalidation again this year”

Nurse, England, aged 65+

Early leavers typically leave the register around 5 years earlier than planned...



49% of professionals leave the register earlier than planned

Those leaving the register **early** on average leave

4 years 11 months

sooner than expected

EU/EEA educated	6 years 10 months*
UK educated	4 years 11 months
Internationally educated	4 years 4 months
Midwife	7 years
Nurse	4 years 9 months
Northern Ireland	5 years 8 months
Scotland	5 years 1 month
England	4 years 10 months
Wales	4 years 6 months

*=caution sample size below 100

“ I resigned from my post after 8 months. I left because the staffing in my workplace was incredibly poor, staff morale was very low and support limited. I felt unsafe as a Band 5 and was very concerned about the quality of care being provided ”

Midwife, Northern Ireland, aged 31-40

...those working longer than expected failing to offset early leavers in time or quantity



17% of professionals leave the register **later** than planned

Those leaving the register **late** on average leave

3 years **5** months

later than expected

UK educated	3 years 6 months
EU/EEA educated	2 years 6 months*
Internationally educated	1 years 10 months*
Nurse	3 years 5 months
Midwife	2 years 10 months*
Northern Ireland	4 years 1 month*
England	3 years 5 months
Wales	3 years 2 months*
Scotland	2 years 10 months

*=caution sample size below 100

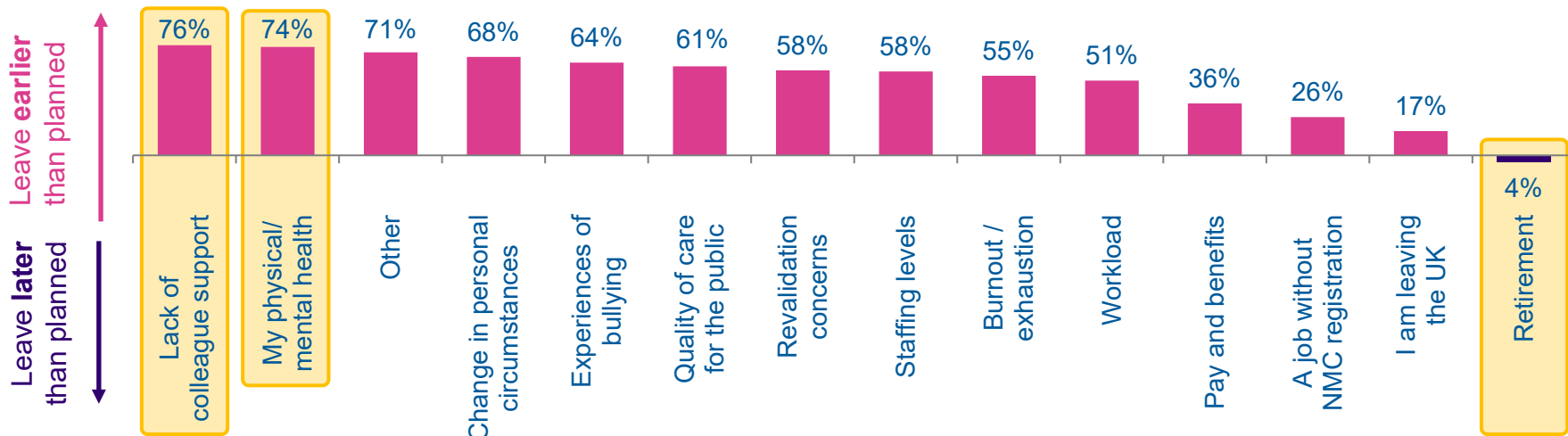
Q11: You mentioned that you left the register earlier than you planned. Approximately, how much earlier did you leave the register than you had planned? **Base:** Total N=1,283; UK educated N=1,195, EU/EEA educated N=38, Internationally educated N=49; Nurses (incl. SCPHN) N=1,127; Midwives (incl. SCPHN) N=59; England N=995; N. Ireland N=35; Scotland N=148; Wales N=63

Poor colleague support pushing people to leave early – whilst those retiring leave when expected



NET: % leaving earlier minus % leaving later than planned

By main reason for leaving the register (sample size over 100)



‘Lack of colleague and senior staff support’ ranked 9th as reason for leaving but is 1st for NET proportion of early leavers - showing it has a high impact on desire to leave the register early

Retirement is the most common reason for leaving – but people retiring are broadly leaving when expected

Leavers with poor health report both physical and mental health issues...

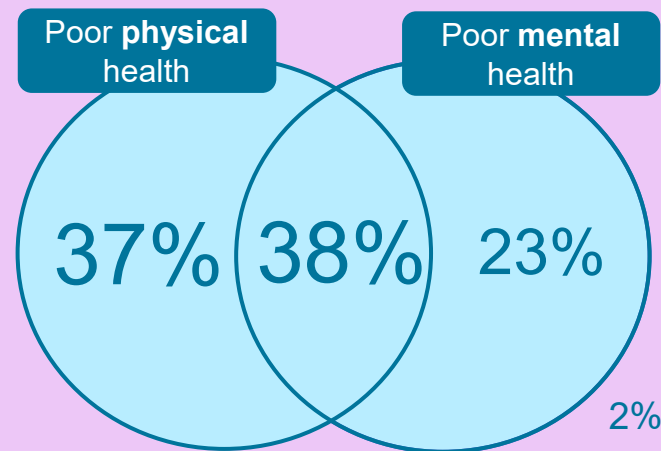


Poor health is not only a **common reason** for leaving but is a particularly high driver for **people leaving earlier than expected**

A **slightly higher** proportion of leavers report **poor physical health** rather than mental as a reason for leaving the register

Over **1 in 3** leavers with poor health have **both physical and mental health difficulties**

What health issue made you leave?
Those leaving due to poor health



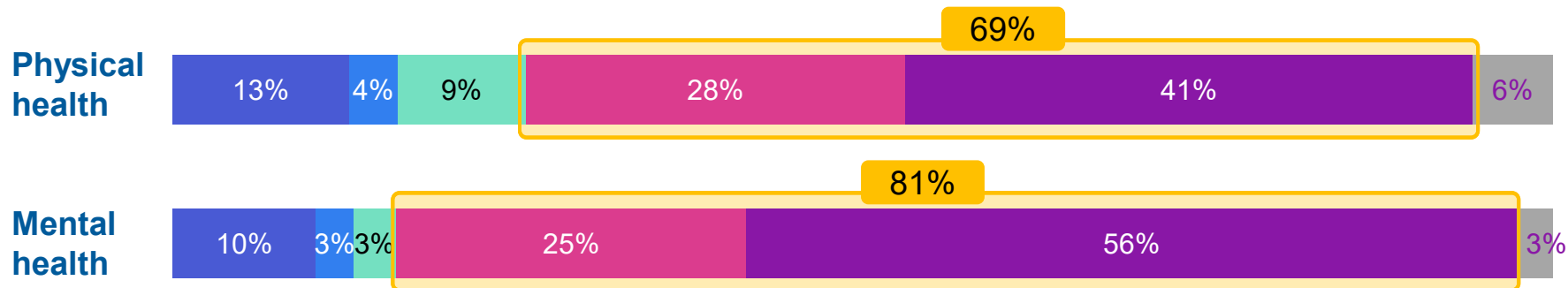
...4 in 5 who leave due to mental health believe that their role negatively contributed to this



How did your role impact on your health?

Those leaving due to poor health

■ Strong positive ■ Small positive ■ No impact on my health ■ Small negative ■ Strong negative ■ Don't know



Of those leaving the register because of poor mental health, 81% report that their role negatively impacted their mental health...

...69% of those leaving due to poor physical health report that their role negatively impacted their physical health

“
I felt that I was constantly fighting to get the care my patients needed, this impacted on my mental health. I was unable to stop worrying about my patients whose care was being compromised by factors I felt were outside my control”

Nurse, England, aged 61-65



Section 3

Few plan on returning to the NMC register – those considering a return often look outside as well as within the UK

Likelihood of returning to a career in nursing or midwifery stays low – especially if UK educated



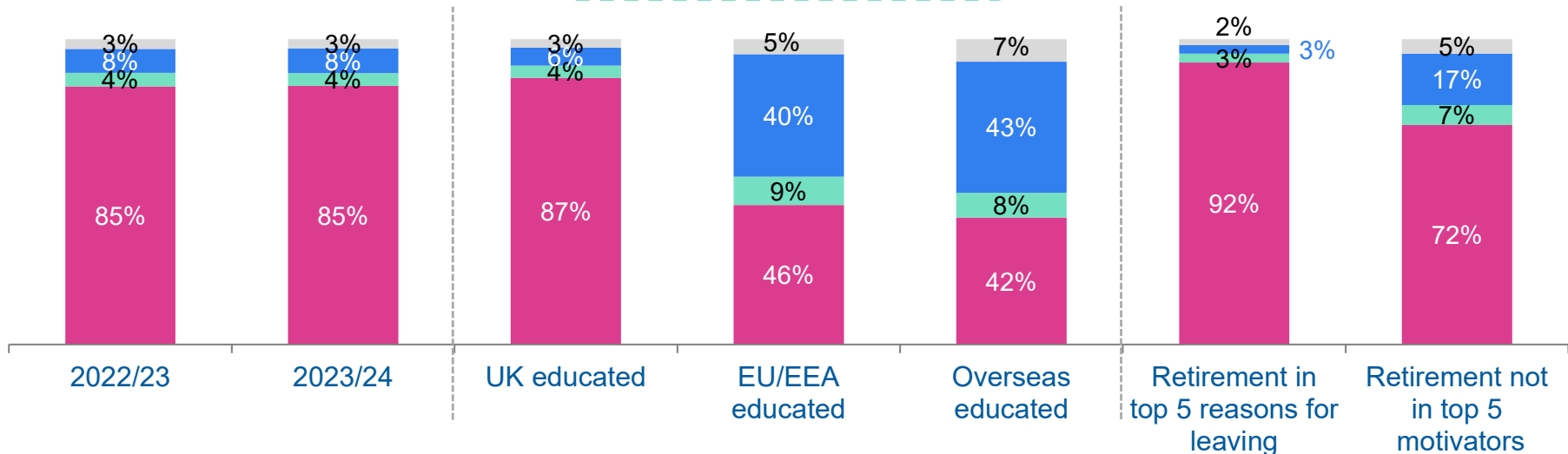
Likelihood of returning to nursing and midwifery

All respondents and by age

- Don't know
- Likely
- Neutral
- Unlikely

UK leavers are older which is likely a factor – 28% of U55s likely to return vs. 4% of 55+

Those not mentioning retirement as a reason for leaving are still highly unlikely to return



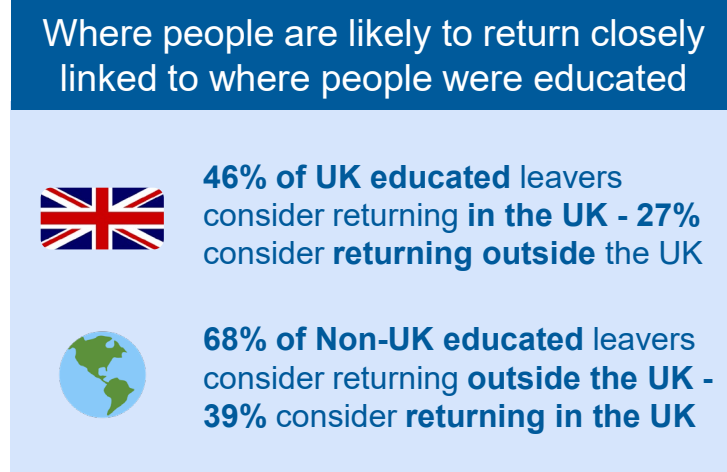
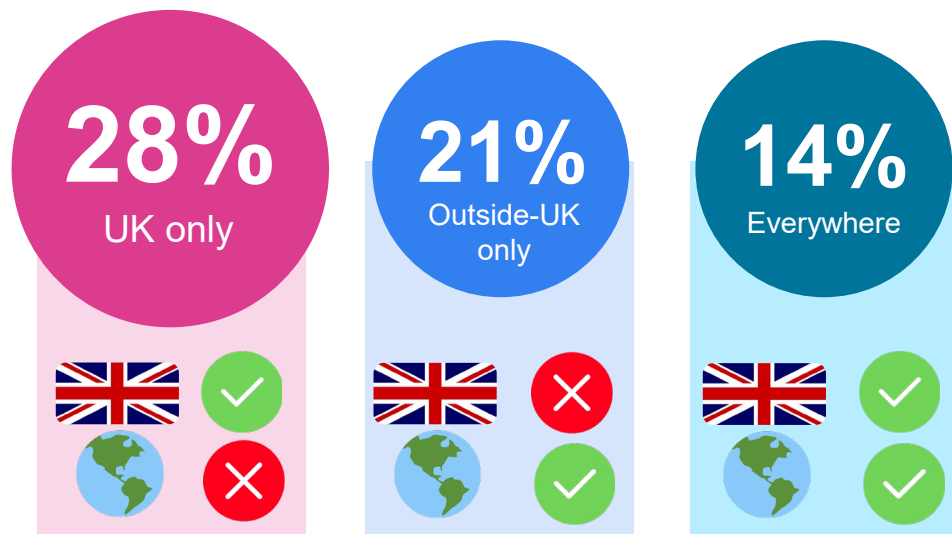
Q7: How likely are you to return to a career as a registered nurse, midwife or nursing associate in future? **Base:** 2023/23 N=7,226; 2023/24 N=7,647; UK educated N=7,174; EU/EEA educated N=162; Internationally educated N=296; Retirement in top 5 N=4,779; Retirement not in top 5 N=2,868

Those likely to return to nursing or midwifery are often considering work outside the UK



Are you likely to return to practise inside or outside the UK?

Those likely to return – UK or Outside the UK



Most leavers requesting documentation to work overseas do go on to practise outside the UK



If a professional wants to work outside the UK in nursing and midwifery they **need a certificate of current professional status (CCPS)** to verify their skills

24,404 professionals **requested** a CCPS between Jan 2023 and March 2024

2,543 professionals who **left the register** at this time **had requested** a CCPS at some point

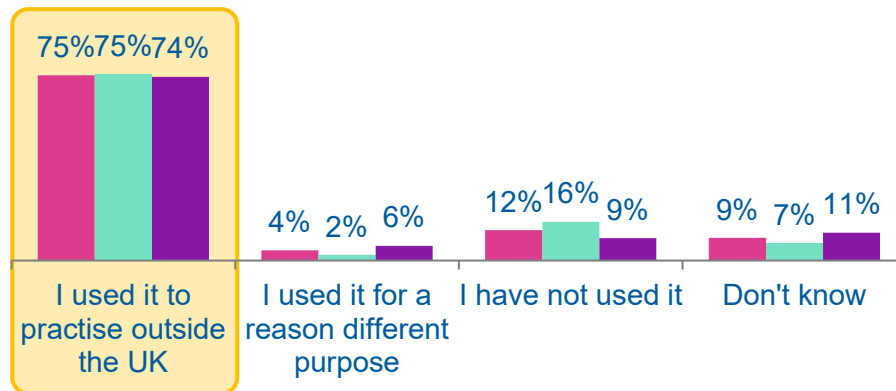
263 of those leavers who requested a CCPS also **responded to the leavers' survey**

Among those responding to the survey who had requested a CCPS, the **majority use it as intended**

Did you use the CCPS you requested?

Leavers who requested a CCPS

■ Overall ■ UK educated ■ Internationally educated*



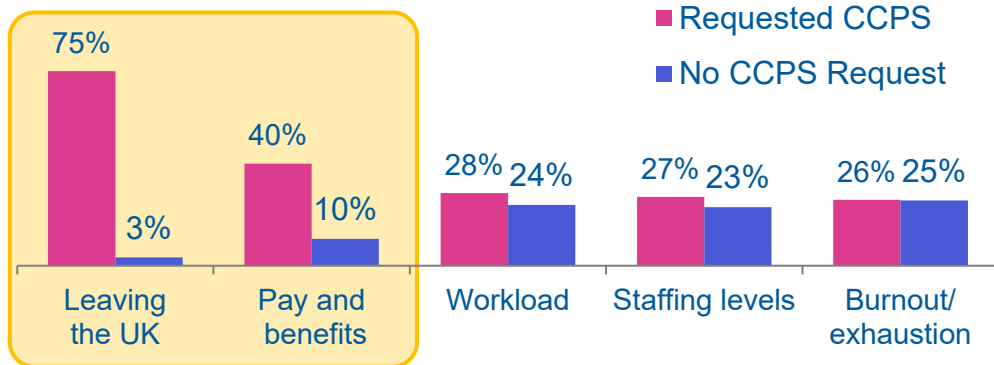
*EU/EEA and Internationally educated beyond EU/EEA combined to boost sample size

Pay and workload underpin reasons for leaving among CCPS requesters



What contributed in any way to you leaving the register?

Top 5 reasons for leavers who requested a CCPS



Not surprisingly, 'leaving the UK' is a leading motivation. Pay and workload are also common reasons for leaving amongst those requesting a CCPS

“Midwives are paid more highly in Canada and I have a better quality of life with lower stress at work too”

Midwife, Canada, aged 31-40

“In Australia the work life balance is incredible. The pay is 4 times what I was getting. I loved being a nurse in the UK but it was not sustainable. I couldn't save, I couldn't buy a house, I couldn't go on holiday”

Nurse, Australia, aged 31-40

“ There are significant challenges that influenced my move home. Wages being too low to buy a property. An inability to work full time due to the cost of childcare. Understaffing was a big issue. Staff burnout increased significantly ”

Nurse, England, aged 21-30



Summary

Executive Summary



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While the top reasons for leaving are similar for nurses and midwives, **concerns** around **staffing levels and quality of care** are more common negatives among **midwives**

Disabled leavers are **more likely to leave due to poor health** – they're also significantly more likely to leave due to **bullying** and **lack of support** than those who do not declare a disability

Likelihood to recommend a career as a nurse, midwife or nursing associate **remains low** but has improved since last year – with midwives, Under 55's, UK educated and NHS workers giving the lowest endorsement

Half of leavers are **leaving earlier than they expected** (consistent with 2022/23) - those retiring leave when expected, whilst **poor colleague support and bad health particularly lead to an early exit**

Poor health driving people to leave the register is **both physical (75%) and mental (62%)** - **4 in 5** who leave due to **mental health** report that their **role negatively contributed to this**

Early leavers typically leave the register **5 years earlier than planned** – **those who do stay** on the register longer than expected stay around **an extra 3.5 years**

Likelihood of returning to a career in nursing or midwifery amongst leavers **stays low (8%)** – for **those likely to return, 1 in 3** would consider working outside the UK

Appendix

Reasons for leaving in England similar to the total trend – the top 4 remain unchanged



What was your main reason for leaving the NMC Register
England – Top 10 reasons selected

= change in rank vs. UK

23/24 Rank	Reason	vs. UK total
1	Retirement	=
2	My physical or mental health	=
3	Burnout or exhaustion	=
4	A change in personal circumstances	=
5	Other	
6	Concern about meeting the revalidation requirements	
7	Quality of care provided to members of the public and people who use services	
8	Lack of support from colleagues or senior members of staff	
9	Experiences of bullying, harassment, or discrimination	
10	Workload	

'Leaving the UK' falls out of the top 10 and 'Workload' moves into the top 10

Workload and gaining a non-registered NMC job more prominent reasons in Northern Ireland



What was your main reason for leaving the NMC Register
Northern Ireland – Top 10 reasons selected

= change in rank vs. UK

23/24 Rank	Reason	vs. UK total
1	Retirement	=
2	My physical or mental health	=
3	Concern about meeting the revalidation requirements	
4	A change in personal circumstances	=
5	Burnout or exhaustion	
6	Workload	
7	Other	=
=8	Experiences of bullying, harassment, or discrimination	
=8	I have a new job in the UK that doesn't need NMC registration	
10	Lack of support from colleagues or senior members of staff	

Scotland match overall top 4 reasons for leaving – yet bullying and lack of support do rank higher



What was your main reason for leaving the NMC Register
Scotland – Top 10 reasons selected

= change in rank vs. UK

23/24 Rank	Reason	vs. UK total
1	Retirement	=
2	My physical or mental health	=
3	Burnout or exhaustion	=
4	A change in personal circumstances	=
5	Lack of support from colleagues or senior members of staff	+4
6	Concern about meeting the revalidation requirements	-1
7	Experiences of bullying, harassment, or discrimination	+3
8	Other	-1
9	Workload	+2
10	Quality of care provided to members of the public and people who use services	-2

Lack of support and bullying also rank higher as main reasons for leaving in Wales



What was your main reason for leaving the NMC Register
Wales – Top 10 reasons selected

= change in rank vs. UK

23/24 Rank	Reason	vs. UK total
1	Retirement	=
2	My physical or mental health	=
3	Burnout or exhaustion	=
4	A change in personal circumstances	=
5	Lack of support from colleagues or senior members of staff	
6	Quality of care provided to members of the public and people who use services	
=7	Experiences of bullying, harassment, or discrimination	
=7	Concern meeting the revalidation requirements	
9	Workload	
10	Other	