

Retention Planning Objective Update

Reference: PO1: Workforce Stabilisation - Retention Plan

Executive Lead: Lisa Gostling, Executive Director of Workforce & OD/Interim Deputy CEO

Reporting Officers: Corinna Lloyd-Jones, Interim Assistant Director of OD and Denise Fitzsimmons, Retention Lead

Period of Reporting: January 2025 – January 2026

Aim & Outcomes

Planning Objective Targets 2025-26:

Nursing, Medical and Allied Health Professional (AHP) and Health Sciences (HCS) retention Task and Finish Groups will identify opportunities that enable staff to share unique cultural experiences in order to identify, deliver and realise opportunities to work differently across the Health Board, with the aim of achieving a reduction in staff turnover of:

- Nursing: 0.5% (Jan 2025 - Jan 2026= **-1.63%**)
- Medical: 1% (Jan 2025 - Jan 2026= **+1.72%**)
- AHP and HCS: 1% (Jan 2025 – Jan 2026= **-1.08%**)

Intended Impact

Local: At the beginning of our retention journey in 2021, Hywel Dda University Health Board (HDdUHB) was the first Health Board (HB) in Wales to make a proactive investment in specific strategies to create environments that support, nurture and retain our workforce, as well as develop and expand our future pipeline.

National: To support the delivery of the *Belong, Thrive, Stay* National Retention Programme and ensure a collaborative and collective approach to improving staff retention across NHS, in February 2024 Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) funded a National Retention Lead and ten organisational Retention Leads on a two-year fixed-term basis. This investment has enabled HDdUHB to build on and accelerate our existing retention work in line with the NHS Wales Community of Practice. HEIW has recently confirmed that funding will be extended until 31 March 2026 to allow further consideration of a future programme proposal.

Local & Ministerial Priorities

Our Nurse, Medical and AHP and HCS Retention work programmes dovetail with the criteria set out in the Welsh Health Circular//2024/017 in relation to implementing and monitoring the Nurse Retention Plan and other professional group retention strategies.

Our Retention Programmes also align to the following de-escalation criteria relating to targeted intervention for the Leadership, Capability and Culture domain and have provided evidence to support the HB's journey towards de-escalation:

“A culture of listening, learning and improving is embedded throughout the organisation based on early and rapid triangulation and resolution of issues from a variety of sources, including quality, mortality, staffing levels, patient outcomes, user and staff feedback”

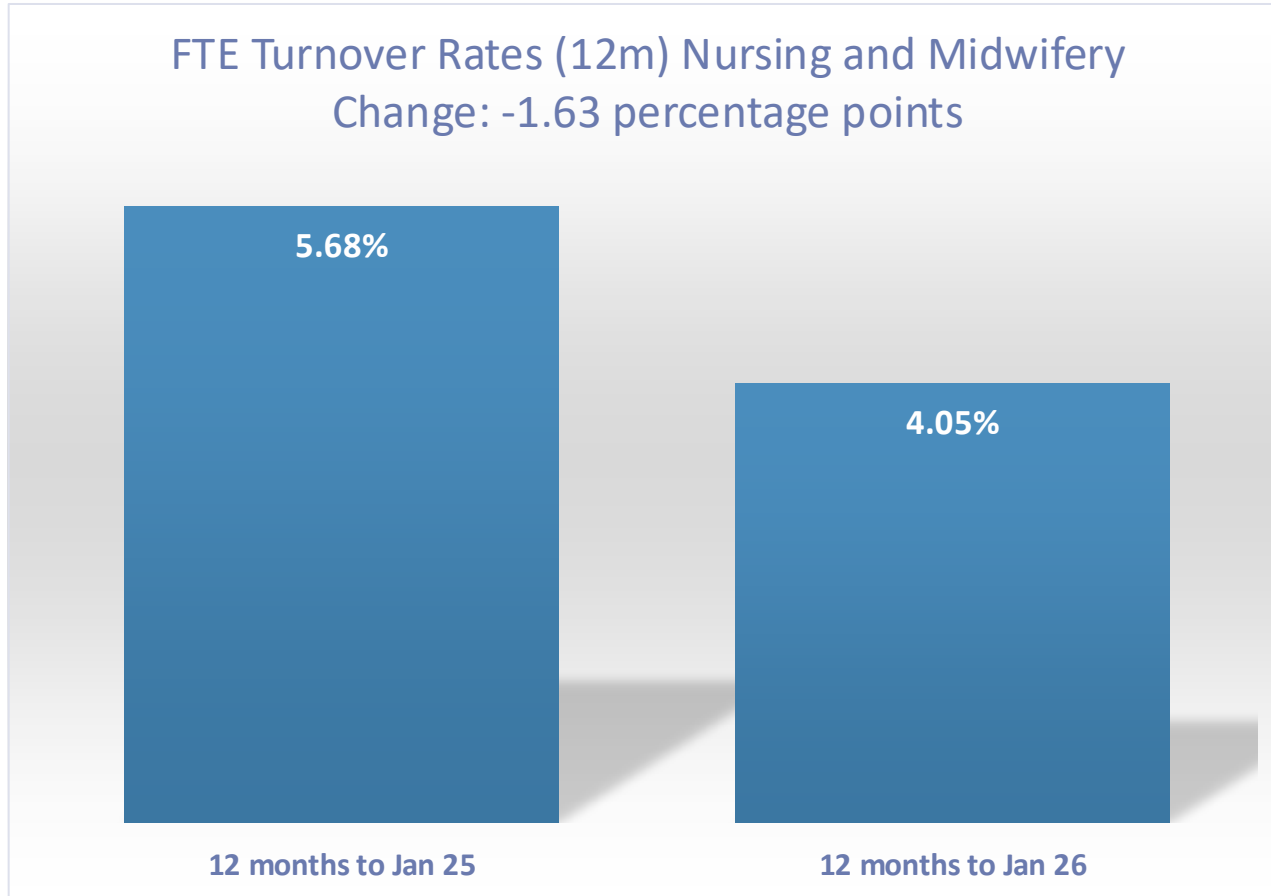
“Plans are in place to develop a sustainable workforce resulted in improved retention and staff well-being, a reduction in the number of vacancies and the number of interim and agency staff, workforce plans and clinician job plans are reviewed annually to ensure that the organisation can deliver the requirements of the annual plan”

Nurse Retention

Our Nurse Retention Group was initially established in 2022 and continues to meet on a 4-week basis.

Our HB Nurse Retention Action Plan has been mapped to the NHS Wales Nurse Retention Plan to ensure alignment with national priorities and we have continued the positive trajectory of implementation.

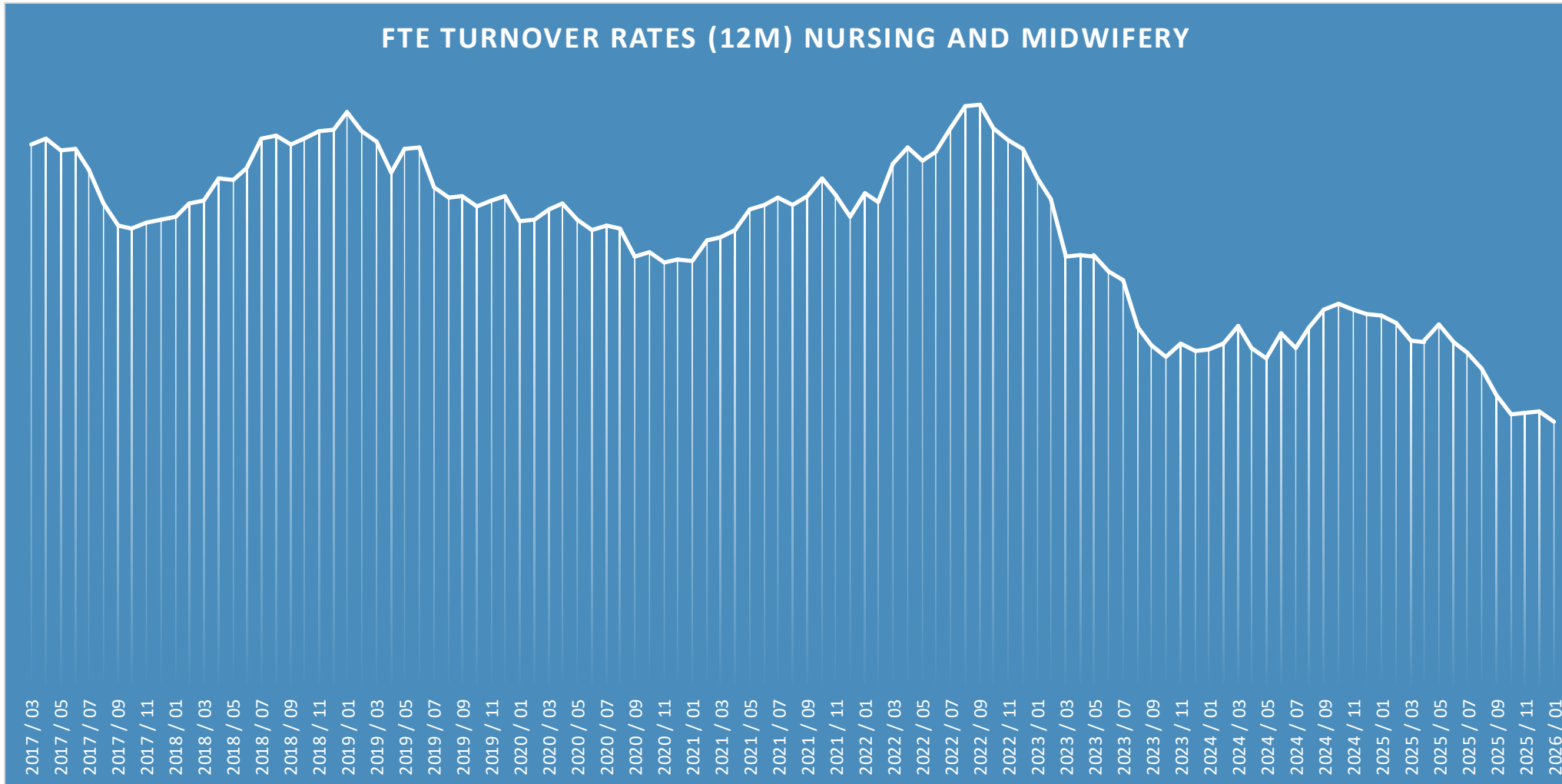
Nurse Retention Progress



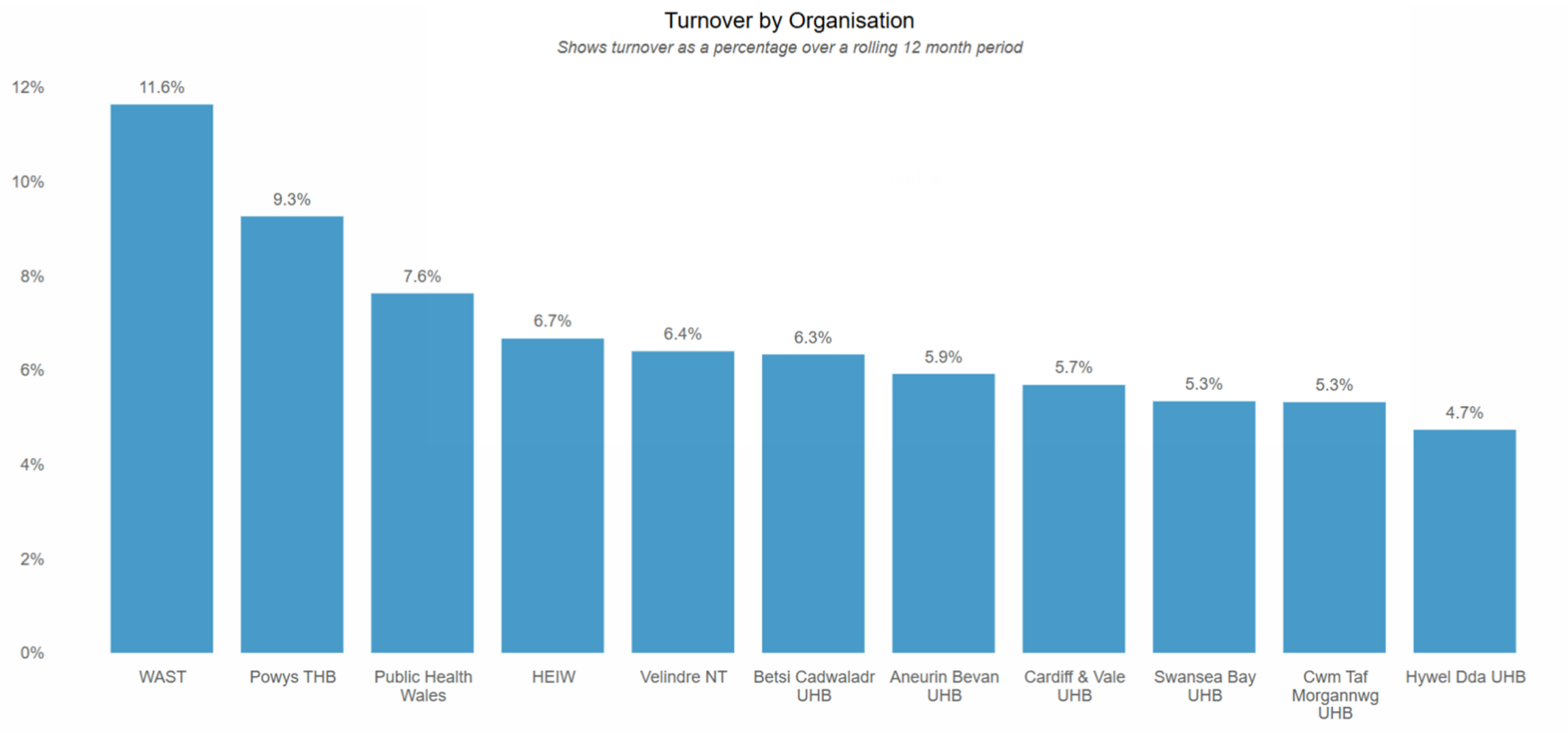
We are currently undertaking a deep dive into our nursing ‘most improved’ areas.

Following the sustained reduction in nursing turnover, we are reviewing ESR data alongside local data and intelligence to capture key improvement drivers and identify where successful approaches can be scaled or replicated across other areas.

Nurse Retention Progress



NHS Wales Nurse Retention Figures (Oct 2025)



Nurse Retention Achievements

- ✓ Best performing NHS organisation in Wales for our nursing turnover rate since 2024.
- ✓ Acknowledgement from Welsh Government during our Public Accountability Meeting in December 2025, recognising the success of the HB's nurse stabilisation programme and the ongoing contributing impact of our nurse retention programme.
- ✓ NHS Wales Retention Programme nominated for Workforce Team of the Year Award at the Nursing Times Workforce Summit 2025.
- ✓ Early in 2025, our HB Retention Lead presented at the HEIW Nursing Conference, highlighting the NHS Wales Retention Programme and key projects our HB has contributed to, e.g. Stay Conversations (see below).

Examples of current projects include:

- Following a successful collaborative pilot project with Powys Teaching Health Board, we have developed a suite of resources that provide clear guidance and a training resource to support the implementation of Stay Conversations.
- Commencing 'Day in the Life' stories with our Grow Your Own staff, capturing unique individual experiences and highlighting areas of good practice. Supporting our development and career planning action, this also helps showcase different ways of obtaining qualifications and entering HB nursing roles.

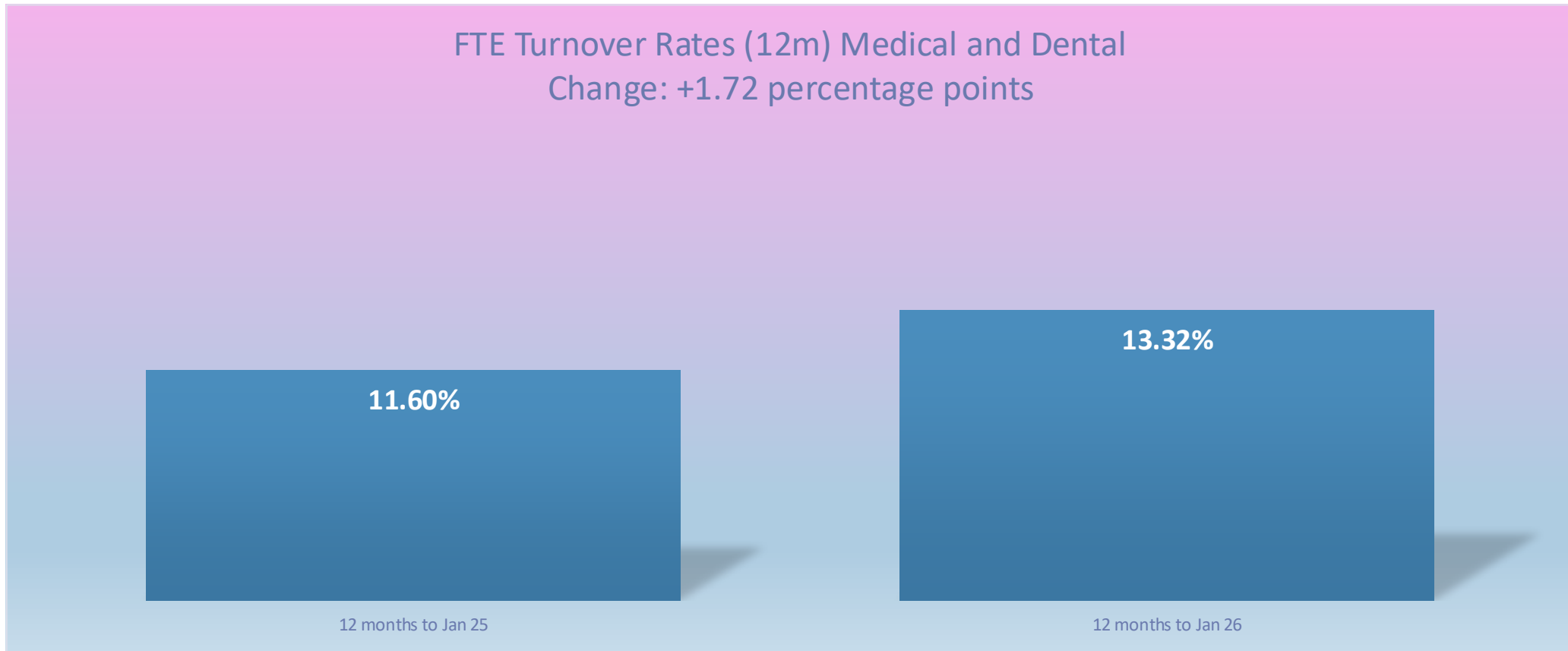


Medical Retention

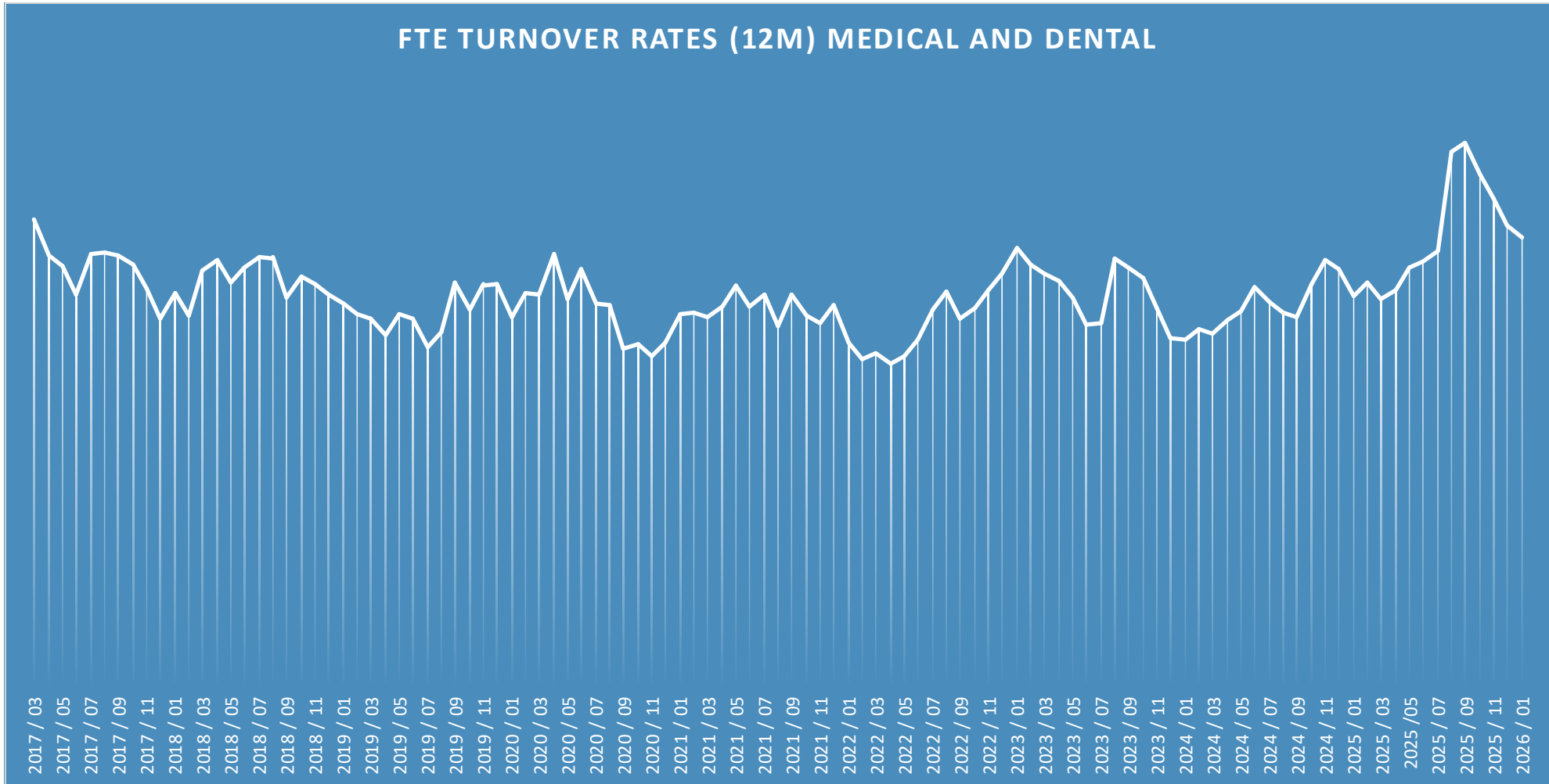
Our Medical Retention Group was established in 2023 and continues to meet on a 6-week basis.

Our Medical Action Plan mirrors the headings and elements of the Nurse Retention Plan, while still reflecting the key factors unique to the staff group.

Medical Retention Progress



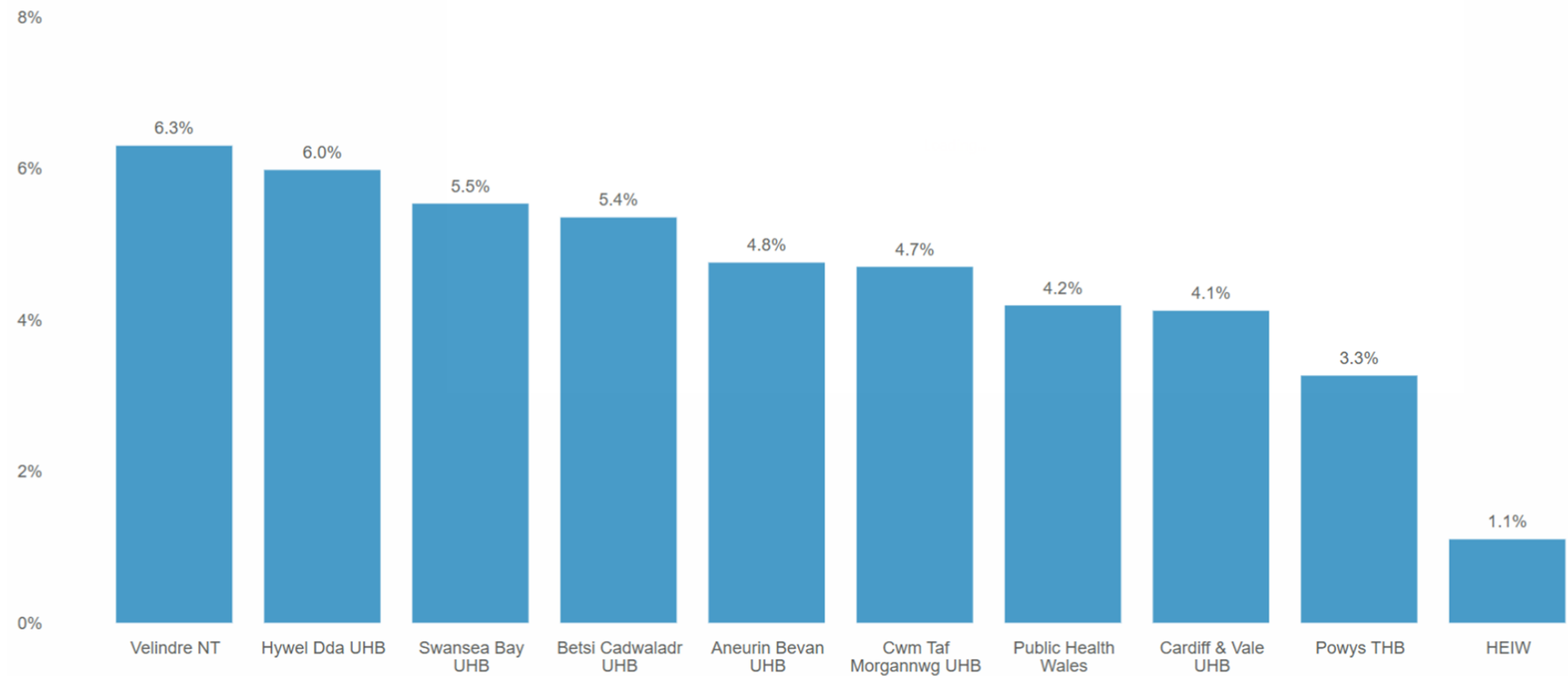
Medical Retention Progress



NHS Wales Medical Retention Figures (Oct 2025)

Turnover by Organisation

Shows turnover as a percentage over a rolling 12 month period



Medical Retention Achievements

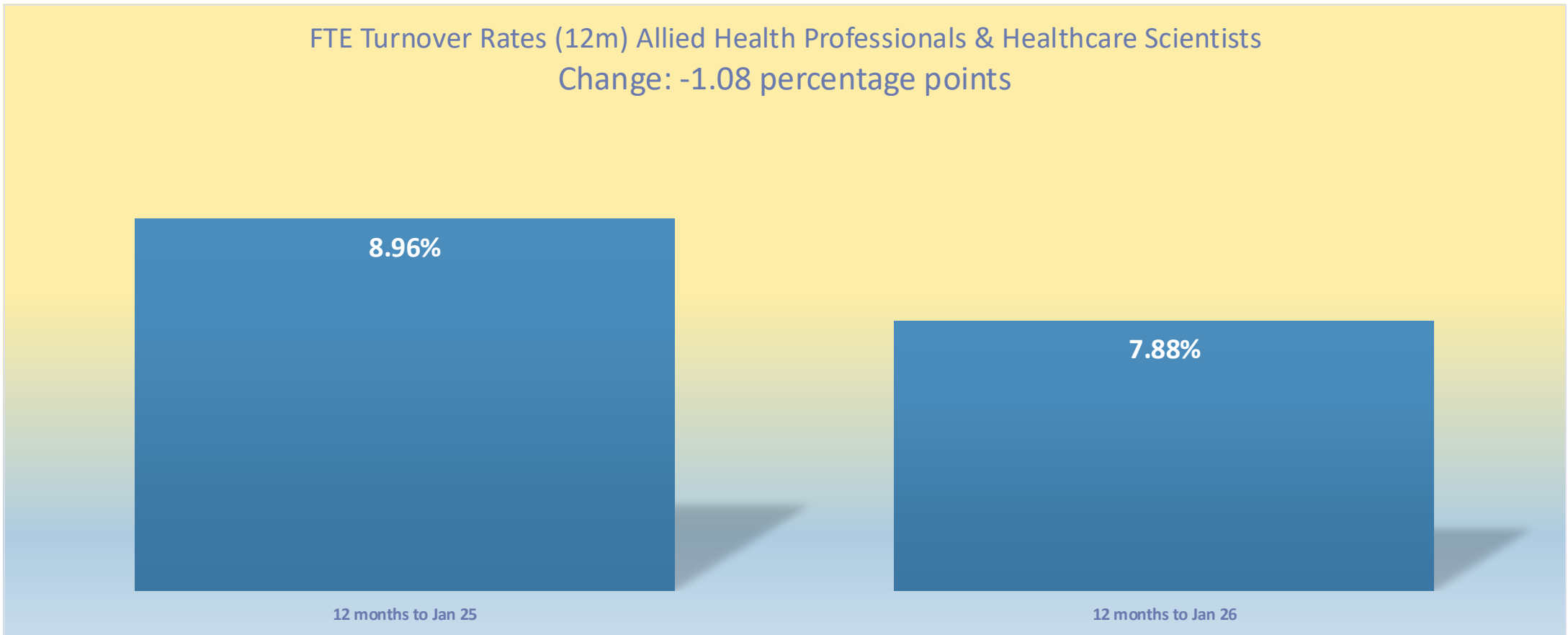
- ✓ Continues to be a key retention focus area, including ongoing collaboration with our HB Medical Workforce Planning Steering Group to ensure an integrated approach across programmes.
- ✓ Data analytics are being used to understand rising medical workforce turnover; high turnover among Specialty Doctors has been identified and targeted support is being developed with Workforce Planning for areas such as Paediatrics.
- ✓ Welcoming stakeholder input to enhance collaboration and increase engagement across the retention agenda, e.g. in a recent meeting Dr Elin Griffiths, Associate Dean for GP Training and PD Integrated Care GP Fellowship Scheme HEIW/GP Partner Meddygfa Teilo, and Dr Anne-Marie Mackintosh, GP Mentoring Lead HDdUHB/GP Partner Robert Street Surgery/GP Appraiser HEIW, shared updates on the NHS Wales iGP programme and South-West Wales GP Mentorship scheme. Excellent contributions such as these offer valuable insights on programme impact and development opportunities and inspire other areas to explore how similar initiatives can strengthen retention across HDdUHB.
- ✓ In the same way we capture staff stories for nurse retention, we are utilising this methodology through engaging with our medical colleagues to capture positive experiences and spotlight best practice.

Allied Health Professional (AHP) and Health Sciences (HCS) Retention

Our AHP & HCS Retention Group was established in 2025 and continues to meet on a 6-week basis.

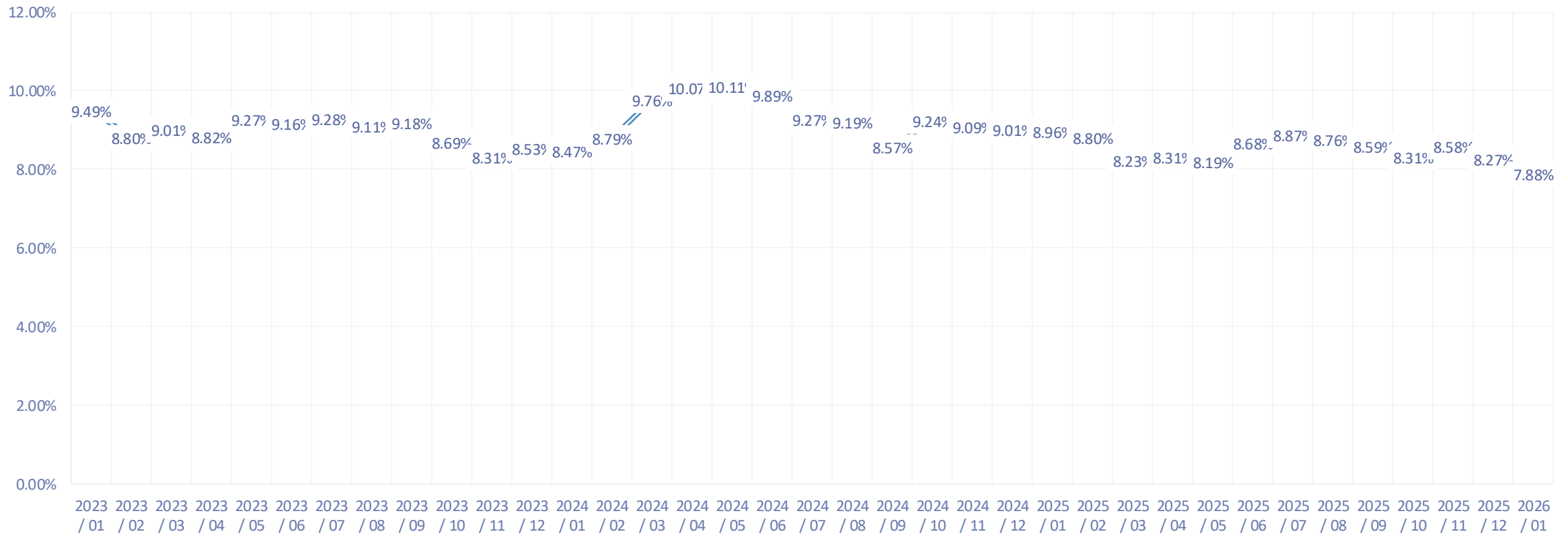
Similarly to our Medical Action Plan, our AHP & HCS Action Plan mirrors the headings and elements of the Nurse Retention Plan, while still reflecting the key factors unique to the staff groups.

AHP & HCS Retention Progress



AHP & HCS Retention Progress

FTE TURNOVER RATES (12M) HEALTHCARE SCIENTISTS AND ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS



AHP & HCS Retention Achievements

- ✓ Establishment phase for all three of our Retention Groups involved data analysis, research and engagement with leaders and staff. Our most recently formed AHP & HCS Retention Group is now concentrating on key priority areas, including health and wellbeing, to enhance support for these staff groups.
- ✓ Evaluating the similarities and differences in experiences across professions; although both AHP and HCS turnover has decreased (see below), we are working with leaders across the staff groups to identify key trends and develop targeted support for each area:
 - AHP: 8.86% in Jan 2025 and 7.76% in Jan 2026 (-1.10%)
 - HCS: 9.35% in Jan 2025 and 8.34% in Jan 2026 (-1.01%)
- ✓ Ongoing communication within the NHS Wales Community of Practice to support AHP and HCS retention, where our HB Retention Lead is engaging nationally to ensure alignment.

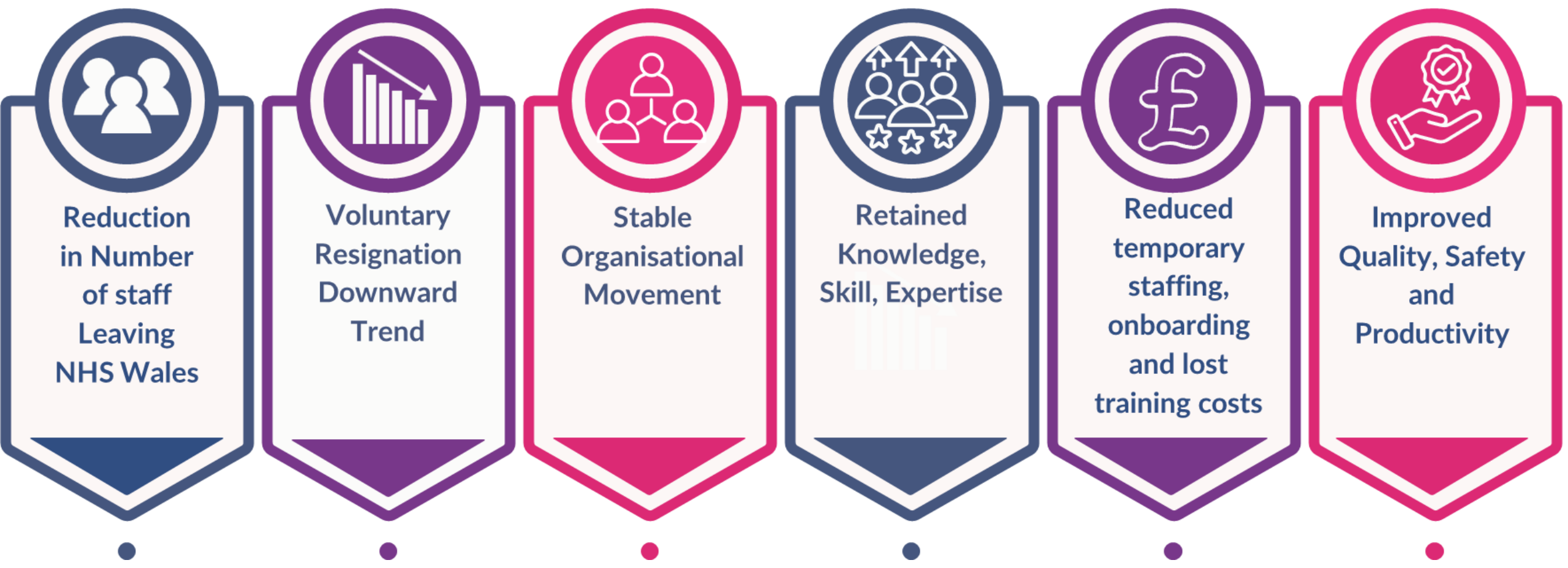
HDdUHB Retention: Next Steps

- Targeted action is being developed for high-turnover staff groups, supported by closer collaboration with services.
- Areas showing significant improvement are being reviewed to identify learning that can be spread and scaled to higher-turnover teams.
- Further projects are planned to strengthen retention, including enhancements to conflict management and flexible working which will be undertaken using quality improvement methodology to identify root causes, test solutions and deliver measurable improvements.

Key Messages

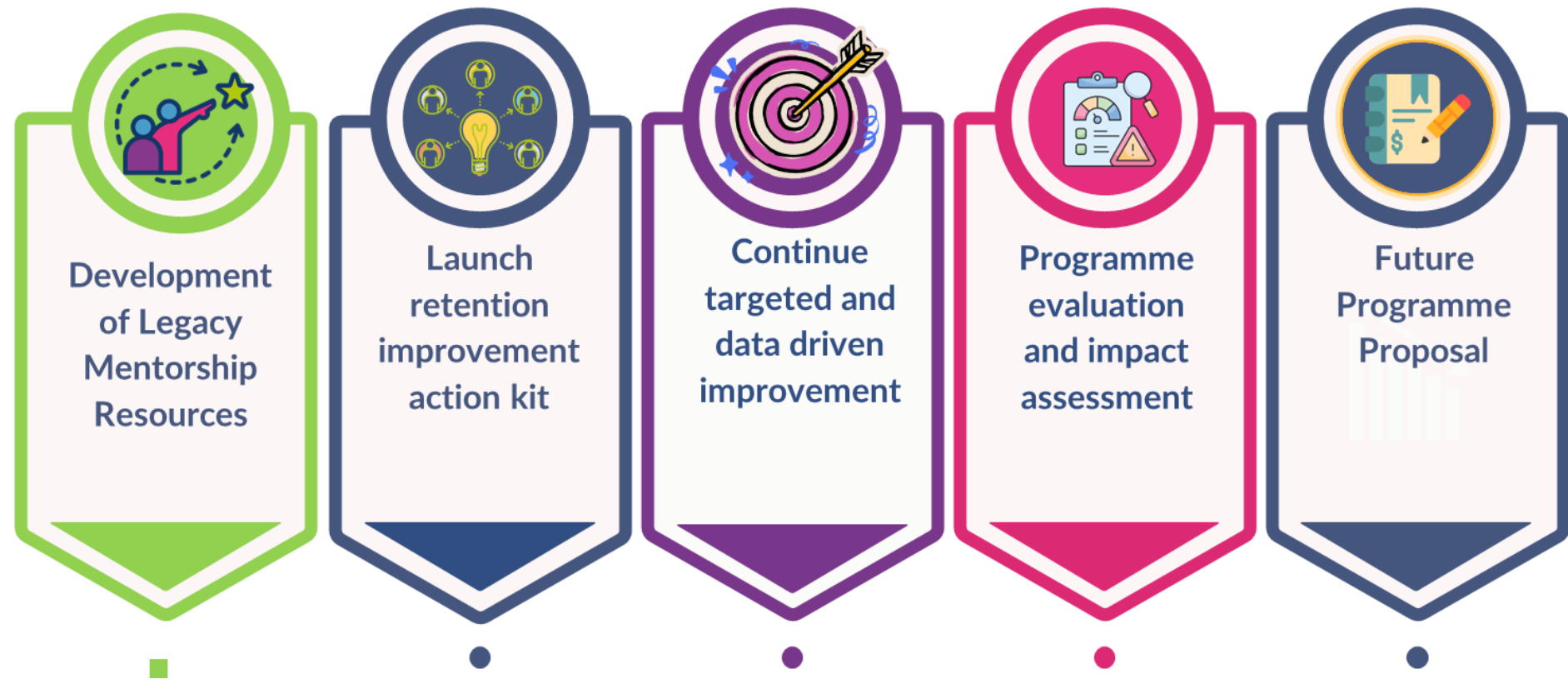
- Of note is one of the key learnings from our nurse retention work in relation to a time lag from the establishment of the Group to when the sustainable reduction in turnover begins to take effect. This reinforces the need for patience, consistency and continued commitment to the programmes, as meaningful improvements take time to embed and show measurable impact.

NHS Wales Retention Community of Practice



NEXT STEPS

NHS Wales Retention Community of Practice



Recommendation

The Committee is asked to:

- NOTE the progress made to date on our HB retention work programmes, and
- RECEIVE ASSURANCE that, with these programmes remaining on track, appropriate progress toward the ambitious target figures will be achieved within the full-year timeline.