

Vision and Strategy: the Nursing Contribution to the health and well-being of people with Learning Disabilities

Overview and rationale

The learning disability nursing workforce has decreased in recent years, whilst there has been an increase in the amount of people with learning disabilities (PWLD), and the complexity of their health and social care needs. Learning disability (LD) nurses have always been central to the care of PWLD and valued highly by them and their families and carers. The values underpinning LD nursing has led to co-produced care, tailored to the individual, with family, carer and multi agency input. It is important to invest in this specialised area of care, to ensure these skills are valued and nurtured in the future. Strategic workforce planning and modernisation of the role was highlighted as key in the *Strengthening the Commitment* UK modernising learning disability nurse review (2012). Implementing the recommendations will ensure a strong vibrant learning disability nursing profession. Developing strong leadership throughout the learning disability workforce, by creating a national network across private and public services. This includes a new academic group to highlight best practice guidelines specifically for PWLD. Our shared objective is to see the health and care system get to grips with past failings, by listening to this very vulnerable group of people and their families. Working collaboratively meeting their needs and working together to commission the range of support, which will enable them to lead fulfilling and safe lives in their communities as highlighted in the *Transforming care the national response to Winterbourne View Hospital: final report* (2012). This model includes the 6Cs and the six action areas that learning disability nurses need to address to deliver high quality, compassionate care and improve health care outcomes.

Making this happen for all, learning disability nurses need to take the lead in the developing the culture of compassionate care especially within these 6 Action areas:



Maximising health and wellbeing. Helping people to stay independent

- Equity and equality in access to primary and secondary care, alongside specialist services, by ensuring an LD liaison service in general hospitals
- Continue collaborative care with wider health and social care teams, PWLD themselves and their families/carers
- Ensure care is always person centred and accessible to the individual tailored to their culture
- Reduce health inequalities faced by PWLD
- Promote access and improved presence of PWLD in the community through links with voluntary sector

Working with people to provide a positive experience

- Use total communication to empower the patient, as well as families/carers, as experts in their own health care
- Develop and promote 'listening organisation' with acknowledgements and actions on patient feedback, ensuring there is a clear feedback process.
- Reasonable adjustments made to ensure access to appropriate services to meet holistic health requirements
- Ensure safeguarding of individuals within all settings, measured via CQC reports.

Delivering care and measuring impact

- Use of Learning Disabilities specific outcome measures such as Health Equalities Framework, as well as feedback from PWLD, family and carers
- Inclusion of Learning Disabilities in Public Health measures
- Ensure all nurses have access to evidence based practice guidelines to meet health needs
- Improve education of mainstream staff to support PWLD needs, delivered by LD nurses, impact measured by attendance records and feedback
- Measurement tools: self assessment framework, primary and secondary care data sets linked to QoF outcomes, and audits

Building and strengthening leadership

- Develop the public profile of LD Nurses, demonstrating the unique contributions in achieving positive holistic health outcomes
- Identify and develop leadership skills and frameworks
- Promote holistic health and wellbeing of PWLD to all AHPs and the general public
- Develop and strengthen professional networks, including the academic network.
- Highlight and disseminate innovative practice and roles with LD nursing, using health technology

Ensuring we have the right staff, with the right skills in the right place

- Identify variety of roles undertaken by LD nurses creating a career framework
- Basic nurse competence should enable LD nurse to enter a range of settings post qualification, using competency frameworks
- Use 6C's in staff recruitment, to ensure staff have values underpinning good care
- Wider MDT and multi agency collaboration aims to reduce stays in inappropriate care settings
- Transparency in cases of poor/sub standard care

Supporting positive staff experience

- Develop and promote 'Listening Organisations' with acknowledgement and actions on staff feedback
- Regular structured clinical supervision with access to trained supervisors
- Effective mentoring and preceptorship for students and newly qualified nurses
- Create and support Continuing Professional Development, to ensure further training once in post.
- Share and learn from instances of good practice via professional networks

Key themes of high quality care delivery

- Person centred care. Directly involving the person with learning disabilities in their care planning and delivery, inclusive of any reasonable adjustments and assessments, which they may require to access the healthcare and treatment they need at any given time.
- Leadership embedded across all aspects of health and in all care sectors and services.
- Education of support workers, student nurse and post registration nurses across all branches of the nursing community to improve assessment planning and delivery of care and awareness of health needs of PWLD, by LD nurses.

Role of LD nurses in promoting positive and holistic health

- Maximise health access and outcomes for PWLD through timely evidence based interventions
- Encourage and promote community presence of PWLD
- Support skills teaching and development to maximise independence and good health maintenance
- Accurate assessment and implementation of treatment and support to maximise health outcomes
- Use education and health promotion to support carers/families/PWLD to maintain good health
- Support non LD specific trained staff in meeting needs of PWLD
- Coordinate care within MDT to ensure holistic healthcare needs are met
- Challenge and reduce incidence of inequality and discriminatory practice, which affects healthcare outcomes

Why are the 6Cs important to learning disability nurses?

LD nurses **care** in all environments, as PWLD live in their own homes, tenancies, supported living residential and nursing homes. A vital part of their role is the development of therapeutic relationships with PWLD and their family or carers. LD nurses training allows them to deliver **compassionate** person centred care, promoting dignity and respect based on values of kindness trust and collaboration. LD nurses are a key part of the feedback loop between PWLD and service development, acting as advocates. LD nurses are a highly skilled workforce, **competent** in assessment care planning implementation skills, founded on an up to date evidence base. Specialised **communication** techniques are utilised to ensure greatest level of patient choice. LD nurses use their communication skills in liaising with multi agency teams to ensure effective and timely care delivery. LD nurses must use **courage** to lead and champion LD care and services, inspiring confidence in the families, carers that health inequalities will be minimised. LD nurses are **committed** to delivering high quality person centred care, and committed to ensuring all health practitioners have a higher awareness of PWLD specific needs.

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