



Strengthening the Commitment

The Interim Report of Scotland's National Implementation Group

Author: Scotland's National Implementation Group

Purpose: Report

Publication Date: May 2015

Target audience: Chief Nursing Officer and senior executive nurse directors, executive directors of health and social care provider organisations, service managers, learning disability nurses, nurse lecturers, academic research staff, people with a learning disability and parents and those who care for and support people with learning disabilities.

Contact details:

Professor Angela Wallace

Chair of Scotland's National Implementation Group

Contents

Introduction	1
Scotland's Reference Group	2
Chapter 1: Strengthening capacity	3
Chapter 2: Strengthening capability	9
Chapter 3: Strengthening quality	15
Chapter 4: Strengthening the profession	22
Conclusion	27
Appendix	29

Introduction

The publication of [*Strengthening the Commitment: the report of the UK Modernising Learning Disability Nursing Review*](#) has brought a welcome focus on learning disability nursing at UK level and within Scotland. This interim report presents progress in Scotland. It provides an overview of key successes, highlights best practice examples and outlines the next steps in continuing our commitment to strengthening learning disability nursing and ensuring people with a learning disability in Scotland receive the care they want, need and deserve.

Scotland set up a National Implementation Group (see Appendix 1) to oversee implementation of the *Strengthening the Commitment* recommendations. NHS boards were asked to establish a local implementation group with an identified lead and wide representation from key stakeholders to progress change at local level.

Michael Matheson MSP, then Minister for Public Health, launched Scotland's Delivery Action Plan in March 2013, setting out actions for the National Implementation Group and NHS board local implementation groups. The UK Steering Group supports the country-level groups and continues to work across the four countries of the UK.

We have seen a number of key legislative and policy developments since the launch of *Strengthening the Commitment* in 2012, including:

[*The Keys to Life - Learning Disabilities Strategy \(2013\)*](#)

[*Social Care \(Self-directed Support\) \(Scotland\) Act 2013*](#)

[*Scottish National Plan on Human Rights 2013*](#)

[*Everyone Matters: 2020 workforce vision 2013*](#)

[*Public Bodies \(Joint Working\) Scotland Act 2014*](#)

[*Setting the Direction 2014*](#)

Taking time to reflect on the progress so far and develop this interim report allows us to consider the priorities going forward in light of these developments.

“There needs to be a commitment that people with learning disabilities and carers are involved to have a real say, not just there to tick a box. This means letting people have influence. People should be involved at the start so that they have a say on everything.”

Reference Group member

Scotland's Reference Group

The Scottish Consortium for Learning Disabilities supported the Reference Group during the review of learning disability nursing. We are delighted to have been able to invest in supporting the group's continued role in taking the work forward.

The Reference Group has identified areas of work to enhance the implementation of *Strengthening the Commitment* and to which people with learning disabilities can make important, valued and expert contributions. The group will recruit new members and develop a co-production plan to take forward the next phase. Supported by facilitators from the Scottish Consortium for Learning Disabilities, the Reference Group will review the potential areas of work they have identified to think about how they can maximise their contribution to *Strengthening the Commitment*.

Chapter 1. Strengthening capacity

Recommendation 1. Location and employment

The four UK health departments and the independent/voluntary sector should establish a national collaborative to enable better understanding of, and planning for, a high-quality and sustainable registered learning disability nursing workforce across all sectors.

In Scotland's Delivery Action Plan, we said we would:

- attend UK collaborative events to represent Scotland
- host the Scottish learning disability nursing independent sector event
- scope and understand where learning disability nurses are practising in the independent sector nationally, in collaboration with Workforce 20:20 and Information Services Division (ISD)
- engage with local authority commissioning colleagues to identify all commissioned services in which learning disability nurses may work.

We asked local implementation groups to:

- scope, understand and report to the National Implementation Group where learning disability nurses are practising in the independent sector
- invite independent learning disability nursing representation on local implementation groups.

"It is our right to get the same good care no matter where we live."

Reference Group member

Progress

Members of Scotland's National Implementation Group have worked with key partners from the four countries to hold engagement events with the independent and voluntary sector. The inaugural meeting of the Independent Sector Collaborative took place in October 2013, agreeing to:

- strengthen links between higher education institutions and independent and voluntary sector providers
- improve outcomes in relation to workforce planning, selection of students, clinical placements, learning and teaching, and support lecturers to keep up to date with practice issues

- drive up quality by requesting organisations in the collaborative to identify good practice examples demonstrating the role and added value of learning disability nurses working in independent and voluntary sector services.

Learning disability nurses from the independent sector in Scotland attend the Scottish Learning Disability Nursing Network events and are represented on the Scottish Learning Disability Senior Nurse Group, the National Implementation Group and NHS Education for Scotland's (NES's) Programme Board.

Work has started through the Scottish Learning Disability Senior Nurse Group to understand where learning disability nurses are practising in the independent sector. Further work is required to engage with local authority commissioning colleagues to identify commissioned services in which learning disability nurses may work locally.

Positive practice

Danshell Group has a consultant nurse in Scotland who is central to professional and organisational development of the nursing workforce. The consultant is involved in a range of activities in addition to clinical work, including teaching, supervision, research and clinical governance. Current and planned activities involve training the nursing workforce in the use of outcome measures (such as the Health Equalities Framework and LifeStar tools) and delivering a leadership and development course for registered nurses. The consultant sits on the Scottish Learning Disability Senior Nurse Group and Scotland's National Implementation Group for *Strengthening the Commitment*.

For more information, contact Debra Moore at: debra.moore@danshell.co.uk

Recommendation 2. Strategic workforce planning and development

Systems to collect workforce data are required in each country, with links across the UK, for workforce planning for future provision of learning disabilities nursing. These should be able to capture information on service provision, educational and research requirements and should cover the independent/voluntary sector.

In Scotland's Delivery Action Plan, we said we would:

- design a learning disability nursing workforce data census
- work with the Programme Manager (Nursing & Midwifery Workload and Workforce Planning Programme) to develop the Mental Health/Learning Disabilities Workload Measurement Tool
- submit an analysis of workforce data prepared by local implementation groups to inform future workforce planning.

We asked local implementation groups to:

- complete an accurate workforce data census and submit it to the National Implementation Group
- share data collated with NHS board workforce planning leads to inform ISD.

Progress

We have seen a 3.1% increase in learning disability nursing posts across Scotland over the last year (ISD data).

The Scottish Learning Disability Senior Nurse Group is working with the Programme Manager (Nursing & Midwifery Workload and Workforce Planning Programme) to develop the Mental Health/Learning Disability Workload Management Tool.

The Scottish Learning Disability Senior Nurse Group developed a scoping tool that has been sent to all NHS boards. Returned data has been analysed and a final report, which will be published separately, is being developed. Results from the scoping exercise will be used to help shape priorities for Scotland's National Implementation Group going forward.

Positive practice

Working across policy areas, *The Keys to Life*, Scotland's learning disability strategy, commissioned NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde to develop a NHS 'blueprint' for specialist services. The board subsequently developed the Learning Disability Change Programme, which has produced a 'Strategy for the Future' that seeks to define the unique contribution of adult specialist learning disability services in the board area. Detailed analysis of the learning disability nursing workforce has been undertaken as a key element of the Learning Disability Change Programme to gain a full understanding of imminent and long-term workforce change. NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde consequently is now in a position to forecast future workforce requirements, develop a workforce plan that encompasses succession planning and create appropriate learning and development opportunities for new recruits to the board.

For more information, contact Tom Kelly at: Tom.Kelly@ggc.scot.nhs.uk

Recommendation 3. New ways of working and new roles

The development of new, specialist and advanced role opportunities should be considered in light of workforce planning, service development and education provision. In particular, this should focus on the roles on non-medical prescribing, psychological therapies and telehealth and in specific settings such as the criminal justice system, mental health services (particularly dementia) and autism services.

In Scotland's Delivery Action Plan, we said we would:

- develop a learning disability nursing service profile tool to support local areas to collate data on current practice roles, including advanced practice roles
- report on learning disability nurses' expertise and qualifications.

We asked local implementation groups to:

- submit local service profiles to the National Implementation Group
- identify gaps in current learning disability nursing provision
- identify prioritised new, specialist and advanced roles required for the future development of the profession: based on local demography, these roles will be informed by the NES pre- and post-registration learning disability nursing frameworks.

Progress

New, specialist and advanced roles developed since April 2012 include:

- two advanced practitioner posts in learning disability and mental health in NHS Grampian
- two clinical academic roles in the two universities that provide learning disability field nursing programmes to support the national model
- a learning disabilities palliative care specialist practitioner in NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde
- a part-time forensic charge nurse in NHS Borders.

Some boards are also extending roles. Nurses in NHS Lanarkshire, for example, have completed training in autism diagnosis and are now able to offer this service.

The scoping exercise shows a range of specialist nursing posts across Scotland, mostly in community settings. Specialist nursing roles have been identified in relation to epilepsy, autism, forensic services and liaison roles. In addition, a significant number of community nurses have undertaken the Community Health Specialist Practitioner Qualification and most of the specialist nurses have completed some form of specialist education to underpin their practice.

Further analysis of the scoping data is being undertaken and will be used to help shape priorities for Scotland's National Implementation Group going forward.

Positive practice

Following identification of the need to develop forensic services in the Borders, funding was agreed in August 2012 to support the development of a new forensic clinical team that includes a part-time forensic charge nurse. The forensic team has continued to develop: two staff nurses are now affiliated members and are being supported to develop their forensic knowledge and skills by, for example, completing NES's *New to Forensic Mental Health* programme.

For more information, contact Marion Paterson
at: marion.paterson@nhsborders.scot.nhs.uk

Recommendation 4. Career choices

Each of the four countries should consider aligning their existing post-registration career frameworks for learning disability nursing to clearly articulate the knowledge and skills required by learning disability nurses at all levels and across all settings. These developments could be utilised across sectors (with appropriate adaptation) to give a coherent career framework.

In Scotland's Delivery Action Plan, we said we would:

- develop a post-registration developmental framework that reflects the key priorities of the review
- share the post-registration framework with the other UK countries via the UK *Strengthening the Commitment* Steering Group.

We asked local implementation groups to:

- use the post-registration framework to inform the development of the learning disability nursing workforce.

Progress

NES developed the [Career and Development Framework for Learning Disability Nursing in Scotland](#) in 2013. The framework sets out a clear career pathway that serves to:

- outline developmental needs of the existing registered learning disability nursing workforce in terms of values, knowledge and skills to enable planning that reflects key priorities for workforce development set out in *Strengthening the Commitment*
- clearly articulate how learning disability nurses' post-registration development can be linked to existing national development opportunities and generic pillars of practice
- act as the foundation for informing future developments in post-registration learning disability nursing education, research and scholarly activity.

The Scottish Learning Disability Senior Nurse Group produced a paper to help individual nurses, teams and managers to exploit the opportunities offered by the Career and Development Framework. Two events for learning disability nurses included sessions to further support them in using the framework and NES's [Effective Practitioner](#) resources, which are designed to support role development.

Positive practice

NHS Forth Valley community learning disability nurses and prison healthcare nurses worked together using *Effective Practitioner* resources to develop closer joint working between the two services to improve the care pathway for prisoners with learning disabilities. Resources included a self-assessment tool to identify individual training needs, workshop sessions to enable sharing of good practice and identify service gaps, and action planning resources to develop a work plan over the next six months.

For more information, contact Allison Ramsay at: allison.ramsay@nhs.net

“Strengthening the Commitment talks about the values a learning disability nurse should have, but we think it needs more detail. We think we need to show clearly what having the right values really means.

“Having a toolbox of values, skills and knowledge could help with the monitoring of a nurse’s work. It could help people with learning disabilities know what to expect from a nurse and help them say how good their care is.

“We hope that a toolbox would help make a learning disability nurse’s job description the same everywhere.”

Reference Group member

Chapter 2. Strengthening capability

Recommendation 5. Maximising the contribution of learning disability nursing

Commissioners and service planners should have a clear vision for how they ensure knowledge and skills of learning disability nurses are provided to the right people, in the right places, and at the right time in a way that reflects the values- and rights-based focus of learning disability nursing.

In Scotland's Delivery Action Plan, we said we would:

- identify an appropriate comprehensive model that incorporates an outcomes framework and self-assessment tool to support local nursing service quality improvement and development of a values-based service
- scope opportunities to integrate learning disability nursing practice in the *Leading Better Care* programme.

We asked local implementation groups to:

- scope and identify tools to measure and improve quality of care for people with learning disabilities.

"It is really important to get the right people for the job of a learning disability nurse."

"Many of the recommendations of Strengthening the Commitment will not get to happen if people with learning disabilities do not know what to expect and what their rights are. Human rights are meant to be a strong theme in Strengthening the Commitment. But it's not only nurses who need to understand these."

Reference Group members

Progress

The Scottish Learning Disability Senior Nurse Group undertook a scoping of outcome models, considering the Confirm and Challenge[®] model, HoNOS LD (Health of the Nation Outcome Scales for People with Learning Disabilities), QoL (Quality of Life) Questionnaire and Health Equalities Framework. This group concluded that the Health Equalities Framework should be rolled out across Scotland.

The scoping exercise showed that while activity to engage learning disability nurses in *Leading Better Care* has been taken forward across Scotland, the engagement could be strengthened.

Positive practice

NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde has embedded the *Leading Better Care* programme within the ongoing professional development programme for all mental health/partnership senior charge nurses. Corporately led by the Nurse Director and driven by the Professional Nurse Advisors Group, this has resulted in all band 7 learning disability nurses undertaking the *Leading Better Care* programme. Senior nurses have consequently been supported to apply the methodology to areas of service improvement, delivering positive results (particularly in the development of improvement plans) when used alongside clinical audit. The Learning Disability Professional Workplan uses the *Leading Better Care* framework to define and deliver on various areas of ongoing work. Going forward, band 6 staff will also undertake the programme to further strengthen the contribution of learning disability nursing staff in NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde.

For more information, contact Tom Kelly at: Tom.Kelly@ggc.scot.nhs.uk

Recommendation 6. Working with people of all ages

Commissioners and providers of health and social care should ensure the skills, knowledge and expertise of learning disability nurses are available across the lifespan. This should be enabled through effective collaborative working across health and social care.

In Scotland's Delivery Action Plan, we said we would:

- commission the Scottish Learning Disabilities Observatory (SLDO) to complete a systematic review of evidence underpinning children's nursing practice and potential application to learning disability nursing practice, with an initial focus on children aged 0–5 years.

We asked local implementation groups to:

- complete learning disability nursing service profile and workforce data to capture where learning disability nurses work across the lifespan.

“Everyone's story is different, everyone has different life experiences. The more people learning disability nurses hear from, the more they will learn about people with learning disabilities.”

Reference Group member

Progress

SLDO was established in 2014 to work as a strategic partner to the learning disabilities policy team in providing high-quality accessible evidence to support policy-makers and practitioners to address the very poor health and health inequalities experienced by people with learning disabilities. The first steering group meeting was held in October 2014, with two of Scotland's nurse consultants in learning disabilities as members.

The service profile captures differences across NHS board areas in relation to learning disability nurses' involvement in supporting children and families with learning disabilities.

NES is taking forward a project on working with families. A project lead has been appointed to explore current and potential models and roles for learning disability nurses in relation to supporting children with learning disabilities and families.

Positive practice

NHS Highland is looking at the experiences of parents with learning disabilities of support they have received from learning disability nurses and other services in the run-up to the birth of their child and the first few months following birth. This will help to identify good practice and gaps in provision that will shape how nurses work with parents with learning disabilities in the future.

For more information, contact Jonathon Gray at: jonathangray@nhs.net

Recommendation 7. Addressing health needs

Commissioners and providers of health and social care should ensure that learning disability nurses are able to collaborate effectively with general health services, including mental health services, to address barriers that exist for people with learning disabilities to improving their health. This should include proactive health improvement, prevention, whole-family and public health approaches.

In Scotland's Delivery Action Plan, we said we would:

- develop a learning disability nursing service profile to collate baseline data on existing liaison, health improvement and public health roles
- work with NHS 24 to develop accessible health information on NHS Inform
- establish links with Healthcare Improvement Scotland.

We asked local implementation groups to:

- complete the learning disability nursing service profile tool and submit to the National Implementation Group.

Progress

The scoping exercise has helped establish baseline data on existing liaison, health improvement and public health roles.

The Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability has been working with NHS Inform to develop their “Easy Read Zone”. This work is now being taken forward as part of *The Keys to Life*.

Positive practice

NHS Dumfries & Galloway has developed a network of “Learning Disability Champions” to improve the healthcare journey for people with learning disabilities. The Champions’ course is delivered over eight months and incorporates a placement that gives participants the opportunity to fully appreciate the complex needs of some people with learning disabilities who may access NHS services. A range of participants complete the course, including ward staff from primary care and acute areas, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, mental health nurses, midwives and district nurses.

Participants are expected to complete a work-based project to benefit people with learning disabilities. Projects have included developing an easy-read patient information leaflet, creating resource packs and producing DVDs about coming into hospital.

For more information, contact Libby Paisley at: libbypaisley@nhs.net

Learning disability nurses in NHS Lanarkshire have worked with colleagues in sexual health to deliver on the standards from the Scottish Government *Sexual Health and Blood Borne Virus Framework (2011–2015)*. This has included the development and delivery of awareness-raising sessions on capacity and consent to sexual activity to provide a value base for all staff, and acknowledging the sexual rights of adults with a learning disability. Accessible information was developed in consultation with service users as part of a sexual health toolkit that was launched at a joint event with sexual health services in March this year.

For more information, contact Margaret Serrels at: margaret.serrels@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk

Recommendation 8. Providing specialist services

Commissioners and service providers should ensure that specialist learning disability services for complex and intensive needs (including assessment and treatment across all sectors) employ sufficient numbers of appropriately prepared and supported registered learning disability nurses. This highlights the need to support and develop the availability of specialist and advanced clinical skills and knowledge of learning disability nurses in all settings.

In Scotland's Delivery Action Plan, we said we would:

- work with NES to further develop positive behaviour support (PBS) education resources for the learning disability nursing workforce
- commission a managed care network pilot to build capacity with identified pilot sites.

We asked local implementation groups to:

- accurately complete the workforce data census and submit to the National Implementation Group
- investigate the added contribution of learning disabilities nurses in meeting the needs of people with complex and intensive care needs through case studies.

Progress

NES has developed three resources to support the learning disability nursing workforce working with people with complex and specialist needs:

- [*Thinking about Me?*](#) supports staff to deliver the best possible care for people with learning disabilities and understand psychological factors
- [*Improving Practice*](#) is an educational resource for support workers to help them help people whose behaviour is perceived as challenging
- [*Promoting Positive Partnerships*](#) is a series of video clips that show family carers talking about their experiences of caring for their son or daughter and the support they have received from health and social care.

The Scottish Government sponsored Edinburgh Napier University to host a four-day seminar programme delivered by Dr Gary LaVigna in June 2014. The programme, which provided training in PBS and applied behaviour analysis (ABA) for learning disability practitioners, was attended by 42 health professionals from NHS boards across Scotland, including learning disability nurses, psychologists, speech and language therapists and occupational therapists.

An evening family seminar was attended by 26 family members. Their feedback included the following.

“All health staff who come in contact with my son should know about PBS or ABA. They are meant to be learning disability specialists but some don't know the basics of behaviour.”

“This seminar was a great opportunity to share my fears with other families; my son is 3 [and is] awaiting a diagnosis.”

Positive practice

Fife commissioned a joint health and social care model to support individuals with learning disability and complex psychological needs. The model, which was developed and designed to reflect the individual needs of clients, is a nurse-led service but is staffed by local authority social care workers, with nurses adopting a managerial and professional advisory role.

The service uses a holistic approach to care that reflects the ethos of PBS with a periodic service review (PSR) based on Dr LaVigna's work. The PSR identifies the main person-centred values of the PBS model and provides a quality assurance system to ensure their implementation.

The service has been successful in providing high-quality care to clients, which has been reflected in the consistently good grades awarded by the Care Inspectorate. It is currently ranked as grade 6 for all themes, including Leadership, Care & Support, and Staffing.

For more information, contact Lorraine Kirkaldy at: lorraine.kirkcaldy@nhs.net

Chapter 3. Strengthening quality

Recommendation 9. Demonstrating quality outcomes

Learning disability nurses, their managers and leaders should develop and apply outcomes-focused measurement frameworks to evidence their contribution to improving person-centred health outcomes and demonstrating value for money. This may require a specific piece of work to scope current frameworks.

In Scotland's Delivery Action Plan, we said we would:

- promote and raise awareness of the Health Equalities Framework across Scotland
- identify and fund sites to pilot the Health Equalities Framework
- scope other outcome-focused health improvement measurement frameworks.

Progress

The Scottish Learning Disability Senior Nurse Group has considered a range of outcome frameworks, including the Health Equalities Framework, the Confirm and Challenge[®] model, HoNOS LD, Talking Points and the QoL Questionnaire Version 3. All were considered useful, but the group recommended concentrating efforts in adopting and implementing the Health Equalities Framework.

The authors of the Health Equalities Framework were invited to present their work at an event attended by 40 learning disability nurses from across Scotland in 2013.

Positive practice

The Scottish Government Learning Disabilities Policy Team and nursing directorate have funded a project to support and embed the Health Equalities Framework in practice. A project manager is being recruited to the Managed Care Network.

This will be a major regional programme involving four NHS boards. It will be divided into two phases:

- training on, and implementation of, the Health Equalities Framework in all identified areas
- collection and analysis of data to give a clearer understanding of the impact of the determinants of health on the lives of people with a learning disability.

For more information, contact Marion Paterson at: Marion.Paterson@borders.scot.nhs.uk

“We think it is important that people with learning disabilities get to tell their story of learning disability nursing. If you only ask professionals, you will miss out what people with learning disabilities know.”

“We think carers’ stories are important too. Not just for speaking on behalf of the people they care for. We need to hear about their experiences.”

“We need to think about the barriers that people face when being honest about their services.”

Reference Group members

Recommendation 10. Quality improvement

Learning disability nurses should strengthen their involvement and links to transformational work, productivity improvement and practice development.

In Scotland’s Delivery Action Plan, we said we would:

- scope current improvement activity, identifying how learning disability nurses can engage and any barriers they face.

We asked local implementation groups to:

- support the scoping exercise by providing information on local continuous improvement work.

Progress

The scoping exercise identified improvement activity being undertaken by learning disability nurses across Scotland.

The Keys to Life learning disabilities strategy is developing a national implementation plan to be led by the professional advisor to the policy team – a learning disabilities nurse. Utilising improvement approaches, the plan will set out a vision, four outcome statements and logic modelling to achieve the outcomes. It will be linked to the Scottish Government’s Programme for Government and national objectives.

Positive practice

NHS Forth Valley has established a programme of continuing professional development to support all senior charge nurses to implement *Leading Better Care*. Learning disability nurses are further developing this to include measures relevant to learning disability nursing in inpatient assessment and treatment services. The aim is to create a quality assurance framework that builds on *Leading Better Care*.

For more information, contact Allison Ramsay at: allison.ramsay@nhs.net

NHS Lanarkshire has invested in creating a practice improvement and development nursing post in the Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Service. The main aim is to develop a number of the recommendations from *Strengthening the Commitment* locally and lead on practice improvement and development issues that help strengthen the profession.

For more information, contact Margaret Serrels at: margaret.serrels@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk

Recommendation 11. Preparing and developing learning disability nursing

Those who commission, develop or deliver education should ensure that all learning disability nursing education programmes reflect the key values, content and approaches recommended in *[Strengthening the Commitment]*. They should also ensure that nurses in other fields of practice develop the core knowledge and skills necessary to work safely and appropriately with people with learning disabilities who are using general health services.

“Having people with learning disabilities involved in recruitment and training gives the message that we are important, respected, can make decisions and should be listened to. It will show nurses how they should see and treat us.

“We know what it is like to have a learning disability and how things feel. People with learning disabilities and carers could teach nurses these things better than professionals.”

Reference Group member

In Scotland’s Delivery Action Plan, we said we would:

- ask higher education institutions to map and develop their existing undergraduate programmes against the National Framework for Pre-registration Learning Disabilities Nursing Field Programmes.

Progress

Both universities have mapped their programmes against the National Framework for Pre-registration Learning Disabilities Nursing Field Programmes as part of the National Model Action Plan.

NES held a ‘Thinking Space’ event in June 2014 to help develop creative approaches to supporting universities to meet the NMC Standards and ensure all

students have the right knowledge and skills to support people with learning disabilities and their families.

Positive practice

Learning disability epilepsy specialist nurses from across Scotland have collaborated with the two provider universities to develop content and resources of sessions on epilepsy care and define expected learning outcomes. The sessions are timetabled in a stepped approach to build knowledge and skills over the universities' three-year education programmes for learning disability nurses. Both universities have established links with the nurses and any or all of them can be called on to support the delivery of the programme. An article about this initiative was published in *Learning Disability Practice* (Powell, 2014).

For more information, contact Alison Corp at: Alison.Corp@gcc.scot.nhs.uk

Recommendation 12. Maximising recruitment and retention

Updated strategic plans for pre- and post-registration learning disability nursing programmes are necessary for each country of the UK to support flexibility and ensure an efficient and sustainable model of delivery for the long term. This highlights the need for appropriate numbers of places on pre-registration learning disability nursing programmes to meet future workforce requirements.

In Scotland's Delivery Action Plan, we said we would:

- implement the National Model Action Plan 2013–2014.

Progress

Edinburgh Napier University and Glasgow Caledonian University have continued to progress the National Model Action Plan, governed by the National Model Steering Group facilitated by NES. As part of this work:

- a memorandum of understanding has been developed to promote collaboration across all universities and colleges in Scotland to support the aspirations of the National Model
- two clinical–academic posts have been funded by the Scottish Government
- Scotland's Colleges has been commissioned to review, enhance and promote articulation routes.

We have seen learning disability nurse student commissions steadily increase since 2012: we currently commission 100 places each year.

Positive practice

The college sector in Scotland has been working in partnership with Edinburgh Napier University and Glasgow Caledonian University to explore models to widen access from non-traditional routes, promote local recruitment and retention initiatives and strengthen links with colleges, universities, and the independent and voluntary sectors to advance collaboration.

Local education partnerships involving the college sector, universities, NHS boards, local authorities, independent and voluntary sectors and other key stakeholders have been established across Scotland.

The NES-funded national marketing strategy, which includes a website with a route map around a qualification framework that involves a school, college, university and employer partnership, is continuing to meet its milestones.

The national Professional Development Award in Learning Disabilities promotes the delivery of standardised high-quality learning and teaching activities and supports Government strategic drivers to ensure an appropriately skilled and ambitious workforce.

For more information, contact Sybil Lang
at: sybil.lang@collegedevelopmentnetwork.ac.uk

Recommendation 13. Developing workforce knowledge and skills for the future

Education providers and services must work in partnership to ensure the educational and developmental opportunities for non-registered staff are developed and strengthened and their benefits are evidenced through appraisal systems, and that educational and development opportunities are available for registered learning disability nurses to support their ongoing development, reflecting the needs of people with learning disabilities.

In Scotland's Delivery Action Plan, we said we would:

- develop further plans to maximise learning disability healthcare support workers' contributions.

We asked local implementation groups to:

- report on learning disability healthcare support workers' engagement with national guidance (the NES Framework)
- ensure that role development is discussed as part of support workers' personal development processes.

Progress

NES produced the [Improving Practice](#) educational resource to enable support workers help people whose behaviour is perceived as challenging.

NES has a wider programme of work supporting healthcare support workers that aims to:

- maximise the use of existing resources to support learning, identify gaps and further develop websites for support staff
- improve access to information about learning and qualifications for support staff, including developing a new fund to support learning
- develop a recognised career development pathway for staff in Agenda for Change bands 1–4 posts, bringing clarity to the differences between clinical healthcare support posts in bands 2, 3 and 4.

NES is designing and delivering a ‘train the trainers’ programme to support the roll-out of [Improving Practice](#).

Positive practice

The NHS Lothian *Strengthening the Commitment* Local Implementation Group has delivered a programme of work across the area that includes the development of a two-day rolling mandatory training programme for healthcare support workers. The content was developed in response to findings from a training needs analysis carried out within the NHS Lothian Learning Disability Services earlier this year.

For more information, contact Eileen Duncan
at: Eileen.Duncan@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk or Christina Bickers
at: Christina.Bickers@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

Recommendation 14. Accessing supervision

Services should provide systems to ensure that learning disability nurses have access to regular and effective supervision and that its impact is monitored and evaluated on a regular basis.

In Scotland’s Delivery Action Plan, we said we would:

- develop the learning disability nursing service profile tool to measure learning disability nurses’ engagement in regular clinical supervision
- scope models of clinical supervision used in practice.

We asked local implementation groups to:

- identify how many learning disability nurses have access to regular clinical supervision

- provide examples of good practice in which engagement in clinical supervision has improved patient care.

Progress

The Scottish Learning Disability Senior Nurse Group has collected data on clinical supervision across Scotland that shows wide variability in how clinical supervision is practised in NHS boards. Clinical supervision appears to occur more regularly in community services or where psychological therapies are provided. Inpatient services seem less likely to have robust clinical supervision arrangements in place.

Learning disability nurses working in remote and rural areas, particularly the island boards where there may only be a single learning disability nurse, face particular challenges in relation to clinical supervision.

The Scottish Learning Disability Senior Nurse Group will develop a position statement/guidance on clinical supervision in learning disability nursing.

Positive practice

Nursing clinical supervision was introduced to the State Hospital in 2006 and is supported by a policy and framework informed by current legislation, evidence, guidance and professional standards. Embedded within the framework is an eclectic model for guiding clinical supervision practice that draws on the strengths of a number of recognised supervision models.

Clinical supervision is provided through individual sessions and on a group basis. Each nurse has a named clinical supervisor who delivers individual sessions; the minimum agreed standard is a one-hour session at least once every eight weeks. Ward-based nursing staff also have access to group clinical supervision, with group sessions led by two facilitators taking place every two weeks. The expectation is that nurses will access group supervision whenever possible, consequently optimising the opportunity to share experiences, reflect on practice and learn from each other.

A recent evaluation of the effectiveness of clinical supervision (Wilson, 2010) was positive, and a further national study is currently underway.

For more information, contact Lesley Murphy at: lesleymurphy1@nhs.net

Chapter 4. Strengthening the profession

Recommendation 15. Leadership and management

Leadership in learning disability nursing needs to be strengthened in practice, education and research settings with robust, visible leadership at all levels, including strategic and national levels. Services must ensure all learning disability nurses in practice have access to a dedicated professional lead for learning disability nursing. In addition to existing leadership and development programmes, a UK-wide cross-sector project to nurture and develop aspiring leaders in learning disability nursing will be led by the four country health departments.

In Scotland's Delivery Action Plan, we said we would:

- develop an action plan to strengthen learning disability nurse leadership in Scotland.

We asked local implementation groups to

- identify local professional leads for learning disability nursing
- identify future professional leads and support succession planning
- ensure the implementation of the *Strengthening the Commitment* action plan is embedded within the senior nurse's objectives and personal development plans.

Progress

The UK Steering group for *Strengthening the Commitment* commissioned the [Positive Choices](#) team in July 2013 to deliver 'Decide, Commit, Proceed', a leadership course for third-year learning disability nursing students. Forty-two students from the four countries attended an intensive two-day programme and went on to access mentorship from a learning disability nurse leader for 18 months. Four students from Scotland were selected for the programme and members of the National Implementation Group were involved in delivering sessions and mentoring students.

A number of time-limited posts have been developed to increase visible leadership and enable leadership development in learning disability nursing at national level, including education projects manager (8B) and project lead (7) posts at NES and the two professional advisor posts at the Scottish Government.

The Scottish Learning Disability Senior Nurse Group has revised its remit and membership and is now taking a more visible leadership role, a key part of which is supporting implementation of *Strengthening the Commitment* across Scotland. The group aims to influence the vision for, and delivery of, learning disability nursing in

Scotland and share best practice, development and education for the benefit of people using services and their families.

The group prepared a position paper on leadership that was launched at the Senior Nurse Group conference in September. The conference provided an opportunity to share the group's work, particularly around leadership, career development and new ways of working with wider stakeholders. The National Implementation Group will consider and seek to progress the recommendations on leadership from the position paper.

Positive practice

All students from Scotland who attended the 'Decide, Commit, Proceed' programme were asked to join their local implementation group. One of the students, Amy Hutchison, was also asked to present about her experiences at Scotland's Senior Nurse Group conference. Amy talked about how her experience has built her confidence as she develops leadership skills in her role: the following is an extract from her presentation.

The first day focused on what is leadership in learning disability nursing and what can we do to maximise our leadership potential. We were asked to write a letter to ourselves detailing two leadership goals; we received the letter one year following the completion of the event – I am happy to confirm I have since achieved both my goals.

For eighteen months after the event, we had the opportunity to contact an allocated mentor via postcards. We advised them of any leadership steps we have taken, no matter how big or small. As well as being able to share achievements and good practice, this has also strengthened my network with influential leaders in nursing whom I may never have had the opportunity to meet.

Overall, 'Decide, Commit, Proceed' has assisted me to develop and understand my skills and qualities as an effective leader, as well as that of others.

For more information, contact Amy Hutchison at: A.Hutchison@napier.ac.uk

Recommendation 16. Promoting the profession

Learning disability nurses need mechanisms to share best practice and develop the evidence base to continue to advance as a profession. Services must support learning disability nurses to participate in appropriate networks. A UK academic network for learning disability nurses will be created to support this drive.

In Scotland's Delivery Action Plan, we said we would:

- implement a national awards scheme for excellence in practice
- increase non-community nursing membership of the Scottish Learning Disability Nursing Network by 25% and independent sector nursing membership by 10%
- ask the Scottish Learning Disability Nursing Network to scope the development of communities of practice within the network linked to the NHSScotland Managed Knowledge Network
- ask educationalists to scope their contribution to the UK Learning Disabilities Nursing Academic Network to ensure Scottish representation.

We asked local implementation groups to:

- ask learning disability nursing members of local implementation groups to join the Scottish Learning Disability Nursing Network and promote and support the network locally.

Progress

The UK Learning Disabilities Nursing Academic Network has been created and currently has around 400 members. Its aims are to:

- represent and promote learning disability nursing education, research and practice development by, for example, actively participating in key national and international committees and working groups
- influence and respond to the UK learning disability nursing agenda through well informed debate, discussion and the dissemination of material that reflects its views on a range of issues
- act as a source of consultation and advice to learning disability nurses and others on learning disability nursing education and research
- share good practice and innovations in the development and conduct of learning disability nursing education and research.

The UK Academic Network has created a community of practice website to share good practice (available at: <http://www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/ukldan.aspx>). Scotland's learning disability nursing academics are members of the network.

The Scottish Community Learning Disability Network reviewed and expanded its role following the launch of *Strengthening the Commitment* to include learning disability nurses working in all settings. The network held an annual conference and innovation in practice awards ceremony in June 2013 as part of the launch of the new Scottish Learning Disability Nursing Network, with nursing excellence being recognised. The network has also revised its steering group to include nurses representing in-patient units and student nurses and is further developing opportunities to involve nursing colleagues working outside the NHS.

In addition to the UK [Strengthening the Commitment Facebook page](#), we now also have a Twitter account – Scotland LD Nurses @StCScot – to share information about how Scotland is taking forward *Strengthening the Commitment*.

Positive practice

The 2014 Scottish Learning Disability Nursing Network annual conference included presentations from last year's innovations in practice award winners and first-year student nurses from Glasgow Caledonian University. The event gave learning disability nurses a chance to hear about innovations in practice and provided speakers with an opportunity to develop their skills in presenting to large audiences.

For more information, contact Billy Pate at: wpate@nhs.net

“Everyone needs to know about Strengthening the Commitment because learning disability nurses have a role in teaching people working in other services how to work well with people with learning disabilities.”

Reference Group member

Recommendation 17. Research and evidence

Learning disability nursing research should be extended to ensure practice now and in the future is evidence based and the impact of interventions can be demonstrated. Services and education providers must ensure that all existing and future schemes for clinical academic careers have appropriate representation of learning disability nurses.

In Scotland's Delivery Action Plan, we said we would:

- scope current research activity in learning disability nursing practice across Scotland
- ask higher education institutions to establish strong links with the Scottish Learning Disability Observatory
- identify priorities for collaborative research by engaging with people with learning disabilities and all key stakeholders, including universities, *The Keys to Life* (the Scottish Government learning disability strategy) and the Scottish Learning Disability Observatory.

We asked local implementation groups to:

- support the development of the national database and research agenda.

Progress

The Scottish Learning Disability Senior Nurse Group has carried out some initial scoping of current research activity in learning disability services which shows that learning disability nurses across Scotland are contributing to the research agenda in a range of ways. This is an area, however, that could be further strengthened.

Two learning disability nurses commenced the Early Clinical Career Fellowships in September 2014. [The Early Clinical Career Fellowships](#) offer an opportunity for nurses and midwives who are committed to developing their leadership potential in the early stages of their career. The fellowships are funded by the Scottish Government.

Professor Ruth Northway has developed [LD Nurse Research](#), a Facebook page designed to help grow learning disability nursing research. The resource provides a forum for researchers to raise awareness of their work, a mechanism for asking research-related questions and an access portal to experienced researchers. It is hoped that [LD Nurse Research](#) will be able to assist researchers by signposting them to relevant guidelines, sources of funding and forthcoming conferences.

Positive practice

Learning disability nurses Sam Abdulla (NHS Lothian) and Nicola Braid (NHS Fife) have been successful in being selected to the Early Career Clinical Fellowships. The fellowships include release from practice to access funded part-time Master's-level education, mentorship/clinical coaching, action learning sets and masterclasses.

For more information, contact Sam Abdulla at: Sam.Abdulla@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk or Nicola Braid at: nbraid@nhs.net

Two nurse consultants in Scotland have recently secured senior academic positions in recognition of their contribution to the literature and evolving evidence base. The nurse consultant in NHS Lothian has been appointed as a professor at Edinburgh Napier University and the consultant in NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde as an honorary clinical associate professor at the University of Glasgow.

For more information, contact Michael Brown at: m.brown@napier.ac.uk or Linda Allan at: Linda.allan2@ggc.scot.nhs.uk

Conclusion and next steps

In preparing this interim report, Scotland's National Implementation Group has sought to demonstrate progress and highlight examples of how *Strengthening the Commitment* is making an impact. We recognise, however, that there is still much to do.

We need to make sure that learning disability nurses continue to add value and have impact and that their individual contribution remains valued within a multi professional and multi agency context.

Three years on from the report being published, Scotland has lived through a period of prolonged austerity and witnessed ever-increasing public expectations. The advent of social media and other technologies means that information moves rapidly between groups and individuals. The NHS is in the throes of reforms that will see health services delivered within integrated health and social care partnerships.

A new Code of Professional Conduct has just been published by the NMC and revalidation is on the horizon. The Inquiry reports from the Mid-Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust and the Vale of Leven Hospital tell us that the need to demonstrate professional and corporate accountability has never been greater.

Learning disability nursing in Scotland needs to build on *Strengthening the Commitment* and respond to the challenges of this new context. To take us forward into the next phase, in line with the continuing work programme across the UK, the National Implementation Group will focus on key themes that reflect the new context and fit with implementation of *The Keys to Life* and the Programme for Government themes:

- **building a fairer Scotland and tackling inequality (Fairer Scotland)**
- **creating more, better paid jobs in a strong, sustainable economy (Prosperous Scotland)**
- **passing power to people and communities (Participatory Scotland).**

The Scottish Consortium for Learning Disabilities Reference Group will continue to be central to this work by identifying where people with learning disabilities can make important, valued, expert contributions to maximise their influence on *Strengthening the Commitment's* implementation.

Key themes for Phase 2	
StC theme	Opportunities
The unique role and contribution of learning disability nurses	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In what new and innovative ways can learning disability nurses build on work to further reduce health inequalities? 2. How should the learning disability nursing role develop in relation to working with children and young people?

Leadership in learning disability nursing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How will learning disability nurses influence governance, leadership and management discussions to ensure timely and effective advice on nursing? 2. What do non-nursing managers and others need to understand about learning disability nursing to ensure best quality and safety in service delivery? 3. How will learning disability nurse leaders set the tone for a culture of collaboration yet demonstrate a unique and valuable contribution in their own right?
Regulation, revalidation, workforce and the professional development of learning disability nursing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the implications of the new Code of Professional Conduct? 2. How will learning disability nurses respond to the opportunities and challenges of revalidation?
Quality improvement, impact and assessment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the priorities for improvement? 2. How do we find a common language of quality improvement within the context of health, Social Care and third sector?

From these the National Implementation Group will set out a framework of priority actions and associated milestones for 2015-18.

Appendix 1. National Implementation Group – remit and members

Remit

- To oversee the national implementation of *Strengthening the Commitment* review recommendations
- Develop, consult on and agree on the national priorities and actions.
- To provide advice and guidance to the local implementation groups as necessary.
- To receive progress reports on implementation from NHS boards local implementation groups.
- To facilitate continued robust links between national programmes of work that have overlaps with elements of the programme.
- To ensure that the exit strategy for the programme addresses the challenge of sustainability and integration of future activity with other national initiatives.
- Provide governance over the resources available to support the implementation of the Scotland Delivery Action Plan.

Name	Job title/representing
Angela Wallace, Chair	Nurse Director, NHS Forth Valley/Scottish Executive Nurses Directors group (SEND)
Hugh Masters (also on UK Steering Group)	Deputy Chief Nursing Officer, Scottish Government
June Knight	Nurse Consultant, NHS Grampian
Andy Graham/Billy Pate	Chair/Vice-chair of Scottish Learning Disability Nurses Network
Hazel Powell (also on UK Steering Group)	Programme Director for Learning Disabilities, NES
Elaine Kwiatek (also on UK Steering Group)	Educational Programme Manager for Learning Disabilities, NES
Allison Ramsay	Lead Nurse, NHS Forth Valley. Secretary of Scottish Senior Learning Disability Nurses Group
Linda Allan	Nurse Consultant, NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde
Michael Brown (Deputy – Eileen Duncan)	RCN Scotland/Nurse Consultant, NHS Lothian
Gary Docherty	Independent and private sector
Jonathan Gray	Nurse Consultant, NHS Highland
Representation from co-production steering group through Laura Finnan-Cowan (named contact)	Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability
Chris Darbyshire	Glasgow Caledonian University
Janet Smith/ Ian Stables	Edinburgh Napier University
David Currie	Partnership Group (Unions) for RCN
Susan Tait	Mental Welfare Commission
Wendy McConville	Staff side representative (Unison)
Tom Kelly	NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde



© Crown copyright 2015

OGL

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3 or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at www.gov.scot

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at
The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-78544-436-4

Published by The Scottish Government, June 2015

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA
PPDAS50689 (06/15)