

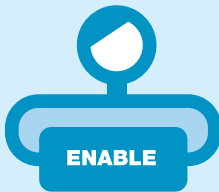


Royal College
of Nursing
Northern Ireland

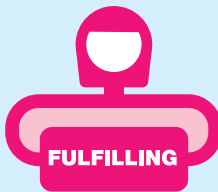
The Registered Nurse - Learning Disability

Skills, knowledge and expertise across the lifespan

"The learning disability nurse empowers and enables people with learning disability to live inclusive and fulfilling lives within their local community. The learning disability nurse works in partnership with people with learning disability and their family/carers to support each person to optimise their health and well-being throughout their lives".



ENABLE



FULFILLING



OPTIMISE

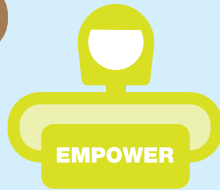


SUPPORT

LDNursesNI



PARTNERSHIP



EMPOWER



INCLUSIVE

Learning Disability Nursing Network

A Registered Nurse – Learning Disability

Is a member of the nursing profession who has a specialised and important role in the lives of people with learning disability. The Registered Nurse - Learning Disability supports the physical, mental, emotional, psychological, educational, spiritual and social needs of a person with learning disability, from early years to the end of life.

“I have been a qualified RNLD for the past six years. I listen to people who some may think have no voice. I teach skills for life to individuals so their world is opened up to more independence and opportunities. I help people understand their health so they can take ownership of their choices. I work alongside parents, siblings and the multidisciplinary team advocating for the rights of individuals.

Who am I? I am a proud RNLD.”

Julie Ann Colvin, RNLD

Professionalism and the Registered Nurse - Learning Disability

All registered nurses and midwives must act in line with the values and behaviours set out by their professional body, the Nursing and Midwifery Council in “The Code; professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses and midwives” (2015). The Code contains a series of statements that taken together signify what good nursing practice looks like.

The Code sets out these statements under four themes:

- Prioritise People
- Practise Effectively
- Preserve Safety
- Promote Professionalism and Trust

The Registered Nurse - Learning Disability is committed to the embodiment of these behaviours, values and standards of practice. The Registered Nurse - Learning Disability is competent, compassionate, caring, courageous, committed, and communicates with people with learning disability using a variety of methods, suitable to their individual needs.



The Registered Nurse Learning Disability works with people with learning disability in a diverse range of roles. This could include: neurodevelopmental assessment, diagnosis and intervention; nursing a person with complex physical needs; comprehensive mental health assessment and treatment; and, the provision of guidance and support. All of this will enable a child, young person or adult with learning disability to flourish and live a fulfilling life with the same rights, access to healthcare, and opportunities as everyone.

A key and essential role of the Registered Nurse Learning Disability is in the provision of care and interventions that promote, sustain and maintain biological, psychological, and social well-being. In line with public health policy, the registered nurse learning disability focuses on early intervention and systemic health improvement approaches.

The particular knowledge, skills and experiences of the Registered Nurse - Learning Disability are transferable across the wide range of health and social care services used by the person with learning disability. This includes roles within management structures and nurse development functions. The Registered Nurse - Learning Disability is also an important member of teams outside of traditional health and social care settings and services, for example, education and university posts, and policy development and advisory roles.

The Practice Education Team comprises nurses from across the specialities. My specific knowledge and expertise as an RNLD ensures that the needs and experiences of people with learning disability are rightfully recognised by my colleagues as essential components of addressing the practice development needs of nursing.

Ian McKnight, RNLD, Specialist Practitioner in Learning Disabilities, Practice Education Facilitator

The Registered Nurse - Learning Disability is: **COMPETENT**

The Registered Nurse - Learning Disability:

- has an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the health needs of the person with learning disability;
- recognises that the person could have additional and competing physical, emotional, social, and educational needs, due to the nature of their learning disability;
- can support people who present with a range of complex physical and mental health needs, and who may experience a range of complex behaviours;
- assesses, plans, implements and evaluates individualised care using a biopsychosocial model, undertaking specialised assessments where required;
- delivers a variety of evidence based clinical interventions, using a range of evidence based resources and tools.

I am a RNLD and an Epilepsy Nurse Specialist for people with learning disability. My knowledge and skills provide advanced monitoring and review, addressing any epilepsy related concerns, promoting positive outcomes and ensuring a high standard of care is provided.

Sarah McCann, RNLD, Epilepsy Nurse Specialist

We should all be working in evidence based ways, embracing new and emerging evidence based interventions that inform and improve the way RNLD care for adults, and children and young people with learning disability. Today we have a range of evidenced-based, therapeutic approaches, such as positive behavioural support, which means that those in our care get the help and support they need to live with their families and local communities and, like everyone else, only be admitted to hospital when necessary. This leads to better outcomes for adults, children and young people, and their families, and greater job satisfaction for staff.

**Siobhan Rogan, RNLD, Intellectual Disability CAMHS
Manager & Advanced Practitioner**

The Registered Nurse - Learning Disability is: **COMPASSIONATE**

The Registered Nurse - Learning Disability:

- sees the person and their likes, dislikes, wishes, personality and strengths first;
- has a real desire to always promote the rights of the people with learning disability;
- always considers others who are important in the person's life;
- is kind, patient and understanding;
- embeds the core principles of Fairness, Respect, Equality, Dignity and Autonomy in their daily practice and leads others by example.

My daughter has been availing of services for many years both as an inpatient and in the community. Since she was transferred to your ward, as a mother, I have had my first night's sleep in many years. I now know my daughter is safe and is being well looked after by nurses who treat her like an individual and with compassion.

Relative

The Registered Nurse - Learning Disability is: **CARING**

The Registered Nurse - Learning Disability:

- provides family centred care;
- works in partnership with the person and those who are involved with them, to co-produce care and support plans that build on and retain strengths and capabilities;
- provides care that addresses the physical, psychological, educational, social and spiritual needs of the person;
- is always aware of the vulnerabilities that person may present with;
- provides care along life's pathway and responds to changing needs at different life stages;
- has the skills to support people who are in crisis;
- can respond quickly, effectively and compassionately when a person with learning disability experiences distress or complex behaviours.

Nurses with a RNLN qualification and registration are unique in that their skills and knowledge are varied; we can ensure excellence in care from early years through to older adulthood and across a wide range of nursing and support needs. We have an extensive and holistic knowledge of the individual. We deliver care with empathy, positivity, and a focus on the person's strengths and capabilities.

Yvonne Diamond, RNLN, Home Manager

*I hurt myself for years until I came to this ward.
The nurses understand me and keep me safe.
The nurses always invite me to come to my meetings.
They make me feel important as I know that no changes
ever happen to my care without me being involved.*

Hospital patient

The Registered Nurse - Learning Disability is: **COURAGEOUS**

The Registered Nurse - Learning Disability:

- always acts as an advocate;
- will challenge others to ensure that the best interests of the person are paramount in all decision-making processes;
- will challenge health and social inequalities and discrimination.

It is widely recognised that people with learning disability are at a disadvantage in life. First and foremost RNLNs see the person for who they are, and not their disability. RNLNs show courage everyday by continually encouraging other people to see beyond the person's learning disability. Day in and day out RNLNs strive to ensure people with a learning disability are respected and treated as individuals and are given the same opportunities in life as everyone else.

Barbara Tate, Team Leader/Specialist Practitioner/CNLD

The Registered Nurse - Learning Disability is: **COMMITTED**

The Registered Nurse - Learning Disability:

- empowers and supports the person to achieve their full potential;
- ensures the person is assisted to understand their care and support needs and never makes assumptions around the person's capacity or level of understanding;
- is committed to person centred care, and works in partnership with the person, their family, other professionals, agencies and the wider community;
- promotes independence and supports the person to independently improve their wellbeing.

Leadership and patient centred care is integral to everything that I do in my job. Every day has many challenges but it's the team of nurses around me who continually inspire me to be a better leader. The team never fail to amaze me with their commitment to the patients; their practice and their approaches reach the pinnacle of patient centred care. They are the reason I walk in through the door - together we achieve amazing things every day.

Rhona Brennan, RNLD, Ward Sister

From their foundation in pre-registration nursing education through to continued professional education and development, the RNLD guides, instructs and assesses learners in achieving a standard of proficiency necessary to care for people with learning disabilities in all practice settings

**Peter Griffin, RNLD, Professional Lead,
Learning Disability Nursing, Queen's University, Belfast**

The Registered Nurse - Learning Disability has: **Excellent COMMUNICATION Skills**

The Registered Nurse - Learning Disability:

- is skilled and proficient at engaging with the people who have a range of communication needs;
- provides and advocates for the provision of reasonable adjustments in order to support the person in decision making processes about their life, their care and treatment, and their support;
- is creative in using different methods of communication to promote health and wellbeing and to empower the person to live a healthy and fulfilling life.



The Registered Nurse - Learning Disability:

"I feel privileged to work with a team of registered nurses who have chosen, from the outset of their careers, to dedicate their professional lives to working with individuals with Intellectual Disability. Their unique commitment, holistic approach and diverse skill set prepares these nurses to ensure that individuals with Intellectual Disability can benefit from all aspects of 21st century health care and research.

A good example is the delivery of mental health services to children and adolescents with Intellectual Disability, where a typical day in the life of a RNLD might range from a narrow focus on submicroscopic genome changes to the broad horizons of human rights legislation!

More than ever, we need RNLD's at the forefront of ensuring people with an Intellectual Disability have better, healthier lives."

Dr Heather Hanna
Consultant Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist in Intellectual Disability

"Skills, knowledge & expertise across the lifespan"



Sarah McCain, Learning Disability Nurse of the Year 2017



Network event 26th September 2017 - Members and Speakers

With thanks to Leah Kelly for the design of our logo



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The RCN represents nurses and nursing, promotes excellence in practice and shapes health policies. Should you require any support please contact an RCN representative in your area.

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