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NHS Lothian

I grew up living next door to a family who had two children with learning disabilities. I was very aware at a young age the impact of having not only one but two children with learning disability within a family. I began voluntary work at Lynebank Hospital in the early 1980s in the WRVS canteen as part of my Duke of Edinburgh Award.

I commenced my RNLD training at Fife College of Nursing & Midwifery (1st person to complete three years LD training in Fife). I worked as a Staff Nurse at Lynebank Hospital, NHS Fife for a period of 8 months. I then took a bold step and left nursing for a period of 18 months. In this time, I moved across to Edinburgh. I commenced working as a staff nurse and then charge nurse in Gogarburn Hospital. In 1994, I was successful and proud to secure a CLDN post within NHS Lothian working across the lifespan. I had the luxury of one-year full time study to gain my BA Community Health at Queen Margaret University in 1996. I continued to engage in post registration study by completing a PG Diploma in Counselling at the University of Edinburgh and in addition, a PG cert counselling children and young people. I then engaged with further study to upgrade my PG Dip to achieve a Customised MSc Intellectual Disability & Counselling @ ENU in 2009.

At the end of 2014, I took on a new role: full time secondment as Project Manager Health Equality Framework (HEF) working regionally for the Learning Disability Managed Care Network across South East Scotland. I worked full time for 31 months funded by the Scottish Government. I am the only Project Manager HEF across the UK.

From July 2017 to June 2019 I continued in seconded role as Project Manager HEF two days per week, funded by LD MCN in parallel with a return to CLDN post three days per week. I have two articles published in Learning Disability Practice on the HEF work completed. I have returned to full time CLDN clinical practice.

I commenced part time Clinical Doctoral study September 2018 at Stirling University with joint scholarship in place between Stirling University and NHS Lothian. I have just moved into academic year two. I am enjoying my new learning.