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I am very proud to be a Learning Disability Nurse. Our role and function is to work in partnership with individuals with learning disabilities and their supporters to enable and collaborate with health services, third sector, and integrated services, private and public agencies to meet the evolving needs of a growing population. Learning Disability nurses work with children, adults and older adults, their families/carers, staff and support teams and the wider workforce to enable each person to achieve their full potential and have a fulfilling life. Working collaboratively improves autonomy, promotes health and well being and supports inclusion; enhancing lifestyles that help achieve the best health outcomes. 2019 marks the centenary of learning disability nursing celebrating the many different roles and functions of the learning disability nurse across the United Kingdom today.

My career path began as a staff nurse/senior staff nurse working in inpatient services before moving to south community learning disability team as a senior charge nurse in NHS GGC. The primary care liaison team was my next post as Primary Care Liaison Nurse and Acting Lead Nurse supporting general practice to deliver locally enhanced service requirements, undertaking C21st Health Checks, working with researchers and providing training and education across primary care.

Heralding early integration, I took up post as Clinical Team Leader within a joint health and social care team and in tandem was invited to contribute to the Learning Disability pre registration programme at Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) alongside contributions to other fields of nursing and health care programmes across a number of HEIs. Having completed my BSc in Health Studies and Masters in Primary Care, I was fortunate to have completed continued professional development in Cancer Genetics, Adults with Incapacity: Part 5 CH32254, Social Work Services Management Programme, Clinical Leadership and Family Planning.

Straddling a joint role across health and lecturing my next role was Clinical Academic Learning Disability Nursing at GCU. Funded by Scottish Government this role supported the national model working across seven territorial health boards NHS Ayrshire & Arran, Dumfries & Galloway, Forth Valley, Greater Glasgow & Clyde, Highland, Lanarkshire, Western Isles and The State Hospital specialist board. During this time, I was very fortunate to embark on my PhD and continue the PhD journey taking up post as Nurse Consultant LD in NHS Grampian, a fantastic role with professional responsibility for Learning Disability Nurses in Grampian, Shetland and Orkney, Associate Lecturer Robert Gordon University and Scottish representative to the UK LD Nurse Consultant Network. My post today is Interim Associate Nurse Director for Learning Disability and Mental Health Services in NHS Grampian. I am honoured to hold such a position. I chair the Scottish Learning Disability Nurse Leads Group and at the request of the Chief Nursing Office, represent Scotland at the UK Learning Disability Professional Senate.

My path has been celebrated with two developments attracting cross party support, NHS Scotland Endorsement, BMA, QNIS and Scholarship Awards. I have been fortunate to work closely with numerous stakeholders including pre registrants and new graduates, third sector, private, voluntary and charity organisations, supportive carers and most importantly individuals with a learning disability. The modern learning disability workforce is built upon a collective leadership model and we welcome our workforce of tomorrow. Come and join us.