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I qualified as a Learning Disability Nurse in August 1993; our training at the time was called Registered Nurse Mental Handicap. I completed my training at Foresterhill Nursing College in Aberdeen. My first post was supporting young children living in the community in Aberdeen with an organisation called Aberlour. I then moved to work at Woodlands Hospital, in various posts from Staff Nurse to Night Charge Nurse until its closure in the early 2000's. Now working within Mental Health and Learning Disability Service for NHS Grampian based at Elmwood, again in a number of different posts, I am currently Interim Nurse Consultant – Learning Disabilities.

My current role covers our inpatient, three Health and Social Care partnerships including professional support to our nurses based in NHS Orkney and Shetland. My role has four main areas. Professional Leadership, Expert Practice, Service, Practice and Policy Development and Education and Research and Development. I provide professional leadership to our CLDN's and support our nursing staff across the inpatient service and HSCP's to implement and evaluate evidence-based practice in the care and treatment of people with learning disabilities. Taking forward our learning disability strategies such as Keys to Life which shapes and influences of practice and representing Grampian at a number of local and national meetings.

I am currently working alongside our nursing teams in the development of several care pathways which will enhance best practice and the patient journey when being supported by our services. Providing leadership and direction that is relevant to policy including ongoing implementation of the HEF, Annual Health Screening, Admission Policy and outcomes identified through Keys to Life and the soon to be launched Strengthening the Commitment – Sustaining the Commitment Strategy for Learning Disability Nurses.

Working in partnership to improve experiences for people with a learning disability recently included our MCN Palliative Care group for NHS Grampian and our Sexual Health Services. Supporting HSCPs with the implementation and development of their action plans for their strategies, which includes a number of health and care focused outcomes. My role at the moment is diverse, with not only a local focus but also across Scotland through participation at events for MWC, HEI's and SPSP, for example.

I have been fortunate throughout my career to have gained many experiences through the different posts that I have been in. All diverse for various reasons but all having the same outcome: to support people with a learning disability to the best of my ability, ensuring best practice and positive outcomes. When I chose to undertake my nurse training, I knew I did not want to be any other nurse than to support those with a learning disability, my reasons at that time and remain the same - 'I wanted to help people and make a difference'