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After completion of a university course, I realised that I didn't know what career path I wanted to follow. I spent some time doing voluntary work with people with learning disabilities and I decided this was the area I wanted to work in as I felt I could make a difference to the lives of people with a learning disability.

I attended Dundee College of Nursing and Midwifery, completing my training in 1994. When I qualified, there were no jobs in the NHS so I worked in a nursing home for people with learning disabilities. Many of the residents had been discharged from the old hospital; however, it was just a move from one institution to another and not really a community placement. Many of the residents could have been living happily in supported housing. I then returned to the NHS working in inpatient forensic learning disability services. I completed a Diploma in Forensic Mental Health at the University of Abertay.

I then moved to a E grade post in a day hospital for people with learning disabilities who displayed behaviour consider challenging. This was out of my comfort zone as challenging behaviour was not something I had enjoyed during my training. We had so much fun, although we had limited staffing and high patient numbers, the team were incredible people with so many skills. I then returned to forensic services as a forensic community nurse being promoted to band 6 and then 7 within this team. At this time, I was also seconded one day per week to Edinburgh Napier University as a clinical academic.

My career then took an unexpected turn when I moved to an integrated team as a community learning disability nurse with care management duties. This was an amazing experience and I learned so much in the time I worked in this team. This was completely integrated care, with one point of contact for the people who required our service. An opportunity to take a band 7 post within the assessment unit became available; something I never thought I would do was return to inpatient service. Again, I was working with an amazing team of people and loved the challenges of working in this environment. After being in this post for only five months I had the opportunity to take over the clinical team manager post. This has been a massive learning curve which is sometimes overwhelming, however I am beginning to enjoy the challenges of this post and although this is a temporary post it is something I would like pursue in the future.

Learning disability nurses have so many opportunities now compared to when I completed my training, I would recommend it as career to anyone to make a difference to the lives of people with a learning disability.