

Learning Disability

Get it Right - RIGHT SKILLS

The Welsh Assembly Government's 2007 Statement on Policy and Practice from People with a Learning Disability made the following declaration of principle: "All people with a learning disability are full citizens, equal in status and value to other citizens of the same age. They have rights to:

- *live healthy, productive and independent lives with appropriate and responsive treatment and support to develop their maximum potential*
- *be individuals and decide everyday issues and life-defining matters for themselves joining in all decision-making which affects their lives, with appropriate and responsive advice and support where necessary*
- *live their lives within their community, maintaining the social and family ties and connections which are important to them "*

These principles are fully endorsed by the Royal College of Nursing. The Registered Nurse for People with Learning Disabilities (RNLD) is the only profession specifically trained to work with and support people who have learning disabilities. RNLD nurses based within community settings as Community Nurses for People with Learning Disabilities (CNLDs) have shaped and developed services since the early 1970's in developing the nursing profession and their

specialist skills within community multi-disciplinary and multi-agency service models. In addition they have facilitated the development of policy and practice frameworks that have transcended organisational boundaries and promoted the development and implementation of standardised clinical and educational protocols. It is imperative that the general health needs of people with a learning disability are met within the primary and secondary health services and within this context the CLDN has a pivotal role. However, it is also essential that the CLDN is enabled to provide their specialist skills to meet those needs that cannot be met within these sectors, and to support staff through the use of specific educational frameworks.

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right

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KEY POLICY ACTIONS

- The creation of evidence-based practice is essential to aid effective service and workforce planning. The Welsh Assembly Government should invest in research to identify the impact of the CNLD role for people with learning disabilities, their families and carers.
- To develop standardised specialist clinical and educational protocols to ensure a consistent quality of education is delivered to service users, families and carers across Wales.
- Unacceptable levels of clinical time are being spent on undertaking and justifying Continual Health Care assessments. The Welsh Assembly Government should take the lead in reforming this current policy framework and reducing this pressure.
- The Welsh Assembly Government should promote Joint Strategic Service Planning models that will provide planned and emergency respite services for people with specialist needs.
- The Welsh Assembly Government should, in collaboration with service-users, carers and professionals ensure national consistency in the eligibility criteria used by statutory bodies for access to services.
- The Welsh Assembly Government should promote a strategy to develop support services for the people with learning disabilities within the criminal justice services. This includes prison, police custody, immigration/ detention and removal services.