

RCN Learning Disability Nursing Forum Annual Report 2024

Forum Name & Introduction:

The purpose of the learning disability nursing forum is to promote and support Registered Nurses and nursing support workers providing care and support for children, adults and older people wherever they practice. The Learning Disability Nursing family and other registered nurses work to improve the health and well-being and the lives and social inclusion of children, adults and older people with learning disabilities wherever they may reside. All have key roles in providing assessment, treatment, care, support and education for people with learning disabilities across the lifespan and supporting other professionals to deliver safe and effective person-centred care across care settings. The purpose of the Learning Disability Nursing Forum is to shape and influence national and local policies, practice and education to improve the lives in the health of children, adults and older people with learning disabilities and promote and enable access to all areas of education, health and social care.

Membership of the forum:

- Learning Disability Nursing Forum membership – we have 4,324 members of this forum, a small increase on last year's membership, of which 3,097 have selected our Forum as 'First Choice'.
- RCN Facebook Page – we have 2,200 members
- X (formerly Twitter) – our Forum page have 2,380 followers and are following 1,896 accounts. However, as the RCN have decided to stop using X as a platform, our Forum account will no longer be used to post from or interact with (as of 25.11.24).
- Committee membership – we have been successful in appointing a new Committee member who will be joining us in January 2025. We were really pleased to receive seven eligible applications for this position and our Forum will continue to have a full committee to represent our members. More details about our committee membership can be found on the website.

Reflections on 2024 (Outputs and outcomes)

1. To develop an RCN position statement on Autism, which had been driven by an Emergency Resolution at RCN Congress in 2023. This position statement was published in November, 2024 - <https://www.rcn.org.uk/About-us/Our-Influencing-work/Position-statements/rcn-position-on-the-health-inequalities-autistic-people-face>. Our Forum are now planning next steps in relation to this and will be engaging with Forum members as part of our 2025 strategy.
2. Our Forum have held a number of member engagement events virtually, including Development of a Professional Framework – March 2024; Congress 2023 feedback in June 2024; Student learning disability nurse engagement – October 2024 and two further Learning Disability Nursing engagement events to discuss Workforce Planning survey (to inform the planned Workforce Summit in November) – October 2024.
3. RCN Learning Disability Nursing Workforce Summit – which took place on 22nd November 2024. An FGG bid was submitted and partially funded to enable this event to take place. One hundred key stakeholders from across the UK attended this in-person event to highlight the crisis in learning disability nursing and develop multi-agency commitments, which will feed in to our Forum's 2025 strategy. This event has involved close collaboration with the UK Consultant Learning Disability Nurse Network and the Learning and Intellectual Disability Nursing Academic Network (LIDNAN).

4. Epilepsy webinar – November 2024. Co-facilitated by our Forum and the Neuroscience Forum. Jonathan Beebee – Professional Lead participated in the virtual event and highlighted its excellent turnout, reflecting strong interest and engagement from attendees. Special thanks to Tolu Olaniyan – Learning Disability Nursing Forum Committee member for organising this event.
5. Our Forum have represented members at a number of key conferences, including Positive Choices and Positive Commitment in March 2024 and a number of other events where we have highlighted current issues facing our profession.
6. Congress - Our Forum presented a Matter for Discussion at Congress 2024 which debated whether learning disability nursing needs re-defining to reflect contemporary practice. We had full voting membership at Congress 2024 to represent our members. Our Forum are also in the process of developing a Congress Agenda item submission, which will include the views of people with learning disabilities. A number of meetings took place in November and planned for December, which will help shape this item.
7. Our Forum responded to the Dept. of Health and Social Care consultation on a code of practice in relation to statutory training in learning disability and autism awareness. We held three member engagement webinars to collect member views to inform our response.
8. Our Forum are currently working with the National Confidential Enquiry into Patient Outcomes and Death (NCEPOD) to develop a study with a focus on identifying positive practice in acute care settings.
9. Our Forum have increased communication with all Forum members via email using an RCN secure portal (Member Communication Centre).
10. Our Forum actively involve other link nurses to connect us with other external bodies – i.e. NHS Learning Disability Shared Decision Making Council.
11. Our Forum Committee members use social media – Facebook, X and LinkedIn to raise the profile of Learning Disability Nursing, the work of the Forum and wider RCN campaigns and resources.

RCN Representations:

1. Our Forum are currently working with the National Confidential Enquiry into Patient Outcomes and Death (NCEPOD) to develop a study with a focus on identifying positive practice in acute care settings. The NCEPOD study aims to reflect positive experiences of what works for people with learning disabilities in acute care. This representation has assisted learning disability nursing and nursing more globally to be considered in this study.
2. Our Forum have represented members at the Positive Choices and Positive Commitment conferences in April, 2024. This is a key event in the Learning Disability Nursing calendar with key stakeholders. Our presence promotes communication and awareness amongst learning disability nurses and students of the forum's and RCN's activity.
3. June 24 – four Learning Disability Nursing Forum members attended Congress as voting members. A matter for discussion from the Forum was presented on redefining learning disability nursing.
4. June 2024 - UK Autism Nurse Consultant Network – Sarah Jackson, committee member co-chairs to share national developments in autism practice and promote developments. The forum has supported the development of the RCN autism position statement.

Plans for 2025:

Take forward the actions from the workforce summit which will inform Strategy day – 10th December to plan work for 2025.

Katy Welsh – RCN Learning Disability Nursing Forum Chair and Jonathan Beebee - Professional Lead

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