





This should include expanding access to the profession through part-time education and postgraduate level entry and increasing nursing student placements in social care.

Furthermore, despite HEIW stating universities were unable to fill the commissioned places, there is no data to further understand how many places are filled every year. There needs to be an improvement in data gathering and transparency of the number of places universities fill. This will provide a more accurate

Figure 2 highlights that NHS Wales, trusts and employers do not want to release nurses to study as there are already not enough nurses to back PII their post and it would also be very costly. This in turn means HEIW does not commission postgraduate nurse education as there are not enough nurses to PII the courses. Universities then close departments and withdraw advanced nurse education courses. As a result, any nurses able to study now have to travel further away, a time consuming and costly burden, and as many of these individuals have existing commitments, this acts as a deterrent from studying. Consequently, patients suffer as Wales does not have the specialist knowledge needed to provide the clinically advanced care, education, and research. This is especially true for learning disability advance practice, specialist, and consultant nurses.

To break the cycle, NHS Wales and employers must facilitate time for nurses to study, HEIW must commission post-registration nursing education and universities must establish learning disability consultant nurse and advance nursing Masters and PhD level courses in their area of practice.

From a nursing perspective: Why learning disability nursing is so important

LD Nurse, RCN Wales Member

Why did you choose learning disability nursing?

"I had just returned from America doing a summer of 'camp' with adults with physical and learning disabilities. I came home and knew I wanted a career in a similar field OR to go into nursing. When I googled USW [University of South Wales] and found there was such a thing as learning disability nursing I didn't hesitate to apply."

What is the most rewarding part of your job?

"Supporting people to achieve things they previously had not. Recently I supported a gentleman in his late 40s to make his toast in the morning; he later told me it was the first time he'd ever made his own breakfast and was super proud."

What is the most challenging part of your job?

"The lack of staff, funding and resources."

If the Welsh Government could do one thing to improve your role, what would it be?

"Increase the pay for nurses. It is so much responsibility, legally, morally and professionally. Not to disrespect any other profession or job but I have known people working in less stressful environments, with less responsibility, earn more money than I do as a band 6 clinical lead in the NHS."

What one piece of advice would you give someone thinking of becoming a learning disability nurse?

"You would probably be financially better off seeking another line of employment. It is a very rewarding and heart-warming job but you need to be particularly resilient and look after your mental wellbeing."

Learning disability nursing continues to play a crucial role in championing health improvement and working to tackle health inequalities. This paper has outlined the necessity of learning

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