

## **Strengthening the Commitment Northern Ireland Action Plan**

### **Report on the Strengthening the Commitment Northern Ireland Action Plan – Information Seminars**

#### **Background**

*Strengthening the Commitment*: the Report of the UK Modernising Learning Disabilities Nursing Review was released in April 2012. Since then a Northern Ireland Action Plan has been developed to take forward its recommendations. Following a period of consultation the Action Plan was officially launched in June 2014. The NI Action Plan is available [http://www.nipec.hscni.net/RegionalCollaborativeforNIActionPlan\\_NOTES.aspx](http://www.nipec.hscni.net/RegionalCollaborativeforNIActionPlan_NOTES.aspx)

#### **The Northern Ireland Collaborative**

A Northern Ireland Regional Collaborative (the Collaborative) chaired by Dr Glynis Henry, CBE, Head of Clinical Education Centre has been established to take forward the NI Action Plan. The Collaborative includes representation from; the independent sector; all five of the Health and Social Care Trusts, Educational Providers, NIPEC; the Health and Social Care Board and Public Health Agency, RCN, RQIA and ARC. The programme of work is facilitated and supported by NIPEC.

One of the key actions of the NI Collaborative from the outset was to increase awareness regarding the NI Action Plan and as a result, regional information seminars were organised in each Trust to:

- raise awareness of the NI Action Plan
- facilitate front line learning disability nurses and other key stakeholders to contribute to decision making both locally and regionally in the identification of key priorities and on-going implementation of the NI Action Plan

Through the NI Action plan, engagement and communication strategy, all registered learning disability nurses and pre-registration learning disabilities nursing students working across all settings including the Independent and Voluntary sector and other stakeholders were invited to attend the seminars. A flyer detailing information regarding the session was prepared and disseminated. In total six information seminars were delivered; one session in each of the five HSC Trusts and one in Four Seasons Health Care; ninety three staff attended in total ranging from pre-registration Learning Disabilities nursing students to Assistant Directors of Mental Health and Learning Disabilities and Executive Directors of Nursing.

The information sessions were extremely well received and participants actively contributed to the seminars. For some it was their first opportunity to hear about the NI Action Plan for others they were more aware of it as they had previously contributed to its development and/or had inputted to the UK Modernising Learning Disabilities Nursing Review.

### **The Seminar**

Following a presentation outlining the 4 Chapters within the report: Strengthening capacity, Strengthening capability, Strengthening quality and Strengthening the profession, time was spent reviewing initiatives the other UK countries have progressed to meet the recommendations from the Modernising Learning Disabilities Nursing Review. (Appendix 1 *insert presentation*).

Using table mats participants were then asked to identify their key priorities, how they could contribute to taking forward the NI Action plan and what initiatives and developments are currently happening in their local areas which could help meet the recommendations from the NI Action Plan. Feedback from the participants was themed and is presented under the following headings:

### **Key Priorities as identified by participants at the information seminars:**

- Ensure that Learning Disabilities nursing skills and competencies are used appropriately

- The need to support recruitment and retention of Learning Disabilities nurses
- The belief that Learning Disabilities nurses should be allowed to and facilitated to practice as Learning Disabilities nurses
- The need to build and maintain strong Learning Disabilities nursing leadership
- Development a career pathway for Learning Disabilities nursing
- That careers within the independent sector are recognised
- The need to regionally agree a process to demonstrate the outcomes of Learning Disabilities nursing practice
- The need to develop the role of the Learning Disabilities liaison nurse in a general hospital settings was a key priority
- The re-establishment of the Learning Disabilities Nursing Professional Forum
- Continuous Professional Development specific to the field of Practice

### **How can Learning Disabilities Nurses contribute to the NI Action Plan?**

Participants suggested they could:

- Get involved in practice development and research
- Ensure Learning Disabilities nursing articulate their nursing contribution
- Increase their confidence and presence for example presenting Learning Disabilities nursing initiatives at conferences and events to show case examples of good practice
- Engage in lunch and learns at a local level
- Participate in the Learning Disabilities Nurses Network when established
- Get involved in initiatives linked to the NI Action Plan at a local level

### **Participants told us about developments they are involved in which could contribute to meeting the actions within the NI StC Action Plan**

examples included:

- The pilot of the Health Equality Framework (HEF) currently ongoing in BHST
- Pre admission assessment project
- Learning Disabilities Dementia Care Pathway
- Establishment of the Nurse Led Crisis Response team
- Development of Epilepsy Specialist Service
- Health Facilitation
- Supporting the pathway of care through acute care services.
- Non-medical prescribing.

- Accessing of enhanced clinical skills to care for those with complex needs

## **Summary**

Although the seminars were received very positively and all who attended were keen to contribute their thoughts and ideas, it was apparent that nearly one year after the launch of the Action Plan, there were a significant number of registered nursing staff who had limited awareness/lacked awareness of its existence. Pre and post registration Learning Disabilities nursing students on the other hand were acutely aware of its existence and indicated that the principles and recommendations within the document were influencing and guiding their learning and development.

It was reassuring to note that the aspirations and priorities identified by the participants at the information seminars reflect the recommendations which have been targeted by the Collaborative. Some of the priorities identified have already been progressed or are currently being taken forward.

The seminars provided an opportunity for learning disabilities nurses to strengthen their commitment to their profession and increased awareness of the ways in which they can become involved in realising the actions from the NI Action Plan.

A number of initiatives and practice developments were identified by the participants (see page 3) and participants were encouraged to submit their local initiatives for consideration at the StC Annual Conference and the StC three year on report.