

An Update on NNLDN – October 2009



The National Networks of Learning Disability Nurses, NNLDN, is a network of networks from across England, Wales, Northern Ireland Scotland and the Republic of Ireland. The NNLDN seeks to share and improve learning disability nursing practice as a means to improve care, thereby contributing to improving the health and wellbeing of people with learning disabilities.

National Networking Event – June 2010

The NNLDN are delighted to announce that the 2009 National Networking Conference event will be held on the 28th and 29th of June 2009 in Yorkshire. Work is ongoing with our conference organising partners, Top Banana Team on the conference venue in Yorkshire (www.nnldnconference.com).

The National Networking Event is the must attend networking event of the year for learning disability nurses working in all care settings as the means to update on key policy developments that impact on practice and care and share learn about new and innovative practice from across England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The opportunity to network and share practice with colleagues from across the 5 countries is core to the National Networking Event.

The 27th National Networking Event in Cambridge in 2009 saw the doubling of the number of learning disability nurses presenting at their practice at the concurrent sessions. These sessions have been well evaluated at previous conferences and the NNLDN plan to build on this at future National Networking Events. There will be the opportunity to for learning disability nurses and their colleagues to submit abstracts for peer review at the start of 2010 for presentation at the conference in Yorkshire.

The NNLDN also provides an Innovation in Practice Award to enable learning disability nurses and their team to undertake a piece of focussed work that develops and improves practice. The winner of the Award has the opportunity to attend the NNLDN National Networking Event to present their work to their peers.

Positive Choices – The Learning Disability Student Nurse Network

NNLDN works in partnership with the Positive Choices Student Network and gives the Fiona Law Student Award to a student nurse from one of the 5 countries who demonstrate innovation in their practice. Five student nurses from across the 5 countries are supported to attend the National Networking Event and at the 2009 conference in Cambridge they held a symposium where they had the opportunity to share their work with delegates.

The 6th Positive Choices annual student conference is being hosted in Leeds on the 8th and 9th of April 2010. The conference event sees some 500 undergraduate student nurses from universities across the 5 countries come together for a 2 day event that enables them to share, learn and develop their practice. Helen Laverty, University of Nottingham chairs the Positive Choices Student Nurse Network and NNLDN will be working in partnership with them in the coming year to support RNLN students at the point of transition on to the nursing register. Developing and supporting lifelong networking as a means to maintain and develop professional learning disability nursing practice is one of the shared objectives of the two networks.

Sponsor a student nurse to attend the NNLDN National Networking Event

NNLDN and Positive Choices have been working together over the last few years to develop the Fiona Law Student Award. There is an opportunity for organisations and companies to support the student award and attendance of the undergraduates at the National Networking Event each year by funding a student place at the conference. For more information on how to become a student sponsor contact Debbie Styles at debbie.styles@topbananateam.com.

Networking Research

The NNLDN has been leading the way by undertaking research looking at networks and networking in learning disability nursing across England, Wales, Northern Ireland, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland. The findings of the research will be available on the new NNLDN website and in the October 2009 edition of Learning Disability Practice Paul Horan from Trinity College Dublin and Michael Brown from Edinburgh Napier University given an overview of the research and key findings in an article titled, *An international evaluation of networks and networking in learning disability nursing*. It can be accessed via their website at (www.learningdisabilitypractice.rcnpublishing.co.uk).

Fiona Law

Many of you will have heard of Fiona Law. Fiona was involved with the NNLDN for many years and was responsible for the membership registrations and website. Sadly Fiona died earlier in the year after a battle with leukaemia. To mark her contribution to both NNLDN and the partner student network Positive Choices, the annual student award for innovation has been renamed as the Fiona Law Student Award. (www.positivechoices.org.uk).

Web site

The NNLDN website is undergoing development at the moment and has been removed temporarily from the internet. Since Fiona's death NNLDN have been considering the options to develop the website to ensure that it continues to support learning disability nurses share their practice and improve care. Information will be sent out in the future about the launch of the new website.

NNLDN Executive Development Day (www.debramooreassociates.com)

The NNLDN Executive has recently with Debra Moore of Debra Moore Associates who facilitated a day focussing on the long term development of the NNLDN to ensure that the needs of learning disability nurses in practice across the 5 countries are met. The work plan will focus on developing the new website, developing the National Networking Event to ensure that more learning disability nurses from practice have the opportunity to disseminate their practice that makes a difference to care, consolidating relationships with the Positive Choices Student Network and the Consultant Nurse Network to grow and evolve the membership to promote life-long networking as part of the professional development of learning disability nurses across the 5 countries.

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