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Learning disability nurse

Learning disability nurses work to provide specialist healthcare and support to people with a learning disability, as well as their families and staff teams, to help them live a fulfilling life.

Why choose learning disability nursing

There are many reasons why you should consider a career as a learning disability nurse. It offers you the chance to make a difference, a high degree of flexibility and a career with excellent employment prospects.

Can't see the video? You'll need to accept all cookies [1]. Alternatively, visit our YouTube Channel to view our videos [2]
Get started

Ready to get started?

Get practical advice and everything you need to know in your inbox.

Sign up for emails [3]

Working life

Children diagnosed with a learning disability are living longer and more fulfilling lives as they transition into adolescence, adulthood, and older age. Learning disability nurses play a crucial role in supporting these individuals throughout their lives in various health and care settings.

You'll care for individuals with learning disabilities with the person you're working with being at the centre of all decisions. Your goal is making sure they receive an equitable level of care for their individual needs. You'll work collaboratively with them, their families, and various teams across multiple settings. You'll be an educator, advocate, and leader, empowering people with learning disabilities to reach their full potential and lead healthy, independent lives.

The main areas of your role as a learning disability nurse involve:

- improving or maintaining a person's physical and mental health
- reducing barriers to them living an independent life
- supporting the person in living a fulfilling life

You may work in a variety of settings, including people's homes, residential or nursing facilities, educational institutions, specialist units such as prisons, GP practices, or hospital settings. You will collaborate as part of a broader team that may include GPs, psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, teachers, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, and physiotherapists.

Holly Tyrell

Community learning disability nurse

> Working with patients to overcome their challenges and being able to celebrate their achievements feels like a real accomplishment

Read Holly's story [4]

Entry requirements

To become a learning disability nurse the main route is through a degree course at university. Entry requirements for these courses can vary depending on where and how you'd like to study so it's important to check with universities. You can find a learning disability nursing courses at the bottom of this page.

Typically you'll need a minimum of five GCSEs at grade 4/C or above, possibly in English language or literature and a science subject, plus two A levels or equivalent level 3 qualifications, such as a T level or BTEC for an undergraduate degree. Some universities may ask for three A levels or equivalent. If you already have a degree, you might be able to study for a postgraduate qualification through a postgraduate programme.

Apprenticeships logo

There are other routes into learning disability nursing such as nurse degree apprenticeships and nursing associate apprenticeships.

Annual payments

If you're eligible, you'll receive at least £6,000 a year towards your studies while at university. Your personal circumstances may mean you could receive more. And the good news? You'll never have to pay it back. Find out more. [5]

Other routes into learning disability nursing

Nursing degree apprenticeships are available with some employers and numbers are expected to continue to grow. Increasing opportunities to apply for nursing associate apprenticeships [6] are also expected. This can lead to nursing degrees or nurse degree apprenticeships.

Must have skills

Don’t forget - academic qualifications aren’t everything. Communication and interpersonal skills are crucial, as well as strong judgement, be able to teach advise and manage people.

If you're applying for a role either directly in the NHS or a university course, you'll be asked to show how you think the values of the NHS Constitution [7] apply in your everyday work.

Training and career development

You could specialise in areas such as education, sensory disability or service management. You may want to work or move into management, teaching or clinical research.

Pay and benefits

Your standard working week will be around 37.5 hours on shift pattern which can include nights, early starts, evenings, weekends and bank holidays. As a learning disability nurse, you’ll be paid on the Agenda for Change (AFC) pay system [8], typically starting at band 5.

You’ll also have access to our generous pension scheme and health service discounts, as well as 27 days of annual leave plus bank holidays.

Find your course to become a learning disability nurse

Region

- Any -

Type of qualification

- Any -

Full or part time

Search

Displaying 1 - 5 of 66 matches

Nursing (Adult and Learning Disabilities)

Edge Hill University

View course [9] Opens in a new window

- Qualification
  - Master of Science (with Honours) - Msci (Hon)
- Study mode
  - Full-time
- Duration of the course
  - 4 Years
- Leading to a career in
  - Nursing (Adult), Nursing (Learning disabilities)
- Contact details
  - study@edgehill.ac.uk [10]

+44 (0)1695 657000
- Region
  North West
  Admissions address
  St Helens Road
  Ormskirk
  L39 4QP
  United Kingdom

Nursing - Adult and Learning Disabilities (Dual Award)

Birmingham City University

View course [11] Opens in a new window
- Qualification
  Master of Science - MSci
  Study mode
  Full-time
  Duration of the course
  4 Years
  Leading to a career in
  Nursing (Adult), Nursing (Learning disabilities)
- Contact details
  courseenquiries@bcu.ac.uk [12]
  0121 331 6295
- Region
  West Midlands
  Admissions address
  Westbourne Road
  Birmingham
  B15 3TN
  United Kingdom

MN Integrated Masters (Adult Nursing plus other field)

University of Chester

View course [13] Opens in a new window
- Qualification
  MNurs
  Study mode
  Full-time
  Duration of the course
  4 Years
  Leading to a career in
  Nursing (Adult), Nursing (Learning disabilities), Nursing (Mental Health)
- Contact details
  01244 511000
- Region

North West
Admissions address
Parkgate Road
Chester
CH1 4BJ
United Kingdom

Nursing (Child and Learning Disabilities)

Edge Hill University

View course [9] Opens in a new window

- Qualification
  Master of Science (with Honours) - Msci (Hon)
  Study mode
  Full-time
  Duration of the course
  4 Years
  Leading to a career in
  Nursing (Children/ Paediatric), Nursing (Learning disabilities)
- Contact details
  study@edgehill.ac.uk [10]
  +44 (0)1695 657000
- Region
  North West
  Admissions address
  St Helens Road
  Ormskirk
  L39 4QP
  United Kingdom

Nursing - Learning Disabilities and Child (Dual Award)

Birmingham City University

View course [14] Opens in a new window

- Qualification
  Master of Science - MSci
  Study mode
  Full-time
  Duration of the course
  4 Years
  Leading to a career in
  Nursing (Children/ Paediatric), Nursing (Learning disabilities)
- Contact details
  courseenquiries@bcu.ac.uk [12]
  0121 331 6295
- Region
  West Midlands

Admissions address
Westbourne Road
Birmingham
B15 3TN
United Kingdom

- Load more Load more results [15]

- **Live vacancies**

If you cannot find a job vacancy in your area, you can also visit the NHS Jobs website [16] and search for more vacancies.

Find a vacancy

Enter your location or postcode

Show results within

Search

Other roles that may interest you

- Mental health nurse [17]
- High intensity therapist [18]
- Children's nurse [19]
- Health visitor [20]

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