

HEF FOR HEALTH



Roving Reporters Kerri-Anne, Jonathan, Gregory & Philip from Muckamore Patients Council interview Rhona Brennan-Ward Sister on Donegore Ward, to find out about HEF-Health Evaluation Framework

The HEF is a tool designed by Learning Disability Nurse Consultants following a scandal at Winterbourne View, which highlighted the ill treatment of people with learning disabilities by staff that should have been supporting them. Following the Winterbourne incident in 2012, a national review across Northern Ireland, Scotland, England, and Wales of Learning Disability nursing was undertaken and the resulting report, 'Strengthening the Commitment', highlighted the need for an objective measurement framework by which learning disability nurses could clearly demonstrate their effectiveness at both individual and service levels.

The HEF was designed to improve health & well being for individuals with Learning Disability through an evidence based approach, using a formal evaluation tool to measure outcomes. The HEF is a computerised tool that works by monitoring the degree and impact of exposure of people with learning disabilities to acknowledged, evidence-based, determinants of health inequality, and by measuring the extent to which services minimise this exposure. The resulting profile is not dependent on the complexity of a person's needs, their specific conditions, or presentations, but rather on the systems around them that ensure that their needs and long-term conditions are appropriately identified and responded to, and that individuals are receiving the right support.

The Health Department chose Muckamore Abbey Hospital to run a six-month pilot of the HEF Project. It is being carried out on Donagore Ward. Rhona Brennan, Ward Sister of Donagore, explained that this decision is owed to the positive reports that the ward has received for the past three years, with recommendations in particular from RQIA.

Rhona explained that she has a personal interest in the role of Learning Disability Nurses and that it is important in her role to know that they are supporting people with Learning Disabilities to lead a healthier and fulfilled life. She says, "We have been waiting for an evaluation tool because we do interventions as nurses to provide good care for the people we support, however until now we could only rely on the input and experiences of the patients to demonstrate this. The HEF tool is based on the care we deliver as nurses and actually measures the interventions we use to support people with learning disabilities and prevent them becoming unwell. I am proud that we are the only place in Northern Ireland using the Health Evaluation Framework and that it helps us to recognise the good work and support that Learning Disability Nurses Provide."



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