

**Learning
Disabilities Nursing:
Field Specific
Competencies**

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Competency (Learning disabilities) and application	Domain and ESC	Suitable items for Multi-choice Exam: Nursing Field specific (E* = Critical item when related to patient and public safety and if tested in MCQ must be passed) (20Qs)	Suitable items for testing within OSCE's E* = Critical item when related to patient or public safety and if tested in scenario/skill must be passed
1.1 Learning disabilities nurses must understand and apply current legislation to all service users, paying special attention to the protection of vulnerable people, including those with complex needs arising from ageing, cognitive impairment, long-term conditions and those approaching the end of life.	D1 Professional values Competency 1		
	Complex needs	E*	E*
	Older people	E*	E*
	Dementia	E*	E*
	Long term conditions	E*	E*
	Dying	E*	E*
	Articulates the underpinning values of the Code (NMC,2018).Care, Compassion and Communication CCC1 ,1.	Y	Y

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	Adopts a principled approach to care underpinned by the Code (NMC, 2018). CCC4, 3.	Y	Y
	Upholds peoples legal rights and speaks out when these are at risk of being compromised CCC4,4.	Y	Y
	Is acceptant of differing cultural traditions, beliefs, UK legal frameworks and professional ethics when planning care with people and their families and their carers CCC4, 5.	Y	Y
	Through reflection and evaluation demonstrates commitment to personal and professional development and lifelong learning CCC5,13.	Y	
	Acts professionally and autonomously in situations where there may be limits to confidentiality, for example, public interest and protection from harm CCC7,5.	Y	Y
	Works within legal frameworks for data protection including access to and storage of records CCC7,8.	Y	
	Works within legal frameworks when seeking consent CCC8, 5.	Y	Y

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	Assesses and responds to the needs and wishes of carers and relatives in relation to information and consent. CCC8,6	Y	
	Shares information safely with colleagues and across agency boundaries for the protection of individuals and the public. OAC11, 6.	Y	
	Works within ethical and legal frameworks and local policies to deal with complaints and concerns. OAC12,9.	Y	Y
	Challenges the practice of self and others across the multi-professional team OAC 14, 7	Y	
	Works within the requirements of the Code (NMC, 2018) in delegating care and when care is delegated to them. OAC15, 2.	Y	Y
	Recognises and addresses deficits in knowledge and skill in self and others and takes appropriate action OAC15,5.	Y	
	Takes decisions and is able to answer for these decisions when required OAC 16,2	Y	Y

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	Appropriately reports concerns regarding staffing and skill-mix and acts to resolve issues that may impact on the safety of service users within local policy frameworks OAC 17,9.	Y	
	Works within legal and ethical frameworks that support promoting safety and positive risk taking. OAC18, 13.	Y	
	Applies research based evidence to practice OAC 9,14	Y	Y
	Works within the limitations of the role and recognises own level of competence. CCC1, 2	Y	Y
	Applies legislation that relates to the management of specific infection risk at a local and national level. Infection Preventions and Control IPC 22,8.	Y	Y
	Assists people to make safe and informed choices about their medicines. MM.40,5.	Y	Y
	Applies legislation to practice in safe and effective ordering, receiving, storing, administering and disposal of drugs, including controlled drugs in both primary and secondary care settings and ensures others do the same Medicine Management MM 34,4.	Y	Y

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	Assesses the person's ability to safely self-administer their medicines. MM 40,4		Y
	Gives clear instructions and explanation and checks that a person understands the use of medicines and treatment options MM40,3.	Y	Y
	Fully understands all methods of supplying medicines, for example Medicines Act exemptions, patient group directions(PGDs), clinical management plans and other forms of prescribing MM,34,6	Y	Y
2.1 Learning disabilities nurses must always promote the autonomy, rights and choices of people with learning disabilities and support and involve their families and carers, ensuring that each person's rights are upheld according to policy and the law.	D1 Professional values Competency 2		
	Upholding rights according to UK law	E*	E*
	Is sensitive and empowers people to meet their own needs and make choices and considers with the person and their carer(s) their capability to care. CCC2, 8.	Y	Y
	Ensures access to independent advocacy. CCC2, 9.	Y	Y

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	Acts autonomously and proactively in promoting care environments that are culturally sensitive and free from discrimination, harassment and exploitation. CCC,4,6	Y	Y
	Makes effective referrals to safeguard and protect children and adults requiring support and protection. OAC11,7.	Y	Y
	Supports people in asserting their human rights. OAC,11,9	Y	Y
	Challenges practices which do not safeguard those in need of support and protection. OAC,11,10	Y	Y
3.1 Learning disabilities nurses must use their knowledge and skills to exercise professional advocacy, and recognise when it is appropriate to refer to independent advocacy services to safeguard dignity and human rights.	D1 Professional values Competency 3		
	Advocacy	E*	E*
	Acts with dignity and respect to ensure that people who are unable to meet their activities of living have choices about how these are met and feel empowered to do as much as possible for themselves. CCC,2,12	Y	Y

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	Is proactive in promoting and maintaining dignity. CCC3, 5.		Y
	Acts autonomously to challenges situations or others when someone's dignity may be compromised. CCC,3,6	Y	Y
	Works within the context of a multi-professional team and works collaboratively with other agencies when needed to enhance the care of people, communities and populations. OAC9,15.	Y	
	Promotes health and well-being, self care and independence by teaching and empowering people and carers to make choices in coping with the effects of treatment and the ongoing nature and likely consequences of a condition including death and dying. OAC 9,16	Y	Y
	Discusses sensitive issues in relation to public health and provide appropriate advice and guidance to individuals, communities and populations for example, contraception, substance misuse, smoking, obesity. OAC,9,18	Y	Y
	Works within a public health framework to assess needs and plan care for individuals, communities and populations. OAC9, 22.	Y	Y
	Is sensitive and empowers people to meet their own needs and make choices and considers with the person and their carer(s) their capability to care. CCC2, 8.	Y	Y

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<p>4.1 Learning disabilities nurses must recognise that people with learning disabilities are full and equal citizens, and must promote their health and wellbeing by focusing on and developing their strengths and abilities.</p>	<p>D1 Professional values Competency 4</p>		
	<p>Supporting equality</p>	Y	Y
	<p>Actively helps people to identify and use their strengths to achieves their goals and aspirations. CCC2,14</p>	Y	Y
	<p>Uses appropriate strategies to empower and support their choice. CC3,7.</p>	Y	Y
	<p>Recognises situations and acts appropriately when a person's choice may compromise their safety or the safety of others. CCC2,10.</p>	Y	Y
	<p>Uses strategies to manage situations where a person's wishes conflict with nursing interventions necessary for the person's safety. CCC,2, 11</p>		Y
	<p>Works autonomously, confidently and in partnership with people, their families and carers to actively empower people to be involved in their care planning and delivery including strategies for self care and peer support. CCC2,13.</p>	Y	Y

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	Acts appropriately in sharing information to enable and enhance care (carers, MDT and across agency boundaries). CCC7, 7.	Y	Y
	Assesses and implements measures to manage, reduce or remove risk that could be detrimental to people, self and others. OAC18,11.	Y	Y
	Works within legal and ethical frameworks to promote safety and positive risk taking. OAC18,13.	Y	Y
	Takes steps not to cross professional boundaries and put self or colleagues at risk. OAC18,15.	Y	Y
	Explains risks to people, relatives, carers and colleagues and educates them in prevention and control of infection. IPC21,10.	Y	Y
	Adheres to infection prevention and control policies and procedures at all times and ensures that colleagues work according to good practice guidelines. IPC22,9.		Y
	Acts as a role model to others and ensure colleagues work within local policy IPC24,4		Y

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	Able to communicate potential risks to others and advise people on their device, site or wound to prevent and control infection and to promote healing. IPC25, 5.	Y	Y
1.1 Learning disabilities nurses must use the full range of person-centred alternative and augmentative communication strategies and skills to build partnerships and therapeutic relationships with people with learning disabilities.	D2 Communication and interpersonal skills Competency 1		
	Augmentative communication	Y	Y
	Has insight into own values and how these may impact on interaction with others. CCC5,10.	Y	
	Works with people and carers to provide clear and accurate information MM40,2.	Y	Y
	Recognises and acts to overcome barriers in developing effective relationships with service users and carers. CCC1, 12.	Y	Y
	Acts autonomously to reduce and challenge barriers to effective communication and understanding. CCC6,10.		Y

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<p>2.1 Learning disabilities nurses must be able to make all relevant information accessible to and understandable by people with learning disabilities, including adaptation of format, presentation and delivery.</p>	<p>D2 Communication and interpersonal skills Competency 2</p>		
	<p>Making information understandable by and accessible to people with a learning disability</p>	<p>E*</p>	<p>E*</p>
	<p>Engages with people in the planning and provision of care which recognises the importance of personal needs and providing both practical and emotional support. CCC5, 9.</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>Y</p>
	<p>Listens to, watches for and responds to verbal and non verbal cues. CCC5,8.</p>		<p>Y</p>
	<p>Uses skills of active listening, questioning, paraphrasing and reflection to support therapeutic intervention. CCC6,12.</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>Y</p>
	<p>Acts autonomously to reduce and challenge barriers to effective communication and understanding. CCC6,10.</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>Y</p>
<p>3.1 Learning disabilities nurses must use a structured approach to assess, communicate with, interpret and respond therapeutically to people with learning disabilities who have complex physical and psychological health needs or those in behavioural distress.</p>	<p>D2 Communication and interpersonal skills Competency 3</p>		

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	Assess, communicate, interpret and respond to complex physical and psychological health needs or those in behavioural distress	E*	E*
	Communicates effectively and sensitively in different settings, using a range of methods and skills CCC6, 8.	Y	Y
	Consistently shows ability to communicate safely and effectively with people providing guidance for others. CCC6,7	Y	Y
	Provides accurate and comprehensive written and verbal reports based on sound evidence. CCC6, 9.		Y
	Provides information to people and their carers. NFM.28,7.		Y
	Uses strategies to enhance communication and remove barriers to effective communication minimising the risk to people from lack of or poor communication. CCC6, 6.	Y	Y
4.1 Learning disabilities nurses must recognise and respond therapeutically to the complex behaviour that people with learning disabilities may use as a means of communication.	D2 Communication and interpersonal skills Competency 4		

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	Responding to complex behaviours	Y	Y
	Anticipates how people might feel in a given situation and respond with kindness and empathy to provide physical and emotional comfort. CCC5, 6.	Y	Y
	Is proactive and creative in enhancing communication and understanding. CCC6,11		Y
	Makes appropriate use of touch. CCC5, 7.		Y
	Manages and diffuses challenging situations effectively. CCC4,7.	Y	Y
	Recognises circumstances that trigger personal negative response and takes action to prevent this compromising care. CCC5,11.	Y	Y
1.1 Learning disabilities nurses must be able to recognise and respond to the needs of all people who come into their care including babies, children and young people, pregnant and postnatal women, people with mental health problems, people with physical health problems and disabilities, older people, and people with long term problems such as cognitive impairment.	D3 Nursing practice and decision making Competency 1 and associated ESCs		

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	Respond to the needs of babies and children	E*	E*
	Responds to the needs of young people	E*	E*
	Responds to the needs of pregnant women	E*	E*
	Responds to the needs of post-natal women	E*	E*
	Responds to the needs of people with mental health problems	E*	E*
	Responds to the needs of people with physical health problems and disabilities	E*	E*
	Responds to the needs of older people	E*	E*

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	Responds to the needs of people with long term problems	E*	E*
	Responds to the needs of people with dementia	E*	E*
	Demonstrates clinical confidence through sound knowledge, skills and understanding relevant to field. CCC1,8.	Y	Y
	Recognises the significance of information and acts in relation to who does or does not need to know. CCC,7,6		Y
	Refers to specialists when required. OAC9, 19	Y	
	Works within the Code (NMC, 2018) and in keeping with guidance on professional conduct for nursing and midwifery students (NMC,2010) and in collaboration with people and their carer's to meet responsibilities for prevention and control of infection. IPC.21,7.		Y
	Recognises and acts upon the need to refer to specialist advisors as appropriate. IPC23, 5.	Y	

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	Refers to specialist members of the multi- disciplinary team for additional or specialist advice. NFM27, 8.	Y	
	Acts appropriately in sharing information to enable and enhance care with carers, multi-disciplinary teams and across agency boundaries. CCC7, 7.		Y
3.1 Learning disabilities nurses must use a structured, person-centred approach to assess, interpret and respond therapeutically to people with learning disabilities, and their often complex, pre-existing physical and psychological health needs. They must work in partnership with service users, carers and other professionals, services and agencies to agree and implement individual care plans and ensure continuity of care.	D3 Nursing practice and decision making Competency 3 and associated ESCs.		
	Response to complex, pre-existing physical and psychological health needs	E*	E*
	Collaborative care planning and transition between services	Y	Y
	Actively empowers people to be involved in the assessment and care planning process. CCC2,2.	Y	Y
	Accurately undertakes and records base line assessments of weight, height, temperature, pulse, respiration and blood pressure using manual and electronic devices. OAC9,2		Y

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	Takes and records accurate measurements of weight, height, length, body mass index and other appropriate measures of nutritional status. NFM28,1		Y
	Measures documents and interprets vital signs and acts autonomously and appropriately on findings OAC 9,21	Y	Y
	Acts autonomously and appropriately when faced with sudden deterioration in people's physical or psychological condition or emergency situation, abnormal vital signs, collapse, cardiac arrest, dehydration, self harm, extremely challenging behaviour, attempted suicide. OAC9,20.	Y	Y
	Performs routine diagnostic tests, for example urinalysis, under supervision as part of the assessment process (near client testing). OAC9,7.		Y
	In partnership with the person, their carers and their families, makes a holistic, person centred and systematic assessment of physical, emotional, psychological, social, cultural and spiritual needs, including risk, and together, develops a comprehensive personalised plan of nursing care. OAC9, 12.	Y	Y
	Acts autonomously and takes responsibility for collaborative assessment and planning of care delivery with the person, their cares and their family. OAC9,13.	Y	Y
	Provides accurate and comprehensive written reports based on best possible evidence. CCC6,9.	Y	Y

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	Works within a public health framework when assessing the needs of people, communities and populations within the UK. OAC9,22.		Y
5.1 Learning disabilities nurses must lead the development, implementation and review of individual plans for all people with learning disabilities, to promote their optimum health and wellbeing and facilitate their equal access to all health, social care and specialist services.	D3 Nursing practice and decision making Competency 5		
	Promote equal access to health, social and specialist services	Y	Y
	Acts autonomously and proactively in promoting care environments that are culturally sensitive and free from discrimination, harassment and exploitation. CCC4,6.	Y	Y
	Recognise infection risk and reports and acts in situations where there is need for health promotion and protection and public health strategies IPC.21,11.	Y	
	Understands the concept of public health and the benefits of healthy lifestyles and the potential risks involved with various lifestyles or behaviours, for example, substance misuse, smoking, obesity. OAC,9,3	Y	
	Works within a public health framework to assess needs and plan care for individuals, communities and populations. OAC9, 22.	Y	Y

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	Supports people in asserting their human rights. OAC11, 9.		Y
8.1 Learning disabilities nurses must work in partnership with people with learning disabilities and their families and carers to facilitate choice and maximise self-care and self-management and co-ordinate the transition between different services and agencies.	D3 Nursing practice and decision making Competency 8.		
	Maximise self care and co-ordinate the transition between different services and agencies	E*	E*
	Is sensitive and empowers people to meet their own needs and make choices and considers with the person and their carer(s) their capability to care. CCC,2,8	Y	Y
	Acts with dignity and respect to ensure that people who are unable to meet their activities of living have choices about how these are met and feel empowered to do as much as possible for themselves. CCC2,12.		Y
	Actively helps people to identify and use their strengths to achieve their goals and aspirations. CCC, 2,14	Y	Y
	Uses helpful and therapeutic strategies to enable people to understand treatments and other interventions in order to give informed consent. CCC,8,4		Y

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	Demonstrates respect for the autonomy and rights of people to withhold consent in relation to treatment within legal frameworks and in relation to people's safety. CCC,8,7	Y	Y
	Assess the person's ability to safely self-administer their medicines MM40,4.		Y
	Supports people to make appropriate the choices and changes to eating patterns, taking account of dietary preferences, religious and cultural requirements, treatments and special diets needed for health reasons. NFM.27,7.	Y	Y
	Promotes health and well-being, self care and independence by teaching and empowering people and carers to make choices in coping with the effects of treatment and the ongoing nature and likely consequences of a condition including death and dying. OAC9,16.	Y	Y
1.1 Learning disabilities nurses must take the lead in ensuring that people with learning disabilities receive support that creatively addresses their physical, social, economic, psychological, spiritual and other needs, when assessing, planning and delivering care.	D4 Leadership, management and team working Competency 1		
	Creatively addresses the needs of a person with leaning disabilities	E*	E*
	Responds appropriately when people want to complain, providing assistance and support. OAC 12,2	Y	Y

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	Shares complaints, compliments and comments with the team in order to improve care. OAC 12,5.	Y	
	As an individual team member and team leader, actively seeks and learns from feedback to enhance care and own and others professional development. OAC 12,8	Y	Y
	Actively consults and explores solutions and ideas with others to enhance care. OAC14,6.	Y	Y
	Challenges the practice of self and others across the multi-professional team. OAC,14,7		Y
	Appropriately reports concerns regarding staffing and skill mix and acts to resolve issues that may impact on the safety of service users. OAC,17,9	Y	Y
	Reflects on and learns from safety incidents as an individual and as a team member and contributes to team learning. OAC,18,9	Y	Y
	Challenges others who do not follow procedures. NFM.30,5.	Y	

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	Participates in clinical audit to improve the safety of service users. OAC,18,10	Y	
1.2 Learning disabilities nurses must provide direction through leadership and education to ensure that their unique contribution is recognised in service design and provision.	D4 Leadership, management and team working Competency 1	Y	Y
	Educating others about service needs and design	Y	Y
	Responds appropriately when people want to complain, providing assistance and support. OAC 12,2	Y	
	Shares complaints, compliments and comments with the team in order to improve care. OAC 12,5.	Y	Y
	As an individual team member and team leader, actively seeks and learns from feedback to enhance care and own and others professional development. OAC 12,8	Y	Y
	Actively consults and explores solutions and ideas with others to enhance care. OAC14,6.		Y

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	Challenges the practice of self and others across the multi-professional team. OAC,14,7	Y	Y
	Appropriately reports concerns regarding staffing and skill mix and acts to resolve issues that may impact on the safety of service users. OAC,17,9	Y	Y
	Reflects on and learns from safety incidents as an individual and as a team member and contributes to team learning. OAC,18,9	Y	
	Challenges others who do not follow procedures. NFM.30,5.	Y	
	Participates in clinical audit to improve the safety of service users. OAC,18,10	Y	Y
2.1 Learning disabilities nurses must use data and research findings on the health of people with learning disabilities to help improve people's experiences and care outcomes, and shape of future services.	D4 Leadership, management and team working Competency 2		
	Using data and research findings	E*	E*

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	Evaluates the effect of interventions taking account of people's and carers' interpretation of physical, emotional and behavioural changes. OAC10,9	Y	Y
	Acts autonomously and takes responsibility for collaborative assessment and planning of care delivery with the person, their carers and their family. OAC9,13.	Y	Y
	Involves the person in review and adjustments to care, communicating changes to colleagues. OAC10,10.	Y	Y
6.1 Learning disabilities nurses must use leadership, influencing and decision-making skills to engage effectively with a range of agencies and professionals. They must also be able, when needed, to represent the health needs and protect the rights of people with learning disabilities and challenge negative stereotypes.	D4 Leadership, management and team working Competency 6		
	Engaging with other agencies and professionals	E*	E*
	Challenge negative stereotypes	Y	Y
	Represent and protect the rights of people with learning difficulties	Y	Y

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	Works autonomously, confidently and in partnership with people, their families and carers to ensure that needs are met through care planning and delivery, including strategies for self care and peer support. CCC2, 13.	Y	Y
	Acts as a role model in developing trusting relationships, within professional boundaries. CCC1,11	Y	Y
	Actively consults and explores solutions and ideas with others to enhance care. OAC14, 6.	Y	Y
	Works inter-professionally and autonomously as a means of achieving optimum outcomes for people. OAC14, 10.	Y	Y
	Safeguards the safety of self and others, and adheres to lone working policies when working in the community setting and in people's homes. OAC14, 11.	Y	Y
	Works within local policies when working in the community setting including people's homes and ensures the safety of others. OAC17,12	Y	Y
	Identifies suitable alternatives when isolation facilities are unavailable and principles have to be applied in unplanned circumstances. IPC23,8.	Y	

Competency (Learning disabilities) and application	Domain and ESC	Suitable items for Multi-choice Exam: Nursing Field specific (E* = Critical item when related to patient and public safety and if tested in MCQ must be passed) (20Qs)	Suitable items for testing within OSCE's E* = Critical item when related to patient or public safety and if tested in scenario/skill must be passed
	Ensures that people including colleagues are aware of and adhere to local policies in relating to isolation and infection control procedures. IPC,23,7	Y	
	Works within national and local policies and ensures others do the same. MM40,2	Y	
	Works confidently as part of the team and, where relevant, as leader of the team to develop treatment options and choices with the person receiving care and their carers. MM.35,9	Y	Y
	Works within the requirements of the Code (NMC, 2018) in delegating care and when care is delegated to them. OAC15, 2.	Y	Y
6.2 Learning disabilities nurses must work closely with stakeholders to enable people with learning disabilities to exercise choice and challenge discrimination.	D4 Leadership, management and team working Competency 6		
	Working with stakeholders	Y	Y
	Challenges discrimination	Y	Y

Competency (Learning disabilities) and application	Domain and ESC	Suitable items for Multi-choice Exam: Nursing Field specific (E* = Critical item when related to patient and public safety and if tested in MCQ must be passed) (20Qs)	Suitable items for testing within OSCE's E* = Critical item when related to patient or public safety and if tested in scenario/skill must be passed
	Works autonomously, confidently and in partnership with people, their families and carers to ensure that needs are met through care planning and delivery, including strategies for self care and peer support. CCC2, 13.	Y	Y
	Acts as a role model in developing trusting relationships, within professional boundaries. CCC1,11	Y	Y
	Actively consults and explores solutions and ideas with others to enhance care. OAC14, 6.	Y	Y
	Works inter-professionally and autonomously as a means of achieving optimum outcomes for people. OAC14, 10.	Y	Y
	Safeguards the safety of self and others, and adheres to lone working policies when working in the community setting and in people's homes. OAC14, 11.	Y	Y
	Works within local policies when working in the community setting including people's homes and ensures the safety of others. OAC17,12	Y	
	Identifies suitable alternatives when isolation facilities are unavailable and principles have to be applied in unplanned circumstances. IPC23,8.	Y	

Competency (Learning disabilities) and application	Domain and ESC	Suitable items for Multi-choice Exam: Nursing Field specific (E* = Critical item when related to patient and public safety and if tested in MCQ must be passed) (20Qs)	Suitable items for testing within OSCE's E* = Critical item when related to patient or public safety and if tested in scenario/skill must be passed
	Ensures that people including colleagues are aware of and adhere to local policies in relating to isolation and infection control procedures. IPC,23,7	Y	
	Works within national and local policies and ensures others do the same. MM40,2	Y	Y
	Works confidently as part of the team and, where relevant, as leader of the team to develop treatment options and choices with the person receiving care and their carers. MM.35,9	Y	Y
	Works within the requirements of the Code (NMC, 2018) in delegating care and when care is delegated to them. OAC15, 2.	Y	Y

Online Resources

Below are some useful online links which can be used to support preparation for the NMC's Test of Competence. These online links are not exhaustive, and many other useful sources will exist. The links are designed to help candidates identify gaps as they explore each domain and competence. Candidates should consider the need for revision and consolidation of knowledge before taking the test of competence. Please copy and paste the links into your web browser to access the information.

<http://www.scie.org.uk/>

<https://www.mencap.org.uk/>

<https://www.mencap.org.uk/learning-disability-explained>

<https://www.mencap.org.uk/learning-disability-explained/resources-healthcare-professionals>

<https://www.mencap.org.uk/about-learning-disability/information-professionals/health/legislation-research-and-good-practice>