

Positive Behavioural Support Academy – Your Views!

At the Challenging Behaviour National Steering Group Meeting on October 17th 2014, Professor David Allen, Tizard Centre, University of Kent, presented a workshop on the proposal for the establishment of a Positive Behavioural Support (PBS) Academy for England. The proposal had been put together by a small group of colleagues that included Professor Richard Hastings from the University of Warwick and others. As the workshop explained, the idea was a response to a growing frustration with the lack of progress over Winterbourne View. The proposal made the following points:

- Though the current focus on re-providing services for those people currently placed in out of area assessment and treatment facilities is understandable, it is arguably the wrong formulation of the 'Winterbourne problem'-the 'real' solution needed to involve developing wide-spread service competence in supporting people with behavioural challenges.
- While Positive Behavioural Support (PBS) is promoted as a preferred intervention model within the *Positive and Safe* programme and other guidance, it is already apparent that there is a significant lack of shared understanding as to what this approach actually entails and evidence that services are simply re-labelling existing approaches as PBS without any discernible change in practice.
- Achieving the kind of cultural change in services that the current policy requires is a long-term process that will not be achieved by short-term intervention. Leaving a long-term legacy from Winterbourne therefore requires a strategic approach that recognises this fact.
- Simply raising the practice bar without equipping people with new skills will be an insufficient strategy given that many localities are struggling to understand how to achieve the objectives of current policy.

Since the workshop, the establishment of the Academy has been included as a recommendation of Sir Stephen Bubb's report, *Winterbourne View-Time for Change*¹. This states that:

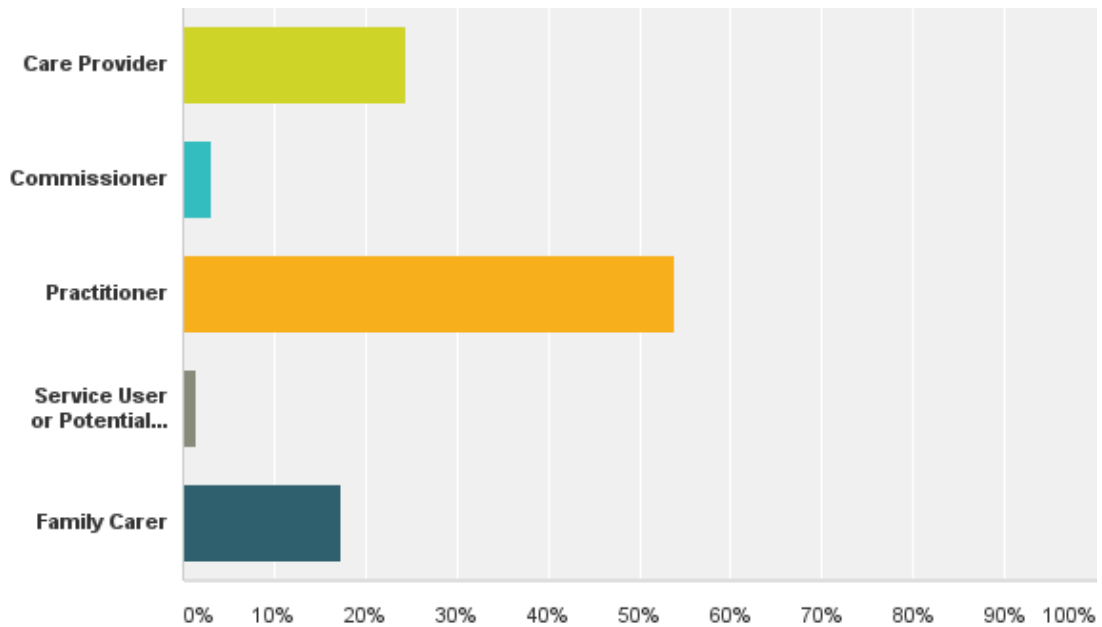
Health Education England, Skills for Care, Skills for Health and partners should develop a national workforce 'Academy' for this field, building on the work already started by Professors Allen and Hastings and others. The Academy should bring together existing expertise in a range of organisations to develop the workforce across the system.

One of the action points arising from the workshop was to consult more widely on the idea of the Academy. The CBF subsequently set up a Survey Monkey poll in order to do so. The survey attracted almost 300 responses in a short period of time, the summary results of which are included in this report.

¹ <http://www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk/learning-disability-files/Bubb-report.pdf>

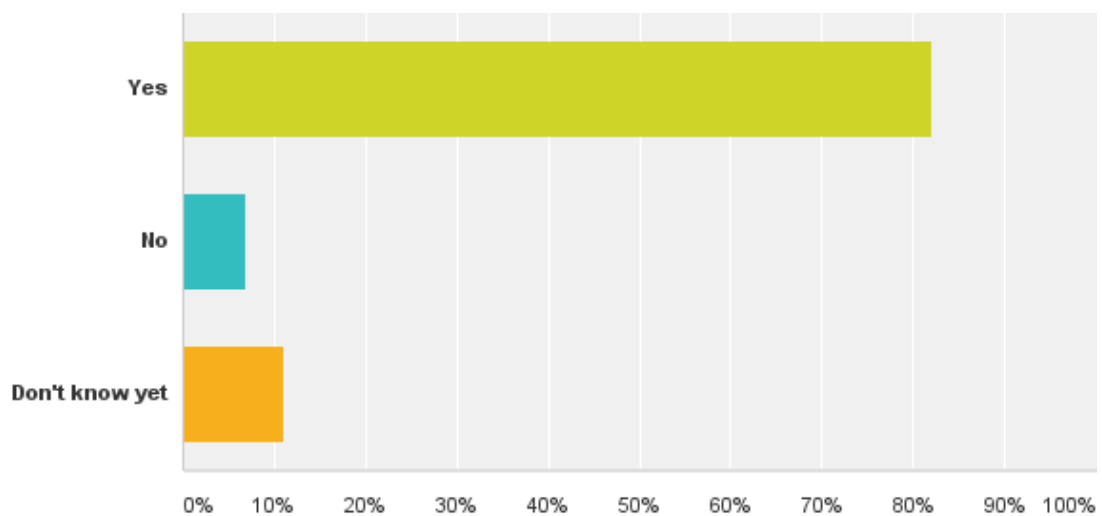
Respondents

Respondents came from a wide variety of backgrounds, with practitioners and care providers being the most prominent groups.



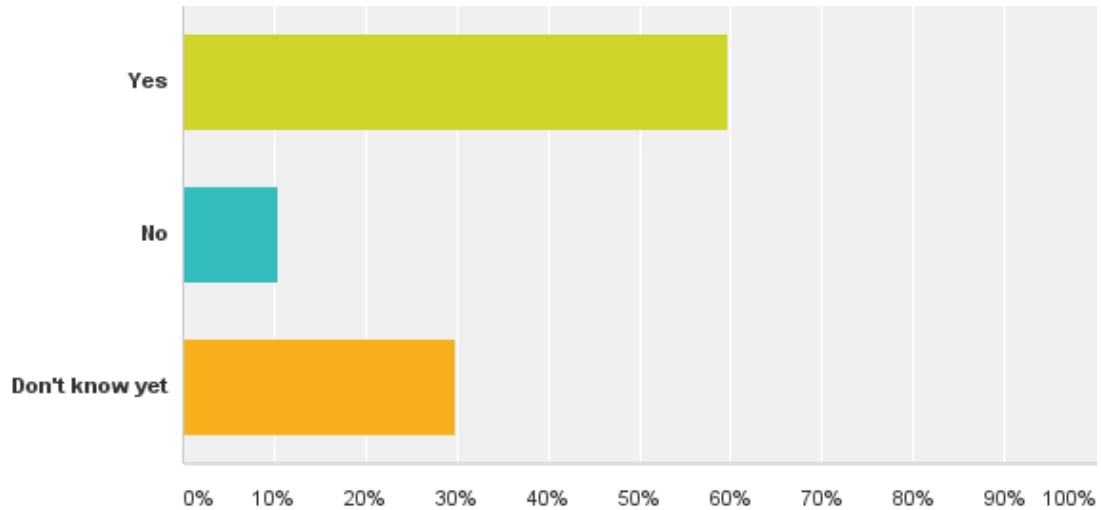
Do you think, overall, that it's a good idea?

Over 82% of respondents thought that the Academy was a good idea.



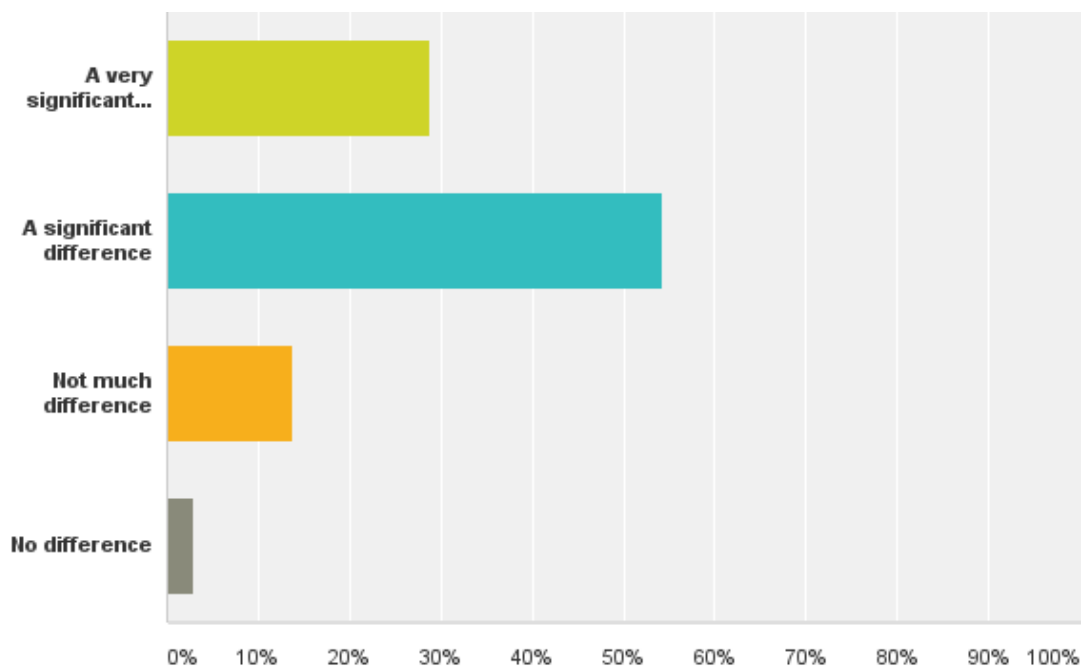
Would you use the Academy's Services?

Just under 60% felt that they would make use of the Academy, with almost 30% being unsure at the present time.



How much of a difference is the Academy likely to make?

Over 83% felt that the Academy would make either a *significant* or *very significant* difference to practice.



How important do you think the Academy's proposed activities are?

Respondents were asked rank the importance of the various roles that the Academy might perform on a five point scale (with 5 being the highest and 1 being the lowest). As the table below shows, establishing PBS practice standards at a variety of levels was felt to be the most important objective, but all objectives were rated as being high priority by over 50% of respondents. This suggests that the Academy would need to fulfil a broad range of functions in order to support wide-spread practice change.

Activity	5	4	3	2	1
Establish national standards for professional staff competencies, organisational competencies, and competencies for families/carers in PBS, providing detailed guidance on the content of PBS training	84%	9%	3%	1%	3%
Develop accreditation mechanisms at multiple levels (for individual practitioners at various levels, for service providers, and a system designed to develop regional competence – especially at the level of local authority areas)	65%	21%	8%	3%	3%
Over-see/commission a roll out of regional/local training programmes in PBS designed to establish local expertise and to empower families	66%	18%	10%	1%	4%
Design and over-see/commission a national learning disability leadership program focused on commissioning, services design, and management of challenging behaviour services	57%	26%	9%	2%	5%
Work with key stakeholders to produce a challenging behaviour toolkit, an all-you-need guide to developing, providing and maintaining effective local services at individual, service and organisational levels	61%	25%	8%	4%	2%
Develop a hub (national) and spoke (regional) community of practice model that would facilitate, for example, the development and roll out of lifespan challenging behaviour care pathways and systems across health, social care, and education	62%	21%	10%	3%	4%
Provide teams of recognised experts to provide consultation for the most complex cases nationally – especially where an action plan has been difficult to agree	62%	21%	9%	3%	5%
Provide information and training to empower families and people with LD and enable their engagement and involvement in the co-production of the design and monitoring of services delivered for them	73%	19%	6%	1%	1%
Establish comprehensive standards for challenging behaviour services, and advise CQC on any additional standards for monitoring of services specialising in the support of people with LD and challenging behaviour	75%	16%	4%	1%	4%
Develop and disseminate best practice relating to challenging behaviour and PBS, including resources to be made freely available via a national, trusted resource bank/repository, running a national annual conference, regional conferences and other events	64%	27%	6%	1%	3%
Carry out or commission research on challenging behaviour/PBS in partnership with government, charitable research funders, and in partnership with University researchers through the establishment of a national research network	55%	27%	14%	1%	4%
In collaboration with other organisations, publish evidence-based practice and PBS research (e.g., through the <i>International Journal for Positive Behavioural Support</i>)	57%	26%	9%	4%	4%
Drawing on the expertise amassed over time, contribute to future local and national policy relating to challenging behaviour	64%	24%	7%	2%	3%

Qualitative Feedback

- *I think this is a very positive step that is very much needed in this country so that all care providers and families can be working off the same model, and reduce bad and abusive practice. I work for a care provider who promotes PBS and the arguments for such strategies are very clear. We just need the backing of an official body to support our beliefs and help us promote the mind-set amongst more sceptical disciplines e.g. nursing who are more medically focused.*
- *It's good that families and communities will also be involved. All too often the views of the families who are endeavouring to find ways of providing positive behavioural support are overlooked (unless they are picked up by the wonderful CBF) and I would really welcome the Academy's ability to identify and share what works for families in terms of prevention as well as direct intervention.*
- *Would be keen to contribute to the work and facilitate local implementation.*
- *Fully support behaviour based proposals and happy to be involved in any part. Fundraising, organising meetings regionally etc.*
- *The proposal is sound and some kind of accreditation approach is needed to drive quality improvements. I'd be interested in helping to promote the idea.*
- *A regional and national review/map of training provided in relation to challenging behaviour would be beneficial in order to ensure efficacy of training provided as well ensuring resources are being used efficiently and training delivery is not being duplicated unnecessarily. This will also help commissioners decide what to commission and allow for more streamlined signposting of services. Provision of regular systematic services reviews within services trained to deliver PBS in order to ensure maintenance of support.*
- *It is long overdue, over the past 20yrs of experience of working and being a parent carer, next of kin to my challenging behaviour brother. I have witnessed poor care, little of understanding of how to support people with LD and challenging behaviour. There is not enough support and training for those at the bottom ladder of being a carer.*
- *As a parent carer of a young man whose behaviour could challenge, I am very keen to be involved. I hope that parents/families/carers can be involved with this project*
- *Already engaged locally I think the idea is great*

There were relatively few negative comments, but these tended to focus on the Academy being unnecessary as accreditation was already covered by qualifications in Applied Behaviour Analysis (*'Developing new competencies and accreditations seems to be unnecessarily reinventing the wheel given what is available from the BACB.'*), that PBS was not the only intervention model that needed to be developed (*'I think it would benefit the academy to engage full with issues regarding the integration of PBS with other approaches (e.g. trauma based approaches) as to deny people with learning disability access to other evidence based approaches would be inappropriate.'*) and that the model would need to eventually cover other user groups if the requirements of current policy were to be met (*'Given Positive and Proactive Care there needs to be an increased focus on the use of PBS in mental health settings and research on its effectiveness.'*)

Conclusions

The Bubb report's recommendations are still under consideration by NHS England at the present time. Currently there are no indications as to whether the Academy or any of the other recommendations are likely to receive support. What is clear is that action is required above and beyond what is already happening – to improve the support children and adults with learning disabilities receive to access a good quality of life. Although not scientific or representative, the results from our Survey Monkey poll suggest that the initiative would be welcomed by those who are supporting people with learning disabilities who challenge services. The number of people who indicated they would like to be kept in email contact with the initiative is also very encouraging and provides a source of information and expertise which can be utilised and built upon as the initiative progresses.

This report will be sent to those individuals who requested to be kept informed, along with any future information about the proposal.

Emily Muir

Challenging Behaviour Foundation