

THE CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR CHARTER

“I was at an assessment and treatment unit for about 12 years. It was not nice being there. Now I’m in my own home and I am much happier.”

Michael, Out of Sight



Introduction

This charter, concerning the needs of children, young people and adults with learning disabilities whose behaviour challenges¹, was co-produced in 2008 and published in 2009 as a tool to co-ordinate and drive change to improve outcomes for children, young people and adults and their families.


BBC Panorama programmes (2011 and 2019) exposed the abuse of people with learning disabilities at Winterbourne View Hospital and Whorlton Hall. The charter was re-published in 2013 after the Transforming Care reports developed in response to Winterbourne View were issued. In 2019 it was widely acknowledged that despite the Transforming Care programme, much remains to be done to meet the needs of children, young people and adults with severe learning disabilities whose behaviour challenges. The charter was therefore reviewed again.

Over the past 10 years many individuals and organisations have signed up to the charter. You can find out who they are on the Challenging Behaviour Foundation website www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk.

Challenging behaviour is often perceived as a 'problem' or 'illness' to be 'treated', 'cured' or 'stopped'. The problem is seen as being part of the child or adult rather than focussing on what needs to change around the individual, such as their environment or how people support them. This is unhelpful and potentially damaging for these individuals. We need to look beyond the behaviour, understand what the behaviour is communicating and then provide appropriate person centred, holistic support to enable individuals to achieve their full potential.

We know that much better support and services could be provided for children and adults who are perceived as challenging. This charter sets out the rights of these individuals and the action that needs to be taken.

By signing up to this charter you endorse the rights of these individuals and commit to working in partnership with the National Strategy Group to influence real change.



"Our job is not to fix people but to design effective environments"
(Rob Horner)

In this charter we are adopting the following definition:

"Behaviour can be described as challenging when it is of such an intensity, frequency, or duration as to threaten quality of life and/or the physical safety of the individual or others and it is likely to lead to responses that are restrictive, aversive or result in exclusion."

(Challenging Behaviour - A Unified Approach; RCPsych, BPS, RCLSLT, 2007).

The charter is a living document and associated guidelines are available linking it with current national policy, guidance and practice. We are happy to receive comments and views.

¹ This charter is focussed on children, young people and adults with learning disabilities whose behaviour challenges including people with autism who also have a learning disability.

Rights and Values:

- 1) Children, young people and adults will be supported to exercise their human rights (which are the same as everyone else's) to be healthy, full and valued members of their community with respect for their culture, ethnic origin, religion, age, gender, sexuality and disability.
- 2) All children who are at risk of presenting behavioural challenges have the right to have their needs identified at an early stage, leading to co-ordinated early intervention, support and education.
- 3) All children, young people and adults have the right to be supported to maintain the physical and emotional wellbeing of the family unit.
- 4) All children, young people and adults have the right to receive person centred support and services that are developed on the basis of a detailed understanding of their support needs including their communication needs. This will be individually-tailored, flexible, responsive to changes in individual circumstances and delivered in the most appropriate local situation.
- 5) Children, young people and adults have the right to a healthy life, and be given the appropriate support to achieve this.
- 6) Children, young people and adults have the same rights as everyone else to a family and social life, relationships, housing, education, employment and leisure.
- 7) Children, young people and adults have the right to support and services that create capable environments. These should be developed on the principles of Positive Behavioural Support and other evidence based approaches. They should also draw from additional specialist input as needed to respond to all the needs of the individual.
- 8) Children, young people and adults have the right not to be hurt or damaged or humiliated in any way by interventions. Support and services must strive to achieve this.
- 9) Children, young people and adults have a right to receive support and care based on good and up to date evidence. This should include timely access to therapies, positive behaviour support and psychology as appropriate to meet their needs.

Action to be taken:

- 1) Children and adult services, working together and with people with a learning disability and families, will construct long term, collaborative plans across education, health and social services. They will work with specialist commissioners to ensure the commissioning of appropriate support and services to meet the needs of children and adults with learning disabilities, their families and carers.
- 2) Local Authorities and the NHS (nationally and locally) will work with children, young people and adults with learning disabilities and their families to develop and co-ordinate plans to:
 - Reduce the exposure of young children with learning disabilities to environmental conditions that may lead to behavioural challenges.
 - Promote the resilience of young children with learning disabilities who face such environmental conditions.
 - Provide early intervention, support and services that will meet the individual needs (including communication needs) of young children who are showing early signs of developing behavioural challenges.
- 3) Active listening to the needs of the family will lead to the provision of appropriate and timely support, information and training.
- 4) Children, young people and adults will be supported to have a good quality of life by individuals with the right values, attitudes, training and experience.
- 5) The NHS (nationally and locally) and services will proactively plan to ensure that children, young people and adults receive the same range, quality and standard of healthcare as everyone else, making reasonable adjustments when required. Children, young people and adults will have an individualised health action plan and be supported to have access to annual health checks to ensure all health needs are met, including accessing universally available health screening.
- 6) Children, young people and adults and their family carers will receive support and services that are timely, safe, of good quality, co-ordinated and seamless. They will be proactively involved in the planning, commissioning and monitoring of support and services including both specialist and mainstream services.
- 7) A person-centred approach that enables and manages the taking of risk will be used to ensure that children, young people and adults have access to family and social life, relationships, housing, education, employment and leisure.
- 8) Local authorities and local NHS services will know how many children, young people and adults live in their area and how many they have placed out of area. On the basis of this information and information from person-centred plans all agencies will plan and deliver local support and services for their population.
- 9) All services will seek to reduce the use of physical intervention, seclusion, mechanical restraint and the inappropriate or harmful use of medication with the clear aim of eliminating them for each individual. Children, young people and adults who have experienced traumatic and inappropriate interventions will receive timely and skilled psychological support.
- 10) All services and agencies will strive to improve continually, using up to date evidence to provide the best support, care and treatment to deliver positive outcomes for individuals.

**Affix
Stamp
Here**

CB-NSG Charter

Challenging Behaviour Foundation

The Old Courthouse

New Road Avenue

Chatham, Kent

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Challenging Behaviour National Strategy Group (CB-NSG) Charter

Sign-up:

I/We.....(name of individual/ organisation)

- endorse the rights of individuals as set out within this charter
- will adopt, use and promote and implement the principles of the charter in my / our work
- commit to working in partnership with the National Strategy Group to influence change
- commit to share examples of best practice

All individuals/organisations who sign up to the charter may be listed on the Challenging Behaviour Foundation website/other publications (contact details will not be listed).

I/We give my/our permission to be added to this list.

Signed.....

Print name

.....
(and name of organisation and job title if appropriate)

Date.....

Contact Details:

E-mail address.....

Tel number.....

Address.....

Please tick here if you do not wish to receive our 'Challenge' newsletter free of charge three times a year.

By signing the charter you will become an associate member of the National Strategy Group and therefore receive email updates and have the opportunity to feed into the work of the group by phone and email. For more membership information see our website. Please tick here if you do not wish to become an associate member of the National Strategy Group.

Please return to: CB-NSG Charter, Challenging Behaviour Foundation,
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making a difference
to the lives of people with
severe learning disabilities

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