

Institution: University of Northumbria at Newcastle		
Unit of Assessment: 3 (Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy)		
Title of case study: New workforce initiatives to improve the provision of Positive Behavioural Support for people with learning disabilities and/or autism		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2016 - 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Anne McNall	Associate Professor	01/07/1987 – 30/06/2019
Steve Noone	Senior Lecturer	01/04/2019 – Present
Karen McKenzie (UoA4)	Professor	01/07/2014 – Present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2016 - 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>Positive Behavioural Support (PBS) is a person-centred approach to providing long-term support for people with behaviours that challenge, such as those living with a learning disability and/or autism. Research from Northumbria University has led to the development of a novel workforce development (WFD) model, which directly addresses training limitations in PBS. Rather than training individuals, the WFD model focuses on system-wide organisational and capability development, to effectively equip the health and social care workforce with the skills to use PBS. The WFD approach is comprised of accredited PBS programmes, PBS awareness sessions, new clinical leadership roles, and a community of practice. It has been applied across a workforce of more than 25,000 people and resulted in a shift in organisational culture, leading to more competent care professionals who are now able to use PBS confidently in their practice. This change has improved the lives of thousands of individuals living with a learning disability and/or autism and led to organisational benefits, such as increased staff retention.</p>		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>Following scandals of abuse in private hospitals, the UK Government has recommended that individuals with behaviours that challenge (BtC) are transferred to community-based care (<i>Transforming Care</i> Programme, 2014). For this policy to succeed, however, the community care workforce needs to be well prepared to care for individuals with learning disability and/or autism, some of whom may display BtC such as self-harm or aggression. Positive Behavioural Support (PBS), which is a positive, person-centred, values-based approach that encourages long-term positive changes in behaviour, supports people with BtC and improves their quality of life. However, there is a lack of skills, capacity and strategic implementation of PBS within the community care workforce, ultimately affecting the quality of care on offer. Researchers at Northumbria have addressed this issue by developing a workforce development (WFD) model to upskill the community care workforce in PBS [R1-R6].</p> <p>Traditionally, social care organisations have adopted short-term, individually focused staff training models, with little consideration for organisational complexity, the development needs at all levels of the care system, or the high staff turnover in the sector. This has led to inconsistency in the provision, quality, accreditation, and transferability of training. In 2016, Health Education England (HEE) and Health Education North East commissioned the multidisciplinary team of Northumbria University researchers to develop a unique whole-system WFD approach to upskill the social care workforce in PBS. As part of the research, the team uncovered an inconsistent approach to learning, teaching, developing, and assessing PBS competence, and an inability to demonstrate the competencies required to provide PBS [R1].</p> <p>The aim of the WFD development process was to identify the competencies the community care workforce needs to support people with BtC, such as how to develop rapport with an individual,</p>		

use effective communication strategies or address the behaviours. Uniquely in this type of research and intervention, a key step in the process devised by the Northumbria team was the exploration of the views of individuals with a learning disability [R2] and their family carers [R3], to understand the features of high-quality support that make a difference to them. Both groups highlighted aspects that were consistent with key components of PBS: the importance for individuals to be supported by staff skilled in the technical aspects of PBS; to be treated with respect, dignity, consistency, open communication; and to have meaningful relationships with care staff. These positive approaches can help many individuals to live a life that can include employment, education, independent living and good relationships with family and friends: to 'feel like just a normal person' [R2]. Family carers additionally acknowledged the valuable role of staff who provided emotional support to them as carers and emphasised how crucial high levels of staff knowledge and competence were to successful outcomes. They also talked of the difficulties for staff working within a wider 'system' and saw it as important that the staff should be supported by the system in using positive approaches in their work. This highlighted the need to develop and deliver a system-wide WFD approach to PBS [R3]. In a second stage, these findings were compared against the competencies highlighted in the PBS Competence Framework, which is a detailed framework of the skills, knowledge and actions required to deliver PBS effectively, previously developed by the team [R1]. This was used to assess the existing competency levels of the current and future workforce to understand their strengths and development needs [R1].

The success of the Government's *Transforming Care* policy, and implementation of a PBS approach, was also challenged by the difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff, which has an adverse effect on the quality and continuity of care [R1, R4]. The research team developed recommendations to increase recruitment and reduce staff turnover, including improving the nature and quality of training, providing better support and supervision for staff and creating a more positive organisational culture [R1, R4]. This research highlighted the need to build capacity within the workforce to provide positive values-based, high-quality supervision and support to staff, enabling them to use similar approaches with those they support. Northumbria's research [R1-R4] led to the development of a comprehensive evidence-based WFD PBS programme in the North East of England in 2017 (reviewed in detail in section 4), implemented by a Steering Group, which consisted of multiple stakeholders, including the Northumbria research team, PBS practitioners, NHS and carer representatives. The programme created the infrastructure for upskilling the workforce in PBS and for promoting a wider organisational culture change to sustain it. An evaluation of the programme identified significant benefits of this approach in relation to: organisational changes, such as in strategy and policies; staff knowledge, confidence and practice; and improved quality of life for people with a learning disability/autism and their families [R5].

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

R1. Karen McKenzie¹, Anne McNall, Steve Noone, Branch, A.², George Murray³, Sherring, M.², Jones, L.², Thompson, J.², and Chaplin, J.² (2020) 'The use of an implementation science theoretical framework to inform the development of a region wide Positive Behavioural Support Workforce Development approach' *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities* Early View <https://doi.org/10.1111/jar.12847>

R2. Karen McKenzie¹, Kathryn Whelan⁴, Claire Mayer⁴, Anne McNall, Steve Noone, and Chaplin, J. (2018) "I feel like just a normal person now": An exploration of what is important for people with intellectual disabilities in the provision of positive behavioural support' *British Journal of Learning Disabilities* **46** (4): 241-249 <https://doi.org/10.1111/bld.12236>

R3. Karen McKenzie¹, Claire Mayer⁴, Kathryn Whelan⁴, Anne McNall, Steve Noone, and Chaplin, J. (2017) 'The views of carers about support for their family member with an intellectual disability: with a focus on Positive Behavioural Approaches' *Health and Social Care in the Community* **26** (1): e56-e63 <https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.12475>

R4. Karen McKenzie¹, Dale Metcalfe⁴, Kathryn Whelan⁴, **Anne McNall**, Branch, A., Baron, E., and Parkins, C. (2017) 'Development of a Local Workforce Market for people with Learning Disability and/or Autism' Health Education England Report <https://healtheducationengland.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/MHaLD/LD/ layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?d ocid=1b3cb9556b4694dc991923746d912495e&authkey=AZDkNANrb4czGkg-NBu-paM&action=view&cid=759d4a5f-9bc9-4267-b11f-02293d41f08d>

R5. Karen McKenzie¹, Rachel Martin⁴, Dale Metcalfe⁴, George Murray³, **Anne McNall**, and **Steve Noone** (2020) "Look, all our hard work is paying off": A qualitative evaluation of a system wide, workforce development model to promote Positive Behavioural Support' *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities* **33** (6): 1512-1522 <https://doi.org/10.1111/jar.12778>

¹ Internal Northumbria University co-author: Professor Karen McKenzie (Department of Psychology), submitted to UoA4

² PBS Steering Group

³ Additional consultant role: 11/2018 - 07/2020

⁴ Northumbria University research assistants, Department of Psychology

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The Northumbria research '*directly informed*' an '*innovative and evidence-based PBS WFD model*' for the North East and Cumbria [E1], which is home to over 25,000 employees within 19 local authorities, 3 large hospital trusts, many independent service provider organisations and other stakeholders, supporting approximately 65,000 people with learning difficulties and their families. The impact is manifest in 1) the implementation of PBS WFD across the region, leading to strategic and structural improvements; 2) an accredited educational provision; and 3) improvements in the lives of people with learning difficulties and/or autism and their families.

4.1 Implementation of PBS WFD: Strategic and Structural Improvements

Northumbria's WFD for upskilling the workforce in PBS [R1], approved by the Government's Transforming Care Board [E2, p2] in 2016, has informed regional strategy in NHS England and HEE for the North East and Cumbria. Judith Thompson (Network Lead for North East and Cumbria Learning Disability Network, NHS) and Charlotte Carr (Learning Disability Workforce Specialist, HEE) note that '*the research was unique in adopting a systemic, multi-component approach... to increase and sustain workforce competence in PBS in the region, in a manner that could be grown at scale*' [E1, p1]. This WFD programme was delivered through the 2017 North East and Cumbria Learning Disability and Autism Workforce Strategy [E1; E3, p8].

Key to the delivery of this strategy was a restructure of the WFD staffing framework, including the creation of new clinical leaders (headcount: 3) and PBS Senior Clinical trainers (headcount: 2) [E1, p2]. The three new WFD clinical leadership positions are strategic roles to implement and manage the regional infrastructure to support practice-based learning [E1, p2]. Moreover, this strategy established a workplace culture more enabling of WFD through the creation of the North East and Cumbria PBS Community of Practice, made up of PBS practitioners, stakeholders, and family carers, to provide a virtual space to make resources accessible and share best practice [E1, p2; E3, p8; E4, p13]. The new environment was supported by new values-based interviewing to appoint staff and resilience training to help staff deal with the stress of supporting people with BtC [E1, p3]. The managers also established the requirement for including staff competence in PBS in commissioning specifications [E1, p2]. The two new PBS Senior Clinical Trainers were appointed to deliver a programme of PBS awareness sessions across the North East and Cumbria region [E1].

Northumbria's recommendations to address high staff turnover [R5] have been adopted by NHS England across the North East region to increase staff recruitment and retention in social care settings [E1] and as a result of the system wide focus of the PBS WFD, organisations have embraced new ways of recruiting, supporting and managing staff, including the application of PBS principles to the staff team [E1; E5; E6, p6], resulting in improved retention [E4, p41]. Many organisations have '*introduced new, or adapted existing, policies to make PBS a central*

component' [E6, p6] or changed the way in which poor staff performance was addressed and managed, for example, differences in *'things like disciplinaries and investigations because we are taking into account...whether we've provided them with everything that we could have for them to have been able to deal with that situation differently'* [E6, p7]. These organisational changes have helped improve staff turnover, motivation and lower staff sickness levels [E1; E4; p41, p47; E5; E6, p7].

4.2 Implementation of the PBS WFD: accredited educational provision and improved practice

Northumbria University were commissioned by the NHS to develop and deliver three new free-of-charge accredited programmes aligned with the 2015 PBS Competence Framework and competencies identified by the research [R1]. 317 staff from 30 local and national social care organisations involved in the provision of support to people with learning disability and/or autism - including organisational practice leaders, practice facilitators who lead teams and support workers - completed the programmes between 2018-2020, and a further 60 NHS staff undertook the programme in 2020 [E1, p2]. The programmes, delivered through a blended learning approach (face-to-face, online, practice-based learning, peer support) are based on a cascade model, whereby organisational leads (undertaking the 'Leading PBS' qualification) provide supervision and support to managerial staff (undertaking the 'Facilitating PBS in teams' qualification), who in turn provide support to front-line support staff (undertaking the 'Competence in PBS' qualification) [E4, p13]. Participants of the training programmes were also supervised by the WFD clinical leaders [E3, p8; E7, p5]. Thompson (NHS) and Carr (HEE) explained that *'The cascade model on which the programmes are explicitly built mean that the learning has benefited thousands of staff and people with a learning disability'* [E1, p2]. In addition, 15 people completed a bespoke Post Graduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Professional Practice for NHS PBS specialists, developed and delivered by Northumbria in 2017, to enable participants to use best practice in evidence-based learning and teaching methods for adult education [E1, p2; E3, p8].

As a result of participating in the PBS programmes, staff reported an increase in confidence and knowledge [E1, p2; E5], with learning from the programmes directly relevant to practice [E4, p7]. A programme participant reflected: *'The course was truly transformative. We thought we knew a lot about PBS, but we learnt so much more, all of which is completely translatable to the workplace. We have already noticed the difference what we have learnt is making within the organisation'* [E8, p3]. The evaluation identified organisational changes implemented as a result of the programme, including introducing new or adapting existing policies to make PBS a central component [E4, p37]. It also confirmed significant improvements in staff practice [E4, p51]. Carr (HEE) noted: *'the skills the people have learned have really empowered them to be able to offer a really, really good quality of support to people'* [E9]. Improvements include reductions in restrictive and aversive approaches, such as physical intervention [E5]. Thompson (NHS) and Carr (HEE) described: *'A significant shift towards staff viewing behaviours that challenge as learned behaviours (that can therefore be influenced by changing the person's environment) rather than as being something inherent to the person'* [E1, p3].

The PBS awareness-sessions run by the new PBS Senior Clinical Trainers have also had an impact on staff skills. 781 people from 102 different organisations from the community and voluntary sector, local authorities, NHS, police, Care Quality Commission, universities, and colleges [E7, p5; E10, p2], and 16 family carers attended these free 3-hour sessions. Attendees appreciated the value of the content and noted that it was useful to apply in practice [E10, p7-10]. One attendee commented that *'This session gives staff an insight in how their behaviour has an impact on people we support'* [E10, p9].

4.3 Improved lives for people with a learning disability/autism and their families

The creation of the PBS WFD programme has led to improvements in staff practice, which in turn benefits the people with a learning disability and/or autism who the staff are caring for [E1]. The programme structure educated participants to change their practice and impacted the culture within organisations, which ultimately affects the lives of the people they work with. Carr

(HEE) observed that *'Thousands of peoples' lives have been touched in some way by this program'* [E9, p3]. In their testimonial, Thompson and Carr comment that:
'staff developed and implemented behaviour support plans that used positive, less restrictive approaches...[that are]...more person-centred and tailored to individual and developed in collaboration with them [leading to] improvements in quality of life of people with a learning disability, including increased and more meaningful contact with families and reductions in behaviours that challenge' [E1, p2].

For example, a senior staff member commenting on the PBS programme was able to see the positive changes delivered through the new approaches as being responsible for *'a 50 percent reduction in [challenging] behaviour, which is amazing'* [E6, p8].

These improvements are, in part, because organisations are becoming better at engaging with families of people with BtC, involving them with interventions and reducing the BtC enough to allow families to engage in activities again. An example of a positive outcome of PBS on one individual was described by a programme participant: *'He has choice, he has control, he has independence ... because of this greater family input. He's able to spend a lot of time at home with his family where that wasn't possible before'* [E4, p41].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

Ref.	Source of corroboration	Link to claimed impact
E1	Testimonial - Judith Thompson (Network Lead for NE and Cumbria Learning Disability Network, NHS England and NHS Improvement) and Charlotte Carr (NE and Cumbria Learning Disability Workforce Specialist, Health Education England)	Confirms Northumbria's contribution to the PBS WFD project and associated benefits
E2	North East and Cumbria Learning Disabilities Transformation Programme News Bulletin (October 2016), NHS North East and Cumbria	Confirms approval of research recommendations
E3	Strategy for the Future of the North East & Cumbria Learning Disability & Autism Workforce, NHS England & Health Education England (2018/2019)	Confirms implementation of PBS training and set up of PBS community of practice
E4	Positive Behavioural Support Workforce Development Programme Final Evaluation Report, Northumbria University (Sept 2020)	Confirms organisational changes from PBS training, impact on people with CB
E5	Feedback on the PBS programme from local organisations	Confirms improvements in staff retention and practice
E6	Karen McKenzie et. al. (2020) "Look, all our hard work is paying off": A qualitative evaluation of a system wide, workforce development model to promote Positive Behavioural Support' <i>Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities</i> 33 (6): 1512-1522. Also R5	Confirms organisational changes as a result of the PBS WFD
E7	The North East & Cumbria Learning Disability Network Impact Statement, Transforming the Learning Disability Workforce, 2017/18	Confirms structure of PBS training initiatives and role of WFD clinical leaders
E8	Webpage – <i>Transforming Care through workforce development</i> (Northumbria University, 11.12.19)	Confirms running of PBS programmes and benefits of the courses for participants
E9	[Confidential] Transcript of interview with Charlotte Carr, Learning Disability Workforce Specialist, Health Education England, May 2019	Confirms positive effects of implementation of PBS WFD programme
E10	Report on North East and Cumbria PBS awareness sessions (A. Branch and S. Wilson, Senior Clinical Trainers in PBS Transforming Care NE and Cumbria, 2017)	Confirms changes on organisations and practice as a result of PBS awareness sessions