

Introduction

The first edition of the *Code of Practice for Trainers in Physical Interventions* was published in 2001 in response to an identified need to clarify standards relating to training in physical interventions skills. This was with particular reference to services for children, young people and adults who have a learning disability or autism. In 2006, a second edition was published in order to 'take account of developments in the field'. The 2006 edition included clarification of how the Code of Practice could be interpreted within mainstream school settings; this was viewed as a very positive addition.

However, it is fair to point out that the 2006 edition received a mixed response. In particular, there was widespread concern with reference to section 3.8 of the Code of Practice, which appeared to endorse the training and use of techniques which may cause pain or discomfort. For many trainers and commissioners of training this weakened BILD's previous position in relation to avoiding the deliberate use of pain within training in physical skills and was in direct contradiction to section 3.7 and the overall principles upon which the Code of Practice rests.

The Code was developed to enable trainers and commissioners of training that includes the teaching of restrictive physical intervention skills to have standards against which they might measure the training. Specifically written to support the delivery of training in social care, health, and education settings, it was developed to provide clarification and guidance to those working with people in therapeutic and supportive roles. The principles of the Code endeavour to maintain appropriate professional relationships and boundaries, accepting that people will normally be using the Code in services in which they have identified the levels of risk and know the people with whom they work and support well. The Code recognises the importance of balancing the rights of vulnerable children, young people and adults with the rights of those people who choose to support, educate and work with them.

In addition, the Code provides the assessment criteria that is used within the well-established BILD Physical Intervention Accreditation Scheme. Therefore, it is vital that this document is both useful, practical and realistic in determining how such training should be delivered.

Why is the Code of Practice needed?

The use of physical interventions is just one component of the wider training and development frameworks that support children, young people and adults who may at times experience difficulties in communication or managing their emotions and use behaviour as a means to express themselves.

It is anticipated that the revised Code will provide the criteria of assessment for those training organisations that apply to the BILD Accreditation Scheme. However, it also provides an important point of reference for commissioners of services, those with responsibility for implementing standards as well as families, carers and all who are involved in supporting people who may be exposed to the use of restrictive physical interventions. The Code will be helpful in:

- shaping the content of training and creating a focus on the important aspects of knowledge and skill including assessment, prevention and positive behaviour support
- identifying risks associated with challenging behaviour in services and managing this appropriately by redirecting available resources
- supporting commissioners to develop preventative and proactive frameworks that include policy development, reporting and reporting/recording and support for team members and service users
- balancing the rights and responsibilities of individual staff members and service users; acknowledging that the safety of staff and the people whom they support must be taken account of
- increasing awareness of legislation and guidance
- supporting training organisations and commissioners of training to agree on structure, content and frequency of the training

It is hoped that this edition of the Code will have an impact on training and therefore on the skills of staff and the delivery of support within the field. The outcome should be to improve the quality of the lives of children, young people and adults who come into contact with services. Training organisations and commissioning services that fully adopt the principles of this code should:

- be able to evidence an appropriate support framework that is underpinned by implementing good policies
- be able to demonstrate the delivery of training and education that reflects the individual needs of the children, young people and adults who they support
- have implemented appropriate assessment processes for behaviour that is socially invalid or challenges the service
- be able to demonstrate a proactive and non-aversive approach to supporting individuals
- demonstrate taking account of and reducing the risk in support and services
- provide evidence that staff receive the appropriate training to enable them to deliver care and support learning opportunities and skill acquisition in an environment which is safe and free from abusive practices
- reduce reliance on aversive procedures and in the use of physical interventions

This edition of the Code has been written to take account of the need to provide accredited training across a variety of settings and with reference to:

- children and adults with a learning disability
- children and adults with autistic spectrum conditions
- pupils with special educational needs
- children with additional needs that may result in socially inappropriate behaviour(s)

- children with social and emotional difficulties associated with behaviours that challenge
- adults with a learning disability and/or autism who are detained under the Mental Health Act
- children and young people (up to the age of 19) who are detained in semi-secure and secure settings or who are detained under the Mental Health Act
- families and family carers, including foster carers, those offering short breaks and support to children, young people and adults with learning disabilities, autism and social emotional and behavioural difficulties

The future vision

Since the 2006 version of the Code of Practice there have been instances of abuse uncovered in services for people with learning disabilities in Cornwall (2006) and Sutton and Merton (2007). In both reports, the inappropriate use of physical interventions and other restrictive practices were highlighted. There have also been concerns highlighted by the inquiries into the deaths of Gareth Myatt, who died while being restrained by three adults while in custody in April 2004 and that of Adam Rickwood who took his own life after being restrained in August 2004. Further concerns are highlighted by Brodie Paterson in chapter 8 of the BILD publication, *Ethical Approaches to Physical Interventions. Volume II* (Allen, 2009).

Much of the work undertaken by BILD in this field has concentrated on making both services and training in physical skills safer. However, we recognise that there has been an overemphasis on the training and use of physical interventions. BILD believes it is now time to refocus the work and highlight:

- the importance of positive behaviour support
- the importance of reducing the use of restrictive physical interventions

- issues relating to poor practice
- examples of best practice and positive support of vulnerable children, young people and adults
- the importance of appropriate cultures within care and education and high quality services

David Allen (2009) states;

*‘having led a **restrain better** initiative, BILD now needs to champion a **restraint reduction** initiative’*

This edition of the Code has placed a greater emphasis on the requirement of training organisations and commissioners of training to provide evidence that restraint reduction plans are being implemented and there is a stronger emphasis on ensuring that any training takes account of the individual characteristics and culture of the service in which the training is being delivered. The Code sets out an expectation that, wherever possible, training is delivered to meet the assessed needs of individual named people. These standards will be implemented via the BILD accreditation process.

The BILD accreditation process by itself will not be sufficient to prevent all instances of abuse in the use of restrictive practices. It is also acknowledged that Government guidance in this area is in need of review and updating to keep pace with the evidence now available. Statutory guidance making reference to the standards of this Code and accreditation across all sectors of social care, health and education would be very welcome.

BILD has made a strong commitment to driving change forward, accepting that this may not be welcomed by all stakeholders; however, we do believe that the time is right to move the agenda forward once again and this edition of the Code is part of that progress.

Sharon Paley