



Challenging Behaviour: A Unified Approach – Update 2 (2026)

Produced jointly by the Intellectual Disabilities Faculties of the
British Psychological Society and Royal College of Psychiatrists

Background and Purpose

- Two decades since the publication of *Challenging Behaviour: A Unified Approach (2007)* and a decade since the first update document was published in 2016
- *Challenging Behaviour: A Unified Approach – Update 2 (2026)* Revised and updated to take account of clinical, service and policy developments in the last 10 years.
- The principal aim of the document is to provide a clinical and service guideline for supporting children, young people and adults with learning disabilities at risk of receiving abusive or restrictive practice.
- Provides a brief, user-friendly guide; with up-to-date references and resources reflecting recent developments in policy and care practice. Not intended on its own to act as a detailed ‘how to guide’.

The Current Service Context



POLICY AND STRATEGY
DEVELOPMENTS



UPDATES FROM THE 4
NATIONS



WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENTS

Good Practice Recommendations

- Good Quality Intellectual Disabilities Services
- Positive Support
- Trauma Informed PBS
- Support for Staff Teams and Carers
- A Culturally Responsive Approach to Support
- The Impact of Neurodiversity
- Quality of Life



Good Practice Recommendations

- Reducing Restrictive Practice
- Capable Environments
- Systemic Approaches
 - Ways of working with staff teams, families, networks
- Pharmacological Interventions
 - STOMP/STAMP



Challenges and Future Directions

- Geographical Variations in Care/Support
- Commissioning and Models of Care
- Research and Evidence Based Practice
- PBS Knowledge, Skills and Quality
- Embracing a Proactive Approach to Service Delivery



Key Updates

2016 update responsive to post-Winterbourne View context and the publication of multiple documents based on the learning from Winterbourne View (e.g. Positive and Proactive Care (2014), NICE Guidance (2015), Building the Right Support (2015)).

- Focus on avoidance of admission, reliance on restrictive practice and inappropriate prescription of drug treatments, risk avoidance rather than risk management.

Update 2 - outlines the key principles, both responsive and proactive, upon which good practice is based, linked to resources supporting the translation of these principles into practice. With the aim of supporting the journey towards high-quality, consistent, local, person-centred services for all at risk of receiving abusive or restrictive practice.