

Preventing challenging behaviour of adults with complex needs in supported accommodation

Project staff

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Background

- Some people with learning disabilities display “challenging” behaviour
- Such behaviour is difficult to manage and sometimes leads to restrictive practices such as restraining the person
- Challenging behaviour is often seen as the person’s “problem” – needing “treatment”
- Providing social care support that makes challenging behaviour less likely would reduce the need for individual “treatment”

Aims and objectives

- This project is evaluating the prevention of challenging behaviour through improvements in social care.
- In particular, do changes in social care:
 - I. Prevent and reduce severity of challenging behaviour?
 - II. Enhance quality of life?
 - III. Enhance staff working life?
 - IV. Enhance quality of life for co-tenants?
 - V. Reduce the need for specialised behaviour and other support?

Methods

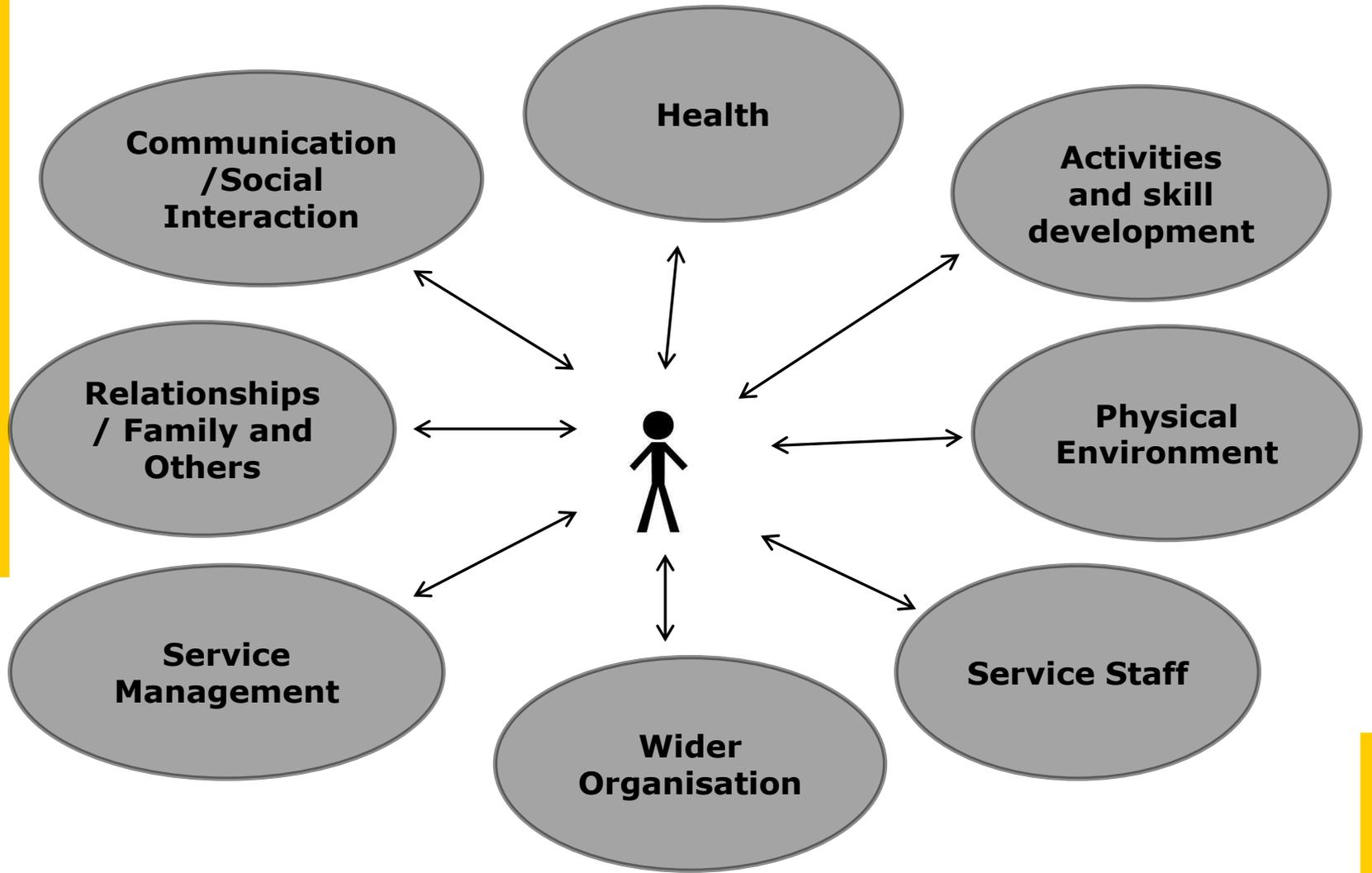
- First, we identified a number of settings within *Dimensions* willing to take part in the research
- Next, we collected information about service users and staff in each setting
- Then, we randomly selected settings to work with as the experimental group. The other settings act as the control group
- We have been working with the experimental settings since April/July of last year
- Follow up data is now being gathered on challenging behaviour, quality of social care and the effects of the intervention on other people living in the settings and the staff supporting them

Experimental and control groups

- 11 vs 13 services (mixture of residential care/supported living)
- Range of 1-7 people supported in each setting; 37 people in experimental group, 42 in control group (roughly half of whom display behaviour described as challenging)
- Northern and southern groupings
- Approximately 140 staff in each group

How we have tried to change things in the “experimental group”

- Using structured model of social care
- Working with staff and service users to agree changes that we will try to make
- Support and training with staff
- Agreeing goals or standards for the setting to achieve
- Agreeing monitoring and feedback arrangements



Progress monitoring

- On monthly basis we have reviewed achievement of standards in each house

Where we are now

- Finishing off intervention work and trying to ensure maintenance
- Collecting follow up and feedback data – a sample of data gathered to date will be presented
- Developing “manual”

Reflections

- Basic premise (social care related to challenging behaviour) supported
- The intervention model is generally acceptable, often greeted with enthusiasm and seems to be capable of producing change
- Research approach perfectly viable but resource intensive
- Very hard work and organisational support absolutely essential

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