Title	Positive Behaviour Support Policy
Issue Date	September 2026
Review Date	September 2029
Equality Analysis Date	September 2026
Equality Analysis Review Date	September 2029
Total Number of Pages	6
Owner	Lynne Thompson – PBS Lead
Distribution	Whole Organisation

Definition(s)

Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) is a person-centred, evidence-based approach that seeks to improve quality of life and reduce behaviours of distress by understanding their underlying causes, adapting environments, developing skills and increasing opportunities for meaningful participation. Seashell recognises that behaviour is a form of communication and is influenced by a range of factors including communication, sensory processing, physical and mental health, relationships and the environment.

Positive Behaviour Support Plans are developed through multidisciplinary assessment and outline proactive, active and reactive strategies tailored to individual need

Purpose

Seashell is committed to promoting the wellbeing, rights, dignity and quality of life of all children, young people and adults through Positive Behaviour Support, trauma-informed practice and least restrictive approaches. Seashell recognises that behaviours of distress often communicate unmet needs, anxiety, fear, sensory differences, communication difficulties, physical health concerns or previous experiences of adversity or trauma.

Seashell's approach focuses on understanding and supporting individuals rather than controlling behaviour, creating environments where people feel safe, valued, understood and able to achieve their potential.

Seashell recognises that many individuals may have experienced adverse or distressing life events that can affect emotional regulation, communication, relationships and behaviour. Staff are encouraged to understand behaviour within the context of a person's experiences and needs, seeking to ask "What has happened to this person?" rather than "What is wrong with them?"

Through compassionate, consistent and relationship-based support, Seashell aims to reduce distress, promote resilience and improve quality of life

Policy / Procedure

Positive Behaviour Support

Positive Behaviour Support provides the framework for understanding and responding to behaviour across Seashell. Staff will focus on recognising strengths, promoting wellbeing, increasing opportunities for success and teaching skills that support independence and self-regulation. Support will be personalised and centred around the individual's needs, preferences, aspirations and quality of life outcomes.

Trauma-Informed Practice

All staff will adopt a trauma-informed approach that promotes safety, trust, collaboration, empowerment and choice. Seashell understands that behaviour may be influenced by previous experiences of trauma, loss, attachment difficulties or prolonged distress. Staff will use compassionate, low arousal approaches that seek to prevent re-traumatisation and support recovery, emotional wellbeing and positive relationships.

Behaviour Support Plans

All individuals will have behaviour support information proportionate to their needs. Where additional support is required, a Positive Behaviour Support Plan will be developed through observation, assessment and multidisciplinary collaboration involving the PBS Team, education, care, therapy and health professionals, alongside families and advocates where appropriate. Plans will identify individual strengths, communication and sensory needs, health considerations, factors influencing behaviour and personalised strategies that promote positive

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outcomes, wellbeing, participation and safety. Following incidents, individuals will be supported to recover emotionally and physically using approaches tailored to their communication, cognitive and emotional needs, including the use of their Recovery Toolbox where appropriate.

Wherever possible, children, young people and adults will be actively involved in developing, reviewing and evaluating their behaviour support plans using communication methods appropriate to their needs, preferences and level of understanding.

Supporting Positive Behaviour

Staff will promote effective communication and total communication approaches which are fundamental to positive behaviour support and should be personalised to the individuals' abilities and needs, strong relationships, predictable routines, meaningful engagement and responsive support. Positive behaviours should be recognised and reinforced, while early signs of anxiety or distress should be responded to proactively. Staff should consider the impact of their own behaviour, interactions and the environment when supporting individuals and follow agreed support plans consistently.

Restrictive Practice and Physical Intervention

Seashell is committed to the continuous reduction of restrictive practices through Positive Behaviour Support, trauma-informed practice, communication support, environmental adaptation, skill development and multidisciplinary review. Any restriction on a person's freedom must be the least restrictive option available and only used when necessary to prevent an immediate risk of harm to the individual or others. Physical intervention may only be used when less restrictive alternatives have been unsuccessful, inappropriate or impracticable in the circumstances. Any intervention must be lawful, proportionate, necessary, respectful of the person's rights and dignity, and consistent with individual support plans, organisational procedures and Restraint Reduction Network principles. Where relevant, decisions regarding restrictive practices will be made in accordance with the Mental Capacity Act 2005, considering capacity, consent, best interests and the principle of using the least restrictive option. Where physical intervention is not authorised, is not the least restrictive option, or is otherwise inappropriate in the circumstances, alternative strategies and control measures must be identified, documented, and clearly communicated to staff to ensure risks are managed effectively and the safety, wellbeing, and dignity of the individual and others are maintained.

However, physical intervention may be used where it is lawful, necessary, proportionate, and consistent with the organisation's duty of care to prevent injury or serious harm to the individual or others.
Any use of physical intervention must be subject to reflective accountability. This includes timely recording, review, and reflective discussion to consider the circumstances leading to the intervention, its effectiveness, any potential learning opportunities, and whether less restrictive approaches could be developed or strengthened in the future. This process supports continuous improvement, promotes transparency, and ensures practice remains person-centred, lawful, and aligned with positive behaviour support principles.

Incident Reporting, Debrief and Learning

All incidents involving behaviours of distress, injury, safeguarding concerns or restrictive practices must be recorded and reviewed in accordance with organisational procedures. Information gathered from incidents will be used to identify patterns, evaluate the effectiveness of support strategies and inform continuous improvement. Following significant incidents, individuals and staff will be offered appropriate opportunities for debrief, recovery, supervision and reflection to support emotional wellbeing, professional learning and the ongoing development of positive support strategies.

Title	Positive Behaviour Support Policy
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Bullying and Peer-on-Peer Harm

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group that intentionally causes physical, emotional, psychological, social or online harm to another person and is usually repeated over time, although a single serious incident may also constitute bullying.

Seashell has a zero-tolerance approach to bullying, harassment and peer-on-peer harm. All concerns will be managed through safeguarding procedures and individuals involved will receive support that reflects their communication, cognitive and emotional needs. The focus will be on promoting safety, understanding, wellbeing and positive relationships whilst ensuring appropriate actions are taken to prevent further harm.

Seashell is committed to creating safe, inclusive and respectful environments across education, residential care, adult services and respite provision. Bullying, harassment, victimisation, discriminatory behaviour and peer-on-peer harm are not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

Staff must remain vigilant to signs that an individual may be experiencing bullying, including changes in behaviour, increased anxiety, withdrawal, distress, reluctance to attend activities or services, physical injuries, damage to possessions or changes in emotional wellbeing. Consideration should be given to individuals who may have difficulties communicating concerns or understanding social interactions.

All concerns relating to bullying or peer-on-peer harm will be taken seriously, recorded appropriately and responded to through safeguarding, behaviour support and restorative approaches as required. Responses will be proportionate to the needs, understanding and vulnerabilities of those involved.

Where bullying or peer-on-peer harm is identified, Seashell will:

- Take immediate action to safeguard individuals and reduce the risk of further harm.
- Listen to and support those affected.
- Investigate concerns promptly and fairly.
- Consider communication, learning, developmental and emotional needs when assessing incidents.
- Provide support to both the person experiencing harm and the person displaying harmful behaviour.
- Develop risk management, behaviour support or safety plans where required.
- Monitor outcomes to ensure concerns have been effectively addressed.
- Work collaboratively with families, advocates, social workers, education staff, health professionals and other relevant agencies where appropriate.

Where behaviour may constitute peer-on-peer abuse, child-on-child abuse, hate incidents, exploitation, criminal behaviour or safeguarding concerns, these will be managed in line with safeguarding procedures, statutory guidance and reporting requirements.

Partnership with Families and Advocates

Families, carers and advocates play an important role in supporting positive outcomes. Seashell will work collaboratively with families to share information, develop support plans, review progress and promote consistent approaches across home, education, care and community settings. Their knowledge, experience and views are valued and contribute significantly to effective support planning.

Title	Positive Behaviour Support Policy
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Equality Analysis Review Date	September 2029
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Staff Training and Development

All staff will receive training appropriate to their role in Positive Behaviour Support, trauma-informed practice, communication, safeguarding and the reduction of restrictive practices, including PROACT-SCIPr-UK® training where required. Staff are expected to maintain competence through regular refresher training, supervision, reflective practice and ongoing professional development, and to understand and follow this policy, individual support plans and associated organisational procedures. Seashell will provide the training, supervision and support necessary to enable staff to fulfil their responsibilities safely, effectively and in accordance with current evidence, best practice and organisational requirements

Safeguarding

Seashell recognises that changes in behaviour, increased distress, withdrawal, aggression, self-injurious behaviour or deterioration in emotional wellbeing may indicate unmet needs, physical health concerns, abuse, neglect, exploitation, bullying or other safeguarding concerns. Staff must remain vigilant and consider safeguarding alongside behaviour support assessments, responding and reporting concerns in line with safeguarding procedures.

Serious Incidents

Where a serious incident occurs, staff must act immediately to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all individuals involved and follow the organisation's incident reporting, safeguarding and escalation procedures. Serious incidents must be reported promptly to the appropriate manager and recorded in line with organisational requirements.

Following a serious incident, appropriate review, debrief and multidisciplinary discussions will take place to identify learning, support recovery and reduce the likelihood of future incidents. Relevant notifications will be made to families, professionals, commissioners and regulatory bodies where required by legislation or organisational procedures.

Legislative and Professional Framework

This policy is informed by current legislation, statutory guidance and best practice, including:

Human Rights Act 1998
Equality Act 2010
Mental Capacity Act 2005
Children Act 1989 and 2004
Health and Social Care Act 2008
Keeping Children Safe in Education
Working Together to Safeguard Children
CQC Fundamental Standards
Ofsted Inspection Frameworks
Restraint Reduction Network Training Standards
BILD Positive Behaviour Support Competence Framework
Relevant safeguarding, health and safety and education legislation

This policy should be read alongside all relevant Seashell policies and procedures.

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Roles and Responsibilities (at different levels)

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented throughout Seashell. Senior leaders are responsible for ensuring compliance, governance and quality assurance within their areas of responsibility. The PBS Team provides specialist guidance, training, incident analysis and support to promote best practice and positive outcomes. Managers are responsible for ensuring staff understand and implement this policy and individual support plans, while all staff are responsible for delivering safe, person-centred, trauma-informed support that is consistent with Positive Behaviour Support principles

Monitoring and Evaluation

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through incident analysis, behaviour trend monitoring, restrictive practice reviews, Positive Behaviour Support Plan audits, training compliance, safeguarding reviews, supervision processes and feedback from individuals and families. Findings will be used to identify strengths, address areas for improvement and support the continued development of high-quality Positive Behaviour Support practice across Seashell.

Equality and Human rights

Seashell is committed to equality, diversity, inclusion and the protection of human rights. Every child, young person and adult has the right to be treated with dignity, respect and compassion and to receive support that recognises and values their unique strengths, needs, culture, identity, beliefs and communication preferences. We are committed to creating environments that are safe, inclusive and empowering, where individuals are listened to, able to participate fully in their education, care and support, and where their rights to autonomy, privacy, family life and freedom from unnecessary restriction are upheld.

Confidentiality and Data Sharing (Handling)

When collecting and processing personal data for the purpose of this policy, authorised users of Seashell data must follow Seashell Trust's Data Protection and Caldicott Policy 2024.pdf policy.

Department processes and procedures will provide service specific requirements to support positive behaviour management data in line with regulatory and professional body requirements. All authorised users of Seashell data and systems must additionally follow the Information Security Policy. and Acceptable use of Seashell's ICT systems and internet- agreement for staff, governors, volunteers and visitors - July 2024.pdf policies.

All records must be treated as confidential. Records should only be accessed by staff who need who need to access them as part of their role. Staff must keep personal information safe and secure and only share information as and when needed. Any non-digital records should be stored securely when not in use e.g. in a locked cabinet. If taking these records offsite, additional protocols are in place to manage security.

Seashell Trust will share records when this is necessary in order to meet or contribute towards meeting the child or young adult's health, care and behaviour needs. When sharing these records, staff must follow Seashell Trust's Data Sharing Framework. If there is any uncertainty about sharing related information, staff should request additional support from their Head of Service, Caldicott Guardians and/or the Data team prior to sharing any records. If data has been lost or incorrectly disclosed, or the records or devices containing those records have been lost, staff should immediately report a data breach through the Data Breach Report Form or by emailing data@seashelltrust.org.uk.

Title	Positive Behaviour Support Policy
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Data Retention

There is guidance in the Retention policy that sets out the Seashell requirements for users, definition of retention periods for types of records and the action to be taken when records are to be securely destroyed or archived.

Related Document(s)

Safeguarding Policy
Positive Behaviour Support Plan Procedure
Incident Reporting Procedure
Mental Capacity Policy
Autism Policy
Bullying Policy
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
Health and Safety Policy
Trauma-Informed Practice Guidance
Restrictive Practice and Restraint Reduction Policy
PROACT-SCIPr-UK® Procedures
Data Protection and Caldicott Policy and data handling procedures
Information Security policy
Data Retention policy

Seashell recognises that some behaviours of distress may impact others; however, the presence of additional needs, disability, trauma or communication difficulties does not diminish the impact of harm experienced by others. Support will therefore balance understanding the reasons behind behaviour with maintaining the safety, rights and wellbeing of everyone involved.

At Seashell, we understand behaviour as communication and are committed to delivering Positive Behaviour Support and trauma-informed practice that promotes safety, dignity, wellbeing, independence and quality of life. Through compassionate, person-centred and least restrictive approaches, we support every individual to feel heard, valued and empowered to achieve their potential