



NCS Challenging Behaviour Policy

Responsible Manager	Debra Cook
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Version Control

NCS Trust is committed to the continuous improvement of its service offerings and underpinning policies and procedures. It will review the functionality of this policy and related procedures on an annual basis unless an incident warrants it being reviewed sooner or if there is new legislation or guidance that must be taken into account.

Version	Date	Author and job title	Date of approval and by whom	Next Review due	Comments (changes applied)
1.0	30/04/20	Anna Johnson Safeguarding Coordinator	James Woods	30/04/2021	
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1. What is challenging behaviour?

A person's behaviour can be defined as "challenging" if it puts them or those around them at risk, or leads to a poorer quality of life. Challenging behaviour can also impact on a person's ability to join in everyday activities, including the NCS programme.

Challenging behaviour can be displayed in a number of ways, including:

- Aggression: E.g. physical violence, verbal hostility, passive aggressive behaviour
- Self-harm: E.g. cutting, scratching, burning, self-hitting, head banging
- Destructiveness: E.g. drinking alcohol, drug use, self-isolation, gambling
- Disruptiveness: E.g. attempts to dominate / disturb an activity, berating others, sexual advances, comments or innuendo
- Disengagement: E.g. continuously refusing to take part in an activities

It is important to be aware that challenging behaviour in young people is common due to the way the adolescent brain develops. The following behaviours are common in teenagers:

- Emotional behaviour - the young person may react in a way that appears extreme or disproportionate to a situation.
- Impulsive decision making - motivated by short-term gains.
- Risk taking - on programme be aware that young people may choose high-risk / dangerous activities.

There may be other causes of challenging behaviour which you need to be aware of on programme. These include:

- Health problems that affect communication and the brain, such as learning disabilities.
- Substance misuse.

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) can have a tremendous impact on a young person and may cause them to behave in a challenging manner.
- Being on programme - young people having time away from home and their parents / guardians may feel more free to display challenging behaviour.
- Challenging behaviours may be a sign that something is wrong, like pain, discomfort and frustration, which the young person cannot express in another way.
- For more information on the origins of challenging behaviour and how it might present please refer to the toolkit for trainers called “Promoting Positive Behaviour” in the Workforce section of the Partner Portal.

2. The purpose of this policy:

The NCS aims to create a positive and safe environment for the young people and staff on programme. Challenging behaviour could have a detrimental effect on this.

The purpose of this policy is to set out a number of key principles and provide common guidelines which all NCS partner organisations and staff are expected to follow when engaging with young people who exhibit challenging behaviour on programme. This policy also aims to ensure that effective and safe intervention strategies are in place should challenging behaviour occur.

This policy statement applies to anyone working on behalf of the NCS Trust and young people taking part in the NCS programme as everyone has a part to play in preventing challenging behaviour from taking place.

3. Key principles for handling challenging behaviour:

- The welfare of the young person is the paramount consideration.
- Young people must never be subject to any form of treatment that is harmful, abusive, humiliating or degrading.
- The specific needs the young person may have (e.g. communication, behaviour management, comprehension and so on) should be discussed with their parent / guardian and where appropriate the young person,

before activities start.

- Where appropriate it may be helpful to record the details of any agreed plan or approach and provide copies to all parties.
- Every young person should be supported to participate. Consideration to exclude a young person from activities should apply only as a last resort in exceptional circumstances where the safety of that young person or of another young person cannot be maintained. Or the challenging behaviour is at such a level that the young person's behaviour is consistently negatively affecting the NCS experience of the wider group.

Preparation:

Planning for activities should include consideration of whether any young person involved may need additional support or supervision to participate safely. This should include:

- If you become aware that a young person on programme is likely to display challenging behaviours, try to find out what the triggers are (e.g. environment, certain activities) and look to ensure these triggers are avoided.
- Assessment of additional risk associated with the young person's behaviour.
- Appropriate supervision ratios and whether numbers of staff should be increased.
- Information sharing for staff on managing any challenging behaviour to ensure a consistent approach.
- Agreeing acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Staff and young people can agree on a code of conduct for behaviour at the start of the programme.
- For further tips on preparing for positive behaviour, please see the knowledge section of the Train the Trainer toolkit on Promoting Positive Behaviour in the Workforce section of the Partner Portal.

In responding to challenging behaviour the response should always be:

- 1) Proportionate to the actions you are managing.
- 2) Imposed as soon as is practicable.

3) Fully explained to the young person.

Strategies to handle challenging behaviour:

- Try to understand why the young person is behaving in this way. E.g. they might feel anxious or or be in pain.
- If you can recognise the early warning signs, you may be able to prevent behavioural outbursts.
- Use coping strategies to reduce stress, such as controlled breathing, counting or fidget toys. The young person themselves may have developed their own coping strategies. If you become aware of this, speak to them in private to find out what helps them and look to assist them with these coping strategies.
- Some people find a distraction can focus a person's energies elsewhere and prevent them displaying challenging behaviour.
- The young person might be behaving in a challenging way to get attention. If this is the case, consider not responding directly to their behaviour – although you should not ignore them completely.
- If their behaviour puts them or someone else at risk, you will need to intervene as calmly as possible.
- If the challenging behaviour is relatively minor and not causing any harm you can hang back and keep a watchful eye to give the young person time to stop the behaviour.
- In a situation of conflict between young people, e.g. a fight, look to separate them immediately by verbally asking them. Following this, separate the young people further by asking them to go to separate rooms. Whilst the young people are cooling down, plan your strategy to speak with them and assess how to deal with their behaviour.
- Focus on the young person's needs. This is because conflict produces a fight or flight response for many young people. In a conflict situation try asking them simple questions to help them work through the situation. For example: "What do they want?" or "Is there anything I can do to help you?"

- Stay in control - It can be easy to let our own emotions show when facing challenging behaviour but staying in control is crucial. Try to display calmness so the young people can see you can handle the situation.
- Please refer to the 'Promoting Positive Behaviour' Trainer's toolkit where more detail can be found about this subject.

Referrals:

- If the challenging behaviour of a young person is perceived as severe or particularly unusual, report the behaviour to your DSO and advise that a referral to children's service may need to be made. This is because the challenging behaviour may be an indication of other issues.
- The young person may already be known to social services and a referral may build up more of a picture for them to assist them in helping the young person.

4. Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in the UK, using information from the NSPCC, NHS, and Young Minds. The NCS will review this policy at regular intervals.