



# Young Epilepsy

Positive Behaviour  
**SUPPORT STRATEGY**



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Better futures  
for young lives  
with epilepsy

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### Ethos

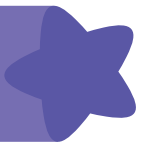
Young Epilepsy is a learning community which seeks to continually develop its students and staff and influence practices and attitudes elsewhere. A behaviour strategy spanning the whole organisation helps all students and staff within Young Epilepsy to live and work together in a safe and happy environment. The strategy translates the organisation's ethos and philosophy into practice that promotes good standards of behaviour.

### Values and principles

The philosophy supporting the behaviour strategy and behaviour support practices within Young Epilepsy is based on the principles of Positive Behavioural Interventions. It is also based on the recognition that most forms of challenging behaviour reflect a communication by the individual that they are not managing in the environment as it is at that time. This way of looking at behaviour support promotes facilitation, empowerment and teaching rather than punishment or sanction as the most effective way to reduce challenging behaviours.

The following key principles form the foundation for this strategy:

- Equality for all students and staff
- Maximising potential by reinforcing positive and appropriate behaviour and encouraging learning from natural consequences
- An equal working partnership between staff and students
- All students have a right to have their individual needs taken into account when developing support approaches
- We believe that all behaviours, including the most challenging, represent attempts to communicate



## Purpose and scope

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This strategy sets out the highest possible standards necessary to support positive behaviour at Young Epilepsy whilst safeguarding the rights of all individuals. The strategy highlights the structures and systems that support staff and students which have been designed by recognising that positive behaviour can be supported by meeting the needs of individuals whether they be educational, emotional, social or neurological.

The strategy has been designed for all staff and students and has as a key aim, the integration of the various and numerous components. The overarching purpose of the strategy is to offer a robust framework that leads to a supportive environment where best practice is applied based on the needs of individuals to allow students to flourish and staff to feel safe.

The strategy will empower staff to problem solve and make decisions in a framework of integrated support. It aims to be a strategy that supports staff and students to maximise their potential through a range of personal development opportunities and ensures that all training components necessary to develop staff are integrated and accessible and based on best practice.

Finally, the strategy allows for robust reporting and audit to ensure that Young Epilepsy focuses on being a learning organisation with a commitment to sharing this learning with others to enhance the lives of all young people with epilepsy and other neurological conditions.

## Elements of effective behaviour support

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There are numerous elements associated with effective positive behaviour support. When applied, these have been shown to help staff and young people to operate in a safe and happy environment. The elements and their application at Young Epilepsy are as follows:

### Student support plans

Each student at Young Epilepsy has a comprehensive support plan that identifies all emotional, education, care and health approaches that are suitable and necessary to maximise the young person's function and development. These include behaviour profiles and strategies. Through these plans we ensure that the student is at the centre of a whole system approach and that all team members are working within a framework that best suits individual needs.

### Environmental factors

Sensory functioning is an important factor to consider when assembling positive behaviour strategies. At Young Epilepsy we have a range of expertise available and personal assessments help to identify the optimum environment for living and learning. We also apply a range of techniques for those with sensory processing difficulties with the aim of enhancing a young person's ability to cope in a range of environments.



## Communication

It is widely recognised and understood that communication has a significant role to play in relation to behaviour. At Young Epilepsy we have expert professionals that assess the total communication needs of our students to ensure that strategies are in place to enable the students to communicate to the best of their ability. Various options are available including the use of adapted language, sign language, technology and signing boards. These combine to allow the student to express their wishes and needs, thereby allowing staff to respond accordingly. The approaches identified for individual students are a prominent feature in the student support plan and are uniquely tailored to their needs.

## Parental/care involvement

Young Epilepsy recognises the essential role played by parents and / or carers in helping to identify the needs of students and is wholly committed to working in a collaborative partnership. Strategies to help support the emotional, education, care and health needs are discussed and agreed and staff engage parents / carers at all stages within the young person's time at Young Epilepsy. In line with our systemic approach, we will also engage with professionals within the systems involved with the young person and will maintain contact with local services. We expect parents / carers and other key stakeholders to engage with review processes, including the Annual Review.

## Interdisciplinary working

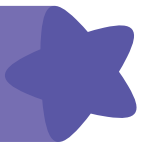
The needs of many of the young people at Young Epilepsy are complex and require the input of a variety of professionals. We believe that we are unique in that we bring the system to the young person and this allows them to access all the services they require in a joined up way. To enable this to work effectively, we adopt an interdisciplinary approach that defines the specific role of each professional but ensures that they are working towards the same goals identified by each individual needs assessment. This is coordinated through a range of activities including interdisciplinary reviews and the student support plans.

## Key worker

Each student at Young Epilepsy is assigned a key worker. They work directly with the student and have an essential role to play in communicating with the named professionals in health, education and residential services, taking the lead on the young person's activities and care. They also lead on updating the student support plan and are the main conduit for communication with parents/carers.







## Behaviour support strategies

These strategies are assembled following individual assessments to support the staff involved with the young person to recognise and promote positive behaviour. They include specific details about the triggers associated with challenging behaviour for that young person and how staff can predict and minimise the expression of such behaviour.

## Positive use of physical intervention

Young Epilepsy prides itself on the training of staff in the appropriate use of physical intervention. Our Safe Support Team work collaboratively with our psychology team to train care staff on the use of support strategies. This provides consistency throughout the organisation and ensures staff are confident and competent in supporting the students.

The system designed at Young Epilepsy takes into consideration all of the above components and brings the professionals together in a way that ensures a proactive approach to behaviour support with a choice of interventions that can be mobilised when needed. This involves a range of professionals and processes that are clearly documented and easily understood by staff.

## Behaviour support at Young Epilepsy

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The system at Young Epilepsy has been designed on the concepts already outlined. The overarching approaches employed by Young Epilepsy are as follows:

### Assessment

Staff at Young Epilepsy will listen to the young person and their parents / carers to get a picture of their individuality and personal expressions of behaviour.

### Reinforcing positive behaviour

For each young person, there will be a support plan which emphasises good behaviour and how this can be achieved in partnership with everyone involved with the young person.

### Allowing space to learn from natural consequences

Through developing young person's skills, we will empower them to make good choices and thereby enjoy the positive outcomes.

### Bespoke interventions

Each young person at Young Epilepsy will have specific behaviour guidelines that reflect their individual needs in their personal environment to help staff to best support their development and achievements.

### Statutory obligations

The strategy and the interaction with students is compliant with all legislative frameworks including mental capacity, deprivation of liberty and all components of human rights legislation.





## Positive Behaviour Support System at Young Epilepsy

### Proactive Management

Baseline assessments to include:

- Environment
- Communication
- Psychology

Student Support Plan

Regular meeting with care staff

Regular review of Student Support Plans

Positive behaviour strategies

Annual reviews

Staff training

Observations in a variety of settings

### Responding To Issues

New or existing issue with student

Single point of telephone/email contact with virtual behaviour support team

**Tel: Ext 222**

**Email: [behavioursupport@youngepilepsy.org.uk](mailto:behavioursupport@youngepilepsy.org.uk)**

Immediate review of issue/information gathering  
Response determined

Staff Support

Positive Support Team

Student Assessment

Psychology/  
Psychiatry

Support Plan Review

Therapies/  
Psychology/  
ENS

Team review in liaison with staff and parents/carers

Outcome setting, support and monitoring

### Significant Issue Response

Emergency Multidisciplinary Team meeting called as per policy comprised of the following:

- Education staff
- Care staff including key worker
- Health staff
- Safeguarding if required

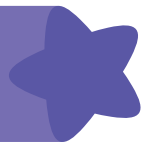
Liaison with parents/carers

Briefing of Director of Integrated Care and Director of Education

Clear actions drawn up and outcomes agreed

Debriefing of other care staff working with the student

Agree review period



The design of the system focuses on three key areas:

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### 1. Proactive management

The students at Young Epilepsy have a right to have their needs assessed and provided for. The processes focus on supporting positive behaviour from the outset and regularly monitoring the student to ensure that goals and objectives are being met. The student and their parents / carers are very much at the centre of this approach.

### 2. Responding to issues

If a student or staff member is experiencing difficulty with behaviour, support can be mobilised quickly and appropriately. This will involve alerting the virtual behaviour support team, made up of the professionals detailed earlier, and the team will respond to the needs in an effective and systemic way. This may involve the reassessment of the student, staff support and/or environment. The previous chart outlines some of the common responses employed by the team.

### 3. Significant issue response

At times it is necessary for the whole team that surrounds a student to come together to discuss significant challenging behaviour of a student that is causing risk to the student themselves, staff or other students at Young Epilepsy. This results in the assembly of an Emergency Multidisciplinary Meeting where the needs and risks can be fully assessed and the necessary precautions or strategies can be put in place. This draws on the systemic interdisciplinary approach discussed earlier.

## Reporting and recording

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Young Epilepsy is committed to complying with all regulatory guidance and this includes the need to adequately record and report incidents relating to various components of our practice, including behaviour support. Several key reporting mechanisms can and may link with behavioural issues. These include:

- Incident reporting
  - Clinical incident reporting
  - Accident reports
  - Statutory notifications
  - Risk assessments
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In addition, there are several key student specific documents that are taken into account when considering expressions of behaviour and these include:

- Care day sheets
  - Seizure charts
  - Medication charts
  - Bowel charts
  - College/school timetable
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The behaviour system draws on all information relevant to an issue or student and reports all incidents through the prescribed route as determined by the policies of Young Epilepsy.

At any given point the system allows for interrogation down to individual student level and the organisation can reasonably access information relating to students who are deemed to be at risk in relation to challenging behaviour. This helps to inform the ongoing development of the system and suitable organisational responses.



## Learning lessons

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Young Epilepsy is committed to continually improving the systems that support our students and our staff. This learning approach is based on the Plan, Do, Study, Act model (PDSA) widely used in the public and charitable sectors. It is predicated on robust audit of information and events and devising a system whereby the organisation as a whole can examine this data and discuss ways in which to build on effective practice and address areas of deficiency.

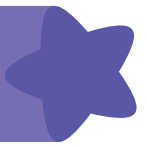
In relation to behaviour support, a range of information, including incidents, speed of response from the behaviour team, outcome of response and students representing specific concern, will be compiled and reported to the Executive Team on a termly basis.

In addition, Young Epilepsy commits to learning directly from staff and will publish an online questionnaire twice a year to determine how behaviour support systems are aligned to the needs of our staff and how well they feel the system is enabling them to assist the development of our students. This information will also be presented to the Executive Team for discussion and action planning.

It is important to note the essential role of debriefing in relation to learning lessons and enhancing practice. Debriefing takes place at all levels in the organisation as and when the need arises but is a fundamental part of the behaviour support system in relation to care staff and parents / carers. The behaviour support team is committed to the ongoing support of our staff and uses situational learning and debriefing to ensure this is effective and appropriate







## Staff support mechanisms

Young Epilepsy respects the fact that our staff are wholly committed to helping our students progress and achieve. Our staff deal with complex behaviour on a daily basis and this can be emotionally, physically and mentally challenging. We are committed to supporting staff and their ongoing wellbeing is a priority for us as an organisation. Key support mechanisms are in place for staff and these include:

- Direct involvement in the development of this strategy
- Relevant induction training
- Ongoing training in behaviour support processes including effective use of physical intervention
- Supervision, mentoring, debriefing and appraisal systems that support the identification of good practice and development needs across the organisation
- The Staff Forum with an ability for representatives to discuss issues with senior managers

In addition, the organisation has put in place several provisions to ensure that staff work in a supportive and consistent environment. These include:

- The policy framework which clearly identifies expectations and provides staff with systems within which they can work safely
- Occupational Health and the Staff Assistance Programme where staff require specific help in relation to their wellbeing and work practices
- Health and Safety frameworks that provide strategies and assistance including safe handling techniques and protective equipment where needed

The above systems play a key role in supporting the staff to work with a complex case load.



## Key Young Epilepsy Staff

### Psychology

Young Epilepsy has an expert team of educational, clinical and neuropsychologists that are expert in the assessment of young people and the development of effective support strategies.

### Psychiatry

Young Epilepsy commissions services from the Maudsley Hospital, London, for the provision of on site psychiatry support from a consultant specialist in children and adolescents.

### Play therapy and intensive interaction

Staff trained in the above approaches are a key component to the system and add significant value in supporting students and staff.

### Therapies

Our full range of therapists at Young Epilepsy are expert at the assessment of environmental, communication and other specific student needs.

### The Positive Support Team

This team is made up of Young Epilepsy staff who are trained specifically in supporting staff to implement behaviour support strategies, de-escalation and the effective use of physical intervention when necessary.

### Positive behaviour mentors (PBMs)

These Young Epilepsy staff are trained to offer advice and support to staff and engage with care staff in relation to individual students or groups of students.

### Epilepsy nurse specialist (ENS)

Many of our students have complex epilepsy and the Epilepsy Nurse Specialist ensures that behaviour strategies take into account the diverse impact of their clinical condition.

### Safeguarding

At all times the Safeguarding Team at Young Epilepsy is available to offer advice and guidance on issues that cause concern.

### Care and education staff

As the staff most often and most closely working with students, the care and education staff, including support workers, teachers, tutors and lecturers have a key role to play in the effective implementation of this strategy and they should be wholly supported to do so.



## Staff Training

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Young Epilepsy has a focussed approach to the delivery of training based on needs analysis. In relation to behaviour support, the following components are particularly important:

- Induction training focussed on the principles of behaviour support employed at Young Epilepsy
- Training by the psychology team on approaches to support positive behaviour and behaviour guidelines
- Safe Support training focussed on:
  - The understanding of behaviour
  - Primary and secondary prevention strategies
  - The law underpinning physical strategies
  - The use of positive physical intervention
- A variety of communication training including Signalong and other techniques to maximise interaction with students
- Autism training defining the specific needs of particular students and methods used in helping these students to reach their maximum potential
- Intensive interaction training for specific staff aimed at developing key skills in the management of certain students

## Indemnity

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Staff who undertake their role in accordance with the procedures and policies of Young Epilepsy, associated service guidance and appropriate training are explicitly reassured that they will be acting within the scope of their employment and that they will be indemnified. Indemnity requires that the procedures followed are in line with this strategy and associated policies, service guidance and training attended. They also

require the use of interventions that are deemed to be appropriate, proportionate and necessary.

Any member of staff will be fully supported throughout the process should any allegation be made.

## Legislative Framework

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The system described is designed in line with the content of the following legislative directives:

- Children’s Act 2004**
- Mental Capacity Act 2005**
- Equality Act 2010**
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005**
- Human Rights Act 1998**
- Mental Health Act 1989**

The following guidance has also been considered:

### Every Child Matters

Department for Education and Skills, **Undertaking Risk Assessments on Pupils with Severe Behavioural Difficulties**, LEA/0264/2003, London: HMSO

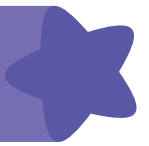
Department of Health (2001) **A Safer Place: Combating Violence against Social Care Staff**, Report of the National Task Force and National Action Plan, Brighton: Pavilion

Department of Health (1993) **Guide on Permissible Forms of Control in Children’s Residential Care**, London: Department of Health

## Key Contacts

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Behaviour Support:	Ext 222
Head of Psychology:	Ext 279
Safeguarding:	See Intranet
Director of Health:	Ext 324



## Glossary

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### Audit

The evaluation of a defined process, system, person or organisation

### Empowerment

Refers to increasing the spiritual, political, social, educational, gender, or economic strength of individuals

### Debriefing

Debriefing is a process of support that uses questioning to gain information and lead to learning

### De-escalation

This refers to actions undertaken to attempt to change the behaviour of an individual when their behaviour is becoming challenging to others

### Deprivation of Liberty

Inappropriately limiting the freedom of a person to access their chosen environment

### Facilitation

Any activity that helps people undertake tasks or makes the tasks easier for people to achieve

### Intensive Interaction

Intensive Interaction is an approach for teaching communication skills to children and adults who have autism, severe learning difficulties and profound and multiple learning difficulties

### Interdisciplinary Working

A group of professionals from diverse fields who work in a coordinated fashion toward a common goal

### Mental Capacity

Sufficient understanding and memory to comprehend a situation and the consequence of actions

### Natural Consequences

Refers to those things that happen as a consequence of our actions and in behavioural terms offers a way by which people can learn to make positive choices by learning from the consequences that occur

### Physical Intervention

Physical holds and break away techniques used in situations where a person is causing risk of harm to themselves or others

### Play Therapy

Provides a way for young people to express their experiences and feelings through play

### Safeguarding

Principles that are employed by all organisations to ensure that vulnerable people are kept safe at all times

### Sanctions

Penalties imposed on a person based on their behaviours

### Sensory Processing

Difficulties with taking in, processing, and responding to sensory information about the environment

### Sensory Functioning

The ability to detect and process information from our senses

### Signalong

A system of communication based on British Sign Language to help people to communicate with each other more effectively

### Statutory Notifications

This refers to information that organisations are obliged to supply to industry regulators

### Systemic Approach

Bringing different parts of a system together to meet a common need or work toward a common goal

## Young Epilepsy

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## Young Epilepsy Helpline

01342 831342 (Monday – Friday, 9am – 1pm)

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