



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

...is a forum that encourages debate on a wide range of research findings, with the overall aim of promoting evidence-based policy and law-making within Northern Ireland



Examining the differences in how residential facilities support adults with learning disability with mental health problems and/or present behaviours that challenge

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Definitions and Background

Challenging behaviour

‘These are behaviours that might be dangerous for the individual themselves, or to others. Such behaviours also include other actions that are considered inappropriate within society in general.’ (Hastings 2003)

Mental Illness

‘clinically recognizable patterns of psychological symptoms or behaviours causing acute or chronic ill-health, personal distress or distress to others’ (World Health Organization, 1996)

Over an 18-month period a total of 70% of them were admitted as a result of challenging behaviour and/or mental health problems (McConkey et al, 2004; Slevin et al., 2008).



Importance of staff culture

Evidence indicates four key factors relating to staff culture that may influence how well services manage people who challenge and these are:

- 1) Staff attributions of the causes of challenging behaviour (Hastings et al., 2003)
- 2) The emotional reaction of staff to such behaviours (Mitchell et al., 1998)
- 3) The self-confidence of staff in dealing with challenging behaviour and/or mental health problems (Hastings et al., 2002)
- 4) Aspects related to the systems and environment in which care staff work are also important variables in determining the effectiveness of a service in supporting people who challenge (Dilworth et al., 2011).

Study Objectives

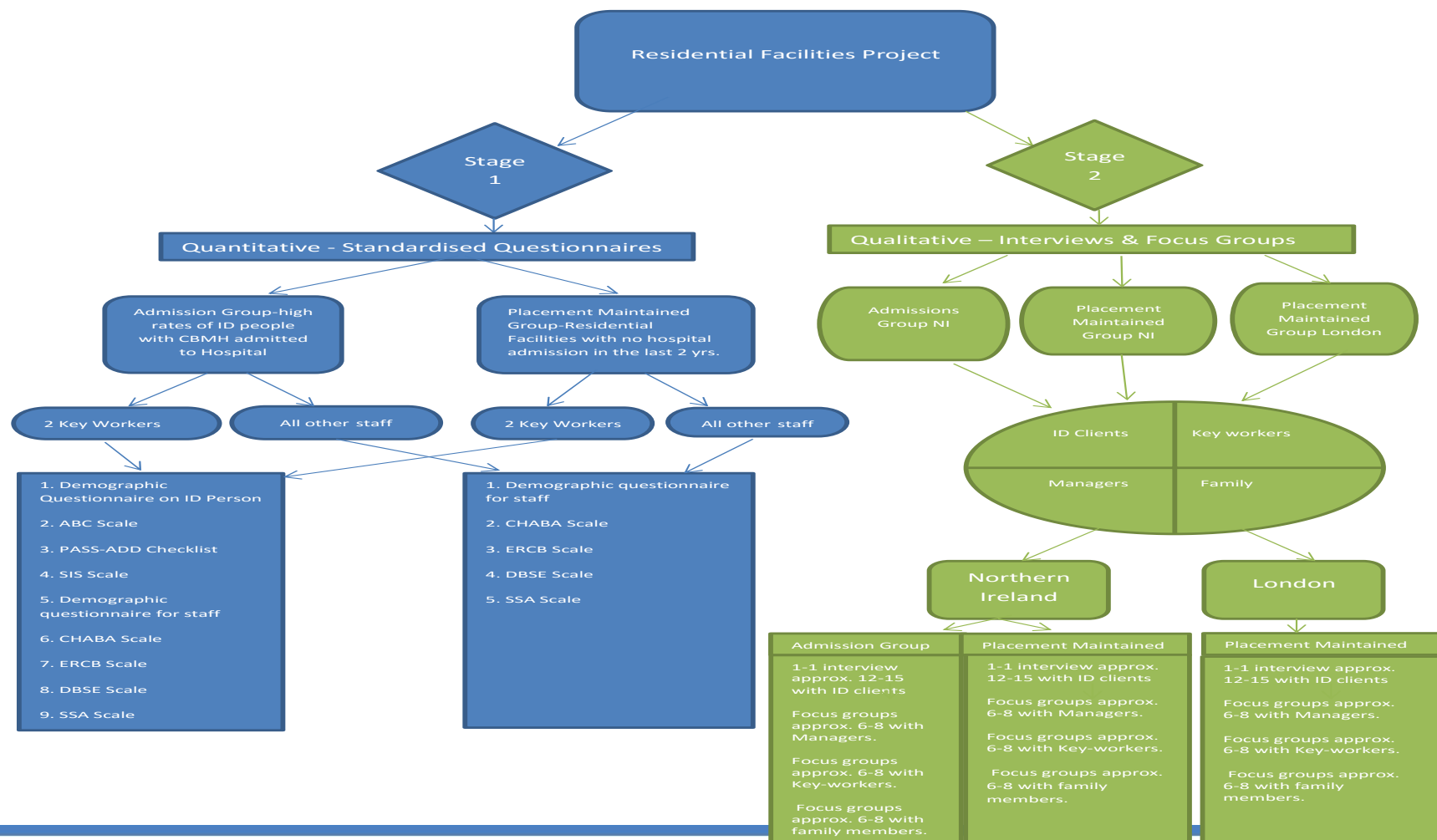
Stage 1

- To examine staff perceptions on the behavioural/mental health characteristics of the adults with learning disability and variations across residential settings;
- To assess staff perceptions on aspects relating to community participation and leisure activities.
- To ascertain levels of staff training and how this relates to the management of people with challenging behaviour and/or mental health problems;
- To identify staff attributions of the causes of challenging behaviour and/or mental health problems for persons with learning disability;
- To explore the emotional reactions of staff to challenging behaviour and/or mental health problems;
- To examine staff self-confidence in dealing/managing with challenging behaviour and/or mental health problems;
- To ascertain aspects related to the systems and work environment which are also important variables in determining the effectiveness of a service

Stage 2

To identify the most salient factors that staff in residential and supported living services and managers perceive as helping them to support a person with learning disability who has challenging behaviour and/or mental health problems?

Fig. 1: Flowchart of Project Stages



Sample size

Stage 1

Admissions Group ($n = 78$) where residents have been admitted into hospital over a four year period (Jan 2012-2014)

Placement Maintained Group ($n = 43$) where a matched sample of people who had placements maintained in the community during the same period.

There were 465 questionnaires completed by staff members in Stage One



Overview of of participants in Stage 2

	Focus Group Managers	Focus Group Staff	Focus Group Family Member/Client Rep	Interviews Service Users
Admissions Group Northern Ireland	6	4	3	12
Placement Maintained Group Northern Ireland	5	5	2	7
Placement Maintained Group London	2	5	4	9
Total	13	14	9	28

Types of behaviours reported as displayed by service users (Placement Maintained Group)

A word cloud on a dark green background. The words are arranged in a vertical cluster. The largest word is 'self-harm' in light blue. Above it is 'Aggressive' in purple. Other words include 'Destruction', 'slamming', 'Ripping clothes', 'verbal', 'Hitting', 'Loud', 'damaging', 'abusive', 'violence', 'slapping', 'bad', 'verbally', 'language', 'shouting', 'Forcefully', 'screaming', and 'outbursts'. The words are in various colors including purple, green, red, and pink.

Aggressive
Destruction
slamming
Ripping clothes verbal
self-harm
Hitting Loud damaging
abusive violence
slapping bad
verbally
language shouting
Forcefully screaming
outbursts

WordItOut

Types of behaviours reported as displayed by service users (Admissions Group)

suicidal
assaults physical
threatening hits
destruction bites damage
self-harm
aggressive verbal
dangerous

WordItOut

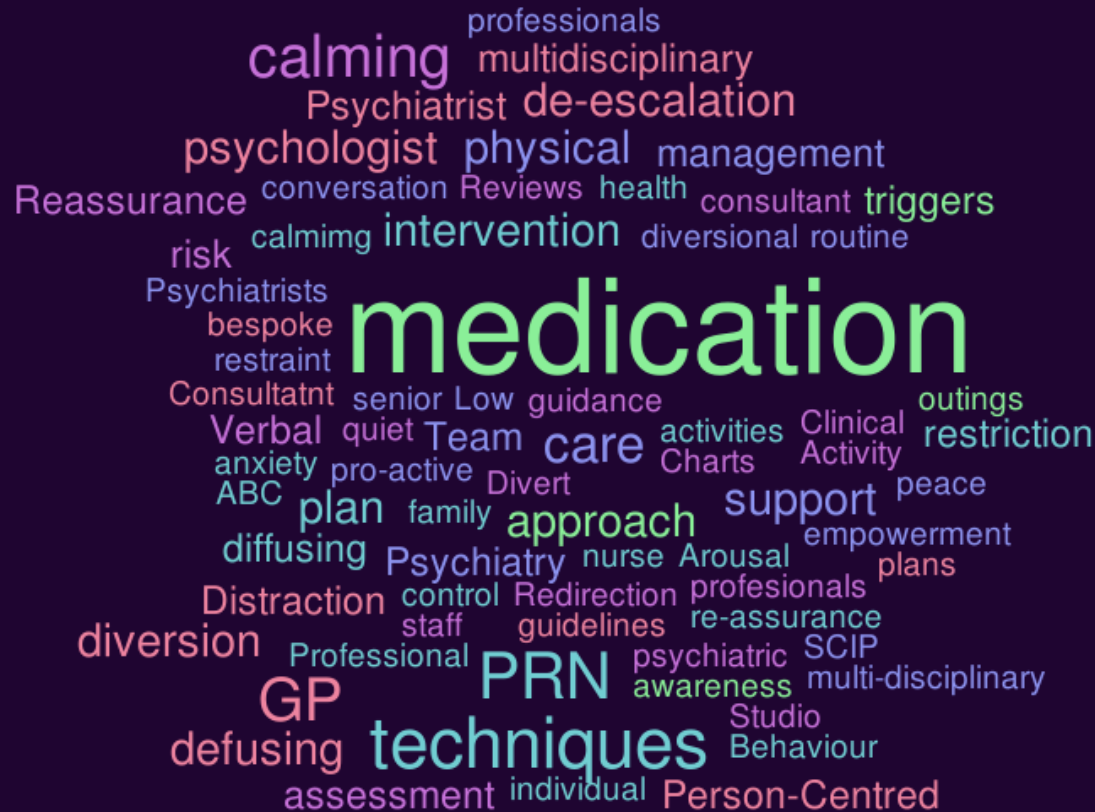
How staff manage challenging behaviour (Placement Maintained Group)

Communication

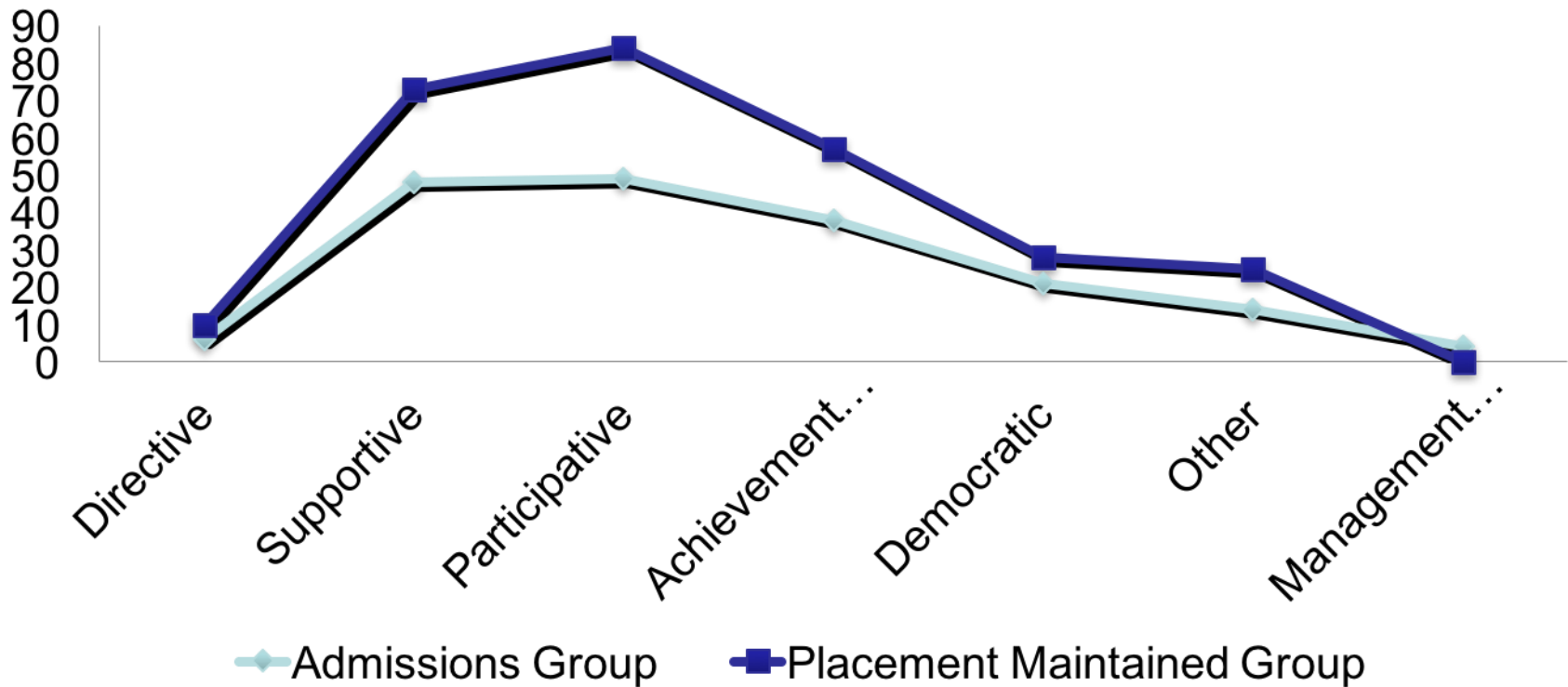
encouragement training
Mapa verbal Positive
attitudes
diversional techniques
reasoning
daycare routine
distract Medication
activities

WordItOut

How staff manage challenging behaviour (Admissions Group)



Leadership styles of managers



Key factors in supporting people to maintain placement

1. Clear and supportive leadership
2. Connections between people
3. Working with family members
4. A confident staff team

Emerging recommendations

Managers of residential services at a local and regional levels should create a strong sense of team work by ensuring the team has articulated a clear vision of the team's work.

The development of leadership skills should be considered a priority for staff appointed into roles to manage residential services for people with intellectual disabilities.

There is a need to a regional agreed process for preparing people appointed into the position of managing residential services for people with intellectual disability who present behaviours that challenge or who have mental health problems.

People managing residential services for people with intellectual disabilities who present behaviours that challenge or who have mental health problems should recognise the need to work closely with people with intellectual disabilities who use services and family members and actively build relationships with them and involve them in decision making.





Northern Ireland
Assembly



The Open
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