

Case study featuring Mike Bloodworth, Head of Education and Training at the Estia Centre (SLaM NHS)

Background

The Estia Centre, part of SLaM NHS, delivers a range of Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) training programmes led by a PBS practitioner, Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist and PBS Coach. Their main courses include:

Using Positive Behaviour Support when supporting adults with a learning disability

(A City & Guilds Assured programme) mapped to First Steps to Foundation, delivered both in person and online over 2.5 days.

Positive Behaviour Support awareness for team leaders

An in-person course delivered over one day.

The team deliver training primarily to social care organisations across Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark, with occasional participants from outside those boroughs.

Mike has also developed a PBS Culture and Practice Improvement Programme, a year-long action learning research initiative designed to strengthen PBS culture and leadership within the not-for-profit sector in Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark.

Why did you decide to join the PBS peer review process?

At the Estia Centre, our work is grounded in a commitment to supporting high-quality, person-centred care that improves the lives of people with a learning disability and autistic people. Through collaborative learning, co-production with people with lived experience and evidence-informed training, our aim is to strengthen the knowledge, skills and confidence of the health and social care workforce so they can deliver better support and achieve better outcomes.

Participating in the PBS peer review process therefore felt like a natural extension of these values. It should be seen as much more than simply meeting a standard or a tick-box exercise. For us, it is an opportunity to reflect on the quality of our training, learn from others and continually strengthen what we offer so that it has the greatest possible impact in practice.

“It’s such a privilege to have an external perspective when reviewing our courses, because when you are reviewing your own training there is always a risk that confirmation bias can influence what you see.”

What we learned and changed

The Estia Centre met the required standard and could have accepted the review grading and left the training as it was. However, the purpose of participating in the process was not simply to meet the standard. We see continuous improvement as

an important responsibility, ensuring our training evolves and strengthens so that it better supports staff and ultimately leads to better outcomes for the people receiving support.

Following the review, I created a detailed action plan based on the feedback and recommendations. The underlying intention for change is to strengthen training quality, reflective practice and the capability of staff to apply PBS principles, all of which contribute to better support for people receiving support.

Clarifying course structure and expectations

Reviewers suggested clarifying who the training is intended for and when onward referrals may be appropriate. The course outline was therefore revised to make expectations clearer and to emphasise what learners should be able to do differently in practice, particularly in using primary PBS strategies to improve quality of life and de-escalate situations.

Strengthening capable environments and prevention

Capable environments were already included in the training, but the course was restructured to give this area greater prominence. There is now a stronger focus on Tier 1 preventative strategies and everyday good practice, with practical tools and workbooks introduced to help teams reflect on and improve capable environments within their services.

Developing reflective practice and practical PBS skills

Additional resources were developed to support frontline staff to use PBS tools more confidently and reflectively. As reflective supervision is not always routine in social care, workbooks and learning tools were introduced to support reflection in both training and supervision contexts.

Strengthening learning around ABC analysis

The training was also enhanced to strengthen how ABC charts are used in practice, focusing more on meaningful analysis and reflection rather than completion alone.

Quality of life, rights and person-centred practice

Content was further developed to strengthen learning around quality of life, human rights and person-centred practice, including greater emphasis on dignity, meaningful activity and understanding sensory differences.

Co-production and lived experience

The training also strengthened its use of co-produced learning and lived experience, including a film we co-produced with a person with lived experience, their family and support teams ([Daniel's Story – A Whole New World](#)) Accompanying reflective activities help learners connect PBS principles with the everyday realities of the people they support.

Final reflections and tips on how organisations can get the most from the process

The peer review process works really well and it is something to be celebrated. To get the most from the process, ask yourself: "What are my motivations for

participating? What are my values?"

If the aim is to improve practice, it is important to engage both as a reviewer and as someone being reviewed.

It also requires a willingness to be open, curious and a little brave. Being reviewed can feel exposing at times, but approaching the process with honesty and a degree of vulnerability creates the conditions for genuine learning and improvement.

We're not all going to be perfect and that's okay. Unless you're a very confident PBS practitioner, it can take a couple of attempts to really get to grips with the process. This is where having a communicative and experienced co-reviewer can be particularly beneficial.

Ultimately, the peer review process works best when it is approached as a shared learning opportunity, where everyone involved is committed to improving practice and strengthening the quality of support for the people we serve.