

UK-SBA Position Statement on the Use of Punishment

The UK-SBA does not condone the use of procedures that are harmful, degrading, painful or dehumanizing.

The UK-SBA advocates the use of constructional, reinforcement-based procedures that focus on equipping people with the skills they need to live the life they want – procedures such as:

- teaching alternative communication strategies to replace behaviour that is challenging, aggressive, self-harmful;
- replacing aversive demands with positive reinforcement procedures and with forms of demand that foster success and positive affect;
- examining physical and social environments for sources of punitive, restrictive or otherwise stressful events and altering those environments to cultivate positive and successful relationships and satisfying experiences;

In situations where behaviour is described as “challenging”, such as some learning disability or autism settings, the UK-SBA recommends taking proactive steps to address contextual factors that may increase the likelihood of challenging behaviour – for example:

- Enhance the person’s quality of life through engagement in meaningful activity
- Eliminate social, activity-related and biological factors that lead to challenging behaviour
- Make challenging behaviour unnecessary by identifying the needs and desires of individuals and making sure those needs are met proactively.

Positive, proactive approaches based on understanding and meeting people’s needs, adding to repertoires and creating opportunities to succeed make punitive procedures unnecessary