



Scottish Government
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SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT POSITION STATEMENT – POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT (PBS) IN SCOTLAND

The Scottish Government continues to support best practice for people with learning disabilities and complex care needs in the form of Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) which is a human rights based framework. PBS aims to understand how to best support someone by understanding their needs and then focusing on adaptations to the environment and to the service to meet those needs.

The Scottish Government, SCLD and the PBS CoP (Community of Practice) condemn any type of treatment that is abusive and any approach that seeks to change a person's neurodivergence or suggest that they should mask their neurodivergent traits.

The Scottish Commission for People with Learning Disabilities (SCLD) issued a [position statement on PBS](#) which outlines how PBS can enhance the well-being of people with complex care needs in Scotland and increase their opportunities to participate in activities, learn new skills and lead independent, interesting and meaningful lives.

Scottish Government are pleased to fund and support the [PBS Community of Practice](#), chaired by Dr. Anne MacDonald and facilitated by SCLD, which has produced a range of free learning resources and is supporting continuous improvement aimed at ensuring practitioners can provide quality services for people with learning disabilities and complex care needs. This includes a dedicated workstream focused on developing a workforce that is skilled in PBS and is supported by NES (NHS Education Scotland) and SSSC (Scottish Social Services Council). The Steering Group for the PBS Community of Practice also has representatives from CAMHS and from education to share learning that is appropriate for children and young people with learning disabilities and complex care needs.

Every person has a unique set of needs and no single approach is recommended for all people all of the time. There are many evidence based approaches we could use but it is important that a person centred approach is taken. Scotland's National Autism Implementation Team (NAIT) have been funded to establish a network to support professionals working with autistic people to discuss support models, including alternatives to PBS. These include a social pragmatic model and environmental interventions or supports and can be found on their website.

We are aware that there are concerns amongst practitioners who use PBS that it is being compared to behaviour modification or conversion practices, sometimes aligned with conversion practices for the LGBTQIA+ community. It is important to state that the Scottish Government Ending Conversion Practices Bill, which is currently [out for consultation](#), is focused on banning the use of conversion practices on the LGBTQIA+ community only. The proposals included in the Ending Conversion Practices Bill consultation set clear parameters on the definition of conversion practices.

The Ending Conversion Practices proposals do not encompass practices offered through regulated services, that are provided by a regulated practitioner and comply with relevant medical, ethical and legal rules and guidelines. This approach ensures that legislation will not unnecessarily impact the delivery of care and support.

The proposed legislation is aimed at a particular form of harmful behaviour that seeks to change or suppress who a person is, using coercive and repeated behaviour or providing a service that is purported to be able to change them. We would not seek to extend the remit of proposals for legislation to capture anything that does not relate to an intention to change or suppress a person's sexual orientation or gender identity.



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