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Assessment and Intervention Team: Managing Challenging Behaviour in Adults with Intellectual Disabilities in the Community

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Introduction: Managing people with intellectual disabilities (ID) with problem behaviours in the community presents a challenge to ID services. Community models as alternatives to hospital care exist. Problem behaviours can have an impact on quality of life putting community placements at risk. Mental illness is a known aetiological factor predisposing to problem behaviours. Varied service strategies have been developed to manage challenging behaviour. We present data on a community-based service that manages challenging behaviour through an objective, multi-disciplinary approach.

Aims: To evaluate the multi-disciplinary challenging behaviour service over a three-year period.

Method: A case note survey of adults with ID admitted to the Assessment and Intervention Team, a challenging behaviour service operating in the London Borough of Haringey.

Results: Over the three-year period the 65 adults were managed by AIT. 44 were male and 21 were female. The age range was 21 – 64 years of age. The level of ID was Mild ID 61%, Moderate 39%. Diagnoses included psychotic disorder (25%); mood disorder (20%); developmental disorder (40%); dementia (10%); challenging behaviour (45%). Six people (11%) were admitted to hospital during their time with AIT. The length of care under AIT ranged from four to fourteen months.

Conclusions: AIT managed effectively people with ID living in the community who presented with complex problems putting their placement at risk. The most common reasons for the behaviours included mental illness and 'challenging behaviour'. People with developmental disorders were a big proportion. Community alternatives are effective with positive benefits to the person.