**Carrying out an Assessment of Behaviours**

The assessment should draw on a wide range of sources and involve those who work closely with and know the pupil well.

1. A definition of the challenging behaviour in question. Before conducting a functional assessment, it is important to prioritise the target behaviour have a clear definition of it. Rather than ‘Sam is lashing out’, ‘Sam uses his left hand to hit out at the arms or faces of staff in the base class.’

2. An assessment of the antecedent (i.e. what happens before) events. Certain things often appear to trigger challenging behaviour. What antecedent events (e.g. activities, settings, individuals, objects, thoughts, or feelings) are most likely to predict the occurrence of the behaviour? What antecedent events are most likely to predict the non-occurrence of the behaviour?

3. An assessment of the consequent (i.e. what happens after) events. What is the pupil gaining, or not gaining from the behaviour that motivates them to do it again, and again and again? Many consequent events are externally motivating, e.g. the consequence of a pupil banging his head may be that he gains more or less attention from people; gets a desired object, food or drink; or escapes from an activity or task. However, consequent events may also be internally motivating, e.g. the consequence of the pupil banging his head when he is feeling bored, may be that he feels more stimulated.

4. Examples of additional factors that may be considered as part of a functional assessment include: a pupil’s communication abilities; their general likes, motivators and dislikes; their learning style (i.e. how do they learn best?); environmental factors (e.g. noise levels, time of day, unpredictable routines, or numbers of people); and the intervention history (i.e. has anything helped before?; what strategies are currently working?).