Psychoeducation with problem-solving (PEPS) therapy for adults with personality disorder: a pragmatic randomised controlled trial to determine the clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of a manualised intervention to improve social functioning

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Disclaimer: This report contains transcripts of interviews conducted in the course of the research and contains language that may offend some readers.

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**Plain English summary**

**Psychoeducation with problem-solving**  
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A personality disorder is a pattern of beliefs and behaviour that causes distress and difficulties to both the affected person and others. We conducted a well-designed evaluation of a treatment called psychoeducation with problem-solving (PEPS) to see if it improved social functioning, which is how well people get on in their day-to-day lives. Psychoeducation involves up to four sessions of an individual talking with a mental health professional about their diagnosis of personality disorder and what it means for them. Participants are then offered 12 group sessions to learn a problem-solving approach to overcome some of their difficulties. We recruited 306 adults and divided them randomly (by chance) to receive PEPS plus usual treatment or usual treatment alone. We planned to recruit 340 people but it was noticed that people receiving PEPS had more adverse events, such as hospital admissions, than those who did not and so we stopped recruiting people early. About 12 months after the end of treatment we found no differences in social functioning between those who received PEPS and those who did not. There were no differences on any other measures – cost of services, quality of life, mood or problem severity. There were more adverse events reported in the PEPS group, but this difference could be as a result of chance. We found no evidence to support the use of PEPS therapy alongside standard care within the NHS to improve social functioning of adults with personality disorder living in the community.
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