

Brandon Bulletin

Autumn / Winter

2022 / 2023

A mindful start to 2023

A new year often prompts us to reflect on the year just passed, and this year, it feels particularly important because 2022 was a year of change for many of us.

At Brandon Centre, there have been plenty of positives such as being able to offer face-to-face support again, the forging of new corporate partnerships, and the launch of exciting services such as social prescribing and the Pan-London CAMHS Waiting List Parent Support Group.

There have also been challenges, such as stepping away from our clinical sexual health services to concentrate on strengthening and developing our holistic approach to mental health and wellbeing.

However, as with many challenges, there has been a silver lining. We are now focusing our plans, resources, and expertise where needs are high-on improving the post-pandemic mental health of young people and their families.

When thinking about this newsletter the link between *mindfulness*, *gratitude* and *wellbeing* stood out to me. We know that by being 'in the moment' and by making time for gratitude, we can improve our wellbeing. However, our busy lives mean we sometimes forget to stop, reflect and express thanks.

So, I'd like to say an important thank you to our staff, trustees, young ambassadors, young people and volunteers and remind everyone to take that moment to appreciate and celebrate all our amazing achievements over the last year.

Brandon Centre's Wellbeing Garden now includes a wonderful summer house and we're looking forward to providing space for young people to explore mindfulness, yoga and other activities that will support our core psychotherapy and coaching services.

Our mindful walks with London Youth promoted the benefits of conversation and being active, and our team Away Day and festive party reminded us of the benefits of being together in person.

We often find that our Young Ambassadors are trailblazers in knowing what works for young people and, as always, we are so appreciative of their support. To reinforce this, we are setting up a new Parent Advisory Committee that will seek parent voices and involvement too.

I hope you enjoy the newsletter and wish you a healthy and mindful 2023!



Julia Brown
Chief Executive

Julia

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Spotlight on Social Prescribing @ Brandon Centre

What is social prescribing?

Social prescribing – sometimes known as community referral or link work – is a non-clinical service that introduces people to activities in their community that are likely to boost their health and wellbeing.

The concept has been supported by the NHS in recent years to best support people facing a variety of complexities in a timely and responsive way. There is evidence to show that it can reduce feelings of isolation, increase confidence, and foster a sense of belonging.



Social prescribing @ Brandon Centre

In July 2022 we began a Social Prescribing pilot focusing on young people across Camden and funded by the North Central London NHS Integrated Care Board.

Lucy Tobin Howard, our Social Prescriber known as Wellbeing Link Worker runs the service in collaboration with The Hive and Fitzrovia Youth in Action.

The pilot aims to help 36 young people with mental or physical health challenges and is available to young people aged between 16 and 24.

'It recognises the importance of a holistic approach that includes social, emotional and practical support and gives people greater control over their own wellbeing,' says Lucy.

How does it work?

After referral Lucy talks to each young person by phone to get to know them, their situation, and their potential interests.

'Together we come up with one to five achievable goals and rate how important they are to the young person. Then we both go away and research some activities to try. It's very collaborative,' says Lucy.

'We focus on activities that the young person feels will be enjoyable and achievable.'

Activities such as pottery painting, photography, jewellery-making and art classes, and physical activities such as joining a gym, martial arts or fencing. Or simply something fun like visiting a farm or ice-skating.

'What's different about social prescribing at Brandon Centre is that I can go along to the activity with the young person. It really helps get rid of those barriers to starting something new. We go together and I support them for as long as they need within our 6 sessions.'

Where an activity does involve a cost, the service has a defined budget to cover the cost where needed to help make activities accessible to everyone.

Lucy also checks in with each young person to see how they're feeling and how the activity is going, giving them time to discuss any emotional issues in more depth. These conversations can be face-to-face or over the phone.

'Giving young people time to build a relationship with me really makes a difference,' says Lucy.



How is it helping?

So far, feedback is very encouraging. Lucy asks a set of questions at the beginning and at the end of the service, covering feelings of enjoyment, anxiety, and confidence.

'We've seen huge shifts in confidence in young people who were really struggling before getting involved in activities,' says Lucy.

It's a great start. A full evaluation of the service will begin in the Spring when we'll also be able to use our own Brandon Centre Wellbeing Garden and summer house to hold Social Prescribing sessions.

'We have high hopes for the difference that social prescribing is making to some very vulnerable young people,' says Emma, Business Development Manager.

'Evidence is starting to show that social prescribing can play an important role in improving young people's quality of life and emotional wellbeing.'

Find out more about Social Prescribing @ Brandon Centre here:

brandon-centre.org.uk/services/social-prescribing



Toy Appeal eases the strain for families

The Toy Appeal, run by our charity partner, ELBA (East London Business Alliance), asks local corporate organisations for donations of toys and games to give to young people over the festive period.

With financial strains being particularly tough last year, extras were hard to manage. So, we asked some of the families participating in our parent groups and BC-SIT service if they would be interested in some support from the appeal.

'We focused on gifts that would encourage physical activity or family time,' says Michelle Drummond, Head of Clinical Training and Consultancy at Brandon Centre.

The Brandon Centre team went to Canary Wharf to collect donations and were able to gift footballs, skateboards, board games, toiletries, and stocking fillers to 10 children in five delighted families who would otherwise have been in a tight spot financially.

We'd like to say a big thank you to Kasia and Lita for going to collect the toys from Canary Wharf.



The team collect sports gear, toiletries and games for Brandon Centre families

Brandon Centre expands parent support offering

We've been running successful parent support groups at Brandon Centre for over 40 years and have become a trusted provider of quality, practical and supportive courses.

So last year, we were delighted to share our expertise through a new partnership with Mind in London.

The pilot parent group is open to parents and carers of young people aged 11-16 who are on a CAMHS treatment waiting list and experiencing depression, anxiety, self-harm or suicidality.

The programme focuses its efforts firstly on supporting parents and carers themselves through the stressful waiting period and, secondly, by providing broad strategies to help parents understand and support their young person's mental health while they wait for specialist treatment.

'Research has shown that parents of adolescents are the least supported group,' says Michelle Drummond, Brandon Centre's Head of Training & Consultancy.

'Long wait lists for counselling and psychotherapy means they are left holding and supporting the young people and they often don't know how to do this, what to do, or say.'

Helping parents and carers to support their children has always been an important part of the work we do at Brandon Centre.



Drawing on the success of our existing programmes, Brandon Centre is the clinical mental health lead for the course, managing the programme content, clinical risk, data and reporting.

Brandon Centre Psychotherapist, Tania Bashar, facilitates the 8-week programme which works with up to 20 people per group, with support from Mind's co-facilitators. Referrals and signposting are coordinated by Mind.

The first four sessions are psychoeducational – focusing on understanding mental health and on strategies to talk effectively to the young person, and the final four sessions focus on peer support for parents – sharing experiences, thoughts, and connecting with each other.

'The young person exists within a family system and a community system. The more resilient and supported those systems are, the more they can positively influence young people's mental health,' says Michelle.

The success of the programme is being monitored using RCADS-P (Revised Children's Anxiety and Depression Scale-Parent Version) to measure the impact of the programme indirectly on young people, and two other measures (the perceived parental stress scale and the Kansas Parental Satisfaction scale) to monitor the direct impact on parents. We also seek qualitative feedback at the end of the programme.

'Feedback and outcomes are really good so far,' says Michelle *'100% of parents said the group had a positive impact on their emotional wellbeing.'*

'We are seeing consistently decreasing distressing symptoms, not only directly in parents, but also indirectly in the children in their care.'

Some of the first-hand feedback from parents has been excellent, and we're hoping to expand the service to more families this year, if the funding is extended.

'Honestly, I strongly recommend this support group to any parent whose child suffers mental health disorder. The group's leaders provide professional guidance and advice in many aspects in a kind, respectful and sympathetic manner. It is just great!'

'I will be forever grateful to them. This group and the information have helped me greatly at a time when I was feeling helpless and low in confidence having hit many dead ends with trying to support my poorly son.'

For more information about the Pan-London CAMHS Waiting List Parent Support Group please email: parentsupport@brandoncentre.org.uk



BWell Coaching goes into the community

In our last newsletter, we announced the launch of our BWell Coaching pilot, funded by the National Lottery Community Fund - Reaching Communities England programme.

The aim of the fund is to 'help more young people reach their potential by supporting them at the earliest possible stage'.

BWell is now well underway and uses a coaching model to help young people self-manage their wellbeing. Running alongside our existing psychotherapy and counselling services as an early access intervention, it offers support at the first signs of mental ill-health.

Wellbeing coaching helps people set and achieve their own goals, using health coaching techniques with a focus on helping young people understand what they want in life and how to take practical steps towards achieving this.

'It's been well received,' says Neil Lawrence, Project Lead. 'We've been listening to what young people, youth workers, and teachers want and have adapted the service to support them in a way that suits young people, and their needs, best.'



BWell has found a natural home within youth hubs and schools in Camden and Islington, taking support to groups as well as offering one-to-one coaching.

'We've established a group called Thriving Young Men in partnership with The LIFT Youth Hub in Islington and are currently starting a Thriving Young Women's Goup,' says Neil.

'Relationship work, including LGBTQIA+ themes, has become a big part of the group sessions. We're then available for extra one-to-one coaching for the young people who want it.'

The partnership approach is also providing much-needed support to youth workers and teachers. The team visits three schools to help embed the mindset support that BWell specialises in.

'We're taking a longer-term view to supporting young people. For example, Islington Young People's network has appointed youth co-chairs and we are providing them with coaching to help them support other young people.'

BWell takes a practical, compassionate, and mindful approach to coaching. It helps young people learn to stay 'in the moment' and to treat themselves, and others, with compassion.

Feedback is very positive with young people reporting better sleep hygiene, improved self-esteem, greater emotional awareness, and more confidence. Here's what some of them had to say about BWell:

'The support I received was amazing; it has helped me to prosper and find tranquillity'

'The team truly wanted to hear what I had to say'

'They would try to dig to find the ultimate cause of the issue'

'Really appreciate the care and support, it's what this world needs'

You can find out more about our BWell Coaching services here:

<https://brandon-centre.org.uk/services/coaching-wellbeing> or email: bwell@brandoncentre.org.uk



Macquarie raises over £4k for Brandon Centre

In November the Macquarie Risk Management Group rose to the *Movember* challenge and grew moustaches of all shapes and sizes. After match funding from Macquarie Group, they raised an amazing £4,216 for Brandon Centre.

By way of thanks, the Brandon Centre team took part in Macquarie's *Movember* event with a talk on Men's mental health, physical health and the importance of wellbeing.

Plus, Brandon Centre's own Sam and Reuben raised over £350 with their own moustache-growing efforts!

We're delighted that Macquarie chose to support Brandon Centre. The money raised will help us to support even more young people's mental health and wellbeing.

If you'd like to support Brandon Centre with a fundraising activity contact:

fundraising@brandoncentre.org.uk



Harry, Matt and Emma join Macquarie's Movember event

Read about all our services in our new Brochure

Our new brochure, very kindly produced (pro-bono) by our friends at Design Portfolio, is now available on our [website](#).

You can find out about all the services we offer young people and their families as well as the positive impact of our work. There's also information about corporate partnerships, community work and how you can volunteer or get involved in other ways. We'd love to know what you think!



Wellbeing tips for 2023

With a new year well underway, there's a lot you can do to keep your mind, body and wellbeing nourished. Here are 10 top tips from the team and young people at Brandon Centre.

- 1. Be kind to yourself and others.**
- 2. Drink enough water everyday.**
- 3. Take time for self-care, for example, exercise, eat a healthy diet, relax and seek support if needed.**
- 4. Get into a good sleep routine and wake up at the same time each day.**
- 5. Reduce screen time when you can.**
- 6. Speak, reduce text - personal connection can improve your wellbeing.**
- 7. Listen to what your body and mind need without judgement.**
- 8. Plan time outside.**
- 9. Try and see friends or family throughout the week.**
- 10. Spend time doing something you enjoy through a hobby or a new activity.**

The Wellbeing Garden @ Brandon Centre

Last year we were fortunate enough to work with HandsOn London and young people from corporate supporters Baringa, Asante Capital and Amazon to give our rather wild outdoor space a much-needed make-over. It was quite a transformation.

Now, thanks to funding from the Mayor of London's Grow Back Greener Fund, the transformation is complete along with a beautiful summer house kindly donated by Crane Garden Buildings.

We'll be announcing more soon about how young people can enjoy our Wellbeing Garden, including coaching and counselling sessions as well as mindful activities al fresco. **We can't wait!**



Festive celebrations 'In Real Life'

After all getting together at our October Away Day, we knew we had to do it again soon so decided to hold a Festive celebration at The Junction Tavern in Kentish Town.

It was a great success. Fabulous food and company and (for those of us who wanted to) we managed to avoid the World Cup for an evening.

Special thanks to Emma Sainsbury and Lita Peña for organising, and to Dolores Currie, our former Chair for joining us.



The team celebrating 'IRL'

Collaborative work at Brandon Centre praised in Ofsted report

Brandon Centre's offer was picked out as part of the 'strong collaborative work with partner agencies' in Ofsted's report, after a focused visit to Islington local authority children's services on 19 and 20 October 2022.

The borough's integrated approach was praised as providing care experienced young people with easy access to healthcare including physical, sexual and emotional health services such as the 'counselling or more intensive support by clinicians as necessary without stigma' provided by Brandon Centre.

We provide a specialist psychotherapy service specifically for care leavers. It provides important support for young people with a history of complex psychological trauma, including abuse and neglect, and who may require a high level of emotional and practical support as young adults.

'Care leavers are a particularly vulnerable - and sometimes overlooked - population of young people, who are often in need of specialist therapeutic support as young adults,' says Pavlos Rossolymos, Brandon Centre Head of Mental Health. *'We are proud that this is something Brandon Centre can offer, in collaboration with our local authority partners.'*



Team Away Day and Survey give valuable insight and opinion

In 2022 we held our charity-wide Away Day, our first time all together since the pandemic. It was a thought-provoking and inspiring day, giving us time to reflect upon and celebrate our work.

We listened to speakers from each service group about their achievements, goals and challenges, then came together to discuss our priorities as an organisation.

We also ran our Brandon Way Survey for employees, volunteers and trustees. In its third year, the survey focused on two key areas:

Views on how we can improve our services for young people and families;

Brandon Centre team satisfaction, wellbeing and concerns.

We'd like to thank everyone who came to the Away Day and those who completed the survey.

What have we learnt?

We're delighted that the results paint a very positive picture of Brandon Centre both as a place to work and as a service provider. There are, of course, areas for improvement which we'll be seeking to understand more fully and develop over the course of the year.

Highlights focusing on engagement with young people and their families included:

- an improvement in employees' experience of putting the voices of young people and families at the heart of Brandon Centre (and increased confidence in our ability to do this);
- suggestions for improving ways to keep young people and families at the centre of our work and ideas to increase our engagement with them; and
- a desire to learn more about how service user engagement forums operate in other organisations.

Highlights focusing on team satisfaction, wellbeing and concerns included:

- words used to describe how it feels to work at Brandon Centre: supportive, collaborative, fun, amazing culture, friendly, non-institutionalised, impactful, frustrating at times and challenging;
- employee awareness of our values of compassion, respect and inclusion is high. When asked to rate how well we live those values, the average response was 8.07 out of 10; and
- staff engagement is high at 8.79 out of 10 and included responses like, 'BC is a very empowering organisation', 'I feel more engaged when staff are involved in decision-making', 'Sometimes it can be difficult to juggle so many plates and wear multiple hats', 'I feel my ideas are valued'.

Away Day ideas for improvement

Some of the ideas for improvement suggested during the Away Day were:

- improved integration between services including secondments;
- more protected time for teams and personal development plans;
- shared reflective practice; structured & peer supervision, and longer-term contracts;
- more emphasis on practitioner wellbeing;
- improved workforce diversity;
- CPD days, mental health days, birthdays off;
- more frequent social get-togethers and team days;
- good news celebrated company-wide.

These are areas we'll be looking at in our organisational policies and strategies as well as in our service-level action plans and personal development plans.

Thanks again to everyone for their enthusiasm in helping us grow in a sustainable and effective way.

If you're interested in becoming a Young Ambassador or joining our new Parent Advisory Committee, please contact: youthambassadors@brandoncentre.org.uk

Thanks to our donors

We'd like to say a big **thank you** to the following organisations and individuals for continuing to support us and the young people we work with:

NHS and Local Authorities

- ♥ Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust
- ♥ London Borough of Camden
- ♥ London Borough of Islington
- ♥ NHS North Central London Integrated Care Board – Barnet/Camden/Enfield/Haringey/Islington
- ♥ Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust

Trusts, Foundations and Individuals

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| ♥ Arsenal in the Community | ♥ The Rhododendron Trust |
| ♥ Adam Fobel | ♥ The Sir Mark and Lady Turner Charitable Settlement |
| ♥ Anonymous Donor | ♥ The Vandervell Foundation |
| ♥ BUPA Foundation | ♥ UCLH Charity |
| ♥ Catch 22 | ♥ Young Camden Foundation |
| ♥ Crane Garden Buildings | ♥ Youth Endowment Fund |
| ♥ Cripplegate Foundation | ♥ The Oakdale Trust |
| ♥ Design Portfolio | |
| ♥ Drapers' Charitable Fund | |
| ♥ Groundwork London | |
| ♥ Islington Giving | |
| ♥ John and Terry Heller | |
| ♥ John Lyon's Charity | |
| ♥ London Youth | |
| ♥ Macquarie Group | |
| ♥ National Lottery Community Fund | |
| ♥ The Charles Hayward Foundation | |
| ♥ The City Bridge Trust | |
| ♥ The Henry Smith Charity | |
| ♥ The Lambert Charitable Trust | |
| ♥ The Mitchell Charitable Trust | |

*Thank
you*

Help make a difference in your community

A high percentage of lifetime mental illness is first experienced before the age of 20. Support from our donors means we can tackle poor mental health as soon as it appears, giving young people every chance of a life free from mental illness.

By keeping young people in education, building their resilience, and keeping families together, we're helping to build a positive future for our community.

Get involved and help change a young person's life.

- ◆ Make a one-off or regular donation
- ◆ Donate to a specific project
- ◆ Support us through Payroll Giving
- ◆ Volunteer with us for a day
- ◆ Choose us as your 'Charity of the Year'
- ◆ Take on a challenge and donate your sponsorship
- ◆ Donate as a gift

Donate via our website: <https://brandon-centre.org.uk/donate-now>

Call us to find out more on [0207 267 4792](tel:02072674792) or email us at admin@brandoncentre.org.uk

A big thanks to all our supporters who are helping us give more young people a promising future.



How to get in touch

General Enquiries: 020 7267 4792

Mental Health services

Email: counselling@brandoncentre.org.uk | Telephone: 020 7267 1321 | Text: 07520 633477

Systemic Integrative Treatment

Email for professionals: deancharlery@brandoncentre.org.uk | Telephone: 020 7424 9935

Parenting Groups

Email for parents: familyservice@brandoncentre.org.uk

Email for professionals: deancharlery@brandoncentre.org.uk

Training for professionals

Email: brandoncentre.healthyliving@nhs.net

Free condoms for 13-24 year olds in Camden (C-card Scheme)

Online registration: <https://comecorrect.org.uk/camden/>

Telephone: 0207 267 4792

Email: Reception@brandoncentre.org.uk

Follow us on:



**Thank you for your interest
in our special charity**

The logo for Brandon Centre is a dark blue, rounded rectangular shape with a white border. Inside the shape, the text "Brandon Centre" is written in a large, bold, white sans-serif font. Below it, the tagline "Here for Young People" is written in a smaller, white sans-serif font.

**Brandon
Centre**
Here for Young People

Please don't forget to **sign-up** for future editions.