

Brandon *Bulletin*

The year so far
2026

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Hello and Welcome

Welcome to the latest edition of the **Brandon Bulletin**.

There's so much to celebrate in this edition, and reading through it I'm struck by just how much of Brandon Centre's work is made possible through people coming together – our young people, staff, volunteers, partners, funders and supporters.

Over the past few months, we've had some wonderful moments... Our **She Is Supported programme** has been shortlisted for a national Children & Young People Now Award, while also securing a further two years of funding from **Mercers' Charitable Foundation** to continue developing this important work with girls and young women in Islington.

We've cheered on our first London Marathon runners, watched some very brave supporters jump out of a plane for us, and continued building strong relationships with schools, youth organisations and community partners.

This edition also allows us to reflect on our history while looking to the future. We recently reconnected with the story of our founder, Dr Faith Spicer, whose belief that young people deserved somewhere safe, compassionate and non-judgemental remains at the heart of Brandon Centre more than 57 years later. At the same time, new funding from the **Prudence Trust** will help us learn, understand and recognise the impact of our work while strengthening our offering.

There are also some important changes within the Brandon Centre family, and we say thank you to both Mark and Sajida, who have given so much of their time, energy and leadership to the organisation in their positions on our leadership board. We're also delighted to welcome our new Chair, Lucy Moore, who you'll get to meet on page 16.

What remains constant through all of this is our commitment to listening to young people and ensuring they can access the support, relationships and opportunities they need to thrive.

Thank you, as always, for being part of Brandon Centre and for supporting the work we do. I hope you enjoy this edition.



Julia Brown
Chief Executive

Our SIS programme has been shortlisted!

We have exciting news...

We are delighted to have our She Is Supported (SIS) programme shortlisted for the **Youth Work Award at the Children & Young People Now Awards 2026!**

SIS brings together the expertise of Brandon Centre, Highbury Roundhouse, Mary's Youth Club and Prospex to provide holistic, accessible and meaningful support to young girls across Islington. This includes one-to-one mentoring, activities, residentials and day trips, as well as mental health and wellbeing support from our community psychologist.

This collaborative programme allows us to combine our knowledge, relationships and skills with the other youth clubs to offer stronger support and opportunities that no single organisation could provide alone.

It's through this unique approach that we are able to give our SIS girls the right support to boost their wellbeing, confidence and development.

And so to be shortlisted for such a prestigious national award is incredibly special! It recognises the dedication, passion and hard work of everyone involved in the SIS programme and the positive impact it has had.

We are looking forward to attending the awards ceremony and celebrating alongside all the other fantastic finalists who have been nominated!

**Children &
Young People Now
Awards 2026**

Finalist

The future of SIS

The Mercers' Charitable Foundation



And while we are on the topic of our brilliant SIS programme... we are thrilled to have successfully secured another two years of funding from **The Mercers' Charitable Foundation**.

To continue supporting our Islington girls in the way that's best for them, we have slightly adapted our approach based on what we've learnt over the past two years.

On July 13th, we joined both The Mercers' Charitable Foundation and St Mary's University at the spectacularly historical Mercers' Hall for a learning day with other funded partners, exploring what 'breakthroughs' look like in our work with young people.

These can be big or small - from a young person making eye contact for the first time, to returning to a session after disengaging or taking small steps towards greater confidence and self-esteem.

Off the back of this, SIS will continue to deliver one-to-one mentoring, day trips and annual residentials, alongside our weekly open-access girls' groups, which will now have our community psychologist Jessica on hand to offer support to both young people and staff.

We are incredibly grateful to The Mercer's Charitable Foundation for their continued support, and are excited to build on this success and learnings to develop our SIS programme even further.



Reconnecting with our legacy

We recently welcomed Nell Nicholson to Brandon Centre to chat to us about her grandmother's (and our founder's) legacy, Dr Faith Spicer.



Faith was an extraordinary woman whose vision continues to shape our work more than 57 years after she founded the **London Youth Advisory Centre** in 1969, the same organisation that would later become **Brandon Centre** after philanthropist Brandon Cadbury, who donated the Kentish Town building that remains our home today.

Nell's stories about her grandmother reminded us of just how remarkable Faith was. Born into a large family of 9 children, she was the youngest of her siblings and one of 8 daughters. At a time when opportunities for women were extremely limited, her mother passionately encouraged her daughters to pursue education and independence – values that clearly influenced Faith's path and determination.

While Faith became a doctor and a psychiatrist, it was through her career as a medical director that she quickly recognised the need for a service that allowed young people to talk through the emotional uncertainty and personal challenges around contraception. An innovator of her time, Faith believed that young people deserved a space where they could talk openly about their experiences and receive support without judgment, which led her to set up her own counselling and psychotherapy service.

But she didn't stop there. Faith helped shape the emerging understanding of adolescent mental health with other organisations, such as the Brook Advisory Centre and the Anna Freud Centre. Although Faith eventually retired from her formal role, she never stopped caring about Brandon Centre. She continued to take an active interest and kept an eye on our work and progress.

While she is no longer with us, her influence is felt every day in our work. We use her values, compassion and innovation as our guide to support young people and their families today. And our connection with Faith helps us stay grounded in the principles that have shaped Brandon Centre from the very beginning.

Nell, a teacher by background, has dedicated her own career to supporting young people through education and mental health services. Her work at Gloucester House reflects many of the same values that defined her grandmother's life, so we're extremely lucky to have Nell come by and share her family story.

It's through Nell that we stay connected to Dr Faith Spicer and her incredible legacy. Her vision transformed the lives of countless young people, and it remains the foundation upon which Brandon Centre continues to grow today.

London Marathon 2026



On a sunny **Sunday 26th April**, we joined thousands of spectators to cheer on our two incredible runners, **Adam and Sam**, at the London Marathon. With our sign held high (wonderfully handmade by Rosie, our work experience intern), we followed the progress of Adam and Sam as they jogged around the city, ready at the sidelines to clap and shout out words of encouragement.

The day was buzzing with energy and spirits were high as we watched runners from all backgrounds and at all levels, racing for a myriad of good causes. It was also fantastic to see those who had dressed up, from teddy bears to chickens and rhinos.

This year's marathon was particularly special, not just because it was our first time there but because it broke several world records, including raising an incredible £87.5 million for charities, the largest amount ever raised from a single event.

We caught up with both Adam and Sam a few days after the race to hear about their running experiences:



“Gosh, it was super hard. My injury started acting up about halfway in and I was still recovering from a cold I caught earlier that week, but I really dug deep to finish and I’m so glad I did. I feel extremely proud of myself for having completed the London Marathon.” – Adam

“The noise when you come over Tower Bridge is an experience that will become a core memory. There were times when I was convinced everyone was there for just me; the support was that incredible. It was spectacular to see people come together for something so positive, and to see my daughter and wife at mile 11 was just amazing. I feel incredibly lucky to be able to do it and to represent Brandon Centre.” – Sam

We're so unbelievably proud of both of our racers who took on the challenge of running around the 26.2-mile route and fundraising over **£2,000** each for Brandon Centre!

Skydiving

From being on the ground at the London Marathon to taking to the skies and jumping out of planes, it's been a busy month for us!

On **24th April**, Maya, Grace and Lucca got up super early to travel to North London Skydiving Centre in Cambridgeshire to jump from an incredibly impressive **10,000 feet** in order to raise money for Brandon Centre.

After some training, our brave team of skydivers took to the air in a small plane, before taking the exhilarating jump out into clear blue skies – and once the parachutes came out, it was a peaceful glide down to the ground.

We're extremely grateful to Maya, Grace and Lucca for skydiving on behalf of Brandon Centre and smashing their fundraising target with an incredible

£3,500k raised!



One day at La Sainte Union Catholic School

As part of the **First Give One Day**, on 11th May, we visited La Sainte Union Catholic School to speak to students about our work and the impact charities can have in our local communities.

The day involved a panel discussion alongside the Amy Winehouse Foundation and The Passage, followed by a Q&A session and interactive stalls where students could learn a little bit more before deciding which charity to support.

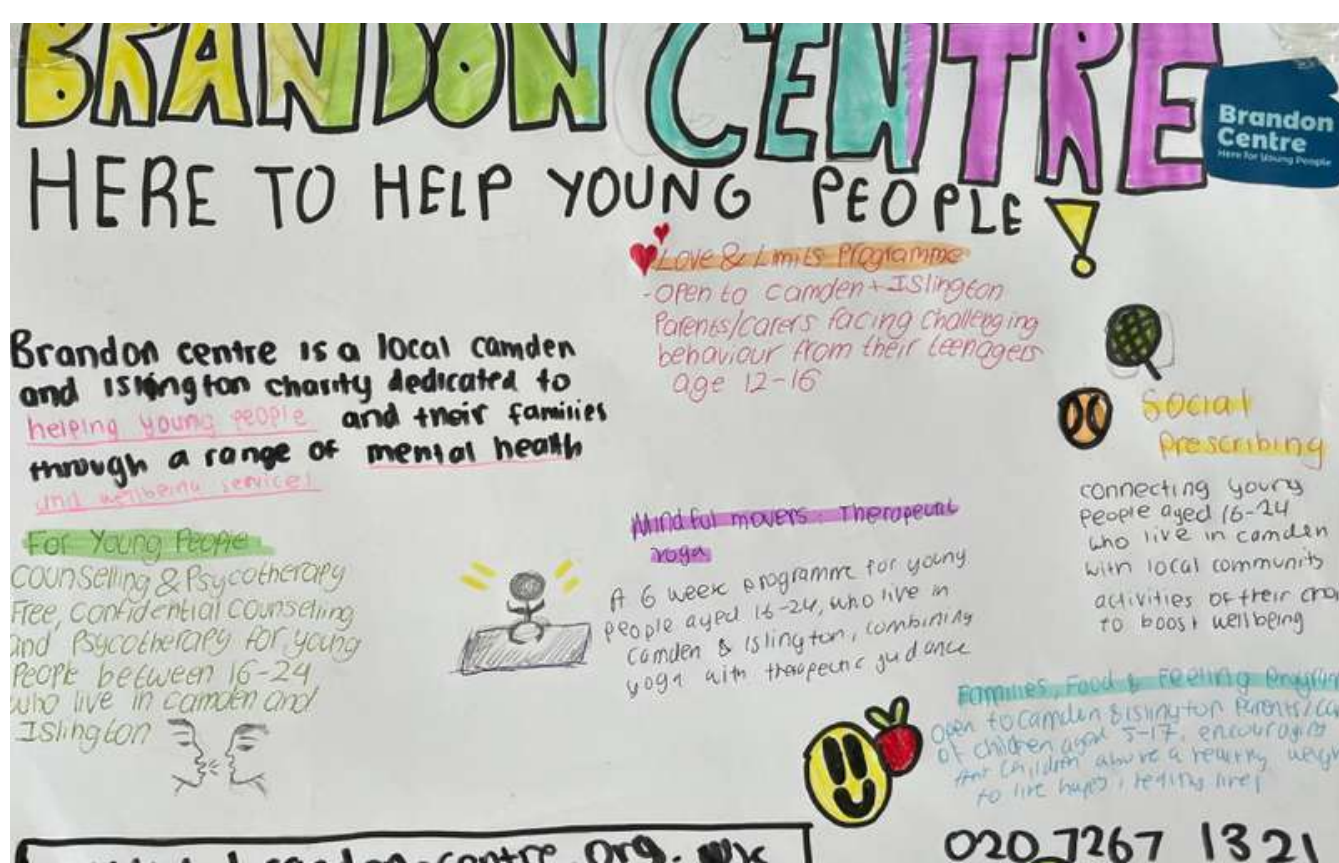
We were inspired by the students' thoughtful questions and genuine engagement as we discussed issues affecting young people, such as mental health, homelessness, drugs and alcohol, and wider social challenges.



At the end of the day, students voted with donations, and we were delighted to receive a wonderful **£175 for Brandon Centre!** The pupils also created a series of colourful posters promoting each charity involved, which was a really lovely touch.

While we are extremely grateful for all the fundraising support, the most valuable part of the day for us was the opportunity to connect directly with the students, raise awareness of what we do, and encourage conversations about mental health and community support.

A huge thank you to all the students and staff at La Sainte Union Catholic School, as well as First Give, for organising such a positive and inspiring event, and for making us feel so welcome!



Celebrating 10 years of The Hive



At Brandon Centre, we collaborate with various youth hubs across the Camden and Islington area, meeting young people in places where they're most comfortable to offer our services.



One of these is **The Hive (led by the national charity Catch22)**, which recently celebrated its 10th anniversary. And as one of our incredible partners, we were delighted to celebrate with them.



For the past decade, The Hive has provided early intervention and wraparound support for young people aged 16 to 25 who are experiencing, or are at risk of, poor mental health. What makes this youth hub so special is its understanding of the many factors which shape a young person's wellbeing, so it offers a variety of support, from emotional and social to physical and practical.



The anniversary celebration was a powerful reminder of the life-changing impact that The Hive continues to have. Young people candidly shared their experiences, highlighting the importance of having a safe and welcoming space to turn to during tricky times.



One person described walking through The Hive's doors as "the best decision of my life" while another reflected that "For the first time, I felt heard".



The event also marked the publication of an independent evaluation commissioned by the charity Catch22, which demonstrated the positive impact the hub has had on the mental health, wellbeing and life chances of young people across Camden over the past 10 years.



As one young person shared:

"The Hive has personally helped me through a lot... I feel valued and respected, and I'm grateful for the help and guidance they've provided."



Reaching this milestone is a testament to those who have helped shape The Hive to what it is today - from commissioners and partner organisations to the dedicated staff who work tirelessly to turn a bold idea into a thriving service.



For us, we're incredibly proud to be a part of The Hive's journey and look forward to building on its success so that many more young people can access the support they need to lead healthy, happy and fulfilling lives.

Our annual summer picnic

Bringing the team together over badminton, boules and buns.

On **14th July 2026**, we all headed over to Hampstead Heath for our annual staff picnic along with our friends and colleagues at The Hive.

The sun was shining, so it was the perfect excuse to play a few friendly games of badminton and boules, and to simply take a break from the day-to-day, properly catching up with one another.

As always, we ended up with quite the picnic spread with everyone bringing along something to share. Special mentions have to go to Maya's handmade vegan cheese twirls and Emma's big bag of fresh pastries – an elite park snack.

A big thank you to everyone who came along and helped make it such a lovely afternoon!



Our annual summer picnic



Strengthening our impact

A big thank you to

PRUDENCE TRUST



We're delighted to share that Brandon Centre has been awarded funding through the Prudence Trust's *What's Working?* fund.



This exciting investment will give us the capacity and resources to strengthen our data, monitoring and impact capabilities, helping us better understand the difference our services make and how we can continue to improve them.



By building up and rounding out our data, we'll be able to make both operational and strategic decisions rooted in evidence that's unique to us. This will help us see more clearly how our services are working and where we'd like to invest more time and resources, ensuring that we provide better support for young people and their families.



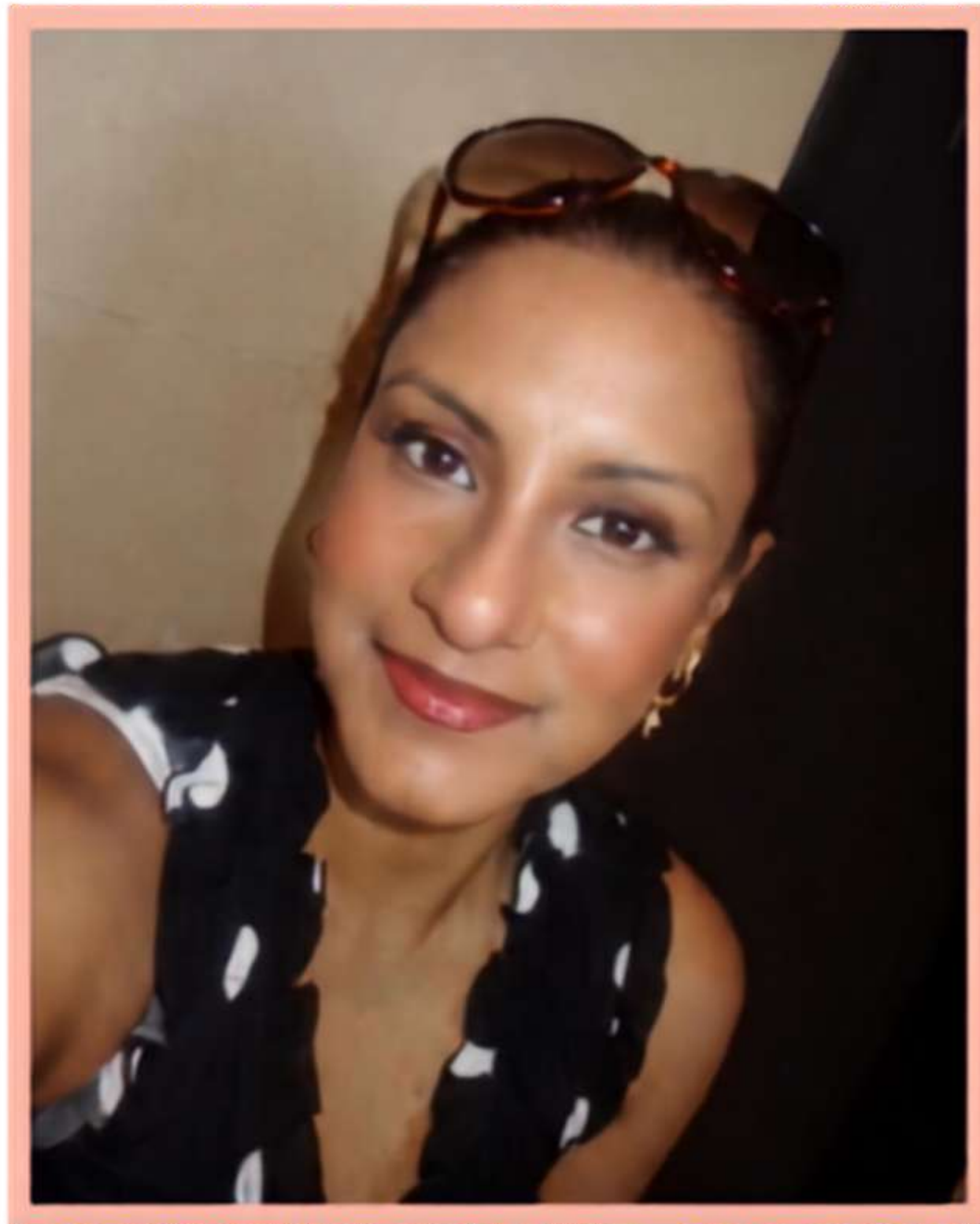
The funding will also enable us to identify both our strengths and any gaps, so that we can continue to improve our services and strengthen relationships with new and existing partners.



Through Prudence Trust's data, it's our ambition for Brandon Centre to become an excellent example in the young people's mental health sector and to share our learnings with others. We're super excited to keep you in the loop, so watch this space for our upcoming webinars and events!

Thank you to Sajida!

As **Sajida** steps down as chair of our **Young People's Leadership Board**, we took the time to ask her a few questions about her time with us.



Q

Hi Sajida,

Can you tell us a little about how you first became involved with Young Ambassadors and what led you to join the Young People's Leadership Board?

A

I was part of a workshop focusing on individual experiences of race and/or class in therapy. I was very passionate about talking about my own experience, but I also got to hear from others who had a different point of view, which opened up the conversation and highlighted topics I previously wouldn't have considered. It was really enlightening.

Q

When you first joined the board, what were you hoping to gain from the experience?

A

To figure out how to get young people into therapy and what was stopping them. With this knowledge, I then wanted to break barriers for those who would benefit from therapy but are reluctant to try, as it had done wonders for me and I wanted to give back to my community.

[read more](#)

Q

Over the past few years, you have been involved in a wide range of opportunities. What achievement are you most proud of from your time with the board?

A

Each opportunity has brought its own achievement, so it's difficult to choose just one. My biggest achievements would have to be when I was involved in things I hadn't done before. The two that stand out to me are: Persuading a panel at a fundraising bid and winning it! And hosting a series of workshops where I was interviewing young people for the Linkaters Voice Unlocked project. Both were nerve-wracking in the moment but immediately empowering after!

Q

Can you share a moment when you felt your voice, or the voice of young people, had a real impact?

A

This is a tricky one... I like to believe that every moment has been impactful, be it big or small. I think these days, the world is looking tough for everyone, and as time goes on, young people are left with less and less resources to support themselves... so yes, any moment that shines a light on a young person's voice is impactful in itself.

Q

How has being involved with the board helped you develop personally or professionally?

A

I can sometimes be a bit awkward around new people as I find anything slightly new intimidating. However, being involved with the leadership has given me the ability to just 'go for it' even when I'm unsure of my abilities.

Professionally, it has definitely helped me land a job... I ALWAYS bring up BC in my interviews because that is where it all started.

Q

What do you think makes the Young People's Leadership Board special?

A

The staff, the staff, the staff.

Q

If you could sum up your experience in three words, what would they be and why?

A

Educational: I was always learning!
Flexible: I was able to take part in my own time, Collectively led: Everything was shaped by the contribution of everyone.

Q

And finally, what would you say to a young person who is thinking about getting involved with the Leadership Board after using our service?

A

Go for it; you will gain even more than you contribute.

And thank you to Mark!

With **Mark** also moving on from our **Board of Trustees**, we asked him a few questions around his experience and if he had any advice for the new Chair.



Q Reflecting on your time with us, what's been the most rewarding part of your experience at Brandon Centre?

A Three things come to mind. The first one is hearing how much of a positive impact Brandon Centre has had on young people, that never gets old! The second is being able to support my colleagues and watch them grow professionally. And the third is working with Julia, the CEO. Her drive, passion and enthusiasm for young people and the work that we do is truly amazing, and will stay with me.

Q How have you seen Brandon Centre evolve during your time?

A There have been many changes. We've moved away from only offering sexual health services and changed the way we work to add in new support like social prescribing and yoga. But through it all, young people's needs have remained at the heart of BC.

Q What do you think makes us unique?

A The history, Brandon Centre's roots go back to 1969 and Faith Spicer's work, and that founding spirit of pushing boundaries for young people's mental health still runs through the organisation today.

It's that special combination of our long-standing reputation in the Camden and Islington area, the clinical depth and our historic building in Kentish Town that makes the centre feel a world away from being an institution, giving that warm welcoming, almost family feel.

Q What excites you about the future of the centre?

A The people who work here, I'm always in awe of their dedication and commitment to the young people they support, and the professionalism and expertise they bring to their work.

Q What advice would you like to give to our new Chair?

A Take the time to listen. In a role like this, there's an impulse to jump straight in and make an impact quickly, but what matters most is remembering you're a steward of Brandon Centre. It's your role to speak to colleagues, listen to how they feel, take on feedback and collaborate with them to improve the work that we do.

A little note from Lucy, our new Chair



Hi everyone!

I'm delighted and very excited to be taking on the role as Chair of Brandon Centre.

I've been a Trustee since 2020 and have seen so much change and development over the last few years under our CEO, Julia's leadership. What Brandon Centre does for young people in Camden and Islington (and beyond) is truly inspiring, especially during a time when the challenges that young people face have intensified.

In my role as Chair, I aim to be a support to Julia, the team and the Board of Trustees to continue to innovate and challenge on behalf of the young people in our neighbourhoods, ensuring that we deliver interventions that transform the lives of those we meet.

I'm also looking forward to developing and shaping our new emerging strategy and working with Julia to refocus our governance and leadership following our recent review work.

My background is as a population health doctor, having mainly worked in strategic and Board level roles within the NHS, including being the Chair of the British Pregnancy Advisory Service since 2023. So I believe that I can bring some good knowledge and experience to my new role.

We work in difficult times, but we have a team which cuts well above its weight, and I'm so looking forward to the next phase of development. Watch this space...

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
- ♥ London Borough of Enfield
- ♥ London Borough of Barnet
- ♥ Camden and Islington Mental Health Trust
- ♥ NCEL CAMHS Provider Collaborative

Trusts, Foundations and Individuals

- | | |
|---|---|
| ♥ Comic Relief | ♥ The Portal Trust |
| ♥ Compass Wellbeing | ♥ Propel |
| ♥ The City Bridge Trust | ♥ Prudence Trust |
| ♥ The Hampstead Wells and Campden Trust | ♥ River of Hope |
| ♥ The Henry Smith Foundation | ♥ The Sir Mark and Lady Turner Charitable
Settlement |
| ♥ Islington Giving | ♥ The Mercers Charitable Foundation |
| ♥ Linklaters | ♥ The Talent Fund |
| ♥ London Marathon Foundation | ♥ Tavistock and Portman |
| ♥ London Youth | ♥ University College London |
| ♥ Mind in Enfield and Barnet | ♥ University of East London |
| ♥ The Mayor of London | ♥ University of Hertfordshire |
| ♥ The Oakdale Trust | ♥ The Vandervell Foundation |
| ♥ The Pixel Fund | ♥ Young Camden Foundation |

We'd also like to thank our anonymous donor who has supported our young people's counselling services over the year with a very generous donation.



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 **020 7267 4792** or email us at **reception@brandoncentre.org.uk**

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

A big thank you to all our supporters

How to get in touch

General Enquiries

Telephone: **020 7267 4792**

Mental Health Services

Email: counselling@brandoncentre.org.uk | Telephone: **020 7267 4792** | Text: **07520 633477**

Systemic Integrative Treatment

Email for professionals: deancharlery@brandoncentre.org.uk or familyservice@brandoncentre.org.uk
Telephone: **020 7267 4792**

Parenting Groups:

Love and Limits group and ADHD parent support group

Email for parents: familyservice@brandoncentre.org.uk

Email for professionals: deancharlery@brandoncentre.org.uk

Families, Food and Feelings

Email for parents and professionals: brandoncentre.healthyliving@nhs.net

Parent support group for CAMHS waiting list

Email for parents and professionals: parentsupport@brandoncentre.org.uk

Training for professionals

Email: training@brandoncentre.org.uk

C-Card Scheme:

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

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

Telephone: **020 7267 4792**

Email: reception@brandoncentre.org.uk



*Thank you for your interest in
our special charity*



**Brandon
Centre**
Here for Young People

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