Brandon Bulletin

Autumn / Winter 2021/2022

Bids, new beginnings and a 'thank you'

We ended the year with a flurry of activity to submit tenders for our most important contracts and I'm delighted to confirm that we've been successful in securing our Mental Health – Minding the Gap - contract with Camden, our core borough.

It's a fantastic start to 2022, and I'd like to thank everyone involved in putting together such a strong bid. The contract will run for five years, with the opportunity for an extension for up to a further four. This allows us to continue our excellent Counselling and Psychotherapy Service, our Systemic Integrative Treatment (BC-SIT) Service and our support for The Hive youth hub.

The funding means we'll be able to reach more local young people struggling with poor mental health and provide them with accessible and practical support at a critical point in their lives.

When putting together such bids, I'm reminded not only of all the wonderful work we do but also of the resoundingly positive



support we receive at Brandon Centre, from our team, trustees, ambassadors and volunteers, as well as the strong partnerships we've developed with our commissioners, funders and partners.

So, I'd like to start 2022 with a heartfelt Thank You to everyone.

And there's plenty more to look forward to. With our core services running successfully, we're able to look at more ways to support the young people in our community. For example, we recently secured additional funding from The Mitchell Charitable Trust to provide psychological therapies for UCL students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and from John Lyon's Charity to offer counselling to young people accessing our Sexual Health services.

We also won our bid to the National Lottery Community Fund - Reaching Communities England programme which means we can launch our exciting new wellbeing coaching pilot, 'BWell'.

Our work with Arsenal in the Community is going from strength to strength, our innovative new community service with UCLH is underway, and our Young Ambassadors are making amazing progress ensuring that we're developing our services in a way that meets young people's needs.

There's always much more to mention, so I hope you'll read on with interest.

In the meantime, Happy New Year!

Julia



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Mental Health support at the heart of Brandon Centre. A word from Pavlos.

"Supporting young people's mental health has been at the heart of our work at Brandon Centre for over 50 years, and continues to drive everything we do. So, winning the Minding the Gap contract with Camden is a wonderful testament to the excellent work put in by the team over the last few years, to refine and improve our Counselling and Psychotherapy, and BC-SIT services.

Our single assessment and 16-session model is working effectively and our new outcome measures are giving us a clear idea of the benefits young people are getting from the service.

The funding will also allow our BC-SIT team to continue their important work with our intensive treatment model for the families of children at risk of going into care or custody.

I'd like to thank our 15-strong team of psychotherapists, psychologists, and support staff, and our 10-strong BC-SIT team, for their commitment and dedicated work. They have kept the service running through tricky times and without them, many young people and their families would still be feeling the negative impact of poor mental health.

So, thank you everyone!"

Dr Pavlos Rossolymos

Head of Mental Health

Arsenal Girls Kicks Programme back on the pitch after lockdown.

Arsenal in the Community has been running the national Kicks Programmes (run by 92 professional football clubs across the UK) since 2006, with the aim of keeping young people away from anti-social behaviour, drugs, and crime.

In 2019 the team secured additional funding from the London Marathon Charitable Trust and Islington Giving to extend their Girls programme, in collaboration with Brandon Centre and other community organisations, with the aim of engaging females between the ages of 8 and 17.

We spoke to Osiro Imoedemhe, Brandon Centre's Sports Psychologist on the programme, Jack Ironside, Senior Manager for Social Inclusion at Arsenal in the Community, and Pavlos Rossolymos, Brandon Centre's Head of Mental Health, about launching the new initiative during lockdown, and how it's playing an important part in improving local girls' lives.

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Q: How did the Girls Kicks programme come about?

Jack: "There's quite a lot of research that shows that a particular set of issues stop girls from taking part in sport, particularly in their teenage years. These include body changes, puberty, and increased levels of anxiety. We found that there didn't seem to be many sports-based interventions in the community which aimed to tackle all those issues together.

There are so many factors that contribute to a young person making positive changes. So we were keen to build relationships and develop partnerships with experts, like Brandon Centre, that would help us build a programme that tackles those issues in a meaningful way.



We officially launched in February 2021. Some of Arsenal's top women's players and around 100 girls joined us at the Arsenal Hub, which is the home of Arsenal in the Community, next to the Emirates.

But then lockdown hit, and we had to re-think everything."

Q: How did you carry on during lockdown?

Pavlos: "We moved the programme to online workshops. We tried to focus more on wellbeing and activities that kept us connected with those girls for whom Arsenal is a bit of a lifeline, a safe haven."

Osiro: "Performance and wellbeing are very much interlinked. So, we look at the person as a whole and try to support them, not just in football, but in all areas of their life; at school, at home, with friends. So that was our focus during lockdown."

Jack: "It turned out to be a good relationship builder. Now we've got a foundation, and a partnership with our community organisations that's really quite strong."

Q: What does the programme look like now you can meet face to face again?

Jack: "The Girls Kicks team is a mix of experienced professionals, like Osiro, or Becks, our professional coach. Then we have one or two participants who have come through the programme as assistants and young leaders. It's a really nice dynamic, and makes for a really credible program, that's safe and well delivered."

Osiro: "There are structured sessions where we cover important topics, but then if someone's having a tough week, or even a good week, and they want to have a one-to-one chat with me, I'm there for them.

The structured sessions will cover 6 key themes that we believe every young person should receive training on. They are: Purposeful practice, Resilience, Mindfulness, Growth Mindset, Communication, and Awareness.

We'll look at how each of these relates to playing football, as well as to other aspects of their life, like being intentional and purposeful on the pitch but also when studying for school, how to be aware of your surroundings on the pitch, but also when staying safe as young women out walking down the street.

They're important skills that will hopefully help them flourish and thrive in whatever they choose to do. We're making sure that as young women, they feel supported, and that they have the tools they need to succeed.

Pavlos: "I think the beautiful thing about the programme is that the wellbeing element is weaved in so well. It's part of the football practice, but it builds on the girls' resilience and wellbeing in a really integrated way. Osiro is there, kicking a ball around with them, but also available to talk to them privately about anything that's bothering them."



Q: What benefits have you seen so far?

Osiro: "It's absolutely invaluable. The girls are getting so much out of it. Even from the five-minute chat that I have with them before they play a game, you can see the immediate difference in their performance, because they're thinking about being purposeful, or giving feedback, or communicating.

It's also allowed the girls to be more open to talking about things that aren't going well in life, things that they want to work on. Some girls are very happy to ask for a chat, so I think there's a reduction in stigma as well.

This project is so special because it bridges the gap between wellbeing and performance. I think it's a very safe space for them. They're free to just be themselves.

Even the friendship groups that are being created are special, with girls from completely different walks of life becoming best friends."

Q: What hopes do you have for the programme in the future?

Jack: "It's quite a long-term vision that we have for the Girls programme. Our existing programmes have a strong pathway that helps young people move from being a participant to being a volunteer and playing an active role in the community, to becoming a leader.

We want that for the Girls programme too. We're working on providing a pathway that gives the girls the same opportunities to develop careers in football or sport.

If it looks like a young person might have an interest in coaching, we ask if they want to come along to help out with the younger ones. That often gets the ball rolling, and more often than not, they really enjoy it. It's empowering and a confidence boost for them.

Then if they go on to become a coach, it sends a really positive message to the younger members and peers in the community, that 'if they can do it, I can do it'.

It's also important that we keep a sense of community. Under the London United banner, which brings together all the professional London clubs, we've purposely tried to build programmes so that, no matter where you live in London, there's that doorstep provision. And the idea is that you then develop a really strong sense of community for those girls.

We want it to be more about the person than the player. It's really the social outcomes that we're interested in."

When is the Girls Kicks Programme on?

Friday evenings and Saturday mornings at The Arsenal Hub and other locations (Covid dependent).

The programme is supported by funding from the Premier League Charitable Fund, The London Marathon Charitable Trust and Islington Giving.

For more information, contact: rjones@arsenal.co.uk at Arsenal.



"Mental Health isn't something to be taken lightly"

Arsenal's Lexi talks about how counselling lifted a weight off her shoulders.

Brandon Centre's relationship with Arsenal in the Community goes back three years, with our own Geoffrey Baruch providing counselling and psychotherapy support for 16- to 25-year-olds attending the Arsenal in the Community programmes.

Lexi was studying Arsenal's A-Level equivalent coaching programme, but during lockdown, her mental health really started to suffer.

In this **article** Lexi talks about how having the time to talk to Geoffrey about her concerns each week really helped her, despite being worried about the stigma around counselling.

"It was a weight lifted off my shoulders as I talked – keeping it in was the worst thing I've ever done," says Lexi.

Read the full article **here**.

To find out more about the service email: geoffreybaruch@brandoncentre.org.uk

Brandon Centre wins funds for 'BWell' coaching pilot.

We're thrilled that our bid to the National Lottery Community Fund - Reaching Communities England programme has successfully secured £197,400 in funding over two years, for Brandon Centre to run our new 'BWell' coaching pilot.

The Reaching Communities programme offers funds for organisations that work with their community to help them thrive. One of the aims of the fund is to 'help more young people reach their potential by supporting them at the earliest possible stage' which is exactly what our 'BWell' pilot hopes to achieve.

'BWell' will use a coaching model to help young people self-manage their wellbeing. It will run alongside our existing psychotherapy, counselling and sexual health services as an early access intervention to help young people get support at the first sign of issues impacting their wellbeing.

This is an important step for us at Brandon Centre as we continue to see **increasing numbers of high-risk young people with unsupported mental health needs.**

Unfortunately, long waiting times mean many of them can't access the support they need for months and many of them get pulled into negative circles which further entrench their problems.

Sadly 76% of parents say that their children's mental health deteriorated while waiting for support.*

Our 'BWell' coaching service aims to tackle this problem with a preventative wellbeing model available to those young people most at risk of becoming lost between the support already widely available in the community, and the high thresholds in place for statutory support.

"The crucial factor of our pilot will be the rapid access to trained coaching support alongside the development of a peer support community," says Julia Brown, Brandon Centre CEO and professional Coach. "As our Young Ambassadors have said 'There's a different energy' to this support."



"It's not our intention to take people away from counselling, however rather to provide and test a different intervention that will encourage early presentation," says Julia. "**By encouraging vulnerable young people to seek early coaching support we can make sure they are signposted to the best service**, which in turn will mean fewer young people end up in crisis and long-term counselling."

"Our model not only seeks to prevent mental ill-health and poor wellbeing, but **it will 'hold' those young people already on our waiting lists in a more safe and resilient space**, giving them access to a strong and positive community of professionals and peers."

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

We're not new to this model of coaching at Brandon Centre. Between April and September 2021, we ran a small coaching programme to local young minority groups, funded by the Camden Youth Foundation.

Anecdotal feedback from the programme is extremely positive, with the young people involved reporting benefits such as better sleep hygiene, improved self-esteem, greater emotional awareness and regulation, and more confidence with communication and interpersonal relationships.

The model is also a good fit with our Brandon Way work and our commitment to involving young people in the co-production and design of our services. We talked to our young people about what a coaching conversation would look like, and the response was resoundingly positive.

They thought it felt empowering. **Above all, they want someone to really listen to them, not judge or give instructions**, not to try to 'fix' the past, but to help facilitate their own thinking and help them find their own solutions.

BWell will be our first major initiative to take this forward combining the successful 'open door access' of our sexual health services with the support of our therapeutic mental health expertise, and our young people's enthusiasm to get involved and provide peer-to-peer support.

Find out more about our mental health services here: https://brandon-centre.org.uk/services/mental-health-therapeutic-support

Or contact us at: counselling@brandoncentre.org.uk

*A new era for young people's mental health, YoungMinds report.



UCLH @ Brandon Centre

New model combines medicine, psychology, and youth support

Last October, we launched a new integrated service with the NHS adolescent team at University College London Hospitals (UCLH). We spoke to **Lizzie Wortley, lead Paediatric Registrar**, and **Joe Burton**, **Project Manager** about what makes this new service so innovative and important.

What is UCLH @ Brandon Centre?

The service, known as the **UCLH Adolescent Service**, will be funded by the UCLH Transformation Fund until March then, for another two years, by the UCLH charity. The service will see 13 to 18-year-olds with complex medical needs living in the Camden and Islington area.

"We'll see young people from a viewpoint that's not always available elsewhere," says Lizzie Wortley, Paediatric Registrar.

"For example, the young person that gets referred in with a physical problem like a headache or tummy pain, but for whom medical screening tells you there's no major red flag."

It's not necessarily clear what the mental or physical health needs are of these young people. For many, this results in them becoming 'lost in the system', while their symptoms continue to impact their lives.

The service will see those young people from a 360-degree professional perspective which will assess their wellbeing from a medical, psychological, and social point of view.

"We'll look at how much of the problem is driven by function, and how much of a role stress, anxiety, or other factors are at play in the way those symptoms manifest themselves," says Lizzie.

"In this way, we can help them manage their physical symptoms by helping them understand the interaction of everything that's going on in their life."

Where is the service based?

At Brandon Centre, 26 Prince of Wales Road, Kentish Town, London NW5 3LG.

A big benefit of working with the UCLH team at Brandon Centre is that it allows us to make these important services available within the community.

"It's a level of accessibility that you just can't create in a big tertiary hospital," says Lizzie.

What's also innovative about the service is that it brings together several professionals, with different skills, into one space. Young people will be seen at Brandon Centre by a multidisciplinary team including paediatricians, psychologists, youth workers and occupational therapists.

Together, the team will be able to make decisions about the best course of action there and then, avoiding the potential delays of referrals down the wrong route.

"It's about giving practical and pragmatic support without having to have 5 or 6 conversations with different professionals who weren't in the room and didn't see the interaction for themselves," says Lizzie "That's why this service is going to be so helpful."

"This is a really exciting opportunity," says Julia Brown, Brandon Centre CEO. "By offering this service we're pulling secondary care out into the community. We're able to look at the young person holistically and support their health and wellbeing, whether it's a short-term challenge or a longer-term issue."



"We hope that by making healthcare accessible in a welcoming and friendly environment, young people will realise that talking to professionals isn't this big scary thing," says Lizzie.

"We want to encourage them to take a proactive and positive approach to their own health, which will have important benefits for them as they reach their 20s and 30s. And this, in turn, benefits the healthcare system as a whole."

How can people access the service?

"Young people will generally be triaged in from the GP referral lists at first, but we're also working with schools and other third sector youth groups to see if we can open up additional sources of referral, as well as make sure that young people who could benefit from the service are seen and heard," says Joe.

When is the service available?

Tuesday afternoons @ Brandon Centre

If you know someone who could benefit from the service, or to find out more, contact:

uclh.adolescentserviceatbrandon@nhs.net

Spotlight on our Young Ambassadors

Engaging with young people is vital to the success of our services, and this year we've welcomed five new members to our Young Ambassador programme.

The programme aims to help develop our Young Ambassadors' skills, experience, and confidence through training, volunteering and employment opportunities within Brandon Centre.

Let's meet our newest Young Ambassadors...

Haven Pope

I'm Haven and I'm 19 years old. I've been working in the Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) sector for nearly 3 years now, delivering sexual health workshops to young people, researching young people's experiences of sexual health services in Camden and Islington, and helping to design the future of sexual health education and care.

Having used sexual health services for a long while and having always been enthusiastic about having positive and inclusive conversations around sex, becoming a Young Ambassador and joining the Young People's Leadership Board at Brandon Centre is really important to me.

To be working behind the scenes with a group of amazing people is such a great feeling. I get to be at the forefront of making sure sexual health services and RSE are the best they can be to support young people no matter their age, background or needs.



Haven Pope Young Ambassador





Clara McDade Young Ambassador

Clara McDade

I'm Clara, a student in my final year of university and passionate about young people's sexual and mental health. I also do a lot of work around gender-based violence and intimate partner abuse in young people.

I became involved with the Brandon Centre at the beginning of 2021, after working on a project for the CAMISH Network, and had the pleasure of contributing to Brandon Centre's Young People's Involvement Strategy before becoming a Young Ambassador.

But my relationship with Brandon Centre goes back years! Having gone to school in Camden, the Brandon Centre was always a safe, positive place for me and my friends to go for advice about sex, relationships or mental health.

I'm very proud to be representing this special organisation, and hope to continue the open and inclusive spirit of Brandon Centre as a Young Ambassador.

Rosy Todd

I'm Rosy, and I joined Brandon Centre whilst studying Architecture at university.

I'm keen to open up conversations about mental health in the UK and, as a Young Ambassador, I hope to help make health and wellbeing services more accessible to young Londoners and demystify the therapy process.

Since working with Brandon Centre, I've found that making a positive difference is important to me and must play a key role in my future going forward.



Rosy Todd Young Ambassador





Young Ambassador

Lillan Lemouchi

I'm Lillan and, since teen-hood, I've had an unrelenting passion and care for all things sexual health. I'm specifically interested in LGBTQI+ youth advocacy and in exploring sexuality education through applied philosophy.

I often use creative arts methods to cultivate accessible and authentic dialogues about sexual health and relationships. In 2020-21 I worked with UCL to develop a collaborative zine-making platform for young people to engage with personal and unfiltered reflections on these topics (with the help of Brandon Centre!).

I'm now looking forward to continuing this line of work collaboratively within the Camden community.

Georgie Wilde

I'm Georgie. I'm 21 and a university student here in Camden, as well as a service user. My passion for all things sexual health was ignited at the age of 18 after being exposed to sex-positive RSE (Relationships and Sex Education.) It revolutionised the way I thought about myself, and my relationships with others, giving me power when I previously felt I had none. Since then, I've wanted to help other young people achieve better sexual health and RSE access.

I love tackling challenging topics, in particular, the still sometimes stigmatised worlds of sexual health and mental health. One of my biggest RSE interests lies in promoting pleasure and breaking shame cycles. I was able to explore these interests recently by designing and leading workshops with some incredible young people. We explored topics like porn and pleasure through discussion, art, and poetry.



This work inspired my dissertation for my undergrad degree, which looks at re-framing the canon of philosophical porn-related literature from the perspective of education and young people's needs.

I'm beyond excited to bring these experiences to Brandon Centre's young people's board and to work with the amazing team of Young Ambassadors!

If you're interested in joining us as a Young Ambassador, contact: **youthambassadors@brandoncentre.org.uk**



Brandon Centre joins Open House London 2021

On Saturday September 4th Brandon Centre opened its doors and garden to the public as part of the Open House London Festival 2021.

Our team of staff and Young Ambassadors welcomed over 50 visitors interested in finding out more about the history of our building and the welcoming environment it allows us to provide for the young people in our community.

One of this year's themes at Open House London was the link between architecture and wellbeing, promoting mental health with mindful architecture, and visits to undiscovered places.

"What was lovely, and a bit different, about the visits, was that instead of talking about the architecture of the building we talked about what goes on inside the building," said Julia, Brandon Centre CEO.

"We talked about the importance of community-based services that help young people deal with their mental and sexual health and how, with our support, they can go on to become responsible, fulfilled, and healthy young adults."

Our beautiful house dates back to the Georgian period. It was donated by the well-known philanthropist, Brandon Cadbury, after being so impressed by our founder, Faith Spicer's, ground-breaking work with adolescents in 1960s London. As a thank you, we named the charity after him in 1984.

We still enjoy a close relationship with the Cadbury family through The Oakdale Trust who very generously support our work, and Brandon's daughter, Olivia Tatton-Brown, is our very special Patron.

Read more about our 52-year story here: https://brandon-centre.org.uk/our-history





Our very own 'extreme garden makeover'



After 18 months of Covid restrictions, the Brandon Centre garden was looking and feeling a little neglected.

With just days to go before we opened our doors as part of the Open House London Festival, we needed help, and fast.

Thanks to Julia's quick thinking and the generous support of HandsOn London, help arrived in the form of Jon Meech and his team of 11 volunteers from Baringa, an International Management Consultancy.

HandsOn London is a charity that connects volunteers with good causes. Jon and his team link groups, or individual volunteers, with a variety of community and charity projects. The projects get an extra pair of hands, and the volunteers get a great sense of achievement.

"The garden had become a bit of a jungle," says Jon. **"A lot of things had grown badly or weren't** particularly healthy, and the patio area was all but invisible."

"The volunteers' faces dropped when I said what we were going to do. And that we only had two hours to do it!" says Jon.

With Open House London visitors due to arrive the following day, and with Covid still very much on people's minds, we were keen to have some open space for visitors to sit and relax in.

And they did it!

"It was unbelievable," says Julia. "It was like a two-hour extreme makeover. They even did the front garden while they waited for me to get there."

"The volunteers were light on their feet at the end of the day, just looking at what they'd achieved," says Jon. "Because it's actually really hard work, and they never thought they'd do it."

"We even moved the paving stones to a better location with a spare 20 minutes at the end of the day."

Our Open House visitors had no idea of the transformation that had taken place only 24 hours earlier!

Jon returned with another team of 12 volunteers, this time from Asante Capital, an independent global advisory group.

"We finished tidying up and did some more pruning," says Jon.



"The canopy is good, so we opened up underneath for planting bluebells and other spring flowers. What's there now will grow brighter and greener because there aren't any problem plants taking away vital nutrients."

"We'll also be planting wildflowers that attract bees and butterflies and encourage other wildlife."

We're so grateful to HandsOn London for giving us our garden back.

Now we're looking into funding for our own tools and even a summer house, so that we can start using the space for coaching and other wellbeing activities, giving our young people even more choice over how they access our services.

Find out more about our wellbeing services here: https://brandon-centre.org.uk/services/mental-health-therapeutic-support

Or contact us at: counselling@brandoncentre.org.uk



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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:



We offer huge thanks for the very generous **£1000 donation** made by **Trust Payments** in respect of the sponsorship of **Niki Ashcroft** who recently completed the 3 Peaks Challenge for Brandon Centre.



Centre

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



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

We're open. Here's how you can reach us...

We hope to be open for drop-ins again soon, but for now, please call before you visit.

We'll book you an appointment or direct you to the right service.

General Enquiries: 020 7267 4792

Mental Health services

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

We're currently offering a mixture of face-to-face and remote therapy sessions, via telephone or video call. This blended offer is working well.

Sexual Health services

Remember to call us before you visit. We're seeing just as many people as before lockdown, but we'll need to book you an appointment.

Email: contraception@brandoncentre.org.uk | Telephone: 020 7267 4792 | Text: 07451 288524

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

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