



# Brandon Trust

DRIVING UP  
QUALITY



2018-19

## Self-Assessment Report

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## Introduction

Brandon is committed to providing high-quality, person-centred support. We know we can only be certain of getting this right by listening to our stakeholders and not being afraid to change and improve the things that they feel we could do better. That's why, in December 2013, we signed up to the Driving Up Quality Code.



Driving Up Quality is an independent, national campaign and code of conduct. It was set up in the aftermath of the shocking abuse at Winterbourne View. Its aim is to prevent what happened there from ever happening again. It does this by encouraging providers to continually assess and improve their services against five key areas, alongside promoting a culture of listening and openness.

For us, being part of Driving Up Quality is all about people we support, their families, Brandon staff, Trustees, and our other stakeholders coming together to recognise our achievements and find new ways to drive up the quality of our services.

## Our Driving Up Quality events

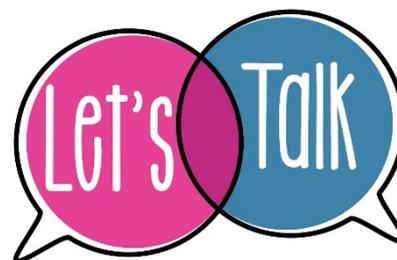
Our Driving Up Quality events, which we host across Brandon's six geographical areas, are the focal point of our commitment to the campaign.

When they started, our events were rightly focussed on understanding where we can improve what we do. That remains as true as ever, but we also recognise how important it is to celebrate what we do well, as well as the individual achievements of people we support. That's why our events are fun, social occasions, filled not just with listening and discussion, but also with activities, music and dancing.



## At each event, we ask:

1. What is working well?
2. Where can we do better?
3. What action can we take to make improvements?



We then develop bespoke actions for each of our areas, as well as identifying Brandon-wide commitments which we can act on across the organisation.

This report highlights:

- the feedback from our area events, set against the five key areas of the Driving Up Quality code of conduct.
- real stories\* of what's working well.
- the commitments we're taking forward.



\*Some of the names in our examples have been changed for privacy



## KEY AREA 1

# SUPPORT IS FOCUSSED ON THE PERSON

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## What did people tell us at our events?

### What's working well

 **We are supporting people to learn new skills and become more independent.**

As well as supporting people in their day-to-day lives to learn new skills and become more independent, we run several day services and enterprises across our areas. Our enterprises offer people with learning disabilities and autism opportunities to gain work skills, vocational training, and paid employment. They include a working farm, a pottery, a ceramics studio and cafes.



### Where we can do better



**Supporting people to be more involved in the recruitment of their support team.**

We've made this one of our main Driving Up Quality commitments – we want to do more to meaningfully involve people we support in recruiting their support staff.



**People want more consistency in the staff teams that support them (reduce agency use).**

- ✓ As well as ensuring we recruit appropriate numbers of staff, we will use local bank staff wherever possible rather than agency.
- ✓ Staff recruitment levels will be reviewed frequently to ensure consistency and identify any gaps.

## Example

### An amazing journey

I first met James in 2014. He was 24 years old. Described as having a severe learning disability, autism and behaviours that seriously challenged, he had spent many years in a long stay hospital. Any attempt to move him to residential care had failed catastrophically.

I was introduced to James as part of a team who were tasked with designing a service that would finally make this move successful. My role on that team was to advise on positive behavioural support. However, that was only short-term and, having finally met James, I was determined to do whatever I could to transform this young man's life. I successfully applied to be manager of James' new residential support service – and began an incredible journey alongside him.

My first step in this role was to recruit a team to support James and start a gentle transition from hospital to home. This transition was never going to be easy, but from early on, we started to see that every bit of positive contact improved the quality of James' life ever so slightly.

Through giving James choices and options, and supporting him proactively, we very quickly saw his most challenging behaviours extinguish. He became visibly more comfortable in the company of other familiar people, his communication significantly improved, and he began to sing, whoop and smile.

At the same time as we were getting to know James, we were also working hard behind the scenes with many other partners to make sure that his new home would provide the best environment for him. We had to consider every possible detail as we knew it was probably his last chance at life outside hospital.

Finally, everything came together and James was able to make the move.

The transition was never going to be an easy one for James. There was a possibility that he would never accept his new home. The first few weeks proved to be just as difficult as we expected. Initially, he refused to move beyond a single room in the house – his place of safety.

There were many discussions around what to do in James' best interest during this time involving his family, advocates, social workers, our commissioners, and specialist health professionals. Slowly, through gentle encouragement and persuasion, staff supported him to adjust to his new surroundings. Gentle routines were re-introduced, and James finally began to settle in. He began to sing, whoop and walk with a swagger again.

Small step by small step, his progress has continued. He is now not only comfortable in his new home, but enjoying regular trips out. These might be simple things that many of us naturally take for granted, but they seemed impossible for James just a year ago.

James' support team have walked alongside him every step of the way and have celebrated every one of his achievements. Here's a story from one them, Robert, that shows just how far James has come and what that means to his team:





“As we set off to drive, I asked James to point which way he wanted to go, he made a strong showing of pointing left so that’s where we headed. We planned to stop at the garage I usually take James for an ice cream. As we neared the garage he pointed at it and banged the window, so we pulled into the garage and parked in the car park area. My colleague Sarah headed in to the garage and when I

reassured James she was buying him an ice cream, he began swaying from side to side whooping and smiling from ear to ear, he looked amazing, so happy, it was so brilliant.

“We headed up onto a nearby green and pulled over to eat our ice creams. As James ate his, Sarah and I ate ours. Then, rather magically, a car and a work van pulled up either side of us, in both vehicles the people inside were eating ice creams too.

It was such a lovely few moments, where three vehicles and every person in them were all equals, gently taking in the sunshine and enjoying our ice creams as one.

“James’s smile was so wide, he ate his ice cream and we set back off on our drive. James again pointed which direction he wanted to go, and away we went, we saw cows, goats, sheep and dogs chasing tennis balls.

“It was such a lovely morning, James was awesome, he looked so content and for those few moments eating his ice cream in the car with the other passengers and drivers, he wasn’t a guy with autism, he was a regular Joe, doing everyday things in his community, just like everybody else.”

## Tammy – Locality Manager



## KEY AREA 2

# THE PERSON IS SUPPORTED TO HAVE AN ORDINARY AND MEANINGFUL LIFE

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## What did people tell us at our events?

### ✓ What's working well

#### Supporting people to plan holidays and day trips.

Many people we support don't have the financial means to do some of the things they've always wanted. Brandon's Dream Fund is a charitable fund that helps dreams, ambitions and aspirations come true. Applications can be made throughout the year, either solely by people we support or with the input of staff.

In 2018 the Dream Fund awarded funding to 48 applications. These ranged from once in a lifetime holidays to helping someone we support publish and launch their own children's book.



### Where we can do better



**Have more days where we can meet, spend time together and build relationships.**

This is extremely important to many people we support. We've made it one of our main Driving Up Quality commitments.



**People we support wanted more support to better understand and manage their budgets and finances.**

This is another of our main Driving Up Quality commitments – we want to ensure people feel they are getting value for money and have control over their support budget.

## Example

### Finding Greg's voice

In 2015, Brandon Trust started to support Greg in his home. He had been let down by his previous provider. How to communicate support plans, and keeping his anxiety levels low, was not shared or handed over to us. His home life because of this, was extremely challenging, however, from the day we took over it was a fresh start for Greg. Our team met up with a team of specialists and together we started to work out how Greg would like to be supported. Transition from service provider was far from easy for Greg, we had a lot of professional input and things to prove with them.

We quickly realised that lots of Greg's 'behaviours' actually came from epileptic seizures. With determination and perseverance, we set about proving this, which showed we had a clear understanding of Greg and knew him well. As time went by his life became structured to his wants, needs, and preferences, with Greg leading the way as it should be. His home now is warm and inviting with him making the art for his walls, his curtains, furniture, everything in his home is what he has chosen. His life is good, he is empowered and happy, choosing how he wants to live his life with support. Fast forward to now, Greg can communicate well by using signs, his iPad, and the mobile phone to share pictures with his team. Staff usually needed to instigate this...



On one hot Saturday, the sun was shining, and Greg had finished getting dressed. This was all before anyone had made any suggestions about what he would like to do. Greg is non-verbal and struggles to communicate what he would like to do for himself, so we usually give him choices.

This morning was different. For the first time, he pointed to a photo on his wall of himself at the beach, completely unprompted. We asked Greg if he wanted to go to the beach. He pointed to his cheek enthusiastically, this means yes in Greg's language. We asked: 'Do you want to go to that beach?' Again, Greg said yes, pointing to his cheek. We were amazed and delighted that he had decided what he wanted to do all by himself. It was hard to believe that just a short while ago, he didn't sign at all and now here he was telling us exactly what he wanted to do.

Greg was very enthusiastic to go to the beach, which he enjoyed thoroughly. We watched in amazement; Greg was anticipating the waves, jumping up and down with excitement prior to the waves hitting him. The sensory enjoyment he looked to be getting from the waves was a privilege to watch; a very cold and wet privilege!

Once we all dried off, we snacked at the café and spent some more time on the beach. Greg looked relaxed and happy. The next day, he did the same thing with different support staff and chose the beach again in the same way. This is a massive step in finding Greg's 'own voice'.

### Abigail and Karen – Greg's support team



## KEY AREA 3

# CARE AND SUPPORT FOCUS ON BEING HAPPY AND HAVING A GOOD QUALITY OF LIFE

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## What did people tell us at our events?

### ✓ What's working well

✓ **People feel they are supported to stay safe.**

In 2018 Brandon became a member of the National Safeguarding Adults Network and created our own Safeguarding Panel. The Panel meets every three months and involves people from across Brandon, including Trustees, members of the executive management team, area managers, locality managers, team leaders, our quality team, and a 'critical friend' - someone from the care sector who doesn't work for Brandon.

The Panel's aim is to make sure we're always open and honest about how we can learn from safeguarding cases. Each meeting focusses on safeguarding news and policy changes. The members also discuss case studies and examine our processes to make sure they are the best they can be.

### Where we can do better



**People wanted more support to share ideas about the activities they enjoy.**

- ✓ We are exploring how to better store information about holidays, trips, good courses and activities that people have enjoyed, to allow this information to be easily shared with others.

## What else are we doing?

### Plan for Life

Plan for Life is our main support planning tool. It's an important document that contains everything from someone's essential medical information to their communication preferences.



Feedback from staff told us that it could be lengthy or complicated to complete, and it wasn't easy to involve people we support in doing it. We've recently introduced a whole new format for Plan for Life. It's been created with the input of staff and people we support. The new Plan is split into simple sections, and we've provided staff with guidance notes and a completed example to make using it as clear and simple as possible.

By transitioning to the new Plan format, the information of people we support will be clearer and a more accurate representation of who they are. This will help new and existing staff to provide them with the best support possible.

## Example

### A new lease of life



A little over a year ago, Jon was on higher doses of medication, struggled with a number of anxieties, and had a limited range of activities that he would choose from.

However, that's all changed. With a number of new factors such as a new team leader with fresh ideas, further training for his staff team and reduction of his medication, Jon's life began to change for the better.

It wasn't always easy for Jon, or his staff team, but he trusted us as we trusted him and together, we all persevered. Following a medication review and with support from Jon's health team, it was decided that it would be in Jon's best interests to try and reduce the amount of medication that he was taking. Following the medication reduction, over time, Jon's communication and listening skills have improved, he is more able to express how he is feeling and with the help of staff is better at managing his anxiety.

We also encouraged Jon to make more use of the car to access the community. This was a giant celebratory leap forward for Jon. Going out in the car provided a wider range of activities and enabled Jon to visit places that had always been important to him, for example meeting up with his sister and having picnics at one of his favourite spots.

Jon became more open to trying new activities and started going to a local monthly disco. He started swimming and going to a local library for new books to read and he helps with recycling at the local Brandon Trust office as well! Jon is far more active now and is generally more relaxed and has even overcome his anxiety about visiting the hairdressers. He's more willing to explore places and activities outside of his comfort zone, it's wonderful to see!

Jon has admirably accepted all of these new experiences that have opened up his world and still enjoys them very much to this day. He has come so far and we are all very happy for him and really proud of his journey over the last year. So here's a written toast to Jon and his future, a personalised and meaningful life... or as we might say to Jon, "Good times and happy memories" ahead!

### Jon's support team



## KEY AREA 4

# A GOOD CULTURE IS IMPORTANT TO THE ORGANISATION

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## What else did people tell us at our events?

### Where we can do better



**Families of people we support would like better communication around support hours/day services. They would also like it to be easier to raise any concerns.**

- ✓ We are committed to improving how we capture the contact/communication preferences of family members. We will also offer the opportunity to meet with a staff team leader outside of any formal reviews.

## What else are we doing?

### STOMP campaign

STOMP is a health campaign to stop the overmedication of people with learning disabilities or autism and improve quality of life. In May 2018, Brandon signed the STOMP pledge for social care to say we are committed to the campaign.

People with a learning disability and/or autism can be given psychotropic medication - medication that can affect how people think, feel, or behave - to 'manage' their behaviour. For some people, this is a helpful option. However, some people are taking this medication when they don't need to.

We support

**STOMP**

Stopping over-medication of people with a learning disability, autism or both

The problem with this is that the medication can have serious side-effects. Also, giving medication does not help us to understand why the person is doing the behaviour in the first place, or how we can better support them.

To get us started, Brandon team leaders completed a survey about people we support being prescribed psychotropic medication. The results suggest there may be people we support who could be taking less psychotropic medication. Therefore, it's very important that our staff are aware of the STOMP campaign. Also, that they feel empowered to talk to medical professionals about the medication someone they support is taking.

To support and empower staff we're developing a training programme for Brandon teams. We've called it 'Let's talk about STOMP', and it will focus on what STOMP is, the problems that can be caused by overmedication, and what we can do to help. Each team will then be able to work with the person they support, and their families, to come up with a STOMP action plan.

## Example

### Building a positive behaviour support community

Positive Behaviour Support (PBS), is an approach to supporting people whose behaviour may sometimes challenge us. These behaviours could include verbal and/or physical aggression, self-injury, or the person isolating themselves. The main aim of PBS is to improve the person's quality of life, so they can do more of the things that are important to them. The approach looks at how we can support the person every day, to help them stay relaxed and happy.

At Brandon, we're creating a PBS community where staff who are passionate about supporting people who communicate through their behaviour, will come together to think about how we use PBS.

Early in 2018, we appointed an advanced practitioner in PBS to establish this community. We're pleased to announce that we recently appointed two experienced practitioners in PBS. They are members of Brandon staff, who have taken on the additional role, drawing on their interest in the field. They'll have opportunities to develop their skills and provide leadership in their local area.

In addition, a small group of support staff have completed training from BILD (British Institute of Learning Disabilities), on how to complete a behaviour assessment and meet someone's needs. These new skills will equip staff in their day-to-day roles.

The next step in building our community, is to recruit more experienced practitioners in PBS, so every area of Brandon has support. We're also developing awareness training for all support staff. The more we can increase understanding of PBS, the better support we can offer to enable people to live the lives they choose.





## KEY AREA 5

# MANAGERS AND BOARD MEMBERS LEAD AND RUN THE ORGANISATION WELL



## What did people tell us at our events?

### Where we can do better



Some people we support would like a better understanding of what the Board of Trustees is, who the members are, and what they do.

This will be another of our main commitments.

## What else are we doing?

### Supporting and training Brandon's leaders

Our frontline leaders play a hugely important role in the quality of support we provide. Our Leadership Development Programme was created to make sure our managers and team leaders have the best possible training and on-going support, to lead their teams effectively.

Every new and existing leader in Brandon will be taking part in the programme, which consists of self-assessment, one-to-one support and bespoke training modules.



## Quality Checkers

Following feedback that people wanted to be more involved in ensuring they and others receive the highest quality of support possible, Brandon has now employed a team of Quality Checkers. Our Quality Checkers are people we support who are trained and paid to inspect the quality of support being provided across Brandon.

The team has already started their first quality visits and we're looking to expand our group of Quality Checkers moving forward.



## Example

### Finding our new Chief Executive

In early 2018, Brandon began recruiting for a permanent Chief Executive. It was crucial that people from all areas of Brandon were represented and involved in this process, and that their voices and opinions were heard.

When it came to interviewing, we invited a group of staff representatives to play a part in the selection process. Ella, who was a support worker at the time (now a team leader), was thrilled to be asked to be involved:



“Being involved in the panel for interviewing the CE candidates was a very nervous but exciting experience... I was interviewing alongside people we support, team leaders, locality managers, area managers and members of the Board. It was nice to be involved in something that support workers might not usually be asked to do.

“On the day, meeting the candidates and hearing different questions from people all over Brandon was great. It was nice to be able to ask questions from a support worker position – we are front line support and I think it’s essential that we have a say when it comes to something as important as finding the person that will lead Brandon.”

Eleanor, who is supported by Brandon, also attended the interview process:

“I had a lovely day and I have enjoyed it and nice to meet new people and it will be ok to invite me again. I really enjoyed interviewing people, getting to know them and finding out their skills to get the best person for the job. Brandon supports us and is a big part of our life, so it’s a decision we make really carefully.”

In May, 2018, we were delighted to appoint Sue Porto as Brandon’s new Chief Executive. Sue has an outstanding track record of leadership in the charity and public sectors, having been Chief Executive at Bath-based charity St John’s Foundation and the national children’s literacy charity Beanstalk, as well as holding senior positions at The Prince’s Trust and Prison Service.

## OUR COMMITMENTS

Our Driving Up Quality commitments are based on the main areas of feedback highlighted during our events. It's where we commit to taking meaningful, lasting action and change.

We'll share our commitments with people we support, their families and Brandon staff. We plan to discuss them and measure our success throughout the year and at our next Driving Up Quality events.

### Commitment 1



- ✓ **Having more fun events, activities and social opportunities is a recurring request from many people we support.**
- ✓ **As well as our Driving Up Quality Events, our regional areas plan a variety of events throughout the year such as drop-ins and Christmas parties.**
- ✓ **We are planning to do more inclusive activities & events such as sensory days and discos, so that each area has a calendar of regular social activity.**
- ✓ **We will let people know in advance when they are happening and ensure they're accessible for anyone that would like to attend.**
- ✓ **We'll involve any people we support that want to help plan and carry out events.**

## Commitment 2



- ✓ Where possible, all recruitment will include the opportunity for people we support to meet potential support staff - to ask them questions, give their feedback and be involved in deciding if they will be employed.
- ✓ We'll explore how assistive technology or other means can be used to include people in recruitment activity who communicate in different ways.
- ✓ When we recruit for senior management positions, we will continue to involve people throughout Brandon on interview panels.

## Commitment 3



- ✓ We will be arranging more opportunities for people to meet the Board and find out more about the role they play at Brandon.
- ✓ This will take place across all our regional areas.
- ✓ We'll aim for there to be representatives of the Board at each of our Driving Up Quality events.

## Commitment 4



- ✓ We want staff to support and enable people around understanding and managing their finances.
- ✓ We'll work with our area finance teams to roll out workshops, involving people we support as experts by experience.

## Commitment 5



- ✓ **Our involvement and communications teams will explore what people we support, and their families, need to help them feel more connected to Brandon. We'll then create an action plan accordingly.**