

## Brandon launches on the high street

Brandon Trust has taken the next step in its bid to help more people with learning disabilities and autism by opening its first charity shop in Bristol.

The Brandon Shop, at 2 Cotham Hill, opened its doors to customers on Thursday, 20 August.

As well as nearly-new donated goods, it sells items produced by people with learning disabilities in many of the local classes, workshops and social enterprises run by Brandon Trust.



Shop manager Lou Minchin explained: "Cotham Hill is buzzing with charity shops, but I believe ours is going to be that extra bit special, from its very current and welcoming design, to the wide range of unique items we will be selling alongside donated stock, including handmade ceramics and woodwork from Brandon's various social enterprises, plus organically grown plants, flowers and other produce from our very own Elm Tree Farm Project in Stapleton."

The potential benefits for Brandon include generating new income to help boost services and providing opportunities for people we support to gain valuable workplace training and increase community connections.

Manager Lou said the shop is keen for any donated goods, such as good-quality clothing, shoes, jewellery, children's wear, toys, books, CDs, DVDs, computer games, ornaments, kitchen items and homeware. Meanwhile, the shop is looking for volunteers to fill a variety of roles. She added: "I would love to feel that we are doing our bit to share awareness of the work that Brandon carries out around Bristol with people who previously had little or no knowledge of the organisation. We need people in the local area to shop, volunteer, and donate with us."

The future plan for Brandon is to open two similar shops in different parts of the city in the coming months.

Brandon Trust Chief Executive Lucy Hurst-Brown said: "We are really excited about opening our first shop.

"We know it's going to provide a great shopping experience while also showcasing some of the groundbreaking work that Brandon does. We hope shopping here will inspire people to support Brandon in a variety of ways."

For more information on how to get involved, contact Lou on 07718 972 438 or [louise.minchin@brandontrust.org](mailto:louise.minchin@brandontrust.org) or visit [www.brandontrust.org/get-involved/our-charity-shops/](http://www.brandontrust.org/get-involved/our-charity-shops/)

## Welcome Warwickshire

Brandon Trust is pleased to announce it started providing community day support services to adults with learning disabilities and autism in Warwickshire from 1 September 1.

It follows a Warwickshire County Council tendering process in which Brandon was successfully awarded the contract in May, to run the Sesame Centre in Rugby and the Ramsden Centre in Nuneaton, which currently support a combined total of 37 people.

The subsequent transition process enabled Brandon Trust to prepare for operational integration from the transfer date, and a series of welcome and information sharing meetings provided the opportunity to meet customers, carers and staff.

Brandon Trust Area Director Ingrid Vlam said: "We're very excited to have the opportunity to work in Warwickshire. We will work in partnership with all stakeholders using our skills, experience and knowledge, to enrich people's lives based on their own needs and aspirations."

## Children, Young People and Families Strategy launch

June saw the official launch of Brandon Trust's Children, Young People and Families Strategy.

To promote and celebrate this, various launch events were hosted by area teams and people we support during June, July and August.

The Bristol team were the first to hold their event at Elm Tree Farm Open day on 7th June, and on June 20th the Cornwall team held their event in Newquay, showcasing their specially produced, short film 'Follow Me' at Newquay's Lighthouse Cinema, followed by a family fun day at Fistral Beach. Our north team held a family fun day in Gloucestershire, and it was launched during the event.



In Cornwall, Brandon Trust has grown from supporting one child and his family, to 40 families over the past five years. In Wiltshire, we have been offering short programmes of behavioural support to children in their family homes since 2013, and children's summer camps have been popular across all areas of Brandon Trust in recent years. Small pockets of new business are developing in Bristol, Gloucestershire and some London boroughs.

Brandon Trust is ready to support even more children, young people and families and our new strategy outlines how we are going to improve and extend our support in all of our operational areas over the next three years.

The new Children, Young People and Families Strategy can be found at [www.brandontrust.org/information-and-support/children-and-families/](http://www.brandontrust.org/information-and-support/children-and-families/)

## Success in London

Brandon Trust's free 20 photographic exhibition, which features the inspirational stories of 20 people with learning disabilities, was staged at Oxo Tower Wharf's gallery@oxo on South Bank in July and proved a big hit with visitors.

The official launch night on 7 July attracted a good crowd including staff, trustees, local dignitaries and regular fundraisers, while we had more than 1,500 visitors coming through the doors to view the photos during the two weeks it was open.

Reece Wheatley, pictured, a person we support and who is one of the people featured in 20, said: "I was invited to attend the opening night of Brandon's London 20 photographic exhibition and seeing my picture and story displayed in the gallery made me very proud and pleased. Being part of the London launch night helped grow my confidence and was an opportunity I'm glad I took.



"During the evening, I spoke to different people about my picture and story and had many pictures taken which was exciting.

"Summing up the whole evening, I would say I really enjoyed it. It was a great day for me and my family."

## Rock on Roy!

Here's Roy who we support in Cornwall. His passion is music so he went to see The Stranglers and Motorhead concert at The Eden Project Sessions and had an amazing time!

Team leader Karen Lutz said: "Roy loves and communicates through music.

"Everything Roy does is through rhythm. He prefers attending outside events as he enjoys the freedom to move around and have his own personal space to party. Eden is perfect for it.

"We were laughing all night and had such a great time. Roy likes the people with him to dance alongside; this involves being very tactile and very creative.

"He got a lot of smiles from people, who also stopped to speak with him and ask if he was having a good time."

Want support in Cornwall? Get in touch: [www.brandontrust.org/information-and-support/looking-for-support/cornwall/](http://www.brandontrust.org/information-and-support/looking-for-support/cornwall/)



## Brandon Trust Dream Fund and Rachel's story

We love seeing people smile. Don't you? Brandon's Dream Fund puts smiles on people's faces as they fulfil their aspirations and are helped to live independently in their local community.

Rachel has recently benefited and tells us the difference it has made to her life.

"We were prisoners in our own home. I had to rely on my 17-year-old daughter for everything. It was such a struggle to leave the house so we were barely able to go out. My daughter's health was suffering and I just didn't know where to turn".



Rachel, who has learning and physical disabilities, was in tears when she found out that the Dream Fund was able to help her purchase an electric wheelchair. She had been close to breaking point when she got the fantastic news. Spending 6–7 days a week stuck in one room in her house was a nightmare for someone who loves the outdoors.

"I just can't believe how our lives have turned around. I've got my independence back. My daughters have got their mum back and we've seen a massive improvement in all our lives. I'm so grateful to everyone that supports Brandon Trust's Dream Fund. I really can't say thank you enough.

"I couldn't enjoy going out before we received this help. I was given a wheelchair by the NHS but it was so big and heavy I wasn't able to push myself. My oldest daughter, Steph, found it really difficult to push and would suffer from really bad back pain. I was very depressed and had to place too much responsibility on her young shoulders. Now our family is so much happier as we can spend quality time together."

Seven-year-old Melanie, Rachel's youngest daughter, is over the moon. "Mum can pick me up from school now. The first day she got her new chair she came and surprised me. I couldn't believe it when I saw her. I screamed in delight and was really happy". Mum and daughter have been enjoying regular trips out together and love going for coffee and babyccinos. This simply never happened before.

Since Mum started using the wheelchair, 17-year-old Steph has started an online course, taken up jogging and has rekindled her ambition to become a dog groomer. "It's amazing. I don't have to follow Mum around anymore. It's made such a big difference. I couldn't imagine life without it".

The Dream Fund supports requests for specialist equipment, home adaptations and once-in-a-lifetime breaks. Please make a life-changing donation today via [www.brandontrust.org/donate](http://www.brandontrust.org/donate) or call Simon on 0117 906 2906 or email [simon.purkiss@brandontrust.org](mailto:simon.purkiss@brandontrust.org) for more information.

To feedback on this issue of Family and Friends, contact [tim.gray@brandontrust.org](mailto:tim.gray@brandontrust.org) or 0117 952 8210. Brandon Trust, Olympus House, Britannia Road, Patchway, Bristol, BS34 5TA



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