

100 Voices On Personal Safety

**A report on Personal Safety, at home or out
and about, by people with learning
disabilities and autism**



Why this report?

This report has been produced to express the views of people supported by the charity Brandon Trust. The views contained were collected over a 12 month period, beginning with local meetings, culminating in the annual 100 Voices conference held in Bristol on 15th June 2013; an event held by and for people with learning disabilities and autism.

How did 100 people get together?

In order to listen to the views and opinions of people supported by the charity, Brandon Trust holds regular 'Local User Forums' (LUFs) in each of its areas across the South of England.

The LUFs are facilitated **independently** of Brandon Trust in an effort to collect the real and unbiased views of the people supported by the charity.

The LUFs meet regularly and discuss any problems or issues people with learning disabilities and autism face in their daily lives. Minutes of these meetings are then sent, by the independent facilitators, to the charity's Executive Management Team, for consideration and action.

Brandon Trust also runs a Consultative Committee with reports directly to the full Board, consisting of representatives from the LUFs, other people with learning disabilities, some of its Trustees including the Chair of the Board and the Chief Executive. This Consultative Committee hosts the 100 Voices conference every year.

What did the 100 Voices say?

The Local User Forums decided to bring, the topic of 'Personal Safety (at home or 'out and about') to the conference, both to discuss it with other people with learning disabilities and autism, and to raise their concerns with a number of influential external guests, whom Brandon Trust invited on their behalf.

100 Voices had identified personal safety as a particular issue and recognised that within this theme there are many sub-themes, including hate crime, bullying and harassment, mate crime and anti-social behaviour.



So why is Personal Safety so important?

Over the last two years firstly Employment and then Transport have been championed at the annual 100 Voices Conference. Since then people with learning disabilities and autism have told us that the issue of personal safety is the next major matter they wish to address; specifically their negative experiences, the impact these have on their lives and their wish to live in a safer community.

Unfortunately, it is felt that too often people with learning disabilities and autism are seen as easy targets; exploited, used and as a result often live in fear. Something that the people Brandon Trust support with learning disabilities and autism want to change.

What topics were discussed?

In total **more than 250 people attended** this year's 100 Voices Conference, most of whom were people with learning disabilities and autism.

The topics discussed were:

- Hate crime
- Anti-social behaviour

- Discrimination
- Bullying
- Mate crime
- Social media
- Scams
- Cold/Doorstep callers to the home

As well as various forums to explore what these were and people's experiences of them, we had a range of valuable presentations from experts including SARI, Avon & Somerset Police, Safe Places and First Group on how to keep safe.

We also heard presentations from each of Brandon Trust's Local User Forums which went into detail about the real experiences that people we support have experienced, some included suggestions on how to keep safe and minimize the risks of being targeted. The following was discussed;

- Being bullied and verbally abused while travelling on public transport
- Being robbed while out and about in the community
- Safety at home; how to answer the door and what to do if you feel threatened
- Preparing to go out; what to do to reduce the risks

What did we learn at the 100 Voices Conference?

- Crimes against people with learning disabilities and autism often stem from a lack of understanding.
- The effects of crime, including how it can affect the whole person, (inside and out) and their immediate family and their friends.
- What is Mate Crime and how to tell the difference

- What is Hate Crime and what organisations are out there, in addition to the Police Force, to help deal with these sorts of crimes.
- What the Safe Places initiative is; a nation wide, community focused scheme to support people with learning disabilities and autism who may need some assistance while out and about in their communities.
- How to deal with ‘cold’ or ‘door step callers’ at home.
- How to protect ourselves while using social media and what to look out for.
- How to spot a scam. Scams can be very well disguised and can come via the internet as well as in person.
- People with learning disabilities and autism often live in fear of crime, are often seen as ‘easy targets,’ and are often too frightened or intimidated to tell someone.



Brandon's 7 Point Pledge

Brandon believes that the level of actual and perceived risk to personal safety experienced by the people we support, and more generally people with learning disabilities and autism in the UK, is wholly unacceptable. In response to our findings we pledge to do the following things over the next 12 months:

1. To run an active campaign to raise the general public's awareness of the issues at local and national levels, with the aim of reducing ignorance and drawing in practical support for building a safer society.

2. To lobby MPs, and others in positions of authority, to improve policy and drive practical solutions.
3. To host practical information and signposting on our website for people who need help.
4. To 'map' all the resources already available within the areas of our current operations, and establish formal links with these agencies.
5. To continue to develop our work with The Bristol Hate Crime Service and the 'Safe Places' projects, share the learning and work hard to extend these opportunities to more people in the UK.
6. To develop an e-learning product for the people we support to increase their safety on-line.
7. To extend our support planning system, to include a specific section on enhancing personal safety.

To conclude

The 2013 100 Voices Conference on Personal Safety raised a number of serious issues for people with learning disabilities and autism. These problems surface all too frequently. Brandon believes that they will only be addressed effectively when there is an increased commitment within our communities and government, both at local and national levels, to work together to make real and positive changes. Brandon commits to taking a central role in making this a reality.

100
VOICES

The logo for '100 VOICES' features the number '100' in a large, bold, blue font. To the right of the '00' is a graphic of two overlapping speech bubbles, one pink and one blue. Below this, the word 'VOICES' is written in a large, bold, pink font.

Notes

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