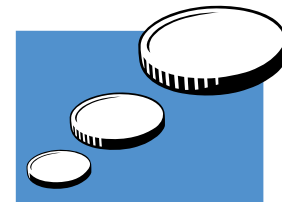


Giving Insights



New
**Philanthropy
Capital**

Autumn 2008

Go figure

The youth of today

It costs the Brandon Centre less than £2,000 to improve a teenager's mental health. It can cost at least ten times more if the problem is left untreated.

We all know that being a teenager can be difficult. But for one in ten teenagers who suffer from diagnosable mental health disorders, this is more than just passing angst. These disorders can have enormous repercussions at such an important stage in a young person's life. Teenagers with mental health problems tend to have high levels of truancy and are more likely to be excluded from school and commit crime.

The Brandon Centre offers help to young people with mental health problems. Since it was founded in 1968, it has gained an



excellent reputation for helping vulnerable and disadvantaged young people, including young offenders.

And its approach works. Last year 47% of the young people receiving psychotherapy for a year experienced a reliable improvement in their mental health.

The potential returns are extraordinary. The total cost of running the psychotherapy service last year was £226,000. The service was used by 268 young people between the ages of 12 and 25. With 126 young people experiencing improvements in their mental health, the cost works out at just £1,800 per person who show an improvement.

This is a tiny sum compared to the costs this treatment prevents. Stopping a teenager from being excluded saves £20,000 in costs to the education system

alone. Successfully treating a young person's conduct disorder prevents criminal behaviour and is estimated to save the state on average about £15,000 in criminal damages, court and prison costs.

Taking the exclusion cost of £20,000 alone gives a ten-fold return to investing in the Brandon Centre.

At least 40% of teenagers with mental health problems never receive help. The cost of letting these problems go untreated is not just felt through higher crime and poor school performance, but through the potential of so many young people that goes unfulfilled.

The question is not whether we can afford to fund charities like the Brandon Centre, but whether we can afford not to.

[Lucy Heady](#)



**The Economist's
Matthew
Bishop on
society's new
superheroes**

p3

p5

**Helping
professional
advisors design
a philanthropy
offering**

**Are titan jails
a mistake?**

p11

**Martha Lane Fox,
on why she funds
unfashionable
causes**

p12

