

Formalising talent management at Brandon Trust

Brandon Trust, an independent charity with a team of approximately 2,500 staff, provides a wide range of support services across Southern England and the Midlands. From light-touch enabling care in individuals' homes to complex accommodation with nursing support, the organisation is committed to delivering high-quality, person-centred support. As an Early Adopter of the Care Workforce Pathway, Brandon Trust sought to enhance its performance management processes by introducing a structured framework for assessing skills, knowledge, and behaviours across key roles.

Historically, performance management within Brandon Trust had been conducted through ad-hoc appraisals, often varying in approach across different teams and locations. By implementing a competency-based framework aligned with the Care Workforce Pathway, the organisation aimed to provide structured feedback, set clear expectations, and create better opportunities for career development. The goal was to ensure that all staff, regardless of career aspirations, had access to a fair and transparent development process.

Brandon Trust began by mapping the Pathway role categories against existing job descriptions to identify alignments and gaps. This review revealed an opportunity to formalise specialist skills through a career framework tailored to the organisation while remaining consistent with sector-wide standards. It also highlighted the potential to standardise learning and development opportunities, particularly through quality-assured apprenticeship qualifications that could be used to assess competency.

To test the approach, a cross-section of line managers and staff participated in a pilot programme, assessing their current skills against the Pathway role category descriptions. This was followed by structured career conversations to explore development goals and opportunities. The pilot provided valuable insights, including a clearer view of organisational skills gaps and a recognition that many staff were motivated by specialist career pathways rather than traditional managerial progression. This evidence-based approach helped Brandon Trust shape a development strategy that accounted for both aspirations and operational needs.

The introduction of this structured performance management approach is already delivering benefits. By identifying key skills gaps, Brandon Trust can take a strategic approach to workforce planning, ensuring that development opportunities align with both staff career goals and service demands. Plans are in place to fill gaps through a combination of internal development and targeted recruitment.

Line managers are being upskilled in career coaching to better support their teams in setting and achieving development goals, while staff will have access to a new career development plan booklet. This document, completed ahead of appraisals and reviewed throughout the year, will ensure ongoing, meaningful development conversations that support both individual growth and organisational priorities.

Through this process, Brandon Trust has gained a clearer understanding of its workforce strengths and areas for improvement. Mapping values and competencies has provided a foundation for consistent role expectations, while career development planning is helping to invest in staff in a structured and meaningful way. By embedding a career conversation model that considers both strengths and potential skills gaps, the organisation is creating opportunities for progression while improving workforce stability.

“Testing the Care Workforce Pathway has enabled us to understand our key considerations and focus for the future. It has allowed us to map our values, roles, and competencies - helping us identify both strengths and areas for improvement. Introducing structured career development planning has given staff and managers the tools to support progression, retain talent, and ensure we continue providing high-quality care and support.”