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# Young people's training role in NHS mental health support

YOUNG people with mental health conditions are helping to train hospital staff to better support other children in crisis.

A survey at Barts Health **NHS Trust**, which runs children's A&E departments at The Royal London, Newham and Whipps Cross hospitals, found staff felt unable to respond effectively to the needs of children and young people requiring treatment for self-harm, overdose, anxiety and depression.

One in five of the 350 staff surveyed said they encountered young people with mental health conditions almost all the time, and most said they would like to improve their own skills in this area.

Mental health services for children and young people across east London are provided by two specialist NHS trusts, but many will often attend A&E when in crisis.

With the support of the



**PRAISE: Christine Fogarty**

Healthy Teen Minds and Common Room organisations and mental health professionals, the trust has developed training for hospital staff believed to be the only programme of its kind in the NHS.

So far more than 150 staff have attended the We Can Talk one-day training session, including children's nurses,

health care assistants, doctors and ward clerks.

Christine Fogarty, neonatal ward manager at Whipps Cross Hospital, said: "I hold a senior position and I've not had mental health training before.

"I can see how this will be really useful when caring as well as in supporting my staff to do so."

Grace Jeremy, 24, an adviser with Common Room who now leads the staff training sessions, said: "From what I have seen and heard in the sessions staff really care and want to support people better, and I am thrilled to be helping to make this happen."

Robin Barker, senior nurse and director at Healthy Teen Minds, said: "This is a uniquely collaborative and exciting approach to the training – listening to mental health professionals, asking staff about their training needs and speaking to young people."