

What do we do at the Darwin Centre?



An introduction for young people and their parents/carers



Pride in our children's, young people's and families' services

Who are we and what do we do?

The Darwin Centre is a Tier 4 adolescent inpatient unit. We are part of the NHS and we have a specialist school which is funded by our local educational authority. We work with young people aged 12-18 who have complex mental health problems.

We have a range of professionals and different skills within our team. These include: Children's Mental Health Nurses, Children's Learning Disabilities Nurses, Health care assistants, Psychiatrists, Family therapists, Clinical psychologists, Occupational therapist, Occupational therapy assistant, Social worker, House keeper, Art and Music therapists, Specialist school teachers and Teaching assistants, Research assistant, Administrators, Support time Recovery workers, and a Patient and Parent Involvement worker.

Why do young people come to the Darwin Centre?

There can be a number of reasons for an admission to the Darwin Centre.

Some of the most common include

- Needing a place of safety and support 24 hours a day, during a mental health crisis. This is often at the most difficult time in someone's life and when a young person is viewed as not currently safe to stay within their community
- To receive therapeutic work and care when the community around a young person are struggling to cope and find ways forward with complex difficulties.
- When a 'time out' is needed to build a more complete understanding of the difficulties. This involves an in- depth assessment using a wide range of professionals and perspectives, all based together here at the Darwin centre.

What can we realistically hope to achieve during an admission to the Darwin centre?

- Not "fixing" the problem, but providing stability and a stepping stone on the path to recovery
- Providing a safe environment to express difficult feelings and needs
- Re-engaging a young person with their education and learning.
- Parents families and community workers feeling more supported and having a better understanding of the difficulties
- Beginning therapy, both individually and with

families.

- Working out together what might need to change in A young person's life to continue progress in the future.
- Build tools and explore strategies for coping in a way that means you can leave hospital and carry on recovery in the community.
- Provide a piece of intensive therapeutic work in a safe environment when it might not feel safe enough to do this type of work in the community.
- Identifying appropriate interventions that can be carried on in the community
- Connecting a young person with the right support networks in their community
- Help to find hope for the future and improve self esteem

As a team we have identified some 'core values' that influence our practice at the Darwin centre:

- We are caring, compassionate and we listen
- We try to understand a young person's perspective and see things through their eyes
- Building strong relationships with a young person is central to the work we do
- We work hard to engage with families and we strive

to work together with them

- We try to respond to self harm in calm and thoughtful ways and we encourage young people to find safe ways of expressing their feelings
- We use the least restrictive ways of working whenever possible
- We try hard to encourage young people to take a lead in their own care and make their own decisions
- We value a range of skills and perspectives in the team.
- We work well and pull together as a team in difficult situations
- We try hard to think about the wellbeing of one another in our team and support each other
- We are welcoming and we make tea for people!

What our parents and patients say about us

“The staff are very friendly and are always on hand to help you if you are struggling or in difficulty.”

“They (the staff) are very caring and compassionate and are always there to help you and assist you in distress.”

“People have understood from time to time that I can't cope and my therapist has gone to great extremes to make sure I have safety plans and coping strategies put in place for whenever I need.”

“I have been able to discuss my problems and life struggles without feeling rejected or like I'm not human.”

“Staff tend to be very friendly and help you achieve things if you don't know how to. They also take your opinion into account.”

“My primary nurse and Dr Millard always discuss all my options with me to help me make the best decision.”

“I get on really well with all members of staff, and they all help me in different ways.”

“We can talk without being judged.”

“I feel I am listened to and valued as a parent.”

“I have felt the whole team are well informed and communicate well/ The team have been very good at listening and proactively questioning for possible ways to help understand my daughter.”

“This team has been outstanding, throughout our involvement. Communication both within the team and with parents has been excellent.”

For more information about the Darwin Centre please see our website where you can download our patient or parent Welcome pack: <http://www.darwincentre.cpft.nhs.uk>

For information about the therapeutic model at the Darwin centre 'AMBIT' please visit: <https://manuals.annafreud.org/ambit/index.html>

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Leaflet published: March 2018
Leaflet review date: March 2019

Patient Advice and Liaison Service

For information about CPFT services or to raise an issue, contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on Freephone 0800 376 0775, or e-mail pals@cpft.nhs.uk

Out-of-hours service for CPFT mental health service users

Contact Lifeline on **0808 808 2121**
7pm-11pm
365 days a year

If you require this information in another format such as braille, large print or another language, please let us know.



CPFT supports the **HeadtoToe Charity** – visit www.HeadToToeCharity.org for details on how you can help

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