



# Emerge's Trauma Response Support

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**Interviewee:** Joy Wright, Founder and CEO of Emerge



Following discussions with **Joy Wright**, this story outlines how Emerge offer trauma response support to young people in an informal yet informed way, offering a "bridge out of crisis" for young people, and their families, following hospital admission relating to emotional health and wellbeing.

## Who are Emerge?

Emerge are a team of youth workers and volunteers and one of the key Mindworks Surrey partners who support children and young people (CYP) aged 10-25 who find themselves in the Emergency Department (A&E) and beyond, because of self-harm, a suicide attempt or emotional crisis. They started offering support in one hospital in 2016 and now run projects in 10 hospitals with 2 more coming this year, working across Surrey, Kent and Berkshire.

## How does Emerge align with the Needs-Based Groupings of the THRIVE Framework (Wolpert et al., 2019)?

Emerge provide these CYP initially with **risk support**, before helping them access services in **all other needs-based groupings**, and aiming to see them **thrive**.

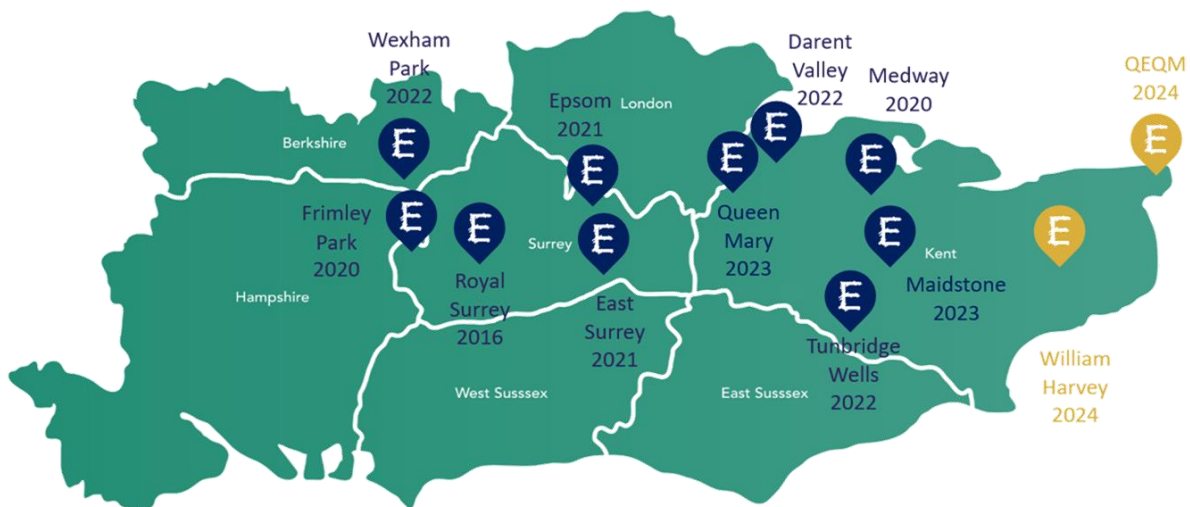


## How do Emerge provide support to CYP and families?

Emerge exists to be a **'Voice of Hope'** for CYP during time spent in hospital and following it, as they offer immediate, weekly, in-person, one-to-one follow up support in the community for up to three months. They also offer space with parents/carers to listen, support and signpost. Emerge does not replace any clinical role or pathway, rather, they come alongside and help CYP through the process, and to get the most from the care available to them.

Emerge is made up of specially trained volunteers and a small staff team who:

- Give quality time, care and compassion to CYP in a purposely non-clinical capacity.
- Provide comfort and distraction through playing games like Uno, doing colouring or talking about whatever the young person is interested in.
- Help CYP to engage with treatment, connect with other sources of support and recover hope.
- Are available in the following hospitals from 7-11pm on various evenings:





## How does Emerge’s trauma response support align with the THRIVE Framework?

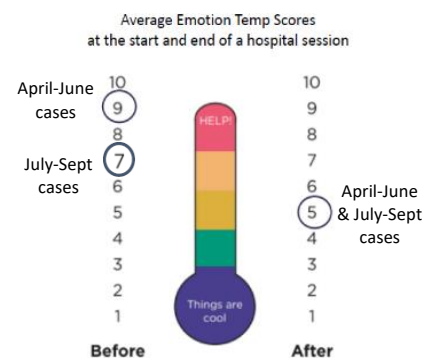
**Accessibility:** CYP and families can contact Emerge directly or ask a member of hospital staff. If the team are not available, a message can be left and Emerge will reply as soon as possible.

**Proactive Prevention and Promotion:** Emerge also offer training for schools, churches, parents/carers and in youth work settings, to equip adults and adolescents to understand self-harm/suicide attempts using tried and tested material. It introduces the concept of self-harm as an umbrella which CYP cling on to, to protect themselves from the storms of life.



**Partnership Working:** Emerge has grown from a grass-roots organisation set up in 2016 and joined Mindworks Surrey Alliance when it began in 2021. So they are relatively new to being part of commissioning arrangements and systems and find that clinical mental health colleagues outside of the acute setting may not understand their role and remit or struggle to understand how they ‘fit’ into their frame of reference and protocols. The reality is that because they are purposely non-clinical and offer something different which compliments the clinical processes, straddling hospital and community settings, providing informal yet informed care, this adds value to what clinical colleagues are doing, enhancing patient experience and outcomes for CYP.

**Outcomes-informed:** They use an outcome tool called the ‘Distress Thermometer’ (DT) (National Comprehensive Cancer Network, 2019) which is a 10-point scale used to assess the emotional health of young people before and after a support session and measure the impact of the support offered. This outcome measure is then inverted to align with the Goal Based Outcomes (GBO) scale that we regularly report as a Mindworks Alliance. The DT works on a variety of levels: relationally and part of a **shared decision making** process; as solution focused which enables the practice of mastery and control; and it can be used across the whole system meaning it increases the **communality of language** as well as **partnership working**.



Furthermore, for CYP whose distress levels have declined on the DT, Emerge witnesses the transitioning of the CYP through the blue, yellow or red ‘Zones of Regulation’ (Kuypers, 2011) into the green Zone of Regulation where they are able to make more considered decisions regarding their care.

Emerge also continually evaluate and improve their way of working by asking CYP to complete an **Experience of Service Questionnaire** after their receiving the follow up support.

## How is Emerge experienced by CYP and colleagues?

*I feel like a weight has been lifted, I have a new lease of life. I just want to get focused on the positive things. I’m thankful for what you guys do.*  
Young Person

*Emerge offers a caring and compassionate service to teenagers and young adults in their time of great distress, the value of which cannot be underestimated. Patients consistently give positive feedback. It has been demonstrated time and again that creating a calming environment around patients experiencing psychiatric disturbance benefits them greatly, shortening admissions, lessening the severity of their illness and medication requirements. The Emerge service is fundamental to this process and adds staffing at a one-to-one level without cost to the NHS.*

Emergency Medicine & Psychiatry Lead at Royal Surrey County Hospital

## Future Directions

Emerge is coming soon to hospitals in Ashford and Margate in Kent. They have also just secured funding to allow them double the number of young people in Surrey who can receive their follow-up support. Furthermore, they are developing a referral pathway in all hospitals where they work to enable routine referrals from Paediatric Liaison Nurses so that CYP can be easily referred to Emerge without requiring the CYP or their family to self-refer, improving **accessibility** which is essential to those in crisis.

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