

# Katie's story

Katie is an active member of the Clinical Research Network's Mental health Young Person's Advisory Group. It has given her an outlet to turn any negative experiences into positives by guiding researchers looking into mental health.



Katie is 25 and works as a psychological wellbeing practitioner. She has personal experience of mental health problems including self-harm and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as well as a parent with schizophrenia.

Working within the NHS and through her own experiences Katie recognised gaps in care for mental health patients. Whilst volunteering for a mental health charity, Katie was introduced to the CRN: Mental health Young Person's Advisory Group; a group made up of young people with either direct or indirect experience of mental health issues and an interest in research. Katie saw the group as an opportunity to draw on both her professional skills and personal experiences for the benefit of patients.

The main objectives of the group are to act as the main point of contact for researchers seeking service user and carer advice on studies relating to young people, promote the young service user/carer perspective in mental health research and to identify and share good practice in service user and carer involvement.

Katie said: "It is quite empowering to be put in a position where researchers listen to you and to use your own experiences to be part of something that will benefit young people in the future.

"The group has opened my eyes to the opportunities out there to get involved in research. Mental health is a part of my life and it is reassuring to know that there are places that allow me to use my experiences to help others.

"I hope that one day there are services that will cater for all of the different types of mental health problems that young people experience. If this group contributed to that ideal being one step closer then I would be very proud to have been a part of that."

[www.crn.nihr.ac.uk/mentalhealth](http://www.crn.nihr.ac.uk/mentalhealth)

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