

A secure welfare placement is a placement route which is not taken lightly by a local authority as it entails depriving a young person of their liberty. When this decision is taken, a young person can be informed of the decision in different manners and, at the time a decision is made, it can be unknown to the young person what a placement within a secure children's home will look like for them, or even how long they might reside there.

A young person who has resided within a secure children's home on welfare grounds has written an account of their journey within the placement and the positive impact it had on her:

U's Journey in Secure Children's Home A, written by U

Escort car journey;

The day I got caught I was held in a local police station, where I was then told I was going to be placed in a secure children's home. I was then told I would only be there for a 72-hour order and the judge had to make a decision weather I would be staying there or not. At that point I was feeling overwhelmed but mainly scared. To me it felt like my life was held in the judge's hands. I did not know the day I was going to have my freedom back.in the police station I was than greeted by the presence of 3 quite intimidating escort but after a friendly conversation they reassured me they were only there to help and do their job. They led me to their car at the back of the police station. The moment I was in the back of the escorts car it was just a big fat **WHO, WHAT, WHERE AND WHEN?**

Cage admit;

From the moment I seen the big gates and building I knew I was there but as we pulled up and a cage was shut behind me it really hit me, that I was in a secure unit. My feelings at that time was a variatie, I was so angry, lost but most of all speechless, I didn't know where to look. I than got took into a room where the door was locked behind me. I was in the admit room, where I met J and B. they waited for me to settle before they asked me a number of questions but what seemed to startle me most was at the end of a few questions the word 'jail' was mentioned. After those questions was asked B and J took my belongings from me. my coat shoes and bag, I was than pat searched by B and walked through a metal detector. At that point it felt Asif I was in a horrible dream just waiting to be woke up.

1st night and day;

Walking through the corridor and seeing all the locked doors really made me come to realisation to where I was. When I got into room 2 all I was thinking about was a good night sleep due to not having slept properly in a while, as I sat on the mattress I was expecting to bounce back but found myself sat on what it felt to be a concrete mattress. From then it felt I was being punished for something I haven't done. Although I was in a strange place I managed I found that I slept quite easy. The following day when I woke up I felt very frustrated as it felt like I was being watched but having asked questions I was explained that the observations were for my safety which seemed to calm me.

72 hours;

Receiving a phone call of my social worker I was then told I would be here on a 3-month rehabilitation order and would be leaving 15th of June. At that moment when I heard that, a flush of emotions was running through me I thought it would be the longest and worst 3 months of my life. But I was wrong....

Meeting yps and staff;

With a social anxiety I found the first few days hard because I needed everyone to talk to me in order to feel comfortable around everyone and to interact with them. When I found out I was the only yp here for welfare and every other yp was here for yjb I felt the odd one out.

School;

When staff had told me I was going into education I was shocked, mostly because I hadn't been in education for a while but more to the point I did not think there was a school in a secure unit. Although the education is not up to mainstream standard it still has the resources us yps need. After school finishes all the yps go to their rooms at 4 o'clock. I find that times useful so I could have my phone calls and relax up until dinner time. When I phone friends and family it makes me feel sad as I don't get to be with them and start reminiscing.

Activities+food;

Within the unit there are structured food times which I found hard as I was used to opening a fridge and eating what I'd like but with activities following up to food times I found it easier because time goes fast when you're in activities having a laugh with the staff and yps. activities have made my days feel like they've gone faster.

Mobility+responsibilities;

When I found out that I was going out on mobility I was so excited but knew I had a lot of responsibilities because I was being trusted to come back, the minute I stepped outside I knew I was one step closer to coming out. I felt better for myself as I could see how far I'd come and grown into a better person. Not just for me but for my family and associates too. To my own surprise when I was outside I did not want to run away.

Health care;

It wasn't until I was here that I realised I was so unhealthy. My weight was very low due to the fact that I wasn't eating properly. I came to this unit weighing 7.5 stone and now I'm leaving a healthy 9.5 stone. I feel better in myself and I'm so pleased about it.

Staffcare+My realisation;

When I first came here I thought that staff were just doing their jobs. But having different bonds with different staff made me realise how much they care and how much they'd do for us yps. So my advice to any yp reading this is let them help you.

The last days;

For me my last days have made me come to realise however much I hate this place and want to never return I'm actually going to miss it and how much it's done for me. Not only am I leaving here healthy but I'm leaving here stronger than I've ever been I'm leaving here with ambition, stability and with a very strong mentality.

For me it might have been a rocky road, but it just goes to show it might be dusty and hidden away but it is there somewhere inside you the heart of a survivor, courage, tenacity and strength. so don't shy away from the hard times

they are your chance to shine. struggle develops strength and storms make you stronger.

I would like to say a big thank you to secure unit A and staff as it wouldn't have happened without you.

Written by U

