

## **National Secure Welfare Commissioning Unit Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Do I have to use the co-ordinating unit to place a welfare child in a SCH?**

Local authority use of the commissioning unit is on a voluntary basis. However, the benefits to local authorities using the unit are many. Local authorities report that finding a placement for a young person needing a secure welfare bed is time consuming and challenging. The unit will significantly support local authorities who choose to use it as up to date capacity information will be readily available and the matching process will be facilitated by the unit staff, leaving the responsible local authority to carry on with the practical care planning arrangements for the young person.

### **Can I make a referral to the unit by phone?**

Yes, the telephone number is 01962 846432. You are welcome to contact the unit for a discussion, a full written referral will then be required.

### **How long will it take to receive a response from the co-ordinating unit when I make a referral?**

You will receive an acknowledgement of receipt of your referral within 30 minutes of submitting the referral form to the unit's GCSx email. If further information is required then the Placement Officers will contact you within 1 hour to discuss further. The unit intends to respond to all referrals within 2 hours.

### **As a SCH, if I get a direct referral from a local authority should I ask them to contact the co-ordination unit instead?**

To support the outcomes of the unit we would hope that all SCH encourage local authorities to contact the unit. If a local authority does not want to contact the unit then the SCH should process the referral to ensure the young person's needs are met.

### **What data are you collecting and how will it make a difference to the sector?**

One of the primary purposes of the unit is to gain a much clearer understanding of the volume, demand and need profile of young people needing secure welfare accommodation. The unit will be collecting data on all aspects of referrals for young people and the outcomes of those referrals, including where there have been challenges to making placements. This information will be shared with the sector and will ultimately be used by Ministers to make decisions on the future management of the sector.

**What will happen if my preferred SCH is not available when I refer?**

The benefit of the unit is that detailed information of all the units, the young people placed in them and the unit's specialisms will be held in one place. This has the advantage of ensuring that all options for a young person can be presented to you when you refer enabling you to make an informed decision about the most appropriate placement for the young person.

**Will there be support out of hours?**

An on-call facility will be available. The statistics for the past 4 years evidence that there have been only 5 secure orders made in England out of hours and the unit expectation is that secure orders will be sourced within the working week to ensure the appropriate response to a young person. However, there are rare occasions where this is not possible and the unit will respond to those referrals as required.

**Will the available beds still appear on the SAN website?**

Bed availability will no longer be shown on the SAN website from 16 May 2016 but will be held by the unit.