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# scottish justice matters

# LIVING IT

**CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND JUSTICE**

Edited by **Claire Lightowler, Susie Cameron and Brian Rogers**



# SECURE CARE – WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT? ROUTINES!

## Becca

**I HAVE BEEN** in secure care for five months and residential before that. When I first came I was brought through the garage and had a 'personal search'. I had no idea where I was or what was going on! It was night time so I was taken to my bedroom (well more like a cell) the door locked after staff went out and there was nowhere for me to go. That was pretty scary but weirdly I slept soundly! Staff checked on me really regularly, viewing me through a wee panel, something else new and weird!

The next morning I got a wakeup call around 8am. I was a bit confused but quickly realised this was one of the 'routines' of the unit! I asked to go for a shower and had to be given toiletries for this, handing them back straight after I had used them. I was taken to meet the other young people and was really wary about this, but everyone was really nice and seemed relaxed so once I got to know them all I was fine.

Staff spoke to me about the rules of the unit, no hoodies (!!!), and certain times for things. We weren't even allowed out for fresh air if it wasn't our 'courtyard time'. The weirdest thing was that they told me when I would eat. I had so much to get used to at the start I thought it would take me ages. I asked staff LOADS of questions, but for the first time in ages I felt safe and settled.

I hadn't gone to school for at least two years but I knew that this was expected of me. So I started going every day and began to enjoy it. I have been focusing on Maths and English and have achieved qualifications in both. There is a salon and I am working alongside a beautician to deliver treatments, more qualifications! I also got involved with making a film, have started my Duke of Edinburgh award and have been fixing bikes for my Velotech award. I want to become a mechanic so all of this helps towards getting into college and getting a work placement.

During the first few weeks all calls and visits are supervised. That was difficult because I couldn't really speak to my family properly and I wasn't comfy. I was really annoyed about that and became quite angry at staff but I was told that I had to accept it as it was all part of my risk assessment. Everything is risk assessed here, whether we can go into the unit or sit at the dinner table. When I realised that it was going to happen no matter what I said I got on with it. Eventually I got to spend time with my family without staff being there!

After my Assessment I had to attend a big meeting where they discussed the work I was going to have to do. Everyone does programmes or therapy of some sort to help them to move on. I met the person I was going to be working with, it was good to have someone to talk to that wasn't staff or my parents. We talked about my future and we made a plan together. It made it easier being here because I could do

things to help me move. When your assessment is finished you move from the Assessment Unit, I really didn't want to go! I had made friends in the unit and got on really well with the staff. It was hard leaving everyone else behind.

I've just moved to the Close Support Unit where I get a fob for my room so I can walk in and out (I don't need to ask to go to the toilet) and you are given much more freedom. I'm just about to start my independent walks and am increasing time away from the unit; it's been hard been away from my friends and family for this long but my relationships with my family have definitely improved. Following the 'routines' hasn't been all bad!

When I think about the way things used to be for me and the things I missed out on because I got caught up with smoking weed every day I can't believe I let myself get like that. If I hadn't come here I'm really not sure where I would have been now.

**Everything is risk assessed here, whether we can go into the unit or sit at the dinner table**

**Rebecca is fifteen and had been in secure care for four months and is now into week seven of close support.**

# UK Justice Policy Review:

Volume 2

6 May 2011 to 5 May 2012

# UK Justice Policy Review:

Volume 3

6 May 2012 to 5 May 2013

By Richard Garside, Arianna Silvestri  
and Helen Mills

# UK Justice Policy Review:

Volume 1

6 May 2010 to 5 May 2011

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