

**UNION COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

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## **News Release**

### **Union County Shelter Program Wins Best Practice Award**

**November 22, 2016, Monroe, NC** – The Union County Division of Social Services is proud to announce they've received the Best Practice Award for Innovations in Services to Customers by the N.C. Association of County Departments of Social Services for its Shelter Care Program.

The Shelter Care Program serves abuse, neglected, and court involved youth. The 24-hour program is licensed by the State and has the capacity for nine residents. The Shelter Care Program began the task of restructuring in 2014-2015. Under the guidance of the director, several components were developed to provide a high quality service to the residents of Union County.

One major addition to the program was the development of a best practice curriculum. Residents are now able to participate in open-ended, peer groups that focus on mental wellness, critical thinking/decision making, and future planning. The psychoeducational groups deliver the material through a variety of modalities that are current and age appropriate. The Shelter Care Program employs staff who are experienced and trained in the areas of mental health, psychological safety, behavioral issues, and crisis intervention. The program has a schedule and is structured in such a way that it allows the residents daily opportunities to be active participants in their care. The legal guardians are also given the opportunity to participate by addressing concerns and providing feedback regarding the progress of their child.

One measure of success is to look at the rates of recidivism on crime prevention. The Department of Public Safety measures this through the Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol score or SPEP score. The State average SPEP score is 49. The Shelter Care Program received a SPEP score of 73. The Shelter Care Program has several staff members who are trained in Triple P (Positive Parenting Program). This is an evidenced based, best-practice program that proves highly effective for teaching parenting skills. The Aftercare and Prevention Social Worker was just added to enhance program effectiveness, have better outcomes for DSS and court ordered children, and to prevent children from coming into DSS custody. During the last licensing audit, the State reviewer reported that she was "pleased" with the progress and direction of the program. Over the past two years, the program has been able to achieve a 42 percent increase in the number of children served, and has increased a revenue stream by 25 percent.