

Tier 4 Units United

Units United began back in the early 1990's and grew out of a desire for more contact between tier four psychiatric units. Carol Kirk, then head teacher at Longview in Colchester, Essex, made contact with The Darwin Centre in Cambridge and a handful of London units including Simmons House and Brookside to meet informally to network and discuss their experiences. Over the years more units joined and an annual conference was organised originally in Northampton and in more recent years in Birmingham. These conferences offer the chance to hear speakers on a variety of topics, attend workshops and network with other education staff from psychiatric units. Outside speakers are often invited but many of the most helpful sessions have been led by volunteers from units keen to share their experiences.

Units United has always been an informal organisation with no formal membership or definitive members list. What we share in common is a desire to provide the best possible education to the young people who find themselves patients in tier four units.

In June 2020 the National Association of Hospital Education hosted a zoom meeting for tier 4 units and it became clear that there was an overlap between units who attend the Units United conference and units on that call. As the NAHE has developed and its influence has grown it seems to make sense to include Units United under its wing. After consulting with our members it was agreed that Units United would become a special interest group of the NAHE. We hope that members will see the benefits of joining forces and will choose to become full members of the NAHE, however, in order to ensure our current members can continue to participate, there will be no requirement for members to join the NAHE in order to attend Units United events.

We continue to be an informal group and welcome anyone who would like to help organise events or share ideas in any way.

Since 'units' is a term used by many settings, including general hospital schools, we have added the words 'Tier 4' to the beginning of our title to make it clear that this group is for education staff working in psychiatric units.