

# Letter from Kibble

Sue Webber MSP  
Convener  
Education Children and Young People Committee  
T3. 60  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

19 April 2023

Dear Sue,

## **Education Children and Young People Committee – ‘Last bed’ Provision information request**

I write in response to your letter regarding the Education Children and Young People Committee request dated 31 March 2023 for information in respect of the Scottish Governments ‘last bed’ provision arrangement.

Please find our response noted below.

**Q1.** What the definition of the ‘last bed’ is, i.e., should there always be an empty bed? Or what are the circumstances that the ‘last bed’ can be used?

The term ‘last bed’ is not an accurate description of this arrangement or what it seeks to achieve.

The backdrop to this was at a time when data indicated that there were high numbers of placements from cross border authorities made with some of the Scottish secure accommodation service providers. The Scottish Government wanted to ensure there was available provision for Scottish children and young people if required by a Scottish local authority or Scottish Ministers for children and young people serving a custodial sentence.

The recent Children and Young People’s Centre for Justice (CYCJ) report – Preparing to Keep the Promise: A Comparative Study of Secure Care and Young Offender Institutions in Scotland (30 March 2023) stated:

*“More recently discussions have taken place wherein an agreement in principle has been reached for the Scottish Government to purchase ‘the last bed’ within the independent secure care centres. This is designed to ensure that there is capacity for Scottish children and to provide some financial support while a longer-term strategy can be considered”.*

The suggestion of providing *additional* financial support to secure care providers was never a feature of this arrangement. The placements reserved/pre-booked (last bed) were paid for at the Scotland Excel Secure Care Accommodation Services Contract weekly fee rate.

Provision was also made that in the situation whereby all 4 beds were not used for a month, and cross border referrals were being received, then a review would be undertaken.

**Q2.** Is there a 'last bed' at each secure accommodation centre, or is it one 'last bed' across the whole of the secure accommodation estate?

The contracted secure care accommodation service providers agreed to making a bed available in each of the services (4 places in total) on request of the Scottish Government.

**Q3.** Funding for the 'last bed' pilot. The Committee understands that the funding for this runs out today and there has not yet been confirmation of whether future funding will be forthcoming. What is your understanding of the funding situation?

Agreement to continue this arrangement after the initial pilot term of 3 months has been reached and Scottish Government officials are progressing work on the details to finalise, including confirmation of the budget.

Kind Regards

Sinclair Soutar  
Chief Operating Officer