

Douglas Ross MSP
Convener Education, Children and Young People Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

By Email: ecyp.committee@parliament.scot

05 January 2026

Dear Convener,

Future Sustainability of Secure Care – Consultation

I am writing to inform you of the Scottish Government's intention to launch a public consultation on the future of secure care on **8 January 2026**. The consultation will also address plans for a victim single point of contact service for victims - emanating from the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024.

Over the past year, I have kept Parliament informed of the ongoing challenges in delivering secure care in Scotland, as well as the measures this Government has taken to build a more sustainable system. In June, we published the Government's [response to the report "Reimagining Secure Care: A Vision for the Future"](#), which outlines the key actions required to achieve this vision, and reaffirms the Scottish Government's commitment to keeping The Promise by ensuring we meet the needs of children - both now and in the future - through the provision of safe, supportive and appropriate environments.

As you know, our immediate priority has been to stabilise and strengthen secure accommodation capacity. As of today, 17 secure care places are available. That relatively positive position is one that we have seen for the past six months. It comes as a result of the following recent actions:

- £8.4 million committed to support placements for sentenced and remanded children and maintain up to 16 secure beds through 2025-27.
- £2 million allocated for contingency measures in 2025-26.
- Updated practice guidance on alternatives to secure care published in March 2025.
- A new four-bed national contingency resource, Annan House, opened at Rossie in April 2025.
- A dedicated professional lead appointed within Social Work Scotland (started August 2025) to support placing authorities and improve decision-making.

- A second four-bed contingency resource, Esk House, at Rossie - expected to open in the next few weeks.
- Collaboration with Kibble to construct up to three new four-bed, trauma-informed, houses to meet evolving needs of children.
- Joint action plan in development with COSLA to coordinate national and local efforts.

Despite these positive developments, secure care services continue to experience significant challenges linked to capacity, funding and commissioning arrangements. While current efforts to restore capacity and manage immediate risks remain important, they cannot on their own resolve the underlying systemic issues affecting the long-term sustainability of the sector.

To explore all possible perspectives and to develop a long-term solution, we will be launching a public consultation on 8 January to explore how best to ensure the sustainability, efficiency and effectiveness of secure care services in Scotland. The consultation will invite views on potential future delivery models, including COSLA's recent manifesto proposal for the nationalisation of secure care.

The consultation will provide an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of existing funding and commissioning mechanisms and to gather evidence to support future policy options that remain firmly aligned with The Promise and its focus on meeting the needs of children now and in the future.

Additionally, the consultation will include proposals for the single point of contact (SPOC) service for victims to access information, advice and support where there is information to suggest the child has committed an offence, or a child under the age of 12 has caused harm. This service was established by the Children (Care and Justice) Act 2024.

The consultation will run for 14 weeks. Consultation engagement sessions will be held before the pre-election period begins, taking place throughout February and early March. This 14 week period provides sufficient time for individuals to review the materials, participate in engagement events and prepare their responses.

On conclusion of the consultation, responses will be analysed in spring 2026 and advice will thereafter be provided to the new administration.

I would welcome the Committee's support in helping to raise awareness of this consultation and its importance by sharing it with your networks, helping ensure our continued collective commitment to keeping The Promise.

Yours sincerely,

Natalie Don-Innes MSP
Minister for Children, Young People and The Promise