



# Protocol and procedures for secure accommodation services on the use of registered emergency beds.

Publication date: December 2024

Publication code

## Protocol and procedures for secure accommodation services on the use of registered emergency beds.

### 1. Context

Secure accommodation services were deemed registered with the Care Commission in 2002 and most existing services possessed what was, and remains, colloquially described as an 'emergency bed'. This 'emergency bed' is a single secure bedroom which is not an integral part of one of the secure houses. It may be located close to the reception area, for example, or in another part of the service's campus.

This protocol is designed to ensure consistent and safe practice, expectations and outcomes around the use of these 'emergency beds.' It should be followed and read in conjunction with the expectations set out in the Care Inspectorate's ['Matching and Looked After Children and Young People: Admissions Guidance for Residential Services'](#).

Providers should also take into account the [Health and Social Care Standards](#), and [Secure Care: National Pathway and Standards](#), in all considerations of the use of emergency beds.

### 2. Introduction

Across the sector, emergency bedrooms should be used infrequently and for very short periods. Circumstances where the bedroom may be used include:

1. when the presenting behaviours of a young person are too unsettled for them to be in a shared house.
2. when a service is full, but may have an impending vacancy, and a previous resident needs to be returned urgently to a secure setting.
3. when a service is asked to accommodate emergency stays for children and young people from court who have been remanded or sentenced.

Whilst in circumstances 2 and 3 the young person is usually "attached" to a house, and only sleeps in the bedroom, scenario 1 detailed above would be classed as a young person experiencing single separation.

### 3. Principles of use of a secure accommodation service emergency bedroom

- Services should always operate within their conditions of registration and the maximum number of children and young people detailed on their registration certificate.
- Services may only use an additional bedroom on an emergency basis if their conditions of registration specifically allow this.

- The use of an emergency bedroom, over and above the standard maximum occupancy number on a service's conditions of registration, should be viewed as an unusual occurrence.
- The aims and objectives of services that may use emergency bedrooms should contain comprehensive criteria for their use.
- The Care Inspectorate's evaluation of any use of the emergency bedroom will be based on the outcomes, and risks to outcomes, for all children and young people in the service.

#### **4. Requirements of secure accommodation services using a registered emergency bed.**

##### **I. Should the emergency bedroom be used for a young person already living in the service, it is expected:**

- That the placement agency, carers and advocates for the young person are consulted on the need for the bedroom to be used. The placing authority must confirm their knowledge of the location of the bedroom and how care, support and supervision will be provided both during the day and night, throughout the young person's stay.
- That the young person and their family/carers have the arrangements appropriately and sensitively explained in a way which they will understand.
- A formal service assessment is recorded that concludes that the use of the emergency bed best meets the young person's current and immediate needs. This would include:
  - a) a full assessment of the needs of the young person and the service's ongoing capacity to meet their needs, particularly safety
  - b) an assessment of the location of the emergency bed and its suitability for that specific young person
  - c) a specific staffing needs assessment being undertaken and implemented. This must take into account both the needs of the young person using the emergency bed and also the needs of the wider group of individual young people, particularly in the house which the young person is spending their daily life
  - d) confirmation that national guidance\* and the service's policy on seclusion continues to be adhered to
  - e) arrangements for the monitoring and quality assurance of staff practice and outcomes for the young person when they are using the emergency bedroom
  - f) the young person's views and how advocacy and / or legal representation is being pro-actively supported to ensure their voice is heard about their living circumstances
  - g) that a multi-agency case conference on current and future care planning for the young person takes place within 48 hours, with the aim of returning the young person back to group living.

- The use of the bedroom should be notified to the Care Inspectorate through the eforms system under the heading of incidents.

**II. Should the emergency bedroom be used for a young person when a Children's Hearing makes a Compulsory Supervision Order, which includes secure authorisation, it is expected:**

- Written confirmation from the placing authority is received, confirming that they are aware that the bed placement being offered is for the purposes of an emergency. The placing authority must confirm their knowledge of the location of the bedroom and how care, support and supervision will be provided, both during the day and night, throughout the young person's stay.
- That the young person and their family have the arrangements appropriately and sensitively explained in a way which they will understand.
- Written confirmation from the placing authority of their actions to find/develop alternative provision to the use of the emergency secure bed placement that is being requested. The service must be able to evidence prior to admission that the placement is being made with an initial short-term intention. It is important before the use of any emergency bed placement that both the placing authority and the registered provider are clear about the next steps for the young person.
- A formal service assessment is recorded that concludes that the use of the emergency bed placement best meets the young person's needs and does not / will not adversely impact on other young people resident. This would include:
  - a) a statement and rationale on why the emergency bedroom requires to be used
  - b) a full assessment of the needs of the young person and the service's ongoing capacity to meet their needs, particularly safety. Particular reference should be made to sections 7 and 8 of the Care Inspectorate's 'Matching and Looked After Children and Young People: Admissions Guidance for Residential Services'
  - c) an assessment of the location of the emergency bed and its suitability for that specific young person
  - d) a specific staffing needs assessment being undertaken and implemented. This must take into account both the needs of the young person using the emergency bed and also the needs of the wider group of individual young people, particularly in the house which the young person is spending their daily life. Particular reference should be made to sections 7 and 8 of the Care Inspectorate's 'Matching and Looked After Children and Young People: Admissions Guidance for Residential Services'.
  - e) confirmation that national guidance\* and the service's policy on seclusion continues to be adhered to
  - f) arrangements for the monitoring and quality assurance of staff practice and outcomes for the young person

- g) the young person's views and how advocacy and / or legal representation is being pro-actively supported to ensure their voice is heard about their living circumstances
- h) the proposed timescales and arrangements which ensure the young person moves to a house bedroom as quickly as possible and uses the emergency bedroom for the shortest period
- i) that a multi-agency case conference on current and future care planning for the young person takes place within 72 hours.

**III. Should the emergency bedroom be used to accommodate an emergency placement for a young person from court who has been remanded or sentenced, it is expected:**

- The service makes every effort to receive the necessary information on the young person's needs and the risks from carers and agencies who know, or may know, the young person.
- A formal service assessment is recorded that concludes that the use of the emergency bed placement best meets the young person's needs and does not/ will not adversely impact on other young people resident. This would include:
  - a) a statement and rationale on why the emergency bedroom requires to be used
  - b) a full assessment of the needs of the young person and the service's ongoing capacity to meet their needs, particularly safety. Particular reference should be made to sections 7 and 8 of the Care Inspectorate's 'Matching and Looked After Children and Young People: Admissions Guidance for Residential Services'
  - c) an assessment of the location of the emergency bed and its suitability for that specific young person
  - d) a specific staffing needs assessment being undertaken and implemented. This must take into account both the needs of the young person using the emergency bed and also the needs of the wider group of individual young people, particularly in the house which the young person is spending their daily life. Particular reference should be made to sections 7 and 8 of the Care Inspectorate's 'Matching and Looked After Children and Young People: Admissions Guidance for Residential Services'
  - e) confirmation that national guidance\* and the service's policy on seclusion continues to be adhered to
  - f) arrangements for the monitoring and quality assurance of staff practice and outcomes for the young person when they are using the emergency bedroom
  - g) the young person's views and how advocacy and / or legal representation is being pro-actively supported to ensure their voice is heard about their living circumstances.
  - h) the proposed timescales and arrangements which ensure the young person moves to a house bedroom as quickly as possible and uses the emergency bedroom for the shortest period
  - i) that a multi-agency case conference on current and future care planning for the young person takes place within 72 hours

## 5. Required notifications to the Care Inspectorate when an emergency bedroom is used.

Services are required to notify the Care Inspectorate on every occasion that the emergency bedroom is used. Such actions should be notified via an incident notification within 24 hours of the emergency bed being used. The notification must include:

- the reasons for the emergency bedroom being used, referencing the protocol and procedures;
- the initials of the young person;
- the date which the young person started using the emergency bedroom;
- the proposed duration that the emergency bed will be used for, and specific planned end date;
- a concise summary of how the expectations in the protocol have been met.

Should the the planned end date for the use of emergency bedroom pass, an update to the incident notification must be made. This should detail the reasons why the deadline for the emergency bedroom to cease being used has passed, contingency arrangements, and a revised end date.

**The notification process detailed in this protocol does not indicate ‘approval’ by the Care Inspectorate of any specific placement or use of the ‘emergency bedroom.’ It provides a degree of assurance to the regulator that the use of the bedroom meets the protocol parameters. It is the provider’s responsibility to:**

- **assess, on each and every specific occasion, whether the use of the emergency bedroom is a safe and appropriate placement choice.**
- **implement and resource the necessary care practices to ensures care of the young person which is safe and respects their rights.**

## 6. \* National Guidance on seclusion and restrictive practices.

- [Included, Engaged and Involved Part 3: A Relationships and Rights-based Approach to Physical Intervention in Schools](#), Scottish Government.
- [Position Paper- Depriving and restricting liberty for children and young people in care home, school care and secure accommodation services, Care Inspectorate](#), 2023.
- [Rights, risks and limits to freedom, Mental Welfare Commission 2021](#)
- [Use of seclusion: Good Practice Guide, Mental Welfare Commission 2019.](#)
- [Self evaluation tool on restrictive practices, Care Inspectorate, November 2024](#)

**Headquarters**

Care Inspectorate  
Compass House  
11 Riverside Drive  
Dundee  
DD1 4NY

web: [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com)

email: [enquiries@careinspectorate.com](mailto:enquiries@careinspectorate.com)

telephone: 0345 600 9527



@careinspect

**Other languages and formats**

This publication is available in other formats and other languages on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iarrtas.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.