

In the first instance, please contact the Welsh Government to inform them that you intend to refer for a secure welfare placement. The SWCU will require an email from the Head of Service to confirm agreement has been granted by the Welsh Government for the placement search to be undertaken.

Complete the SWCU Referral form. Referral goes 'live', and search commences.

Once a bed offer has been received, you will need to apply for Welsh Ministerial approval.

Welsh Ministerial approval is required for placing young people under 13 years of age in Wales under section 119, in England under Section 25, and under the High Court's inherent jurisdiction together with a mirror order from the Court of Session in Scotland under the "nobile officium" for placements in Scotland.

When applying for ministerial approval, you will be asked to provide the information contained in the code and they will contact Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) for a professional view of the case before an approval letter can be issued. It is likely that CIW will contact the local authority to discuss the circumstances of the case.

Government Contacts (Mon-Fri 8:30am-5:30pm):

Alistair Davey, Deputy Director, Enabling People
Tel: 03000 256319 / 07501 596840 Email: Alistair.Davey@gov.wales
Penny Hall, Improving Outcomes
Tel: 03000 253095 Email: Penny.Hall@gov.wales

The local authority will be asked to provide:

- The name and date of birth of the child concerned.
- A verbal summary of the reasons for the secure placement.
- Confirmation of whether a bed in a secure children's home has been identified and is available.
- Confirmation of whether the child is currently with the local authority or missing from care (having absconded).
- Details of when the local authority is intending to go to court to seek a secure order.
- Details of what alternatives to a placement in a secure children's home have been considered and why these were rejected.

You will also need to submit written paperwork by e-mail:

- A full written history/chronology of the child
- A contemporary care plan that covers the period of the secure placement, including the aims and objectives of the placement and (where possible) the exit strategy from secure accommodation
- Agreement in writing at Assistant Director / Head of Service level or above, seeking the approval of the Welsh Ministers.

The Welsh Government will review the documentation, assess the application and advise of the decision as soon as possible. If the application is successful, the LA will receive a letter via email granting Ministerial approval for a secure application to be made to the Family Court.

Process Flowchart (Wales)

Is a secure welfare placement required for an under 13 outside of core working hours?

(Weekends, Bank Holidays and Mon-Fri after 5:30pm- 8:30am)

The U13 process for core working hours.

In exceptional circumstances, where you need to seek approval in an emergency out of hours (17.30 to 08.30) or during a weekend or bank holiday, please contact

Alistair Davey on

07501 596840

The 'on call' duty officer will require the following information:

- The name and date of birth of the child concerned.
- A verbal summary of the reasons for the secure placement.
- Confirmation of whether a bed in a secure children's home has been identified and
- is available.
- Confirmation of whether the child is currently with the local authority or missing from care (having absconded).
- Details of when the local authority is intending to go to court to seek a secure order.
- Details of what alternatives to a placement in a secure children's home have been considered and why these were rejected.

Based on the information received, the 'on call' duty officer will consider whether the criteria is met and if a secure placement would be appropriate for the young person.

The duty officer will give a verbal approval to the LA on the basis that the required documents are submitted as soon as possible the next working day.

Contact the SCH's individually to explore bed availability via the contact details on the SAN website:

Our Homes. – Secure Children's Homes (securechildrenshomes.org.uk)

If an out of hours bed is sourced, then a referral to the SWCU will still be required within core working hours. If there is no bed availability, please revert to the SWCU referral process for core working hours.

Once Welsh Minister
assesses the documents,
the LA will receive a letter
via email granting
Ministerial approval for an
application to be made to
the Family Court.