

Tom Arthur
Minister for Social Care and Mental Wellbeing
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
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Via: MinisterSCMW@gov.scot

Date: 4 July 2025
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Dear Mr Arthur,

Closure of Ward 7A, Woodland View, Ayrshire

As Scotland's National Human Rights Institution, we are writing in relation to reports of the closure of Ward 7A at Woodland View, which we understand is scheduled to take place on 14 July 2025. While we appreciate that this is a decision for the Health and Social Care Partnership and that there will be a range of factors that have led to this decision, the situation will have implications for the human rights of those currently resident at Woodland View on which we write to seek your views.

You will be aware that the Scottish Human Rights Commission has repeatedly called for urgent action to move people who have no need for medical care out of institutions. Our January 2025 report, ['Tick Tock: a human rights assessment of progress from institutionalisation to independent living in Scotland'](#) highlighted that long term institutionalisation does not protect the right to independent living under Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and risks the Scottish Government and its agencies acting in violation of European Convention rights, such as the right to liberty and the prohibition of inhuman and degrading treatment.

The report also provides guidance on the process that should be followed to ensure deinstitutionalisation happens at pace and in line with human rights standards. In

particular, it directs duty bearers to the [Guidelines on deinstitutionalisation](#) prepared by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which outlines each step in the deinstitutionalisation process. In the current context, it is important to highlight the requirements at paragraphs 93-98 in respect of preparations for leaving the institution. They articulate the requirement for planning processes to be customised to each individual and centred around their will and preferences. They also highlight that people must be provided with adequate time and opportunities to prepare physically and emotionally for living in the community.

Arrangements in the community must also ensure that they uphold both the right to independent living and relevant European Convention rights such as the right to liberty, the right to private and family life and protection from inhuman and degrading treatment.

We would be grateful to hear from you as to your views on the human rights implications of this decision and any steps the Scottish Government can take to ensure that the relevant human rights are being actively considered and protected throughout this closure.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Angela O'Hagan
Chair of the Commission

Cc: Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee,
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