

**P-06-1479 Stop the detention of learning disabled and autistic children, young people and adults in hospitals - Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee - 6
March 2025**

Stolen Lives are human rights defenders.

We welcome that the Welsh Government 'supports the principle that a hospital bed is not a home.' However, the inclusion of the words 'whenever practical' gives health boards and local authorities the excuse they will be looking for to maintain the status quo.

People with learning disabilities are not detained in secure hospitals because of the Mental Health Act but because of inappropriate provision and poor care, as exemplified this week by the ITV news investigation which uncovered allegations of multiple failings at residential and supported-living homes run by Lifeways, which operate in England, Scotland and Wales.

People with learning disabilities from Wales are being held in secure hospitals in breach of their human rights and there is no evidence of a human rights-based approach to end this practice.

The minister says she 'committed to reducing the number of people receiving their care, long-term in a hospital setting and when they are admitted, their hospital stay is for no longer than is absolutely necessary.'

No person with a learning disability should be locked up in a hospital. To do so is a failure to uphold the right to independent living in terms of Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Furthermore, the failure of the State to provide social care support should not be considered appropriate criteria for admission and sustained detention. Allowing the detention of people with learning disabilities and/or who are autistic without therapeutic benefit places the Welsh Government at risk of breaches of the ECHR.

When the recommendations from the Task and Finish group are submitted, we urge the Welsh Government to focus on urgent progress and reform.

While Stolen Lives awaits change, our relatives continue to live in hospitals without choice and control.