



**ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2023**

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# Chairperson's foreword



I am pleased and proud to present the Annual Report of Oberstown Children Detention Campus, 2023, in compliance with the legal requirement on the Board of Management under section 174 of the Children Act 2001. Presented to Roderic O'Gorman, Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, this document provides an overview of the operation of the Campus, outlining the activities and achievements of the staff and young people.

I took up the role of Chair of Oberstown Children Detention Campus on the 1st of June 2023, succeeding Professor Ursula Kilkelly who led the organisation through the most innovative reform of child custody the State has ever seen. During this time, Oberstown has demonstrated that it is possible to promote the rights of children in a custodial setting. It is an honour to succeed Professor Kilkelly, who reflects on her decade on the Board later in this report (see page 60).

Being child rights compliant is essential to an effective youth justice system – one that keeps the community safe, is able to respond to the needs of victims and enables young people to overcome the consequences of adverse childhood experiences through interventions supporting them to develop alternative behaviours, and ensuring that their voice and experiences are integral to the operation of the system.

I applied for this role because there is clear evidence that Oberstown has made significant progress to ensure that the Campus works to protect the rights of the children in its care, for which it has deservedly gained an international reputation. It is the clear intention of the Board, the Director and his team that we continue to build on this work.

The continuous and substantive improvements in the care provided to young people since Oberstown was established is clearly evidenced through annual reports and HQIA inspection reports. The Annual Report 2023 demonstrates the breadth and depth of work undertaken across the Campus by a dedicated workforce. The young people received holistic and rights-based care that enables them to envisage a different future for themselves.

There is progress still to be made across a number of areas, and 2024 will focus on continuous improvement, addressing staff vacancies, strengthening internal systems and processes and working to ensure that custody is a last resort.

The Board of Management comprises 12 members, representing staff, the local community, relevant government departments and agencies, with five members appointed through public appointment. The Board has responsibility to assure the Minister that Oberstown is operating in line with the requirements of the Children Act 2001, relevant national law and policy and the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies. I can confirm that the Board of Oberstown works hard to provide the highest standards of governance and oversight, including through its standing committees. We provide challenge and support to the Director and the Senior Management Team in the delivery of their operational responsibilities.

Oberstown is a complex, risk-aware, secure facility that operates every hour of every day – it is the only one in the State and therefore can never close. In 2023, the Campus was operating at certified capacity on a number of occasions, which presented challenges. Nevertheless, the passion and commitment to ensure that young people in Oberstown remain safe, well cared for and able to fulfil their potential remains the focus of the Board and staff. We are mindful of the responsibility placed on the Campus and we will continue to discharge our duties to the highest standards.

As the new Chair of the Board of Management, I wish to record my gratitude to my Board colleagues for their diligence and commitment as well as their welcome and patience as I continue to learn about the work of Oberstown. Finally, I want to thank the staff across the Campus who work tirelessly every day to ensure that the children receive the best care possible.

**Koulla Yiasouma**  
Chairperson, Board of Management

‘there is clear evidence that Oberstown has made significant progress to ensure that the Campus works to protect the rights of the children in its care, for which it has deservedly gained an international reputation.’

# Director's overview

**Oberstown's positive energy and vitality was reaffirmed across the Campus throughout 2023. The rhythm and routine of our day-to-day life is driven by staff who strive to allow our young people to maximise their potential. This daily endeavour continues to be supported by the Board of Management, external stakeholders, the Senior Management Team and all staff in working to deliver our Strategy across the five goals (see pages 12–23).**

In terms of our overall performance, collaboration among internal and external stakeholders has been a critical success factor in allowing our young people to prepare for life after Oberstown. Developments on Campus in education and preparation for work have focused on building our young people's practical and personal life skills. Notable initiatives funded by the Dormant Accounts Fund include our 'Banging Sandwiches' coffee van business along with the forklift training, fitness instruction, careers and horticultural projects (see pages 32–37). Opportunities for creative expression – a key educational and personal growth focus for young people – were boosted by a new podcast project, made possible by Creative Ireland's Youth Nurture Fund (see page 59). These initiatives reaffirm the premise that our young people are capable of anything once given the opportunity, and this is where our intensive approach to working with our young people yields real value.

The development of leaders at every level of the organisation formed a large part of our journey in 2023. This was evident in the project to develop staff to become Safety Intervention trainers, bringing this expertise on Campus and greatly enhancing our in-service training offering. Equally inspiring was the successful launch of the CORU registration project and its impact on the professionalisation of the Residential Social Care Worker role. Facilitated by a team of peer champions, the positive effects of CORU registration will be felt across the Campus in the years ahead (see pages 62–64). Similarly, the leadership we see every day at all levels of the organisation – staff stepping up and into their roles to ensure that the young people in our care have the best opportunity to maximise their potential while on Campus – adds real value and speaks to the mission of the organisation.

In recognising the challenges we sometimes face as an organisation, we made significant progress in 2023 towards rolling out a new supervision model. This initiative focuses on our commitment, under Goal 2 of our Strategy, to building staff resilience and promoting in-practice learning. The new supervision model supports our staff in gaining a deeper understanding of their role, including

the wider social context and other factors that inform their work with young people. A further key development in staff wellbeing came with the positive outcome of external assessments and an onsite audit against ISO 45003, which relates to psychological health and safety at work. Certification to this standard in 2024 will be a major step forward in this regard.

We continued to develop our programmes in 2023, focusing on fostering growth in the context of recognising victims' needs and creating an understanding of the impact of offending behaviour. The expansion of programmes has been a welcome and effective initiative focused on specialised, individualised areas of care (see pages 24–28). With regard to our rights-based, participative approach, key developments in 2023 allowed our young people be part of international initiatives including the Walk in My Shoes project with the Netherlands Helsinki Committee and Youth Perspectives (YOPE). We also worked with Penal Reform International and the Data MOSAIC project, giving young people the chance to be part of system change regarding improved data collection and analysis on violence against children in places of detention (see pages 29–31).

All our work in 2023 took place against a backdrop of almost full employment in Ireland, constricting the numbers of graduates available to us in the social care field and leading to recruitment challenges at many levels. However, our student placement programmes and graduate entry programmes are beginning to come to fruition in terms of awareness and improved numbers, and we are very fortunate that we have a very stable, experienced body of staff to mentor and guide this cohort.

It is a wonderful privilege to have the opportunity to develop a platform for our young people in order to enhance their life opportunities when they leave us. However, it is important to note that our young people may present with very complex needs, which sometimes delays the impact of the learning while in our care. For this reason, the benefits gained in Oberstown may not be fully evident until young people are in their mid-twenties and, having met some of these more mature young people during 2023, it is heartening and humbling to see they are fully appreciative of their learning and experiences while in Oberstown. Our staff put this belief in making a difference to young people's lives and maximising their potential into their work every day.



**Damien Hernon**  
Director



# About Oberstown

**Oberstown is Ireland's national centre for the detention, care and education of young people under 18 years referred by the courts on detention or remand orders. Established under the Children Act 2001, the Campus provides individualised care to young people through an integrated multi-professional approach that enables young people to address their offending behaviour and return successfully to society.**

Young people referred to Oberstown by the courts usually face criminal charges of a serious or persistent nature. They often have very complex needs and require individualised and specialised care and support to ensure their needs are met and they are prepared to return to their communities to live constructive and fulfilling lives.

In line with legal requirements, Oberstown meets the needs of young people in relation to their Care, Education, Health, Offending behaviour and Preparation for leaving – the five elements of CEHOP®, the Oberstown model of care (see page 10).

Oberstown applies a rights-based model, set out in the Children's Rights Policy Framework. This means that young people participate in decision making about their care, their lives and the Campus as a whole. The framework has 12 Campus Rules that set standards to ensure that young people at Oberstown are safe, get the best care possible and have their rights respected (see page 7).

## Life on Campus

Located in Lusk, Co Dublin, the Campus is a modern, secure, custom-built facility, with residential units that accommodate up to eight young people. Young people are cared for 24/7 by Residential Social Care Workers and Night Supervising Officers; 177 staff in a total of 248 are directly involved in the front-line care of young people.

In 2023, Oberstown was authorised to accommodate a maximum of 40 boys and six girls. The average daily occupancy was 35 young people. Over the course of 2023, there were 129 young people detained on the Campus, 127 boys and two girls.

At the centre of the Campus is a large school, with a varied primary, secondary and vocational curriculum delivered by the Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB). Each young person follows an educational programme tailored to their academic level and social needs, along with key factors such as expected length of stay on

Campus, an assessment of what they might achieve, and their future plans and career interests. The school offers the national curriculum (Junior and Senior cycle), QQI certification, and learning support programmes including BKSb (basic key skills builder).

Oberstown staff run an extensive schedule of afterschool activities. The Campus health suite offers a full range of medical and health services. Specialist programmes address offending behaviour and underlying factors (see pages 24–28). Multidisciplinary care is provided by a range of professionals (psychology, speech and language therapy and addiction counselling) through Tusla ACTS (Assessment Consultation Therapy Service) and the National Forensic Mental Health Service, who provide psychiatric care. The Campus Chaplain caters for the young people's religious and spiritual needs and the Advocacy Officer promotes young people's participation in decision making across all aspects of the organisation (see pages 29–31).

## Governance and Management

Oberstown has a Board of Management, which has responsibility for the overall management of the Campus. The Board is appointed by the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth under sections 164 and 167 of the Children Act 2001 (the Act), the primary legislation governing Oberstown. Section 158 of the Act states that the principal objective of Oberstown is to provide appropriate educational and training programmes and facilities for children having regard to their health, safety, welfare and interests, including their physical, psychological and emotional wellbeing (see pages 39–45).

The Act assigns the day-to-day running of Oberstown to the Director, who has primary (*in loco parentis*) responsibility for the young people on Campus. The Director, together

with the Senior Management Team, is charged with ensuring that the needs and rights of young people are met and the standards set down in national law are fulfilled.

Within the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY), the Children Detention Schools Unit has direct responsibility for Oberstown. Governance and performance arrangements are set out in an Oversight Agreement between DCEDIY and Oberstown, reviewed annually. The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) has responsibility for inspecting Oberstown, at least annually, using a rigorous and transparent approach (see pages 46–47).

Oberstown is accountable to the Minister for implementation of relevant national policy. This includes the Youth Justice Strategy 2021-2027, which makes specific references to the role of Oberstown in the youth justice system, assigning lead or co-responsibility to Oberstown for a range of strategic actions. For more information, go to [https://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/Youth\\_Justice\\_Strategy](https://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/Youth_Justice_Strategy).

## Stakeholders

Oberstown works with a wide range of external stakeholders in the delivery of the Campus purpose. These include partners who support and provide education, care and vocational training services on site and organisations that engage with young people in a variety of ways to promote their successful return to their communities or onward placement to prison (see page 66).

# 12 Campus Rules

**The 12 Campus Rules are 12 standards that have been set to make sure that Oberstown is a place where young people are safe, get the best care possible, and where their rights are respected.**

## 1. Care

Young people shall receive the best possible care so that their full potential can be realised. Their needs shall be individually assessed, and personalised placement plans developed to ensure their needs are met. They shall be supported to maintain contact with family as appropriate.

## 2. Education and Recreation

Young people shall have access to appropriate education, training and leisure activities suited to their needs and abilities and designed to prepare them for independent living.

## 3. Health

Young people shall have access to health, medical and therapeutic care in line with their assessed needs.

## 4. Offending Behaviour

Young people shall have access to a range of services, supports and programmes that address their offending behaviour and prevent further offending on release.

## 5. Preparing for leaving

Young people shall be prepared for leaving Oberstown through placement planning that assists their successful return to their families, communities or transition to prison. Such planning shall take account of policies and procedures for mobility trips, temporary leave and supervision in the community.

## 6. Safeguarding

Young people shall be protected from all forms of harm and abuse and their welfare promoted.

## 7. Consultation

Young people shall be supported to access information and effective complaints mechanisms, and to have their voices heard and to participate in decisions made about them.

## 8. Positive Behaviour

Young people shall be supported to understand and demonstrate norms of good behaviour that ensure long-term positive outcomes.

## 9. Restrictive Practices

Practices that interfere with the rights of young people shall only be used with approval and in exceptional circumstances.

## 10. Staffing, Management and Governance

The care of young people shall be provided by a suitable number of appropriately qualified staff of various grades, and effective and transparent management and governance shall be in place to deliver public accountability.

## 11. Physical Environment

Young people shall be cared for in an environment that is safe and secure, considering their physical, emotional and psychological well-being.

## 12. Authority to Suspend the Rules

In exceptional, emergency circumstances, the Director may limit the effect of these Rules to the extent that it is necessary to deal with that emergency.

# Campus population quick facts 2023

Maximum number of young people:  
**46**  
[40 MALE + 6 FEMALE]

Average daily population:  
**35** [13 REMAND  
22 DETENTION]

**3**  
Leaving Cert students

**4**  
Junior Cycle students

**27**  
QQI module certificates

Number of young people detained on remand or detention orders:  
**129**

Average age: **16**  
Where from? **53** DUBLIN **27** FROM THE TRAVELLER COMMUNITY

**60-70**  
Afterschool activities classes held over a four-hour period per weekday

**20**  
Gaisce Awards

**4**  
Work Placements

[127 MALE + 2 FEMALE]

In Oberstown on 31/12/22: **34** + New admissions: **95**

Onward placements 2023: **116**  
Where to? **74** HOME **16** RESIDENTIAL CARE **14** OTHER **12** IRISH PRISON SERVICE

**24**  
Baristas trained

**30**  
Fitness instructor qualifications

**12**  
SafePass certificates

**20**  
Manual handling certificates

Detention orders: **59** + Remand orders only: **70**

Average length of detention order (days): **138**  
Average length of remand order (days): **44**  
Number of court escorts: **575**

**2,309**  
Nursing appointments

**885**  
GP appointments

**226**  
Dental appointments

## CEHOP® – Oberstown’s model for individualised care



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### Care

- Placement planning process based on initial and ongoing needs assessment and focused on supporting each young person’s return to the community.
- Individual care plan with input from inter-disciplinary professional care team, family and other significant people in the young person’s life, including input from external agencies as required.
- Supports and services provided by a trained, expert multi-disciplinary team.
- Young person’s voice is key at every stage of the process (see pages 29–31).

### Education

- All young people attend school in Oberstown.
- Full support for learning, including taking state exams and pursuing vocational training. The Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB) delivers the curriculum on Campus.
- Educational objectives focused on equipping young people for the future, with outcomes measured in line with individual progress and potential.
- School classes augmented by an extensive programme of afterschool activities.

### Health

- Access to healthcare services for all young people on Campus.
- Purpose-built medical suite managed by Clinical Nurse Manager working with two nurses and a Residential Social Care Worker (RSCW). Health & Wellbeing team promote health and wellness of young people in Oberstown.
- Visiting GP, dentist, optician, podiatrist and physiotherapist providing services onsite.
- HSE Forensic Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (FCAMHS) provides psychiatric services to young people in Oberstown. Tusla’s ACTS (Assessment Consultation Therapy Service) provides multidisciplinary services to address behaviours associated with complex clinical needs.

### Offending behaviour

- Focus on working with young people to address factors associated with their offending behaviour.
- Programmes develop young

people’s sense of responsibility and life skills and support their care on Campus. Areas addressed include victim empathy, controlling impulsive behaviours, avoiding misuse of drugs and alcohol (see pages 24–28).

### Preparation for leaving

- Placement planning meetings (PPMs), held onsite, identify and review the needs of young people and the services and supports they require.
- Each young person has a PPM every five weeks to review their progress. Oberstown chairs the PPM; attendees include the young person, residential unit staff, teachers and external partners with a role in the young person’s return to the community or onward placement. Family members or guardians attend the meetings either in person or via phone or video link.
- The process is structured to give the young person a say in decisions that affect their ongoing care in Oberstown and their life after leaving the Campus.

The Oberstown Board, management and staff are guided in their work by the Campus mission, vision and values.

## PURPOSE

Oberstown Children Detention Campus provides care and education for young people referred by the courts on detention or remand orders, supporting them to address their offending and return successfully to society.

## VISION

The Oberstown vision is to provide young people with the highest standards of rights-based, child-centred care that meets their needs and enables them to maximise their potential.

1.

We place young people at the heart of what we do.

2.

We listen to young people, acknowledging and respecting their right to participate and influence decisions that affect them.

## VALUES

6.

We foster learning, encouraging new ideas and ways of working.

5.

We work in partnership to fulfil our shared vision.

4.

We respect each other – our staff, young people and external partners – promoting honesty and authenticity.

3.

We act with integrity and are accountable for our actions.

# Implementing our Strategy 2023

2023 was the first full year of the Oberstown Strategy 2022-2026 and its associated annual business plan. Across the year, the Director, the Senior Management Team and staff teams worked to progress the organisational priorities set out in the business plan, providing monthly progress updates to the Board of Management.

[Oberstown Smartsheet dashboard](#)



The Oberstown strategy has Strategic Goals covering five key areas of activity:

1. Care of young people at Oberstown
2. Staff wellbeing and development
3. Partnerships
4. Transparency and accountability
5. Sustainability.

Each of the Strategic Goals has five high-level Strategic Actions with associated priority tasks for their implementation. By the end of 2023, a total of 73 tasks were either completed or in progress.

Monitoring progress against the business plan was a focus for the Board throughout 2023, with regular reviews of progress undertaken by the Strategy Committee. The Director and Senior Management Team reported progress to the Board as recorded on Smartsheet, a new collaborative work management tool to assign tasks, track project progress, share documents, and demonstrate progress using sophisticated dashboards.

On the following pages we set out a summary of work completed or in progress under each of the Strategic Goals.



# Goal 1

## We will provide the best possible child-centred, individualised, rights-based care and education to young people.

Business plan progress at 31 December 2023:

1.1

Enhance and mainstream the participation and influence of young people in decision making at all levels.

- Independent external review of young people’s participation completed; work ongoing to implement recommendations.
- Partnering with the Netherlands Helsinki Committee (NHC) and Youth Perspectives (YOPE) in EU-funded ‘Giving Back Project’ to enhance participation and improve lived experience of young people in detention. Twelve staff and three young people trained in participation; three young people nominated for membership of Youth Lab Board. Project in progress, end date Q1 2024.
- Unit Charters established and prominently displayed within residential units.
- Weekly young people’s Unit meetings established using standard agenda templates developed with the young people.

1.2

Develop the CEHOP® model of care through the further integration of education and the enhancement of multi-disciplinary and trauma-informed approaches that ensure the complex and diverse needs of young people are met.

- Options paper ‘Trauma informed and Responsive Care in Oberstown’ submitted to Board for approval.
- Restorative Practice refresher workshops conducted in all residential units.
- Enhance and strengthen integration of education (formal/informal) on Campus – working group established.

Oberstown established a strong partnership with the Netherlands Helsinki Committee (NHC) and Youth Perspectives (YOPE) Netherlands in 2023, working together on the EU-funded ‘Giving Back Project’, which aims to enhance the child-friendly practices of European youth justice professionals in detention facilities. Oberstown welcomed visitors from the project to Campus in Q1 2023. Pictured: (left to right) Michelle Griffin, Lamyn Belgaroui, Jason Miedema, Elizabeth Vrieling, Fédi Hoff, Gráinne Smyth.

1.3

Advance the effectiveness of Oberstown placement planning, embedding the participation of young people and their families in decision making, leading to improved outcomes.

- Process mapping of PPM (placement planning meeting) process to inform restructuring of PPMs to be more trauma-informed and include integration of multidisciplinary functions. Resource allocated.
- Improve young people’s experience of PPM process through post-meeting evaluation. Young people provided feedback on PPM process as input to continuous development. Work ongoing.



1.4

Take all necessary measures, in partnership with key agencies, to ensure young people leaving Oberstown have access to the supports and services that meet their needs.

- All young people have an exit plan in place before leaving Oberstown. Target of six weeks prior to leaving, subject to input from external agencies.
- Service Level Agreements (SLAs) reviewed for external agencies providing in-reach care to young people and their carers. Annual process established.
- Proactively target work, education and vocational training opportunities to support young people both on Campus and on leaving, ensuring compliance against governance framework (aligned with Strategic Goal 4.3). Five initiatives completed in 2023 – Way 2 Work, FlyeFit, John Sisk & Son, The Candle Project, LinkedIn.

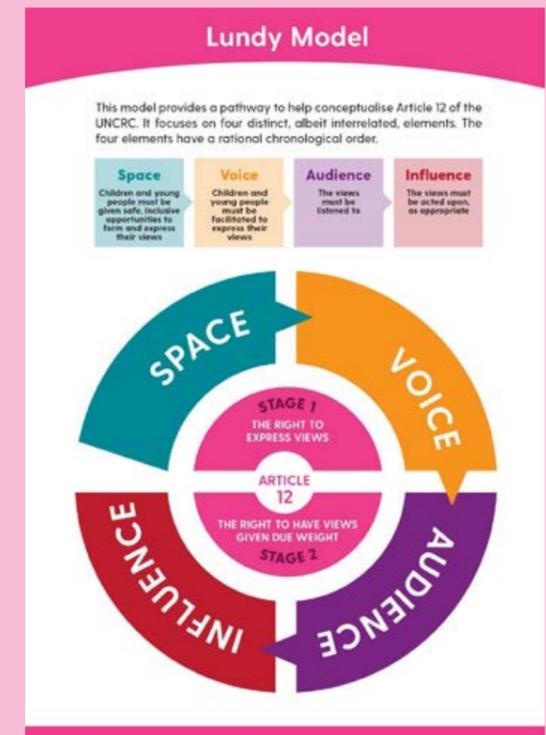
1.5

Embed the Children’s Rights Policy Framework into practice in order to mainstream a consistent, rights-based approach to the care of young people.

- Develop plan for embedding CRPF into working practices of all staff who work directly with young people. Implementation across residential units under way.

“Family support and engagement with agencies are important factors.”

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK



**Lundy Model** – A major review of young people’s participation in decision making on Campus, commissioned in 2022, was presented to the Board in September 2023. Leading international children’s rights academic Professor Laura Lundy and policy maker Anne O’Donnell assessed Oberstown’s approach against the Lundy model, widely recognised as the benchmark for participation and endorsed by the Irish Government in the National Strategy on Children and Young People’s Participation in Decision-Making (2015–2020). See pages 29–31 for more on young people’s participation..

# Goal 2

## We will foster a culture of leadership, learning and resilience among our staff.

Business plan progress at 31 December 2023:

### 2.1

Adopt a strategic, evidence-based approach to workforce planning so that Oberstown has the right people with the right blend of skills and experience in place to meet the evolving needs of young people and the organisation.

- Organisational capability review complete at Senior Management Team level. Recruitment campaigns conducted in line with findings. Project ongoing due to employment market challenges.
- Business case developed for early retirement pension scheme for frontline staff. Board considering options for presenting to DEPR. Work ongoing.
- Review of current staff and roles across all grades under way.

### 2.2

Develop and embed a system of performance accountability at individual, team and organisational level with an emphasis on continuous feedback, formal supervision, recognition, and coaching.

- All HR policies and procedures under review with help of external agency. Draft review under consideration.
- Blended working policy developed and submitted for Board approval.
- Revised employee handbook progressed with input from external agency. Revisions planned for 2024.
- Practice supervision policy developed for unit-based NSOs and RSCWs. Secured Board approval December 2023.
- Coaching skills training commenced for all line managers as part of supervision training. Project in progress. First phase completed in conjunction with supervision and both aligned for planned developments in rollout of performance management.

### 2.3

Implement a Talent Management plan that creates a culture of learning and development and sets out a clear vision for recruitment and succession planning.

- CORU registration process started for eligible RSCWs, NSOs and others with social care experience. Project lead identified and partnership established with Social Care Ireland to develop project plan. Registration drive scheduled for Q1 2024.
- Talent Development Framework aligned to Oberstown strategy being developed, incorporating succession planning. Draft framework prepared for Q2 2024 review.
- Graduate programme to ensure pipeline of appropriately qualified staff being developed for RSCWs and other roles. Liaison with third-level institutions ongoing.
- Input provided to social care academic curriculum via joint development project with Shannon Technological University. Work ongoing.
- Mentoring programme to facilitate induction and succession planning progressed; options paper linked to training needs analysis being developed.

### 2.4

Continue to enhance staff engagement, wellness and wellbeing in order to promote a positive organisational culture and enhance staff resilience, building on existing processes and supports.

- Ibec KeepWell Mark midterm review completed, covering priorities identified in the Oberstown Working Well Framework in relation to: Leadership, Absence Management, Health & Safety, Mental Health, Smoke Free, Physical Activity, Healthy Eating and Intoxicants.
- Supervision training rolled out to all managers working with young people.
- Benchmarking of Oberstown's approach to psychological health and safety at work against ISO 45003 – the first global standard on managing psychosocial risk – progressed. BSI conducted an initial assessment and full onsite audits. Audit schedule concluded in December, positive audit reports received with recommendation for certification in Q1 2024.

### 2.5

Implement an equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) strategy to foster a culture of respect and dignity at work and in the care we provide to young people.

- EDI strategy in development following consultation with Ibec.



Recruitment and graduate development programme initiatives included welcoming groups of students from South East Technological University (SETU) in March and November 2023. The visits gave the students and academics an insight into social care work in Oberstown. Pictured: (left to right) Oberstown care staff Jessica Feeney, Darren Bryan, Niamh Carroll, and Nadine Bollard gave the students a guided tour of the Campus.



A major project to facilitate CORU registration for all eligible staff with social care experience started in Q4 2023. Deputy Director Rose Murray was appointed project lead and Oberstown is partnering with Social Care Ireland to facilitate the registration process.



Oberstown worked with assessors from the Ibec KeepWell Mark on its interim review of wellbeing practices and initiatives on Campus. The KeepWell Mark is an integral element in the Oberstown Working Well Framework, a holistic approach to staff wellbeing. Further information on page 65.

# Goal 3

We will partner with families, communities, agencies and services to deliver the best possible outcomes for our young people.

Business plan progress at 31 December 2023:

3.1

Formalise engagement with the families of young people, promoting good communication and participation in decision making to ensure the needs of young people are met in Oberstown and when they leave.

- Parents and other external carers consulted on their experience of the PPM process, with input considered for continuous improvement.
- Family engagement strategy in development.

3.2

Leverage Oberstown’s stakeholder network to enhance our collaborative approach with key partners to promote the fulfilment of the organisation’s purpose and vision.

- Oberstown actively participated in the work of multiagency working groups to support the delivery of the CEHOP® framework and to ensure the young person remains the focus. This is an ongoing activity.

3.3

Contribute actively to national and international debate to enhance public understanding about the rights-based, individualised approach to the care and education of young people in detention.

- Oberstown Director contributed to strategic and operational meetings on the Youth Justice Strategy 2021-2027. Ongoing engagement planned for 2024.
- Engagement plan in place with connections established and consolidated across the Oberstown stakeholder network through events, hosted visits to Oberstown, participation in virtual events and in-person visits to external organisations.

3.4

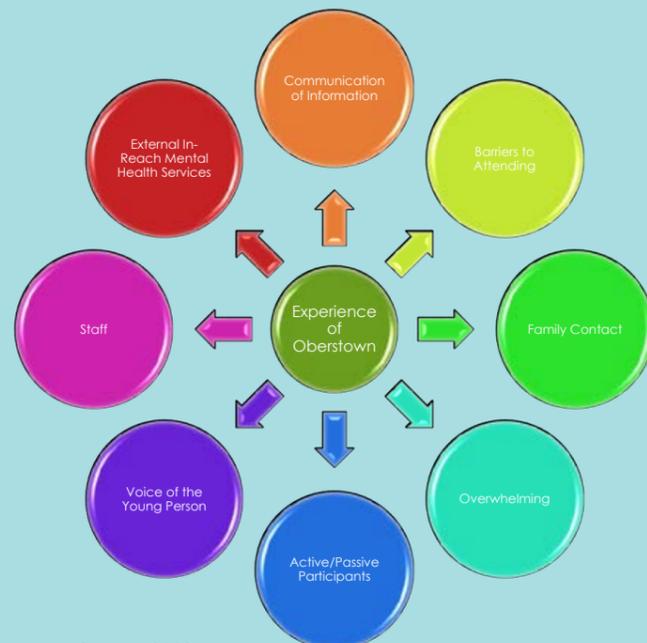
Consolidate Oberstown’s role as a good neighbour and positive contributor to the community, exploring opportunities for the advancement of our mutual interests.

- Oberstown engaged in initiatives that enable young people and staff to contribute to the local community. Activities included: providing a Meals on Wheels service to local senior citizens; providing the annual Christmas dinner event for the Man O’ War Senior Citizens Group; delivering decorative Christmas wreaths made by the young people to local residents; decorating Lusk Nursing Home. Ongoing activity linked to annual events and Gaisce awards projects.
- Enhanced relationship with Java Republic, providers of barista skills and food business education to young people on Campus, as a part of the Oberstown Coffee Van Business Project financed by the Dormant Accounts Fund.

3.5

Work with key external partners and agencies to ensure the timely delivery of key actions under the Youth Justice Strategy 2021-2027, especially with regard to young people who are transitioning from Oberstown.

- Oberstown Director contributed to strategic and operational meetings on the Youth Justice Strategy 2021-2027. Ongoing engagement planned for 2024.
- Oberstown Director and members of the Senior Management Team contributed to forums on youth diversion (Department of Justice) and probation (Irish Prison Service).



**Parent Participation Report** – A project was conducted to gain an understanding of parents’ experience of placement planning meetings (PPMs) at Oberstown. It identified the communication of information as the key component of PPMs for the parent/guardian. They reported that by attending these meetings they receive information that they may not necessarily get over the telephone. Parents also said that PPMs give clear statements and objectives for young people around what they have to achieve while in Oberstown. See ‘Young People’s participation’ pages 29–31 for more detail.

“PPM’s are very good, informative – they gave me updates since the last meeting, progress plans and suggestions around his transfer to prison.”

PARENT COMMENT ON PPM PROCESS



**Youth Justice Strategy** – Oberstown contributed to the national and international debate on child rights issues in 2023. The Director took part in strategic and operational meetings on the Youth Justice Strategy 2021-2027 and, together with Deputy Directors, at meetings of the North/South Youth Advisory Group. Meetings were held with a range of agencies and organisations, including GSOC, the Irish Prison Service, the Probation Service, the Judiciary and various Justice Department initiatives.

# Goal 4

We will ensure that our governance, practices and decision making are transparent, data-driven and evidence-based.

Business plan progress at 31 December 2023:

4.1

Promote the highest level of compliance with the standards of good governance throughout the organisation.

- Approved corporate procurement plan implemented. Training on procurement rules for all managers provided by an external company.
- Compliance with governance framework policies and procedures introduced as a standing agenda item at Campus meetings.
- Corporate Risk Register updated and a new Risk Management Policy developed and approved.

4.2

Develop a comprehensive and robust system of reporting on organisational performance and strategy delivery, that enhances management and Board level capability.

- Review and evaluation of reporting mechanisms identifying current data capture inputs and outputs. Work ongoing.
- New suite of reporting templates introduced. Dashboard reporting and progress tracking system established using Smartsheet for Oberstown Business Plan, HIQA compliance plan and audits.

4.3

Develop a data and evidence-driven approach to decision making, with enhanced systems for recording, approval and evaluation.

- Decision-making framework developed with 'golden hour' tasks agreed. Roll out and implementation planned for 2024.

4.4

Establish a research advisory group to ensure that the Oberstown service continues to develop in line with the latest evidence and best practice.

- Updated Research Policy approved by Board.
- Research Advisory Group established.

4.5

Continue to enhance the quality of care provided to young people in Oberstown by promoting organisational transparency in line with our vision and values.

- Links established and strengthened with international networks to facilitate transfer of good practice and knowledge sharing. Links developed with: St. Marys and Kibble in Scotland; Netherlands Helsinki Committee and Teylingereind in the Netherlands.
- The Director and members of the Senior Management Team participated in national and international forums, workshops, seminars and conferences.
- Oberstown held its annual stakeholder update meeting in May 2023.
- External visitors to the Campus included members of the judiciary and youth justice experts and academics from national organisations and from Australia, the Netherlands, New Zealand and the USA.



The Oberstown approach was discussed and presented (virtually and in person) at forums and meetings in Australia, the Netherlands, Scotland, Spain, the USA and New Zealand.

“Approaches backed by research help improve the quality of care and raise standards.”

## STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK



Oberstown's model for decision making (left) was developed in 2023 and communicated through a major training programme involving staff across the Campus. The model was rolled out in conjunction with 'golden hour tasks' in the context of critical incident management practices, developed in collaboration with external consultants One Team Risk Management.

# Goal 5

We will promote the sustainable development of our Campus and our organisation.

Business plan progress at 31 December 2023:

## 5.1

Map the development of Oberstown's services against the needs of young people and the demand for places of detention to inform future decisions around funding, capacity and occupancy of the Campus.

- Capital Programme 2022-2026 completed in partnership with DCEDIY and OPW.
- Capital fund allocation from DCEDIY 2023-2026 secured and capital programme timelines agreed.

## 5.2

Develop a comprehensive plan to promote the sustainable development of Oberstown's physical Campus.

- Environmental policy developed and submitted to the Board.
- Sustainable, green procurement practices promoted by including environmental, economic and social criteria in the procurement of supplies, services and works.
- Waste management, reduction and recycling measurements introduced and promoted through staff awareness programmes.
- Costed project plan in place.

## 5.3

Implement projects designed to enhance environmental and energy sustainability on Campus in line with the Government's Climate Action Plan.

- Cross-Campus Environmental Team established with monthly meetings.
- Oberstown Climate Action Plan updated and revised for Board approval.
- The Climate Action Roadmap prepared and submitted to SEAI and DCEDIY.
- Oberstown migrated to new SEAI 2030 monitoring and reporting, gap-to-target analysis and adopted the climate action mandate. Awaiting updated SEAI 2030 system software, expected in 2024.
- Energy efficiency project plan developed and approved in line with government climate action framework. Capital plan includes projects to create a more energy-efficient Campus.

## 5.4

Promote enhanced safety and security of all persons on the Campus by embedding a system of annual audits, inspections and reviews.

- Recertification secured to ISO 45001 for the Oberstown Occupational Health and Safety Management System.
- Recertification secured to ISO 9001:2015 for the Campus Catering service.
- Safety Intervention & Security action plan reviewed and updated. Areas for improvement identified and changes made.
- Safety Intervention and Security Review 2023 completed and action plan developed.
- Safety & Security working group set up.

## 5.5

Adopt a 10-year plan for the renewal of internal spaces on Campus, ensuring that the fabric of our buildings is maintained to the highest standards.

- Review of internal spaces in progress. This project will continue into 2024.
- Energy monitoring in place and consumption reduction targets set for the Campus. Registered with SEAI Decarbonisation Partnership Programme and Energy MAP, SEAI Reduce Your Use 23/24.
- Building management system (BMS) upgraded to address gaps in reporting in line with updated Climate Action Roadmap for 2024.
- Ongoing monitoring of projects under the Public Spending Code.

“Oberstown is a unique environment.. we have lots of opportunities for developing and improving our facilities in a sustainable way.”

### STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK



Oberstown's new Environmental Sustainability Officer promoted key themes in 2023. Waste segregation was the focus for workshops with staff and young people in the residential units and with staff in the support departments around the Campus.



Oberstown continued to engage with the SEAI throughout 2023. In February, Oberstown Environmental Team members Jacek Zgardzinski, Facilities Manager (above left), and Communications Officer, Matthew Kelly (above right), attended the SEAI Public Sector Energy Conference at The Helix, DCU. Around 600 people from public bodies of all sizes attended the event to discuss smarter ways of working to meet Ireland's mandatory energy efficiency and decarbonisation targets. Oberstown and every public body has to meet its energy targets, and report regularly on progress.

# Young people's programmes 2023

**Oberstown offers programmed interventions that aim to build young people's responsibilities and address the factors associated with their offending behaviour. These interventions are developed and offered in line with each young person's individual CEHOP® care plan. The principles of restorative practice, with a focus on building relationships and positive outcomes, underpin all interventions with young people on Campus.**

Programmes are generally popular with young people at Oberstown. Engagement in programmes shows that a young person is committed to making progress, which can help in dealings with the courts, the probation service and Oberstown senior management when considering matters such as requests for permitted absence or applications to stay on Campus past their 18th birthday. Participation in one programme often leads young people to sign up for more as they see the opportunities for personal development, increased self-confidence and skills development.

Young people on remand, particularly those on short remand orders, can initially be reluctant to engage in programmes. This often changes once they have the opportunity to get to know the programme facilitators and hear positive things from their peers and unit staff. Planning programmes for young people on remand is a challenge, however, especially when the length of their stay in Oberstown is uncertain.

Young people new to Oberstown benefit from 'Life connections' sessions, which include therapeutic play sessions and introduce the concept of programme work. This played an important role in September and October 2023 when the Campus received a large number of first-time admissions.

Some young people, near the end of their sentence or those who are turning 18, disengage from programmes. However, most young people remain involved, supported by the Oberstown Programmes Team who plan sessions that allow for factors such as court appearances, medical appointments, visits, activities and school.

## Key developments in 2023

Outlines of the programmes offered in 2023, including the number of young people who participated, are provided on pages 26–28. Key developments in 2023 included:

**Dating Detox** – launched on Campus in 2023, this evidence-based programme aims to support young people to address issues around their behaviour in relationships. It reinforces elements of existing programmes in areas such as: boundaries and sexual consent; jealousy; masculinity and what it means to be a man; dealing with anger and abusive behaviour; and promoting healthy attitudes towards conflict resolution within relationships. A cohort of long-term residents engaged with Dating Detox in 2023 and the feedback from these young people was very encouraging. In March 2023, nine staff members from different areas of the Campus were trained in the delivery of this programme by Respect, the UK-based developer of Dating Detox.

**Dublin Rape Crisis Centre** – the Programmes Team completed training in Body Right and Let's Get Real, two programmes developed by the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre. Body Right is a sexual violence prevention and education programme. Let's Get Real aims to raise awareness among young people of the potential harm, to themselves and their peers, of pornography and sexual objectification portrayed by society. The Programmes team has incorporated both programmes with resources from Dating Detox for delivery in the consent and online behaviour sessions.

**Pro Social Driving** – following a review in January 2023, this driving behaviour programme was enhanced by incorporating elements of the Garage Programme – a Pro Social Ireland project to engage with young people, aged



Mechanics workshops are a popular feature of the Pro Social Ireland Driving and Garage Project.

14-25 years old, who are a danger to themselves and their communities through their driving behaviour. Technical workshops give participants a detailed understanding of the dangers of car modifications, unregulated engine tuning and the negative impacts of dangerous driving practices such as "diffing" "donuts" and "drag racing". The programme also offers a more conventional, hands-on experience of working with cars, examining design functions, diagnosing and fixing minor faults, minor panel beating and car detailing (advanced car valeting). These activities promote emotional control, social responsibility and a greater awareness of the impacts of young people's behaviour on the wider community.

Young people responded well to all aspects of the enhanced programme content, and were very enthusiastic about gaining 1:1 tuition with the two qualified mechanics from Pro Social Ireland. The young people's interest and enthusiasm made a positive impression on the external facilitators of the programme, who were highly impressed by the skills and abilities of the young people engaging in the programme.

**REAL U** – the Programmes Team established a successful collaboration with the Oberstown Campus School to deliver this personal development and sex education programme during term time in 2023. Four core sessions took place each week; young people were offered electives on contraception in conjunction with the Oberstown Health & Wellbeing Team, and on unplanned pregnancy in partnership with Lads to Dads. The collaboration will continue in 2024, strengthened by an additional member of the teaching staff who trained in the programme towards the end of 2023.

**Solas Project** – this youth-focused social justice organisation is an established provider of programmes on Campus. Young people benefit from supports provided by a dedicated Youth Justice Worker from Solas Project who is on Campus twice a week, along with colleagues to deliver programmes covering court processes, life skills and preparation for transfer to prison. In 2023, Solas added a new Driver Safety Programme and facilitated the delivery of an Introduction to Barbering course during the summer.

The Solas team focuses on building relationships with the young people from its catchment area (Dublin inner city, D8 and D12)

**Life connections** – June 2023 saw the return of these therapeutic play workshops focused on helping young people explore topics including mental health, grief, loss, healthy relationships and emotional intelligence. A review of the service in October 2023 concluded that these sessions play a significant role in introducing young people on remand to the core concepts of programme work, and are also popular with some young people on committal orders. The therapeutic value of these workshops is a major factor in helping the Programmes Team members to build solid foundations for focused intervention work with young people on remand, and on committal orders.

**Lads to Dads** – this is a programme for young fathers provided through Deonach, a Tallaght-based community organisation. In 2023, Lads to Dads delivered the Building a Baby programme through individual sessions with young people on Campus who were, or were about to become, parents. Lads to Dads also supported the Programmes Team in delivering the Unplanned Pregnancy element of the REAL U programme.

**The Baseline Programme** – work throughout 2023 on a joint project between Oberstown, the Probation Service, ACTS and NIAPP (National Inter-Agency Prevention Programme) has led to a new programme for young people who have shown sexually harmful behaviour. This programme will cover areas such as drugs and alcohol, emotional regulation, victim empathy, and healthy relationships. It is aimed at young people who have lengthy committal orders regardless of their offence. Offence-specific work will be delivered on a one-to-one basis. The new programme will be introduced in 2024.

## Programmes delivered in 2023

**'IT'S GOOD TO ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR EMOTIONS AND KNOW WHAT YOU'RE FEELING IN THE MOMENT. BUT YOU DON'T WANT TO LET YOUR EMOTIONS CONTROL YOU EITHER, AS IN ANGER AND SO ON.'**

Young person, Respect programme

### Outcomes Star Assessment Tool

Outcomes Star is a core element of keyworking in Oberstown. It is a set of evidence-based tools for assessing, identifying and meeting the needs of young people in order to help them focus on positive change.

We use the Justice Star variation of the approach as it fits well with CEHOP®, encouraging young people to build a holistic picture of their personal development across 10 key areas of their lives, including but not limited to addressing offending behaviour: Accommodation; Living Skills & Self Care; Mental Health & Wellbeing; Friends and Community; Relationships and Family; Parenting and Caring; Drugs & Alcohol; Positive use of time; Managing strong feelings; A Crime-free life. Further information at [www.outcomesstar.org.uk/using-the-star/see-the-stars/justice-star/](http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk/using-the-star/see-the-stars/justice-star/)

**Deliveries 2023:** Continuous delivery – Unit managers and residential social care workers (RSCWs) use Justice Star to help young people measure their progress throughout their stay on Campus, and help them to engage with targeted programmes and interventions.

### “Pathways” Life Skills Intervention

The “Pathways” life skills intervention is Oberstown’s keyworking framework. This is a practical life skills guide for young people who are preparing to leave care, delivered by RSCWs in nine one-to-one modules during keyworking sessions. It is available to every young person on a remand or detention order in Oberstown.

**Deliveries 2023:** Delivered to each young person on Campus through the CEHOP® model of care.

### Decider Life Skills

Based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT), the programme uses skills under four core skill sets: Distress Tolerance, Mindfulness, Emotional Regulation and Interpersonal Effectiveness. The programme uses a lifejacket metaphor as a fun and memorable way to introduce young people to the

skills that keep them afloat when an “emotional emergency” occurs. Young people learn coping skills and develop the resilience required to deal with impulsive behaviours.

**Deliveries 2023:** 30  
**Duration:** January to December  
**Participants:** 52  
**No. completed:** 45  
**Facilitators:** Oberstown staff

### Victim Empathy

“What Have I Done?” is a practical approach to encouraging empathy in young people who hurt others through their behaviour. It challenges the young person to consider what they can do to help repair the harm they have caused.

Six groups ran throughout the year with 10 young people completing the programme.

This programme was delivered by internal facilitators Sam Maund, Pauline Murphy, Sara O’Loughlin and Bill Byrne. One social work student also sat in on sessions.

**Deliveries 2023:** 6  
**Duration:** January to December  
**Participants:** 10  
**No. completed:** 10  
**Facilitators:** Oberstown staff, including the Oberstown Social Worker/Designated Liaison Person

### Crinan Drug Relapse Prevention

A group work intervention that aims to teach participants how to examine the triggers for and the consequences of their drug/alcohol use. It supports young people to develop strategies that help them effectively manage and overcome any stressors or triggers in their environment that may cause a relapse, and is therefore best suited to young people due for release shortly after completing the programme. The programme consists of eight modules.

**Deliveries 2023:** 1  
**Duration:** February to May 2023  
**Participants:** 4  
**No. completed:** 3 (one young person was released before the programme ended)  
**Facilitators:** External

### REAL U

REAL U (Relationships Explored and Life Uncovered) is a personal development and sex education programme aimed at equipping young people with the skills, knowledge and confidence to develop healthy relationships and delay the onset of early sexual activity. The programme has core modules, with electives on sexually transmitted infections, contraception, and unplanned pregnancy.

**Deliveries 2023:** 15 groups  
**Duration:** 4 sessions per week during school term time February to July; September to December.  
**Participants:** 29  
**No. completed:** 29 for the core modules; 20 also completed electives.  
**Facilitators:** Oberstown staff and teachers from the Oberstown Campus School

### Respect: Dating Detox

Dating Detox is an evidence-based programme, developed by Respect, a UK based domestic abuse charity. It aims to support young people to address a variety of issues around their behaviour in relationships. This was a new programme in 2023, introduced after nine members of staff were trained on Campus by Respect. Oberstown tailored the programme into three sections: Consent and Online Behaviour (2 sessions); Respect and Healthy Relationships (3 sessions); and Anger Management (4 sessions). The young people who completed the sessions were all 17 or 18 years old who had previously completed the REAL U programme.

**Deliveries 2023:** 5  
**Duration:** July-August and November-December  
**Participants:** 16  
**No. completed:** 16 (Consent and Online – 5; Respect and Healthy Relationships – 8); Anger Management – 3).  
**Facilitators:** Oberstown staff

**'I KNOW IT'S WRONG TO DO BAD THINGS, BUT IT'S NICE TO HAVE A CHANCE TO STAND BACK AND REFLECT.'**

Young person, Victim Empathy programme

### #askconsent

#askconsent is a workshop focusing on the key concept of consent in all sexual activity, and the self-awareness and communication skills required to protect themselves and others. It was developed by the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre and has been used in colleges across the country. The Oberstown programmes team adapted the material for delivery to our young people and incorporated it into the Respect: Dating Detox programme in 2023. The workshop was also delivered as a stand-alone session.

**Deliveries 2023:** 1  
**Duration:** July-August and November-December  
**Participants:** 22 (including six stand-alone)  
**No. completed:** 22  
**Facilitators:** Oberstown staff.

### Teen Parent Support Programme

A toolkit that promotes best practice in supporting young people at a critical early point of pregnancy and parenthood. Delivered during key working sessions, the focus is on achieving the best possible health and wellbeing outcomes for young teenage parents and their children.

**Deliveries 2023:** ongoing through keyworking sessions  
**Participants:** eligible young people on remand or committal orders  
**Facilitators:** Oberstown staff

### IPS Prison Transfer Programme – Wheatfield Proof

This programme supports young people through their transition from Oberstown to Wheatfield Prison by familiarising young people with what to expect upon arrival and during their time there. It is delivered by external facilitators from Solas Project, offering a combination of pre- and post-release support services focused on reducing reoffending.

The programme takes place once a week, over eight weeks, during evening activities.

**Deliveries 2023:** 12 on a one-to-one basis  
**Duration:** 8 sessions once a week  
**Participants:** 12  
**No. completed:** 9  
**Facilitators:** External

### Understanding the Court Process

A programme run by Solas Project to help young people understand the court processes and terminology.

**Deliveries 2023:**  
**Duration:** January to December  
**Participants:** 17  
**No. completed:** 17  
**Facilitators:** External

### Learning for Life

A life skills programme facilitated by external facilitators from Solas Project. The aim is to support young people to equip themselves with practical skills they may need when they leave Oberstown. It is delivered once a week over 14 weeks.

**Deliveries 2023:** 1  
**Duration:** weekly over 14 weeks  
**Participants:** 4  
**No. completed:** 4  
**Facilitators:** External

### Pro Social Driver Behaviour Programme

Pro Social Ireland delivers this programme, designed for any young person who has road traffic offences and is willing to challenge their driving behaviour. The programme consists of four modules delivered over six two-hour sessions over three weekends. Content is adapted to suit the young people in Oberstown. In 2023, mechanics worked with young people to help increase their understanding of the technical aspects of working with cars.

**Deliveries 2023:** 3  
**Duration:** May-June; July-August; November-December.  
**Participants:** 14  
**No. completed:** 14  
**Facilitators:** External, including car mechanics with supervision by Oberstown staff.

### Solas Driver Safety Programme

The Solas team introduced a Driver Safety Programme in the second half of 2023, due to the increased number of young people on Campus with driving offences. The programme consisted of five sessions to address young people's awareness of: Risk Taking; Driving Offences; Safe Driving; and Consequences.

**Deliveries 2023:** 1  
**Duration:** November 2023  
**Participants:** 8  
**No. completed:** 8  
**Facilitators:** External

### Street Doctors

Street Doctors is a registered charity run by junior doctors and medical students. They teach life-saving first aid to young people at risk of violent crime and drug use. This workshop is delivered by external facilitators in two one-hour sessions.

**Deliveries 2023:** 1  
**Duration:** November 2023  
**Participants:** 11  
**No. completed:** 11  
**Facilitators:** External

### Life Connections

Workshops by Life Connections featuring open conversations about emotional, social and mental health issues. Topics include mental health, grief, loss, healthy relationships and emotional intelligence.

**Deliveries 2023:** 116 (introductory and ongoing sessions)  
**Duration:** July to December  
**Participants:** 56, including 32 who engaged in multiple sessions  
**No. completed:** 56  
**Facilitators:** External

**'YOU NEED THE PROGRAMMES. YOU NEED TO UNDERSTAND THINGS. YOU NEED TO SIT BACK AND LISTEN AND TAKE IT IN, BECAUSE IF YOU DON'T LISTEN YOU'RE NEVER GONNA LEARN - YOU'LL BE THE SAME PERSON FOREVER.'**

Young person

# Young people's participation

**Young people have a range of formal and informal opportunities to have their say in decisions about their lives on Campus and beyond. In 2023, this key aspect of Oberstown's commitment to child-centred, individualised, rights-based care and education was the subject of a major external review commissioned by the Board of Management.**

## Review of participation

Oberstown first set out its strategy for the participation of young people in decision making in 2017 and confirmed its commitment in Rule 7 of the Children's Rights Policy Framework. Towards the end of 2022, the Board commissioned leading international children's rights academic Professor Laura Lundy and policy maker Anne O'Donnell to assess the effectiveness of participation and advocacy on Campus. Their report is based on consultations with five stakeholder groups – young people, unit staff, night staff, managers, and teachers – conducted between November 2022 and May 2023.

The report found that "enormous progress has been made in Oberstown to build a rights-based approach to listening to and involving young people in decision making since publication of its 2017 Strategy". Young people gave valuable input on the issues that matter to them, including the quality of relationships with staff, the levels (behaviour assessment) system, and the speed of response and feedback on their requests and suggestions for change. While they identified the Advocacy Officer and key workers as key people in the participation process, young people often felt the best way to raise issues was in their units with the manager and care staff.

Consultations with staff revealed a "high level of compassion and empathy towards young residents" along with suggestions to expand the "very effective" role of the

Advocacy Officer and to review the levels and placement planning meeting (PPM) process. Teachers raised young people's input to daily timetables, echoed the students' desire for more vocational and practical learning, and called for an expanded range of outlets for young people's opinions in addition to the Student Voice Committee and Campus Council structures.

The report concluded that there is a "strong commitment to further improving and enhancing youth participation" and made recommendations for the next stage, focusing on embedding youth participation as the responsibility of everyone at Oberstown. The Board is progressing an action plan to implement recommendations arising from the review.

**WHAT IS GOOD ABOUT OBERSTOWN? 'BEING LISTENED TO BY THE RIGHT PEOPLE IS THE BEST.'**

Young person

### Role of the Advocacy Officer

Oberstown's Advocacy Officer, Gráinne Smyth, acts as the link between young people, Campus management and the Board. Young people know they can raise concerns or suggestions with the Advocacy Officer and they will be taken seriously. The Board closely monitors this key aspect of Oberstown's rights-based approach both through monthly reports by the Advocacy Officer and through the work of the Board Young People Committee, which regularly meets with young people on Campus.

The Advocacy Officer oversees the Campus complaints procedure for all matters that do not have a child protection element. (Child protection matters are taken to the Designated Liaison Person for Child Protection – see page 31.)

Young people made 11 complaints through the advocacy service in 2023, down from 21 in 2022. The Advocacy Officer recorded 426 advocacy issues in 2023, a rise of 27 on the previous year.

The Advocacy Officer liaises with external agencies and promotes best practice. In 2023, this aspect of the role included:

- Meeting families to discuss participation and their experience of the Placement Planning Process (PPM).
- Meeting Youth Perspectives (YOPE) and the Netherlands Helsinki Committee in Amsterdam to develop Oberstown's collaboration on the EU-funded 'Giving Back Project' to enhance participation and improve the lived experience of young people in detention.
- Attending Cork Juvenile Court at the invitation of Judge Mary Dorgan to observe video link and court proceedings and discuss how to improve this experience for young people in Oberstown.
- Presenting to final year social care students from South East Technological University (SETU) on their visit to Oberstown in November 2023.
- Liaising with EPIC, in-reach provider of advocacy services.

## WHAT IS GOOD ABOUT OBERSTOWN? 'HAVING THE BEST NIGHT STAFF AROUND.'

Young person

### Campus Council 2023

The Campus Council is a formal structure with elected representatives from each of the residential units. Facilitated by Gráinne Smyth, Advocacy Officer, the council met regularly throughout the year, offering views on a range of issues and initiatives, including:

- Meetings with the Oberstown Board Young People Committee. Young people from the Campus Council met members of the Young People Committee following each full Board meeting during the year. The young people used this opportunity to raise issues important to them concerning everyday life at Oberstown.
- Meeting members of MOSAIC, a Penal Reform International project monitoring the safety of children in detention across the EU. Four MOSAIC delegates met four members of the Campus Council to discuss the young people's daily life and sense of safety in Oberstown. The young people were confident in reassuring the group that they and their peers felt safe on Campus, and the delegates commented on the relaxed and fun atmosphere in their meeting and noted that the council had examples of how they influence life on Campus. Young people also contributed their views for presentation to a meeting of the MOSAIC stakeholders' group on Campus in December 2023.
- Becoming part of the new staff induction process on Campus. Since May 2023, a meeting with one young person from the Campus Council forms part of staff induction. Facilitated by the Advocacy Officer, the meeting discusses the young person's life on Campus and what's important to them, including participation and the role of the Campus Council.

- Reviewing the placement planning process (PPM) procedure.
- Promoting awareness of the Steps+ careers guidance project. Members of the council gave feedback on a bespoke Steps+ career resources poster for display on Campus, and contributed ideas to an animated video presented at a Dormant Accounts Fund seminar held at DCEDIY in October.
- Discussing waste management issues with the Environmental Sustainability Officer. The young people worked on bespoke signage for the unit waste bins and led initiatives in the units to raise awareness of correctly segregating waste.
- Contributing interview questions for recruitment competitions for two roles – Programmes Facilitator and Youth Worker – Traveller Youth Initiative.

### Focus groups

In 2023, young people across the Campus volunteered to provide their views to a range of initiatives, including:

**Oberstown Food Convention** – in June, Deputy Director Michelle Griffin and the Catering Manager met a group of young people to discuss food options on Campus. Suggestions for improvement focused on healthier food options including fruit platters, later meal times and expanded dinner options. The Catering Manager and his team worked to implement these changes in Q3 and Q4.

**HIQA feedback** – three HIQA inspectors visited the Campus in June to hear how young people prefer to receive information following a HIQA inspection. A group of 12 young people took part in the exercise, with all participants giving positive feedback on the experience.

**Transition from custody** – nine young people contributed to research by University College Dublin and the Probation Service into transitioning from custody in Oberstown.

## OBERSTOWN'S CHILD PROTECTION SERVICE

Oberstown has a Social Worker who is the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for Child Protection on Campus. Each residential unit has a poster showing DLP Bill Byrne along with information on how young people or staff can report concerns about the safety of any young person.

In 2023, there were 180 matters referred to or followed up by the DLP in line with Campus policy and Children First legislation. This was up from 120 in 2022. Seventeen of these matters were forwarded as Mandated Reports to Tusla, the Child and Family Agency; 10 of the reports referred to matters internal to Oberstown. Of these, four related to physical interventions by staff and six to assaults by one young person on another. Five Mandated Reports related to allegations against Gardaí. The DLP referred 11 matters to the Garda Ombudsman on behalf of young people.

The Social Worker also fulfils a valuable educational role on Campus, conducting Victim Empathy programmes with young people and providing staff training in Children First/ Safeguarding. The Social Worker also supervises placements for social work students – in 2023 a student from University College Dublin successfully completed a 14-week placement.

# Skills development projects

Externally-funded projects are an impactful extension of Oberstown's education and skills development support for young people. In 2023, the Dormant Accounts Fund (DAF) made key skills development initiatives possible in catering, horticulture, fitness instruction, and warehousing skills, along with a bespoke careers development programme.

In recent years, Oberstown has been successful in applying for and securing DAF project funds. The DAF enables measures across nine Government Departments, with funding for DCEDIY initiatives that focus on care support and training for marginalised children and young people. The DAF awards help to expand Oberstown's educational and training programmes that promote rehabilitation and maximise therapeutic outcomes, supporting individual growth and development through direct experience.

On the following pages we outline five key DAF-funded projects involving dozens of young people and staff across the Campus in 2023.



## OBERSTOWN COFFEE VAN BUSINESS

The Oberstown mobile coffee van project became operational early in 2023 and quickly established itself as a highly popular feature of Campus life for staff and young people alike. The project provides young people with on-Campus education, skills development and work experience that will improve their future job prospects. Under the direction of qualified catering staff, young people work on setting up the van and serving customers (staff from all over the Campus) from 11am to 2pm three days a week. This experience enhances the young people's communication and interpersonal skills in a customer service setting. It also gives them practical experience and understanding of food preparation and an insight into how a small catering business works.

The coffee van is an opportunity for young people to use their training as baristas and knowledge of the coffee industry, gained through Oberstown's partnership with coffee company Java Republic. The Oberstown coffee business is run in partnership with Java Republic, with the company donating supplies and specialist expertise to the venture.

Young people train in the coffee van business over a four-month period. In 2023, twelve young people worked in the coffee van, with two of them gaining employment in catering roles on leaving Oberstown. Java Republic provided 12 barista training courses for 24 young people in 2023.



**Coffee connects** – Named 'Banging Sandwiches' following suggestions from staff and young people, the coffee van has had a major impact on Campus life. It quickly became established as a social hub for staff taking a break, bringing together colleagues from diverse roles and teams who may not normally see each other during the working day. For the young people working in the coffee van, it brings opportunities to interact with new people on Campus.

The coffee van was used for special occasions on Campus in 2023, including Gaisce – The President's Award ceremonies, an event to mark the end of Professor Ursula Kilkelly's term as Chairperson of the Board, and Christmas celebrations. Java Republic is a key supporter of the coffee project, donating skills training and supplies.



## BORD BIA BLOOM 2023

The Bloom project was a highlight of 2023, galvanising staff and young people on Campus and taking the results to a national audience. A total of 18 young people and 10 staff members participated in the Rise Garden project to produce a show garden for Bord Bia Bloom in Dublin's Phoenix Park. The project ran from February to June 2023.

Oberstown's young people developed valuable life and workplace skills including teamwork, problem solving and creative thinking. They gained hands-on experience in gardening and horticulture and learned about the environmental and sustainability aspects of maintaining a garden.

Beyond the practical skills acquired, creating an exhibit for the show fostered a sense of ownership and a pride among the young people. They witnessed the tangible results of their hard work as the garden took shape, boosting their self-esteem and confidence. The young people's design ideas for the Rise Garden incorporated elements that reflect the Oberstown ethos and their individual journeys and aspirations, with symbolic plants and features representing growth, diversity and unity. The young people were encouraged to think critically

and creatively about their design as a form of public expression.

John Smith, Activities Coordinator, led the project, with Sinead Flynn, Horticultural Programme Coordinator working closely with garden designer Eugene Higgins to put the young people's ideas into action.

Artist Joe Caslin worked with young people to present images in the garden's centrepiece Tower of Stories structure. The images represent the journey from a low point of fear and confusion, through Oberstown's supportive environment to the point where young people are ready to rise into a new, positive life. Italian cypress trees flanking the Tower symbolise grounding and pillars of support. The pool and bench encourage reflection.

The Rise Garden was a significant community engagement project for Oberstown. It showcased the talent of the young people and created many positive connections with local residents, businesses and the wider community. The young people's work contributed towards their portfolio of achievements under Gaisce – The President's Award. Oberstown staff worked as volunteers during the show, engaging with the public on behalf of the young people.



RTÉ television featured the Rise Garden in its coverage of the show, and the judges recognised its merits with a Silver Gilt Award in the Medium Concept Garden category. Following the show, DCEDIY facilitated the relocation of Rise back to the Campus, creating rest and reflection areas for staff and young people.



**The Rise Garden** – an award-winning symbol of the young people's journey towards growth and change, and their ability to make positive choices that transform their lives. The young people's handprints show they were proud of their work, giving them a presence at Bloom even if they could not attend in person.

Pictured above right, seated – (left to right): Avril Ryan, Gaisce CEO; John Smith, Oberstown Activities Coordinator; Marion Irwin-Gowran, Gaisce Project Manager; Michelle Griffin, Oberstown Deputy Director.

Pictured above – (left to right): Áine Kerr, Gaisce Council Member; Avril Ryan, Gaisce CEO; Jim O'Toole, Bord Bia CEO; Sinead Flynn, Oberstown Horticultural Programme Coordinator; Damien Hennon, Oberstown Director; President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, and Sabina Higgins; Eugene Higgins, garden designer.

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## FORKLIFT TRAINING LICENCE AND TRAINING CENTRE

DAF is funding a project to train young people at Oberstown in the skills required to work in the warehousing and logistics sector, including training in working with forklift and pallet trucks. Oberstown is partnering with Jungheinrich, a German multinational long established in Ireland, which supplies complete solutions for warehouses, including racking and truck systems.

This project aims to improve young people's job prospects by providing them with practical qualifications and skills that are in demand across a wide range of industries. The training experience can also foster a sense of personal accomplishment and pride in mastering specialised skills.

The project started in 2023 with the focus on preparatory work to



ensure the on-Campus training facility meets health and safety and industry standards. Training of young people is planned for 2024. Key milestones include:

- Testing and approving a disused building space on Campus as the site for the Oberstown forklift training centre, following confirmation that it can take the weight of the required forklifts.
- Purchasing equipment including a forklift counter-balance truck, forklift stacker truck and a power pallet truck.
- Sourcing and ordering specialist racking systems which are due to be installed early in 2024.
- Developing protocols, procedures and training policies for the new training centre.



**Pictured above** – (left to right): Conrad McGonagle, General Manager Aftersales, Jungheinrich; Micheál Craven, Oberstown Health and Safety Risk Officer; James Prendiville, Training Sales Coordinator, Jungheinrich.

## NATIONAL ELITE FITNESS PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE LEVEL 3 AND LEVEL 4

The National Elite Professional certificate Level 3 and Level 4 are delivered on Campus in partnership with Image Fitness. These comprehensive programmes provide each participant with the knowledge and skills to become a certified fitness instructor or personal trainer.

The courses are demanding, but are very popular with young people at Oberstown. The fitness instructor course takes 12 weeks (140 hours) to complete. The personal trainer course takes a further 10 weeks (120 hours) for certification. Young people engaging in these industry-leading programmes gain a thorough understanding of exercise science, nutrition and client assessment techniques. Participants learn advanced training methods, injury prevention and rehabilitation strategies and gain expertise in creating personalised fitness plans tailored to meet the unique needs

of their clients. The programmes focus on developing effective communication and coaching skills to better support clients in achieving their fitness goals.

Completing these courses equips young people to pursue a career as a personal trainer or fitness instructor in various fitness settings. In 2023, 22 young people completed their Level 3 certificate and 8 young people went on to complete the Level 4 certificate.

Image Fitness offers each successful participant assistance in finding a position in the fitness industry once they leave Oberstown. In a key 2023 milestone, Image Fitness worked with Oberstown to arrange for two young people to gain work placements with national gym chain FLYEfit, which has agreed to continue the work placement programme.



**Certificates of achievement** – Image Fitness is a national leader in professional fitness training. Working with Oberstown to create a flexible programme that suits staff and young people, more than 70 young people and 26 Oberstown staff have completed fitness instruction courses since 2019.

## STEPS+ CAREERS GUIDANCE

Many of Oberstown's young people have experienced disadvantage across their lifespan including the area of education. The Steps+ project is a career guidance platform that helps young people in Oberstown to explore their skills, interests and strengths and link these to education, training, and employment opportunities. In 2023, over 180 recorded meetings with 53 young people took place to help them recognise their potential and explore career paths that align with their abilities and passions. Key milestones achieved in 2023 include:

- Continued consultation and engagement with young people by staff, including the Advocacy

Officer, Children's Rights Policy Framework Project Lead, Education and Employment Support Worker, unit staff, unit managers and senior management.

- On-Campus Steps+ awareness campaign.
- Improvements to existing Steps+ apps based on consultation and pilot with young people.
- Four additional new Steps+ apps based on emerging needs of the young people.
- Newly designed Steps+ occupational database (1,000+ jobs/apprenticeships).
- New interactive Placement Planning Meeting Report.

- Appointment of a new Education and Employment Support Worker.
- Education Matters Yearbook 2023 Research Article.
- Networking with key stakeholders to support young people's education and career development on and off Campus.

Steps+ has surpassed initial expectations and moved from a "pilot project" to becoming embedded within the CEHOP® care practice model on Campus. The success of the integration of the Steps+ project to date is testament to its potential and the next phase will focus on the importance of supporting the young people as they move on from Oberstown.

# Positive feedback

**'I DIDN'T HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH MY MAM WHEN I CAME IN HERE BECAUSE I WAS CRAZY, BECAUSE I WAS CHASING A HIGH. NOW I COULD RING HER 12 TIMES A DAY JUST TO ASK 'ARE YOU ALRIGHT? LOVE YOU.' BECAUSE OF MY EXPERIENCE HERE I'VE GROWN THE COURAGE TO ACTUALLY DO THAT. YOU DON'T REALISE HOW HAPPY IT MAKES A YOUNG FELLA TO BE ABLE TO SAY THAT.'** **Young person**

**'My experience for my child is they [the Oberstown staff] are a blessing in disguise. He needed it.'**

**Parent of young person**

**'I think the care is excellent that he is getting.'**

**Parent of young person**

**'Being in here has matured me a good bit.'**

**Young person**

**'Programmes have been a good part of our journey in here...they help you to learn how to respect people and about relationships.'**

**Young person**

**'YOU HEAR STORIES AND YOU DON'T KNOW HOW YOUR CHILD IS GOING TO SETTLE. SPEAKING WITH STAFF WAS VERY REASSURING. ANY OF THE STAFF HAVE BEEN VERY FRIENDLY AND HELPFUL - IN RECEPTION, VISITORS AND KEYWORKERS. IT MAKES IT SO MUCH BETTER, WE KNOW HE'S FINE AND SAFE.'**

**Parent of young person**

# Oberstown Governance and Management

## Governance structure

Oberstown operates under the auspices of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY). The Director is accountable to the Board of Management for all aspects of Campus operations and for providing the Board with all relevant information to ensure effective oversight.



## Board of Management

Oberstown is governed by a Board of Management appointed by the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth under the Children Act 2001 (sections 164 to 167). The Board complies with good governance in line with legislation and the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016). Part 10 of the Children Act 2001 outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth, the Board of Management and the Oberstown Director. In the case of any conflict between the Code of Practice and the legislation, the legislation takes precedence.

The Board carries out its functions on behalf of the Minister. Its key responsibility is to provide oversight and strategic direction to Oberstown on behalf of the Minister. The Board is also responsible for supporting the Director to deliver the strategic plan and is accountable to the Minister in line with the Children Act 2001 and associated legislation and policy.

## Board membership

The Board of Management of Oberstown has 12 members plus a Chairperson and includes representatives of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY), the Department of Education, Tusla, two representatives from the local

community and two independent members of staff, with five members identified via the Public Appointments Service (PAS) process. Members are appointed for a term, renewable, of up to four years.

During 2023, four new members joined the Board, including the Chairperson, Koulla Yiasouma, appointed by the Minister on 1 June 2023 to succeed Professor Ursula Kilkelly. William O'Rourke was appointed on 23 March 2023, replacing Donal McCormack as Tusla representative. Staff representatives Fergal Reynolds and Emma Shanahan were appointed by the Minister on 1 July 2023 following a staff election process; they replaced Laoise Manners and Craig Mulligan. Profiles of the Board members are provided on pages 44–45.

## Board meetings

Under the Children Act 2001, the Board must hold as many meetings as necessary for the performance of its functions and is entitled to determine its own procedure. There were 11 regular Board meetings in 2023. The Board Secretary circulates a meeting update to staff on behalf of the Chairperson and publishes it on the Oberstown website following each Board meeting.

Dates of the Board of Management meetings, and details of attendance, are set out in Appendix 1.

## Board committees

Seven standing Board committees were in place in 2023 – the Audit and Risk Committee, the Governance Committee, the People and Culture Committee, the Performance Committee, the Strategy Committee, the Sustainability Committee, the Young People Committee. Dates of the Board of Management and committee meetings, and details of attendance, are set out in Appendix 1. The Committees all operate in line with clearly defined Terms of Reference, approved by the Board and set out in the Oberstown Governance Handbook.

## Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee supports the Board of Management in relation to its responsibilities for issues of risk, control and governance. The Committee is independent from the financial management of the organisation and ensures that the internal control systems, including audit activities, are monitored actively and independently. Its terms of reference were reviewed and approved by the Board in 2023. The Committee has four members; its members during 2023 were: Bernadette Costello (Chair), Professor Ursula Kilkelly (term ended 31 May 2023), Koulla Yiasouma (joined 1 June 2023), John McDaid and Jennifer Gargan.

The Audit and Risk Committee met nine times in 2023. Its work included:

- Met representatives from the office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) to discuss the external audit of the 2022 financial statements. The statements received a clean audit; the committee reviewed the audited financial statements and recommended approval by the Board.
- Provided an Annual Assurance Report to the Board of Management on the review of effectiveness of Internal Control.
- Tracked implementation of all audit recommendations.
- Provided regular review and interrogation of financial information and budget vs actual profile.
- Approved the reappointment of external auditors.
- Commissioned an OGP tender for the provision of Internal Audit Services. The contract was awarded to Mazars.
- Monitored the implementation of the Internal Audit schedule and received regular progress updates.
- Reviewed the Internal Audit Charter, approved by the Board in September 2023.

- Oversaw a review of the Oberstown Risk Management Framework and approved risk management training on the revised framework and on risk identification.
- Provided independent oversight of an updated Risk Register and a new Risk Management Policy, approved by the Board in November 2023.

## Governance Committee

The Governance Committee supports the Board in meeting legal and statutory requirements of good governance, as well as promoting the adoption of good practice. Its terms of reference were reviewed and approved by the Board of Management in July 2023. The Committee has four members; its members during 2023 were: Martin Quigley (Chair), Elizabeth Davey, Professor Ursula Kilkelly (term ended 31 May 2023), Koulla Yiasouma (joined 1 June 2023) and Jennifer Gargan. Jonathan Westrup provides expertise on governance matters as an external member of the Committee.

The Governance Committee met five times in 2023. Its work included:

- Developed and completed the committee's workplan for 2023, providing the Board with regular updates.
- Oversight of Departmental Agreements – reviewed the Performance Delivery Agreement and Oversight Agreement.
- Reviewed and updated the Governance Handbook.
- Completed the Code of Practice Checklist. Gaps identified were added to the Governance Committee workplan along with actions to address these issues, including referral to relevant Board Committees as appropriate.
- Facilitated and reported on Board self-evaluation.
- Produced an updated Research Policy for Board approval and established a Research Advisory Group.

- Oversaw the election process to nominate staff members for appointment to the Board.

## People & Culture Committee

The People & Culture Committee supports the Board in developing and implementing the Oberstown people and culture strategy. Its terms of reference were reviewed and approved by the Board in November 2023. The Committee has three members; its members during 2023 were: Koulla Yiasouma (Chair, joined 1 June 2023), Professor Ursula Kilkelly (term ended 31 May 2023), Jennifer Gargan, William O'Rourke (joined 1 July 2023), Donal McCormack (term ended March 2023), Craig Mulligan (term ended 30 June 2023).

The People & Culture Committee met five times in 2023. Its work included:

- Provided oversight on behalf of the Board of the quarterly HR returns provided to DCEDIY.
- Provided oversight of the CORU Registration Project for RSCWs.
- Monitored progress of the project to review and approve Oberstown's HR policies.
- Provided oversight of the implementation of the 2023 strategic priorities for Goal 2 of Strategy 2022-2026.
- Monitored and reported on the resolution of issues concerning annual leave.

## Performance Committee

The Performance Committee, in line with the requirements of the Governance Handbook, provides a mechanism to review the performance of the Director. Its terms of reference were reviewed and approved by the Board in January 2023. The Committee has four members; its members during 2023 were: Koulla Yiasouma (Chair, joined 1 June 2023), Professor Ursula Kilkelly (term ended 31 May 2023), Bernadette Costello, Brian Arnold and John McDaid.

The Performance Committee met eight times in 2023. Its work included:

## BOARD ACTIONS 2023

- Monitored the implementation of the Oberstown Strategy 2022-2026 and approved the Annual Business Plan 2023, supporting the Director to deliver in key strategic areas.
- Oversaw the appointment of an interim Chief People Officer.
- Approved the Financial Statements and Statement of Internal Control for 2022.
- Interrogated data on the use of restrictive practices, setting clear expectations for their reduced use in line with Oberstown policy.
- Deepened executive engagement in governance processes through the scheduled attendance of the Senior Management Team at Board meetings.
- Approved the Oberstown Code of Practice Compliance Checklist and submitted the checklist to DCEDIY.
- Approved the Oberstown Climate Action Plan and Roadmap and the Oberstown Environmental Policy.
- Accepted the recommendations of the 2023 Review of Young People's Participation in Decision Making
- Approved the Oberstown Risk Management Policy.

- Met with, reviewed and advised on the performance of the Oberstown Director.
- Reviewed and advised on the structure of the Senior Management Team.
- Made provision for succession planning for senior roles.

#### Strategy Committee

The Strategy Committee supports the development of the Strategic Plan 2022-2026 and oversees its implementation. Its terms of reference were reviewed and approved by the Board in September 2023. The Committee has four members; its members during 2023 were: John McDaid (Chair), Jennifer Gargan, Professor Ursula Kilkelly (term ended 31 May 2023), Laoise Manners (term ended 30 June 2023), Úna Ní Dubhghaill (term began January 2023), Koulla Yiasouma (term began 1 June 2023), and Emma Shanahan (term began 21 September 2023).

- The Strategy Committee met four times in 2023. Its work included:
- Met jointly with the Oberstown Senior Management Team to ensure joint ownership of the Oberstown Strategy 2022-2026 between the committee, the Board and the Campus executive.
  - Oversaw the development of the Business Plan for 2023, directly linked to strategic objectives – the first ever business planning process formally adopted at Oberstown.
  - Reviewed Business Plan progress

- on key actions against key performance indicators.
- Reviewed and welcomed a new tracking and reporting system (Smartsheet) for implementation of the Business Plan.

#### Sustainability Committee

The Sustainability Committee assesses, guides, reports on and makes recommendations to the Board for approval on the area of development and implementation of Oberstown’s Sustainability Strategy. Its terms of reference were reviewed and approved by the Board in October 2023. The Committee has three members; its members during 2023 were: Brian Arnold (Chair), Dymphna Sherry and Fergal Reynolds.

The Sustainability Committee met three times in 2023. Its work included:

- Reviewed the draft Climate Action Plan and made a recommendation to the Board for approval.
- Provided oversight of the Capital Projects Programme and the strategic alignment of work to be completed in 2023.
- Provided oversight of a feasibility study for an energy upgrade of the Trinity House Building.
- Reviewed the implementation of strategic actions related to Goal 5 of the Strategy 2022-2026 in the 2023 Business Plan.
- Reviewed the draft Environmental Policy and recommended it to the Board for approval.

#### Young People Committee

The Young People Committee ensures that the views of young people are heard and taken into account by the Board, and reviews the Oberstown advocacy and participation process. Its terms of reference were last updated and approved by the Board in November 2021. The Committee has three members; its members in 2023 were: Jennifer Gargan (Chair) Koulla Yiasouma (joined 1 June 2023), Professor Ursula Kilkelly (term ended 31 May 2023) and Liz O’Neill.

The Committee met nine times in 2023. Its work included:

- Met with young people and discussed matters of concern to them, including: activities, programmes and courses; education and training; food; the rating system; staffing levels; relationships with staff; behaviour management; positive experiences in Oberstown.
- Followed up the issues raised with the Director and provided feedback to the young people.
- Oversaw the 2023 Review of Young People’s Participation in Decision Making.



**Above:** Board members on Campus: (left to right) Laoise Manners, Dymphna Sherry, Martin Quigley, Koulla Yiasouma (Chairperson), Craig Mulligan, Úna Ní Dhubhghaill, Liz O’Neill, Bernadette Costello, William O’Rourke, Jennifer Gargan.



**Left:** Director Damien Hernon presents a bouquet of flowers to Professor Ursula Kilkelly, recognising her final Board meeting, May 2023. Read Professor Kilkelly’s reflections on her time on the Oberstown Board, pages 60–61.

# Oberstown Board of Management 2023

Board members at 31 December 2023

## Koulla Yiasouma Chairperson



**Appointment:** Ministerial  
**Appointment date:** 1 June 2023  
**Term:** 4 years

**Committee membership:** Audit and Risk, People & Culture (Chair), Performance (Chair), Strategy, Young People

Koulla joined the Oberstown Board following an eight-year term as the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People. She is a qualified social worker and former Director (Chief Executive) of Include Youth, a Northern Ireland policy and advocacy NGO focused on supporting young people who were care experienced and/or had been involved in the criminal justice system, to improve their employability through work experience, training and education. She is an Honorary Professor of Practice at Queen's University Belfast and works closely with the Centre for Children's Rights in the School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work.

## Brian Arnold



**Appointment:** Ministerial (Community representative)  
**Appointment date:** 21 July 2021  
**Term:** 3 years

**Committee membership:** Performance, Sustainability (Chair)

Brian Arnold is a local community representative, resident in the vicinity of Oberstown. He is a management consultant with over 30 years' experience in the public and private sectors. He is Chairperson and a director of Lusk Community Council.

## Bernadette Costello



**Appointment:** PAS process  
**Appointment date:** 1 July 2023 (reappointed)  
**Term:** 3 years

**Committee membership:** Audit & Risk (Chair), Performance

Bernadette Costello is a Chartered Director and Chartered Accountant. She is the former Director of Internal Audit & Risk at University of Galway and has extensive experience in financial and management accounting, corporate governance and related areas. She is currently a director of a number of boards in the public and charitable sectors.

## Elizabeth Davey



**Appointment:** PAS process  
**Appointment date:** 18 July 2022  
**Term:** 4 years

**Committee membership:** Governance

Elizabeth Davey was called to the Bar in 2006. She is a practising barrister specialising in criminal, administrative, mental health and investigative law. She has a Masters in Criminology and a particular interest in youth justice.

## Jennifer Gargan



**Appointment:** PAS process  
**Appointment date:** 1 July 2023 (reappointment)  
**Term:** 3 years

**Committee membership:** Audit & Risk, Governance, People & Culture, Young People (Chair)

Jennifer Gargan is a qualified social worker who has worked in the areas of community development, child protection and family support. As CEO of EPIC, Jennifer was an active advocate for the rights of young people with care experience in order to bring about changes in legislation, policy and practice.

## John McDaid



**Appointment:** PAS process  
**Appointment date:** 1 July 2023 (reappointment)  
**Term:** 2 years

**Committee membership:** Audit & Risk, Performance, Strategy (Chair)

John McDaid is a former Chief Executive of the Legal Aid Board having previously worked for the Board as a solicitor and also having worked in private legal practice.

## Úna Ní Dhubhghaill



**Appointment:** Ministerial (DCEDIY nominee)  
**Appointment date:** 1 June 2023 (reappointment)  
**Term:** 4 years

**Committee membership:** Strategy

Úna Ní Dhubhghaill is a Principal Officer in the Children Detention Schools Unit, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY).

## Liz O'Neill



**Appointment:** Ministerial (Department of Education nominee)  
**Appointment date:** 1 July 2023 (reappointment)  
**Term:** 3 years

**Committee membership:** Young People  
Liz O'Neill is the Department of Education representative on the Board and a school inspector with 15 years' experience of carrying out evaluations in a range of learning settings, including post-primary schools, special schools, special care units, and Oberstown Campus School. More recently, her work has involved supporting the Office of the Inspector of Prisons in conducting evaluations of education, work and training in prison settings.

## William O'Rourke



**Appointment:** Ministerial  
**Appointment date:** 1 June 2023 (reappointment)  
**Term:** 4 years

**Committee membership:** People & Culture  
William O'Rourke was appointed on 23 March 2023 and reappointed on 1 June 2023 by the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth on foot of the requirements of section 167 of the Children Act 2001. He is the Tusla representative on the Board.

## Martin Quigley



**Appointment:** PAS process  
**Appointment date:** 18 July 2022  
**Term:** 4 years

**Committee membership:** Governance (Chair)

Martin Quigley is the Director of Data & Analytics with Pobal, where he has responsibility for reporting, analytics and using data to support evidence-based social inclusion programme delivery and policy making. Martin is a qualified social care worker, having previously spent several years working with young people experiencing homelessness in Dublin city.

## Fergal Reynolds



**Appointment:** Ministerial  
**Appointment date:** 1 July 2023  
**Term:** 2 years

**Committee membership:** Sustainability  
Fergal Reynolds is a Residential Social Care Worker on the Oberstown Campus. He is an elected staff nominee, appointed by the Minister on foot of the requirements of section 167 of the Children Act 2001.

## Emma Shanahan



**Appointment:** Ministerial  
**Appointment date:** 1 July 2023  
**Term:** 2 years

**Committee membership:** Strategy  
Emma Shanahan is a Unit Manager on the Oberstown Campus. She is an elected staff nominee, appointed by the Minister on foot of the requirements of section 167 of the Children Act 2001.

## Dymphna Sherry



**Appointment:** Ministerial (Community representative)  
**Appointment date:** 18 July 2022  
**Term:** 3 years

**Committee membership:** Sustainability  
Dymphna Sherry is a local community representative, resident in the vicinity of the Oberstown Campus.

## Other Board members in 2023

### Professor Ursula Kilkelly

Term ended 31 May 2023. Immediate past Chairperson.

### Craig Mulligan

Term ended 30 June 2023. Staff member.

### Laoise Manners

Term ended 30 June 2023. Staff member.

### Donal McCormack

Term ended 3 March 2023. DCEDIY nominee (Tusla representative).

## GENDER BALANCE

- As at 31 December 2023, the Board had seven (58%) female and five (42%) male members, with no positions vacant.
- The Chairperson is female.
- The Board therefore meets the Government target of a minimum of 40% representation of each gender in the membership of State Boards.

# Health Information and Quality Authority Inspection 2023

Inspectors from the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) carry out an annual inspection of Oberstown, as required under the Children Act 2001. Following inspection, the Oberstown Director agrees action plans with HIQA, and the Board of Management monitors implementation of these actions.

HIQA inspects Oberstown against bespoke standards (rules) set out in the Oberstown Children's Rights Policy Framework. The 12 Rules commit the service to ensuring that Oberstown is a place where young people are safe, get the best care possible and have their rights respected (see page 7).

In September 2023, an announced inspection took place over three days. A HIQA team of five inspectors:

- spoke with young people to find out their experience of the service.
- talked with staff and management to find out how they plan, deliver and monitor the care and support services that are provided to young people who are placed in Oberstown.
- observed practice and daily life to see if it reflected what people said.
- reviewed documents to see if appropriate records are kept and that they reflect practice and what people told the inspectors.

Inspectors met 29 young people to talk about their experience of life on Campus; a further 28 young people's views were collected

through questionnaires sent prior to the inspection. They also met with eight parents and guardians, a social worker and a *guardian ad litem* (an individual appointed by the court to represent the best interests of a minor child in legal proceedings). Inspectors spent some time in all residential units and observed routines and interactions between staff and young people. They observed young people's meetings, two offending behaviour programmes sessions and attended a placement planning meeting. The inspectors interviewed staff and management across the Campus during the inspection.

The inspectors noted "positive and supportive interaction between staff and the young people", with most young people interviewed expressing favourable views on their everyday experiences of care. Parents and guardians spoke highly of staff and the quality of care they provide and its positive impact on young people. Comments from parents about the service provided at Oberstown include: "any child that goes in there is well looked after"; "I can't praise Oberstown enough, my son went off the rails, then the crime happened, but Oberstown has been a godsend"; and "I find the staff very helpful and I wouldn't have a bad word to say against them".

HIQA noted that young people are supported in understanding and addressing their offending behaviour through an expanded range of programmes, and found that the service is responding well to changing trends in offending behaviour. Young people are encouraged to take an active role in decisions about their care and plans for their future.

The HIQA report notes Oberstown's "focus on continuous improvement", stating that there is a clear vision with well-defined service values. The service is led by a Director who is "highly experienced and provides good leadership". There was "good quality oversight of most aspects of care and operations across the service" which takes a

"collaborative and child-centred approach".

HIQA focused on six of the 12 Campus rules in its 2023 inspection. Findings included:

## Rule 1 – Care

Young people in Oberstown receive good quality, child-centred care that is based on their needs and appropriately planned. A multidisciplinary approach is taken and young people's care is reviewed regularly and regular reviews include input from parents or guardians. Young people are encouraged to participate in decisions about their care and are supported to maintain appropriate contact with their families. Young people's meetings are good quality and well attended.

**Improvement focus:** While staff meeting records are good quality, improvements are required in the quality and accuracy of records to fully capture discussions at placement planning meetings. Attention is required to ensure day-to-day care records of young people are completed in a timely fashion and to keep the case management system (CMS) up to date.

‘Young people are supported in understanding their offending behaviour and the service is responding well to changing trends.’

## Rule 4 – Offending Behaviour

Young people have access to supports and programmes to address their offending behaviour and prevent re-offending on release. Oberstown takes an individualised approach to addressing offending behaviour and strengthening young people's capacity to conduct positive lives in the community on release.

**Improvement focus:** More complete records are required in the documentation, the assessment tools and offending behaviour plans to ensure that they capture the extent of the support and planning for the young people.

## Rule 6 – Safeguarding

Oberstown has systems in place to protect young people from harm and abuse, underpinned by safeguarding policies and procedures and a child safeguarding statement in line with Children First (2017). Young people were aware of the role of the DLP (Designated Liaison Person for Child Protection) and the Advocacy Officer. There is an up-to-date register and high-quality records of complaints. Programmes are available for young people to develop the knowledge, self-awareness, understanding and skills needed for self-care and protection.

**Improvement focus:** The system for recording incidents, child protection and welfare concerns and safeguarding concerns requires improvement, along with arrangements for oversight of the role of the DLP. Work is required to track trends that would inform the emerging needs of the service and young people.

## Rule 9 – Restrictive practice

Oberstown has procedures in place governing the use of restrictive practices – such as the temporary separation of a young person from their peers or a physical intervention. Young people's safety, welfare and dignity should be paramount in circumstances that require a restrictive practice. Record keeping has improved in this area.

**Improvement focus:** Work is required to ensure procedures are kept up to date and are consistently followed and to further improve the consistency and quality of records.

## Rule 10 – Staffing, management and governance

Oberstown has a clearly defined management structure. The Director and Senior Management Team has a clear vision for the service supported by well-defined service values, with a focus on continuous improvement. The Director provides good leadership to support the vision for the service. The quality of record keeping on the case management system (CMS) supports the oversight, management and governance of the service.

**Improvement focus:** Gaps in governance and oversight of the service require attention, including implementation of staff supervision in line with Oberstown policy. Staff shortages and their impact on the service is a key focus for action. Improvements are required to ensure that some procedures are reviewed and updated to reflect best practice, and that all staff take part in up-to-date mandatory refresher training.

## Rule 12 – Authority to suspend the rules

In exceptional, emergency circumstances, the Director may limit the effect of the rules to the extent that it is necessary to deal with that emergency. There was no suspension of the rules in the 12 months since the last inspection.

**Improvement focus:** A critical incident management approach and operational procedure is in development and this will be fully rolled out in the first quarter of 2024.

For the full HIQA inspection report, see <https://bit.ly/HIQA2023>.

## OTHER STATUTORY BODIES WITH POWERS OF INSPECTION OR INVESTIGATION

**The Ombudsman for Children's Office (OCO)** – promotes the rights and welfare of children and young people up to 18 years old living in Ireland. The OCO deals with complaints made by or on behalf of children, including those in Oberstown, in relation to the actions of public bodies under section 8 of the Ombudsman for Children Act 2002, as amended. During 2023, young people met informally with OCO representatives during outreach visits to the Campus. See page 66.

**The Department of Education** – carries out inspections of the Oberstown Campus School.

Oberstown is also subject to regulation by a range of other statutory bodies, including:

**Workplace Relations Commission** – compliance with employment legislation.

**Health Service Executive** – inspection of environment (catering areas and drinking water) by Environmental Health Officers; and the Health and Safety Authority regarding compliance with the Health and Safety Act 2005.

**Fingal County Council** – inspects the integrated constructed wetlands on Campus.

# Business and compliance overview 2023

**Oberstown operates in accordance with the principles of good governance in line with relevant legislation, the Children Act 2001 and the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016).**

## Conflict of interest

There were no declared conflicts of interest – personal, professional or financial – concerning any decisions of the Board during 2023. The Board maintains a Register of Interests that is reviewed by the Governance Committee annually. Any conflicts are declared at each Board meeting. None were declared in 2023.

## Protected Disclosures

The Protected Disclosures Act 2014 facilitates workers in raising a concern regarding wrongdoing or potential wrongdoing in the workplace by providing them with certain forms of protection from action which might be taken against them for so doing.

The Act provides for different methods of protected disclosure depending on the circumstances and protects disclosures by workers including current or former employees, contractors, consultants, trainees, agency staff and interns.

Section 22 of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 requires the publication of an annual report

each year relating to the number of protected disclosures made in the preceding year and any action taken in response to such disclosures.

Oberstown confirms that, for the financial year from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023, one new report was received in accordance with the provisions of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014.

## Parliamentary questions

Oberstown works with DCEDIY to provide accurate and up-to-date information to public representatives and officials in a prompt and consistent manner. In 2023, Oberstown contributed to the answers to 22 parliamentary questions – down from 46 in 2022.

## Freedom of information (FOI) requests

Oberstown publishes details of FOI requests received, in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform's Code of Practice for Freedom of Information for Public Bodies.

In 2023, Oberstown received eight requests under the Freedom of Information Act, 2014. All requests were granted or part-granted.

## Data protection

The year 2023 was the fifth full year of the application of GDPR and the Law Enforcement Directive (LED). In 2023, Oberstown continued to develop policies, systems and procedures, placing considerable emphasis on staff awareness and training, aimed at ensuring our compliance with the requirements of data protection legislation.

The Data Protection Officer in Oberstown:

- assists in monitoring internal compliance.
- informs and advises on data protection obligations.
- provides advice regarding Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs).
- acts as a contact point between data subjects and Oberstown.

A dedicated email address (DPO@oberstown.com) is in place to facilitate data protection queries and reporting. Data Protection also has a dedicated space on Oberstown Workvivo, the Campus internal communications platform. In 2023, Oberstown received and responded to 8 Data Subject Access Requests (DSAR). There were nine non-reportable breaches and one reportable breach in 2023.

## Financial allocation

The budget of Oberstown Children Detention Campus is allocated by DCEDIY. In 2023, the Campus received a core allocation of €28.544m as follows:

Allocation item	Amount €m
Pay	19.311
Pensions	2.220
Non-pay	5.713

The Campus also incurred Capital expenditure of €1.3m in 2023 funded by DCEDIY.

Oberstown's payroll function is provided on a shared service basis by the National Shared Services Office through DCEDIY. The accounting officer of the National Shared Services Office is responsible for the operation of controls within shared services.

The functions underpinning these responsibilities include authorising and monitoring payments for goods and services, tendering processes and compilation of monthly returns to DCEDIY.

## Internal financial control

The Board has overall responsibility for the internal financial control of Oberstown. It delegates responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of risk management and the internal control environment to the Board's Audit and Risk Committee.

## Budget management

The Director and the Senior Management Team prepare an annual budget based on the operational and developmental needs of Oberstown. The annual budget is recommended for approval to the Board, via the Audit and Risk Committee. Day-to-day responsibilities for managing expenditure within budget limits is assigned to the Director. Expenditure is monitored closely with monthly reports furnished to DCEDIY, and quarterly to the Audit and Risk Committee.

## Internal audit function

Internal audit is an independent appraisal function whose role is to provide assurance to the Board, the Audit and Risk Committee, the Director and all levels of management as to the adequacy and effectiveness of the systems of governance, risk and internal controls operating within Oberstown.

The Internal Audit function is outsourced. Oberstown procures Internal Audit Services through the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) using their established framework for accountancy and auditing services. It operates in accordance with an audit charter approved by the Board and an annual audit plan approved by the Audit and Risk Committee and the Board. In carrying out audits, the contractor complies with the Institute of Internal

Audit Standards, as adapted by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform for use in government departments.

The internal auditors completed a review of internal controls in 2023. Recommendations made were accepted.

## Procurement

Oberstown operates under the Public Procurement Guidelines, which provide the direction for all procurement policy activity, ensuring that the Campus complies with and observes the objectives and key principles of competition, equality of treatment and transparency that underpin national and EU rules. In 2023, external procurement advisers provided information briefings to update relevant Campus managers on procurement rules.

Oberstown avails of centralised managed contracts established by the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) and continues to engage the OGP for advice on current and future procurement requirements. In 2023, a number of contracts were successfully procured in conjunction with OGP in line with the Oberstown procurement plan.



## Financial statements for the year 1 January to 31 December 2023 and Oberstown statement on internal controls

The Board of Management is required to keep accounts in line with section 173 of the Children Act 2001.

Throughout 2023, Oberstown Children Detention Campus continued to manage its financial resources in line with governance requirements. Budgeting and ongoing forecasting enabled secure management of actual expenditure against planned and available resources.

The Financial Statements of Oberstown Children Detention Campus for the year 1 January to 31 December 2023, and its Statement on Internal Controls for the same period, have been completed and will be published as appendices to the Annual Report 2023 on the Oberstown website ([www.oberstown.com](http://www.oberstown.com)) following completion of the audit by the Office of the Comptroller & Auditor General (C&AG).

Financial statements for the year 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022 are available alongside the Annual Report 2022 on [www.oberstown.com](http://www.oberstown.com).

## ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT 2023

Oberstown reports annual energy efficiency data through the SEAI's public sector energy monitoring & reporting system. The SEAI manages the reporting process on behalf of the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC).



### Energy savings

Oberstown consumed 360,550 less kWh in 2023, a saving of 9.6% on 2022.

### Environmental highlights

- Environmental Sustainability Officer hired to coordinate activities, including organising the Oberstown Campus Environmental Team monthly meetings.
- Waste management awareness training for staff and young people.
- Oberstown featured as a case study in the SEAI's Reduce Your Use energy saving campaign.
- Climate Action Roadmap approved by the Board.
- Environmental Policy approved by the Board.
- Campus LED lighting upgrade project continued.
- Water treatment – Oberstown's integrated constructed wetlands (ICW) treats waste from the Campus septic tanks. Fingal County Council inspects the wetlands. Zero effluent was discharged from the ICW in 2023.

## ICT developments

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is integral to the work of care staff, agencies and partners engaged in the care of young people on Campus. This is evident in the increased use of the Oberstown Case Management System (CMS) to track and record the journey of young people through care, as well as the technologies used to manage and share data among stakeholders. The Campus is equipped to use digital and video technology to communicate with the courts, partner agencies and the families of young people.

The Department of Justice provides primary technology support and infrastructure for the services offered by Oberstown, including network services, endpoint devices, hosting for key business solutions, internet access and many software applications. All core systems and data reside within the Department of Justice networks. Access to these resources is strictly controlled via a secure portal or internal private network connection.

In addition, Oberstown provides bespoke technology-based services, applications, and hardware to support other primary objectives that are not available through the IT services provided by the Department of Justice.

### Information security

In response to the findings of the information security review conducted in 2022, work commenced early in 2023 on the definition and implementation of a new Information Security Strategy for Oberstown.

Four key IS strategic goals were defined:

1. Implement a robust information security management framework to support the protection of information systems, bespoke to Oberstown mission-critical objectives.

2. Develop and maintain a culture of information security awareness across the organisation.
3. Identify and create a plan for improving logical access controls for critical systems, networks, and data.
4. Undertake a data discovery programme to identify all information processed by Oberstown.

Many tasks associated with these goals were completed during 2023, and highlights included:

- Creation of the Information Security Asset Inventory & Asset Register.
- Gap analysis of existing information security policies and procedures.
- Risk assessment and risk treatment.
- Data classification.
- Third-party supplier relationship management.

### Oberstown Case Management System (CMS)

The Oberstown CMS is fully operational and is a user-friendly and efficient system that provides a single source of knowledge and reporting on the status and care of young people resident in Oberstown, both past and present. The system is centred on the young person's journey through care. Each young person's records are updated and maintained on a daily basis, offering a detailed picture of individual progress across the entire CEHOP® framework.

As with most modern software systems, the Oberstown CMS is continuously enhanced and improved in line with user feedback, system audits, changing requirements and new work practices.

The continued assignment of the CMS development team to another Department of Justice project during 2023 meant that only critical errors and maintenance-related tasks were

completed on CMS throughout the year.

However, a formal record was maintained throughout the year of all requested CMS enhancements, improvements and feature requests gathered from user feedback, audits, change requests and the documentation of new work practices. New development sprints are scheduled to resume early in 2024.

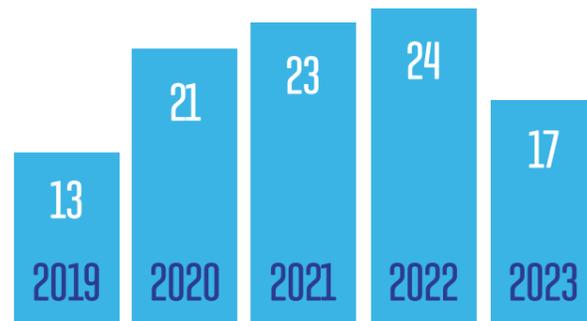
### Data analytics

Smartsheet was established as a collaboration and work management tool to assign tasks, track project progress, share documents, and demonstrate progress using sophisticated dashboards.

Projects using Smartsheet include: Oberstown Audit Tracker; Oberstown Strategic Plan; Oberstown Business Plan 2023 / 2024; Management KPIs; and Oberstown HIQA Compliance Plan.

Progress towards the introduction of Microsoft Power Apps continued throughout 2023, including the installation of dedicated Power Apps infrastructure to facilitate dashboard reporting between Power BI and various Oberstown business applications. Tom Gannon, Oberstown IT Project Lead, worked with the Department of Justice team to adapt the advanced reporting capabilities of Power BI applications to create dashboard reports, initially from data contained in the Oberstown CMS application. A test dashboard was successfully published and shared and some Power BI training was completed at Oberstown during 2023, along with a data security risk assessment and related due diligence associated with use of this solution. The goal for 2024 is that Oberstown will continue to develop dashboards and reports, expanding to include other relevant applications, including accounting package Sage.

HSA reportable injuries 2019-2023:



## Health and Safety

**Inspections and audits** – the Oberstown Health and Safety team continues to forge strong relationships with standards and inspection bodies. In 2023, we welcomed visits from the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), State Claims Agency (SCA), British Standards Institution (BSI), National Standards Association of Ireland (NSAI) and the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA). Notable outcomes included:

- Passed an annual surveillance audit of Oberstown’s Occupational Health and Safety Management System. The audit tested conformance with international standard ISO 45001 and was conducted by certification body NSAI.
- Passed an annual surveillance audit of the Campus Quality Management System. The audit tested conformance with ISO 9001:2015 and was conducted by certification body NSAI.
- Maintained an A level rating from the SCA for incident reporting.
- Facilitated preliminary and full audits to assess Oberstown’s approach to psychological health and safety at work for conformance with international standard ISO 45003, which focuses on managing psychosocial risk within an occupational health and safety management system based on ISO 45001. BSI

‘Driver safety was a focus in 2023, with designated drivers taking advanced driver training courses during the year, registering high scores in both the theory and practical elements.’

conducted the audit, returning positive audit reports and a recommendation for certification in Q1 2024.

**Training** – new modules available to staff on the EazySAFE online learning platform included Chemical Safety Awareness, Food Safety and Driver Awareness. These additions augmented the four mandatory courses – Manual Handling, Fire Safety Awareness, Basic First Aid and GDPR Data Protection.

Driver safety was a focus in 2023, with designated drivers taking advanced driver training courses during the year, registering high scores in both the theory and practical elements.

Critical incident management training continued during 2023, with golden hour tasks and decision making modules developed with input from external providers One Team Risk Management Solutions.

**Enterprise Risk Network** – Oberstown was recognised as a finalist in the Enterprise Risk Network Recognition Awards 2023 for outstanding achievement in the Education and Development category for successful implementation of EazySAFE, introducing critical incident management training and work on ISO 45001 and ISO 45003.

**Supporting young people’s education and activities** – the Health and Safety team worked closely with the Facilities team, School Principal and Activities Coordinator in supporting and promoting Campus projects including the horticultural, catering and painting projects. Courses leading to certificates in Manual Handling, Fire Safety, and SafePass workplace safety are popular with young people.

**HSA matters** – all notifiable HSA incidents are reported by the Health and Safety team. There were 17 HSA reportable incidents in 2023, down from 24 in 2022.

## OBERSTOWN CAMPUS OPERATIONS OVERVIEW

24.5 HECTARE  
SITE

21,000<sup>M2</sup>  
Building floorspace

24/7:365  
ROUND THE CLOCK,  
EVERY DAY OF THE  
YEAR SERVICE

248 STAFF  
177 Staff directly  
involved in  
front-line  
care of young  
people  
[ 51% FEMALE  
49% MALE ]

€25.544M  
FINANCIAL  
ALLOCATION

[ €19.311M PAY  
€2.220M PENSIONS  
€5.713M NON-PAY ]

# JANUARY- APRIL 2023 YEAR IN THE LIFE

A selection of highlights  
on Campus and beyond



## Oberstown Coffee Van Opens for Business

The Oberstown coffee van started serving staff in April 2023 and quickly became a very popular addition to Oberstown life, giving young people a chance to learn new skills and interact with new people across the Campus. Later in the year, we welcomed Java Republic Managing Director, Jeffrey Long, to the Campus along with his colleague Luis Alvarez, who leads the Barista training and coffee education programme. The coffee van education project is made possible by the Dormant Accounts Fund and Java's continuing support is vital. (See page 32 for more on the project.)

**Pictured left** – (left to right): Mathieu Beledent, Oberstown domestic science activities instructor; Jeffrey Long, Java Republic Managing Director; Luis Alvarez, Java Republic Quality Assurance Specialist; Emma Keane, Oberstown Coffee Van Business Facilitator.

**Pictured above** – staff member Colette McGee became the first paying customer at the Oberstown coffee van, using wireless, contactless payment technology operated by Emma Keane, Oberstown Coffee Van Business Facilitator.



## SETU Student visit

Oberstown welcomed a group of 40 final year social care students and academics from South East Technological University (SETU) to the Campus on 11 March 2023. This was the first in a planned programme of events designed to introduce candidate social care workers to the unique career opportunities available at Oberstown. The visitors met senior managers and care staff, who gave an overview of how they work with the young people through presentations and discussions during a short tour of the facility. Following positive feedback from SETU and Oberstown staff, a second visit was held in November 2023.

**Pictured above:** (left to right): Paul McGuinness, Oberstown Training Officer; Cara Driscoll, Oberstown Organisational Psychologist; Dr John Byrne, SETU; Michelle Griffin, Oberstown Deputy Director; Tony Hatton, Oberstown Training Officer.

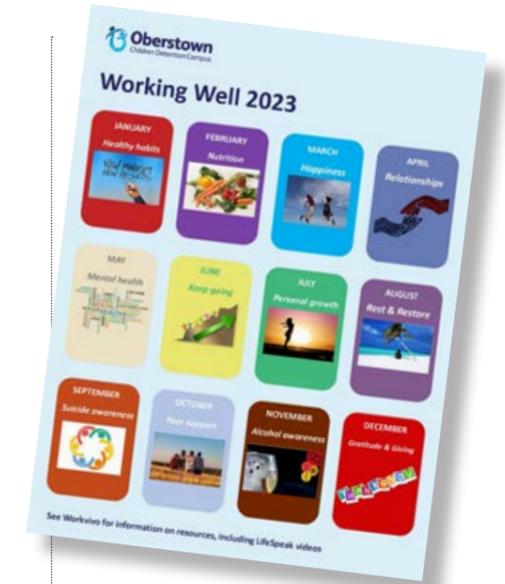


## Inspirational visits

Throughout the year, Oberstown Chaplain John Herron arranges on-Campus visits, talks and events from inspirational characters who share their personal stories of change, redemption and hope with the young people. These events are very popular with young people, who recognise elements of the speakers' chaotic life experiences – including tough social circumstances, fractured relationships, violence, criminality and drug addiction. Feedback from the young people is very positive, who say they identify with and learn from these honest discussions of the struggle involved in emerging from hardship and hurt to build fulfilling lives.

In 2023, inspirational speakers sharing their stories with the young people included: Ruth Boyle – community football coach; Jim Feeley, from neglected orphanage child to Irish Army Corporal and evangelist; Dr Brian Pennie, former addict turned neuroscientist and resilience specialist; Jason Byrne – reformed driving offender, now a bus driver.

**Pictured above** – left: Chaplain John Herron; (right): Ruth Boyle who visited the Campus in February 2023.



**Working Well 2023** – The annual programme of initiatives and events supporting Oberstown's Working Well Framework got off to a strong start with nutrition and exercise advice through Operation Transformation in January. The Campus teams taking part in Transport For Ireland's 'Marchathon' steps challenge excelled once again, with Oberstown finishing second overall in the national organisational leaderboard.

Monthly themes provide a focus for wellbeing throughout the year (see page 65).



**Bake-off for Care Day** – The young people took part in a cake bake-off to celebrate Care Day 2023. Each residential unit engaged in the friendly competition, organised by the Chaplain, supported by care staff and the Activities team, resulting in delicious creations including Victoria Sponge, Red Velvet, Death by Chocolate, Biscoff Coffee, and Lemon cakes.

Care Day is an annual celebration of the positive experiences and contributions of young people in care, coordinated in Ireland by EPIC, a key Oberstown partner organisation.

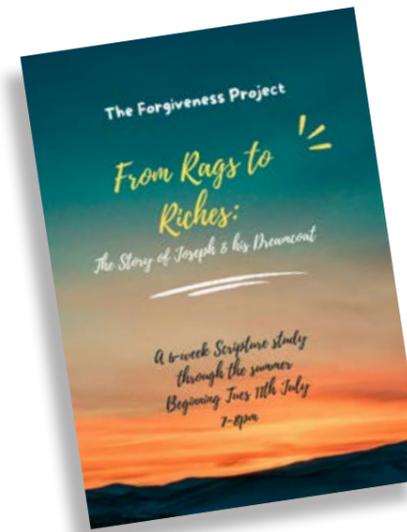
# MAY- AUGUST 2023 YEAR IN THE LIFE



## Gaisce awards on Campus August 2023

Four young people received Gaisce gold, silver and bronze awards at a special ceremony held on Campus in August. Visitors at the event included members of the young people's families and representatives of partner agencies involved. Oberstown staff turned out in numbers to help with the celebration, the latest demonstration of the powerful focus provided by Gaisce – The President's Award in the journey of young people at Oberstown. In 2023, a total of 20 Gaisce awards were earned by young people – two gold, eight silver and ten bronze. These achievements underline the commitment and talents of the young people, along with the staff and teachers who mentor them in the programme organised through John Smith, Activities Coordinator and the Activities team.

**Pictured above** – Avril Ryan, CEO of Gaisce – The President's Award, speaking at the special awards ceremony in August 2023.



**Forgiveness Project** – In July and August, the Chaplain ran a six-week study project on the biblical story of Joseph. Around eight young people attended each weekly session to discuss the themes of human emotion in the story – jealousy, hatred, compassion, betrayal, loneliness, hope, family feuds, false accusations, imprisonments and turns-of-fortunes. Chaplain John Herron said: "It was incredible to have seven or eight lads from across several units showing up for an hour every week in the Prayer Room to explore the unfolding chapters of Joseph's life, and hopefully find therein a reflection of their own journeys as well as wisdom for the road." Triathlon trainer Ger Redmond helped deliver the project along with care staff.



## End of school year

Like schools everywhere, the Oberstown Campus School holds celebratory events at key points in the academic year. The end of school year event recognises young people for their efforts and achievements in subject areas and for their participation in projects, including the Student Voice and Campus Council and the school's Amber Flag designation. In June, staff from all parts of the Campus joined with teachers at the 2023 celebration, congratulating all the young people, including the 'Student of the Year' – a special award for achievement, participation and community spirit.

Three young people achieved their Leaving Certificate, sitting exams on Campus in English, Irish, Maths, Geography, Biology, Art, Visual Studies, Engineering, Construction Studies, Physical Education, Politics & Society. Four young people completed the Junior Cycle requirements in English, Irish, Maths, Geography, History, Art, Home Economics, Engineering, Wood Technology, German, Science, Music and Business. Young people on Campus earned a total of 27 module certificates at Level 3 General Learning QQI.

**Pictured above** – the recipient of the 2023 Oberstown School Student of the Year award receives a trophy and has their initials recorded on a commemorative plaque.



## New Chair for the Oberstown Board of Management

In May, Professor Ursula Kilkelly chaired her final Board meeting and stepped down from the Board after 11 years. Koulla Yiasouma became Chair from 1 June 2023, following nomination by the Minister and confirmation by the Oireachtas Committee for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. See pages 60–61 for Professor Kilkelly's reflections on her time on the Oberstown Board.

**Pictured above** – Ursula Kilkelly (left) with Koulla Yiasouma.

## Bloom

Oberstown's project to create a display garden for Bord Bia Bloom 2023 gained wide positive media attention. Presenter Marty Morrissey came to the Campus with a film crew to hear the story of how the garden took shape. He interviewed John Smith, Activities Coordinator, and Director Damien Hernon and had off-camera chats with staff and some of the young people involved. Oberstown's Rise Garden featured on RTÉ television's coverage of the Bloom festival, broadcast on 1 June 2023.

**Pictured below** – RTÉ's Marty Morrissey interviewing John Smith, Activities Coordinator, on Campus.



**Enterprise Risk Network Recognition Awards** – Oberstown was shortlisted in the SCA Enterprise Risk Network Awards in the Education and Learning category. The nomination was for online training platform EazySAFE, critical incident management training and ISO 45001. The Campus was selected as a finalist from over 100 nominations across the public sector – the most competitive year in the awards to date.

**Pictured above** – Micheál Craven, Health and Safety Risk Officer and Anne Gibney, Learning and Development Training Specialist, at the awards ceremony in May 2023.

## Summer school

The Oberstown Summer School took place in July and August. Collaboration with the Campus school continued, with morning classes for young people keen to continue their school studies during the summer, along with afternoon sessions covering an expanded range of afterschool activities and self-development programmes. Between 60 and 70 classes were offered each weekday.

Highlights included the popular annual 'Come Dine With Me' competition, which ran over six weeks, with young people using their culinary and customer service skills to prepare a special three-course meal served up to judges of staff members. The summer months make team sports possible, with Activities staff arranging on-Campus matches with local youth teams along with the traditional end of summer school staff v young people contest. Two young people completed a triathlon on Campus in August following an eight-week coaching course with professional triathlete Ger Redmond of Pro Coaching. The Oberstown triathlon is held indoors in a designated triathlon gym room – 1.9km on the rowing machine, 90km on a stationary bike and 21.1km (half marathon) on the treadmill. The two young people finished the challenge in under 5 hours 30 minutes, a remarkable achievement.

In August, Campus maintenance staff worked with young people on a painting and decorating skills project (pictured right) to give the school a fresh coat of paint.



# SEPTEMBER- DECEMBER 2023

# YEAR IN THE LIFE



### DAF projects showcase

In October, Oberstown showcased some of the projects financed by the Dormant Accounts Fund at a special seminar at the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) offices in Baggot Street, Dublin. The seminar heard from Oberstown partners helping to deliver the projects for young people – fitness instruction (Image Fitness), barista training and coffee van business (Java Republic), forklift/warehouse skills (Jungheinrich), the Steps+ careers project (Careersportal.ie) and links with work experience and apprenticeships (Way 2 Work).

The invited audience included representatives from government departments and stakeholder organisations including Tusla, HIQA, Children’s Rights Alliance, the Irish Prison Service and the Probation Service.

**Pictured** – (left to right): Bernadette Walsh, Careersportal.ie; Conor Whyte, Image Fitness; Derek Byrne, Way 2 Work; Damien Heron, Oberstown Director; Una Ni Dhubhghaill, Oberstown Board member and Principal Officer at DCEDIY; Luis Alvarez, Java Republic; Yvette Ennis, Oberstown; Eimear Sinnott, Careersportal.ie



**Two Norries podcast** – Director Damien Heron was a guest on the popular Two Norries podcast. Published in December, the interview featured in a ten-part series on crime and justice.



**SEAI case study published** – Oberstown was a featured energy savings case study in the SEAI’s ‘Reduce Your Use’ campaign.



## Creative Youth



### ‘Hear I Am’ podcast project

Oberstown built a podcast studio in Q4 2023 as phase one of ‘Hear I Am’, a new creative education project. The Activities Coordinator and staff worked with a young person to renovate, soundproof and decorate a room in an old building on Campus that is being repurposed as a practical skills workshops area. Oberstown secured funding for the project through the Creative Youth Nurture Fund, part of the Creative Ireland programme administered by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. A programme of podcast recordings is planned for 2024.

**Pictured** – (left): a young person worked with staff to build an impressive podcast studio kitted out with recording equipment (pictured above).

### Christmas cheer

Oberstown’s connection with its neighbours comes into warm focus during the festive season.

On 7 December 2023, the annual Seniors’ Christmas Dinner took place at the Man O’War GAA club, with food and service provided by the Oberstown Catering and Household teams and members of the Senior Management Team.

Young people and staff prepared Christmas care packages for local senior citizens and made wreaths and centrepieces for the local older people’s nursing home in Lusk.

**Pictured** – (near, left to right): Sinead Flynn, Oberstown Horticultural Programme Coordinator, delivering wreaths to Lusk nursing home staff Susan Dunne and Sabrina Boland, along with Laoise Manners, Oberstown Health & Wellbeing team member.

**Pictured** – (far): young people making wreaths with Activities staff.



**Training focus** – Oberstown developed a new team of Safety Intervention Instructors in Q4 2023. Specialist trainers from CPI Europe delivered on-Campus intensive courses to 13 staff in an initiative designed to significantly boost critical skills training in this key area of safety. Oberstown also welcomed a new Learning and Development Manager in November.

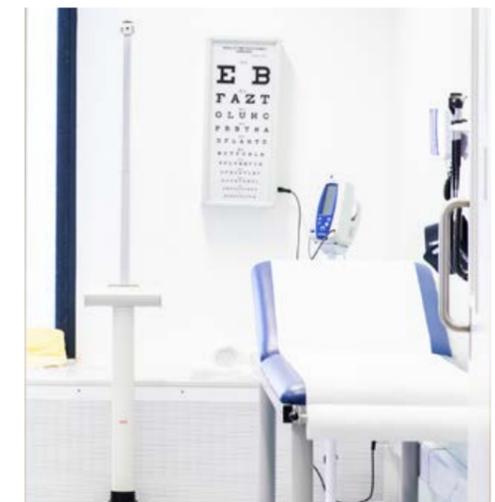
### Wellbeing and health initiatives

The Health & Wellbeing team ran the annual flu vaccination programme in September and October, delivering vaccinations to 105 staff on Campus.

Staff and young people had their say on food and nutrition matters through a Work Healthy survey run by the Catering Manager.

The Organisational Psychologist ran a Work Healthy survey to help plan a free health screening survey for employees, scheduled for delivery on Campus in January 2024 by Medmark, Oberstown’s occupational healthcare provider.

**Pictured** – The Oberstown Campus medical suite.



# A decade of positive change

**In May 2023, Professor Ursula Kilkelly stepped down from the Oberstown Board, which she first joined in 2012. Here she reflects on the progress achieved in the care of young people in detention during her time as Board member and Chairperson.**

‘The scale of the progress made was only possible because everyone worked together, tirelessly, to secure the best possible outcomes for each and every young person who ended up in detention.’

In 2012, detention services for children in Ireland were in dire need of reform. Facilities were fragmented and physical conditions for both young people and staff were poor. Investment was desperately needed and a new modern national approach was urgently required. By 2023, the imprisonment of children in Ireland had come to an end, and the rights-based and child-centred care and education being provided to children in state-of-the-art facilities had begun to attract international attention.

## Key success factors

The dramatic and impactful change that took place over the course of a decade while I was first a Board member and then Chairperson of the Board of Management of Oberstown Children Detention Campus required the hard work and perseverance of many, on and off the Campus. The learning has been shared in my book, written with former Director Pat Bergin, *Advancing Children’s Rights in Detention: A Model for International Reform*, published by Bristol University Press. Here, we recalled the key elements that were fundamental to the project’s success – the foundation stones of law and policy, reinforced by organisational strategy, government investment and political commitment, an attentive civil society, and media and parliamentary scrutiny that kept the pressure on, even when it was most difficult to bear.

Looking inward, a strong policy base was important, culminating in the adoption of the Children’s Rights Policy Framework that places children at the heart of the Oberstown experience, giving them a say in decisions that affect them in their daily lives and in the life of the Campus. A clear emphasis on staff wellbeing – underpinned by the understanding that staff who are cared for provide better care – provided the breakthrough needed to ensure staff, management and young people were on the same page. Robust oversight of restrictive practices and a transparent approach to incident reviews also proved essential to changing culture, as did the commitment to enhanced training and record keeping.

Investment in communication – internally and externally – helped to enhance mutual understanding of

the many different elements at play in the complex world of youth detention and the lives of the young people sent there by the courts. Reaching out into the community, and inviting the community in, were mutually beneficial in improving a wider understanding of the role Oberstown plays in society. Annual comprehensive inspections by the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) documented progress and helped to keep motivation for further improvements high, with a constructive and transparent approach.

## Working together

Looking back on my time in Oberstown, the scale of the progress made was only possible because everyone worked together, tirelessly, to secure the best possible outcomes for each and every young person who ended up in detention. As Chairperson, I was incredibly fortunate to work alongside exceptionally talented people, including Board members who brought professionalism, skill and sound judgement to their role. The sheer scale of change required the commitment of staff and management, a host of community stakeholders and colleagues in the Department of Children Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth who provided steadfast support always. The levels of commitment to the young people were matched only by our ambition for what could be achieved.

Hundreds of young people have been through the gates at Oberstown, on their own life journeys, over the decade of my association with the Campus. Always conscious of the harm their behaviour may have caused, I consider it a privilege to have interacted with many of them as we sought to make their lives and those of their communities better, celebrating their achievements big and small.

If there is one lesson to be learned from the experience of the last decade it is that the drive and focus that brought about such change is every bit as important to maintaining that progress today. For those who have now picked up this mantle, I wish you every success and fulfilment in building on these foundations.



*Ursula Kilkelly is Professor of Law and Vice President Global Engagement at University College Cork. A leading international children’s rights scholar, she served on the Oberstown Board of Management from 2012 to 2023, including two terms as Chairperson starting in 2016.*

# Working at Oberstown

## Resourcing, training and development, and employee engagement initiatives featured in a busy 2023.

### Recruitment challenge

Conditions remained tight in the employment market throughout 2023. Oberstown ran recruitment campaigns for roles ranging from Residential Social Care Workers (RSCWs) and Night Supervising Officers (NSOs) through specialist support functions to senior management.

The Board appointed an experienced Interim Chief People Officer to the Senior Management Team in March 2023. The Human Resources team was further strengthened during the year with the arrival of a Learning & Development Manager and an Industrial Relations Lead. Their expertise helped to further objectives under Goal 2 of the Oberstown Strategy 2022-2026, including work on performance management and developing a new talent management framework, planned for introduction in 2024.

New posts in 2023 included an Environmental and Sustainability Officer with responsibility for coordinating activities under Goal 5 of the Oberstown Strategy 2022-2026, including raising awareness of waste management and energy management initiatives.

In a significant first for the Campus, a Youth Worker joined the Programmes team in July to focus on improving the outcomes for young Travellers placed in Oberstown. The role was made possible through a collaboration between Oberstown and the Traveller Justice Initiative (TJI). The Youth Worker is responsible for supporting young people and their families, working with external agencies and the community to develop and deliver suitable interventions and supports.

Initiatives to promote awareness of career opportunities at Oberstown included:

- Strengthening the links between Oberstown and third-level institutions, with four social care undergraduate student placements in 2023. Social care graduates can gain early career experience at Oberstown

in a programme for individuals who spent their undergraduate student placement on Campus.

- In March and November, Oberstown hosted visits to Campus by two groups of final year social care students from South East Technological University (SETU).
- Oberstown had an exhibition stand at the Social Care Ireland Conference 2023, where residential care staff and senior management met delegates and discussed their work in Oberstown.

### Staff training and development

The process of registering Oberstown staff with CORU, the health and social care regulator, began in November. Rose Murray, Deputy Director, was appointed project lead and worked with Social Care Ireland to develop a project plan for registering eligible RSCWs, NSOs and others with social care experience. This a major step towards formal recognition of the professional workforce at Oberstown.

Learning and development initiatives included new and updated modules added to the EazySAFE online learning platform, which offers mandatory training modules, customised for Oberstown, in Fire Safety Awareness, Manual Handling, GDPR/Data Protection and Introduction to First Aid. An updated version of the Oberstown Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) course was available through the platform and management and staff across the Campus took part in refresher training. Staff were also able to access EazySAFE directly from Workvivo, the Campus communications platform, which offered another option for blended learning.

Supervision training was a key theme in 2023. Coaching skills training commenced in a phased programme to prepare all line managers for a new approach to supervision and performance management.

Safety intervention training focused on building onsite training capacity. In Q4, specialist trainers from CPI Europe delivered on-Campus intensive Safety Intervention Instruction courses to 13 staff, significantly expanding the team of trainers in this key area of safety. Incident management training also continued during 2023.



## Recognition awards 2023

The Oberstown Recognition Awards acknowledge the contribution of individuals chosen by their colleagues for their contribution on Campus and their commitment to the organisation's values. There were eight recipients in 2023.

### Oberstown Recognition Award Winners 2023

Niamh Carroll	Residential Social Care Worker
Yvette Ennis	Children's Rights Policy Framework Project Lead
Colin Halpin	Residential Social Care Worker
John Herron	Chaplain
Patricia Martin	Secretary to the Board of Management
Fiona Matthews	Clinical Nurse Manager 2
Lorraine Rositer	Residential Social Care Worker
Jacek Zgardzinski	Facilities Manager

**Pictured with their Oberstown Recognition Awards 2023** – (from top): Director Damien Herson with Lorraine Rositer, Colin Halpin and Niamh Carroll.

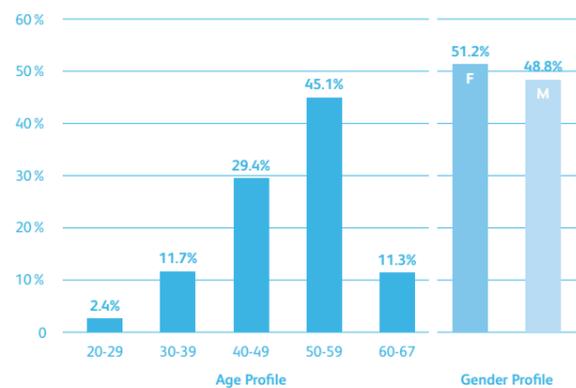
## Employee engagement

Two cross-Campus Staff Engagement Groups (SEGs) – Safety & Safety Intervention, and Systems & Processes – met monthly from January to April to explore ways of enhancing the experience of working at Oberstown. Following their discussions, the groups conducted an online all-staff survey to explore themes including workplace communications, learning and development, staff motivation, accountability and consistency, and safety. The exercise produced a range of suggestions to inform the ongoing work of the SEGs.

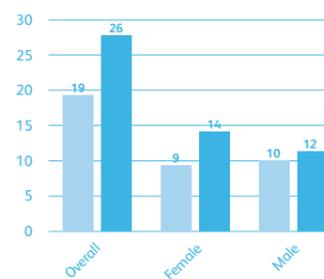
## Equality and human rights

Oberstown’s EDI (equality, diversity and inclusion) approach includes a full commitment to the implementation of the public sector equality and human rights duty, as set out in section 42 of the *Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014*. The *Oberstown Strategy 2022-2026* reflects these values and fulfils the organisation’s responsibility to promote equality and human rights among its staff, young people, service users and everyone affected by its policies and plans.

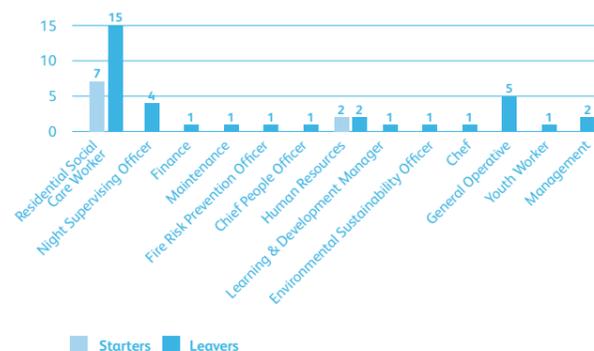
Age and gender profile:



Staff turnover:



Staff turnover by role:



# Working Well 2023

The Oberstown Working Well framework is a whole-system approach to addressing psychosocial health and wellbeing. It features supports and resources around four pillars – Work Safe, Work Healthy, Work Well and Work Wise.

## JANUARY

- Operation Transformation – Workvivo (internal comms platform) posts
- Financial Wellbeanz – Workvivo post & onsite information for registration
- Staff engagement groups – Workvivo posts explaining process and progress
- Menopause Group – gathered information and feedback

## FEBRUARY

- Incident Management Training
- Lifespeak: Harnessing Healthy Habits

## MARCH

- Quit Smoking – Workvivo updates
- Lifespeak: Lifestyle tweaks to improve health and happiness
- Staff engagement survey – Workvivo
- Marchathon – Workvivo updates
- STORM – new material introduced
- Incident Management Training

## APRIL

- Lifespeak: Building resilient relationships
- Incident Management Training
- Introduction to Supervision
- Staff Engagement – Feedback

## MAY

- Lifespeak: Mental Health and its challenges
- Financial Wellbeanz – reminder to register for the service
- Restorative Practice
- ISO 45003 – Audit

## JUNE

- Lifespeak: The Science of Happiness
- Financial Wellbeanz – tax rebates, Workvivo posts
- Financial Wellbeanz – Webinar

## JULY

- Lifespeak: Embracing You – A journey of self discovery
- Inspire – new support Hub – Workvivo updates
- Inspire – Summer Wellbeing – Workvivo updates

## AUGUST

- Lifespeak: Self esteem in kids and Parents
- Self Care /resources

## SEPTEMBER

- Financial Wellbeanz – Webinar
- Lifespeak: Suicide Awareness
- See Change/Green Ribbon campaign – Workvivo updates
- Work Healthy: New Menu and Healthy choices

## OCTOBER

- Lifespeak: Let's Talk About Substance Use, Gambling and Mental Health
- Work Healthy – Survey to employees on Health Screening
- World Mental Health Day

## NOVEMBER

- Financial Wellbeanz – Tax awareness
- Alcohol Aware
- ISO 45003 – Onsite audit

## DECEMBER

- Holiday open programme – webinars designed to support mindfulness and wellbeing during the holiday period
- Peer Support – Managing Depression, Exploring Anxiety-Aware
- Lifespeak: Mental Health & Resilience
- Working Well survey

# Partnerships

## Oberstown works with external agencies to deliver positive outcomes for young people.

Key national service partners include Tusla, the Health Service Executive, the Irish Prison Service, the Education and Training Board, the Probation Service, An Garda Síochána, the Courts Service and the Ombudsman for Children's Office.

External partners providing in-reach services and support for young people returning to their communities include Candle Community Trust, EPIC, Extern, Le Chéile, Way 2 Work and YAP. The work of some of these agencies is outlined below.

### Victim Liaison Service

The Victim Liaison Service invites interested parties to apply via the web or through an application form available in the Victim Support at Court suites in Smithfield, the Children Court and Criminal Courts of Justice. There were three active cases in 2023, including one from 2022.

### Candle Community Trust

Candle Community Trust (Candle) works with Oberstown to support a smooth transition for young people to and from placements in either organisation. Funded by agencies including The Probation Service and CDYSB (City of Dublin Youth Service Board), Candle provides educational, developmental, and therapeutic

programmes to disadvantaged and marginalised young people. Candle supported six young people in 2023.

### Y-JARC

The Joint Agency Response to Crime initiative targets the most prolific, repeat offenders. It runs in Blanchardstown, Dublin and Gurrabraher/Mayfield, Cork with ten places on each programme. Participants include Oberstown, the Irish Prison Service, Tusla, the Probation Service and An Garda Síochána. Oberstown attends Progress meetings at the Steering Group and operations levels.

### Le Chéile Mentoring

A dedicated Le Chéile staff member, based on Campus, works with the Oberstown team to respond to parents of young people in detention and referrals for young people identified as suitable for temporary release. Le Chéile can attend Placement Planning Meetings to support parents. Le Chéile parent mentoring is a community-based service offering individual support to parents around the country. In 2023, the parents of 11 young people engaged with the service and 5 young people on temporary release were supported.

### Ombudsman for Children's Office (OCO)

The OCO attends the Campus monthly. In 2023, OCO representatives made 10 outreach

visits and engaged with young people informally during afterschool activities. The OCO took two formal complaints in 2023.

### EPIC

EPIC – Empowering People in Care provides external advocacy for young people, visiting the Campus monthly.

### Department of Justice Bail Supervision Scheme

The Bail Supervision Scheme, operated by the Department of Justice and delivered by social justice charity Extern, caters for up to 25 young people each year. The courts and Oberstown refer young people to the Scheme. During 2023, 51 young people from Oberstown were eligible; 30 were already known to Extern, 1 was referred by the courts and 5 were referred by Oberstown. A further 15 did not engage for reasons including parents declining, cases deemed unsuitable, or release of the young person before referral.

### Way 2 Work

Way 2 Work (W2W) provides individual mentor-mentee, training, and employment programmes for young people in care or detention. W2W focuses on young people (aged 16-23 years) referred by Tusla or Oberstown. Four young people engaged with W2W in 2023, with one securing a full-time traineeship with Best Drive and another earning a college place on a carpentry pre-apprenticeship programme. W2W arranged work experience for two young people with John SISK & Sons and Best Drive.

### YAP (Youth Advocate Programmes Ireland)

YAP provides intensive support for young people preparing to return to the community. YAP uses a strengths-based, needs-led approach employing community-based advocates to work with young people and their families to support them to achieve their goals. In 2023, YAP worked with two young people and their families at Oberstown.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1

Board of Management Meeting attendance  
January - December 2023

Governance Committee attendance  
January - December 2023

Audit and Risk Committee attendance  
January - December 2023

Strategy Committee attendance  
January - December 2023

Sustainability Committee attendance  
January - December 2023

Young People Committee attendance  
January - December 2023

People & Culture Committee attendance  
January - December 2023

Performance Committee attendance  
January - December 2023

## Appendix 2

Board Fees Paid in respect of  
January - December 2023

Board members exempt from payment  
under OPOS (one person one salary)

# Appendix 1

**Table 1**  
**Board of Management Meeting attendance**  
January – December 2023

Name	Jan 26	Feb 23	Mar 24	Apr 27	May 25	Jun 23	Jul 27	Sep 21	Oct 26	Nov 28	Dec 19	No. of eligible meetings	Total attended
Koulla Yiasouma <sup>1</sup>						•	•	•	•	•	•	6	6
Brian Arnold	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	11	11
Bernadette Costello	•	•	◦	•	•	•	◦	◦	◦	•	•	11	11
Elizabeth Davey	•	•	•	•	◦	•	•	•		•		11	9
Jennifer Gargan	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	11	11
John McDaid	•			◦	◦	◦	•	•	•		•	11	8
Úna Ni Dhubhghaill	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	11	11
Liz O'Neill	•	•	•	•	•		◦	•	•			11	8
William O'Rourke <sup>2</sup>				•	•	•		•	•			8	5
Martin Quigley	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			•	◦	11	9
Fergal Reynolds <sup>3</sup>								•	•	•		5	3
Emma Shanahan <sup>4</sup>								•	•	•	•	5	4
Dymphna Sherry	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	11	11
Donal McCormack <sup>5</sup>	•											2	1
Ursula Kilkelly <sup>6</sup>	•	•	•	•	•							5	5
Laoise Manners <sup>7</sup>	•	•	•		•	◦						6	5
Craig Mulligan <sup>8</sup>	•	•		•	•	•						6	5

- Notes**
- Koulla Yiasouma's term commenced 1 June 2023
  - William O'Rourke appointed 23 March 2023
  - Fergal Reynolds' term commenced 1 July 2023
  - Emma Shanahan's term commenced 1 July 2023
  - Donal McCormack's term ended 3 March 2023
  - Ursula Kilkelly's term ended 31 May 2023
  - Laoise Manners' term ended 30 June 2023
  - Craig Mulligan's term ended 30 June 2023

- Legend:**
- Attended
  - Attended online

**Table 2**  
**Governance Committee attendance**  
January – December 2023

Name	Jan 17	Mar 3	May 8	Jul 17	Oct 17	No. of eligible meetings	Total attended
Martin Quigley <sup>1</sup>	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦	5	5
Jennifer Gargan	◦	◦		◦		5	3
Elizabeth Davey <sup>2</sup>	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦	5	5
Ursula Kilkelly <sup>3</sup>	◦	◦	◦			3	3
Koulla Yiasouma <sup>4</sup>				◦	◦	2	2

- Notes**
- Martin Quigley became Chair of the Committee in March 2023
  - Elizabeth Davey joined the Committee in January 2023
  - Ursula Kilkelly's term ended 31 May 2023
  - Koulla Yiasouma joined the Committee 1 June 2023

**Table 3**  
**Audit and Risk Committee attendance**  
January – December 2023

Name	Feb 16	Mar 16	Apr 4	Jun 15	Jul 25	Sep 11	Nov 16	Dec 19	Dec 20	No. of eligible meetings	Total attended
Bernadette Costello (Chair)	•	•	•	•	◦	◦	•	•	◦	9	9
Koulla Yiasouma <sup>1</sup>				•	◦	◦	•	•	◦	6	6
John McDaid	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦	•	•	◦	9	9
Jennifer Gargan	•	•	•	•	◦	◦	•	•	◦	9	9
Ursula Kilkelly <sup>2</sup>	•	•	•							3	3

- Notes**
- Koulla Yiasouma's term commenced 1 June 2023
  - Ursula Kilkelly's term ended 31 May 2023

**Table 4**  
**Strategy Committee attendance**  
January – December 2023

Name	Feb 15	Apr 12	Aug 28	Nov 15	No. of eligible meetings	Total attended
John McDaid (Chair)	•	•	•	•	4	4
Úna Ni Dhubhghaill <sup>1</sup>	◦		•	•	4	3
Emma Shanahan <sup>2</sup>				•	1	1
Koulla Yiasouma <sup>3</sup>			•	•	2	2
Jennifer Gargan <sup>4</sup>	•				1	1
Ursula Kilkelly <sup>5</sup>	◦	◦			2	2
Laoise Manners <sup>6</sup>		•			2	1

- Notes**
- Úna Ni Dhubhghaill's term commenced January 2023
  - Emma Shanahan's term commenced 21 September 2023
  - Koulla Yiasouma's term commenced 1 June 2023
  - Jennifer Gargan stepped off the Strategy Committee in April 2023
  - Ursula Kilkelly's term ended 31 May 2023
  - Laoise Manners' term ended 30 June 2023

**Table 5**  
**Sustainability Committee attendance**  
January – December 2023

Name	Feb 15	May 17	Oct 18	No. of eligible meetings	Total attended
Brian Arnold (Chair)	•	•	•	3	3
Fergal Reynolds <sup>1</sup>			•	1	1
Dymphna Sherry	•	•	•	3	3
Laoise Manners <sup>2</sup>		•		2	1

**Notes**  
1. Fergal Reynolds' term commenced 21 September 2023  
2. Laoise Manners term ended 30 June 2023

**Table 6**  
**Young People Committee attendance**  
January – December 2023

Name	Jan 26	Mar 24	Apr 27	May 25	Jun 23	Jul 27	Sep 21	Oct 26	Nov 28	No. of eligible meetings	Total attended
Koulla Yiasouma <sup>1</sup>					•	•		•	•	5	4
Jennifer Gargan	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	9	9
Liz O'Neill	•	•	•	•			•	•		3	3
Ursula Kilkelly <sup>2</sup>	•		•	•						3	3

**Notes**  
1. Koulla Yiasouma joined on 1 June 2023  
2. Ursula Kilkelly's term ended 31 May 2023

**Table 7**  
**People & Culture Committee attendance**  
January – December 2023

Name	Feb 14	Apr 12	Jun 15	Aug 29	Nov 16	No. of eligible meetings	Total attended
Koulla Yiasouma <sup>1</sup> (Chair)			•	•	•	3	3
William O'Rourke <sup>2</sup>				•	•	2	2
Jennifer Gargan <sup>3</sup>		•	•	•	•	4	4
Donal McCormack <sup>4</sup>	•					2	1
Ursula Kilkelly <sup>5</sup>	•	•				2	2
Craig Mulligan <sup>6</sup>	•	•	•			3	3

**Notes**  
1. Koulla Yiasouma's term commenced 1 June 2023  
2. William O'Rourke's term commenced 1 July 2023  
3. Jennifer Gargan's term commenced 12 April 2023  
4. Donal McCormack's term ended 3 March 2023  
5. Ursula Kilkelly's term ended 31 May 2023  
6. Craig Mulligan's term ended 30 June 2023

**Table 8**  
**Performance Committee attendance**  
January – December 2023

Name	Jan 24	Jan 26	Jan 31	Feb 9	Feb 14	Apr 4	May 26	Oct 17	No. of eligible meetings	Total attended
Koulla Yiasouma <sup>1</sup> (Chair)								•	1	1
Brian Arnold	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	8	8
Bernadette Costello	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	8	8
John McDaid	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	8	8
Ursula Kilkelly <sup>2</sup>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		7	7

**Notes**  
1. Koulla Yiasouma's term commenced 1 June 2023  
2. Ursula Kilkelly's term ended 31 May 2023

# Appendix 2

**Table 1**  
**Board Fees Paid in respect of January – December 2023**

Name	Amount €
Brian Arnold	5,985.00
Bernadette Costello	5,985.00
Elizabeth Davey	5,985.00
Jennifer Gargan	5,985.00
Dymphna Sherry	5,985.00
Koulla Yiasouma	5,237.00

**Table 2**  
**Board members exempt from payment under OPOS\***

Ursula Kilkelly
Donal McCormack
John McDaid
Laoise Manners
Craig Mulligan
Úna Ní Dhughghaill
Liz O'Neill
William O'Rourke
Martin Quigley
Fergal Reynolds
Emma Shanahan

**Notes**  
\* One person one salary

**The Oberstown  
website,  
[www.oberstown.com](http://www.oberstown.com),  
provides extensive  
information on the  
Campus and its work  
with young people,  
including:**

- Oberstown's mission, Board and management
- Campus statistics
- Publications and resources
- Information for visitors
- Careers information
- News and media resources

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**[www.oberstown.com](http://www.oberstown.com)**



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[WWW.OBERSTOWN.COM](http://WWW.OBERSTOWN.COM)

