



**OBERSTOWN**  
CHILDREN  
DETENTION **CAMPUS**

CARE  
EDUCATION  
HEALTH  
WELLBEING



# ANNUAL REPORT 2020

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# CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD

**As Chairperson of the Board of Management, I am pleased to present the 2020 Annual Report of Oberstown Children Detention Campus to the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Roderic O’Gorman. The report fulfils the duties of the Board of Management under section 174 of the Children Act 2001, providing an update to the Oireachtas on the development of the Campus and ensuring, on behalf of the Minister, that the Board is held accountable for the delivery of Oberstown’s responsibilities under national law and policy.**

**C**hange has been a constant in Oberstown over many years, but 2020 brought that to new levels. The impact on Campus operations of COVID-19, the global pandemic, and the period of transition associated with the departure of Director Pat Bergin required commitment, hard work and care to ensure that the Campus was stewarded through a challenging period. I am pleased to report not only that Oberstown came through this period without deviation from Campus policy or diminution of the standard of care, but we also continued to innovate, to grow and to develop in line with the ambitions of the Oberstown Strategy.

This report details the many highlights of the year. The award of 22 Gaisce awards to young people, including Oberstown’s first gold award, was a significant achievement. Impressive advances were made with regard to young people’s advocacy, ensuring that their views and perspectives are part of decision-making throughout the Campus, including at Board level. The recognition by HIQA of these and other improvements in the quality of care provided to young people as ‘compliant’ or ‘substantially compliant’ constituted an important milestone in the development of the Oberstown service.

New staff continued to be recruited across the organisation and the appointment of Oberstown’s first Chief People Officer demonstrated the importance we attach to our people. Our continued commitment to employee health and wellbeing was externally validated in 2020 by achieving Ibec KeepWell Mark accreditation and subsequently winning the Wellbeing Initiative of the Year 2020.

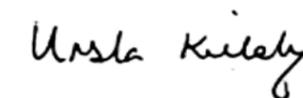
COVID-19 challenged Oberstown in multiple ways and demanded extraordinary commitment, diligence and hard work by both staff and young people to minimise its impact on the Campus. Strong governance, attentive management and good communication were all key to generating the cohesion and focus that were the hallmarks of our approach. Every effort was made to keep

young people safe with positive routines, but at times, when restrictions required, they missed school, in-person family visits and the interactions across the Campus that are so important for their development and wellbeing.

At the same time, the circumstances encouraged greater creativity, flexibility and agility that will undoubtedly shape our approach for years to come. Use of the Children Act provisions – to reduce the Oberstown population by supporting some young people to return safely to their communities – was just one such example of learning we will take forward into the future.

The Board of Management worked doubly hard during 2020, transitioning to remote format, which in turn enabled more frequent meetings in both Board and Committee sessions. Further substantial enhancements in Oberstown’s governance were achieved, as set out in the pages that follow, with the support of our Board Secretary, Patricia Martin. The level of attendance at Board and Committee meetings, detailed in the Appendix, highlights the extraordinary level of commitment shown by each individual Board member to the interests of Oberstown and our wider governance responsibilities.

2020 saw the departure of Oberstown Director Pat Bergin, who left to take on a new role in September. Pat has been central to the successful development of the Campus over the past seven years and we are extremely grateful to him for the endless hard work, commitment and leadership he showed throughout that time. Building on what has been achieved, we now look forward to the development of our next Strategy, with a view to further advancing the rights of young people in Oberstown, in the years ahead.



**Professor Ursula Kilkelly**  
Chairperson, Board of Management



**‘I AM PLEASED TO REPORT NOT ONLY THAT OBERSTOWN CAME THROUGH THIS PERIOD WITHOUT DEVIATION FROM CAMPUS POLICY OR DIMINUTION OF THE STANDARD OF CARE, BUT WE ALSO CONTINUED TO INNOVATE, TO GROW AND TO DEVELOP IN LINE WITH THE AMBITIONS OF THE OBERSTOWN STRATEGY.’**

# ABOUT OBERSTOWN CHILDREN DETENTION CAMPUS

Oberstown Children Detention Campus (Oberstown) is Ireland's national facility for the detention of children remanded or sentenced by the courts. Located in Lusk, Co Dublin, the Campus is based in custom-built premises comprising residential accommodation units for young people as well as education, recreation, visiting, medical and other facilities.

In fulfilment of national law and policy, Oberstown accommodates young people up to the age of 18 on detention or remand orders providing them with care and education in a safe and secure environment, while helping them to address offending behaviour and preparing them to return successfully to their families and communities.

In 2020 Oberstown was authorised to accommodate a maximum of 48 boys and six girls. In 2020, the average daily occupancy was 36 young people. Over the course of 2020, there were 122 young people detained on Campus.

## LAW AND POLICY GOVERNING OBERSTOWN

**Primary legislation** – Oberstown operates under the *Children Act 2001* (the Act), as amended, under the auspices of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) – formerly the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

**Principal objective** – 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.

**Role of the Director** – Section 180 of the Act affirms that young people in Oberstown are in the care of the Director who has “like control over the child as if he or she were the child’s parent or guardian” and who shall “do what is reasonable...in all the circumstances...for the purpose of safeguarding or promoting the child’s...health, development or welfare”.

**Board of Management** – Oberstown is governed by a Board of Management appointed under sections 164 and 167 of the Act (see page 36).

**National policy** – Oberstown falls under the aegis of the Children Detention Schools Unit in the DCEDIY. National policy commits, as a high-level goal, to provide a safe, secure environment and necessary support for detained young people to assist their reintegration into the community. *Tackling Youth Crime, the Youth Justice Action Plan 2014–2018* commits to the provision of evidence-based care and development opportunities to enable young people to return to their communities to play a constructive role in society. The Action Plan also falls under national children’s policy, specifically *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures – the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014 – 2020*.

.....  
**‘OVER THE COURSE OF  
2020, THERE WERE  
122 YOUNG PEOPLE  
DETAINED ON CAMPUS’**



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

### MISSION

To ensure that young people detained in Oberstown Children Detention Campus are supported to move away from offending behaviour to make a more positive contribution to society.

### VISION

To provide safe, secure and appropriate care for young people to meet their health and education needs; to support them to address their offending behaviour and prepare them to return to their families and communities following release from detention.

### VALUES

- Respect
- Learning and reflection
- Working Together
- Honesty and Integrity
- Commitment to quality care and support.

# STRATEGY UPDATE

**Oberstown's first three-year Strategy entered its final year in 2020. Implementation of planned actions continued throughout the year alongside work to set objectives for the next phase of strategic development for the Campus.**

**The Oberstown Strategy 2017-2020 set five key objectives:**

- 1 PROVIDE THE BEST POSSIBLE CARE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**
- 2 DEVELOP OUR PEOPLE AND OUR ORGANISATION**
- 3 IMPLEMENT POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND STANDARDS CONSISTENT WITH THE BEST MODEL OF DETENTION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**
- 4 ENHANCE COMMUNICATIONS ALIGNED TO OUR VALUES AND MISSION**
- 5 DELIVER ROBUST GOVERNANCE AT ALL LEVELS AND DRIVE EFFECTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY**

Throughout 2020, progress was made across all objectives, including:

- In July 2020, the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth gave consent under section 179 of the Children Act 2001 for Oberstown to adopt the 12 Campus Rules, which form part of the Children's Rights Policy Framework. A project to develop the procedures to implement the Framework (the rules and the associated policies) began in 2020, with cross-Campus input.
- Programmes to develop young people were enhanced with the appointment of an Interim Head of Programmes as a member of the Senior Management Team.
- Joint initiatives to enhance the educational offering on Campus continued, with input from the Board, Campus management, care staff, teachers and the Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB), which has responsibility for the school on Campus. A meeting in November 2020 between the relevant parties set priorities for developing a coherent approach.
- Work continued to promote the participation of young people in decision making on Campus. The Board established the new Young People Committee and worked closely with the Advocacy Officer to hear young people's views on a regular basis.
- Oberstown hosted a virtual stakeholder event in July attended by a wide range of external partners and stakeholders to discuss progress and developments.
- Engagement with higher education providers continued, with student placements on the Campus in line with COVID-19 restrictions.

## DEVELOPING OUR NEW STRATEGY

During 2020, the Board and Senior Management Team focused on continuing to implement the Oberstown Strategy 2017-2020. While the introduction of a new strategic plan was postponed to 2021 due to COVID-19, the strategy development process continued throughout the year. Views on the future development of the Campus were gathered and discussed via staff focus groups, a staff survey and consultations with young people. Staff also had the opportunity for short one-to-one discussions with the Interim Director towards the end of 2020.

A survey conducted in June and July 2020 gave each staff member a chance to anonymously contribute their views on their role, the opportunities and working practices across Oberstown, and to make suggestions for improvements. To enable comparable results and to help measure progress, the survey used the same questions as the 2017 exercise. Participation was entirely voluntary, and a total of 104 staff members from all areas of the Campus took part in the 2020 survey – up from 62 in 2017.

Other key results are summarised in the table below.

Consultation on the next phase of the Oberstown strategy will continue in 2021, including input from stakeholders.

	2020 Agree/strongly agree	2017 Agree/strongly agree
I would recommend Oberstown as a place to work	77%	30%
Oberstown is at the forefront of good practice	77%	28%
Oberstown does the right things in fulfilment of its mission	73%	28%
I have the opportunity to learn new skills	59%	40%
I get the right training when I ask	54%	20%
I am encouraged to bring forward innovative ideas	57%	36%
I have a good understanding of the main priorities of my own work area	91%	82%
I have a good understanding of the main priorities of areas outside my own area	66%	55%
I have a clear understanding of the overall priorities of Oberstown	78%	49%

- Work continued on a review of the Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between Oberstown and external stakeholders. This process is under review by the Board's Governance and Audit & Risk Committees.
- The Campus has commissioned research via the Irish Research Council employment-based graduate programme to research the outcomes and experiences of young people in Oberstown using the Case Management System Data and the views of young people.
- In Q4 2020, the Chief People Officer (CPO) prepared a draft Framework of Engagement & Consultation in collaboration with the Forsa Assistant General Secretary. This Framework sets out the guiding principles of the relationship between Oberstown and Forsa and provides clear and definite procedures to allow discussion, negotiation and dispute resolution to take place.
- Plans were progressed to further professionalise the communications function and embed effective communication in Campus operations, internally and externally, with the recruitment of a Communications Officer who took up post in April 2020.
- The implementation of national law and policy continued to be a priority of Campus management. Oberstown (via the Chairperson and the Director) were members of the steering committee for the development of the Youth Justice Strategy, ensuring that Oberstown was appropriately represented in the development of the strategy.

For more detailed information on strategy implementation across all five strategic objectives, see Appendix 1.

# YOUNG PEOPLE IN OBERSTOWN - CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CAMPUS POPULATION 2020

Young people sent to Oberstown by the courts typically present with complex needs. Analysis of data relating to the population in 2017, 2018 and 2019 showed a consistent pattern in the circumstances facing young people, including:

- six in ten are not engaged in full-time education prior to detention and around one in four have a diagnosed learning disability
- around four in ten have suffered the loss of one or both parents either through death, imprisonment or no long-term contact
- seven in ten have substance misuse problems
- four in ten have either been in care or had significant involvement with Tusla prior to their detention in Oberstown
- around half of the young people have a mental health need, and one in four have been prescribed medication for a mental health concern

This broad profile holds true for the 2020 population.

## CHANGING POPULATION PROFILE

In recent years Oberstown has seen a rise in the proportion of young people who are detained on longer sentences for very serious offences, including causing death.

This requires the Campus to provide specialist, offence-specific programmes and supports and to work hard to motivate young people to follow individual placement plans. It can be hard for some young people to commit fully to programmes when they know they will transfer to prison; others make good progress addressing their offending behaviour, but there is a risk they will regress when they transfer to the adult system.

Staff are also supported with respect to the trauma associated with more serious offences.

AROUND HALF OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE A MENTAL HEALTH NEED, AND ONE IN FOUR HAVE BEEN PRESCRIBED MEDICATION FOR A MENTAL HEALTH CONCERN

DURING 2020 THERE WERE 122 INDIVIDUAL YOUNG PEOPLE DETAINED IN OBERSTOWN ON REMAND OR DETENTION ORDERS

119 MALE 3 FEMALE



### Age profile 2020



### Onward placements in 2020



# CEHOP – A FRAMEWORK FOR TARGETED CARE

Oberstown delivers a planned and customised journey through individualised care for each young person. CEHOP, a bespoke framework devised and developed at Oberstown, has five pillars – care, education, health, offending behaviour, and preparation for leaving.



## CARE

Young people’s care is provided through a placement planning process which identifies and addresses young people’s needs while in Oberstown and focuses on supporting their return to the community. Each young person’s care plan is based on initial and ongoing needs assessments made by an inter-disciplinary professional care team, with structured involvement from family and other significant people as well as appropriate outside agencies. Individual care is then provided by a multi-disciplinary team with training and expertise in the range of supports and services required. The young person’s voice is key at every stage of the care process.

In 2020, 115 concerns relating to the welfare and protection of young people were referred to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) in line with Children First legislation and internal reporting guidelines. Of these concerns, 87 related to external matters including incidents that occurred prior to the young person being placed on remand or detention orders in Oberstown. Overall, 25 concerns met the referral threshold set down by Children First and these were forwarded as Mandated Reports to Tusla, the Child and Family Agency; five of these concerns related to the period of time when the young person was in Oberstown.

## EDUCATION

All young people attend school while they are in Oberstown and are supported to learn, to undertake state examinations and to continue vocational training. The Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB) has responsibility for delivering the curriculum on Campus. The Board and Management of Oberstown and the leadership of the DDLETB ensure that the education provided to young people in detention meets their needs.

Educational outcomes are measured in a number of ways including improvements in literacy and numeracy and participation in state examinations, with the ultimate objective to equip young people for the future.

In 2020, nine young people achieved the Junior Certificate in subjects including English, Maths, Geography, Metalwork, Materials Technology (Wood), Science, Environmental & Social Studies, Visual Art, and Home Economics. As in the wider community, COVID-19 restrictions meant that formal Junior Certificate examinations did not go ahead. Student certification involved the nine candidates receiving an evidence-based school report setting out their learning achievements.

One young person achieved the Leaving Certificate after taking exams in Engineering, Art, History, Construction Studies, English and Maths.

## HEALTH

Young people in Oberstown have access to healthcare services delivered in a purpose-built medical suite. The suite is managed by a clinical nurse manager, who works with two nurses and a social care worker. Young people also have access to a visiting GP, dentist and physiotherapist on-site. The Health & Wellbeing team provide valuable services in promoting the health and wellness of the young people in collaboration with the multi-disciplinary team in Oberstown.

Graphic: Oberstown Medical Suite Activity 2020



The HSE Forensic Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (FCAMHS) provides psychiatric services to young people in Oberstown. In 2020, FCAMHS and the ACTS (Assessment Consultation Therapy Service) service received a total of 76 referrals.

The Health & Wellbeing team also provide Oberstown staff with a range of medical supports, including preventative care. The team held six flu vaccination sessions in October, with a total of 169 staff members taking part.

## OFFENDING BEHAVIOUR

Oberstown works with young people to develop their sense of responsibility and life skills to address the factors associated with their offending behaviour. The Interim Head of Programmes identifies and implements programmes to address offending behaviour and to support the young people’s care while on Campus. These programmes cover a range of areas, including victim empathy, dealing with impulsive behaviours and reducing misuse of drugs and alcohol.

While COVID-19 restrictions made 2020 a challenging year for the delivery of programmes requiring external facilitation on Campus, targeted programmes were delivered throughout the year with the help of trained Oberstown staff (see page 22).

## PREPARATION FOR LEAVING

Placement planning is a key focus of the CEHOP framework. From the moment a young person comes to Oberstown, information is provided to them in a youth-friendly manner and their needs are considered by a diverse team of professionals on Campus.

Multi-disciplinary clinical meetings, chaired by Oberstown, are held on Campus on a weekly basis to identify and review the needs of young people and the services and supports they require. A dedicated person is allocated to chair placement planning meetings to ensure consistency in approach, engagement, attendance, recording and progress on agreed actions. Residential unit staff, teachers and external partners with a role in the young person’s return to the community or onward placement also attend the meetings. If appropriate, Oberstown refers young people to the Bail Supervision Scheme, which aims to keep young people on remand out of detention and to address their offending behaviour through community-based intervention.

# MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF COVID-19

To manage the risks of COVID-19, Oberstown took a comprehensive set of measures that helped keep the Campus coronavirus-free during 2020. This remarkable achievement was based on an agile and practical approach to applying public health guidelines in a unique, specialised environment. Keeping life on Campus as close to normal as possible called for continuous monitoring of risks and adjustment to working practices throughout the year, and was underpinned by two key messages: “Individual and collective responsibility” and “Stay safe, on and off Campus”.

Oberstown is an essential service operating in a unique setting. The Campus started active management of COVID-19 in early March 2020, introducing measures to protect young people and staff from the risks posed by the virus and to minimise any impact on the routines and rights of young people.

From the outset, every effort was made to ensure that COVID-19 public health measures would not compromise the capacity of the Campus to provide for the care and wellbeing of young people. To this end, the Board of Management directed that there was to be no deviation from Campus policy, even under the challenging circumstances, without express Board authority. The Board worked closely with management and kept matters under review during 2020 through regular monthly meetings and interim informal meetings, all held remotely.



Artwork created by a young person in Oberstown

## OPERATIONAL IMPACT

From March 2020 onwards, Oberstown introduced a comprehensive range of proactive steps designed to:

- reduce the risk to staff and young people of contracting coronavirus and keep Oberstown free from COVID-19
- put plans and procedures in place to control and limit the spread of the virus among staff, young people and visitors if a case is confirmed among the Campus community.

Key measures included:

**Planning, preparation and communication** – detailed risk assessments, protocols and business continuity plans were drawn up to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 entering the Campus and to address

any outbreak that might arise. Oberstown held daily emergency planning team meetings, established a COVID-19 communication programme in line with public health guidelines for all staff and young people on Campus, and introduced technology-driven communication tools to keep all staff on and off Campus informed of developments.

**Early release** – Oberstown acted to reduce the number of young people on Campus to safe levels in light of decreased availability of staff and other risks. The Director used his authority under s 202 (permitted absence) or s 205 (temporary leave) of the Children Act 2001 to return young people to the community in line with risk assessments and in consultation with external stakeholders including the Probation Service and An Garda Síochána. All young people on permitted absence were supported and monitored daily by a dedicated member of Oberstown staff. Education was enabled

through the online education tool Moodle, and a range of community supports were put in place to ensure the young people adhered to restrictions and to the terms of the contract agreed with the Director.

**Staffing** – staff identified as high risk or extremely vulnerable were accommodated via remote working. From March 2020 to December 2020, 12 staff members across all grades were not available to be rostered due to COVID-19.

Remote working was introduced for all employees who could work off-Campus. However, most staff working directly or indirectly with young people can only carry out their roles on Campus, which presented challenges ensuring sufficient staffing was available to support the safe and secure operation of Oberstown. With agreement and cooperation from staff representatives, staff rosters were amended in March 2020 to reflect the needs of the Campus in the emergency situation. An initial revised roster was agreed until June 2020 and extended to the end of July. A second COVID-19 roster was drawn up in July 2020 to reflect updated Government and public health advice, lessons learned and increased familiarity with new ways of working on Campus. Specific considerations in drawing up the emergency rosters included concerns relating to the impact on individuals of limited child care arrangements, the need to provide annual leave to staff, and the ongoing management of core COVID-19 safety principles on Campus to avoid cross-contamination.

**Management of COVID-19 on Campus** – residential units operated as discrete entities, with staff limiting contact with colleagues or young people outside their work teams. Standard operating procedures and protocols were developed and updated regularly to support the management of suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19 affecting a young person or staff member on Campus.

‘OBERSTOWN ACTED EARLY TO PROTECT THE CAMPUS FROM THE VIRUS AND MINIMISE THE IMPACT ON THE ROUTINES AND RIGHTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE’

## ‘YOUNG PEOPLE SAID THEY MISSED THE STRUCTURE AND THE ENGAGEMENT WITH TEACHERS DURING THE PERIOD OF THE SCHOOL CLOSURE’

A medical oversight group was established comprising the Director, medical team, and a duty unit or site manager. Its role was to take early key decisions and ensure COVID-19 Campus protocols were implemented. An isolation unit and isolation corridors on units were designated. Storage of PPE and training was provided to each staff group on the use of PPE, including the wearing of masks and gloves.

A COVID-19 Safety Implementation and Monitoring Committee was set up, chaired by a Deputy Director, with cross-Campus membership including the senior management team and lead worker representatives from care staff and Campus support functions. The Committee was formed in May 2020 and met weekly to monitor compliance with COVID-19 requirements and to take actions in line with Government guidelines and recommendations set out in the Return to Work Safely Protocol.

The Committee communicated regularly with staff, summarising actions taken across the Campus and reinforcing the key public health messages of practising good hand hygiene, social distancing, cough etiquette and individual and collective responsibility. Safety signage and poster campaigns were launched and refreshed with updates to reflect lessons learned and to keep pace with evolving Government and public health advice, including a matrix summarising the measures that applied across the Campus at each of the Government’s 5-level framework introduced in September 2020. The matrix – organised under the key headings of Contractors, Visitors, Internal, Training/Meetings, Travelling from outside Dublin, Scenarios, Overnight stays, School, ACTS, Working from home, Travelling for Work, Canteen, Facilities – was a key reference point as the public health picture changed.

**Annual leave** – despite the disruption to usual patterns of annual leave, Oberstown worked to ensure that staff took time off in 2020 in order to support their wellbeing, in line with statutory requirements, while ensuring that the operational needs of the Campus were met.

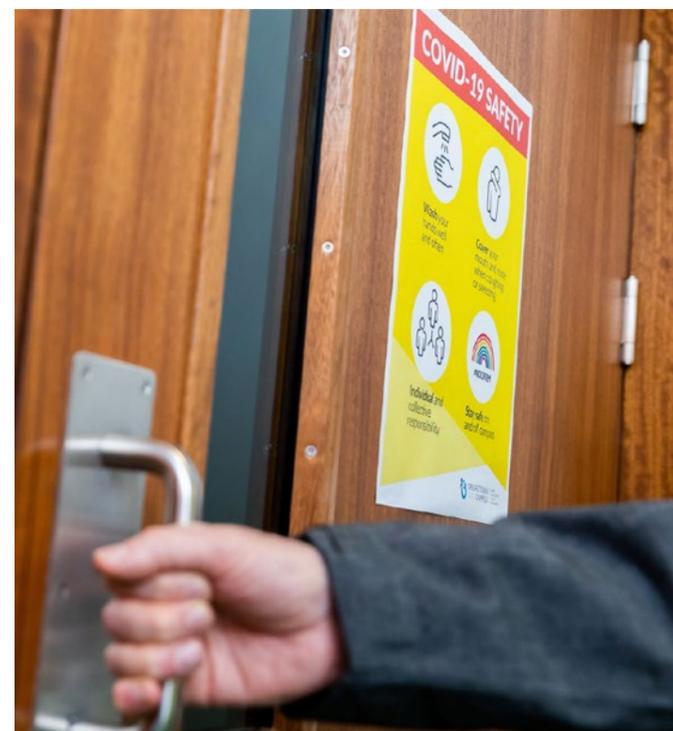
**Staff welfare** – Oberstown addressed the stress associated with COVID-19 and the challenges for staff working remotely through the Campus Support Services, the Employee Assistance Programme and the Campus Organisational Psychologist. Virtual workshops were provided, offering support and tips for managers on how to support staff who may be experiencing difficult times.

**Rapid antibody and antigen testing on Campus** – from October to December 2020, Oberstown partnered with Health Passport Ireland as a participant in a pilot rapid antibody and antigen testing programme. Tests were made available to staff on a voluntary basis during scheduled sessions using Oberstown’s Health & Wellbeing Unit (Medical Suite). Five sessions were held between Friday 30 October and Monday 21 December 2020, with an average of 117 people tested each time. The high participation rate reflected strong staff support for the pilot programme and for the concept of antigen testing as a proactive step in managing the risks associated with COVID-19.

**Working environments** – all physical working environments were reviewed and risk assessed to ensure that physical arrangements conformed with COVID-19 safety best practices and the challenges associated with social distancing. Impacts included moving many regular meetings to dial-in or virtual only, and strict restrictions on the numbers of people attending meetings in person. This practice avoided unnecessary travel for employees and Board members.

**Training** – normal staff training was suspended from 12 March 2020, apart from infection control and hygiene classes provided for all teams by the Clinical Nurse Manager and the medical team. Training resumed on Campus from the 16 June to support the ongoing training needs of staff. The involvement of external trainers and facilitators was severely curtailed during 2020, in line with Campus policy on external visitors.

**Intensified cleaning and health and safety measures** – the cleaning regime across the Campus was reviewed and new procedures were developed. These included an enhanced seven-day cleaning regime (previously five-days). Signage and internal communications channels were used to remind staff of self-care and to communicate key COVID-19 messages. An external cleaning and hygiene audit was conducted with the aim of ensuring that cleaning methods and materials were appropriate; the inspector commended Oberstown’s cleaning regime and made helpful suggestions for further improvement.



## SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE

While some changes to routines were inevitable, and they involved some disruption to Campus life, young people approached the new arrangements with remarkable resilience and good humour. The Oberstown Advocacy Officer, Gráinne Smyth, communicated frequently with young people on Campus and represented their views on Campus life during COVID-19 to management and the Board of Management. Unit staff played an important role in ensuring that young people understood the risks associated with the virus and how to keep themselves and others safe.

For the young people, the key changes were:

**Virtual visits and communications** – family in-person visits were not allowed from late March 2020 onwards in line with Government direction and public health advice on restricted movements in society. Visitors to the Campus from other services deemed to be non-essential were also stopped or limited during periods of restricted movement. Video conferencing was introduced in place of family visits – a change that led to some very positive feedback from young people and family members, especially those families who would normally have to travel long distances to visit in person.

Families reported that the Campus made good efforts to ensure that they stayed connected under the new arrangements. Technology, including video calls, was used to connect the young people on permitted absence with

their keyworkers in Oberstown to help them keep to their contracts. Young people and families also welcomed the use of video calls with the probation service and their legal representatives.

**School** – following the Government decision to close all schools nationally on 12 March 2020 the Campus school closed. Educational support was maintained during the school closure due to the efforts of stakeholders including the DDLETB Director of Schools, the Director and the Board of Management. While young people at Oberstown received relatively little formal schooling between the closure of the school on 12 March 2020 and the end of the school year in July, education remained a key part of their daily routine. Summer School activities were provided for seven weeks from July to August (see page 26).

Young people said they missed the structure and the engagement with teachers during the period of the school closure. The Board of Management made a formal request to the Minister for Education that Oberstown be exempt from any future school closure on the basis that the Oberstown school is in a unique residential setting, and that safe operation of the school is possible given the size of the building, the exceptional pupil-teacher ratio and the low risk of virus transmission posed by the young people.

The school reopened in September 2020 and a normal service was provided until the Christmas holidays.

**Work experience** – Oberstown’s Barista training programme, run in partnership with Java Republic, continued in 2020 – with an enforced break between March and July – and was a popular Summer School activity. Work experience in the Campus kitchen was not possible between March and the end of 2020.

**Health services** – The Oberstown Health & Wellbeing team continued to address the medical needs of young people throughout 2020, activating healthcare and isolation protocols where COVID-19 cases were suspected and supporting the expedited testing of young people (all tests were negative) which helped to manage risks in a timely way. ACTS and FCAMHS continued to be available to young people on a limited basis and partly through technology.

**Placement planning, services and supports** – communication platforms were developed to facilitate young people, family members, professionals and other staff to meet the requirements of the placement planning structure, ensuring that Oberstown continued to operate within government guidelines. While full placement planning meetings had to be suspended between March and June, and external agencies including the Ombudsman for Children’s Office, Le Chéile Mentoring and Youth Advocate Programme (YAP) stopped attending Campus in person, the service was operational during 2020.



# #HOLDFIRM

**Mixing across the Campus** – young people and staff were limited to interactions with their peers and colleagues in their own residential units and work teams. While this ‘pod’ system was an important safety measure, young people reported that they missed interacting with other young people across the Campus.

**Court visits** – while some court appearances were adjourned, others took place using video-conferencing facilities. The use of technology in this way has its limitations, including risks associated with protecting the legal rights of young people. However, video-conferencing also created a new dynamic on Campus, presenting opportunities for new ways of working. Young people who would traditionally have had to travel long distances to court welcomed attendance via video link. The Director took part in discussions, in a group convened by the Department of Justice, regarding how best to embed video conferencing into the normal process of court attendance for young people.

## STAYING UPBEAT

In May 2020, young people at Oberstown entered the HIQA competition ‘Creativity and Care during COVID-19’, submitting artwork, creatively decorated cakes, poems and stories. Three young people won prizes for their highly imaginative entries: ‘Chicken Man’ (see right), a humorous comic book character; ‘Turnaround’ a poem about a young person’s change of perspective in Oberstown; and ‘Lightbulb’, a doodle showing how creativity during COVID-19 shines a light in the dark.



A mechanical model created by a young person in Oberstown

# YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION AND CONSULTATION

**Oberstown is committed to the participation of young people in decision making and involves them in matters that affect their lives on Campus and beyond. Developed in line with national policy, our rights-based approach gives the young people in our care a voice as individuals, as members of their residential unit and on a Campus-wide level.**

## ADVOCACY SERVICE

Oberstown's Advocacy Officer, Gráinne Smyth, acts as the link between young people, Campus management and the Board. The Advocacy Officer ensures that young people understand the role of advocacy on Campus in ensuring their views are heard and treated seriously in decisions that affect how they spend their time at Oberstown.

A key aspect of the role is to ensure that young people's rights are both protected and promoted during the advocacy process. This is particularly important in the case of complaints – 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.)

Young people made a total of 26 complaints through the advocacy service in 2020 – down from 47 in 2019. There is a formal procedure for recording complaints; all complaints are investigated and each young person signs a copy of their complaint and registers their satisfaction level with the outcome.

YOUNG PEOPLE MADE A TOTAL  
OF 26 COMPLAINTS THROUGH  
THE ADVOCACY SERVICE IN 2020  
– DOWN FROM 47 IN 2019

## Young people's views

Established in 2018, the advocacy service has been instrumental in ensuring that young people's views are embedded in the culture and practice of Oberstown. During 2020, young people at Oberstown had their say on a wide variety of topics – from day-to-day Campus life to national education and care policy. Young people contributed to consultation initiatives and research projects on:

- Court appearances via video link.
- The development of new Campus procedures under the Children's Rights Policy Framework.
- The remand experience.
- The national curriculum review by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) – input via virtual focus groups.
- Life at Oberstown during the COVID-19 national health emergency.
- Experience of the care system and custody (Tusla research).
- Policing in Ireland (academic study).
- Experience of working towards the Gaisce awards while in detention.
- Case study material for STORM training.

## Advocacy during COVID-19

The Advocacy Officer played an important role in Oberstown's response to COVID-19 during 2020, acting as a point of contact for young people on permitted absence, liaising with parents and drawing up guidelines for speaking with young people on Campus about COVID-19. A monthly report to the Board on advocacy issues was introduced, including presenting young people's views on life on Campus under the exceptional circumstances presented by the pandemic. The Chairperson responded with a video message to convey the Board's support and understanding of the young people's concerns.

## Networking for best practice

Liaison with external agencies and initiatives helps ensure that advocacy at Oberstown keeps abreast of best practice. During 2020 the Advocacy Officer continued to develop Oberstown's external support network by participating in a range of virtual events, including:

- Mental Health First Aid Ireland training event focusing on the needs of young people.
- NVR (Non Violent Resistance) Ireland training webinar "Ending shame and silence – NVR responding to family fear and violence".
- Fingal Children & Young People's Services Committees mental health webinar "Anxiety: time to change the lens" led by Dr Mark Smyth, Senior Clinical Psychologist in CAMHS and President of the Psychological Society of Ireland.
- SATU (Sexual Assault Treatment Unit) training in the procedures and processes for supporting a victim of sexual assault.
- National Parents Council session "Let's Talk about Anxious Children" led by Dr Colman Noctor, Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist.
- UCC conference "Ensuring the Progressive Reform of Youth Justice in Ireland in line with International Research and Evidence-Based Approaches", part of a research project funded by the Irish Research Council in association with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.
- ACJRD (The Association for Criminal Justice Research and Development) 13th Annual Martin Tansey Memorial Lecture "Reducing Reoffending: Choices and Challenges" delivered online by Professor Ian O'Donnell, Professor of Criminology, University College Dublin Sutherland School of Law.

## CAMPUS COUNCIL 2020

COVID-19 restrictions presented challenges for the Campus Council, the young people's representative body connecting each of the remand and detention units with departments across the Campus and with the school.

In the absence of group meetings, two council members met monthly with the Board of Management's newly-established Young People Committee to put forward issues and views raised by their peers.

The graphic below shows the Campus Council process in Oberstown. It is based on the Lundy Model of Child Participation – a rights-based approach to involving young people in decision-making which is endorsed in the National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making (2015 – 2020).

Oberstown Campus Council: Process of Participation



## YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS 2020

### Life under covid-19:

**"I HAVE MORE VISITS NOW AS MY FAMILY DON'T HAVE TO TRAVEL"**

"THINGS ARE EASIER HERE THAN OUTSIDE. I HAVE JUST COME BACK AND EVERYTHING IS DIFFERENT OUTSIDE. THINGS HAVE CHANGED VERY LITTLE IN HERE – THE LADS DON'T KNOW HOW LUCKY THEY ARE TO GET A HAIRCUT."

### Improving the behaviour rating system:

**"GETTING A DAY OFF YOUR SENTENCE TO GET OUT EARLY ON PERMITTED ABSENCE FOR EVERY WEEK THAT YOU ARE ON A BEHAVIOUR CONTRACT."**

### Single separation:

**"I DON'T THINK IT'S THE BEST FOR A YOUNG PERSON TO BE ON THEIR OWN. IT'S NOT GOOD FOR YOUR MENTAL HEALTH."**

### Video link court appearances:

**SOME OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE HAD NO IDEA WHAT WAS HAPPENING DURING THEIR VIDEO LINK COURT APPEARANCE AND DID NOT FEEL PART OF THE PROCESS.**

### Input to Courts Service on improving the court experience:

**"WOULDN'T IT BE GREAT IF YOU HAD CHILDREN'S COURTS EVERYWHERE IN THE COUNTRY?"**

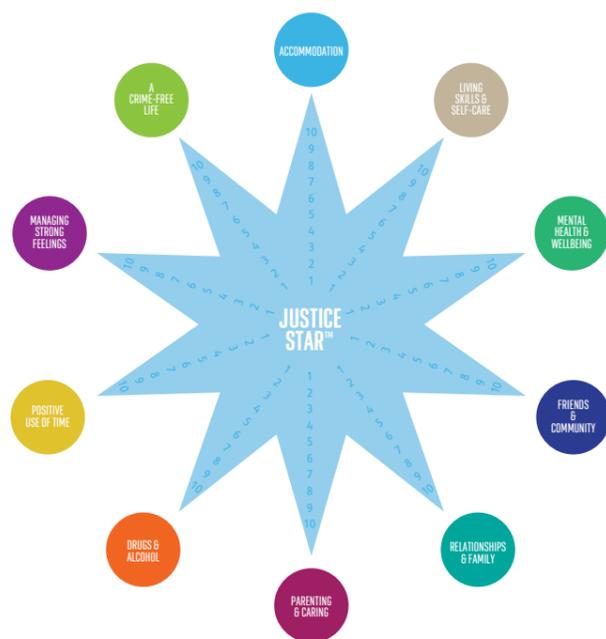
# DEVELOPING YOUNG PEOPLE – PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LIFE SKILLS

Focusing on the personal development of young people is a key aspect of Oberstown’s mission and is central to the CEHOP framework.

We help young people to understand and address their offending behaviour, build a sense of responsibility and acquire life skills to enable a successful return to their families and communities.

We select and implement programmes based on their proven effectiveness in helping young people. Delivered through group work and individual interventions, each programme is underpinned by the principles of restorative practice with a focus on positive outcomes.

The Justice Star evidenced-based tool\*



\* Justice Star™ © Triangle Consulting Social Enterprise Ltd

## YOUNG PEOPLE’S PROGRAMMES 2020

### Outcome Star

Outcome Star became a core element of keyworking in Oberstown in 2020. Introduced at the end of 2019, Outcome Star 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 (see graphic).

Unit managers and residential social care workers use Justice Star to help young people measure their progress throughout their stay on Campus, and to help them to engage with targeted programmes and interventions. By the end of 2020, a total of 29 staff members had been trained to use this assessment tool.

### Pathways

The Pathways life skills intervention, introduced in 2019 as Oberstown’s keyworking framework for all young people, became further embedded in the CEHOP model of care during 2020. Pathways is a practical life skills guide for young people who are preparing to leave care and is delivered in nine one-to-one modules during keyworking sessions. It is available to every young person on a remand or detention order in Oberstown and all residential social care workers are trained in its use.

COVID-19 restrictions limited the number of targeted programmes delivered on Campus during 2020. All programmes delivered from March to December 2020 were facilitated by Oberstown staff. The practice of integrating young people’s programmes into the evening activities and summer school class timetable continued in 2020.

## OBERSTOWN RAN FIVE SEPARATE TARGETED PROGRAMMES DURING 2020

### 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.

**No. deliveries 2020:** 12

**Participants:** 17

**No. completed:** 14

### 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.

**No. deliveries 2020:** 15

**Participants:** 32

**No. completed:** 30

### Street Law

An initiative with the Law Society of Ireland which places trainee solicitors to teach young people about law. The programme provides young people with an understanding of the law as it applies to their lives, helps them develop critical thinking and communication skills, and assists in changing attitudes so they are better equipped to deal with and understand the law and authority. This programme was delivered as part of evening activities in four one-hour sessions in January 2020.

**No. deliveries 2020:** 1 course delivered in 4 one-hour sessions as part of evening activities in January 2020. Further conducts were not possible due to Covid-19 restrictions.

**Participants:** 5

**No. completed:** 5

### 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.

The programme consists of eight modules that were delivered by two external facilitators from Crinan Youth Project.

**No. deliveries 2020:** 1 course delivered in 4 one-hour sessions as part of evening activities in January 2020. Further conducts were not possible due to Covid-19 restrictions.

**Participants:** 6

**No. completed:** 6

### Relationships and Sexual Health

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.

**No. deliveries 2020:** 5 courses, facilitated by Oberstown staff during evening activities and also delivered by teachers as part of the SPHE curriculum.

**Participants:** 18

**No. completed:** 18

# SKILLS-BASED TRAINING AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES 2020

The Oberstown activities team provided an extensive range of recreational and educational programmes in 2020. After-school activities during term time cater for a wide range of interests and skills. Young people attend voluntarily and have input to the range of activities offered – from fun pastimes to more challenging skills development programmes requiring commitment, hard work and a focus on achievement.

## VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Oberstown offers vocational skills training programmes to provide young people with practical skills that increase their prospects of employment in the future. Developments in 2020 include:

### Java Republic Coffee Education Programme

Established in April 2019, this practical training programme enables young people to meet the market requirements for new baristas. Participants learn about the coffee industry and go through an intensive one-day barista training session with a certified Specialty Coffee Association trainer from Java Republic. A total of 19 young people completed the course in 2020, earning a Java Republic Barista Skills for Beginners certificate – an industry-standard entry-level qualification. After completing the course, Oberstown’s baristas are able to practise their skills on-site using coffee machines donated by Java Republic.

**The Java Republic Shield:** One young person worked with activity staff to design and create an elaborate decorative shield as a thank you to Java Republic for its partnership with Oberstown. The shield depicts the journey of a coffee bean from seed to cup and includes illustrations of the shared values of community and relationships.



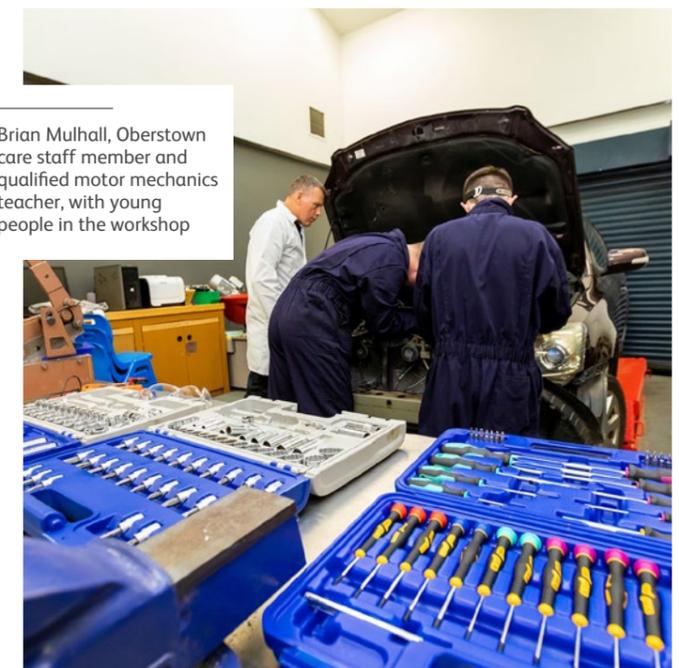
## Fitness instructor training

A total of 20 young people and seven members of staff qualified as fitness instructors in 2020 after completing a 12-week course delivered on Campus by Image Fitness Training and facilitated by the Oberstown school and activities team. The successful participants achieved a National Elite Fitness Professional Certificate EQF Level 3 in Fitness Instruction, following assessment based on a practical and written examinations. The course includes modules on practical fitness instruction, anatomy, physiology and training methods. In 2020, four young people enhanced their qualifications with certificates in gym management, fitness programme design, and specialist instruction in spin cycling, kettlebell and TRX/suspension classes.

Image Fitness guarantees that young people who successfully complete the course and want to start a career in the industry will get a job interview for a role as a fitness instructor once they leave Oberstown.

## Motor mechanics workshop

A pilot programme to introduce young people to motor mechanics was launched on site in 2020, with courses running four days a week from June to December. Young people were instructed in the basics by staff member Brian Mulhall, a qualified motor mechanics teacher. The classes were held in a specially equipped workshop in the Campus school, where young people gained hands-on experience of working on recently retired vehicles. Following the success of the workshop, a formal course leading to work placement is planned for 2021.



Brian Mulhall, Oberstown care staff member and qualified motor mechanics teacher, with young people in the workshop



## SUMMER SCHOOL 2020

Oberstown Summer School 2020 ran over seven weeks from 6 July to 25 August, operating Monday to Friday afternoons from 1.30pm to 6pm. The programme comprised an average of 80 classes per day, with each young person timetabled for four classes of 55 minutes each day. Three of the young people's programmes to develop life skills and address offending behaviour were integrated into the 2020 Summer School – the Real U, Decider and ShoutOut programmes featured on the timetable.

Providing such an extensive programme was a considerable achievement in a year when regular school activities and project work had been affected by COVID-19 restrictions. Oberstown sourced independent activities and educational providers and worked with the Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB) to ensure that a full Summer School programme could take place for up to 35 young people.

Feedback on Summer School 2020 from all involved was very positive, with staff reporting that young people presented with no behaviour management issues, complied with the COVID-19 regime and attended all assigned classes on a daily basis. Summer School 2020 ended with socially-distanced awards presentations, video presentations of short dramas performed by some of the young people, with cakes and coffee served by trained Oberstown baristas.



## AFTER-SCHOOL AND SUMMER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMMES 2020

Every day there are between 80 and 90 classes available to the young people – around 450 classes per week.

### Sport

FAI football coaching  
Wall Tennis  
Circuit class  
Personal Training Fitness suite  
Snooker

### Personal development and life skills

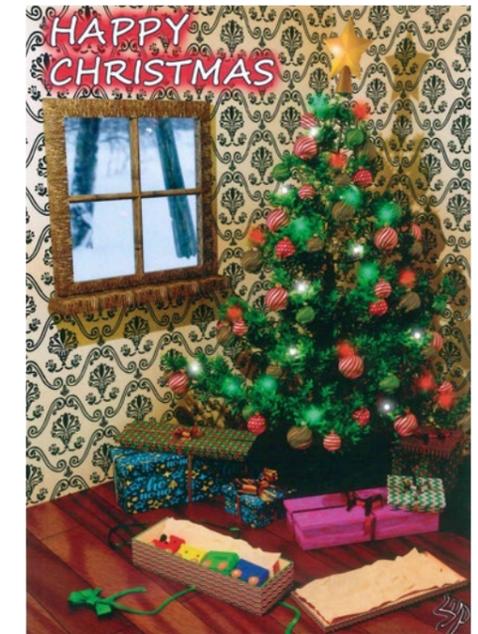
Relaxation /Meditation  
Real U programme  
ShoutOut programme  
Deciders programme

### Arts and self-expression

Art  
Drama  
Textiles  
Music / Digital Music  
Pottery  
Pyrography  
Cinema Room

### Practical and technical skills

Barista training  
Fitness Instructor Course  
Home Economics  
Wood Technology  
Motor Mechanics



**Creative output:** examples of work by young people include paintings, pottery, decorative wood burnings and graphic designs produced using 3-D modelling and image editing techniques.



# OBERSTOWN AND GAISCE – A JOURNEY OF ACHIEVEMENT

2020 was a landmark year for Oberstown’s collaboration with Gaisce, the President’s Award ([www.gaisce.ie](http://www.gaisce.ie)). Young people at Oberstown achieved a total of 22 Gaisce awards in 2020 – 1 gold, 3 silver and 18 bronze – rewarding months and in some cases years of work. The Gaisce gold award was a first for Oberstown and is a significant milestone for all the staff and young people who are using the programme to acquire and develop a diverse range of skills, building resilience and self-confidence and focusing on positive outcomes along the way.

Marks of achievement:  
young people show their  
Gaisce medals



**The President of Ireland, Michael D Higgins**, visited Oberstown for a Gaisce awards ceremony in 2020. The event underlined the President’s commitment to the goal that Gaisce is for every young person, a theme he had emphasised on his previous visit to the Campus in 2018.

Pictured above, President Higgins congratulates young people and the staff who helped them earn their Gaisce awards, (also pictured, Oberstown Interim Director Damien Heron) and pictured top, Ursula Kilkelly, Chairperson of the Oberstown Board, addresses an award recipient, watched by President Higgins.

**G**aisce facilitates a programme tailored to the needs of every young person who wants to take part and aims to give each participant the best possible opportunity to earn their award. The programme celebrates the ability and resilience of young people and focuses on helping them realise their full potential.

The shared values between Gaisce and Oberstown continue to make this a fruitful partnership, with benefits across the Campus and beyond.

Speaking at the 2020 Gaisce awards ceremony, Oberstown Chairperson Ursula Kilkelly said: “The Gaisce awards are an excellent fit for Oberstown with our mutual commitment to supporting young people to fulfil their potential, self-direct their personal development and achieve goals across a wide variety of areas and interests.”

The Oberstown Activities Coordinator, John Smith, leads the Oberstown programme, liaising with Gaisce and arranging support for young people from teachers, care staff and members of the activities team. Staff members act as President’s Award Leaders (Gaisce PALs), who help the young people to set and achieve their personal challenges in four main areas of activity:

### Community involvement

Examples of Gaisce activities by young people in Oberstown include:

- Making Christmas wreaths distributed to the local Man O’War Seniors Group and displayed around the Campus over the 2020 Christmas season. One young person also designed the 2020 Oberstown Christmas Card.
- Young people made comfort blankets and therapy chairs to support SOSAD Ireland in its initiatives to connect young people impacted by trauma.
- Young people in Oberstown made wooden plaques with cheerful designs to help brighten the wards of the Children’s Hospital at Temple Street.



- Raising funds for children’s charity LauraLynn through two sponsored events – a 5k run on Campus and a 30-day press up challenge.

### Personal skills

The Gaisce personal challenge can cover a wide variety of activities – from building skills in sports and pastimes such as snooker, through completing projects in arts and crafts to participation in young people’s development programmes such as Deciders or Real U (see page 23).

“I LIKE COMPLETING GOALS, AND GAISCE GIVES ME A WAY TO ACHIEVE.”

Young person at Oberstown



**Gold standard:** one young person's gold Gaisce award work included researching and producing 'The Pearl', a mural depicting wildlife in Rogerstown Estuary, close to Oberstown.

“BECAUSE OF GAISCE  
I GET TO DO THE  
THINGS I LIKE  
MORE OFTEN.”

Young person at Oberstown

#### Physical recreation

Young people work towards personal physical fitness and sporting achievements, which may lead to certification in fitness training or FAI football coaching.

#### Adventure journey

Young people complete their adventure journey challenge by committing to personal learning objectives. Examples include:

- Self-awareness programmes, including Real U and SpunOut workshops aimed at understanding sexuality.
- Restorative practice workshops focused on building better relationships.
- Street Doctors – a skills programme that gives young people first aid skills to help save lives.



## HEALTH INFORMATION AND QUALITY AUTHORITY INSPECTION 2020

Inspectors from the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) are authorised to carry out independent inspections of Oberstown against the Standards and Criteria for Children Detention Schools. The Children Act 2001 requires an inspection of Oberstown to be carried out annually. Following inspection, action plans are agreed between the Oberstown Director and HIQA and the implementation of these actions is monitored by the Board of Management.

In December 2020, a thematic announced inspection took place over three days during which inspectors met with children and staff on the Campus. The inspection focused on the planning in place for the delivery of the best possible care and protection for young people in Oberstown, the promotion of children's rights, and staff supervision in carrying out their duties.

Inspectors spoke with 11 young people about their understanding of their rights and how they felt their rights were being promoted. They also asked the young people about their participation in planning their care and in decision-making processes that affect them. The inspectors spoke with staff and management, analysed data and reviewed documentation such as children's care files and placement plans, policies and procedures, and minutes of staff, management and Board meetings.

Among their observations of life at Oberstown while on site, the HIQA inspectors noted positive interactions between young people and staff while moving around the Campus on their way to and from school and other activities: "Children and staff members were observed chatting and enjoying each others' company on these walks, and the children were observed as at ease. Inspectors also observed staff managing complex situations in a responsive and respectful way, and generally, interactions with children were observed as caring, warm and supportive."

The report found that the Campus was 'compliant' or 'substantially compliant' across the three standards assessed during the inspection. There were no findings of non-compliance in any of the areas examined over the three days.

The inspection found 'substantial compliance' in relation to planning for young people and management and staffing at Oberstown, and the Campus was 'compliant' with respect to children's rights.

.....

**"KEYWORKERS CARE ABOUT YOU MORE, BUT ALL THE STAFF ARE SUPPORTIVE AND HELP YOU WITH STUFF."**

Young person quoted in the  
HIQA inspection report

.....

**"OVERALL, CHILDREN WHO MET WITH INSPECTORS DESCRIBED POSITIVE EXPERIENCES OF THEIR CARE. THEY SPOKE WELL OF STAFF MEMBERS AND SAID THAT THEY WERE HELPFUL, SUPPORTIVE AND NICE."**

Extract from the HIQA  
inspection report

According to the report, the young people interviewed by HIQA:

- described positive experiences of their care at Oberstown
- welcomed the support given to them by all staff and highlighted the role of keyworkers and the Advocacy Officer
- were aware of their rights at Oberstown and confirmed that the staff explained their rights clearly to them
- were happy that any complaints or concerns they raised were heard and addressed.

HIQA noted good practice in a number of areas including:

- overall improvements in staff supervision which was found to be taking place across the service for all grades
- the system for planning the care of young people was working well, ensuring that children's needs were being met on an assessed basis, through a multi-agency and multi-disciplinary approach
- children were actively encouraged to participate in decision making about their lives, including their placement plans
- there was an effective system in place to manage complaints
- systems and procedures were in place to promote children's rights and have their voice heard.

## 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. Under COVID-19 restrictions, OCO representative visits to Campus were replaced by phone calls and video meetings with young people. During 2020, 13 young people requested to meet with the OCO representative.

**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.

## 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 and 167). The Board operates in line with legislation and the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies, complying with good governance, setting the strategic direction of the Campus and overseeing the delivery of the Oberstown Strategy and national policy in line with the 2001 Act.

The Board carries out its functions on behalf of the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. Its key responsibility is to provide oversight and strategic direction to Oberstown on behalf of the Minister. The Board is also responsible for ensuring that the Minister is advised of significant matters arising in respect of Oberstown, and that the Director is supported to deliver the strategic plan and is accountable 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 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. The current term of the Board of Management began on 1 June 2019. Profiles of the Board members are provided on pages 40-41.

## FROM 1 MARCH ONWARDS, ALL BOARD AND BOARD COMMITTEE MEETINGS WERE CONDUCTED REMOTELY, BY VIDEO CONFERENCE, IN LINE WITH COVID-19 TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS AND CAMPUS PROTOCOLS.

## BOARD MEETINGS

Under the Children Act, 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 2020. An update was circulated to staff and published on the Oberstown website following every Board meeting.

From 1 March onwards, all Board and Board Committee meetings were conducted remotely, by dial-in or video conference, in line with COVID-19 travel restrictions and Campus protocols. In light of the challenges facing the Campus during the health emergency, the Board convened four additional informal 'catch up sessions' in 2020 in between the scheduled monthly Board meetings. Two extraordinary meetings were also held during 2020.

Dates of the Board of Management meetings, and details of attendance, are set out in Appendix 2.

## BOARD ACTIONS 2020

- Developed a training plan for all Board members.
- Monitored the implementation of the Oberstown Strategy and supported the Director in delivering on strategic objectives.
- Approved the Audit and Risk Committee Assurance Report setting out the Board's process for reviewing internal control systems for finance, operations, compliance and risk management.
- Monitored and supported the steps taken to protect the Campus from the risks associated with COVID-19 and ensured that there was no deviation from Campus policy.
- Approved the draft Financial Statements and Statement of Internal Control for 2019.
- Approved a Strategic Risk Register and introduced a standing item to review strategic risks at each Board meeting.
- Developed the Campus strategic planning and continuity planning process in light of COVID-19 restrictions.
- Established a Transition and Succession Group to oversee arrangements following the resignation of the Director in July 2020, including the appointment of an Interim Director and management of the recruitment process for a new Director.
- Established a Young People Committee.
- Approved the final version of the Campus Rules – the basis of the Children's Rights Policy Framework. The Board also approved a consultation and implementation plan for the Children's Rights Framework.

## BOARD COMMITTEES

Two standing Board committees were in place throughout 2020 – the Audit and Risk Committee and the Governance Committee – and three more were established during the year: the Strategy Committee, the Young People Committee and the People and Culture Committee. Dates of the Board of Management and committee meetings, and details of attendance, are set out in Appendix 2.

### Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee is a standing Board committee. It met nine times in 2020 to review the financial management and controls of Oberstown, reporting to the Board. During 2020, the Committee:

- Approved the 2019 annual accounts.
- Conducted and reported on a review of budgeting and financial reporting.
- Conducted and reported on an audit of procurement.

### Governance Committee

The Governance Committee is a standing Board committee. It met eight times during 2020 to review the governance of Oberstown, reporting to the Board. During 2020, the Committee developed and approved a workplan which included:

- Developing a training plan for the Board and organising risk management training with the IPA.
- Conducting a Board Self Effectiveness Review.
- Monitoring compliance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.
- Developing a revised Oversight Agreement and Performance Delivery Agreement between Oberstown and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

- Overseeing Board engagement with young people and with members of the Executive.
- Producing a legislative checklist.

### Strategy Committee

The Strategy Committee is a standing committee of the Board, comprising six Board members. It was established in April 2020 and restructured in October 2020. The role of the Committee is to support the development of the next strategic plan and ensure its implementation.

The terms of reference for the Committee were approved by the Board in December 2020.

The Committee extended the deadline for the completion of the new strategy due to the exceptional circumstances of COVID-19. An Interim Continuity Plan was put in place in December 2020 which focuses on priorities arising from the current strategic plan along with issues presented by COVID-19. Its implementation will be monitored by the committee.

### Young People Committee

The Young People Committee is a standing committee of the Board, comprising three Board members. It was established in October 2020. The role of the committee is to support the Board in the fulfilment of its governance and oversight responsibilities for young people in Oberstown. Its main objective is to ensure that the views of young people are heard and taken into account by the Board.

The terms of reference were approved by the Board in November 2020.

The committee met in October and December 2020.

‘THE YOUNG PEOPLE COMMITTEE WAS ESTABLISHED IN 2020 TO ENSURE THAT THE VIEWS OF YOUNG PEOPLE ARE HEARD AND TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT BY THE BOARD.’

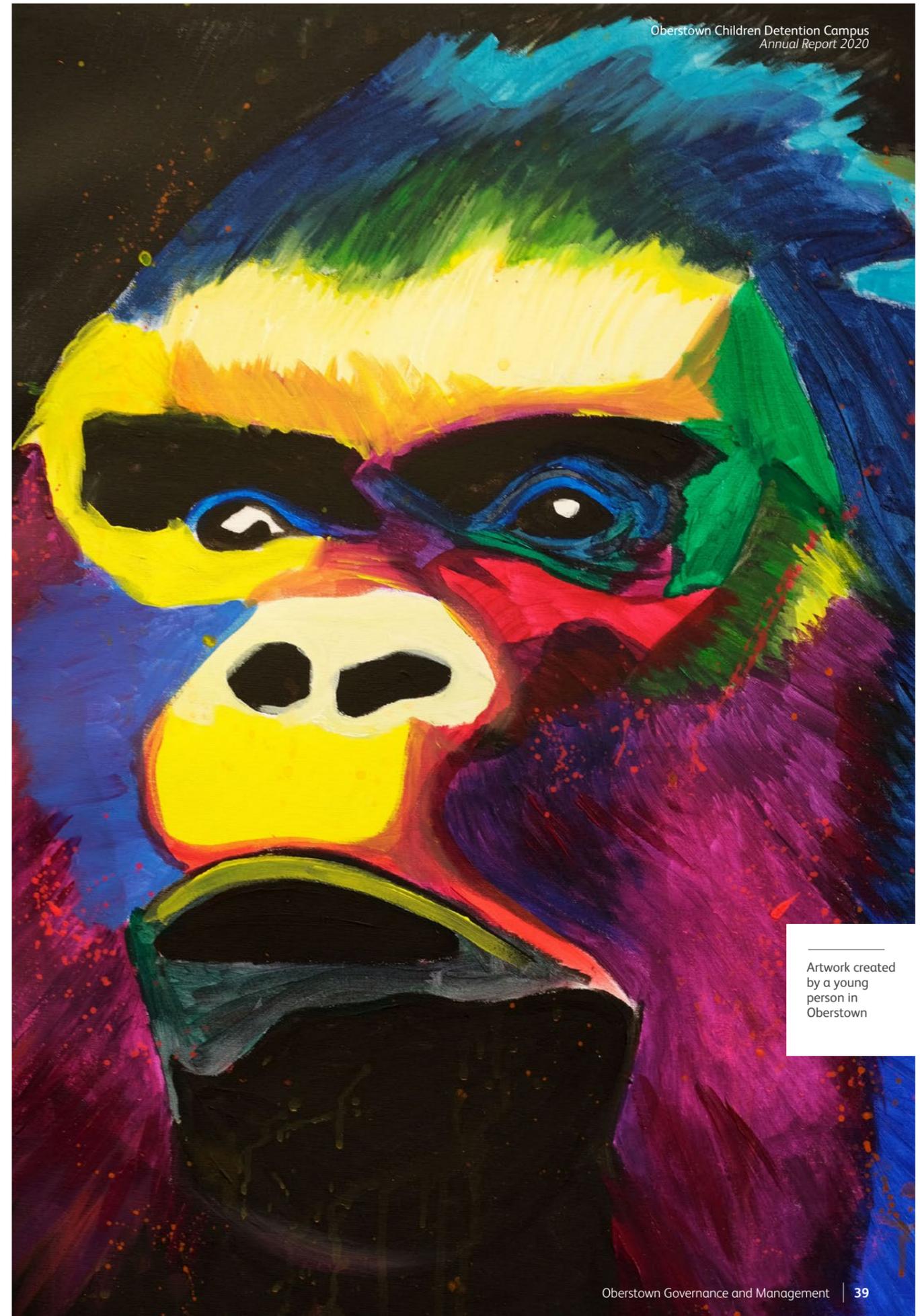
As part of the Board’s direct engagement with young people, the committee met with two Campus Council representatives at both meetings. There was discussion around matters of concern raised by the young people and feedback on management responses to these concerns were brought to subsequent meetings. The Advocacy Officer advised that the young people were very pleased with the opportunity they had been given to talk directly to the Board.

The committee will continue to develop this engagement further as COVID-19 restrictions are reduced.

### The People and Culture Committee

The People and Culture Committee is a standing committee of the Board, comprising four Board members, and was established by the Board in December 2020.

The role of the committee is to assess, guide, report on and make recommendations to the Board for approval in the area of development and implementation of the Oberstown People and Culture Strategy.



Artwork created by a young person in Oberstown

## OBERSTOWN BOARD OF MANAGEMENT 2020



### Professor Ursula Kilkelly

Chairperson

**Appointment:** Ministerial

**Appointment date:** June 2019 (reappointment)

**Term:** 4 years (active on Oberstown Board since 2012, Chairperson since January 2016)

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

Professor Ursula Kilkelly is a Professor of Law at University College Cork and an established international expert in youth justice and detention and children's rights. At UCC, she teaches juvenile justice and children's rights on the LL.M in Children's Rights and Family Law. She is co-editor of *Youth Justice: An International Journal*.



### Eamon Clavin

**Appointment:** Ministerial (Department of Education nominee)

**Appointment date:** 4 July 2019 (reappointment)

**Term:** 4 years

**Committee membership:** Governance, Strategy

Eamon Clavin is a Divisional Inspector in the Department of Education of Skills, attached to the Inspectorate's Teacher Education and Inclusion Evaluation and Policy Support Unit. He has a particular interest in Special Education, DEIS and Traveller Education and is a Council member of the National Council for Special Education (NCSE).



### Bernadette Costello

**Appointment:** PAS process

**Appointment date:** 4 July 2019

**Term:** 4 years

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

Bernadette Costello is a Chartered Accountant and past Chair of Chartered Accountants Ireland Audit Committee and Chair of the Board of Accounting Technicians Ireland. She is a former Director of Internal Audit & Risk Management, National University of Ireland, Galway and has extensive experience in financial and management accounting, corporate governance and related areas.



### Linda Creamer

**Appointment:** Ministerial (Tusla nominee)

**Appointment date:** 4 July 2019 (reappointment)

**Term:** 4 years

Linda Creamer is a regional Service Director in Tusla with responsibility for the delivery of child protection and welfare services in the Dublin North East region. During her career she has worked directly with children and their families in the community and she has developed extensive expertise in the field of child protection and welfare.



### Tadgh Delaney

**Appointment:** Ministerial (DCYA nominee)

**Appointment date:** 4 July 2019 (reappointment)

Retired from the Board 19 May 2020

**Term:** 4 years

**Committee membership:** Audit & Risk Committee

Tadgh Delaney was an Assistant Principal Officer in the Irish Youth Justice Service, Department of Children and Youth Affairs during his time on the Oberstown Board, which dates back to July 2017. He retired from the Board on 19 May 2020.



### Jennifer Gargan

**Appointment:** PAS process

**Appointment date:** 4 July 2019

**Term:** 4 years

**Committee membership:** Governance, Transition & Succession, Young People (Chair), Strategy

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.



### Elizabeth Howard

**Appointment:** Ministerial (Community representative)

**Appointment date:** 4 July 2019 (reappointment)

**Term:** 3 years

Elizabeth Howard is a local community representative resident in the vicinity of the Oberstown Campus.



### Noreen Leahy

**Appointment:** Ministerial (DCEDIY nominee)

**Appointment date:** 8 June 2020

**Term:** 3 years

**Committee membership:** Strategy, Transition & Succession, People and Culture

Noreen Leahy is a Principal Officer of the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.



### Laoise Manners

**Appointment:** Ministerial (Staff member)

**Appointment date:** 4 July 2019 (reappointment)

**Term:** 2 years

**Committee membership:** Strategy

Laoise Manners is a residential social care worker and part of the medical team in Oberstown.



### John McDaid

**Appointment:** PAS process

**Appointment date:** 4 July 2019

**Term:** 4 years

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

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



### Craig Mulligan

**Appointment:** Ministerial (Staff member)

**Appointment date:** 4 July 2019

**Term:** 2 years

**Committee membership:** People and Culture

Craig Mulligan is a residential social care worker in Oberstown.



### Don O'Leary

**Appointment:** PAS process

**Appointment date:** 4 July 2019 (reappointment)

**Term:** 3 years

**Committee membership:** Strategy, Young People

Don O'Leary is the Director of the Cork Life Centre, a voluntary organisation offering an alternative learning environment to young people who find themselves outside mainstream education.



### Pat Rooney

**Appointment:** Ministerial (Community representative)

**Appointment date:** 4 July 2019 (reappointment)

**Term:** 3 years

Pat Rooney is a local community representative, resident in the vicinity of the Oberstown Campus.



### Emer Woodfull

**Appointment:** PAS process

**Appointment date:** 4 July 2019 (reappointment)

**Term:** 3 years

**Committee membership:** Strategy, People and Culture

Emer Woodfull is a practising barrister at the Law Library Dublin who was called to the Bar in 2003. She has a background in child, criminal, investigative, inquiry and employment law. She was previously an award-winning current affairs broadcaster and series producer in RTE, the national broadcaster.

## GENDER BALANCE

As at 31 December 2020, 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.

# COMPLIANCE AND OPERATIONAL OVERVIEW 2020

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

## Protected Disclosures

Under the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 Oberstown is required to publish a report on the number of protected disclosures made to the organisation in the preceding year and the action taken (if any) in response to the protected disclosure. In 2020, no protected disclosures were received from parties internal or external to Oberstown.

## Conflict of Interest

There were no declared conflicts of interest – personal, professional or financial – concerning any decisions of the Board during 2020.

## Risk Management

Oberstown maintains a Strategic Risk Register setting out the organisation's principal risks and mitigation measures. The risk register is reviewed regularly and updated as required.

## 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 2020, Oberstown contributed to the answers to 16 parliamentary questions.

## Freedom of Information (FOI)

Oberstown manages its Freedom of Information (FOI) responsibilities in line with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act, 2014. In 2020, Oberstown received a total of nine FOI requests: six requests were granted, three part-granted, none were refused.

## Data Protection

In 2020, Oberstown continued to implement significant data protection measures to further enhance its existing organisational controls to protect personal data. A GDPR governance framework was implemented during the year. A dedicated GDPR programme of work is in place and continues to deliver a wide range of critical data protection enablers to ensure Oberstown progressively maintains compliance with GDPR. Data protection measures to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic include:

- improvements to core business processes
- ongoing refinements to standard operating procedures

(eg breach management, subject access requests)

- updated policies for data protection, remote working, virtual meeting
- high-priority compliance activities, such as the completion of Brexit Impacted Data Sharing Agreements and Data Protection Impact Assessments for high-risk activities
- staff training and awareness activities to assist staff with understanding their statutory obligations.

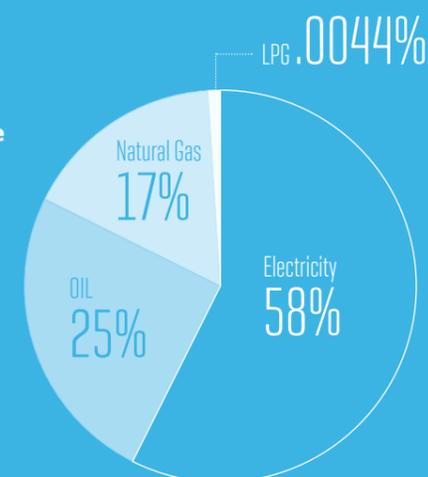
## Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014

Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 imposes a statutory obligation on public bodies in performing their functions to have regard to the need to: eliminate discrimination; promote equality of opportunity and treatment for staff and persons to whom it provides Services; and protect the human rights of staff and services users. Oberstown acknowledges this duty and commits to its full implementation. Oberstown operates in line with Irish, European and international human rights law and promotes equality and human rights through our policies and practices, including the Children's Rights Policy Framework, our CEHOP framework and strategic approach.

## ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT 2020

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).

### Campus energy usage 2020:



### Energy savings

Oberstown continued to deliver energy efficiency usage and cost savings in 2020, with an overall reduction of 15.5% in expenditure on energy in 2020 compared to 2019.

### Key projects

- Campus LED lighting upgrade project continued.
- Waste management – a new recycling system was introduced in all administrative areas.

## Financial Statements for the year end 1 January to 31 December 2020 and Oberstown Statement on Internal Controls

The budget of Oberstown Children Detention Campus is allocated through the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. In 2020, the financial allocation for Oberstown was €23.816m.

The Board of Management is required to keep accounts subject to Ministerial direction (s. 173) in line with the requirements of the 2001 Children Act.

Throughout 2020, 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 2020 and its Statement on Internal Controls for the same period have been completed and will be published as appendices to this report on the Oberstown website ([www.oberstown.com](http://www.oberstown.com)) following completion of an audit in respect of 2020 by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Financial statements for the year 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019 are published as an appendix to the 2019 Annual Report on the Oberstown website ([www.oberstown.com](http://www.oberstown.com)).

## THE OBERSTOWN CMS IS CONSTANTLY BEING ENHANCED AND IMPROVED IN LINE WITH USER FEEDBACK, CHANGING REQUIREMENTS AND NEW WORK PRACTICES.

### ICT DEVELOPMENTS

#### Oberstown Case Management System (CMS)

The Oberstown CMS is fully operational, and has been in daily use since Q4 2018. The system is centred on the young person's journey through care while resident at Oberstown. The records of each young person are updated and maintained on a daily basis, and provide a single source of information on each individual's care and progress across the entire CEHOP framework.

As with most modern software systems, the Oberstown CMS is constantly being enhanced and improved in line with user feedback, changing requirements and new work practices. Oberstown's CMS team uses an agile system development methodology, ensuring that approved enhancements to the system are made available to users at 4-6 weekly intervals throughout the year.

Changes in 2020 covered more than 230 items that added to the system's record-keeping and decision support capabilities along with major improvements to the user interface.

#### Softworks

Softworks, Oberstown's human resources and rostering software, was upgraded in January 2020. The new version introduced a range of enhancements to timesheets, GDPR compliance, employee preferences, authorisations and calendars. Changes introduced later in the year covered the tracking of unsocial hours and recording of sick leave.

Later in 2020, the Campus submitted additional change requests for Softworks to create custom changes in the software to handle the tracking of unsocial hours payments and to automatically handle sick leave for staff members on probation.

New working arrangements under COVID-19 required significant roster changes – the initial urgent changes were introduced successfully within a very tight timeframe. A series of subsequent COVID-19-related roster updates were ongoing throughout 2020.

#### Outcome Star

In January 2020, Oberstown introduced a web-based set of tools to support the use of Outcome Star, the framework for measuring and supporting change when working with young people (see page 22). After initial troubleshooting to resolve access to the solution, an initial 20 users were trained on its use.

#### Sendmode

Sendmode is a GDPR-compliant bulk text/bulk SMS solution that enables information updates to be shared with various employee, management and stakeholder groups in a fast and efficient manner. It was introduced in February 2020 to enhance the capacity to communicate updates on COVID-19.

#### IT business continuity planning

As part of IT business continuity planning in response to COVID-19, in early March 2020 Oberstown worked with the Department of Justice to map critical business processes to key staff and management systems.

#### Remote meeting solutions

From April 2020, remote meeting solutions including Zoom Professional and Webex, were introduced to enable staff members working remotely to meet. Oberstown also enhanced existing video conferencing solutions to facilitate both an increasing volume of remote court appearances, and to enable virtual visits for young people.

#### Oberstown website

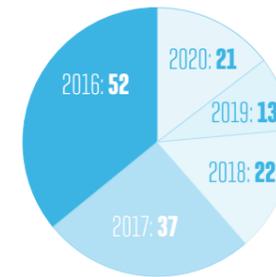
Enhancements and updates to www.oberstown.com were made in 2020 to address:

- Coronavirus (COVID 19) related Campus procedural changes.
- Victim Liaison information and application.
- Security enhancements.

#### Wifi in Oberstown

Wifi access was extended in Campus administrative areas in June 2020. Wifi nodes were installed in the Central Building, with controls covering staff and guest access. The enhanced security and reliability of wifi connectivity was essential to the smooth running of remote working and virtual meetings in 2020.

HSA reportable injuries 2016-2020



Lost day & no lost day, injury comparison 2016-2020



### HEALTH AND SAFETY

During 2020, the Health and Safety team continued to embed the Campus risk management system across all departments.

**COVID-19** – Helping to assess, implement and monitor measures associated with the prevention and control of the risks associated with COVID-19 was a key focus. The Health and Safety team played a central role on the COVID-19 Safety Implementation and Monitoring Committee, and provided ongoing monitoring and advice across all operational areas, including:

- Conducting risk assessments and drawing up standard operating procedures (SOPs) for a wide range of activities and scenarios, including: protocols for suspected COVID-19 cases on Campus; working from home; visitors and essential contractors; court trips and travelling for work; remote working; office social distancing; Campus facilities and services.
- Reviewing and updating all health and safety compliance documentation – including the Campus safety statement, risk assessments, procedures and safety templates – to include additional information and control measures concerning COVID-19.

- Auditing traffic across Campus.
- Drawing up a matrix of actions linked to the Government's COVID-19 levels of response.
- Working with the Catering Manager and Household Manager to source and maintain stocks of appropriate COVID-19 materials for hand sanitisation and additional cleaning materials.

**Training** – Health and safety training featured in the six-week special training programme organised under COVID-19 rostering arrangements. Topics covered included: completion of IAA (Incident, Accident & Assaults) forms required under the National Incident Management System (NIMS); how to read and complete a risk assessment; revisions to the safety statement; and fire awareness training.

Training was also provided to members of the Household department on the safe use of chemical cleaning materials. Staff and young people were trained in the safety aspects of redecoration projects in the residential units.

Ongoing Campus health and safety inductions, including COVID-19 elements, were undertaken with new employees, contractors, visitors and external bodies such as ACTS,

FCAMHS, Le Chéile Mentoring and the Ombudsman for Children's Office. Specific COVID-19 inductions were provided to teachers and other staff returning to Campus after periods of absence.

**ISO 45001** – Oberstown's Occupational Health and Safety Management System maintained its certification under ISO 45001 following an annual surveillance audit. Compliance with ISO standards is a key driver of ongoing improvements in health and safety systems on Campus.

**HSA matters** – In October 2020, Oberstown supplied the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) with extensive documentation on the Campus response to the threat of COVID-19. The HSA conducted an onsite visit to audit the information and Oberstown's collective approach to COVID-19, in line with national guidance. No immediate concerns were raised during the audit; follow-up risk assessments and amendments to the Campus safety statement were completed and the updated material was submitted to the HSA in line with the inspector's deadline of 14 December 2020.

All notifiable HSA incidents are reported by the Health and Safety team. There were 21 HSA reportable injuries in 2020, up from 13 in 2019.

# DEVELOPING OUR PEOPLE AND CULTURE

The Human Resources team at Oberstown provides programmes, services, advice and guidance to support employees throughout their employment. The recruitment of a Chief People Officer was a major strategic step in 2020, signalling a new phase in developing Oberstown's people and organisational culture.

## WORKING TOGETHER

Staff rose to the unique challenges that COVID-19 presented in 2020, adapting to new ways of delivering the service and supporting each other on and off Campus. Designated by the Government as an essential service, the priority was to continue to provide a safe and secure environment for young people and staff. The Director and Senior Management Team, supported by the Board of Management, put measures in place to support the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and young people.

Oberstown followed the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) guidance on working arrangements during COVID-19 for the Civil and Public Service. This involved tailoring, where necessary, workforce planning and practices to reflect Oberstown's unique workplace environment. These measures included a temporary emergency roster negotiated between Oberstown and Forsa, the local staff representative body, designed to introduce new staffing arrangements that would help prevent the spread of coronavirus on Campus while maintaining the quality of the service.

Thanks to the collective efforts of all staff, high standards of care were maintained and the Oberstown policies and procedures were implemented with minimal disruption to routines.

## BUILDING THE TEAM

Recruitment during 2020 strengthened the team in key functions across the Campus.

The arrival of a Chief People Officer underlined the strategic commitment by the Board of Management to developing the potential and capabilities of all Oberstown's people. Aoife Rafferty took up the post in July 2020 and joined the Senior Management Team with a remit to transform the Human Resources function into a service focused on developing Oberstown's people and organisational culture. Further additions to the HR team during the year added to the knowledge and expertise in this key area.

Pat Bergin left his post as Director on 1 November to take up a new challenge in the HSE (see page 48). Following an internal selection process by the Oberstown Board's Transition and Succession Group conducted over the summer, Deputy Director Damien Hernon became Interim Director on 2 November 2020. The Senior Management Team was restructured and expanded to include Interim Head of Programmes and Interim Head of Residential (see organisational chart, page 33).

A new Communications Officer was recruited in the first quarter of 2020. Matthew Kelly joined Oberstown in April with the remit to develop and enhance the Oberstown Communications Strategy, communicate Oberstown's activity to a wide range of national and local stakeholders, protect and enhance the organisation's reputation, and raise awareness and engagement among staff across the Campus.

Other recruitment campaigns during 2020 resulted in:

- nine residential care workers and 10 night supervisors joining the team to deliver direct care to the young people on Campus
- temporary staff being appointed to provide cover for 11 staff advised to cocoon at home during COVID-19
- strengthening the corporate functions with new team members in areas including Finance and HR.

New joiners complete a rigorous induction programme designed to provide each employee with the knowledge and skills to work in the unique environment on Campus. The 2020 induction programme was enhanced to include COVID-19 safety elements.

## TRAINING

Oberstown is committed to its people and their continuing professional development.

In 2020, as part of the emergency COVID-19 roster, care staff took part in a bespoke training programme giving them the opportunity to refresh their skills, knowledge and expertise. The training was delivered over a six week period so that residential social care workers (RCSWs) and night supervising officers (NSOs) on each unit could attend in their own team pods. Topics covered in a varied programme designed to keep staff completely up to date with best practice and relevant legislation included: restorative practice; first aid; Children First; behaviour management and communication techniques; fire safety awareness and health and safety. The majority of care staff were able to participate and staff feedback on the training programme was very positive – a tribute to the collaborative and innovative approach demonstrated by a cross-Campus training team.

Staff across all roles attended and delivered other scheduled training courses during 2020 in line with COVID-19 restrictions, including Infection Prevention and Control training delivered by Oberstown's Clinical Nurse Manager, the rollout of an e-learning module on Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM), and a continuation of the Suicide Prevention and Self-harm Mitigation (STORM) training programme.

THE CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER HAS A REMIT TO DEVELOP THE PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE. THIS UNDERLINES THE STRATEGIC COMMITMENT BY THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT TO FOCUS ON THE POTENTIAL AND CAPABILITIES OF ALL OBERSTOWN'S PEOPLE.



Ursula Kilkelly with Pat Bergin on his last day in Oberstown

## OBERSTOWN 2013 TO 2020

Pat Bergin, who left his post as Director on 1 November, reflects on a period of change and progress.

“Providing the highest level of care to young people was central to my role as Director of Oberstown – I saw this as the significant responsibility I carried out over the past seven years. My journey in Oberstown reflects the evolution of the service over that time. There were periods of reflection, significant change, resistance, agility, joy, success, and pride. In the end, my overall feeling is one of positive achievement.

There have been some major developments in youth justice over that time. Young people under 18 years of age are no longer sent to prison. There is a greater awareness of the challenges experienced by young people and of the services required for those on remand or placed in detention. The development of CEHOP as a model of care for the Campus will reap long-term benefits – providing a forward-looking focus for staff, young people, and stakeholders to achieve the best outcomes for young people.

There remain challenges, including: addressing the needs of emerging adults; reintegration and aftercare planning for young people on release; and embedding the education and training infrastructure into the Oberstown approach. The Campus is well placed to address these challenges – through its robust governance structure, committed staff team and engaged stakeholders.

I am proud of what the Oberstown staff, management, Board members and stakeholders have achieved in such a short period for the young people in our care. Finally, to the many young people who kept me grounded: thank you for the conversations and insights into how we could do things better.”

## RECOGNITION AWARD 2020

In 2020 the Chief People Officer launched the Oberstown Recognition Awards. These awards were nominated by staff for staff and gave everybody the opportunity to acknowledge colleagues who had gone above and beyond in their day-to-day activities on Campus. Nominations were submitted on the basis of staff who demonstrated commitment to one or more of the Oberstown values: Respect, Learning and Reflection, Working Together, Honesty and Integrity, and Commitment to quality care and support.

The awards nomination process was open to all staff, and a total of 61 employees took part via an anonymous survey on Oberstown Workvivo. Each name put forward was backed up by examples of how the nominee’s work or approach embodies the Oberstown values. Each employee was awarded with a certificate of recognition from the Chief People Officer.



Gráinne Smyth (left) receives her Recognition Award from Aoife Rafferty

### Oberstown Recognition Award Winners 2020

Margaret Dunne	Finance Officer
Grainne Smyth	Advocacy Officer
Pat Kenny	Central Security
Paul Keegan	RSCW
Sam Maund	RSCW
Pat Butler	NSO

## STAFF FEEDBACK

Oberstown conducted a staff survey in 2020 as part of a consultation process to develop the next phase of the Campus strategy (see pages 6-7). The anonymous survey was open to all employees via Oberstown Workvivo, and attracted a total of 104 responses which were broadly representative of different roles across the Campus. Key results included:

**77%** WOULD RECOMMEND OBERSTOWN AS A PLACE TO WORK

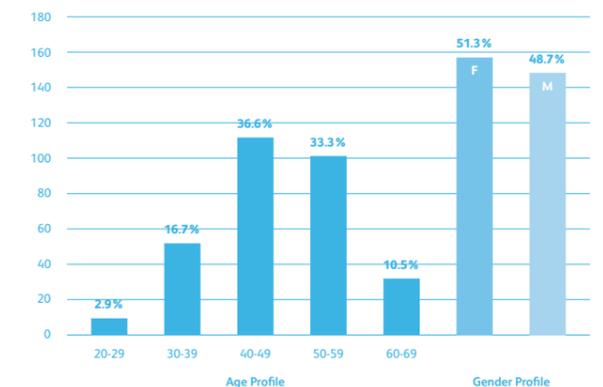
**77%** BELIEVE THAT OBERSTOWN IS AT THE ‘FOREFRONT OF GOOD PRACTICE’

**73%** SAY OBERSTOWN DOES THE RIGHT THINGS TO FULFIL ITS MISSION

**59%** SAY THEY HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN NEW SKILLS

### Age and gender profile

Oberstown employed a total of 273 staff in 2020, equal to 245 whole-time equivalents.

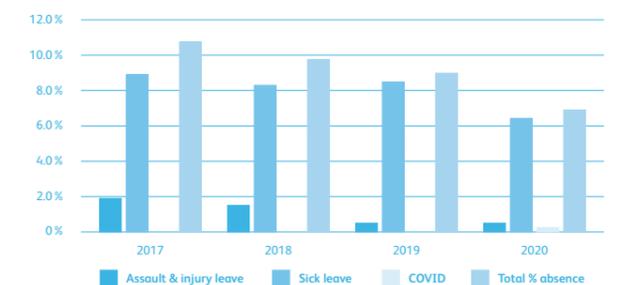


### Staff turnover



### Absenteeism

In recent years Oberstown has seen a decrease in the overall level of staff absenteeism, with the biggest decrease seen in Assault and Injury Leave.



# THE OBERSTOWN WORKING WELL FRAMEWORK

Working Well is a strategic framework developed to address employee health and wellbeing. Cara Driscoll, Organisational Psychologist, directs efforts to progress activities under four pillars, each with specific objectives:

## WORK SAFE

- Create a safe and healthy working environment
- Build safe and healthy working systems
- Build a safe and healthy culture

## WORK HEALTHY

- Utilise the resources on Campus to promote a healthy working environment
- Commit to engaging in healthy initiatives
- Encourage and support employees to develop and maintain healthy behaviours

## WORK WELL

- Display commitment to a collaborative approach to wellbeing and continue to recognise the challenges within the working environment
- Continue to provide access to Employee supports such as; Line Managers, Employee Assistance Programme, Occupational Health, Peer Support Workers, Campus Support Services, and Training and Education
- Build awareness regarding physical and emotional wellbeing in self and others

## WORK WISE

- Create an inclusive team working environment
- Establish and promote the organisational values
- Bring the organisational values to life

## ONLINE SUPPORTS WERE POPULAR IN 2020. WEBINARS TAILORED TO THE NEEDS OF OBERSTOWN STAFF COVERED HEALTHY SLEEP FOR SHIFT WORKERS, NUTRITION AND GENERAL WELLBEING.

### KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN 2020

#### Work Safe

- Delivery of training to staff in the area of suicide prevention and self-harm mitigation (STORM) continued in 2020. By the end of 2020 the initial target set for delivery (70%) was exceeded and 98% of frontline staff were trained in STORM Skills Training. Refresher skills training was developed in-house and sanctioned by STORM for delivery to a number of staff groups. In recognition of the successful, best practice approach adopted by Oberstown, the STORM Skills Training CIC approached Oberstown to develop a case study to share with other organisations on how STORM has been successfully embedded in training on the Campus.
- Oberstown was a finalist in the Collaboration category for work in Fire Safety in the Enterprise Risk Network Recognition Awards 2020. The Awards acknowledge leaders in enterprise risk management in the State sector and commend the ongoing process of continuous improvement and progress in the management of risk within the SCA's Delegated State Authorities (DSAs).

#### Work Healthy

- The year kicked off with engagement across the Campus in Operation Transformation. The catering team showed their healthy competitive side by winning the Oberstown 2020 challenge, demonstrating engagement in the activity, menu creation and motivation for weight loss. Two members of staff – Jacinta Connolly and Antoine Maher – led the effort with great support from the Health & Wellbeing team, who kept the momentum going despite the weather and other challenges.
- The wellbeing calendar of events was amended to meet the restrictions imposed by COVID-19. Monthly themed events and awareness days included: green

ribbon mental health awareness; sun smart – Irish Cancer Society; flu vaccinations; and peer supporter month. Webinars tailored to Oberstown staff needs were made available to staff, covering topics including: healthy sleep for shift workers; nutrition; financial wellbeing; and general wellbeing. These virtual supports proved popular across the Campus.

- Specific supports and resources were put in place to assist people with maintaining positive behaviours and habits during the various phases of COVID-19 restrictions.

#### Work Well

- All employees were surveyed for feedback on Working Well, which generated ideas for the future as well as providing input into activities during 2020.
- Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) refresher training was rolled out via an online course – this a pilot exercise for e-learning in Oberstown.
- New 1:1 employee support sessions were provided for all new employees throughout 2020.
- Oberstown was accredited for the Ibec KeepWell Mark and was successful at the KeepWell Awards 2020 (see page 52).
- Oberstown was a finalist in the Enterprise Risk Network Recognition Awards 2020 in the Education & Learning category.

#### Work Wise

- Work commenced on exploration of employee engagement and living our organisational values.
- The inaugural employee recognition awards scheme was launched in December 2020 (see p48).

# WORKING WELL AT OBERSTOWN – AN AWARD-WINNING APPROACH

**Oberstown’s commitment to employee health and wellbeing earned significant external validation in 2020 in the form of KeepWell Mark accreditation and winning the Ibec Wellbeing Initiative of the Year 2020.**

**I**n February, Oberstown achieved KeepWell Mark accreditation following an audit by Ibec of the levels of activity, action plans and practices developed under the Oberstown Working Well framework. This was the culmination of a process that helped the Organisational Psychologist and members of the Working Well committees to review the work done during 2019 to introduce the framework – from creating policies through to the setting up of forums, such as the new Employee Support Service, and a wide range of other activities.

The KeepWell Mark accreditation process began as a way of assessing how Working Well measures up to best practice, and of exploring other ideas to enhance employee wellbeing at Oberstown. Recognition in the Ibec KeepWell Awards 2020 in August was a welcome bonus.

Cara Driscoll, Organisational Psychologist at Oberstown, explains: “We were delighted to learn that we had met the standard for KeepWell Mark accreditation, and it was a great surprise and honour to be shortlisted for awards in three categories – Best in class: Mental Health, Wellbeing Initiative of the Year, and Company of the Year: Large. This gave impetus to our wider wellbeing plan. The post-assessment report helped to hone our Working Well framework and enhanced it by adding a number of key deliverables to the journey we were on.”

Comments from the KeepWell Awards judges were also very encouraging: “Staff wellbeing and psychological safety are paramount in stressful work environments, and this is something that Oberstown has prioritised. The initiative our judges wanted to recognise, was the ‘deep listening supervisory sessions’ that are facilitated at group



and at one-on-one level to allow staff an opportunity to discuss issues affecting their wellbeing and share best practice. These sessions are a safe place to be open and honest about the impact of work on the individual, and to identify additional supports where needed. This activity promotes collaboration and embeds consistency in management practices across the organisation – the judges were impressed by the high value placed on employee wellbeing in Oberstown.”

While KeepWell Mark accreditation and success in the awards is not the focus of Oberstown’s health and wellbeing approach, being recognised alongside much larger organisations from the private sector was a major achievement. Oberstown staff who help with the Working Well programme volunteer to be a part of developing wellbeing for all their colleagues in addition to their main responsibilities. External partners also play a significant role, including Ibec, STORM (Skills Training on Risk Management), CISM Network Ireland, Carlow IT and DCU.

The result is a bespoke framework for the unique environment of Oberstown.

## OBERSTOWN WORKING WELL COMMITTEES

### Work Healthy

Eamon Hughes, Fiona Matthews, Neil Clarke, Damien Hernon, Brenda Tolan Teeling, Sara O’Loughlin, Oisín Dunne, Kevin Dooney

### Work Well

Lorraine Hogan, Craig Mulligan, Mary McCormack, Oisín Dunne, Laoise Manners, Jane Keenan

### Work Safe

Damien Hernon, Caroline Teeling, Anne Gibney, Amy Martin

### Work Wise

Aoife Rafferty, Neil Clarke, Jane Keenan, Rose Murray, Anne Gibney

“THE CORE STRENGTH OF OUR WORKING WELL FRAMEWORK IS THAT IT IS INTEGRAL TO OUR WORK HERE AT OBERSTOWN: IN ORDER TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE WITH THEIR WELLBEING, TO DELIVER BEST QUALITY CARE TO YOUNG PEOPLE, WE NEED TO LOOK AFTER OUR OWN WELLBEING.”

**Cara Driscoll, Organisational Psychologist at Oberstown.**



# COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

Internal and external communications at Oberstown promote the organisation’s mission, vision and values and support the implementation of the strategic plan. While COVID-19 limited some external activities during 2020, it was a year of significant developments and engagement with stakeholders on and off Campus.

## INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

COVID-19 underlined the importance of consistent, regular communications with Oberstown staff using the most efficient and effective channels. With limited opportunities for face-to-face meetings and briefings across Campus, new communications solutions were introduced to supplement or replace established channels. Public health messages and Campus safety measures were conveyed and reinforced through:

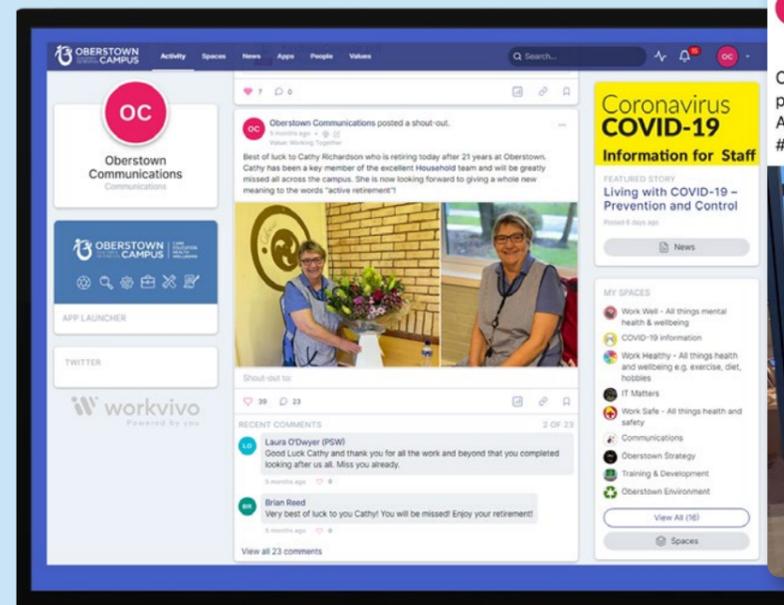
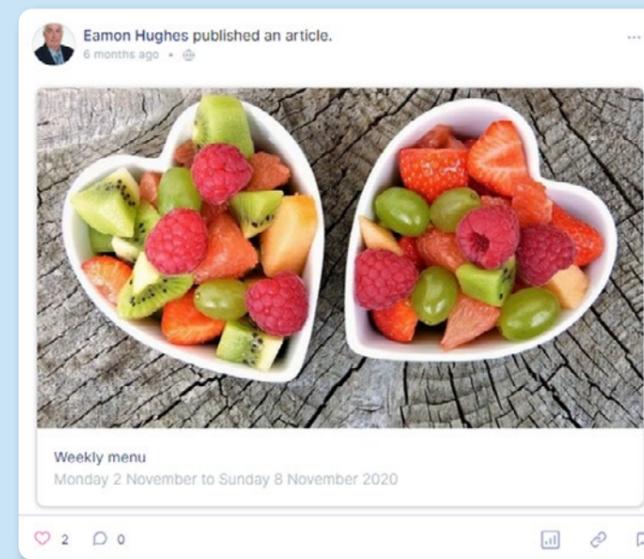
- Signage and poster campaigns across the Campus.
- Sendmode text messaging for direct updates.
- TV monitor displays carrying static and video presentations.
- Campus-wide messages using a dedicated communications email address.
- Oberstown Workvivo PC and mobile-enabled internal communications platform (see panel opposite).
- Socially distanced management update meetings where possible.
- Dial-in and video meetings.

## OBERSTOWN WORKVIVO

On 1 May 2020, Oberstown launched Workvivo as the Campus internal communications platform. Available to all staff members via PC and mobile phone, Oberstown Workvivo is designed to look and feel like a social media site and serves as a quick and easy way for staff to stay connected and to share information.

Oberstown Workvivo was introduced to help with the Campus response to the COVID-19 health emergency by providing a way for staff working remotely or on-site in isolated bubbles to access campus information and resources. The launch project was accomplished within April thanks to input from a cross-Campus team led by the Compliance and Business Manager with input from the IT Project Leader and the newly-recruited Communications Officer.

Oberstown Workvivo is now widely used across the Campus community as a way to keep up to date across a wide range of activity, and users have a range of options for posting content, including pictures, video, straw polls, surveys and document attachments. Popular items include staff wellbeing initiatives, staff recognition ‘shout-outs’ and news of achievements by staff and young people. Anonymous surveys conducted through Oberstown Workvivo attracted high response rates and played an important role in gathering staff input to the strategy development process, views on Campus food options, and the inaugural staff recognition awards.



‘ANONYMOUS SURVEYS CONDUCTED THROUGH OBERSTOWN WORKVIVO ATTRACTED HIGH RESPONSE RATES AND PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN GATHERING STAFF INPUT TO THE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS.’

SINCE MAY 2020 LAUNCH...

479 updates posted

28 shout-outs given to colleagues

5034 likes given – an average of 21 likes per day

664 comments posted

80% of employees registered their profiles (217 employees)

71 articles published with important updates and news



## STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS



**Oberstown website** – [www.oberstown.com](http://www.oberstown.com) was updated regularly during 2020 with news, publications and statistics, including:

- Monthly updates included statistics on Campus occupancy and behaviour management performance, and notes of Board of Management meetings.
- Blogs published during 2020 offered overviews and insights into young people’s programmes, the CEHOP framework, and Oberstown’s Working Well programme and the background to winning the Ibec KeepWell award (see page 52).
- Publications and documents published during 2020 included the *2019 Annual Report* and *2019 Financial Statements*, and the *Board of Management Governance Handbook*.
- Recruitment campaigns were promoted through the website and were among the most popular items (see page 46).
- A new Victim Liaison Service section.
- COVID-19 information including updates on Campus visiting arrangements.

**Stakeholder engagement** – Oberstown continued to develop and strengthen engagement and partnerships with external stakeholders across the youth justice system and in civil society. While public health measures limited physical attendance at seminars and conferences in 2020, members of the Board and the Campus Senior Management Team participated in virtual events hosted by external organisations.

In July, Oberstown hosted an update meeting for an invited audience of external stakeholders. More than 50 people attended the Zoom event, which featured a presentation by the Director and Chairperson of the Board of Management outlining progress towards achieving Oberstown’s strategic goals. Participants contributed to a discussion session following the presentation and gave positive feedback on the event. A video of the presentation was made available to participants and staff via a dedicated link on the newly-created Oberstown YouTube channel.

Organisations, institutions and interest groups joining members of the Oberstown Board of Management and the Oberstown Senior Management Team at the stakeholder event included: ACTS, An Garda Síochána (Garda Diversion Programmes), Association for Criminal Justice Research and Development (ACJRD), Childhood Development Initiative, Crinan Youth Project, Department of Children and Youth Affairs, Dublin Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board, EPIC, Extern, FCAMHS, HIQA, Irish Penal Reform Trust (IPRT), Irish Youth Justice Service (IYJS), the judiciary, Ombudsman for Children’s Office (OCO), Solas, South Dublin County Council, The Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice, Tusla, Youth Advocate Programmes Ireland (YAP).

Restorative practices training provider Childhood Development Initiative (CDI) published a podcast recorded at Oberstown in August. Oberstown Deputy Director Brian Hogan, Programmes Manager Selenna Reilly and residential social care workers Oisín Dunne, Pauline Murphy and Samuel Maund contributed, outlining how Oberstown uses restorative practices to develop relationships with young people and staff.

## ‘OBERSTOWN CONTINUED TO DEVELOP AND STRENGTHEN ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS WITH EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS ACROSS THE YOUTH JUSTICE SYSTEM AND IN CIVIL SOCIETY.’



Launching the Oberstown Annual Report 2019 (l to r): Roderic O’Gorman, Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth; Ursula Kilkelly, Chairperson of the Oberstown Board; Pat Bergin, Director of Oberstown

## 'OBERSTOWN CONTINUES TO BUILD AND DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS WITH ITS NEIGHBOURING COMMUNITY.'

Oberstown continued to be an active participant in the development of a new national youth justice strategy. The Campus was an invited member of the Department of Justice and Equality's expert Steering Group on Youth Justice, contributing alongside Government Departments, An Garda Síochána, the Probation Service, Tusla, community representatives and academic and practitioner experts. In June, the Director and the Chairperson of the Board of Management provided Oberstown's submission to the public consultation on the Draft Youth Justice Strategy 2020-2026.

**Public and media engagement** – 2020 offered limited opportunities for proactive media engagement for Oberstown. In July, the launch of Oberstown's Annual Report for 2019 was covered across national print, radio and online media including *The Irish Times*, *Irish Examiner*, TodayFM and FM104. The accompanying press release featured comments from Roderic O'Gorman, newly-appointed Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth along with the Oberstown Director and Chairperson. Media coverage highlighted the life challenges and educational issues facing young people in detention, and the success of barista and fitness skills training activities programmes at Oberstown.

In August, Director Pat Bergin was a guest on *The Pat Kenny Show* on Newstalk to discuss Oberstown's response to the challenges of COVID-19 and the measures in place to keep the Campus free from coronavirus. The Chairperson of the Board also contributed to one of the issues arising from COVID-19 through an opinion piece on how remote court hearings present challenges for young people, published on RTE Brainstorm.

Oberstown's young people received positive press coverage in May, in an *Irish Examiner* report on HIQA's Creativity during COVID-19 Competition. One of the three prize-winning entries from Oberstown – a drawing of a hand sketching a lightbulb – was mentioned in the report for its message celebrating the way that ideas and creativity help bring light to the "dark and boring" days of the coronavirus.

Oberstown's external press agency provided a media office service throughout the year, responding to enquiries ranging from conditions on Campus during COVID-19 to the characteristics of young people in detention. Oberstown has a policy of not commenting on individual cases but takes the opportunity of media enquiries to clarify issues and raise awareness of the work done on Campus. The Oberstown website includes a Media Toolkit section and provides statistics on Campus performance. Press enquiries contribute to ongoing assessments of the information published on [www.oberstown.com](http://www.oberstown.com).

### SOCIAL MEDIA

Oberstown continued to develop its use of Twitter and LinkedIn to engage with external stakeholders, providing updates on developments on Campus and supporting recruitment campaigns.

### ENGAGING WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Oberstown continues to build and develop relationships with its neighbouring community. The catering department continued to provide meals for Meals on Wheels locally. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, 2020 meant that Oberstown's annual Seniors' Christmas Dinner at the Man O'War GAA club could not take place. Young people made Christmas wreaths as gifts for the local seniors, which were very well received.

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1

Review of the Implementation of the Oberstown Children Detention Campus Strategic Plan

## APPENDIX 2

Board of Management Meeting attendance  
January – December 2020

Board of Management Update Meeting  
attendance January – December 2020

Governance Committee attendance  
January – December 2020

Audit & Risk Committee attendance  
January – December 2020

Strategy Committee attendance  
January – December 2020

Transition & Succession Committee  
attendance January – December 2020

Young People Committee attendance  
January – December 2020

Board of Management and  
Committee meetings attendance  
January – December 2020

## APPENDIX 3

Board Fees Paid in respect of  
January – December 2020

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

# APPENDIX 1

## Review of the Implementation of the Oberstown Children Detention Campus Strategic Plan

### Strategic Objective 1

Provide the best possible care for young people

Ref.	Goals	Progress for 2020
1 (a)	<b>Review and revise all relevant policies that support the CEHOP framework.</b> <b>Promote staff awareness of these policies and improve management responsibility for their implementation.</b>	The Children's Rights Policy Framework was approved by the Board and submitted to the Department in 2019. In early 2020, a project to develop the procedures associated with the framework was set up with two elements: the Rules as consented by the Minister, and the Policies as approved by the Board mid-2020. The Procedures project underpins the policies and continued throughout 2020 with an expected end date of Q1 2021, with training, implementation, auditing and QA planned for roll-out in Q2 2021.
1 (b)	<b>Appoint a Young Person's Programme Manager to develop and lead out on specific evidence-based programmes to address offending behaviour.</b>	A new Interim Head of Programmes was appointed in November 2020. The Probation Service on Campus was reviewed but, due to resource issues, the development objective for 2020 was not met. However, there is a commitment of two days cover a week for Q1, 2021.
1 (c)	<b>Review behaviour management policies and procedures in consultation with staff and taking into account the views of young people.</b>	A steering group consisting of Senior Management and Unit Managers was formed to review behaviour management with an emphasis on positive behaviour. The key areas for consideration are: Ratings, Procedures and Behaviour Contracts. An overhaul of Ratings is scheduled to be implemented in Q2 2021.
1 (d)	<b>Ensure that restrictive practices are implemented in line with approved policies and procedures.</b>	The Children's Rights Framework was adopted in 2020, effective 2021. This is expected to effect continued progress in the reduction of restrictive practices. The Director's Report addresses restrictive practices in the monthly Board meetings and a similar process is in development for Senior Management Team (SMT) meetings in 2021.
1 (e)	<b>Take further steps to promote a Campus-wide and holistic approach to CEHOP, with shared practices and approaches across residential units and the Oberstown School, with enhanced access to learning in line with the needs of young people.</b>	Several joint initiatives between Care Staff and Education Staff at a systems and communications level contributed to a more collaborative approach. Effective channels of communication are in place between the Board, the Campus and the DDLETB. In November 2020, a meeting took place between the relevant parties to promote a more coherent approach to education across the Campus.  The provision of activities is under review and was subject to a tender for services earlier in the year which unfortunately did not progress to conclusion. The recently appointed Interim Head of Programmes is in consultation with the Activities Coordinator regarding potential development.

Ref.	Goals	Progress for 2020
1 (f)	<b>Work with external agencies to ensure that the complex needs of young people in Oberstown are met.</b>	Work with external agencies continued despite the restrictions of COVID-19. A stakeholder session took place in September 2020.  A process has been undertaken to review the Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between Oberstown and external stakeholders. This is under review by the Board's Governance and Audit & Risk Committees.
1 (g)	<b>Adopt a Campus strategy to promote the participation of young people in decision-making.</b>	The Board has established a Young People Committee which met with the Campus Council in October 2020. The Advocacy Officer submits monthly reports to the Board of Management and appears quarterly at Board meetings.

### By 2020, we will: Promote Oberstown as a secure and safe environment for the care of young people by providing suitable physical infrastructure and the effective implementation of all operational procedures in its use.

1 (h)	<b>Work with our stakeholders to agree a Campus facilities management plan that provides effective management and support for the physical estate.</b>	Included in the Facilities Management Contract are two 12-month extensions. Following intensive meetings and discussions, the Director recommended to the Board to extend the Facilities Management contract. This recommendation was supported by the Audit & Risk Committee for approval at the November 2020 Board meeting.
1 (i)	<b>Develop a plan for the future of the physical Campus, identifying priority physical works.</b>	Two projects were devised and put in place during 2020 to assist with the move from Units 1 and 2 to the detention side of the Campus.  The draft Youth Justice Strategy 2021-2026 contains a commitment to a long-term plan for the Campus.

### By 2020, we will: Have in place multi-agency and specialist support to deliver effective assessment and clinical and therapeutic services to young people in line with their needs.

1 (j)	<b>Ensure that the best supports and services are provided to young people in Oberstown and where possible on their return home in conjunction with other agencies.</b>	A complaints procedure is in place.  SLA with FCAMHS is outstanding but will be complete as part of the SLA process underway (see above).  We have utilised the mechanisms of the Children Act 2001 to support the reintegration of young people back into families and communities, especially throughout COVID-19. These mechanisms are being used into the future. These will be progressed by the Interim Head of Programmes.  The draft Youth Justice Strategy commits to further enquiry as to how the potential for after care for young people leaving Oberstown might be better supported.
1 (k)	<b>Take steps to make publicly available information on the care provided to young people and factors associated with their care in conjunction with the DCEDIY.</b>	Website is updated with relevant information and data monthly.

Ref.	Goals	Progress for 2020
1 (l)	Take steps to ensure that the range of supports that young people need are provided through better placement planning, effective working with key workers and ensuring that young people have a say in these processes in line with the Oberstown Strategy on the Participation of Young People in Decision-Making.	Work continued on consultation with young people and parents to assess the effectiveness of placement planning.
1 (m)	Deliver on the Oberstown agreed measures and metrics to support the full implementation of CEHOP.	Auditing continues on the CEHOP framework incorporated into the Case Management System. The Campus has commissioned research via the Irish Research Council employment-based graduate programme to research the outcomes and experiences of young people in Oberstown using the Case Management System Data and the views of young people.

**By 2020, we will: Promote the collation, analysis and use of good quality data to support the quality of care provided to young people.**

1 (n)	Implement the new case management system across Campus, providing enhanced recording of decision-making.	The Case Management System continued to be developed using an Agile method of development. User feedback is taken into consideration and the system is enhanced on an ongoing basis.
1 (o)	Ensure that accurate data is readily available to decision-makers and taken into account in both operational and strategic decision-making.	Improvements continued in the sharing of information in a number of areas including health and safety, sick leave, staff attendance, incident reporting, restrictive practices, campus capacity and bed management. Research on young people on remand, including an analysis of data from the Case Management System and the views of young people, was completed in November 2020.
1 (p)	Take steps to make publicly available information on the care provided to young people and factors associated with their care.	Information continues to be regularly updated on the Oberstown website with a view to giving the public a better understanding of young people in detention. A review of available data will be undertaken as part of the next strategic plan.

## Strategic Objective 2

### Develop our people and our organisation

**By 2020, we will: Have in place a people and career development strategy with clear alignment to employee development, skills enhancement, continuing professional development and succession management practice.**

2 (a)	Have in place a skills matrix for all staff	Following the training needs analysis in 2019 a high level training plan was developed. The plan was put on hold due to COVID-19. An alternative six-week training plan was developed which was incorporated into the COVID-19 roster. The training events were delivered on Campus to all staff, giving staff the opportunity to update and refresh a range of core skills.
2 (b)	Develop and implement a staff training and development plan consistent with identified needs from our performance management process.	COVID-19 took the focus away from developing a Learning & Development programme.

Ref.	Goals	Progress for 2020
2 (c)	Develop a set of career pathways where applicable and appropriate for staff.	In Q4 2020, the Chief People Officer (CPO) started working in partnership with the Senior Management Team, Line Managers and Forsa to map out appropriate career paths for each grade across the Campus. In Q1 2021 particular focus will be on the RSCW and NSO group who are instrumental in the safe and secure delivery of care to the young people.
2 (d)	Develop and implement a continuing professional development (CPD) model for all grades within Oberstown.	The development of a CPD model for all staff was put on hold due to COVID-19. The CPO worked with the Senior Management Team to determine what level of CPD is required for each grade and scope out the associated costs. A priority matrix is being developed to ensure CPD is delivered to the right people at the right time.

**By 2020, we will: Implement our revised grading structure with appropriate promotional opportunities for staff.**

2 (e)	Engage with our staff and trade unions to ensure that our existing grading structure and proposed additional grading opportunities are negotiated and implemented.	In Q4 2020, the Chief People Officer (CPO) prepared a Framework of Engagement & Consultation in collaboration with the Forsa Assistant General Secretary. This framework sets out the guiding principles between Oberstown and Forsa and provides clear and definite procedures to allow discussion, negotiation and dispute resolution to take place.
2 (f)	Review our practices to ensure that fairness and transparency applies in all promotional situations.	Complete.

**By 2020, we will: Put in place a programme of supports and enablers to ensure the smooth implementation of registration for our Residential Social Care staff.**

2 (g)	Ensure that we have identified the necessary competencies and modules necessary for residential social care staff to meet the impending standards and put in place the necessary training programmes.	Due to COVID-19, this exercise was progressed but not finalised in 2020.
2 (h)	Assess the gaps between our existing staff groups' knowledge and practice and standards.	Due to COVID-19 the Performance Management Development System (PMDS) training did not take place. This will remain on the agenda for 2021.
2 (i)	Recruit all future new care staff to the necessary standards for certification and registration.	An audit was conducted in 2020 to review the job description for Residential Social Care Workers. All recruitment campaigns for this staff group require a minimum level of relevant experience and qualifications.

**By 2020, we will: Have reviewed and enhanced our performance management processes and ensure that all staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.**

2 (j)	Implement phase 1 of the Performance Management Development System (PMDS) for management.	Due to COVID-19 the PMDS training did not take place. This remains on the agenda for 2021.
2 (k)	Roll out PMDS for other staff groups.	Due to COVID-19 the PMDS training did not take place. This remains on the agenda for 2021.
2 (l)	Invest in our management groups with a view to developing and enhancing their capability to support better decision-making in all areas.	During 2020, as a result of COVID-19, only mandatory training was carried out on the Campus. Work commenced on a People & Culture Strategy with emphasis on the Learning & Development of management groups to enhance the capability to support better decision making in all areas.

## Strategic Objective 3

Implement the policies, procedures and standards consistent with the best model of detention for young people

**By 2020, we will: Have adopted a revised policy and procedure framework, ensuring unambiguous guidelines and procedures are in place in all areas.**

Ref.	Goals	Progress for 2020
3 (a)	Ensure that all revised Campus policies are evidence-based, communicated effectively to staff and young people, and their implementation is supported by unit and senior managers.	All HR policies were considered by HR and the Chairperson of the Board following Ibec review. The CPO, who took up post in June 2020, has responsibility for finalising all these policies before they are submitted to the Board for approval.
3 (b)	Implement a system of regular policy review, taking into account the views of young people and staff.	The Children's Rights Policy Framework was approved by the Board in 2020, following the adoption of Rules with the consent of the Minister. Procedures to implement the Policies are under development. This puts in place a new policy platform for Oberstown, in consultation with staff, young people and stakeholders.
3 (c)	Take steps to promote and test consistent adherence to recording decision-making.	Proposals to develop a process to audit implementation of the Children's Rights Policy Framework were considered and will be finalised early in 2021.
3 (d)	Ensure information is available to the Board of Management to enable scrutiny of Campus policy implementation.	Implementation of the Children's Rights Policy Framework became part of the Director's monthly report to the Board. Board engagement with members of the Senior Management Team began with the CPO attending in November 2020. The Board Young People Committee began meeting bi-monthly with young people on Campus.

**By 2020, we will: Have in place appropriate external certification of our operation such as ISO for Health and Safety and ISO accreditation in our Catering Department.**

3 (e)	Commence the documentation of 'how we do things' from a quality standards perspective in Oberstown for the health and safety and catering functions.	Complete.
3 (f)	Put in place a project team to drive the ISO accreditation processes in these areas.	Complete.

**By 2020, we will: Develop a programme to support student placement and continuing professional development for staff.**

3 (g)	Engage with relevant higher education providers to identify opportunities for student placements.	Student placements took place but at a slower pace due to COVID-19. Placements are planned for 2021.
3 (h)	Actively promote a system of continuing professional development for staff.	Matter remains outstanding but is being progressed in line with the other training/professional development items above.

## Strategic Objective 4

Enhance communications aligned to our values and mission

**By 2020, we will: Have enhanced the public understanding of the Oberstown mission and vision to provide excellence in the care and education of young people in detention.**

Ref.	Goals	Progress for 2020
4 (a)	Adopt a Communications and Engagement Strategy to ensure stakeholders are regularly informed of Campus developments and initiatives.	A high level work plan for external communications has been developed by the Communications Officer and was approved by the Board in October 2020, and implementation is underway.
4 (b)	Continue to engage with the public to raise awareness about and build confidence in Oberstown.	Plans to further professionalise the communications function and embed effective communication in Campus operations, internally and externally, were progressed with the recruitment of a Communications Officer who took up post in April 2020.
4 (c)	Enhance staff understanding of their roles and their contribution to developing pro-social model of engagement with young people.	Staff roles and engagement with young people were key themes in consultations on the new Oberstown Strategy, refresher training during COVID-19 restrictions and in the development of the Children's Rights Policy Framework.

**By 2020, we will: Support strong engagement with our neighbouring community.**

4 (d)	Engage with our neighbours to better understand their needs.	A meeting between neighbours and the outgoing Director took place in 2020 and the Interim Director continued the dialogue with the local community.
4 (e)	Develop an enhanced community engagement programme to ensure these needs are met in a mutually beneficial way.	This process continues. Because of COVID-19 there was no Christmas party this year. However, the Campus Council prepared gifts for the local Senior Citizens, which were acknowledged and well received. The initiative will continue throughout 2021, with young people focusing part of their Gaisce award on projects focused on the local community.

**By 2020, we will: Implement a series of actions to create an Oberstown Campus culture.**

4 (f)	Support the development of the associated behaviours for our values, and communicate how these values affect our practice.	Plans were put in place to engage with teams across the campus to scope out how their role links to the values of the organisation and collectively describe the key behaviours expected to help bring the values to everyday life on the Campus. COVID-19 limited these interactions but the values did feature in consultations on the Oberstown Strategy.
4 (g)	Seek to enhance the reputation of the Campus through a series of culture initiatives and the creation of a common language.	Internal communications have been enhanced by using technology as a driver due to COVID-19. Workvivo was launched in May 2020 as tool to improve staff communication on all events and developments on the Campus. A stakeholder event took place in July 2020, via Zoom. The Remand study was completed.
4 (h)	Develop and implement a staff engagement programme to focus on cultural change.	Scheduled updates from the Director and Senior Management team were introduced to keep staff informed. Internal communication is being delivered across a range of channels: Workvivo; the Oberstown SendMode text message platform; and communications from the CPO and Line Managers via team meetings and team correspondence.

## Strategic Objective 5

Deliver robust governance at all levels and drive effective accountability

### By 2020, we will: Establish a clear understanding of the Oberstown governance structure.

Ref.	Goals	Progress for 2020
5 (a)	Make available a clear concise map of the organisational structure with areas of responsibility.	This is in place and is kept under review.
5 (b)	Implement the legislation and policies as set down by the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (formerly the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs).	The implementation of national law and policy continued to be a priority of Campus management. Oberstown (via the Chairperson and the Director) were members of the steering committee for the development of the Youth Justice Strategy, ensuring that Oberstown was appropriately represented in the strategy development process.
5 (c)	Develop and implement a Campus Code of Conduct.	The Code of Conduct was adopted by the Board as part of the Governance Handbook. The Code of Conduct was adopted.
5 (d)	Ensure that good practice in governance is applied in all areas of our operations.	The Governance Committee reviewed the Governance Handbook and the updated version was approved by the Board in December 2020. A Governance Work plan for 2020 ensured that the Board continues to advance implementation of the Code of Practice. This included a self-assessment review (completed by the IPA), and the completion of the Code of Practice checklist, submitted to the Department in September 2020.

### By 2020, we will: Continue to enhance the accountability provided by management, including the Board of Management, for the Campus.

5 (e)	Have effective IT systems in place to act as an enabler of enhanced case management, information sharing and availability of relevant data for decision making.	The Oberstown Case Management System (CMS) is fully operational and an ongoing programme of improvements was introduced throughout 2020 using an agile development methodology. Progress was made on the Microsoft Power BI data analytics for Oberstown CMS Progress was made on the Criminal Justice Operational Hub with DOJ / Oberstown & DCEDIY.
5 (f)	Ensure the Board is supported to provide effective oversight by the provision of timely information.	Improvements in communication and information flow continued in line with the Governance Handbook, the Oversight Agreement and the Performance Delivery Agreement. Implementation was kept under review by the Governance Committee.
5 (g)	Engage with a variety of audiences nationally and internationally to share the experiences and expertise in the practices of youth detention.	In September, the Director presented to the Board on the New Zealand systems of detention. Measures continue to be taken to raise the profile of Oberstown internationally, including starting the process of registering CEHOP as an Oberstown trade mark.
5 (h)	Actively participate in youth justice decision-making at national level, including in the development of a long-term vision and legislative programme for the sector.	The Director and Chairperson actively participated in the steering group for the development of the Youth Justice Strategy, which sets the direction for the future of the youth justice system. Horizon scanning was introduced at the Board to ensure that the Board is kept up to date with national and international developments.

# APPENDIX 2

Table 1  
**Board of Management Meeting attendance**  
January – December 2020

Name	Jan 16	Feb 13	Mar 31	Apr 16	May 14	Jun 18	Jul 22	Sep 9	Oct 14	Nov 18	Dec 16	Total Attended
	👤	👤	📞	📺	📺	📺	📺	📺	📺	📺	📺	
Ursula Kilkelly	•	•	◦	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	11
Eamon Clavin	•	•	◦	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	11
Bernadette Costello	•	•	◦	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	11
Linda Creamer			◦		•	•						3
Jennifer Gargan	•	•	◦	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	11
Elizabeth Howard	•	•	◦	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	11
Noreen Leahy <sup>1</sup>						•	•	•	•	•	•	6
John McDaid	•	•	◦	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	10
Louise Manners	•		◦	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		9
Craig Mulligan	•	•	◦	•			•	•	•	•	•	9
Don O'Leary	•	•	◦	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	11
Pat Rooney	•	•	◦	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	11
Emer Woodfull	◦	•	◦	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	10
Tadhg Delaney <sup>2</sup>	•	•	◦	•	•							5

**Notes**

- Noreen Leahy's term commenced 8 June 2020
- Tadhg Delaney's term ended 19 May 2020

**Legend:**

- 👤 Regular board meeting
- 📞 Dial-in board meeting
- 📺 Video conference
- Attended
- Attended by dial-in

Table 2  
**Board of Management Update Meeting attendance**  
January – December 2020

Name	May 1	Jun 5	Jul 20*	Jul 30*	Aug 14	Nov 6
Ursula Kilkelly	•	•	•	•	•	•
Eamon Clavin	•	•	•	•		•
Bernadette Costello	•	•	•		•	•
Linda Creamer	•		•	•	•	
Jennifer Gargan	•	•	•	•	•	•
Elizabeth Howard	•	•	•	•	•	•
Noreen Leahy <sup>2</sup>			•	•	•	•
John McDaid	•	•		•	•	•
Louise Manners		•	•	•	•	
Craig Mulligan	•	•	•			•
Don O'Leary	•	•	•	•	•	•
Pat Rooney	•	•	•	•	•	•
Emer Woodfull	•	•	•	•	•	•
Tadgh Delaney <sup>1</sup>	•					

**Notes**

- Tadgh Delaney's term ended May 19th, 2020.
- Noreen Leahy's term commenced June 8th, 2020.

**Legend:**

-  Regular board meeting
-  Dial-in board meeting
-  Video conference
- Attended
- Attended by dial-in
- \* Extraordinary Meetings

Table 3  
**Governance Committee attendance**  
January – December 2020

Name	Jan 6	Mar 2	Apr 8	May 5	Jun 2	Jul 6	Oct 6	Dec 3
Ursula Kilkelly (Chair)	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Eamon Clavin	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Jennifer Gargan	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

Table 4  
**Audit and Risk Committee attendance**  
January – December 2020

Name	Jan 29	Feb 21	Mar 26	May 5	Jun 9	Jul 9	Sep 15	Nov 5	Dec 14
Bernadette Costello (Chair)	•	•	○	•	•	•	•	•	•
John McDaid	•	•	○	•	•	•	•	•	•
Ursula Kilkelly <sup>2</sup>					•	•	•	•	•
Tadgh Delaney <sup>1</sup>	•	•	○	•					

Table 5  
**Strategy Committee attendance**  
January – December 2020

Name	Apr 10	Oct 13	Dec 7
Ursula Kilkelly <sup>3</sup>	•		
Eamon Clavin	•		•
Jennifer Gargan	•	•	•
Noreen Leahy	•	•	•
John McDaid (Chair)	•	•	•
Laoise Manners	•	•	
Don O'Leary	•	•	
Emer Woodfull <sup>3</sup>	•		

**Notes**

- Tadgh Delaney's term ended May 19th, 2020.
- Ursula Kilkelly's term commenced May 29th, 2020.
- Committee membership was restructured in October

**Legend:**

-  Regular board meeting
-  Dial-in board meeting
-  Video conference
- Attended
- Attended by dial-in
- Did not attend

Table 6  
**Transition & Succession  
Committee attendance**  
January – December 2020

Name	Jul 20	Oct 8	Nov 12
Ursula Kilkelly (Chair)	•	•	•
Jennifer Gargan	•	•	•
Noreen Leahy	•	•	•
John McDaid	•	•	•

Table 7  
**Young People Committee  
attendance**  
January – December 2020

Name	Oct 14	Dec 16
Jennifer Gargan (Chair)	•	•
Ursula Kilkelly	•	•
Don O'Leary	•	

Table 8  
**Board of Management and Committee meetings attendance**  
January – December 2020

Name	Board of Management Meetings attendance	Governance Committee Meetings attendance	Audit and Risk Committee Meetings attendance	Strategy Committee Meetings attendance	Young People's Committee Meetings attendance	Transition & Succession Meetings attendance
Ursula Kilkelly	17	8	4	1	2	3
Eamon Clavin	16	8		2		
Bernadette Costello	17		9			
Linda Creamer	5					
Jennifer Gargan	17	8		3	2	3
Elizabeth Howard	17					
Noreen Leahy	10			2		3
John McDaid	15		9	3		3
Laoise Manners	13			1		
Craig Mulligan	13					
Don O'Leary	16			2	1	
Pat Rooney	17					
Emer Woodfull	16			1		
Tadgh Delaney	6		5			

## APPENDIX 3

Table 1  
**Board Fees Paid in respect of  
January – December 2020**

Name	Amount €
Bernadette Costello	5,985.00
Jennifer Gargan	5,985.00
Elizabeth Howard	5,985.00
Don O'Leary	5,985.00
Pat Rooney	5,985.00
Emer Woodfull	5,985.00

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

Ursula Kilkelly
Eamon Clavin
Linda Creamer
Tadgh Delaney
Noreen Leahy
John McDaid
Laoise Manners
Craig Mulligan

Notes  
\* One person one salary

# FURTHER INFORMATION

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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