



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

CARE  
EDUCATION  
HEALTH  
WELLBEING

# OUR STRATEGY 2022-2026



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

It is our Vision to provide young people in detention with the highest standards of rights-based, child-centred care that meets their needs and enables them to maximise their potential.

Our Strategy 2022-2026 aims to fulfil this vision by implementing **5 Goals** and **25 Actions**.

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# FOREWORD

As Chairperson of the Board of Management of Oberstown Children Detention Campus, I am pleased to present our new Strategy 2022-2026. Oberstown is the national service which provides care and education for young people on remand or detention orders. We have a responsibility to support young people to address their offending behaviour and successfully return to their communities or move to onward placements. We aim to do this by meeting the highest standards, with an ambition to be the leading centre of its kind internationally.



Since its establishment on 1 June 2016, Oberstown has developed to become a professional, specialist and agile service providing rights-based care and education for young people in detention. Through the vision and determination of our leadership and the hard work and resilience of our staff, we have come through a period of immense change and challenge, emerging confident and ambitious about our future.

This Strategy builds on the progress achieved under our 2017-2021 Strategy, extended as a result of COVID-19, in five key areas:

**Care of our young people** – we have developed a range of services and approaches to address the needs of young people covering Care, Education, Health, Offending behaviour and Preparation for leaving under our CEHOP® model of care. In 2020, we adopted our new policy platform – the Children’s Rights Policy Framework – in line with national and international standards. Addressing young people’s complex needs as well as their offending behaviour is key to our success.

**Staff wellbeing and development** – we value our people and are committed to promoting their wellbeing and development. We have seen significant progress in this area and we look forward to the fresh impetus that will flow from the adoption of the people priorities in this Strategy.

**Partnerships** – in the Oberstown community, strong partnerships are key to the fulfilment of our ambition and this Strategy recognises the importance of collaboration with young people’s families, with Government Departments, agencies and with non-governmental organisations in order to ensure that the reach of our service is strengthened and maximised.

Particularly important are our key partners – Tusla, the Irish Prison Service – and our onsite service providers. In addition to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, we will work with the Department of Justice in the implementation of the Youth Justice Strategy 2021-2027.

**Transparency and Accountability** – we are committed to the highest standards of governance and this Strategy emphasises the importance of evidence-based decision-making, research and the effective use of data to improve all aspects of our service.

We will account to the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, and his Department, for the delivery of this Strategy through a robust reporting framework, including an enhanced annual business planning process, and in our Annual Report.

**Sustainability** – our service continues to develop in line with the evolving needs of young people, the nature of their offending behaviour and the needs of society. Our focus is to ensure that Oberstown is sufficiently agile to respond to these changing circumstances and demands. Oberstown is also committed to the sustainable development of the physical Campus, in fulfilment of the Government’s Climate Action Plan.

I would like to thank all our stakeholders – internal and external – who have contributed to the development of this Strategy and, together with the Board of Management, I look forward to seeing the impact of its successful implementation in the years ahead.

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

# INTRODUCTION

As Director of Oberstown Children Detention Campus, I am delighted to introduce our Strategy 2022-2026, which sets out our direction and outlines the ambitious work programme that will enable us to deliver on our strategic goals in the years ahead.

Creating the Strategy has been a significant journey and I am very thankful for all the contributions from the many different stakeholders throughout the consultation process. I am especially grateful to the Chairperson of the Board of Management and the Board for their continued support as we continue to push the boundaries with regard to our very progressive approach to the care and education of young people in detention.

It is our intention to build on the success of our previous Strategy, which was delivered in a collaborative fashion with both our internal and external stakeholders, despite the challenges of COVID-19 in 2020 and 2021. Throughout this difficult period, the sustained delivery of service and the continuing wellbeing of the Campus were key drivers. The agility and commitment shown by the organisation and all who live and work here have been key factors, enabling us to achieve our objectives during the global pandemic.

Our Strategy 2022-2026 seeks to build on this collaborative approach by strengthening the voice and participation of young people, their families and our stakeholders. It strives to build on our talent resource through a very progressive people strategy which allows the organisation to evolve to meet the increasingly complex needs of our young people.

As a good neighbour we will seek out engagement in the wider community, taking a ‘what might be possible’ approach. Through enhanced use of data, we will ensure that our decision making will be evidence-based in order to future-proof our service and the Campus in a sustainable fashion.

I look forward to delivering on the goals set out in the Strategy, employing the concept of collective stewardship towards maximising the potential of our young people and of our organisation.

**Damien Hernon**  
Director



Stakeholder feedback...  
“Build an ethos that encourages innovation.”

## STRATEGY CONSULTATION PROCESS

This Strategy is the result of an extensive consultation process, beginning with staff and young people and including a wide range of external stakeholders. Our Board Strategy Committee led this process, in collaboration with the Director and the Senior Management Team, ensuring ownership and input at all stages. The process included:

18 Strategy Committee Meetings

11 Focus groups facilitated by the Director across all areas of activity on Campus

Open invitation to voluntary one-to-one meetings between staff members and the Director

4 Staff engagement sessions on the draft Strategy

Young people engagement process, facilitated by the Advocacy Officer and conducted by key workers

28 Stakeholder organisations and institutions contributed to stakeholder consultation

# ABOUT OBERSTOWN

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

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

In line with legal requirements, Oberstown meets the needs of young people in relation to their **Care, Education, Health, Offending behaviour** and **Preparation for leaving** – the five elements of CEHOP®, the Oberstown model of care (see graphic opposite). Applying a rights-based model, set out in our Children's Rights Policy Framework, young people participate in decision making about their care, their lives and the Campus as a whole.

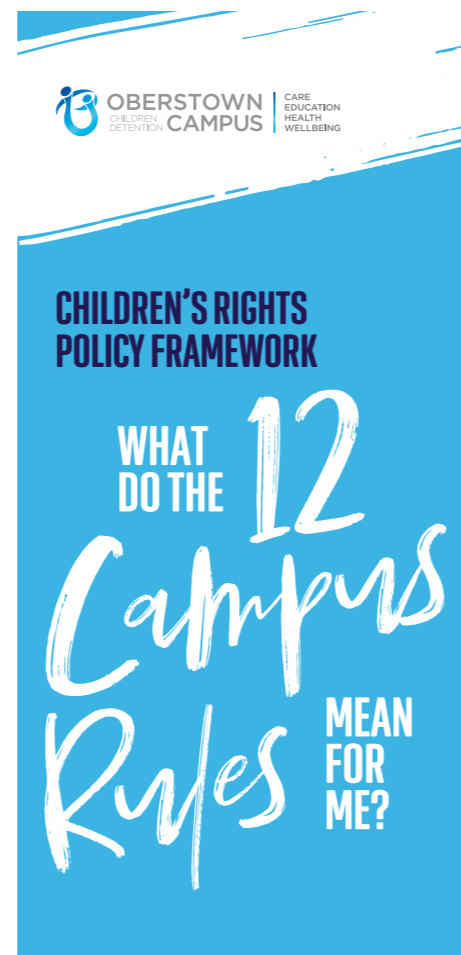
## WHAT WE DO

Oberstown is a modern, secure, custom-built facility, with residential units that accommodate up to eight young people. There is a large school, with a varied primary, secondary and vocational curriculum delivered by the Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board and a health suite that offers a full range of medical and health services. Specialist programmes address offending behaviour and underlying factors and young people are cared for 24/7 by Residential Social Care Workers and Night Supervising Officers.

Multi-disciplinary care is provided by a range of professionals (psychology, speech and language therapy and addiction counselling) through Tusla ACTS (Assessment Consultation Therapy Service) and the National Forensic Mental Health Service who provide psychiatric care. The Campus Chaplain caters for the young people's religious and spiritual needs and the Advocacy Officer promotes young people's participation in decision-making throughout all aspects of the organisation.

## GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Oberstown has a Board of Management appointed by the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) under the Children Act 2001, which has responsibility for the overall management of the Campus. Governance and performance arrangements are set out in an Oversight Agreement between DCEDIY and Oberstown, reviewed on an annual basis. Day-to-day responsibility for Oberstown rests with the Director, who under the Act has primary ('*in loco parentis*') responsibility for the young people in our care. The Director, together with the Senior Management Team, has responsibility for ensuring that the needs and rights of young people are met and the standards set down in national law are fulfilled. The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) has responsibility for inspecting Oberstown at least annually using a rigorous and transparent approach.



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

## STAKEHOLDERS

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



Oberstown's model for individualised care is CEHOP® which focuses on providing Care, Education, Health and wellbeing interventions, Offending behaviour programmes and Preparation for leaving.

® CEHOP and the CEHOP graphic are registered trade marks of Oberstown Children Detention Campus

**OBERSTOWN PROVIDES CARE FOR A MAXIMUM OF 46 YOUNG PEOPLE. IN 2021, WE HAD AN AVERAGE DAILY POPULATION OF 31 YOUNG PEOPLE, THE MAJORITY OF WHOM WERE BOYS.**


**AVERAGE LENGTH OF DETENTION ORDER 357 DAYS**

**AVERAGE AGE OF YOUNG PEOPLE 16 YEARS**

**266 STAFF**  
51% FEMALE 49% MALE

**AVERAGE LENGTH OF REMAND ORDER 56 DAYS**

**'YOUNG PEOPLE WHO COME TO OBERSTOWN HAVE A MULTITUDE OF COMPLEX NEEDS.'**




## PURPOSE

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



## VISION

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



## VALUES

1. We place young people at the heart of what we do.
2. We listen to young people, acknowledging and respecting their right to participate and influence decisions that affect them.
3. We act with integrity and are accountable for our actions.
4. We respect each other – our staff, young people and external partners – promoting honesty and authenticity.
5. We work in partnership to fulfil our shared vision.
6. We foster learning, encouraging new ideas and ways of working.

# OUR STRATEGIC GOALS



This Oberstown Strategy 2022-2026 reflects the organisation’s purpose, vision and values. The five Strategic Goals and their associated Actions set out on the following pages represent the overall direction, focus and ambition for Oberstown in the coming years.

Our Strategy 2022-2026 takes account of Oberstown’s responsibilities under national law and policy, the Strategy of our home department (DCEDIY) and is aligned with the Youth Justice Strategy 2021-2027.

‘EVERYONE IN THE OBERSTOWN COMMUNITY HAS A ROLE TO PLAY IN IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY. WE ARE COMMITTED TO LISTENING TO THE VIEWS OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE AND VALUE THEIR INPUT. THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN OUR CARE ARE WORKING TO DEVELOP THEIR OWN VERSION OF THE STRATEGY, ADAPTING THE LANGUAGE TO MAKE IT THEIRS AND TO EXPRESS WHAT IT MEANS FOR THEM IN PRACTICAL TERMS.’

# GOAL 1.

**WE WILL PROVIDE THE BEST POSSIBLE CHILD-CENTRED, INDIVIDUALISED, RIGHTS-BASED CARE AND EDUCATION TO OUR YOUNG PEOPLE.**

Stakeholder feedback...

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

## Strategic Actions

### Oberstown will:

1. Enhance and mainstream the participation and influence of young people in decision making at all levels.
2. Develop the CEHOP® model of care through the further integration of education and enhancement of multi-disciplinary and trauma-informed approaches that ensure the complex and diverse needs of young people are met.
3. Advance the effectiveness of Oberstown’s placement planning process embedding the participation of young people and their families in decision making, leading to improved outcomes.
4. Take all necessary measures, in partnership with key agencies, to ensure young people leaving Oberstown have access to the supports and services that meet their needs.
5. Embed the Children’s Rights Policy Framework into practice, in order to mainstream a consistent, rights-based approach to the care of young people.

# GOAL 2.

**WE WILL FOSTER A CULTURE OF LEADERSHIP, LEARNING AND RESILIENCE AMONG OUR STAFF.**

Stakeholder feedback...

**“Boost recruitment by creating an interest in the work and identify young people for mentoring and support scholarships.”**

## Strategic Actions

### Oberstown will:

1. Adopt a strategic, evidence-based approach to workforce planning so that Oberstown has the right people with the right blend of skills and experience in place to meet the evolving needs of young people and the organisation.
2. Develop and embed a system of performance accountability at individual, team and organisational level with an emphasis on continuous feedback, formal supervision, recognition, and coaching.
3. Implement a Talent Management plan that creates a culture of learning and development and sets out a clear vision for recruitment and succession planning.
4. Continue to enhance staff engagement, wellness and wellbeing in order to promote a positive organisational culture and enhance staff resilience, building on existing processes and supports.
5. Implement an equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) strategy to foster a culture of respect and dignity at work and in the care we provide to young people.

# GOAL 3.

**WE WILL PARTNER WITH FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES, AGENCIES AND SERVICES TO DELIVER THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES FOR OUR YOUNG PEOPLE.**

Stakeholder feedback...

“This is about getting companies and agencies involved in offering opportunities and resources for young people when they leave Oberstown.”

## Strategic Actions

### Oberstown will:

1. Formalise engagement with the families of young people, promoting good communication and participation in decision making to ensure their needs are met in Oberstown and when they leave.
2. Leverage Oberstown’s stakeholder network to enhance our collaborative approach with key partners to promote the fulfilment of the organisation’s purpose and vision.
3. Contribute actively to national and international debate to enhance wider public understanding about the rights-based, individualised approach to the care and education of young people in detention.
4. Consolidate Oberstown’s role as a good neighbour and positive contributor to the community, exploring opportunities for the advancement of our mutual interests.
5. Work with key external partners and agencies to ensure the timely delivery of key actions under the Youth Justice Strategy 2021-2027, especially with regard to young people who are transitioning from Oberstown.

# GOAL 4.

**WE WILL ENSURE THAT OUR GOVERNANCE, PRACTICES AND DECISION MAKING ARE TRANSPARENT, DATA-DRIVEN AND EVIDENCE-BASED.**

Stakeholder feedback...

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

## Strategic Actions

### Oberstown will:

1. Promote the highest level of compliance with the standards of good governance throughout the organisation.
2. Develop a comprehensive and robust system of reporting on organisational performance and strategy delivery, that enhances management and Board level capability.
3. Develop a data- and evidence-driven approach to decision making, with enhanced systems for recording, approval and evaluation.
4. Establish a research advisory group to ensure that the Oberstown service continues to develop in line with the latest evidence and best practice.
5. Continue to enhance the quality of care provided to young people in Oberstown by promoting organisational transparency in line with our vision and values.

# GOAL 5.

## WE WILL PROMOTE THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR CAMPUS AND OUR ORGANISATION.

Stakeholder feedback...

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

### Strategic Actions

#### Oberstown will:

1. Map the development of Oberstown’s services against the needs of young people and the demand for places of detention to inform future decisions around funding, capacity and occupancy of the Campus.
2. Develop a comprehensive plan to promote the sustainable development of Oberstown’s physical Campus.
3. Implement projects designed to enhance environmental and energy sustainability on Campus in line with the Government’s Climate Action Plan.
4. Promote enhanced safety and security of all persons on the Campus by embedding a system of annual audits, inspections and reviews.
5. Adopt a 10 year plan for the renewal of internal spaces on Campus, ensuring that the fabric of our buildings is maintained to the highest standards.

## IMPLEMENTING OUR STRATEGY

The Oberstown Strategy was approved by the Board of Management at its meeting on 25 April 2022. Implementation will be led by the Director, together with the Senior Management Team.

An Annual Plan will be developed by the executive and approved by the Board identifying priorities for each year of the Strategy and Key Performance Indicators to help measure and track successful implementation of the Strategic Goals. The Director will report progress in the achievement of the Annual Plan monthly to the Board to ensure appropriate oversight of the process. An account of Strategy implementation will be reported every year in the Oberstown Annual Report.

### Resources

Oberstown is fully committed to the implementation of this Strategy and to ensuring the resources are available to enable its success. An ambitious Strategy, its implementation depends on Oberstown leadership and the support and commitment of all our stakeholders, internally and externally. In particular, we are grateful for the ongoing support of the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and look forward to providing the Minister with regular updates on our progress.

The Strategy will be aligned to the Oberstown risk management process so risks to its success are identified and treated. Rigorous financial management and planning will take place alongside the development of each annual plan to ensure appropriate resources are available to support the implementation of the Strategy.

### Equality and human rights

Oberstown is committed to the implementation of the public sector equality and human rights duty, as set out in section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014. Our Strategy reflects these values and fulfils our responsibility to promote equality and human rights among our staff, young people, our service users and everyone affected by our policies and plans. As part of this Strategy, we will ensure fulfilment of this duty and account for its delivery within our Annual Report.

### STRATEGIC GOALS AND ACTIONS

#### WHAT ARE WE SETTING OUT TO ACHIEVE?

Purpose  
Vision  
Values  
5 Goals  
25 Actions

### ANNUAL PLAN

#### HOW WILL WE DO IT?

An annual planning process will identify organisational priorities that ensure the delivery of Strategic Goals and Actions.  
This will be aligned to the DCEDIY Strategy and the Performance Delivery Agreement between Oberstown and the Department.

### MEASURING PROGRESS AGAINST PLAN

#### HOW IS THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN GOING? HOW IS PROGRESS BEING MEASURED?

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) linked to Strategic Goals, Actions and annual priorities will be set out in an Annual Plan.  
Monthly progress report reviewed by the Board of Management.  
Quarterly reporting to the Department against the Performance Delivery Agreement.

### ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORTING

#### HOW DID WE DO THIS YEAR? WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED FOR NEXT YEAR?

Oberstown Annual Report.  
Annual strategy implementation review.





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