

Stakeholder engagement meeting, September 7th

On Thursday September 7, Oberstown hosted a stakeholder engagement session with a view to sharing information and building understanding about developments in Oberstown, and some of the challenges faced by the Campus.

The meeting was attended by a wide range of interested parties, (see endnote) and, held on Campus, it was an opportunity for stakeholders to view and tour the new facilities.

The main topics for discussion were to inform attendees about the Oberstown strategic plan; to share recent research data, and to provide some relevant information about the restrictive practices used in Oberstown.

Chair of the Board of Management of Oberstown Professor Ursula Kilkelly began the session by setting out the agenda for driving reform and change in Oberstown. This work includes: Reviewing and revising the policy base, implementing the Oberstown Strategic Plan, and the Communication & Engagement Strategy, and overseeing a range of subcommittees on risk, audit & finance, and governance.

Professor Kilkelly went on to outline some headline priorities to be achieved by 2020.

They are to:

- ▶ Have taken steps to implement the CEHOP framework (Care, Education, Health and Welfare, Offending Behaviour and Preparing for Release) on a consistent basis across the Campus
- ▶ 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
- ▶ 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
- ▶ Promote the collation, analysis and use of good quality data to support the quality of care provided to young people
- ▶ Have in place a people and career development strategy with clear alignment to employee development, skills enhancement, continuing professional development and succession management practice
- ▶ Have reviewed and enhanced our performance management processes and ensure that all staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities
- ▶ Have adopted a revised policy and procedure framework, ensuring unambiguous guidelines and procedures are in place in all areas
- ▶ Have enhanced the public understanding of the Oberstown mission and vision to provide excellence in the care and education of young people in detention.
- ▶ Continue to enhance the accountability provided by management, including the Board of Management, for the Campus

Director of Oberstown Pat Bergin then addressed the session by sharing with stakeholders the results of a research project looking at the characteristics of young people in Oberstown during Q1, 2017. The data, set to be published shortly, provides a comprehensive overview of the needs of young people in detention, and the challenges they face. The data analysis demonstrates that young people in detention have a wide range of complex needs requiring a holistic, multi-agency response. Mr Bergin pointed out that by understanding the origins, needs and trajectories of these young people, it is hoped that the necessary services and interventions in place and under development can assist them to move on from their offending behaviour.

The Oberstown director went on to give an overview of restrictive practices, namely: Single Separation; Restraint; Handcuffs and Programmes. The director set out some statistics for 2017 and drilled into the reasons why single separation is used, for example upon admission, for behavioural concerns, contraband and individual programmes.

The director concluded by saying that the process of embedding good practice continues amid challenges such as the complexity of the young people and their circumstances of the environment, the changing population daily, new needs, new challenges, known/unknown factors which are all part of the reality of the Oberstown environment.

Following presentations from the director and the chair, there followed an open and constructive discussion relating to all of the issues outlined above. Stakeholders welcomed the comprehensive data made available, and asked a wide range of questions in order to further understand the challenges faced in Oberstown. The session was hugely successful and the attendees made known their appreciation for the open and transparent culture in Oberstown.

Endnote: *The meeting was attended by representatives from: Youth Advocate Programmes Ireland (YAP); TUSLA Child and Family Agency Association for Criminal Justice Research and Development (ACJRD); The Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice; University College Cork (UCC); EPIC; The Probation Service; the Irish Penal Reform Trust (IPRT); Le Chéile Mentoring & Youth Justice Support Services; HIQA; Ombudsman for Children's Office (OCO); Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC); Irish Youth Justice Service (IYJS); Children's Rights Alliance and the Tallaght West Childhood Development Initiative. The Oberstown Senior Management Team was also in attendance.*