

Principal Officer – Care

Job Specification & Terms and Conditions

Job Title and Grade	Principal Officer – Care
Closing Date	Friday 7 th August @ 5pm
Location of Post	Oberstown Children Detention Campus
Contract Type	Full-time Permanent contract
Salary Scale	The salary for this post ranges from €108,152 to €133,775 per annum (Principal Officer – Standard Scale)
Working Hours	35 hours per week
Annual Leave	30 days annual plus 10 bank holidays
Reporting Relationship	Director
Purpose of the Post	The Principal Officer - Care is a senior leadership level position with responsibility for leading an experienced and dedicated team in the delivery of excellent, high quality services. Reporting to the Director, the post holder will be responsible for the day-to-day operations and management of Care Services in line with Oberstown vision, mission, values and organisational strategy. They will lead on the development and implementation of children's rights and service improvements, ensuring that Oberstown remains at the forefront of service delivery and youth justice service innovation and is responsive to potential changes in the external environment. They will also have a key role in strategic planning, ensuring alignment with wider agency and Ministerial objectives, in line with relevant legislation, in particular the Children Act 2001, as amended. In-depth knowledge of the legal framework underpinning the care provided by Oberstown will be an essential aspect of this role. The Principal Officer – Care will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Children's Rights Policy Framework at Oberstown, and for the delivery of safe care for children in Oberstown and the youth justice services in relation to detention. Additionally, strong stakeholder management skills will be required to gain the confidence of and build productive relationships with internal and external partners. The Principal Officer– Care will be responsible for fostering and developing a high employee engagement, embedding devolved decision making and accountability

	within the services, underpinned by a best practice and transparent performance management process. As a member of the Senior Leadership Team, the successful candidate will play a key role in the organisation by influencing its capacity to perform its functions effectively in a complex environment. The position offers an opportunity for an ambitious, enthusiastic, and committed professional with a strong commitment to serving the public interest, to influence and contribute to the development of the Campus.
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Principal Duties and Responsibilities

As a key member of the Senior Leadership Team, the Principal Officer - Care will have overall management responsibility for care operations on Campus. They will lead and be responsible for the provision of rights based care at Oberstown and as a member of the Senior Leadership Team, will report to the Director and work closely with Corporate Services, the wider Management Team, and all relevant internal and external stakeholders.

Operational

- Oversee and coordinate all Care functions and activities relating to the detention of young people at Oberstown, continuously assessing, streamlining and improving how core services are delivered, implementing changes where required.
- Lead and embed Oberstown's model for individualised Care which consists of five key pillars: Care, Education, Health and wellbeing interventions, Offending behaviour programmes and Preparation for leaving (CEHOP).
- Oversee the delivery of Oberstown's Children's Rights Policy Framework (CRPF) ensuring that young people's rights are upheld and the highest standards of care are fulfilled at all times.
- Set the direction and lead the day-to-day operational, rights based delivery of Care pathways in accordance with legislation, regulation and agreed policy.
- Develop effective planning and control systems to ensure resources are secured, deployed and managed effectively within their area of responsibility, providing leadership and managerial oversight for operational service delivery.
- Improve service delivery through data led analysis and identification of trends around the changing needs of young people.
- Actively monitor and manage the occupancy on Campus on a daily basis, both during regular working hours and out-of-hours as necessary, and liaise with the relevant Bodies (e.g. Courts; Bail Supervision Scheme; DCEDIY) where full capacity has been reached or is in danger of being reached.
- Deliver the annual business plan and manage budgets agreed.
- Ensure services are delivered in the safest, rights-based way for both young people and staff in line with all Health & Safety protocols and legislation.

- Be part of the provision a senior management out-of-hours roster providing on-call cover to Oberstown in the event of an emergency, and taking a role in determining – with the Director – whether an incident meets the threshold for reporting to the Minister under the Notifiable Incidents Policy.

Standards, Policies and Legislation

- Work closely with the Care teams to organise and assure implementation of all internal and external policies and procedures pertinent to the Children's Rights Policy Framework.
- Ensure attention to detail and consistent adherence to procedures and current standards within area of responsibility.
- Ensure that robust, effective and compliant programme governance arrangements are implemented and maintained.
- Deal with legal issues arising in respect of the detention of young people at Oberstown, including out-of-hours as necessary. This will require operational knowledge of the Children Act as the basis for lawful detention.
- Manage and provide the relevant information on all the required key performance indicators providing the Director with regular updates, reporting proactively on any area of concern.
- Ensure that all rules, policies and procedures developed in relation to detention are appropriately aligned with relevant legislation, rules and guidelines (both national and international) in relation to children's rights.
- Develop an in-depth knowledge of the operation of the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) Standards and other standards as they apply to the provision of care at Oberstown. Hold responsibility for compliance against policy/audits including, but not limited to:
 - Oberstown's model for individualised Care, Education, Health and wellbeing interventions, Offending behaviour programmes and Preparation for leaving (CEHOP),
 - Children's Rights Policy Framework (CRPF),
 - Health Information & Quality Authority (HIQA) Standards.
- Ensure that current practice meets best standards and oversee actions taken to improve practice and service delivery.
- Ensure that appropriate child safeguarding procedures are in place on the Oberstown Campus.
- Promote and effect a continuous quality improvement environment for operational services in accordance with existing and future regulatory requirements.
- Maintain own knowledge of relevant policies, procedures, guidelines, legislation and regulations to perform the role effectively and to ensure all standards are met.

Leadership

- Lead and develop the Care Services teams by providing vision and direction, ensuring that organisational strategic objectives are achieved.
- Deliver the people strategy across Care Services and advocate for an Employee Engagement approach.
- Foster a team culture that encourages leadership, engagement, accountability, innovation and clear communication.

- Ensure the effective and efficient development and deployment of the workforce capacity and capability.
- Lead and deliver successful change management initiatives as required while ensuring clear outcomes in delivering quality services.
- Promote a culture of personal responsibility where staff are supported to deliver and held accountable for performance.

Strategic Thinking, Judgement and Decision Making

- Provide specialist advice to the Director and Board of Management on the area of youth justice, in particular safe, rights compliant custody/detention.
- Contribute to the development and delivery of strategic objectives, fully participating as member of the Senior Leadership Team, including at Board meetings.
- Contribute to Oberstown's engagement with wider inter-agency forums in the area of youth justice and youth detention, helping to position Oberstown as a significant contributor to the wider youth justice arena.
- Identify coherent solutions to complex issues.
- Develop business cases, strategic plans, project plans, new policies and procedures and governance arrangements as required.
- Input to review of the Children's Act 2001, as amended, in relation to issues relating to children detention.
- Contribute to the development of policies and procedures for young people with regard to designated area of responsibility.

Relationship Building

- Foster links with stakeholders to maximise availability of suitable, integrated, effective services, enhancing and reinforcing the reputation and credibility of Oberstown as a provider of excellent services.
- Build and maintain appropriate relationships with all external stakeholders.
- Attend and present at National and International conferences / seminars on the area of youth justice.
- Represent Oberstown in liaison with a wide range of government and public bodies.

General

- Assume campus wide leadership for other specific projects if so requested by the Director.
- Deputise for the Director, acting for, and representing him in matters as and when required.
- Pursue continuous professional development in order to develop leadership capability and professional knowledge.
- Undertake any other responsibilities that may arise from time to time as directed by the Director.

The above duties are not intended to be a comprehensive list of all responsibilities involved and, consequently, the post holder may be required to perform other duties as appropriate to the post,

which may be assigned to him/her from time to time, and to contribute to the development of the post while in office.

Confidentiality

In the course of employment, the successful candidate will have access to, or hear information concerning the medical or personal affairs of young people and/or staff, or other service business. Such records and information are strictly confidential and, unless acting on the instructions of an authorised officer, on no account must information concerning staff, young people or other service business be divulged or discussed except in the performance of normal duty. In addition, physical and electronic records must never be treated in such a manner that unauthorised persons can obtain access to them and must be left in safe custody when no longer required.

Professional Knowledge & Experience

Candidates must be able to demonstrate clearly at interview that they possess the full range of competencies as set out below.

Leadership & Strategic Direction

- Good communication and interpersonal skills including the ability to present information in a clear and concise manner.
- Leads the team, setting high standards, tackling any performance problems & facilitating high performance.
- Facilitates an open exchange of ideas and fosters an atmosphere of open communication
- Contributes to the shaping of Oberstown's strategy and policy.
- Develops capability and capacity across the team through effective delegation.
- Develops a culture of learning & development, offering coaching and constructive / supportive feedback.
- Leads on preparing for and implementing significant change and reform.
- Anticipates and responds quickly to developments in the sector/ broader environment.
- Actively collaborates with other Departments, Organisations and Agencies.

Judgement & Decision Making

- Identifies and focuses on core issues when dealing with complex information/ situations.
- Assembles facts, manipulates verbal and numerical information and thinks through issues logically.
- Sees the relationships between issues and quickly grasp the high level and socio-political implications.
- Identifies coherent solutions to complex issues.
- Takes action, making decisions in a timely manner and having the courage to see them through
- Makes sound and well informed decisions, understanding their impact and implications.
- Strives to effectively balance the sectoral issues, political elements and the citizen impact in all decisions.

Management & Delivery of Results

- Initiates and takes personal responsibility for delivering results/ services in own area.
- Balances strategy and operational detail to meet business needs.
- Manages multiple agendas and tasks and reallocates resources to manage changes in focus.
- Makes optimum use of resources and implements performance measures to deliver on objectives.
- Ensures the optimal use of ICT and new delivery models.
- Critically reviews projects and activities to ensure their effectiveness and that they meet Organisational requirements.
- Instils the importance of efficiencies, value for money and meeting corporate governance requirements.
- Ensures team are focused and act on Business plans priorities, even when faced with pressure.

Building Relationships & Communication

- Speaks and writes in a clear, articulate and impactful manner.
- Actively listens, seeking to understand the perspective and position of others.
- Manages and resolves conflicts / disagreements in a positive & constructive manner.
- Works effectively within the political process, recognising & managing tensions arising from different stakeholders perspectives.
- Persuades others; builds consensus, gains co-operation from others to obtain information and accomplish goals.
- Proactively engages with colleagues at all levels of the organisation and across other Departments/Agencies.
- Organisations and builds strong professional networks.
- Makes opinions known when s/he feels it is right to do so.

Specialist Knowledge, Expertise & Self Development

- Develops and maintains skills and expertise across a number of areas that are relevant to his/her field and recognised by people internal and external to the Department/ Organisation.
- Keeps up to date with key departmental, sectoral, national and international policies and economic, political and social trends that affect the role.
- Maintains a strong focus on self-development, seeking feedback and opportunities for growth.

Drive, Commitment & Public Service Values

- Consistently strives to perform at a high level.
- Demonstrates personal commitment to the role, maintaining determination and persistence while maintaining a sense of balance and perspective in relation to work issues.
- Contributes positively to the corporate agenda.
- Is personally trustworthy, honest and respectful, delivering on promises and commitments
- Ensures the citizen is at the heart of all services provided.
- Is resilient, maintaining composure even in adverse or challenging situations.

- Promotes a culture that fosters the highest standards of ethics and integrity.

Eligibility Criteria Qualifications and/ or experience

Qualifications

The selection criteria below outline the qualifications, skills, knowledge and/or experience that the successful candidate will need to demonstrate for successful discharge of the responsibilities of the post.

Applications will be assessed on the basis of how well candidates satisfy these criteria.

Essential Criteria

- A qualification in Business Management, Social Care, Psychology or Law at Level 8
- At least 7 years' experience in a senior leadership role
- At least 3 years' experience of managing multiple projects and working with a broad range of stakeholders, preferably within an environment supporting vulnerable young people.
- Experience of driving and managing organisational change.
- Experience of budgetary responsibility and managing resources particularly in the area of workforce and capacity planning.

Desirable Criteria

- A qualification in Business Management, Social Care, Psychology or Law at Level 9 or higher
- Experience of working within, and a strong understanding of, the wider youth justice system in Ireland.
- Experience of speaking in public and advocating for people's rights.

Application and Selection Process

How to apply

Applications must be made by submitting the following documents:

- A short cover letter outlining why you wish to be considered for the post and where you believe your skills, experience and values meet the requirements of the position.
- A comprehensive CV, which must include an outline of your education to date (including level on NFQ) and work experience to date.

In order to apply for the post of Principal Officer – Care, please forward the above requested information via email to recruitmentmail@oberstown.com before **5pm on 7th August 2026**

Selection Methods

Oberstown will run the selection process in accordance with best recruitment practices. The approach employed comprise of a series of assessments administered over a number of stages, which may include:

- shortlisting of candidates, on the basis of the information contained in their application.
- a competitive preliminary interview.
- case study/work sample/role play/media exercise, and any other tests or exercises that may be deemed appropriate.
- a final competitive interview which may include a presentation.

Shortlisting

In the event of a shortlisting exercise being employed, an expert board will examine the application forms and assess them against pre-determined criteria based on the requirements of the position. It is therefore in your own interest to provide a detailed and accurate account of your qualifications and experience on the application form.

Other important information

Oberstown will not be responsible for refunding any expenses incurred by candidates.

The admission of a person to a competition, or invitation to attend interview, or a successful result letter, is not to be taken as implying that Oberstown and/or employing authority is satisfied that such a person fulfils the requirements or is not disqualified by law from holding the position.

Prior to recommending any candidate for appointment to this position, Oberstown will make all such enquiries that are deemed necessary to determine the suitability of that candidate. Until all stages of the recruitment process have been fully completed a final determination cannot be made nor can it be deemed or inferred that such a determination has been made.

Should a person recommended for appointment decline, or having accepted it, relinquish it, Oberstown may at its discretion, select and recommend other persons for appointment on the results of this selection process.

Candidates should make themselves available on the date(s) specified by Oberstown.

Confidentiality

Subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2013, applications will be treated in strict confidence.

All enquiries, applications and all aspects of the proceedings are treated as strictly confidential and are not disclosed to anyone, outside those who are directly involved in the selection process.

Certain items of information, not specific to any individual, are extracted from computer records for general statistical purposes.

Deeming of candidature to be withdrawn

Candidates who do not attend for interview or other test when and where required by Oberstown, or who do not, when requested, furnish such evidence as Oberstown require in regard to any matter relevant to their candidature will have no further claim to consideration.

Candidates' Obligations

- A third party must not impersonate a candidate at any stage of the process. Any person who contravenes the above provisions or who assists another person in contravening the above provisions is guilty of an offence. A person who is found guilty of an offence is liable to a fine and /or imprisonment.

In addition, where a person found guilty of an offence was or is a candidate at a recruitment process, then:

- Where s/he has not been appointed to a post, s/he will be disqualified as a candidate; and
- Where s/he has been appointed subsequently to the recruitment process in question, s/he shall forfeit that appointment.

Health

A candidate must be fully competent and capable of undertaking the duties attached to the position and be in a state of health such as would indicate a reasonable prospect of ability to render regular and efficient service, which will include sporting and leisure activities as well as an ability to be fully involved in physical restraints where necessary (training will be provided).

Character

Each candidate must be of good character.

Age

Candidates should be aware that a maximum recruitment age will apply to this competition. Candidates must not yet be 67 years of age on the closing date and time for the competition.

Other requirements of the role

Driving Licence

Successful candidates will be required to hold a current full clean Driving Licence – Category B, prior to commencement of employment.