



ANNUAL REPORT 2024

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The depth and breadth of the work carried out on the campus over every one of the 366 days of 2024 has been inspiring

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Cover image – The new purpose-built horticultural area at Oberstown has been developed as part of a bespoke practical vocational training programme. **See page 32.**

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VOCATIONAL SKILLS AND WORK OPPORTUNITIES



'Big difference from when I first came into Oberstown, 100%. I'm leaving all that life behind me. Definitely not going back to that. I have plans now.'

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Young people's feedback

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YEAR IN THE LIFE

Highlights on campus and beyond



In 2024, total CO² was 47.1% below the baseline (2016-2018) of 1,557,430 kgCO²

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ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY 2024



Chairperson's foreword



The Board of Management at Oberstown Children Detention Campus is proud to present the Annual Report to the Minister for Children, Disability and Equality, Norma Foley, and to our all stakeholders. The Board is required to assure the Minister and her department that Oberstown is fully compliant with the requirements of relevant laws and regulations particularly the Children Act 2001.

The campus promotes the re-integration of young people into society by addressing their health, safety, welfare and interests. The law recognises the importance of tailoring care to meet the needs of the individual child and the importance of maintaining relationships with families. To fulfil our legal requirements, Oberstown works to be rights compliant having developed the Care, Education, Health, Offending behaviour and Preparation for leaving (CEHOP®) framework, and the report demonstrates how Oberstown undertakes this work.

The year has been particularly challenging as our occupancy levels have remained high and staffing levels are still a challenge. The needs of some of the young people are increasingly complex and the willingness of the whole staff team to adapt to those needs is remarkable. The depth and breadth of the work carried out on the campus over every one of the 366 days of 2024 has been inspiring. At all times the young person remains at the centre of the work, in the knowledge that meeting their needs in this way, and with support of community-based services when they leave, increases the likelihood that they will not re-offend.

Oberstown is subject to robust regulatory systems. The service is inspected by the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) who once again this year highlight the quality of care provided, as reported by the young people, their families and social workers all of whom applauded the work of staff. HIQA also recognised the challenges of high numbers of young people and recruitment across several functions,



‘At all times the young person remains at the centre of the work, in the knowledge that meeting their needs in this way, and with support of community-based services when they leave, increases the likelihood that they will not re-offend.’

including residential care and corporate services, which in turn have had an impact on our ability to develop particular areas. HIQA noted the need for improvements in a range of areas and it is a priority for the Board that these are addressed in line with our HIQA compliance plan.

Relationships are key to the successful operation of a complex organisation like Oberstown. It is a privilege to have observed and received reports of the quality of relationships between staff and young people – it is the key to success of the organisation. Staff consistently demonstrate their commitment to the wellbeing and success of the young people and in turn we recognise our responsibility to the care of all staff.

As custodian of a 24 hectare site in a rural community we are constantly mindful of our duty to the environment and the importance of being good neighbours. We have continued to improve our environmental sustainability and are mindful that we are only some of the way through that journey.

It is apparent from this Annual Report that 2024 has been a successful year for the campus, but we remain mindful of the need to maintain our improvement journey. The Board of Management is very grateful to management and staff for their hard work and dedication to young people, their families and the broader community.

Koulla Yiasouma
Chairperson, Board of Management

Director's overview

2024 marked another year of growth and development on campus. We witnessed the continuing progress of our young people, thanks to the unstinting support of our staff in enabling them to maximise their potential. The 'can do' mentality of our staff across the campus bears testament to the possibilities created by taking a rights-based, participative approach to care.

The achievements and positivity delivered are all the more impressive when we consider the operational challenges faced across the year. Chief among these were the rise in daily occupancy levels, up 11% year on year, and an ongoing difficult recruitment market.

The campus continues to grow in national and international repute, underlining the importance of collaboration with internal and external stakeholders and the support and guidance of the Board of Management and the Department of Children, Disability and Equality. The evidence is clear in the overall progress made within our current strategic plan (see pages 11 to 21) and in the international collaborations outlined below.

Service quality remained very high, as verified by the tenor of the 2024 HIQA inspection, which highlighted the overall satisfaction of young people, their families and stakeholders. The inspection report and resulting HIQA compliance plan are helping us to focus on areas for improvement in restrictive practices, staffing and governance. The plan adds welcome impetus to our efforts to enhance supports delivered through our education services, young people's programmes and skills development initiatives, which continue to underline the power of our CEHOP® framework.

Oberstown continues to take opportunities to offer our unique perspective on core aspects of the youth justice system. Stakeholder engagement has focused on issues such as detention as a last resort, universal community sanctions and the disproportionate numbers of Travellers in Oberstown.

The increasingly complex needs of our young people and the nature of some of their offences have led to significant developments within our young people's programmes. A notable development in this regard is our collaboration with NIAPP (Tusla's community-based National Inter-Agency Prevention Programme) and the Probation Service to develop a bespoke intervention for working with young people who engage in harmful sexual behaviour. Our

'Oberstown continues to take opportunities to offer our unique perspective on core aspects of the youth justice system.'

multidisciplinary relationships continue to evolve as we continue to seek to understand the root cause of our young people's challenges in order to respond in the best ways possible, equipping them to make an effective return to society.

Participation and collaboration helped deliver one of the highlights of 2024. 'Walk in my shoes', our international project conducted with the Netherlands Helsinki Project and Young Perspectives (YOPE), came to a successful conclusion in impactful events held in March and April. This was an opportunity for the young people to help us understand where they had come from and to reflect on some of the reasons that caused them to be in conflict with the law. This powerful project has given us new perspectives on how we can help them move forward towards a more positive future (see page 64).

Another key international project was our work with Penal Reform International on Data MOSAIC, a European pilot programme which gave our young people and staff the opportunity to be involved in system change that seeks to improve data collection and analysis on violence against children in detention. The ultimate aim is that this will inform national policy.

Building new relationships and breaking down barriers was the focus of the Breath of Fresh Éire public art and story exchange project, a key collaboration in 2024, involving Oberstown, An Garda Síochána and Gaisce – The President's Award. The murals installed at Balbriggan Garda station and at Balbriggan Rugby Club are a strong illustration of the capacity of our young people to engage in projects with a positive community focus. The process of producing these artworks is a story of young people – and Gardai – going outside their comfort zone to build relationships and look at the world in a new way (see page 64).

Engagement in these national and international initiatives allows us to showcase the campus, creating benchmarks for future activity and helping the campus to deliver positive change.

We saw a major step forward in staff development in 2024. Registration with CORU, the health and social care regulator, has been on the agenda within social care for some considerable time and I am delighted to report that Oberstown outperformed its targets with regard to the registration process. This is a key component in ensuring that there is a pipeline of highly qualified and registered staff operating within standardised professional criteria looking after our young people into the future (see page 60).

The seven-eyed supervision model, a key wellbeing support for frontline staff, was introduced across campus this year. Supervision sessions provide the reflective space for our staff to develop resilience and promote peer learning. The approach helps staff to identify and engage with emerging themes, creating a positive feedback loop leading to opportunities for personal and team development (see page 63).

Progress during 2024 leaves us well positioned and energised to tackle the next stages of Oberstown's journey. Our current strategy runs to 2026 and the process of refreshing and refocusing our goals is underpinned by our solid platform, created collectively over the years and focused on delivering opportunities for young people and staff to maximise their potential.



Damien Hernon
Director



About Oberstown

Oberstown is Ireland's national centre for the detention, care and education of young people under 18 years referred by the courts on detention or remand orders. Established under the Children Act 2001, the campus provides individualised care to young people through an integrated multi-professional approach, enabling 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 young people's needs covering their Care, Education, Health, Offending behaviour and Preparation for leaving – the five elements of CEHOP®, the Oberstown framework for care (see page 22).

Oberstown applies a rights-based, participative model in line with national policy and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and set out in the Children's Rights Policy Framework. This means that young people participate in decision making about their care, their lives and the campus as a whole. The framework has 12 Campus Rules that set standards to ensure that young people at Oberstown are safe, get the best care possible and have their rights respected. HIQA inspects Oberstown's service against the 12 Campus Rules.

Life on campus

Located in Lusk, Co Dublin, the campus is a modern, secure, custom-built facility, with residential units accommodating up to eight young people. Young people are cared for 24/7 by Residential Social Care Workers and Night Supervising Officers; 165 staff in a total of 250 are directly involved in front-line care.

In 2024, Oberstown was authorised to accommodate a maximum of 40 boys and six girls. The average daily occupancy was 39 young people. Over the course of 2024, there were 120 young people detained on the campus, 118 boys and two girls.

At the centre of the campus is a large school, with a varied primary, secondary and vocational curriculum delivered by the Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB). Each young person follows an educational programme tailored to their academic level and social needs, along with key factors such as expected length of stay on campus, an assessment of what they might achieve, and their future plans and career interests. The school offers the national curriculum (Junior and Senior cycle), QQI certification, and learning support programmes including BKSB (basic key skills builder).

Oberstown staff run an extensive schedule of afterschool activities. The campus health suite offers a full range of medical and health services. Specialist programmes address offending behaviour and underlying factors (see pages 24–31). Multidisciplinary care is provided by a range of professionals (psychology, speech and language therapy and addiction counselling) through Tusla ACTS (Assessment Consultation Therapy Service) and the National Forensic Mental Health Service, who provide psychiatric care. The campus Chaplain caters for the young people's religious and spiritual needs and the Advocacy Officer promotes young people's participation in decision making across all aspects of the organisation (see pages 40–42).

Governance and management

Oberstown has a Board of Management, which has responsibility for the overall management of the campus (see pages 43–49). The Board is appointed by the Minister for Children, Disability and Equality under sections 164 and 167 of the Children Act 2001 (the Act), the primary legislation governing Oberstown. Section 158 of the Act states that the principal objective of Oberstown is to provide appropriate educational and training programmes and facilities for children having regard to their health, safety, welfare and interests, including their physical, psychological and emotional wellbeing.

The Act assigns the day-to-day running of Oberstown to the Director, who has primary (*in loco parentis*) responsibility for the young people on campus. The Director, together with the Senior Management Team, is charged with ensuring that the needs and rights of young people are met and the standards set down in national law are fulfilled.

Within the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE), the Children Detention Schools Unit has direct responsibility for Oberstown. Governance and performance arrangements are set out in an Oversight Agreement between DCDE and Oberstown, reviewed annually. The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) has responsibility for inspecting Oberstown, at least annually, using a rigorous and transparent approach (see pages 50–52).

Oberstown is accountable to the Minister for implementation of relevant national policy. This includes the Youth Justice Strategy 2021–2027, which assigns lead or co-responsibility to Oberstown for a range of strategic actions.

Stakeholders

Oberstown works with range of external stakeholders in the delivery of the campus purpose (see page 66).

PURPOSE, VISION, VALUES

The Oberstown purpose, vision and values guide the Board, management and staff in their work.

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

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

In Oberstown our values are:

1. We place young people at the heart of what we do.
2. We listen to young people, acknowledging 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.

Campus population quick facts 2024

Maximum
number
of young
people
46
(40 Male + 6 female)

Number of young
people detained on
remand or detention
orders

120
(118 Male + 2 female)

In Oberstown
on 31/12/23
27 + **93**
New
admissions

Detention
orders
63 + **57**
Remand
orders only

Average daily population

39 [16 Remand
23 Detention]

Average age

16

2

Leaving
Cert
students

6

Junior Cycle
students

27

QQI module
certificates

Total room nights occupied

14,274

60-70

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

20

Gaisce
Awards

Where from?

43 **17** **13** **13** **34** [**25**]
Dublin Cork Limerick Waterford All other counties From the Traveller community

Onward
placements 2024

96

Where to?

65 **9** **9** **13**
Home Residential Care Other Irish Prison Service

12

Baristas
trained

27

Fitness
instructor
qualifications

16

SafePass
certificates

32

Manual
handling
certificates

30

HAACP
training

1

Forklift
licence

58

Career
modules
completed

Average length
of stay on
detention
order (days)

461

Average length
of stay on
remand
order (days)

101

Number
of court
escorts

593

2,477

Nursing
appointments

1,064

GP appointments

241

Dental
appointments

Campus operations quick facts 2024

24.5 HECTARE SITE [60.5 Acres]

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

250 STAFF [53% Female 47% Male]

165 STAFF DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN FRONTLINE CARE OF YOUNG PEOPLE

105 CORU REGISTERED SOCIAL CARE WORKERS

116 GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL STAFF PRACTICE SUPERVISION SESSIONS

€27.244m FINANCIAL ALLOCATION

[€17.187m Pay €2.619m Pensions €7.438m Non-pay]

Implementing our Strategy 2024

Implementing the Oberstown Strategy 2022-2026 and its associated annual business plan is a key focus for current and future operations. In 2024, the Director, the Senior Management Team and staff teams worked to progress the organisational priorities set out in the business plan, providing monthly progress updates to the Board of Management.

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

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

Each of the Strategic Goals has five high-level Strategic Actions with associated priority tasks for their implementation. Monitoring progress against the business plan is a focus for the Board throughout the year, with regular reviews of progress undertaken by the Governance and Strategy Committee.

The Director and Senior Management Team report progress to the Board as recorded on Smartsheet, a new collaborative work management tool to assign tasks, track project progress, share documents, and demonstrate progress using sophisticated dashboards. In 2024, additional reporting to the Board included progress on implementation of agreed

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

GOAL

1.

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

GOAL

2.

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

GOAL

3.

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

GOAL

4.

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

GOAL

5.

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

GOAL 1

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

Business plan progress at 31 December 2024:

1.1

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

- Completed project with the Netherlands Helsinki Committee (NHC) and YOPE in EU-funded 'Giving Back Project' to enhance participation and improve lived experience of young people in detention. Twelve staff and three young people trained in participation; three young people nominated for membership of Youth Lab Board. Young people led three 'Walk in My Shoes' sessions for cross-campus groups of staff in March 2024. Project officially closed at an event in the Netherlands in April 2024, attended by the Director, Advocacy Officer, a Unit Manager and Social Care Worker.

1.2

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

- Established working group to enhance and strengthen integration of education (formal/informal) on campus – project lead appointed along with membership from education (Oberstown Campus School), care and activities. Action plan and KPIs in place.
- Organised Oberstown Careers Day 2024 in October on campus as an integrated education and development event for young people.
- Introduced new young people's programmes including: substance misuse programme, provided by Crosscare; Tusla's NIAPP programme addressing sexually harmful behaviours; Traveller Mediation Programme.

1.3

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

- Established single point of contact for maintenance of PPMs (placement planning meetings). Action plan and KPIs in place.
- Created and filled a new post – Senior Operations Manager, Services Integration. Post holder joined in November 2024.
- Progressed PPM evaluation process with input from young people at Campus Council. Agreed to continue practice of post-meeting evaluation through keyworking sessions.

1.4

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

- Completed project to ensure young people have an exit plan in place, with input from external agencies, six weeks before leaving Oberstown.
- Updated Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for external agencies providing in-reach care to young people and their carers. Ongoing monitoring.
- Progressed work, education and vocational training opportunities to support young people both on campus and on leaving. Concluded Steps+ project on career guidance (funded by the Dormant Accounts Fund), with outputs integrated into Oberstown Activities offering.
- Presented young people with options for work and educational placements at Oberstown Careers Day 2024.

1.5

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

- Established Children's Rights Policy Framework (CRPF) as a standing agenda item at each Unit meeting.
- Developed process map and aide memoire to guide staff on relevant procedures.
- Developed CRPF training, delivered by Unit Manager at weekly team meetings.

OBERSTOWN CAREERS DAY 2024 INCLUDED OPTIONS FOR WORK AND EDUCATIONAL PLACEMENTS

GOAL 2

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

Business plan progress at 31 December 2024:

2.1

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

- Developed business case for early retirement pension scheme for frontline staff.

2.2

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

- Prepared practice supervision policy for rollout to Unit-based NSOs and RSCWs. Held socialisation training sessions with staff.
- Delivered coaching skills training for all line managers as part of supervision training project.

2.3

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

- Started CORU registration process for eligible RSCWs, NSOs and others with social care experience. Project lead identified and partnership established with Social Care Ireland. A total of 105 staff fully registered by end 2024, with a further 43 in progress (see page 60).
- Developed Workforce Management Framework aligned to Oberstown strategy, incorporating succession planning. Iterative process with presentations to the Board.
- Progressed graduate programme to ensure pipeline of appropriately qualified staff for Social Care Workers. Delivered presentations at Munster Technological University (MTU) and Dundalk Institute of Technology. Hosted visits to Oberstown for final year social care students from MTU, South East Technological University (SETU) and Blanchardstown Institute of Technology.

2.4

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

- Rolled out supervision training to all managers working with young people.
- Achieved certification for Oberstown's approach to psychological health and safety under ISO 45003 – first global standard on managing psychosocial risk. BSI assessor conducted audit and onsite assessment and audits at the end of December 2023, with official certification received in Q1 2024.

2.5

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

- Developed EDI strategy following consultation with Ibec.

**MORE THAN 100
REGISTERED
SOCIAL CARE
WORKERS**

GOAL 3

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

Business plan progress at 31 December 2024:

3.1

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

- Consulted with families regarding the PPM process. Input collected on an ongoing basis.

3.2

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

- Participated in multiagency working groups to support the delivery of the CEHOP® framework and to ensure the young person remains the focus.
- Engaged regularly with agencies including The Probation Service, An Garda Síochána National Youth Diversion Programme, Social Care Ireland, Youth Justice Strategy Working Group.

3.3

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

- Contributed to strategic and operational meetings on the Youth Justice Strategy 2021-2027, attended by the Oberstown Director.
- Established an engagement plan, with connections mapped and consolidated across the Oberstown stakeholder network. Actions progressed through events, hosted visits to Oberstown, participation in virtual events and in-person visits to external organisations.
- Completed projects with the Netherlands Helsinki Committee (NHC) and Young Perspectives (YOPE), including the ‘Walk in my shoes’ project and the MOSAIC international research project.

3.4

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

- Completed initiatives that enable young people and staff to contribute to the local community. Activities included: providing a Meals on Wheels service to local senior citizens; providing the annual Christmas dinner event for the Man O’ War Senior Citizens Group; delivering decorative Christmas wreaths made by the young people to local residents; decorating Lusk Nursing Home.
- Engaged with the local Man O’ War GAA club, including donating surplus gym equipment from the campus, providing car parking for special events, and working on a mural for the club.
- Completed Breath of Fresh Éire public art project in collaboration with An Garda Síochána Balbriggan and Gaisce – The President’s Award (see page 64).

3.5

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

- Contributed to strategic and operational meetings on the Youth Justice Strategy 2021-2027, attended by the Oberstown Director.
- Contributed to forums on youth diversion (Department of Justice) and probation (The Probation Service). Oberstown input provided by the Director and members of the Senior Management Team.

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN MULTIAGENCY WORKING GROUPS

GOAL 4

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

Business plan progress at 31 December 2024:

4.1

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

- Developed Fraud and Corruption training course and added it to the EazySAFE online learning platform in August 2024.
- Prepared a Fraud and Corruption policy, recommended by the Board Audit and Risk Committee for approval to the Board in September 2024.
- Included compliance with governance framework policies and procedures as a standing agenda item at campus management and departmental meetings.
- Established a Corporate Risk Register; Risk Management Policy approved by the Board and communicated to staff.
- Developed divisional risk registers.

4.2

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

- Embedded new reporting templates, including dashboard reporting and progress tracking system using Smartsheet for Oberstown Business Plan, HIQA compliance plan and audits.
- Conducted regular Board evaluation of reporting mechanisms, identifying current data capture inputs and outputs.

4.3

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

- Established decision making framework.

4.4

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

- Initiated project partnership with the Criminal Justice Open Research Dialogue, funded by the National Open Research Forum.

4.5

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

- Oberstown participated in national and international forums, workshops, seminars and conferences, represented by the Director and members of the Senior Management Team.
- Exhibited at the Social Care Ireland Conference in April 2024.
- Attended a round table meeting in December 2024 organised by the Department with stakeholders invited from the Courts Service, An Garda Síochána, The Probation Service, Irish Prison Reform Trust, Ombudsman for Children's Office, Extern, EPIC, the Department of Justice, Tusla.
- Hosted external visitors to the campus including members of the judiciary and youth justice experts and academics from national organisations and from the Netherlands.

DECISION
MAKING
FRAMEWORK
ESTABLISHED

GOAL 5

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

Business plan progress at 31 December 2024:

5.1

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

- Commenced project to analyse trends and patterns in numbers and characteristics of young people since 2016.

5.2

Develop a comprehensive plan to promote the sustainable development of Oberstown’s physical campus.

- Progressed Environmental Policy and Programme 2023-2026.
- Promoted sustainable, green procurement practices by including environmental, economic and social criteria in the procurement of supplies, services and works.
- Conducted ongoing awareness programmes for staff and young people on waste management, reduction and recycling measurements.
- Conducted food waste review in June and July 2024.

5.3

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

- Secured Board approval for Climate Action Roadmap.
- Achieved a place on the ISO 50001 accelerator course with SEAI.
- Developed, approved and implemented the Capital plan for 2024.

5.4

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

- Passed annual surveillance audit for ISO 45001 for the Oberstown Occupational Health and Safety Management System.
- Passed annual surveillance audit for ISO 9001:2015 for the campus Catering service.
- Conducted monthly H&S audits. Established Non-Conformity Register and notification system for ongoing monitoring.
- Developed Fire Safety Management System with support from external fire experts and OPW.

5.5

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

- Engaged with OPW and DCDE to develop project plan for upgrading and maintaining buildings.
- Developed building management system (BMS), including upgraded reporting metrics.
- Conducted ongoing monitoring of projects under the Public Spending Code. Discussed variance analysis at regular Senior Management Team meetings.

CLIMATE
ACTION
ROADMAP
APPROVED
AND
PROGRESSED

The CEHOP® framework

Oberstown delivers individualised care to each young person on campus. Each individual’s journey through care is informed by a CEHOP®, a comprehensive framework to address needs in five key areas – care, education, health, offending behaviour and preparation for leaving.

Care

- Placement planning process based on initial and ongoing needs assessment and focused on supporting each young person’s return to the community.
- Individual care plan with input from inter-disciplinary professional care team, family and other significant people in the young person’s life, including input from external agencies as required.
- Supports and services provided by a trained, expert multidisciplinary team.
- Young person’s voice is key at every stage of the process (see pages 40–42).

Education

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

Health

- Access to healthcare services for all young people on campus.
- Purpose-built medical suite managed by Clinical Nurse Manager working with two nurses and a Residential Social Care Worker (RSCW). The Health & Wellbeing team promote health and wellness of young people in Oberstown.
- Visiting GP, dentist, optician, podiatrist and physiotherapist providing services onsite.
- HSE Forensic Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (FCAMHS) provides psychiatric services to young people in Oberstown.
- Tusla’s ACTS (Assessment Consultation Therapy Service) provides multidisciplinary services to address behaviours associated with complex clinical needs (see page 23).

Oberstown Medical Suite activity 2024

GP clinic* appointments	1064
Nurse-led clinic appointments	2477
FCAMHS clinic appointments	136
Dental clinic appointments	241
Optician clinic appointments	64
Physiotherapy clinic appointments	198
Podiatrist clinic appointments	7
Routine hospital appointments	27
Hospital A&E visits	14

*GP and all other clinics held on campus in purpose-built Medical Suite



Offending behaviour

- Focus on working with young people to address factors associated with their offending behaviour.
- Programmes develop young people’s sense of responsibility and life skills and support their care on campus. Areas addressed include victim empathy, controlling impulsive behaviours, avoiding misuse of drugs and alcohol, and offence-specific courses based on individual needs (see pages 24–31).

Preparation for leaving

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

ACTS AT OBERSTOWN

Tusla’s ACTS (Assessment, Consultation and Therapy Service) has a dedicated team of six professionals on campus providing specialist multidisciplinary therapeutic support to young people to address behaviours associated with complex clinical needs.

The ACTS Oberstown team members are a Clinical Team Manager, a Senior Psychologist, Senior Speech and Language Therapist, a Senior Social Worker and two Social Care Leaders. They use the AMBIT framework (Adolescent Mentalization based Integrative Treatment Approach) – a whole-team approach designed for working with clients presenting with multiple and complex problems, and developed for young people who are typically underserved by mainstream community services.

The ACTS Oberstown team’s main purpose is to:

1. Multidisciplinary team (MDT) assessment for children coming into detention.
2. Provide an advisory service to the courts.
3. Conduct interventions to help children, families and networks of support to reduce the risk of children reoffending and returning to detention.
4. Offer signposting to community supports and services.
5. Support Oberstown to care for and manage children.

Young people are referred to ACTS by the Oberstown Health & Wellbeing team, Unit staff or FCAMHS. Every referral is allocated for an ACTS initial assessment of clinical need and is subject to a multidisciplinary clinical review.

Following initial assessment, each young person is allocated a clinician or clinicians based on their clinical needs and an ITP (individual therapy plan) is developed in consultation with the young person, and shared with the young person and those working with the young person. The ITP is reviewed at multidisciplinary team meetings.

Supporting young people as they transition back to the community is a key part of the service. This work focuses on mobilising supports and promoting engagement, and typically lasts up to a maximum of six weeks following discharge.

Young people's programmes 2024

Programmes are central to the Oberstown CEHOP® framework, helping young people address the underlying factors that contribute to their offending behaviour as well as promoting personal development and social skills.

The Oberstown Programmes team includes two expert facilitators who deliver most of the programmes on campus either themselves or in collaboration with other internal or external stakeholders. These collaborations are key in tailoring programmes to the individual needs of young people. For example, clinicians from the onsite Tusla ACTS (Assessment Consultation and Therapy Service) team support and direct the Programmes team in delivering individually targeted interventions in response to specific needs.

Programmes are delivered either in small groups or to individuals as targeted interventions. Some young people struggle in the group setting and work much better on a 1:1 basis.

Strong relationships between staff and young people help encourage participation in programmes, which is voluntary. Taking part can be challenging for some young people, as the subject matter addresses the factors that led them to crime and their detention. Many young people choose to participate, however, engaging with work that can be both hard and very rewarding. Young people know that engaging in programmes is viewed positively by the courts, probation service and senior management when considering suitability for campus jobs, permitted absences or requests to stay on campus past their 18th birthday. Participation in one programme often leads young people to sign up for more.

Life Connections, therapeutic play sessions, also help introduce young people to the core concepts of programme work, providing an appropriate space to build relationships and trust with young people.

Young people on remand who are new to the campus can initially be reluctant to engage in programmes, particularly if they are on a short remand. This generally improves once they get to know the programme facilitators and get feedback on the programmes and facilitators from their peers and residential unit staff.

Feedback from young people who completed various programmes during 2024 emphasised group dynamics, the need to be ready to engage in the work and the perceived relevance of the material as important factors influencing the level to which they engaged in particular programmes. The Programmes team considers this feedback in programme planning and delivery.

Other factors that can have an impact on young people's ability to participate in programmes are competing demands such as court, medical appointments, visits, activities and school.

Key developments in 2024

Outlines of the programmes delivered in 2024 are set out on pages 28 to 31. Key developments included:

Workshops

In 2024, internal and external workshops helped the Programmes team to extend its approach and work with a larger number of young people than might have been the case with purely multi-session, longer programmes which can require more focus and commitment. Workshops will continue to be a valuable part of the portfolio of interventions in 2025.

Planning multi-session programmes for young people on remand is challenging, due to the uncertainty about their length of stay on campus. In 2024, the Programmes team adapted existing resources to create and deliver workshops for young people on remand, initially as standalone interventions with a view to developing multi session programmes if needed.

‘Programmes are what you have to do to impress the judge. That’s why you do them at first. But you get something from programmes that will help you to deal with situations in the future and help you see the signs so you can stay out of some situations.’

Young person

Workshops delivered early in 2024 covered Emotion Regulation and Mental Health. A number of the young people who took part continued into full programmes. The young people on remand welcomed the workshops, especially those who may have struggled to focus in multi-session programmes. These interventions helped bridge the gap between early programme work, such as Decider and Real U, and more challenging programmes such as Respect and What Have I Done (see below for programme details).

Young people on long periods of remand cannot take part in certain offending behaviour programmes. In 2024, the Programmes team addressed this issue by devising and delivering a series of workshops covering subjects such as defensive thinking, responsibility and responses to crime. The workshops drew on

established programmes including Challenging Choices, What Have I Done? and Respect. The workshops were reflective in tone, but less offence-specific to ensure they could be targeted at young people who are on long periods of remand.

Following a pilot programme involving two mature young people on committal orders, who were well placed to compare them to the longer-form offending behaviour programmes, the Programmes team developed the workshops into a three-session programme called Responsibility. This new programme was delivered to young people on long-term remand.

Young people on remand in connection with road traffic offences are not easy to accommodate on multi-session, longer-term programmes such as Pro Social Driving. To address this, the Programmes team worked with the Road Safety Authority (RSA) to adapt its Wrecked.ie programme, which targets young people who represent a major risk group. The resulting road workshops can be delivered to young people on a standalone basis, and deal with issues such as driver distraction, drug driving, and impairment. Pilot workshops ran throughout July and were very well received by the young people. Barry Anderson of the RSA noted that the cohort of young people he gets to work with in Oberstown are often those who do not attend in the community or are extra hard to reach with this kind of information.

Workshops on Drug Awareness and Harm Reduction, piloted in December 2024, were developed in conjunction with the Crinan Project. This initiative focused on reaching young people who would not normally qualify for Crinan's Relapse Prevention Group, which focuses on young people on committal orders who are nearing the end of their sentence and will be returning to the community. Feedback from the young people was very positive and more workshops are planned for 2025.

Two other workshops focused primarily on young people on remand were delivered during 2024. Street Law and Street Doctors (see pages 29 and 30).

‘Once you’ve done a couple of programmes you get used to talking and it makes it easier. I would say to lads to do programmes, they are worth doing’

Young person

Crosscare

Oberstown welcomed Crosscare back on campus in March 2024. The Crosscare team attend on Monday and Friday mornings throughout the year, providing a much-needed individual drug counselling service to young people. Crosscare also support some young people after they leave Oberstown.

REAL U

Collaboration with Oberstown Campus School in delivering the REAL U programme continued in 2024. This personal development and sex education programme is delivered as part of the school timetable by a teacher and one of the programme facilitators, an arrangement which means the core REAL U modules are available to all young people on campus on committal orders who are willing to engage with the subject matter.

The Programmes team delivers elective modules on consent, contraception and STIs (sexually transmitted infections) outside the school timetable. The core REAL U modules provide a good basis for the Respect programme and are a reliable indicator of which young people may benefit from the programme.

Solas

The Solas Project team continued to offer support to young people on campus throughout 2024, attending campus once a week. Their work focused on the Irish Prison Service (IPS) transfer programme, catering for young people going directly from Oberstown into the IPS, or turning 18 while still on remand. A total of 13 young people transferred into the IPS in 2024.

Solas staff build relationships with young people in Oberstown that provides continuity and reassurance when they enter Wheatfield. The Solas team take a similar approach to young people who are returning to the community in their catchment area (Dublin inner city, D8 and D12).

Pro Social Driving

Pro Social Ireland ran three separate driver education programmes in 2024, building on the success of courses developed in 2023 which incorporate an element of practical mechanics. The programme is popular with young people, who say the courts are aware of the programme and view their participation in driver education as a positive sign. The Programmes team introduced a fun element to the practical sessions in 2024 – a Pit Stop Challenge involving a timed wheel change, with the added benefit of providing opportunities to reinforce practical learning gained on the course.

Life Connections

Life Connections therapeutic play workshops continued throughout 2024, covering topics including mental health, grief, loss, healthy relationships and emotional intelligence. These sessions were very popular with young people and played a significant role in introducing young people on remand to the core concepts of programme work. Some young people on committal orders also chose to attend multiple sessions of these workshops. A number of sessions were delivered during 2024 to young people on a 1:1 basis for specific reasons such as bereavement, decision making around prison transfer, and moving on from Oberstown.

Recording information and feedback

The Programmes team continued to work with Oberstown IT staff to develop improved ways of recording information about young people’s engagement with programmes. This information helps to inform placement planning meetings and keyworkers about relevant available programmes. Progress in 2024 included adjustments to programme completion reports to reflect young people’s feedback, along with holding feedback sessions.

The workshop format extends the capacity of the Programmes team to meet the needs of individual young people on campus in a more tailored way. For example, one young person was able to complete a series of three workshops on his own prior to participation in the Pro Social Driving programme in October 2024. Without the flexibility of workshops he may not have had the opportunity to learn and then demonstrate a degree of focus which was absent in many of his interactions across other areas of the campus.

Traveller Mediation Programme – young people’s conflict skills training

The Traveller Mediation Programme was a new offering during 2024. The programme aims to equip young people with communication and conflict-related skills, providing them with opportunities to explore conflict and problem solving and empowering them to use a conflict management process. While much of the material in the programme is tailored for members of the Traveller community, the skills are applicable to any young person and the programme was offered to a cross-section of young people on campus. The programme was delivered as a collaboration between the Traveller Mediation Service, Oberstown’s Programmes team and Oberstown Campus School staff.

Baseline

During 2023, Oberstown worked with the Probation Service along with ACTS and NIAPP (Tusla’s community-based National Inter-Agency Prevention Programme) to develop a shared tool for working with young people who engage in harmful sexual behaviour. The resulting Baseline programme was introduced in February 2024 as an offence-specific intervention conducted weekly throughout the duration of a young person’s sentence.

Facilitated on campus in conjunction with an external stakeholder NIAPP, Baseline requires considerable and consistent commitment from

the participants, focusing on topics such as coping with emotions, pathways to offending behaviour, relationships and addictive behaviour. Participants are chosen based on specific offences and in collaboration with stakeholders on and off campus.

The programme can be delivered on a rolling basis over 18 months with young people taking part as required. Collaboration with NIAPP means that any modules not completed when a young person leaves Oberstown can be continued through the community-based service.

Communication and collaboration on campus

Throughout 2024 efforts were made to improve communication and collaboration within Oberstown, taking into account the wide variety of therapeutic interventions being provided on campus as well as the wide variety of activities on offer. Coordination is essential to identify which young people are involved in these activities, avoid scheduling difficulties and manage competing demands that may be placed on some young people.

Meetings to address these issues involved the Programmes team, Oberstown Campus School, Activities, Advocacy, ACTS, Steps+ and the campus Chaplain. Better communication has helped improve the provision of the services that support young people to address the reasons behind their offending behaviour as well as building relationships between stakeholders.

Enhanced communication during 2024 included the Programmes team attending the Campus Council meeting in March to speak with the young people’s representatives about their experiences of programmes offered on campus. This provided valuable insights into young people’s views of what works and what does not work, as well as identifying what additional programmes they might like to do. Discussions also covered the challenges for young people in attending programmes and explored possible solutions.

PROGRAMMES
DELIVERED IN
2024

Decider Life Skills

Based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT), the programme uses skills under four core skill sets: Distress Tolerance, Mindfulness, Emotional Regulation and Interpersonal Effectiveness. The programme uses a lifejacket metaphor as a fun and memorable way to introduce young people to the skills that keep them afloat when an “emotional emergency” occurs. Young people learn coping skills and develop the resilience required to deal with impulsive behaviours.

Deliveries 2024: 24

Duration: January to December

Participants: 44

No. completed: 42

Facilitators: Oberstown Programmes staff Pauline Murphy and Sam Maund.

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.

This programme is available to young people on a committal order who meet the criteria for inclusion. Not all young people on campus will complete the programme as not all will meet the criteria for inclusion and those on remand are not eligible. Six groups ran throughout the whole year with 9 young people completing the programme.

Deliveries 2024: 6

Duration: January to December

Participants: 10

No. completed: 9

Facilitators: Oberstown Programmes staff Pauline Murphy and Sam Maund, and the Oberstown Social Worker/Designated Liaison Person

REAL U

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

Deliveries 2024: 15 groups for the REAL U core modules, 10 in collaboration with Oberstown Campus School, 1 in collaboration with the ACTS team, and 4 delivered by Oberstown programme facilitators.

Duration: 4 sessions per week during school term time February to July; September to December. Additional sessions delivered outside school hours by Oberstown programme staff.

Participants: 32

No. completed: Core modules – 28. Electives – 17 (consent), 10 (STIs), 6 (contraception)

Facilitators: Oberstown staff, teachers from the Oberstown Campus School, ACTS staff, Medical team staff

Victim Empathy

‘You get to learn that what you did is not fair to the victims and the victims’ families, and your own family as well’

Young person

Crinan Programme

‘Four of us did Crinan, once a week for eight weeks. Taught us all about drug relapse, the risks. You’re not around drugs while you’re in here so we’ll see how it goes, but I’ll take those ideas with me.’

Young person

Respect: Dating Detox

Dating Detox is an evidence-based programme, developed by Respect, a UK based domestic abuse charity. It aims to support young people to address issues around their behaviour in relationships. This work can be very challenging and is only suitable for delivery to young people who have experience of group work and have completed the core REALU modules.

The programme extends the work on boundaries and sexual consent, beyond the REAL U programme. It covers more specific work around jealousy in relationships, masculinity and what it means to be a man, dealing with anger and abusive behaviour, plus healthy attitudes towards conflict resolution within relationships.

Oberstown focused on six core sessions in 2024: Consent and Online Behaviour (2 sessions); Respect and Healthy Relationships (4 sessions).

Deliveries 2024: 4

Duration: July-August and November-December

Participants: 13

No. completed: 13.

Facilitators: Oberstown staff Sam Maund, Pauline Murphy, Craig Knight and Darren Bryan.

Pro Social Driver Behaviour Programme

Pro Social Ireland delivers this programme, designed for any young person who has road traffic offences and is willing to challenge their driving behaviour.

The programme aims to re-educate and rehabilitate participants by firstly challenging established thinking patterns and attitudes, thus bringing about a new-found awareness and understanding in relation to their driving behaviour. The aims are to reduce re-offending, reduce road collisions and serious injury and fatality. Content is adapted to suit the young people in Oberstown. Mechanics worked with young people to help increase their understanding of the technical aspects of working with cars.

The programme consists of four modules delivered once a week over four weeks to groups of two young people at a time.

Deliveries 2024: 3

Duration: March; July; October.

Participants: 10

No. completed: 10

Facilitators: External, including car mechanics, supervision by Oberstown staff.

Life Connections

Workshops by Life Connections featuring open conversations about emotional, social and mental health issues. Topics include mental health, grief, loss, healthy relationships and emotional intelligence. The conversational delivery is enhanced with the use of a sensory activity, helping the facilitator and participant to build a working relationship and allowing the participant to engage with the topic as much or as little as they are comfortable. The programme provides a safe space for young people to engage with a professional psychotherapist, who is not connected to Oberstown, through the medium of play.

Deliveries 2024: Four 45min sessions ran 2 evenings per week, every second week, with 1 or 2 young people at each session.

Duration: July to December

Participants: 76 including one-off and multiple sessions

No. completed: 76, including 9 young people engaging in 10 or more sessions and 27 in 5 or more sessions.

Facilitator: External facilitators with supervision by care staff or Programme team facilitators

Traveller Mediation Programme – Young People’s Conflict Skills Training

Delivered as a collaboration between the Traveller Mediation Service, Oberstown’s Programmes team and Oberstown Campus School, the programme focuses on communication and conflict-related skills, encouraging problem solving and conflict management. Much of the material is tailored for members of the Traveller community, but the skills are applicable to any young person and the programme is offered to a cross-section of young people on campus.

This is a new programme, introduced in June 2024. Young people receive a certificate from the Traveller Mediation Service upon completion.

Deliveries 2024: 2 (a 6-week programme with weekly sessions of 90 minutes)
Duration: June-July; October-November.
Participants: 10 (4 non-Traveller)
No. completed: 10
Facilitators: External (Traveller Mediation Service) with Oberstown Traveller Link worker, Programmes team and Oberstown Campus School staff.

Street Doctors

Street Doctors is a registered charity run by volunteer junior doctors and medical students. They teach life-saving first aid to young people at risk of violent crime and drug use. The sessions are well received by young people. In 2024, facilitators noted a consistent theme of drug misuse when young people spoke of their experiences of unconsciousness. This led later in the year to the introduction of the Harm Reduction Workshops delivered by the Crinan team.

Deliveries 2024: 2 (each programme has 2 sessions of 90 minutes)
Duration: April and July
Participants: 15
No. completed: 15
Facilitators: External facilitators, volunteer student doctors, co-facilitated by Programmes team.

Crinan Drug Relapse Prevention

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

The Crinan team also deliver workshops on harm reduction and drug awareness in order to involve some young people who were not able to participate in the full relapse prevention programme.

Driving Programmes

‘I learned simple things about car safety, putting on your seatbelt and not looking at the phone, that kind of thing. I’ll do that now. I wouldn’t do that before.’

Young person

Deliveries 2024: 1 (a series of 8 modules lasting 60 minutes each)
Duration: June to August 2024 (full programme); December 2024 (workshops)
Participants: 5 (full); 6 (harm reduction and drug awareness workshops)
No. completed: 5 (full programme); 6 (workshops)
Facilitators: External (Crinan).

IPS Prison Transfer Programme – Wheatfield Proof

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

The programme takes place once a week, over eight weeks, during evening activities.
Deliveries 2024: 19 on a 1:1 basis (one session each week over 8 weeks)
Duration: 8 sessions once a week

Participants: 19 (13 transferring into the Irish Prison Service on committal sentences; 6 on remand who passed their 18th birthday before their cases were decided)
No. completed: 19
Facilitators: External (Solas Project).

Baseline

The Baseline programme is an offence-specific programme focusing on harmful sexual behaviour. Introduced in February 2024, it is facilitated in conjunction with external stakeholder NIAPP (Tusla’s community-based National Inter-Agency Prevention Programme), ACTS and the Probation Service. Sessions take place weekly for the duration of a young person’s sentence. Baseline requires considerable and consistent commitment from the participants, covering topics including coping with emotions, pathways to offending behaviour, relationships and addictive behaviour. Participants are chosen in collaboration with stakeholders on and off campus. Collaboration with NIAPP means that any modules not completed when a young person leaves Oberstown can be continued through the community-based service.

Eight young people engaged in elements of this programme during 2024, with between two and four young people engaging in each session.

The programme is delivered by Lisa O’Loughlan NIAPP in collaboration with Sam Maund, programmes team and supported by Janice McCabe, probation and Angela Tuite, ACTS.

Deliveries 2024: Weekly from February 2024
Duration: One session per week of 60 minutes.
Participants: 8
No. completed: Rolling programme
Facilitators: External facilitators from NIAPP, ACTS and the Probation Service along with Programmes team facilitators.

RSA Wrecked.ie Workshop

Wrecked.ie is a Road Safety Authority (RSA) initiative that uses real-life stories to tell the consequences of road traffic collisions and other life-changing events that happen on Irish roads. The workshops cover themes including driver distraction, drug driving, road users’ impairment, driving without insurance, modified cars and driving when using a mobile phone

In July 2024, young people attended a pilot Road Safety Workshop, developed for young people in Oberstown following discussions between the Programmes team and Barry Anderson of the RSA (Road Safety Authority). Further workshops were held in November.

The RSA noted that the cohort of young people at workshops in Oberstown are often those who do not attend in the community or are extra hard to reach with this kind of information. The RSA is planning to deliver more workshops at Oberstown and is working with the Probation Service to develop a programme for young people in the community.

Deliveries 2024: 2
Duration: July and November, workshops last 90 minutes.
Participants: 11
No. completed: 11
Facilitators: External facilitator Barry Anderson from the RSA and co-facilitated by internal programme facilitators Sam Maund and Pauline Murphy.

Street Law

Delivered by trainee solicitors, Street Law is an initiative from the Law Society of Ireland aimed at promoting a better understanding of legal matters including equality and access to law. The Street Law Programme is adapted for the young people in Oberstown, comprising two separate workshops – one covering general information and legal

terms, the other relating to rights and responsibilities during stop and search.

Deliveries 2024: 2
Duration: March, each workshop session takes 90 minutes.
Participants: 7
No. completed: 7
Facilitators: Four trainee solicitors (two in each workshop) supported by Programme team facilitators.

Emotions workshops

A series of three workshops introduced early in 2024 to bridge the gap between early programme work, such as Decider or Real U, and later, more intensive group work involved in programmes including the What Have I Done? and Respect: Dating Detox programmes. The workshops cater for young people who are either new to programme work or those who may have completed some work but need further grounding in emotional awareness.

Deliveries 2024: 21
Duration: Each workshop session takes 60 minutes.
Participants: 23
No. completed: 23
Facilitators: Oberstown Programmes team facilitators.

Responsibility Programme

Aimed at involving young people on long-term remand in productive discussions around how and when they take responsibility for their own actions. The Responsibility programme is based on the premise that young people have the opportunity to choose how they wish to respond to their circumstances. By emphasising young people’s autonomy and control over whatever situation they may find themselves in, they start to realise the possibilities and the fact that responsibility is empowering.

These workshops serve as either an alternative offending behaviour programme for long-term remands, or as a bridging programme for young people seeking to do something substantial but not yet ready for more challenging group work.

Deliveries 2024: 3
Duration: July, August, November. Three sessions of 60 minutes each.
Participants: 6
No. completed: 6
Facilitators: Oberstown Programmes team facilitators.

Decider Programme:

‘Decider programme will help me make better decisions when I get out, man, stuff like that. Thinking before I do things, breathe. Pick up new things from that programme each week.’

Vocational skills and work opportunities



Young people work on and maintain a purpose-built horticultural area on campus, featuring flower beds, polytunnels growing market produce and a quiet corner set aside as a memorial garden.

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Placement planning – equipping young people for reintegration into society following release – is the focus of individualised care provided at Oberstown. The campus offers young people a range of opportunities to develop vocational skills along with raising their awareness of employment and career opportunities.

Horticultural training programme

Oberstown has a purpose-built horticultural area and has developed a bespoke practical vocational training programme. In 2024, the Oberstown Horticultural Programme Coordinator trained 15 young people, with each participant attending sessions over a three-month period.

Project funded by the Irish Government's Dormant Accounts Fund.



Fitness training courses and qualifications

Image Fitness partners with Oberstown to deliver National Elite Fitness Professional Certificate Level 3 and Level 4 courses to young people and staff on campus. These industry-leading comprehensive programmes give participants the knowledge and skills to become certified fitness instructors or personal trainers.

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

Completing these courses equips young people to pursue a career as a personal trainer or fitness instructor in various fitness settings. In 2024, 19 young people completed their Level 3 certificate and 8 young people went on to complete the Level 4 certificate.

Image Fitness offers each successful participant assistance in finding a position in the fitness industry once they leave Oberstown. In recent years, Image Fitness has worked with Oberstown to arrange for young people to gain work placements with national gym chain FLYEfit.

Project funded by the Irish Government's Dormant Accounts Fund.



Catering work experience

Coffee van business

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

Young people train in the coffee van business over a four-month period. In 2024, twelve young people worked in the coffee van, with two of them gaining employment in catering roles on leaving Oberstown. All young people working in the coffee van receive industry-recognised training in food hygiene (HAACP). In 2024, Java Republic provided barista training courses leading to qualifications for 12 young people.

Project funded by the Irish Government's Dormant Accounts Fund.

Kitchen work experience

The Catering Team provides training and work experience to young people in the campus kitchen. In 2024, 15 young people worked in the kitchen, training in food hygiene (HAACP) with an option to complete a QQI Level 3 qualification in Food Production.



Forklift training licence and warehousing skills

Work continued in 2024 on the project to give young people at Oberstown the opportunity to train in the skills required to work in the warehousing and logistics sector, including working with forklift and pallet trucks. Oberstown is partnering with Jungheinrich, a German multinational long established in Ireland, which supplies complete solutions for warehouses, including racking and truck systems.

Preparatory work focused on the on-campus training facility continued in 2024, with training of young people due to start in 2025. Oberstown staff trained as instructors by Jungheinrich will run the programme. In 2024, one young person gained a forklift licence after training with Jungheinrich on permitted leave from the campus.

Project funded by the Irish Government's Dormant Accounts Fund.

Top left: Oberstown's education and skills partnership with coffee company Java Republic supports the coffee van project. **Above:** Preparations and testing of the forklift training facility – a repurposed space in the old school – progressed during 2024.

INDUSTRY SKILLS CERTIFICATES COURSES

Oberstown offers young people courses leading to certificates that enhance their employment credentials. These include:

Manual Handling – an essential Health and Safety requirement in many workplaces – 32 young people in 2024

SafePass – a safety awareness qualification which is a prerequisite for working in the construction sector – 16 young people in 2024

HACCP Food Safety – 27 young people trained in 2024

Fire Safety Awareness – an essential Health and Safety requirement in many settings – 1 young person certified in a pilot to test suitability of course; training offering planned to commence Q3 2025.

Decorating certificate – recognition of the skills learned through practical instruction and experience on campus – 10 young people in 2024

Young people at Oberstown Campus School completed 27 QQI modules in 2024.

MECHANICS' WORKSHOPS

Young people take part in the Pro Social Ireland Driving and Garage Project, a programme to address dangerous driving behaviour. Technical workshops give participants a detailed understanding of the dangers of car modifications, unregulated engine tuning and the negative impacts of dangerous driving practices. The programme also offers a more conventional, hands-on experience of working with cars, examining design functions, diagnosing and fixing minor faults, minor panel beating and car detailing (advanced car valeting). The programme is delivered through 1:1 tuition with two qualified mechanics from Pro Social Ireland. In 2024, 10 young people completed the programme.

Below: A young person gains hands-on training in basic car mechanics in the campus car workshop, with mechanic Leslie O'Donnell.



Left: The Oberstown 'Hear I Am' podcast room, built by young people and staff, has become a key skills and personal development space on campus.
Below: (left to right): Conor Reid, Sound Engineer with project partner Frontline Films; Dylan Owens, Digital Activities Tutor; John Smith, Oberstown Activities Coordinator.



Podcast and digital production skills

Oberstown built a podcast studio in Q4 2023 as phase one of 'Hear I Am', a creative education project. The Activities Coordinator and staff worked with young people to renovate, soundproof and decorate a room in an old building on campus that is being repurposed as a practical skills workshops area. A programme of podcast recordings took place in 2024 in collaboration with external experts from the creative industries. The project exposes young people to the processes and technologies involved in this area of the creative industries – from the physical construction of the podcast room through content creation to the recording technology involved in podcast production. It has led to several key connections for future collaboration on this and other creative skills development programmes in the coming years.

Funded through the Creative Youth Nurture Fund, part of the Creative Ireland programme administered by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.





Top: A young person worked as 'official' photographer at the careers event – part of a project supervised by his art teacher.

Above: Bernadette Walsh of careersportal.ie speaking with a young person about Steps+.

Right: A young person conducts a roving mic interview with Activities team member Paul Keegan and 'Hear I Am' podcast director Kim Bartley of Frontline Films.



Campus careers day

In October 2024, Oberstown hosted its first ever careers day on campus. Representatives of 23 organisations attended, offering careers and vocational education advice and opportunities. Every young person on campus had the opportunity to meet the employers.

The event was a success, connecting with potential employers, careers guidance advisers and training providers, helping to raise awareness of Oberstown's work and creating opportunities for young people. These connections are currently being developed with a view to expanding the range of work experience and job options available to young people in preparation for leaving Oberstown.



Above: Hannah Doyle, W2W Relationship Coordinator and Derek Byrne, W2W CEO

Steps+

The Steps+ project is a career guidance platform that helps young people in Oberstown to explore their skills, interests and strengths and link these to education, training, and employment opportunities.

In 2024 the Steps+ App was enhanced to include a work experience tracking system to streamline the process of securing and processing work experience on and off the campus. Further developments on the Steps+ App included a certified scoring system for all training and programmes on the campus.

Project funded by the Irish Government's Dormant Accounts Fund.



Way 2 Work

Way 2 Work (W2W) provides individual mentor-mentee, training, and employment programmes for young people in care or detention. W2W focuses on young people (aged 16-23 years) referred by Tusla or Oberstown.

In 2024, eight young people engaged with W2W for training and mentoring, with outcomes including:

- one young person securing employment on a farm after taking part in the mentoring programme and completing a course in Milking Process Technique, QQI Level 6 with FRS Training in conjunction with Teagasc and Animal Health Ireland.
- one young person completing a 5-day Construction course post-release, gaining industry-relevant certificates including Manual Handling, Working at Heights, MEWPs (cherry pickers), Abrasive Wheels (grinders) and PAT (portable appliance testing).
- young people training in SafePass and Manual Handling training provided through W2W.
- one young person securing a place in Youth Reach to continue a QQI Level 3 and progress an apprenticeship.

Young people's participation

Oberstown's strategy commits the organisation to "child-centred, individualised, rights-based care and education" and to "enhance and mainstream the participation and influence of young people in decision making at all levels". Rule 7 of the 12 Campus Rules and its associated Participation Policy focuses on supporting young people "to access information and effective complaints mechanisms, and have their voices heard and participate in decisions made about them".

Structures helping to put this approach into practice include open access to the Advocacy Officer and participation in placement planning meetings (PPMs), the Student Council and Campus Council. Members of the Board of Management's Young People Committee regularly meet with young people after each Board meeting to discuss matters of interest (see page 47). A key goal is to ensure that participation is part of everyday life on campus, ensuring that young people's input is heard and respected in interactions between individuals at all levels.

Advocacy Officer

The role of the Advocacy Officer is well established on campus, providing a vital link between young people, campus management and the Board. Young people know they can raise concerns or suggestions with Gráinne Smyth, the Advocacy Officer, and they will be taken seriously. The Advocacy Officer prepares regular reports to the Board and its Young People Committee.

The Advocacy Officer oversees the campus complaints procedure for all matters that do not have

a child protection element. (Child protection matters are taken to the Designated Liaison Person for Child Protection – see page 42.)

Young people made 17 complaints through the advocacy service in 2024, up from 11 in 2023. The Advocacy Officer recorded 392 advocacy issues in 2024, a fall of 34 on the previous year.

The Advocacy Officer liaises with external agencies and promotes best practice. In 2024, this aspect of advocacy and participation included:

- Sharing participation experience (virtually) at the Netherlands Helsinki Committee 'Promising Practices' event with organisations including Young Perspectives (YOPE) and Penal Reform International.
- Working on the team that facilitated Oberstown's 'Walk in my shoes' sessions presented by young people participating in this collaborative 'Giving Back' session with Netherlands Helsinki Project and YOPE (see page 64).
- Liaising with the EPIC (Empowering People in Care) participation team which launched its leadership programme at Oberstown in 2024.
- Attending the 'Leading Lundy Community of Practice' event at Queen's University Belfast, networking with Irish and international agencies and experts.
- Contributing to research into child-friendly participation and complaint practices with Shane Murdoch, National Practice Lead of VOYCE New Zealand. This was a virtual meeting along with Brian Hogan, Oberstown Deputy Director.
- Presenting on participation at the Mary Immaculate College (MIC) Thurles Summer School 2024 at a session hosted by the Ombudsman for Children's Office (OCO). Following the meeting, the OCO invited Oberstown to collaborate on a paper for submission to the 2025 World Congress on Family Law and Children's Rights in Cambridge University in the UK.

- Coordinating young people's input to the visit to Oberstown of the Oireachtas Committee on Key Issues Affecting the Traveller Community. The Committee met young people participating in Oberstown's Traveller engagement group on conflict and mediation (see page 66).
- Representing Oberstown at an Irish Prison Service co-creation workshop on implementing an Expert by Experience role.
- Facilitating a research visit to Oberstown by Alison Coyne, Research Officer at the Department of Justice. Alison met with nine young people on campus as part of her UCD PhD Law project, co-funded by the Irish Research Council and the Probation Service, on pathways for young people leaving detention.
- Attending a Penal Reform International knowledge exchange event in Sofia, Bulgaria including a visit to the only youth detention facility in Bulgaria.
- Leading Oberstown's participation in Data MOSAIC (MONitoring the SAFety of Imprisoned Children) project, run by Penal Reform International. Delegates from the MOSAIC project visited campus over the year and worked with the Advocacy Officer, IT Project Lead and General Manager – Business & Compliance to incorporate data collection into the Oberstown CMS (case management system).

Campus Council 2024

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

- Meetings with the Oberstown Board Young People Committee. Young people from the Campus Council met members of the Young People Committee following each full Board meeting during the year. The young people used this opportunity to raise issues important to them concerning everyday life at Oberstown.

A key goal is to ensure that participation is part of everyday life on campus, ensuring that young people's input is heard and respected in interactions between individuals at all levels.'

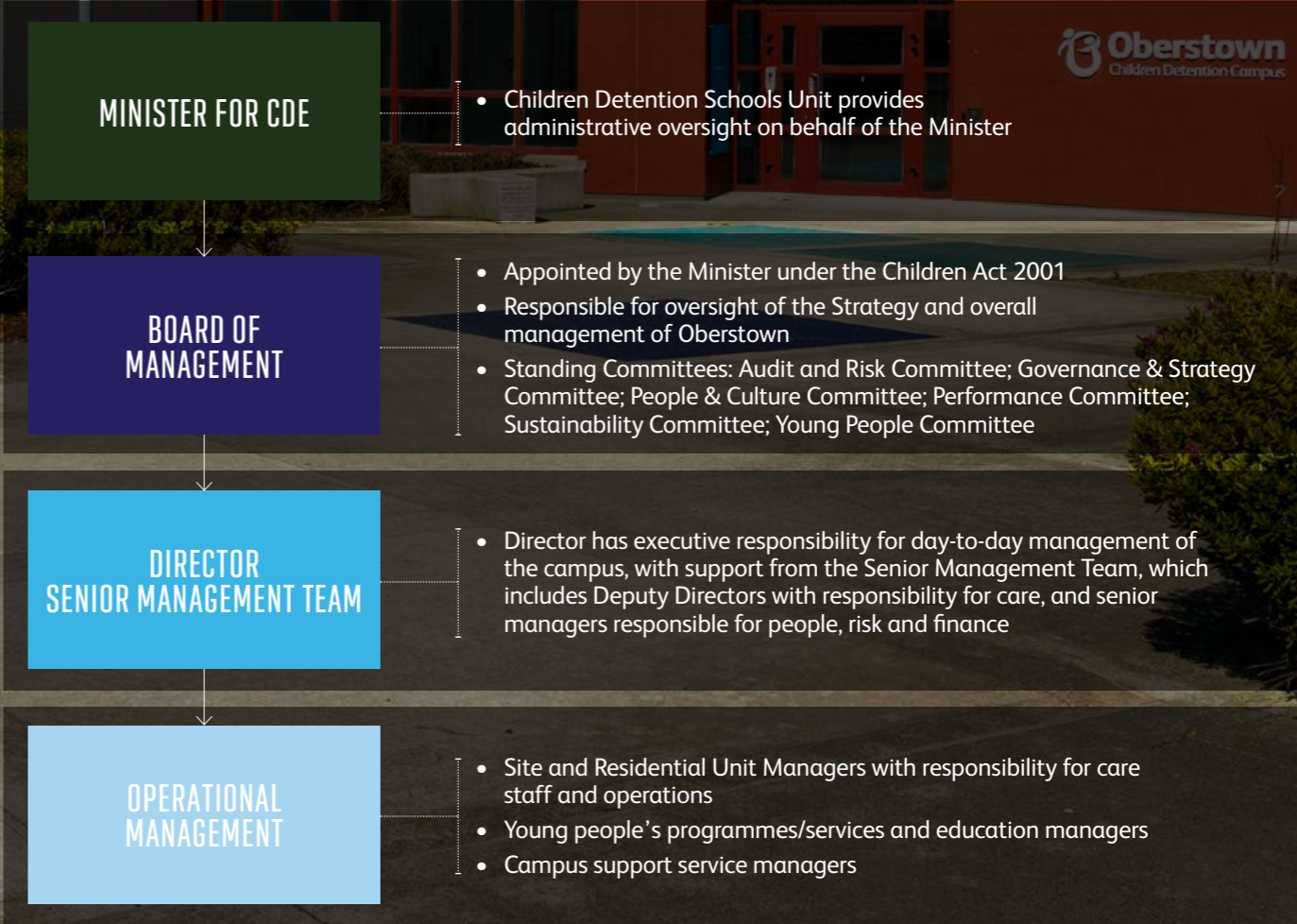
- Meeting members of the Data MOSAIC project in two focus sessions to discuss their experiences and how these are being recorded on the Oberstown CMS.
- Meeting members of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth on their visit to the campus in February 2024. Young people spoke about their work on the Campus Council, the opportunities available for them on campus, young people's participation in staff induction, and engaging in projects including the Giving Back and the Creative Ireland Nurture Fund podcast project.
- Discussing programmes in meetings with facilitators from the Oberstown Young People's Programmes team. The absence of a dedicated programme delivery space was a key topic, with young people offering their views on how a programmes room should be set up and equipped to maximise benefit from programmes sessions. The Programmes team facilitators included the Campus Council members' input in proposals to campus management.
- Contributing to consultations on a range of issues, including placement planning meetings (PPMs), permitted absences, work experience, restrictive practices, procedure reviews, ratings and activities.
- Meeting the Education and Training Support Worker about the young people's participation in the inaugural Oberstown Careers Day in October 2024 (see page 38).
- Discussing interior design proposals for the residential units with the designer.

OBERSTOWN'S CHILD PROTECTION SERVICE

Oberstown has a Social Worker who is the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for Child Protection on campus. Each residential unit has a poster showing DLP Bill Byrne along with information on how young people or staff can report concerns about the safety of any young person. Bill meets with every young person who arrives on campus, whether new or returning. The DLP reports to the Board of Management monthly and has a monthly meeting with a Deputy Director to review the DLP Database and facilitate managerial oversight of child protection matters. In 2024, there were 190 matters referred to or followed up by the DLP in line with campus policy and Children First legislation. This was up from 180 in 2023. Mandated Reports on 27 of these matters were forwarded to Tusla, the Child and Family Agency; 12 of the reports referred to matters internal to Oberstown. Of these, one related to a physical intervention by staff and nine to assaults by one young person on another. Eight Mandated Reports related to allegations against Gardaí. The DLP referred 8 matters to the Garda Ombudsman on behalf of young people. The Social Worker also fulfils a valuable educational role on campus, providing staff training in Children First/Safeguarding and advice to all staff around any matters relating to child protection. In 2024, work started on preparing all Mandated Reporters on campus to be Primary Reporters to Tusla, instead of referring reports from Oberstown through the DLP, a practice established since the Children First Act 2015 became law. This change process is scheduled to be completed in 2025.

OBERSTOWN GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

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



BOARD OF MANAGEMENT & BOARD COMMITTEES

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

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

Board membership

The Board of Management of Oberstown has 12 members plus a Chairperson and includes representatives of the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE), the Department of Education, Tusla, two representatives from the local community and two independent members of staff, with five members identified via the Public Appointments Service (PAS) process. Members are appointed for a term, renewable, of up to four years. Profiles of the Board members are provided on pages 48–49.

Board meetings

Under the Children Act 2001, the Board must hold as many meetings as necessary for the performance of its functions and is entitled to determine its own procedure. There were 11 regular Board meetings in 2024. The Board Secretary circulates a meeting update to staff on behalf of the Chairperson and publishes it on the Oberstown website following each Board meeting.

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

Board committees

The Board reorganised its standing committees in May 2024, combining the Governance and Strategy committees into the new Governance & Strategy Committee. There were six standing committees at 31 December 2024 – Audit and Risk, Governance & Strategy, Performance, People and Culture, Sustainability, Young People. See below for overview reports on committee activities (no summary for the Performance Committee as it deals with internal personnel issues).

Dates of the Board of Management and committee meetings, and details of attendance, are set out in Appendix 1. The Committees all operate in line with clearly defined Terms of Reference, approved by the Board and set out in the Oberstown Governance Handbook.

Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee supports the Board of Management in relation to its responsibilities for issues of risk, control and governance. The Committee is independent from the financial management of the organisation and ensures that the internal control systems,

including audit activities, are monitored actively and independently. Revised terms of reference were reviewed and approved by the Board in November 2024. The Committee has four members; its members during 2024 were: Bernadette Costello (Chair), Koulla Yiasouma, John McDaid, Jennifer Gargan and Elizabeth Davey (joined 1 May 2024).

The Audit and Risk Committee met six times in 2024. Its work included:

- Met representatives from the office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) to discuss the external audit of the 2023 financial statements. The statements received a clean audit; the committee reviewed the audited financial statements and recommended approval by the Board.
- Provided an Annual Assurance Report to the Board of Management on the review of effectiveness of Internal Control.
- Reviewed a Data Protection Report (May 2024).
- Reviewed reports from the State Claims Agency (May, September and November 2024).
- Monitored scheduled internal audits across the year, including:
 - March – Internal Financial Controls.
 - October – Culture Review Phase I.
 - November – Catering and Supplies.
- Reviewed work by Oberstown and Forvis Mazars on annual leave and related payroll accruals for the 2023 financial statements.
- Tracked implementation of all audit recommendations.
- Provided regular review and interrogation of financial information and budget vs actual profile.

- Oversaw a review of the Oberstown Risk Management Framework including risk management training on revisions to the Risk Policy, risk management categories and Risk Appetite Statement.

Governance & Strategy Committee

The Governance & Strategy Committee was established on 1 May 2024 when the Governance and Strategy Committees merged. This summary covers the work of all three committees during 2024.

The Committee's main objective is to assure the Board of the proper governance of Oberstown's activities, and to support the development of the strategic planning and implementation process. The Committee also oversees the work of Oberstown's Research Advisory Group. Its terms of reference were reviewed and approved by the Board of Management in May 2024.

The Committee has five members; its members at the end of 2024 were: John McDaid (Chair), Koulla Yiasouma, Martin Quigley, Una Ní Dubhghaill and Emma Shanahan.

The Governance Committee met four times in 2024. Before merging into the new body, the Governance Committee and Strategy Committee each met twice in 2024. Work in 2024 included:

- Developed and completed the committee's workplan for 2024, providing the Board with regular updates.
- Monitored progress against the Oberstown Business Plan 2024.
- Worked with the Senior Management Team to draft a Business Plan for 2025.
- Oversaw completion of an external Board evaluation, facilitated by Board Excellence.

BOARD ACTIONS 2024

- Monitored the implementation of the Oberstown Strategy 2022-2026 and approved the Annual Business Plan 2024, updated to include the HIQA Compliance Plan, supporting the Director to deliver in key strategic areas.
- Oversaw the introduction of a new Senior Management Structure, including the appointment of people to new posts: Head of Corporate Services, Senior Manager Care Operations, Senior Manager Care Integration.
- Approved the Financial Statements and Statement of Internal Control for 2023.
- Interrogated data on the use of restrictive practices submitted for each Board meeting, setting clear expectations for their reduced use in line with Oberstown policy.
- Approved the campus Crisis Management Plan.
- Approved the Risk Management Policy and Risk Appetite Statement.
- Reviewed the Risk Register.
- Approved the campus Energy Policy, Environmental Policy and Climate Action Road Map.
- Participated in a Board Evaluation process conducted by Board Excellence.
- Reviewed new HR policies.
- Approved the Oberstown Code of Practice Compliance Checklist and submitted the checklist to DCDE.
- Approved a new Research Strategy developed by the Research Advisory Group.
- Approved a new structure for Board Committees.

Board and committee meetings
January - December 2024

See Appendix 1 for full details of attendance.

11
Board meetings

30
Committee meetings



- Updated Board members on training opportunities.
- Oversight of Departmental Agreements – reviewed the Performance Delivery Agreement and Oversight Agreement.
- Completed the Code of Practice Checklist. Gaps identified were added to the Committee workplan along with actions to address these issues, including referral to relevant Board Committees as appropriate.
- Organised two Board away days. In January 2024, the sessions focused on Board performance and skills and stakeholder engagement. In September 2024, the Board received training on Children’s Rights and Governance.
- Oversaw work on a new Research Strategy developed by the Research Advisory Group and approved by the Board in November 2024.
- Established a group to review the Children’s Rights Policy Framework.

People & Culture Committee
The People & Culture Committee supports the Board in developing and implementing the Oberstown people and culture strategy. Revised terms of reference were reviewed and approved by the Board in November 2024.

The Committee has five members; its members at 31 December 2024 were: Koulla Yiasouma (Chair), Jennifer Gargan, William O’Rourke, Dymphna Sherry and Emma Shanahan.

The People & Culture Committee met four times in 2024. Its work included:

- Recommended a revised Senior Management Structure to the Board for approval in February 2024.
- Provided oversight on behalf of the Board of the quarterly HR returns provided to DCDE.
- Provided oversight of the CORU Registration Project for RSCWs.
- Approved new HR policies for Board review and approval.
- Monitored and interrogated progress of assigned action items within Business Plan 2024 and HIQA Compliance Plan.
- Provided oversight of the implementation of the 2024 strategic priorities for Goal 2 of Strategy 2022-2026.
- Monitored and reported on the resolution of issues concerning annual leave (work performed with the Audit & Risk Committee).
- Developed workplan for the Committee in 2024-2025, approved in November 2024.

Sustainability Committee
The Sustainability Committee assesses, guides, reports on and makes recommendations to the Board for approval on the area of development and implementation of Oberstown’s Sustainability Strategy. The Committee has three members; its members during 2024 were: Brian Arnold (Chair), Dymphna Sherry and Fergal Reynolds.

The Sustainability Committee met four times in 2024. Its work included:

- Provided oversight of the Environmental Programme 2024-2026, which provides guidance to the organisation and presents an integrated overview of the Oberstown’s sustainability pathway.
- Provided oversight of the Capital Plan 2024.
- Monitored the Business Plan 2024 with specific focus on action items assigned to the committee and linked to Goal 5 of the Oberstown Strategy 2022-2026.
- Reviewed and interrogated energy reporting data and practices, reporting to the Board on a quarterly basis.
- Reviewed the first Oberstown Energy Policy, developed to meet the requirements of ISO 50001, and recommended to the Board for approval.
- Provided oversight of the process to achieve ISO 50001 accreditation by Q4 2025 through regular updates from the Environmental Officer.
- Reviewed the Environmental Policy and made a recommendation to the Board for approval.
- Provided oversight of environmental initiatives in Oberstown including food waste management and sustainable procurement.

Young People Committee
The Young People Committee ensures that the views of young people are heard and taken into account by the Board, and reviews the Oberstown advocacy and participation process. Its terms of reference were revised and approved by the Board in February 2024. The Committee has five members; its members in 2024 were: Jennifer Gargan (Chair), Koulla Yiasouma, Liz O’Neill, Elizabeth Davey (joined 1 May 2024) and Dymphna Sherry (joined 1 May 2024).

The Committee met eight times in 2024. Its work included:

- Developed a 2024 workplan with priorities including:
 - Implementation of the review of participation:
 - Restrictive Practice: review the policy and procedure and how it is used in practice.
 - Review of Mental Health Services.
 - Review of ratings system for young people.
 - Oversight of Business Plan 2024.
 - Monitor implementation of HIQA Action Plan.
- Met with young people and discussed matters of concern to them, including: activities, programmes and courses; education and training; food; the rating system; staffing levels; relationships with staff; behaviour management; positive experiences in Oberstown.
- Followed up the issues raised by young people with the Director and provided feedback to the young people.
- Revised the committee’s terms of reference to extend its remit in light of the 2023 Review of Young People’s Participation in Decision Making.

OBERSTOWN BOARD OF MANAGEMENT 2024

Board members at 31 December 2024

Koulla Yiasouma
Chairperson



Appointment: Ministerial
Appointment date: 1 June 2023
Term: 4 years
Committee membership: Audit and Risk, Governance & Strategy, People & Culture (Chair), Performance (Chair), Young People
Koulla joined the Oberstown Board following an eight-year term as the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People. She is a qualified social worker and former Director (Chief Executive) of Include Youth, a Northern Ireland policy and advocacy NGO focused on supporting young people who were care experienced and/or had been involved in the criminal justice system, to improve their employability through work experience, training and education. She is an Honorary Professor of Practice at Queen's University Belfast and works closely with the Centre for Children's Rights in the School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work.

Brian Arnold



Appointment: Ministerial (Community representative)
Appointment date: 11 July 2024 (reappointment)
Term: 3 years
Committee membership: Performance, Sustainability (Chair)
Brian Arnold is a local community representative, resident in the vicinity of Oberstown. He is a management consultant with over 30 years' experience in the public and private sectors. He is Chairperson and a director of Lusk Community Council.

Bernadette Costello



Appointment: PAS process
Appointment date: 1 July 2023 (reappointed)
Term: 3 years
Committee membership: Audit & Risk (Chair), Performance
Bernadette Costello is a Chartered Director and Chartered Accountant. She is the former Director of Internal Audit & Risk at University of Galway and has extensive experience in financial and management accounting, corporate governance and related areas. She is currently a director of a number of boards in the public and charitable sectors.

Elizabeth Davey



Appointment: PAS process
Appointment date: 18 July 2022
Term: 4 years
Committee membership: Audit & Risk, Young People
Elizabeth Davey was called to the Bar in 2006. She is a practising barrister specialising in criminal, administrative, mental health and investigative law. She has a Masters in Criminology and a particular interest in youth justice.

Jennifer Gargan



Appointment: PAS process
Appointment date: 1 July 2023 (reappointment)
Term: 3 years
Committee membership: Audit & Risk, People & Culture, Young People (Chair)
Jennifer Gargan is a qualified social worker who has worked in the areas of community development, child protection and family support. As CEO of EPIC, Jennifer was an active advocate for the rights of young people

with care experience in order to bring about changes in legislation, policy and practice.

John McDaid



Appointment: PAS process
Appointment date: 1 July 2023 (reappointment)
Term: 2 years
Committee membership: Audit & Risk, Governance & Strategy (Chair), Performance,
John McDaid is a former Chief Executive of the Legal Aid Board having previously worked for the Board as a solicitor and also having worked in private legal practice.

Úna Ní Dhubhghaill



Appointment: Ministerial (DCDE nominee)
Appointment date: 1 June 2023 (reappointment)
Term: 4 years
Committee membership: Governance & Strategy
Úna Ní Dhubhghaill is a Principal Officer in the Children Detention Schools Unit, Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE).

Liz O'Neill



Appointment: Ministerial (Department of Education nominee)
Appointment date: 1 July 2023 (reappointment)
Term: 3 years
Committee membership: Young People
Liz O'Neill is the Department of Education representative on the Board and a school inspector with 15 years' experience of carrying out evaluations in a range of learning settings, including post-primary schools, special schools, special care units, and Oberstown Campus School. Her

work has involved supporting the Office of the Inspector of Prisons in conducting evaluations of education, work and training in prison settings.

William O'Rourke



Appointment: Ministerial
Appointment date: 1 June 2023 (reappointment)
Term: 4 years
Committee membership: People & Culture
William O'Rourke was appointed by the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth on foot of the requirements of section 167 of the Children Act 2001. He is the Tusla representative on the Board.

Martin Quigley



Appointment: PAS process
Appointment date: 18 July 2022
Term: 4 years
Committee membership: Governance & Strategy
Martin Quigley is the Director of Data & Analytics with Pobal, where he has responsibility for reporting, analytics and using data to support evidence-based social inclusion programme delivery and policy making. Martin is a qualified social care worker, having previously spent several years working with young people experiencing homelessness in Dublin city.

Fergal Reynolds



Appointment: Ministerial
Appointment date: 1 July 2023
Term: 2 years
Committee membership: Sustainability
Fergal Reynolds is a Residential Social Care Worker on the Oberstown Campus. He is an

elected staff nominee, appointed by the Minister on foot of the requirements of section 167 of the Children Act 2001.

Emma Shanahan



Appointment: Ministerial
Appointment date: 1 July 2023
Term: 2 years
Committee membership: Governance & Strategy, People & Culture
Emma Shanahan is a Unit Manager on the Oberstown Campus. She is an elected staff nominee, appointed by the Minister on foot of the requirements of section 167 of the Children Act 2001.

Dymphna Sherry



Appointment: Ministerial (Community representative)
Appointment date: 18 July 2022
Term: 3 years
Committee membership: People & Culture, Sustainability, Young People
Dymphna Sherry is a local community representative, resident in the vicinity of the Oberstown Campus.

GENDER BALANCE

- As at 31 December 2024, the Board had seven (58 %) female and five (42 %) male members, with no positions vacant.
- The Chairperson is female.
- The Board therefore meets the Government target of a minimum of 40 % representation of each gender in the membership of State Boards.

HEALTH INFORMATION AND QUALITY AUTHORITY INSPECTION 2024

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

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

In June 2024, an announced inspection took place over three days. A HIQA team of seven inspectors:

- Met 28 young people to talk about their experience of life on campus.
- Spent time in all the residential units and observed staff interacting with young people.
- Observed young people's meetings and activities, and spoke with young people during their lunch breaks, after school and during evening activities.
- Attended a placement planning meeting (PPM).
- Received completed inspection surveys from 35 of the 38 young people on campus during the inspection.
- Observed practice and daily life to see if it reflected what people said.
- Spoke with six parents and two social workers about the Oberstown service.
- Interviewed staff and management across the campus.
- Reviewed documents to see if appropriate records are kept and that they reflect practice and what people told the inspectors.

Positive feedback

The HIQA inspection report noted a positive environment at Oberstown, with strong support systems, effective healthcare, valuable educational and recreational opportunities, and good communication and inclusion practices. The inspectors reported that "there were clear systems and procedures in place to protect young people from harm and abuse. Arrangements for governance and management of child protection and welfare concerns, as well as the related oversight of practices, had improved in the nine months since the previous inspection."

Young people, parents, and social workers described Oberstown staff as engaging, caring and helpful. Parents and social workers noted staff members' dedication and positive impact on the young people, who say they feel respected and supported by the staff.

Healthcare services on campus were praised, including emotional health supports along with improved physical outcomes such as better fitness and drug-free status. Parents noted the prompt and effective way that Oberstown meets health needs. Both young people and parents felt that Oberstown provided a safe and secure environment. The comprehensive health, medical, and therapeutic services contributed to the overall wellbeing of the young people.

Parents saw significant improvements in the young people's educational engagement and outcomes. Young people said they enjoy attending school and viewed their learning and achievements as beneficial for their future. They also spoke highly of the range of activities on offer, including recreational and vocational programmes.

Communication and inclusion was welcomed by parents and social workers, who felt well-informed and included in decision-making processes through regular meetings and updates. They appreciated the culture of open communication and the staff's responsiveness to any concerns. Young people also reported that they feel included in decision making about their care.

Key findings

The HIQA report findings are grouped and reported under two dimensions: Capacity and Capability of the service, and Quality and Safety of the service.

Under Capacity and Capability, the key findings were:

Management and governance

Oberstown is well-managed with clear lines of authority and accountability. Improvements were made since the last inspection in governance and oversight, particularly in child protection and welfare. Areas for improvement include ensuring sufficient staff numbers, better oversight of restrictive practices, and enhancements in performance management, record keeping, and training.

Staffing

The inspectors reported ongoing challenges in recruiting and retaining sufficient numbers of qualified staff. Despite efforts to address these issues, including offering part-time positions and expanding placements for social care students, staffing remained a high-risk area.

Supervision and training

Progress was made in staff supervision, with the introduction of group supervision. However, the inspectors stressed the need to improve the quality of supervision records. There were also gaps in mandatory training, including refresher training in Children First.

'Young people, parents, and social workers described Oberstown staff as engaging, caring and helpful. Parents and social workers noted staff members' dedication and positive impact on the young people.'

Risk management

While there was a risk management framework in place, significant risks associated with the use of single separation were not adequately identified or managed. Improvements were needed in the governance and monitoring of these practices.

Policy and procedures

All current procedures had been reviewed and updated since the last inspection, but the development of guidance and procedures for physical interventions was still in progress.

Rules related to Capacity and Capability:

- Rule 10: Staffing, Management and Governance: *Not compliant.*
- Rule 12: Authority to Suspend Rules: *Compliant.*

Under Quality and Safety, the key findings were:

Education and recreation

Young people had access to appropriate educational, vocational, and recreational programmes tailored to their needs and interests. There was a high level of school attendance, although some young people missed parts of the school day due to the process for resolving incidents. A comprehensive activities programme was in place from Monday to Friday, but there were fewer structured activities available on weekends.

Health

Young people had access to excellent health, medical, and therapeutic services on campus. They received timely medical care and were supported in making decisions about their health. There were effective procedures for dealing with medical emergencies and incidents.

Preparation for leaving

Oberstown has good systems in place to prepare young people for returning to their families, communities, or transitioning to the Irish Prison Service (IPS). However, opportunities for permitted absences to engage in community employment or training were limited.

Safeguarding

There were clear systems and procedures to protect young people from harm and abuse. Improvements were made in reporting procedures, record keeping, and tracking child protection concerns. Further improvements were needed to ensure mandated reporters make reports themselves or jointly with the Designated Liaison Person (DLP). Training for mandated persons had not commenced, and refresher training in Children First was not fully compliant.

Restrictive practices

The inspectors found that the use of restrictive practices required significant improvement. While staff had a good understanding of Oberstown's single separation procedure, practices were not always used in exceptional circumstances or for the shortest period necessary. There was no guidance or procedure documents for physical interventions, and some young people were restricted to their rooms on weekends due to insufficient staff. Progress had been made in some aspects of procedures and recording, but further improvements were required.

Physical environment

Campus premises provide a safe and secure environment and meet the service needs of the young people and overall upkeep and maintenance was good. Fire safety improvements had been maintained, but some management procedures needed updates.

Rules related to Quality & Safety are:

- Rule 2: Education and Recreation: *Compliant.*
- Rule 3: Health: *Compliant.*
- Rule 5: Preparation for leaving: *Compliant.*
- Rule 6: Safeguarding: *Substantially compliant.*

- Rule 9: Restrictive Practice: *Not compliant.*
- Rule 11: Physical Environment: *Substantially compliant.*

Continuous improvement

Welcoming the HIQA inspection, Damien Hernon, Oberstown Director, said: "We are always striving to improve, and the commentary contained within this report helps us to do that. Our staff are committed to providing the highest possible quality of care for young people in detention, and this report contains positive feedback in this regard. Our focus is on maximising the potential of our young people and all who deliver and benefit from our service."

Koulla Yiasouma, Oberstown Chairperson, said: "The Board of Management welcomes HIQA inspections and the resulting action plans as vital contributions to Oberstown's governance. We will use the latest report and action plan to reinforce our focus on achieving the highest standards, supporting the Oberstown management and staff to deliver improvement and further progress in all aspects of the service."

For the full HIQA inspection report, see <https://bit.ly/HIQAOberstown2024>.

OTHER STATUTORY BODIES WITH POWERS OF INSPECTION OR INVESTIGATION

The Ombudsman for Children's Office (OCO) – promotes the rights and welfare of children and young people up to 18 years old living in Ireland. The OCO deals with complaints made by or on behalf of children, including those in Oberstown, in relation to the actions of public bodies under section 8 of the Ombudsman for Children Act 2002, as amended. During 2024, young people met informally with OCO representatives during outreach visits to the campus.

The Inspectorate of the Department of Education – carries out inspections of the Oberstown Campus School under sections 7 and 13 of the Education Act 1998. 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.

Young people's feedback

'Worst thing about being in Oberstown is no freedom – to walk down to the shop, being away from friends and family. You take your freedom for granted when you're outside, you absolutely do. They treat you well in here, don't get me wrong, they look after you. But what's that when you don't have your freedom?'

'Finished the fitness instructor course, so I'm now a qualified fitness instructor. Good course to have. I'm leaving here with a qualification, just got it finished before I'm going out the door, and that is definitely something I'm looking to go into.'

'Building that thing for the Garda was good as well. No one where we're from really knows the Guards. Some of them could have the exact same story as us. They could have been in trouble and changed their life as well. They are just normal people.'

'It takes so long to go through court, man. I could be in court today and not get sentenced until next year. Why does it take so long to get through it?'

'Big difference from when I first came into Oberstown, 100%. I'm leaving all that life behind me. Definitely not going back to that. I have plans now.'

'I have a plan for after Oberstown. I want to be a carpenter, building things. I like working with my hands. It's creative. It's satisfying.'

'Best thing about my time in Oberstown? Positive people in my life now – staff, teachers, some good lads. Being away from drugs, being clean and sober. I have a fresh head. That's the best thing.'

Business and compliance overview 2024

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

Conflicts of interest

There were no declared conflicts of interest – personal, professional or financial – concerning any decisions of the Board during 2024. The Board maintains a Register of Interests that is reviewed by the Governance Committee annually. Any conflicts are declared at each Board meeting. None were declared in 2024.

Protected disclosures

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

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

Section 22 of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 requires the publication of an annual report each year relating to the number of protected disclosures made in the preceding year and any action taken in response to such disclosures.

Oberstown confirms that, for the financial year from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024, no report was received in accordance with the provisions of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014.

Parliamentary questions

Oberstown works with DCDE to provide accurate and up-to-date information to public representatives and officials in a prompt and consistent manner. In 2024, Oberstown contributed to the answers to 24 parliamentary questions – up from 22 in 2023.

Freedom of information (FOI) requests

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

In 2024, Oberstown received seven requests under the Freedom of Information Act, 2014. All requests were granted or part-granted and one request was transferred to the Department of Justice.

Data protection

Throughout the year, we reviewed and strengthened our data protection policies and procedures to ensure compliance with our legal obligations and best practice standards. Regular staff training, policy updates and audits have further reinforced our commitment to a culture of data protection awareness and compliance. The DPO provided guidance on the completion of Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs) for new or high-risk processing activities.

The Data Protection Officer in Oberstown:

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

A dedicated email address (DPO@oberstown.com) is in place to facilitate data protection queries and reporting. Data Protection also has a dedicated space on Oberstown Workvivo, the Campus internal communications platform. In 2024, Oberstown received and responded to nine Data Subject Access Requests (DSAR). There were three non-reportable breaches and five reportable breaches in 2024.

Financial allocation

The budget of Oberstown Children Detention Campus is allocated by DCDE. In 2024, the campus received a core allocation of €27.244m as follows:

Allocation item	Amount €m
Pay	17.187
Pensions	2.619
Non-pay	7.438

The campus also incurred capital expenditure of €2.550m in 2024 funded by the Department.

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

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

Internal financial control

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

Budget management

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

the Director. Expenditure is monitored closely with monthly reports furnished to DCDE, and quarterly to the Audit and Risk Committee.

Internal audit function

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

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

The internal auditors completed a review of internal controls in 2024. Recommendations made were accepted.

Procurement

Oberstown operates under the Public Procurement Guidelines, which provide the direction for all procurement policy activity, ensuring that the campus complies with and observes the objectives and key principles of competition, equality of treatment and transparency that underpin national and EU rules.

Oberstown avails of centralised managed contracts established by the Office of Government

Procurement (OGP) and continues to engage the OGP for advice on current and future procurement requirements. In 2024, a number of contracts were successfully procured in conjunction with OGP in line with the Oberstown procurement plan.

Financial statements for the year 1 January to 31 December 2024 and Oberstown statement on internal controls

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

Throughout 2024, 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 2024, and its Statement on Internal Controls for the same period, have been completed and will be published as appendices to the Annual Report 2024 on the Oberstown website (www.oberstown.com) following completion of the audit by the Office of the Comptroller & Auditor General (C&AG).

Financial statements for the year 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023 are available alongside the Annual Report 2023 on www.oberstown.com.

ICT developments

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) plays a key role in the care of young people on campus. Staff and management use the Oberstown Case Management System (CMS) to track and record the journey of young people through care. Oberstown employs a range of technologies to manage and share data among stakeholders. The campus is equipped to use digital and video technology to communicate with the courts, partner agencies and the families of young people.

The Department of Justice provides primary technology support and infrastructure for the services offered by Oberstown, including network services, endpoint devices, hosting for key business solutions, internet access and many business applications. All core systems and data continue to reside on premise within the Department of Justice, and access to these resources is strictly controlled via a secure portal or internal private network connection. A new development within the overall Department of Justice IT services framework is an increasing focus on cloud-based solutions for processing and storage, bringing with it an increased need for diligence and risk assessment. In addition, Oberstown provides bespoke technology-based services, applications, and hardware to support other primary objectives that are not available through the IT services provided by the Department of Justice.

Reviewing and enhancing information management policies formed an essential element of IT project work during 2024, with a particular focus on incident response and business impact assessment. A further focus was preparing the groundwork to leverage Oberstown’s system-based datasets, using the

Microsoft Power Apps solution for reporting purposes.

Incident response planning

Oberstown conducted a major Security Incident Response Planning exercise in 2024, aligned with a Department of Justice initiative to address the business impact of a potential loss of ability to process (IT systems outage). The exercise saw Oberstown requesting a recovery order of systems with different time intervals based on a risk assessment of the impact of the loss of systems in an outage scenario. Systems were grouped in three batches based on how critical they are to the operation of Oberstown, with priority recovery times ranging from within one week to three months.

Oberstown Case Management System (CMS)

The Oberstown CMS is fully operational and is a user-friendly and efficient system that provides a single source of knowledge and reporting on the status and care of young people resident in Oberstown, both past and present.

In line with many modern software business solutions, the Oberstown CMS is developed using an agile methodology, with upgrades and improvements delivered in batches (‘sprints’) to promote sustainable development. It is continuously enhanced and improved in line with user feedback, system audits, changing requirements and new work practices.

Following temporary re-assignment to other high priority development projects during 2023, the Oberstown CMS development team resumed work on a series of new development sprints commencing early in 2024. During 2024, the team completed three development sprints, delivering 75 updates, enhancements and fixes.

A new development within the overall Department of Justice IT services framework is an increasing focus on cloud-based solutions for processing and storage, bringing with it an increased need for diligence and risk assessment.

Data MOSAIC

Data MOSAIC, a European pilot project run by Penal Reform International, aims to address and prevent violence against children within detention settings. Oberstown is a key participant in this project and agreed to enhance the Oberstown CMS to facilitate a data-driven approach to strengthening child protection reporting systems.

Changes to the CMS included the introduction of bespoke forms plus a report containing a defined and relevant data set. Upon implementation, three months of data were available to populate the report. The report was presented in dashboard format, to be used as part of the next steps for creating evidence-based policies to protect children against violence across Europe.

Hub Court Lists

The Court List project is part of the Department of Justice CJOH (Criminal Justice Operational Hub) multi-year programme. The programme’s goal is to create a centralised electronic exchange that enables criminal justice organisations to send and receive data in an efficient and secure manner.

The project objective was to provide an automated feed of Court Lists (Diary) information from the District and Higher Courts to Oberstown, with the data passing temporarily through the Hub on its way between the two organisations.

The project was successfully rolled out late in 2024, and integrated new court list screens into the Oberstown CMS to achieve the following goals:

- Provide an improved, streamlined process to enable Oberstown to manage the production of young people for scheduled court appearances.
- Reduce the volume of queries to the courts’ offices in relation to young offender court appearances.
- Reduce the instances whereby a young person misses a court hearing.
- Provide more up-to-date information about young people who appear in courts.
- Remove the need to use emailed court lists.

Smartsheet

The Smartsheet collaboration and work management solution continues to be an important addition to the Oberstown technology toolset. In 2024, it was used to track and manage projects and initiatives, including audits, the Oberstown Strategic Plan and annual business plan, management KPIs and the Oberstown HIQA Compliance Plan.

Microsoft Power Apps

Work continued into 2024 focusing on introducing Power BI reporting capabilities to Oberstown. Focusing initially on reporting dashboards for data from the Oberstown CMS, the Department of Justice Power Apps and Oberstown CMS development teams conducted tests on sample dashboards. The first set of live Power BI dashboards based on Oberstown CMS data are expected to be published early in 2025, with a plan to broaden the use of Power Apps to include financial and human resources data sets.

Health and Safety Inspections and audits

The Oberstown Health and Safety team gained two new members in 2024 to provide administrative support for a busy schedule of standards audits and inspections. Oberstown welcomed visits from the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), State Claims Agency (SCA), British Standards Institution (BSI), National Standards Association of Ireland (NSAI) and the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA). Notable outcomes included:

- Passed assessment by BSI and obtained certification to ISO 45003 Occupational Health and Safety management – Psychological risk management. ISO 45003 sits alongside Oberstown’s ISO 45001 Occupational Health and Safety Management system certification. Oberstown is one of the first organisations in Ireland to be certified to ISO 45003, demonstrating a very clear commitment to the highest standards of health and safety risk management at work.
- Maintained an 'A' level rating with the State Claims Agency (SCA). The A rating represents

the highest achievable rating for reporting incidents on the NIMS system.

- Passed annual surveillance audits conducted by NSAI on the campus Quality Management System (ISO 9001) and Occupational Health and Safety Management System (ISO 45001).

Training

Delivery of modules through EazySAFE, the online training platform, reached a milestone in 2024 with more than 3,000 training certificates completed since its introduction in 2022. Oberstown added several new courses to the training offering, including Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM). The Oberstown Health and Safety Statement was made available through EazySAFE in 2024.

Safety Intervention training remained a key focus, with twelve CPI Safety Intervention instructors trained on campus during the year. Having these additional instructors on campus has positively contributed to a decrease in the number of restraint-related injuries. Verbal de-escalation forms a large part of the training.

Supporting young people

The Health and Safety team continued to support our young people on campus, helping to facilitate projects including horticultural, Pro-Social Driving, unit painting and the Oberstown Coffee Van. The team also provides Manual Handling and Fire Safety awareness training and certification for young people.

HSA matters

All notifiable HSA incidents are reported by the Health and Safety team. There were 11 HSA reportable incidents in 2024, down from 17 in 2023.

Environmental and Sustainability 2024

Oberstown is working to implement the Public Sector Climate Action Mandate, which sets the following targets for public bodies:

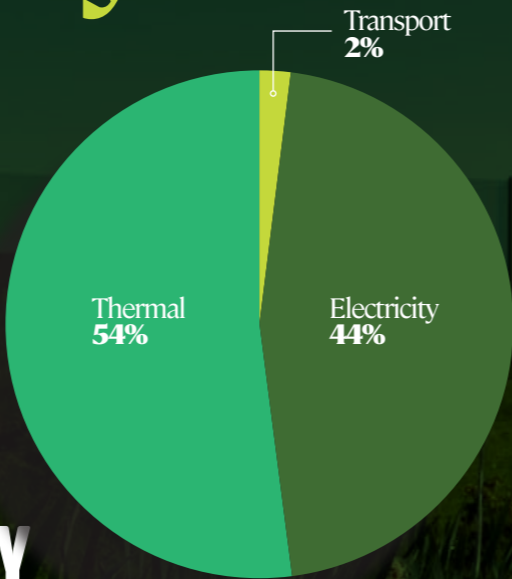
- Reduce energy-related GHG emissions by 51% in 2030.
- Improve energy efficiency in the public sector by 50% by 2030.
- Update Climate Action Roadmaps annually.

The campus has an established Environmental Team, coordinated by the Environmental Sustainability Officer, with members from all key areas. A Senior Management Team member is the Oberstown Climate and Sustainability Champion.

Goal 5 of the Oberstown Strategy 2022-2026 commits to “the sustainable development of our campus and our organisation”. The Board of Management monitors environmental and sustainability performance through its Sustainability Committee, including approving the campus Energy Policy and updates to the Climate Action Roadmap.

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). The campus also submits an annual statement on its compliance with the Climate Action Mandate. The campus reports on compliance with Circular 1/2020: Procedures for offsetting the emissions associated with official air travel through DCDE.

The data provided on these pages shows Oberstown’s progress during 2024 towards the Climate Action Mandate with reference to previous years and relevant baselines.



ENERGY CONSUMPTION

2024 Total energy consumption
3,460,432 kWh



ENERGY EFFICIENCY

By 2024, energy performance had improved by 45.3% since the baseline (2009)

2024: **54.7%**
2030 Target: **50%**

GHG EMISSIONS

FOSSIL CO²
(NATURAL GAS+HEATING OIL)
In 2024, fossil CO² was 39.4% below the baseline (2016-2018) of 699,741 kgCO²

2024 **424,031 kgCO²**
2030 Target **342,873 kgCO²**

TOTAL CO²
(FOSSIL+ELECTRICITY+TRANSPORT)
In 2024, total CO² was 47.1% below the baseline (2016-2018) of 1,557,430 kgCO²

2024 **823,426 kgCO²**
2030 Target **526,426 kgCO²**

2024 ENERGY INITIATIVES

- Energy Awareness Days in January and August
- LED lighting upgrade continued.
- Installed high efficiency Natural Gas Boiler at Trinity House.
- Implemented a Building Energy Monitoring System (BEMS).
- Implemented an Energy Management System according to ISO 50001:2018.
- Developed and approved Oberstown Energy Policy.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

128 Tonnes Total Weight
AN INCREASE OF 10% ON 2023
Recyclables 26% Food waste 27% General waste 29% Paper shredding 2% Bulky/wood 16%

54% RECYCLING RATE
(UP 13% ON 2023)

SINGLE USE PLASTIC BOTTLES
77% fewer plastic bottles on campus
2023: 9,720 bottles 2024: 2,280 bottles

2024 WASTE MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES

- Replacement of food containers by compostable options.
- 15 young people participated in the Waste & Recycling Quiz.
- Training – Introduced an Environmental Awareness session in the induction of new employees.
- Training – 84 % of staff completed the Environmental Awareness course on the EazySAFE online learning platform.
- Training – Oberstown staff attended a number of Green Public Procurement courses and workshops.
- Food Waste Prevention Plan – Development of Food waste review.
- Circular economy – Donation of gym equipment to the local Man O'War GAA club.
- Finalist in Ireland’s Climate Change Leadership Awards for Recycling Project of the Year (see page 68).
- Waste management competitions between residential units (bi-monthly).

Working at Oberstown

Professional recognition of social care staff by CORU was a major achievement in a busy year for staff development and recruitment.

CORU registration

In 2024, Oberstown took a major step forward in supporting eligible staff to have their social care work experience and qualifications recognised by CORU, the health and social care regulator. By the end of the year, there were 105 Oberstown staff on the CORU register of Social Care Workers, with further registrations in the process for recognition in 2025.

Deputy Director Rose Murray led the CORU registration project, working to a plan devised in consultation with Social Care Ireland and an internal team including the Learning & Development Manager, Unit Managers, RSCWs and NSOs.

A key first step was to identify staff across campus who were eligible for registration under two main pathways – existing practitioners employed in social care work roles for a qualifying period (known as ‘grandparenting’), and those with approved qualifications in social care. Each individual application involves sourcing and presenting supporting documents for approval by the CORU Social Care Workers Registration Board. Oberstown’s key goal for the project was therefore to support staff members in making their application. Key project steps included:

- Briefing staff on the benefits and process involved in CORU registration. This involved valuable contributions from external stakeholders including Social Care Ireland.
- Establishing a core CORU support team (known on campus as the ‘CORU clinicians’) comprising RSCWs (Laura Totton, Maurethe Leonard, and Ciara Maguire), a Unit Manager (Emma Shanahan), an NSO (Bryan Mills) and the Learning & Development Manager (Michael Byrne).

- Working with a pilot group of 15 RSCWs to ascertain a timeline for each application.
- Holding weekly CORU clinics in the campus Training Centre to deal with the questions and practicalities arising during the registration process, including uploading documents to the CORU portal. Clinics ran from mid-February to the end of October 2024, giving staff across campus a range of opportunities to take part.
- Setting up a dedicated campus CORU registration email address and storage space on the IT system to ensure efficient and secure communications.
- Engaging a Commissioner of Oaths to certify the validity of documents submitted for registration.

CORU has recognised the high standard of applications received from Oberstown. In November 2024, the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies invited Deputy Director Rose Murray to present an overview of the Oberstown approach to CORU registration to an online audience of more than 200 HSE Social Care Worker managers. The Oberstown approach emphasised establishing a structured support system to provide clear guidance, ongoing communication, and tailored assistance for staff navigating the registration process. Early and thorough preparation, collaboration with key stakeholders, and proactive engagement to address challenges efficiently were recognised as keys to success.

Oberstown’s commitment to aligning with CORU’s professional recognition requirements for Social Care Workers brings benefits for individual staff members, service users and all stakeholders. It underlines the organisation’s focus on providing the highest standards of care for young people and helps promote a culture of continuous professional development (CPD). Maintaining CORU registration in line with CPD requirements is an individual and management challenge that sits well with Oberstown’s determination to prioritise best practices and elevate standards of care in the service.

‘Building strong connections with universities and colleges to promote awareness of career opportunities at Oberstown is a key recruitment focus.’

Oberstown staff registered with CORU 2024

RSCW Unit-based staff	56
NSO staff	28
Site Managers	6
Unit Managers	5
Senior Managers	1
Advocacy	1
Programmes	3
Activities	3
Training	2

A changing workforce

The campus welcomed 24 new staff members in 2024, despite a very tight recruitment market across all sectors, especially in Oberstown’s key social care work category. Posts were filled following more than 20 public and internal campaigns, attracting a volume and quality of candidates that underlines Oberstown’s growing reputation as a uniquely rewarding place to work. Roles on offer ranged from Residential Social Care Workers (RSCWs) and Night Supervising Officers (NSOs) through specialist support functions and leadership development roles to senior management positions.

In November 2024, the Board appointed an external candidate as Head of Corporate Services, a new role on the Senior Management Team. Two new senior care manager roles were also filled in Q4 2024, one through

internal promotion, covering service operations and integration and reporting to the Deputy Director, Care and Integration. The creation of a Site Manager Development role was another significant addition to Oberstown’s internal career pathways for care staff.

Some of Oberstown’s longest-serving staff members retired from the service in 2024. A total of 13 employees left through retirement during the year, the highest number in the previous four years. Oberstown has a loyal workforce and has enjoyed relatively low staff turnover for a number of years. However, the age profile of the campus workforce is a challenge, especially in light of changing career patterns.

Building strong connections with universities and colleges to promote awareness of career opportunities at Oberstown is a key recruitment focus. In 2024, the campus hosted information sharing visits from final year social care students from Technological University Dublin (TUD) Blanchardstown, Munster Technological University (MTU) and South East Technological University (SETU). The campus has an established programme for social care student undergraduates and offers early career experience to new graduates.

Career options were also the focus of discussions at Oberstown’s exhibition stand at the 2024 Social Care Ireland Conference, staffed by campus residential care professionals with varying levels of experience along with senior management representatives.

Staff training and development

Learning and development initiatives maintained a strong focus on Safety Intervention training for all frontline staff, with 104 staff members participating in training during the year. A further eight staff members and three teachers from the Oberstown Campus School renewed their Safety Intervention Instructor certification, enhancing the strong team of trainers in this critical area of safety on campus. In November we obtained two new Safety Pods as an addition to our Safety Intervention techniques.



Weekly CORU clinics helped drive Social Care Worker registration.

New customised modules added to EazySAFE helped Oberstown reach a landmark 3,000 certificates awarded on the online learning platform since its introduction in 2022. New modules included Fraud Awareness, Anti-Bribery & Corruption, the Oberstown Safety Statement, and the Children’s Rights Policy Framework.

Staff practice supervision, a key training theme in 2023, went live in 2024 as a key development in Oberstown’s commitment to staff wellbeing and continuous service improvement (see page 63).

HR policies update

An extensive project to update HR policies progressed in 2024, with a number of policies approved by the Board of Management and shared with Oberstown’s union partners. The HR team collaborated with the Board’s People and Culture Committee, unions and

staff across the campus to ensure policies are up to date, with a new Employee Handbook scheduled for production in 2025.

Equality and human rights

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

WORKING WELL 2024

Working Well guides the planning, delivery and review of psychosocial resilience, health and sustained wellbeing considerations for Oberstown employees.

The framework represents Oberstown’s recognition of the link between employee health and wellbeing, staff engagement and the need to attend to psychosocial factors at work. These factors are fundamental to providing the best possible care to young people.

The campus Organisational Psychologist is responsible for delivering the framework, comprising four pillars: Work Safe, Work Healthy, Work Well, and Work Wise. Interdepartmental collaboration with a variety of stakeholders ensures staff across the campus benefit from initiatives, expert resources and improved facilities and working practices under each of the pillars.

Oberstown’s approach to employee wellbeing is recognised as extending beyond the traditional provision of staff welfare supports. In 2024, the campus became one of the first organisations in Ireland to achieve certification to ISO 45003, the global standard providing guidance on management of psychosocial risks and promotion of wellbeing at work. Oberstown maintained its certification under Ibec’s KeepWell Mark and was again listed among Ireland’s Top 100 Leaders in Workplace Wellbeing.

The rollout of a new model for practice supervision was a major step forward in 2024. This was a campus-wide change management initiative with ongoing consultation and feedback to inform the process.

Working Well – Key developments in 2024

Work Safe

- H&S team strengthened to further develop risk management systems and processes for the campus.
- Oberstown Crisis Management Plan completed as part of the Incident Management Training programme.

Work Well

- Health screening programme available for all staff.
- In-house campus support provided access to counselling for staff.
- New model of practice supervision rolled out.

Work Healthy

- Menopause Working Group provided suggestions for developing staff supports.
- Catering team maintained certification under ISO 9001/2015 and introduced enhanced menus with input from staff and young people.
- Stop smoking supports available for staff.

Work Wise

- HR policy review commenced.
- Developments to STORM suicide prevention and self-harm mitigation training.

Oberstown practice supervision

Led by the Organisational Psychologist, the campus rolled out practice supervision to frontline staff in 2024. This development highlights Oberstown’s continued progressive approach to staff wellbeing and development, providing a space to discuss and process emotional reactions,

dilemmas, and concerns in relation to work. Oberstown uses the Seven-eyed Supervision Model, which explores issues from multiple perspectives and considers the possibility of alternative views.

In line with best practice, supervision takes place outside of the line management function, allowing for in-depth reflection on practice. The comprehensive programme exemplifies a whole campus ethos approach to leadership, learning, and resilience.

Rollout process

1. Board Approval 2022-2023

- The new Seven-eyed Practice Supervision Model introduced and shared with all key stakeholders and staff.
- Policy approved by Board.

2. Frontline Staff Socialisation 2024

- Supervision resource pack developed.
- 97 1:1 Supervision socialisation sessions.
- 17 Group socialisation workshops.

3. Staff Practice Supervision Go Live 2024

- 116 Group & Individual Supervision Sessions.
- 12 Open Consultation Sessions.
- 137 Frontline staff.

4. Next Steps 2025 and beyond

- Board and staff review the benefits of practice.
- Supervision implementation across campus.



2024 YEAR IN THE LIFE JANUARY- APRIL

A selection of
highlights on campus
and beyond



Breath of Fresh Éire

Murals produced by Oberstown young people were officially launched on 28 March 2024 at Balbriggan Garda Station by Joe O'Brien, Minister of State for Community Development and Integration. The 'Breath of Fresh Éire' street art project built from conversations between Gardaí, the youth of Oberstown Children Detention Campus and Gaisce – The President's Award.

The project set out to foster a sense of understanding and connection between the young people, An Garda Síochána, and the wider Balbriggan community. The artworks were installed at Balbriggan Garda Station and Balbriggan Rugby Club. Completed as part of their Gaisce Award, the project was facilitated through a series of seven workshops at Oberstown, led by artist Joe Caslin supported by John Smith, Activities Coordinator, the Activities team and Oberstown Campus School art teacher Ruth Denham. Gaisce produced a video to commemorate the event (<https://youtu.be/DHzOLyK8xXk>) and the launch was featured on RTÉ Television News.

Below: Minister Joe O'Brien (left) and artist Joe Caslin with the 'Outreach' mural at Balbriggan Garda Station.



'Walk in my shoes'

In February and March 2024, Oberstown hosted powerful contributions to the EU-funded 'Giving Back Project', which aims to enhance the child-friendly practices of European youth justice professionals in detention facilities. Three young people met with groups of staff from around the campus to share their stories, giving candid and open insights into their lives before and during their time in Oberstown and their plans for the future. Guests from project partners the Netherlands Helsinki Committee (NHC) and Youth Perspectives (YOPE), who had mentored the young people and trained 12 Oberstown staff on earlier visits, attended the events.

Director Damien Hernon noted the impact of the 'Walk in my shoes' sessions: "The young people involved were magnificent, they were brave and courageous and they should be very proud of themselves, especially given the fact that there was an international flavour to the session. If we all take a minute to walk in others' shoes, it creates understanding and further enhances our opportunities to help our young people maximise their potential."

Above: A young person sharing his story with Oberstown staff and project partners from NHC and YOPE.



Inclusive school

Oberstown Campus School retained its Amber Flag designation in 2024 – recognition by suicide and self-harm charity Pieta House of schools that foster a positive and inclusive environment for mental health and wellbeing.

Oberstown was also chosen as a special exhibit at the UNESCO Global Inclusive Schools' Forum, with Suzanne Fitzpatrick, School Principal and Colette Macken, Assistant Principal, attending the event at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris in March 2024. The exhibit highlighted Oberstown Campus School's ethos in line with the Forum's goal of promoting and sharing innovative inclusive learning practices. Oberstown is a member of the Nurture Schools Programme, a school-wide approach to supporting students with social, emotional and behavioural challenges, and is an officially recognised ADHD-friendly school.

In 2024, the campus school was accepted onto the Yellow Flag programme, which recognises schools that are culturally and ethnically inclusive, celebrate diversity and challenge racism and discrimination.

Left: Colette Macken, Assistant Principal, working with a young person in the school nurture room.

Maximising potential video – Director Damien Hernon gives his overview of the unique experience of working with young people at Oberstown in a video published on the Oberstown website (www.oberstown.com/careers) in April 2024.



CORU registration drive – The CORU registration project marked a key milestone in March 2024 when Wayne Carr became the first RSCW to be fully registered as a Social Care Worker with the help of the CORU clinic team (see page 60).



Above: Wayne Carr, Social Care Worker, with Rose Murray, Deputy Director.

2024 YEAR IN THE LIFE MAY- AUGUST

A selection of highlights on campus and beyond



Garda Youth Diversion Scheme

Close collaboration with the youth diversion programme continued in 2024. Oberstown Chairperson Koulla Yiasouma spent time with Garda Assistant Commissioner Paula Hilman and members of her team at Garda Headquarters in April.

The dialogue continued with Oberstown hosting a visit to the campus by senior

members of the Garda National Youth Diversion Bureau (GNYDB) in May.

Above: Oberstown Deputy Director Brian Hogan (centre) with visitors from the Garda National Youth Diversion Bureau (l to r) Inspector Gwenn McKenna, Superintendent John Finucane (GNYDB Director), Inspector Aidan Curtin and Inspector Dan McGinty.



Oireachtas Committee visit

Members of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Key Issues affecting the Traveller Community visited Oberstown in July. The delegation met staff and young people across the campus, including facilitators from the Traveller Mediation Network.

Above: Left to right: Leo Bollins, clerk to the Committee; Damien Hernon, Oberstown Director; Pat Buckley, TD; Oonagh McCardle, Traveller Justice Initiative; Michelle Griffin, Oberstown Deputy Director; Senator Eileen Flynn, Committee Chairperson; Anne Costello, Traveller Justice Initiative; Denise Mitchell, TD; Rose Murray, Oberstown Deputy Director.

'Assistant head gardener' interviews

Oberstown's Steps+ careers service prepares young people for the process of applying for jobs, including coaching in interview techniques and skills. Two young people put their training into practice in the summer, when they were shortlisted and interviewed for the role of Assistant Head Gardener.

Below: Interview panel – Sinead Flynn, Horticultural Programme Coordinator, Lorraine Rositer, RSCW, and Suzanne Fitzpatrick, Principal of Oberstown Campus School.



Spreading the word

Oberstown Director Damien Hernon was the featured guest on the award-winning Talking Bollox podcast in August. Listeners reacted well to the wide-ranging discussion of Oberstown's work on the popular programme, presented by Terence Power and Calvin O'Brien, who earlier in the year was himself interviewed by young people for Oberstown's 'Hear I am' podcast project.

Over the summer, the Director delivered workshops entitled 'Embedding a rights-based and participative culture in Oberstown' at the National Youth Justice Conference in Stirling, Scotland. He also spoke at 'Know Your Rights', an Irish Penal Reform Trust event supported by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC).

Right: Damien Hernon with Fiona Dyer, CYCJ Scotland Director, at the National Youth Justice Conference in Scotland.



End of school year

Oberstown Campus School celebrated the end of a successful school year in June. The event recognised achievements across the full range of activities in a unique educational setting, where each student has an individual learning plan that recognises their academic and social needs. Students contributed to positive changes and improvement in the school through the Student Voice, Campus Council and a new Green Schools student-teacher committee. Highlight school events included Positivity Week, Culture

Week and Maths Week which brought fun and excitement to the timetable. Participation in the Nurture Programme enhanced student engagement and the popular Creative Schools initiative again produced outstanding project work, including a photography exhibition on display at the event

Two young people sat their Leaving Cert exams in 2024, six young people completed their Junior Cert and students earned certificates across 27 modules at Level 3 General Learning QQI.

Energy Awareness Day – Staff took part in the second Oberstown Energy Awareness Day in August, with one-to-one meetings discussing energy-saving ideas at work and at home.

Below: Rodrigo Rufino, Environmental Sustainability Officer with Declan Rajasingam, Oberstown's Energy Consultant from facilities contractor Aramark.



Sporty summer – Oberstown hosted six teams in football challenge matches during the summer school in July and August. Opponents included youth teams from local clubs and a team from Solas Project, including facilitators working on programmes with the young people on campus. Young people and staff represented Oberstown in the fixtures, organised by the Activities team.

The summer school included morning classes provided by the Oberstown Campus School and afternoon sessions covering an expanded range of afterschool activities and self-development programmes. Between 60 and 70 classes were offered each weekday. The annual snooker tournament was a popular summer activity.



2024 YEAR IN THE LIFE SEPTEMBER- DECEMBER

A selection of highlights on campus and beyond



Careers Day

Oberstown hosted its first ever Young People’s Careers Day in October. Every young person on campus had the chance to meet representatives from 23 organisations offering careers and vocational education opportunities and advice. Organised in conjunction with the Steps+ careers project and supported by the Oberstown Campus School. Organisations represented included Microsoft Ireland, Image Fitness, Teagasc, Solas/Learning Works, Solas Project, FIT Technology Apprenticeships, Gaisce – The President’s Award, Designer Group, City

of Dublin Education and Training Board, Pathways Centre, CIF Construction Industries Federation, Louth and Meath Education and Training Board, LOETB National Construction Training Centre Mount Lucas, TUDublin Access to Apprenticeship, Youthreach, Aramark, Mr Price, Gaisce, Way2Work, Jungheinrich, Careers Portal, Ashbourne Paving, Rewind Aesthetics.

Above: Mags Byrne of Solas/Learning Works discusses further education and training options with a young person.

Irish Climate Change Leadership Awards

Oberstown was recognised at the Irish Climate Change Leadership Awards 2024 in November, winning a top three placing in the Recycling Project of the Year Category. Other ICCLA finalists included major Irish private sector companies and multinationals as well as large State organisations. Credit for this achievement goes to Rodrigo Rufino, Environmental Sustainability Officer, the campus Environmental Team, staff and young people supporting practical efforts to improve our environmental and sustainability performance on campus.

Right: Campus representatives at the ICCL Awards ceremony at the Royal Marine Hotel, Dun Laoghaire. (l to r) Jacek Zgardzinski, Gráinne Smyth, Damien Hernon, Karen Foran, Rodrigo Rufino, Dervela Moule, Matthew Kelly (attendee not in photo Patrick Bellew)



School Yellow Flag programme – In September, the Oberstown Campus School was chosen as one of three Dublin schools to work on the Yellow Flag programme. The initiative recognises schools who value and celebrate cultural diversity and are committed to treating people fairly. Yellow Flag is supported by Fingal County Council and South Dublin County Council.



Christmas Community Project – Oberstown young people made Christmas wreaths and swags to decorate the local community nursing home along with gifts for their families as part of their community project. Staff also took part in wreath-making, organised by Sinead Flynn, Horticultural Project Coordinator. Christmas decorations along with other examples of the young people’s handiwork were sold at the Oberstown Christmas Craft Fair, raising funds for Crumlin Children’s Hospital and the Irish Cancer Society.

Gaisce Awards presentation

In December, Oberstown hosted a special awards ceremony recognising the achievements of five young people who had earned their Gaisce awards. Gaisce CEO Avril Ryan presented the medals – each young person achieved silver with one also receiving the rare Gaisce Gold. An invited audience including young people’s family members, Oberstown staff, Board members and partner agencies gathered on campus for the celebration.

Below: John Smith, Activities Coordinator, speaking at the Gaisce Awards event.



Good news stories

The Oberstown chaplaincy service arranges events and campaigns throughout the year, led by Chaplain John Herron and supported by staff across the campus, including evening activities staff. A busy schedule of projects and inspirational talks included:

- Three ‘Forgiveness Projects’ over the course of the year, examining the 7 Deadly Sins, Gospel of Mark, and the Life of Joseph.
- Super Soul Sundays, featuring guests including Conor Harris of Kildare GAA and Jake Mulraney of St Pat’s Athletic FC.
- Weekly Breakfast Club.
- Retreats at Easter and the end of summer with a range of inspirational guests.
- Suicide Awareness Month events in September, including a balloon release and a visit from the Samaritans.
- Visit from the God Squad (faith-based motorbike group).
- Remembrance Service for campus.
- Magician’s workshop.
- Visit from Trauma Dogs (Irish Guide Dogs for Blind).
- Christmas concert with the Dublin Victory Gospel Choir.



Festive neighbour

On 1 December 2024, Oberstown provided a Christmas dinner for the Man O’ War Senior Citizens’ Group. The Oberstown Catering and Household teams take the lead on this traditional event, held in the Man O’War GAA Club hall and attended by members of the Senior Management Team and staff members past and present from the local community.

Right: Adrian Grant and Paula Smith of the Household team



Partnerships

Oberstown works with external agencies to deliver positive outcomes for young people. Key national service partners include Tusla, the Health Service Executive, the Irish Prison Service, the Education and Training Board, the Probation Service, An Garda Síochána, the Courts Service and the Ombudsman for Children’s Office (OCO).

External partners provide in-reach services and support for young people. Here is an overview of some of this work.

Victim Liaison Service

The Victim Liaison Service invites interested parties to apply via the web or through an application form available in the ‘Victim Support at Court’ suites in Smithfield, the Children Court and Criminal Courts of Justice. There were no active cases in 2024.

Candle Community Trust

Candle Community Trust (Candle) works with Oberstown to support a smooth transition for young people to and from placements in either organisation. Candle provides educational, developmental, and therapeutic programmes to disadvantaged and marginalised young people. In 2024, Candle supported six young people through regular visits to Oberstown, four of whom continued with the service after release.

Crosscare Counselling Service

Crosscare Counselling resumed its addiction counselling to young people in Oberstown in 2024. This service complements the work of Tusla’s ACTS (Assessment Consultation Therapy Service) team on campus. The Crosscare

team provided individual counselling on Monday and Friday mornings, in sessions that focus on making informed choices and facilitate access to targeted support and treatment plans. In 2024, Crosscare delivered counselling to 15 young people and key working to 14 young people.

YJARC

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

Le Chéile Mentoring

A dedicated Le Chéile staff member, based on campus, works with the Oberstown team to respond to parents of young people in detention and referrals for young people identified as suitable for temporary release. Le Chéile can attend placement planning meetings (PPMs) to support parents. Le Chéile Parent Partnerships Mentoring is a community-based service offering individual support to parents around the country. In 2024, the parents of 10 young people engaged with the service (from Dublin, Kildare, Cork, Meath, Limerick and Waterford) and Le Chéile supported 14 young people prior to and post release.

Ombudsman for Children’s Office (OCO)

The OCO attends the campus monthly, engaging with young

people by appointment and informally in afterschool activities.

EPIC

EPIC – Empowering People in Care provides external advocacy for young people on campus monthly.

Department of Justice Bail Supervision Scheme

The Bail Supervision Scheme, operated by the Department of Justice and delivered by social justice charity Extern, caters for up to 25 young people each year. The courts and Oberstown refer young people to the scheme. During 2024, 59 young people from Oberstown were eligible; 24 were already known to Extern, 1 was outside the catchment area, 1 was referred by the courts and 10 were referred by Oberstown. A further 23 did not engage for reasons including parents declining, cases deemed unsuitable, or release of the young person before referral.

Way 2 Work

Way 2 Work (W2W) provides individual mentor-mentee, training, and employment programmes for young people (see page 39).

YAP (Youth Advocate Programmes Ireland)

YAP provides intensive support for young people preparing to return to the community. YAP employs community-based advocates to work with young people and their families to support them to achieve their goals. In 2024, YAP worked with four young people and their families at Oberstown. One of the young people went on to win a ‘Sustainability Star’ award for work after release at a YAP youth and family hub.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Board of Management meeting attendance
January - December 2024

Audit and Risk Committee attendance
January - December 2024

Governance & Strategy Committee attendance
May - December 2024

Governance Committee attendance
January - May 2024

Strategy Committee attendance
January - May 2024

People & Culture Committee attendance
January - December 2024

Sustainability Committee attendance
January - December 2024

Young People Committee attendance
January - December 2024

Board of Management meeting attendance totals
January - December 2024

Appendix 2

Board Fees Paid in respect of
January - December 2024

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

Appendix 1

Table 1
Board of Management meeting attendance
January – December 2024

Name	Jan 26	Feb 29	Mar 26	Apr 25	May 30	Jun 25	Aug 29	Sep 24	Oct 24	Nov 25	Dec 19	No. of eligible meetings	Total attended
Koulla Yiasouma	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	11	11
Brian Arnold	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	11	11
Bernadette Costello	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	11	11
Elizabeth Davey	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	11	11
Jennifer Gargan	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	11	11
John McDaid	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	◦	•	•	•	11	10
Úna Ni Dhubhghaill	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	11	11
Liz O'Neill	•	◦	◦	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	11	9
William O'Rourke	•	•	◦	◦	•	•	◦	•	•	•	•	11	8
Martin Quigley	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	◦	•	•	•	11	10
Fergal Reynolds	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	11	11
Emma Shanahan	•	◦	•	•	•	◦	•	•	•	•	◦	11	8
Dymphna Sherry	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	11	11

Legend:

- Attended
- Not Attended

Table 2
Audit and Risk Committee attendance
January – December 2024

Name	Feb 2	Mar 21	May 15	Sep 5	Nov 14	Dec 16	No. of eligible meetings	Total attended
Bernadette Costello (Chair)	•	•	•	•	•	•	6	6
Koulla Yiasouma	•	◦	•	•	•	•	6	5
John McDaid	•	•	•	•	•	•	6	6
Jennifer Gargan	•	•	•	•	•	•	6	6
Elizabeth Davey ¹			◦	•	◦	•	4	2

Notes

1. Elizabeth Davey's term commenced 1 May 2024

Table 3
Governance & Strategy Committee attendance
May – December 2024

Name	Jun 10	Aug 22	Nov 5	Nov 14	No. of eligible meetings	Total attended
John McDaid (Chair)	•	•	•	•	4	4
Koulla Yiasouma	•	•	•	•	4	4
Martin Quigley	•	•	◦	•	4	3
Úna Ni Dhubhghaill	◦	•	•	•	4	3
Emma Shanahan	•	•	•	◦	4	3

Notes

Governance & Strategy Committee was formed on 1st May 2024 when the Governance & Strategy Committees merged.

Table 3a
Governance Committee attendance
January – May 2024

Name	Jan 16	Apr 16	No. of eligible meetings	Total attended
Martin Quigley	•	•	2	2
Jennifer Gargan	•	•	2	2
Koulla Yiasouma	•	•	2	2
Elizabeth Davey	•	•	2	2

Table 3b
Strategy Committee attendance
January – May 2024

Name	Jan 16	Apr 16	No. of eligible meetings	Total attended
John McDaid (Chair)	•	•	2	2
Úna Ni Dhubhghaill	•	•	2	2
Emma Shanahan	•	◦	2	1
Koulla Yiasouma	•	•	2	2

Table 4
People & Culture Committee attendance
January – December 2024

Name	Feb 6	Apr 16	Jun 10	Nov 13	No. of eligible meetings	Total attended
Koulla Yiasouma	•	•	•	•	4	4
William O'Rourke ¹ (Chair)	•	•	•	•	4	4
Jennifer Gargan	•	•	•	•	4	4
Emma Shanahan ²			•	◦	2	1
Dymphna Sherry ³			•	•	2	2

.....
Legend:
• Attended
◦ Not Attended
.....

Notes
1. William O'Rourke term as Chair commenced 1st May 2024
2. Emma Shanahan's term commenced 1st May 2024
3. Dymphna Sherry's term commenced 1st May 2024

Table 5
Sustainability Committee attendance
January – December 2024

Name	Jan 15	May 15	Sep 4	Dec 12	No. of eligible meetings	Total attended
Brian Arnold (Chair)	•	•	•	•	4	4
Fergal Reynolds	•	•	•	•	4	4
Dymphna Sherry	•	•	•	•	4	4

Table 6
Young People Committee attendance
January – December 2024

Name	Jan 26	Feb 29	Mar 26	May 30	Jun 25	Aug 15	Nov 25	Dec 19	No. of eligible meetings	Total attended
Koulla Yiasouma	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	8	8
Jennifer Gargan (Chair)	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	8	8
Liz O'Neill	•	◦	◦	•		◦	•	◦	7	3
Elizabeth Davey ¹				•	•	•	•	◦	5	4
Dymphna Sherry ²				•		•	◦	◦	4	2

Notes
1. Elizabeth Davey's term commenced 1st May 2024
2. Dymphna Sherry's term commenced 1st May 2024

Table 7
Board of Management meeting attendance totals
January – December 2024

Name	Board of Management Meetings attendance	Governance Committee Meetings attendance	Audit & Risk Committee Meetings attendance	Strategy Committee Meetings attendance	Young People Committee Meetings attendance	People & Culture Committee Meetings attendance	Sustainability Committee Meetings attendance	Performance Committee Meetings attendance	Governance & Strategy Committee Meetings attendance	Total Meetings Attended
Koulla Yiasouma	11	2	5	2	8	4	–	4	4	40
Brian Arnold	11	–	–	–	–	4	4	4	–	19
Bernadette Costello	11	–	6	–	–	–	–	4	–	21
Elizabeth Davey	11	2	2	–	4	–	–	–	–	19
Jennifer Gargan	11	2	6	–	8	4	–	–	–	31
John McDaid	10	–	6	2	–	–	–	3	4	25
Úna Ní Dhubhghaill	11	–	–	2	–	–	–	–	3	16
Liz O'Neill	9	–	–	–	3	–	–	–	–	12
William O'Rourke	8	–	–	–	–	4	–	–	–	12
Martin Quigley	10	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	15
Fergal Reynolds	11	–	–	–	–	–	4	–	–	15
Emma Shanahan	8	–	–	1	–	1	–	–	3	13
Dymphna Sherry	11	–	–	–	2	2	4	–	–	19

Appendix 2

Table 1
Board Fees Paid in respect of
January – December 2024

Name	Amount €
Brian Arnold	5,985.00
Bernadette Costello	5,985.00
Elizabeth Davey	5,985.00
Jennifer Gargan	5,985.00
Dymphna Sherry	5,985.00
Koulla Yiasouma	8,978.00
Martin Quigley*	0.00

Notes
* Fees waived

Table 2
Board members exempt from
payment under OPOS*

Úna Ní Dhughghaill
Liz O'Neill
William O'Rourke
Fergal Reynolds
Emma Shanahan

Notes
* One person one salary

**The oberstown website,
www.oberstown.com,
provides extensive
information on the
campus and its work
with young people,
including:**

- Oberstown's purpose, Board and management
- Campus statistics
- Information resources including publications
- Visitor information
- Careers and job vacancies
- News & media resources

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