

Oberstown 2017

Oberstown priority areas

The Director and the Board of Management have identified particular priorities over the past 15 months which have supported improvements in the delivery of safe and appropriate care for young people on Campus. The Board of Management have approved nine revised policies as part of an ongoing work plan, including those on:

1. Care
2. Health and Wellbeing
3. Complaints
4. Safeguarding
5. Dignity and Privacy
6. Single Separation
7. Anti-Bullying
8. Medication Management
9. Handcuffs

Further consideration has been given by the Board of Management to policy areas such as, behaviour management, preparing for release and education.

Campus security

Substantial improvements have been made in the area of security, facility management and health and safety. The Campus appointed a Deputy Director with responsibility for Risk and Safety Services in June 2017. Improvements in the infrastructure on the Campus is underway to ensure buildings are robust and secure to accommodate young people at the Campus.

Single separation

The area of single separation has been a matter of particular attention and scrutiny and Oberstown continues to improve our record keeping, our monitoring and, most importantly, our use of single separation in line with national and Oberstown policy. In October 2017, the Board adopted a statement on Restrictive Practices, to underscore the importance of using single separation, and other restrictive practices, as a measure of last resort. We continue to expect improvements in all areas of our practice on the Campus.

Characteristics of Young People in Oberstown

We have also invested in the collation of data in order to understand better the characteristics of young people placed at Oberstown. Information on the number of incidents that occur on the Campus including single separation and restraints are made available to the Board of Management on a monthly basis. This information is analysed and considered by the Director, the Board of Management and it is now shared with external stakeholders and the general public.

HIQA

Overall, we are satisfied that substantial progress has been made to ensure that Oberstown not only provides a safe and secure care environment for young people referred by the courts, it is also striving to ensure that best practice is in place throughout the organisation. We are pleased that this progress has been recognised by the state's inspection watchdog, HIQA. In March 2017, the Health Information and Equality Authority (HIQA) undertook a three day inspection at Oberstown. While areas requiring improvement were identified, the report also highlighted safe and appropriate care practices. An Action Plan was submitted to HIQA in June 2017 by the Director and this action plan was accepted.

Review Implementation Group

In March 2017, the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Dr Katherine Zappone, TD, established a group to analyse and map the recommendations of all the reviews. This group consists of representatives from the Campus, the Board of Management, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and an external nominee. The group has met regularly during the year and submitted progress both to the Board and the Minister. A final report will be delivered to the Minister, on schedule, in December 2017.

Strategic direction

Over the course of 2017, we have developed a new Strategic Plan for Oberstown. The Plan, which we will be launching shortly, charts the course of Oberstown for the next three years.

Communications and Engagement

The Board approved a Communications and Engagement Strategy in September 2017 to improve external and internal communication on the Campus and a Strategy to enable the participation of young people in decision-making in October 2017. An action plan will be adopted at its next meeting to guide the implementation of all priority actions.