

OBERSTOWN WELCOMES IPRT REPORT HIGHLIGHTING CROSSOVER BETWEEN CARE AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEMS

Oberstown Children Detention Campus welcomes the publication of the Irish Penal Reform Trust report 'Care and Justice,' which considers the crossover of young people in the care with the criminal justice system.

Oberstown was one of the contributors to the study and is the only body that collates any published statistics on this issue. Oberstown's data shows that in each month from July to December 2018 the percentage of young people in Oberstown who were either in care prior to detention¹ or had significant² contact with the Child and Family Agency, Tusla, ranged from 32% to a high of 43% (see notes for further statistics). Our research data also tells us that young people in care and justice experience multiple placement histories, bereavement and loss. Mental health needs and substance misuse are also significant concerns for these young people.

Oberstown Director Pat Bergin commented: "Given these facts, and as the IPRT report recommends, there is a need for a more joined up approach between all agencies involved with these young people, and not just when they enter the 'higher end' of the justice system, i.e. Oberstown. In order to adequately serve this vulnerable population of young people, we must identify and recognise the specific needs of care-experienced young people. From our point of view, this means working with a range of agencies to come up with an individualised placement plan for that young person's needs and to ensure there are a range of services available to you people to meet their complex needs on release.

"For example in Oberstown, when a young person in care comes to us, we liaise with relevant services and people who have worked with and supported that young person. In this way, we can identify their current risks, needs and strengths and this then informs their placement plan.

"In implementing and developing the CEHOP framework within Oberstown, working with community-based stakeholders is vital. To this end, Oberstown has established positive working relationships with statutory and non-statutory services in order to meet the needs of all young people in detention and plan for their release into the community. In particular, Oberstown works with Tusla to support young people in their care during their detention in Oberstown and to plan for their release into suitable services.

Restorative principles and trauma-informed practices are effective ways to both engage and build better outcomes for these young people. We also continue to build on the development of our staff and young people in the area of restorative practices through continued staff training in partnership with community based stakeholders.

We welcome the recommendations as outlined in this report and look forward to continuing to explore innovative ways to work with all of our partners to improve the supports available for young people in care who cross over into the justice system."

¹ The young person may have been in care at any point prior to detention.

²Significant involvement with Tusla means that there was clear evidence of a long history with either the young person or their family.

Notes:**1. Statistics**

Data from Oberstown shows that each month from July to December 2018 between 30% and 40% of young people in detention were either in care prior to detention³ or had significant⁴ contact with the Child and Family Agency, Tusla.

July (43%)

Of the 44 young people in Oberstown:

- 12 young people were in care prior to detention and a further 7 had significant involvement with Tusla.

August (34%)

Of the 46 young people in Oberstown:

- 9 young people were in care prior to detention and a further 6 had significant involvement with Tusla.
- 2 young people were under Special Care orders prior to detention.

September (43%)

Of the 44 young people in Oberstown:

- 11 young people were in care prior to detention and a further 8 had significant involvement with Tusla.
- 1 young person was under Special Care orders prior to detention.

October (43%)

Of the 44 young people in Oberstown:

- 12 young people were in care prior to detention and a further 7 had significant involvement with Tusla.

November (46%)

Of the 37 young people in Oberstown:

- 11 young people were in care prior to detention, while a further 6 had significant involvement with Tusla.

December (32%)

Of the 41 young people in Oberstown:

- 11 young people were in care prior to detention, while a further two had significant involvement with Tusla.

2. CEHOP – care, education, health, offending behaviour and preparation for leaving.

Oberstown helps young people to address their offending behaviour through a programme centred on their care, education and health needs.

Upon arrival each young person is assessed and an individual care plan is developed by a multi-disciplinary team. This produces a bespoke journey through care plan for each young person. This is achieved through a unique care model based on Children Act 2001, developed by Oberstown, in which relationship building is key.

³ The young person may have been in care at any point prior to detention.

⁴ Significant involvement with Tusla means that there was clear evidence of a long history with either the young person or their family.