



# Oakhill Secure Training Centre

Chalgrove Field  
Oakhill  
Milton Keynes  
MK5 6AJ

## Assurance Inspection

Inspected under the secure training centres joint inspection framework

## Information about this secure training centre

Oakhill Secure Training Centre is operated by G4S Care and Justice Services (G4S). The centre provides accommodation for up to 80 children, male and female, aged 12 to 19 years, who are serving a custodial sentence or who are remanded to custody by the courts. There were 67 children resident at the time of the inspection, 66 boys and one girl.

Education is provided on site in dedicated facilities by G4S. Healthcare services are provided by G4S Health Services UK. The commissioning of health services at this centre is the statutory responsibility of NHS England under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

**Inspection dates:** 5 and 6 March 2024

**Date of the last inspection:** 2 to 6 October 2023

**Judgement at the last inspection:** requires improvement to be good

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
2 October 2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
16 May 2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
4 October 2021	Full	Inadequate

## Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspectors evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, under the secure training centres inspection framework.

This inspection was carried out in accordance with Rule 43 of the Secure Training Centre Rules (produced in compliance with Section 47 of the Prison Act 1952, as amended by Section 6(2) of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994), and Section 80 of the Children Act 1989. His Majesty's Chief Inspector's power to inspect secure training centres is provided by Section 146 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Joint inspections involving Ofsted, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) are permitted under paragraph 7 of Schedule 13 to the Education and Inspections Act 2006. This enables Ofsted's His Majesty's Chief Inspector to act jointly with other public authorities for the efficient and effective exercise of his functions.

All inspections carried out by Ofsted, HMIP and CQC contribute to the UK's response to its international obligations under the United Nations Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT) and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. OPCAT requires that all places of detention are visited regularly by independent bodies – known as the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) – which monitor the treatment of and conditions for detainees.

## Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

Leaders remain passionate and committed to providing a safe and stable environment for children in Oakhill. Leaders and children know each other well through a range of mechanisms. Daily cross-departmental meetings review children's experiences, monitor concerns and identify actions. Leaders routinely engage with children through spending time on units and regularly eating meals alongside children and staff in the dining room. This is enabling leaders to understand the quality of care, listen to and act on children's issues and observe relationships.

The learning from the last inspection has been embraced and the centre is making solid and steady progress against most recommendations to improve children's experiences in Oakhill. Improvement plans are monitored and advanced through weekly cross-departmental meetings. As a result, conflict resolution has improved overall, Release on Temporary licence panels have started, staff retention is improving, the first family day was successfully delivered and the development of a dedicated intervention resource is ongoing. The required pace of expected progress on the standard of the treatment rooms not meeting infection prevention and control standards has not been met. The director took immediate action while inspectors were on site to improve this. The education recommendation was not considered as part of this visit.

Despite national challenges in recruitment, workforce retention is starting to stabilise so children can enjoy more enduring relationships with staff. Children are able to form trusting relationships with the staff. Interactions are relaxed, with spontaneous expressions of fondness such as fist bumps and handshakes when meeting each other. Children reported that they have a number of staff to whom they can address any worries or concerns.

Complaints are taken seriously. Investigations are resolved in a timely way and the reasons behind any findings clearly explained to children. The governance of complaints is thorough, which prevents drift, and children are reassured that their voice is valued.

Children actively influence some decisions in the routines and the running of Oakhill. For example, they have helped shape the development plans for changing the rewards system and influenced the dining arrangements and menus. Although these have not been fully implemented, there is a genuine sense of children's views being valued and acted on. In addition, the Youth Custody Service (YCS) has consulted with children and, as a result, has provided funding leading to the purchase of new gym equipment. Children are using the new equipment, and the YCS plans to meet with the children in the near future to get their feedback.

Staff intervene sensitively and skilfully to prevent escalation of conflict between children. Following the last inspection, the use of conflict resolution initially increased. More

recently, operational demands have hindered staff's ability to complete some sessions. When conflict resolution is used, it is effective in easing tensions and repairing fragile relationships between children and supporting greater opportunities for socialising.

Children's health needs are well promoted. They have good access to a range of age-appropriate services, with little or no waiting times to access support. Staff shortages are currently addressed by the use of long-term agency and regular bank staff. However, there is no speech and language support for children.

Children at risk of self-harming are helped to be safer. Children's voices are central in shaping strategies which help to reduce their distress. Plans and planning are robust and underpinned by detailed multidisciplinary work through which children's individual vulnerabilities are understood. Plans are regularly reviewed and adjusted effectively to meet children's changing needs.

Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities with regard to reporting any safeguarding concerns. The response is thorough, engaging relevant stakeholders and partners, and action is taken to protect children. These systems are strong and embedded across the centre. As a result, children are safer, and a learning culture ensures that practice continues to evolve.

Staff have a good understanding of children and their unique triggers. This is enabling staff to de-escalate many situations, thereby preventing the need for more assertive action. When staff use restraint to safeguard children, this is mostly appropriate and proportionate. Robust oversight results in prompt corrective actions being taken when there are shortfalls in standards. Leaders have fostered a culture in which body-worn cameras are used frequently to promote transparency and accountability. This is supporting children to be safer.

Single separations, where children are locked in an area when they meet the legal criteria of being a significant risk to themselves or others, are used in line with expected standards and for the minimum time necessary. Scrutiny of the use of single separation is strong, and children are helped to understand the reasons for separation.

New staff are well supported through a structured training programme and the extension of senior leadership mentoring provides enhanced help and guidance.

Most staff receive regular supervision, which is used to check on their welfare as well as providing clear direction on the centre's expectations and standards. Despite this, timescales for actions to be completed are not routinely defined and meetings do not sufficiently focus on children's individual needs and plans to help staff understand what they need to do to improve children's experiences.

## What needs to improve:

### Recommendations

- Improve children's quality of care by:
  - having sufficient skilled staffing across the centre that meets children's diverse needs and supports children's routines, including ensuring that they are not locked in their rooms during normal waking hours;
  - ensuring that all children who achieve platinum status in the incentive scheme but who are unable to live in the enhanced house at that time receive the same rewards as their peers;
  - promoting the use of the dining room to maximise opportunities for children to eat communally and to socialise.
- Improve children's education by implementing an appropriate reading curriculum and ensure that children with low-level reading skills receive the support they need, such as through phonics teaching, to help them to develop their reading skills quickly.
- Improve the help and protection children receive by:
  - providing timely conflict resolution to increase opportunities for more children to mix with their peers when it is safe for them to do so;
  - helping staff to feel confident and to intervene in disputes between children at an early stage to prevent escalation to violence and the need for physical restraint.
- Improve children's resettlement by helping to prepare them to return to the community through the delivery of high-quality interventions, key-working, high-quality Release on Temporary Licence and regular family days.
- Improve children's health by ensuring that all healthcare areas meet infection control standards.
- Improve leadership and management by strengthening quality assurance arrangements for education and having secure, independent monitoring of safeguarding concerns.

## Secure training centre details

**Provider name:** G4S Care and Justice Services (G4S)

**Director:** Michelle Price

## Inspectors

Lead Inspector: Lisa Summers, Ofsted, His Majesty's Inspector

Quality Assurance Manager: Pauline Higham, Ofsted, Senior His Majesty's Inspector

Paul Taylor, Ofsted, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

Thirza Smith, Ofsted, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

Esra Sari, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons

Catherine Raycraft, Care Quality Commission, Health and Justice Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2024