

Oakhill Secure Training Centre

Chalgrove Field
Oakhill
Milton Keynes
MK5 6AJ

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the secure training centres 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 74 children resident at the time of the inspection, 70 boys and four girls.

Education is provided on site in dedicated facilities by G4S. Healthcare services are provided by G4S Health Services UK.

Inspection date: 5 December 2024

This monitoring visit

1. In October 2024, inspectors identified serious weaknesses impacting on children's care and well-being. This visit was unannounced and focused on children's well-being, specifically the issues that led to the inadequate judgement at the last inspection. Not all the recommendations were reviewed at this visit. Progress against these will be tested at the next full inspection. The CQC has issued a (Section 29 Health and Social Care Act 2008) Warning Notice against G4S Healthcare Service (UK) Limited, and this will be followed up after 31 January 2025 to check compliance.
2. Progress is being made against the serious weaknesses identified at the last inspection in October 2024. Leaders have taken the findings from the last inspection seriously and have taken swift action. Improvement plans have been revised and are appropriately targeted. Extended separation of children from their peers has not been used since the last inspection, and children are no longer locked in their rooms if they do not attend education.

3. The child-focused director has established improved quality assurance mechanisms to oversee the use of separations and children refusing to attend education. Leaders are strengthening recording and revising policies and processes on the use of separation. All children who have been separated or who do not attend education are identified on a daily basis at morning briefings. This is providing greater accountability and challenge across the centre.
4. The director has established a dedicated health improvement board made up of staff of sufficient seniority to drive the change needed. The board oversees and monitors progress against a health improvement plan which is focusing on the deficits identified at the last inspection. This includes some external scrutiny, for example, an independent audit on infection prevention and control has been carried out, and a resultant action plan is being progressed.
5. The Youth Custody Service (YCS) is strengthening its monitoring of the centre. There is now regular reporting of children not attending education and the YCS attends the health improvement board. YCS staff have requested additional guidance to enable them to monitor the quality and impact of health provision more effectively.
6. Since the last inspection, no child has been subjected to extended removals from their peers. If children need to be separated, the decisions are now proportionate and appropriate. Decisions have a clear rationale and the suitability of this action for each child. Leaders have developed clear pathways for staff to follow, detailing key actions that are triggered by set timescales. This includes escalating management oversight and monitoring. There is now a continual review to test if the child still meets the criteria for separation and why. Staff reported that they understand these new processes, through regular briefings, notices and emails.
7. Children told inspectors that they feel safe and cared for, and many said they had a member of staff they could talk to if they had any concerns or problems. This helps children to feel safe and supported. Children understand their daily routines, and these are consistent. Children confirmed that if they refuse to attend education, they are no longer locked in their rooms.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
October 2024	Full	Inadequate
March 2024	Assurance	No serious or widespread concerns
October 2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
May 2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good

What needs to improve: Recommendations

- Immediately cease the use of single separation when children do not attend education and do not meet the criteria set out in Rule 36 of the Secure Training Centre Rules.
- If children are separated for extended periods, there must be a clear recorded justification for its ongoing use. Healthcare professionals should retain access and proactively monitor the health and well-being needs of a child who is separated. Healthcare staff should also ensure that any new healthcare or well-being needs which arise (physical or psychological) are identified and met. If support is refused, the reason should be recorded, and repeated attempts should be made.
- *Improve the quality and impact of health support for children by:
 - ensuring that children’s wide-ranging health needs are swiftly assessed;
 - ensuring that appropriate and timely interventions are delivered to meet children’s assessed needs, in line with national guidance;
 - ensuring that there are clear care plans in place which are reflective of children’s current needs;
 - ensuring that all health records are accurate and accessible to staff;
 - ensuring that all healthcare areas meet infection prevention and control standards;
 - carrying out effective medicine audits and ensuring safe storage practice for medicines;
 - ensuring that governance systems are accurate and effective at identifying shortfalls in the service provided.

*These matters are subject to enforcement action by the Care Quality Commission.

- Improve the quality of education by:
 - having sufficient teachers and learning support assistants with the relevant subject knowledge and skills and supporting the development of their pedagogic skills, as necessary;
 - reviewing the curriculum so that it meets the needs of children, and that its content is broad and ambitious, to enable children to learn as much as possible;
 - improving the progress that children make in English and completing the launch of an effective reading strategy, monitoring its impact and the improvement of all children’s reading skills.
- Improve leadership and management by strengthening quality assurance arrangements for:
 - education, to identify and improve key areas of teaching and assessment and to monitor a broader range of children’s progress in knowledge, skills and behaviours over and above qualification achievement, and to gain a true picture of children’s development;

- healthcare, so that there is a good understanding of the quality and impact of health provision for children so that weaknesses can be identified and addressed at the earliest opportunity.
- Improve the response to children’s complaints so that children’s concerns are independently investigated and fully addressed. Children’s views as to whether they are satisfied with the outcome should be recorded and if they are not satisfied, they are informed what they can do next. Responses to children should be made in a way that is child-friendly and meets their communication needs.
- Improve children’s resettlement by helping to prepare them to return to the community through the delivery of high-quality interventions that address the reasons why they are placed at Oakhill STC.
- Improve care planning so that plans are comprehensive, integrated across the centre, effective in tracking children’s progress and provide staff with sufficient information about children’s individual needs to promote consistent practice.
- The YCS should conduct a review with the centre director of the number of children that the centre can appropriately look after, so that children’s needs are met in respect of the space and services available to them.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the secure training centre since its last inspection.

The centre was inspected under the secure training centres inspection framework.

This inspection was carried out in accordance with Rule 43 of the Secure Training Centre Rules 1998 (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.

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Secure training centre details

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Inspectors

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Thirza Smith, Social Care Regulatory Inspector, Ofsted

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