



Ministry
of Justice

Sir Nic Dakin MP
Parliamentary Under-
Secretary of State for
Justice

Andy Slaughter MP, Chair
Justice Select Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

MoJ ref: SUB 126927

28 August 2025

Dear Andy,

URGENT NOTIFICATION – OAKHILL SECURE TRAINING CENTRE

As you are aware, Sir Martyn Oliver, HM Chief Inspector of Ofsted, issued an Urgent Notification (UN) at Oakhill Secure Training Centre (STC) on 31 July 2025.

The Chief Inspector has raised several serious concerns including systematic failures in safeguarding procedures, poor leadership and staff conduct, and the lack of a child-centred culture. These findings are unacceptable, and the Lord Chancellor and I will continue to work closely with Ofsted, the Youth Custody Service (YCS) and G4S, which runs the site, to improve standards and ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children held in the centre.

Since the UN was invoked, senior officials at the YCS have been working with Oakhill STC to begin addressing the most urgent concerns raised by the inspectorate. More information on the actions we have taken, or plan to take, is detailed in the Lord Chancellor's response letter and action plan which have been published on the UN page of the GOV.UK. I have enclosed copies with this letter.

I will continue to ensure the support is provided to Oakhill STC to secure much needed improvements. In accordance with Ofsted's framework, it will be publishing a full report in September and undertaking a further visit within 8 weeks of its findings from this inspection. I assure you that the Lord Chancellor and I will be closely monitoring Ofsted's subsequent findings to help ensure there is progress and that we will maintain this focus until sustained improvement is achieved.

I will place a copy of this letter in the library of the House. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at MCorrespondence.NicDakin@justice.gov.uk.

SIR NIC DAKIN MP



Ministry
of Justice

The Right Honourable
Shabana Mahmood MP
Lord Chancellor & Secretary
of State for Justice

Sir Martyn Oliver
HM Chief Inspector
Ofsted
10 South Colonnade
Canary Wharf
London
E14 4PU

28 August 2025

Dear Martyn,

URGENT NOTIFICATION – OAKHILL SECURE TRAINING CENTRE

Thank you for your letter outlining the serious concerns raised following your full inspection of Oakhill Secure Training Centre (STC), published on 31 July, and invoking the Urgent Notification process. I am pleased to provide this response within the 28-day timeframe, in accordance with the 'Joint inspection framework: secure training centres' and the linked protocol between the Ministry of Justice and HM Inspectorate of Prisons.

As you know we had concerns about Oakhill and had discussed these with Ofsted. We are, therefore, grateful for the planned routine full inspection whereby you have raised very serious issues including systematic failures in safeguarding procedures, poor leadership and staff conduct, and the lack of a child-centred culture. You have raised concerns around the new healthcare provider's ability to address healthcare issues given their scale and complexity.

Rapid action has already been taken to put in an experienced Director and Deputy Director and the YCS had provided the site additional safeguarding and operations expertise. Where inappropriate practices were found, these have ceased, and healthcare and mental health provision has been bolstered. This Government is determined to continue to drive much needed improvement in response to your findings. To achieve this, I have enclosed the action plan for Oakhill STC which will be published alongside this letter. The action plan focuses on tackling the most pressing issues including child safeguarding, leadership, culture and accountability, staff conduct and capacity, healthcare provision, and living conditions and decency standards.

I note that in accordance with your framework, you will be publishing your full report in September and undertaking a further visit within 8 weeks of your findings. I assure you that I will be closely monitoring the situation at Oakhill STC to help ensure that you see improvements and that the site will continue to receive bolstered support so that these can be sustained and further built on.

I would like to thank you and your team for your valued scrutiny of our youth estate, and I look forward to receiving your full inspection report and hearing the outcomes of subsequent visits in due course.

Yours sincerely,

RT HON SHABANA MAHMOOD MP
LORD CHANCELLOR AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR JUSTICE

Oakhill Secure Training Centre (STC) Urgent Notification Action Plan

Themes and Concerns	#	Response	Owner(s)	Target Completion Date
Safeguarding and Separation	1	<p>Robust and timely safeguarding systems will be put in place and followed to protect children from the risks of harm. This will be achieved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointing a standalone permanent Head of Safeguarding with relevant expertise and ensuring the safeguarding team is sufficiently resourced and skilled to support and deliver effective child safeguarding. Ensuring appropriate processes, escalations and recommendations have been followed through a joint review with the Local Authority of all safeguarding referrals over the last 12 months (August 2024 to July 2025). Reviewing the local safeguarding policy to ensure it aligns with current legislation and the Local Authority's expectations by the end of September, with implementation by the end of October. Strengthening assurance that local processes are followed correctly and the appropriate action taken (including timely information-sharing with relevant authorities) through daily (Mon-Fri) governance meetings overseen by the Director/Deputy Director/YCS Monitor. Agreeing a memorandum of understanding with Milton Keynes Children's Services and the Local Authority Designated Officer that clearly defines local reporting process, joint decision-making and employee relations. 	<p>Director of Oakhill STC</p> <p>YCS Head of Safeguarding</p> <p>Milton Keynes Children's Services</p>	<p>December 2025</p> <p>September 2025</p> <p>October 2025</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>October 2025</p>
	2	<p>Enhanced monitoring arrangements that help safeguard children and ensure they receive good quality care will be achieved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthened monitoring oversight through secondment of a senior YCS Operational Manager. Senior leaders commissioning a review of monitoring systems at Oakhill led by independent Deputy Director from HMPPS. Recommendations from the review, alongside insight from local authority safeguarding partners will be incorporated into a revised local action plan and strengthened monitoring arrangements 	<p>YCS Executive Director</p> <p>HMPPS & Head of Operational Contract Management, YCS</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>October 2025</p>
	3	<p>Removal from Association will be conducted appropriately and in accordance with the STC Rules, supported by:</p>	<p>Director of Oakhill STC</p>	<p>October 2025</p>

N.B. All target dates allude to completion for the end of the stipulated month.

Oakhill Secure Training Centre (STC) Urgent Notification Action Plan

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> G4S reviewing the local Removal from Association policy to ensure that it aligns with STC Rules and communicating consistently to staff any amendments. Assurance of all Removals from Association by the YCS Monitoring Team and Director/Deputy Director through sign off periods of removal and reviews of these to ensure appropriate risk assessment and that children are reintegrated at the earliest opportunity. Improved oversight through provision of daily updates to Managers. 	YCS on site monitor	
Leadership	4	<p>Changes in leadership through the appointment of an interim Director and Deputy Director with considerable experience of youth custody and custodial settings, whilst an internal review is being undertaken, will be further supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondment of a YCS Senior Operational Manager to enhance monitoring oversight. Provision of management support with expertise in key areas, including safeguarding, from both the YCS and G4S Central Management. 	Director of Oakhill STC YCS DD Ops	Complete
	5	<p>Management grip across critical areas of practice will be enhanced through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisions to governance, monitoring and assurance mechanisms relating to the operation of Oakhill STC. To ensure all contributing agencies are properly held to account and there is join-up, earlier identification of risk and full oversight of appropriate practices being followed. A multi-agency approach, with Oakhill working collaboratively with YCS subject matter experts, Milton Keynes Local Authority, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), and the independent restraint reviewer to ensure that practice reflects the principles of Working Together to Safeguard Children, and that safeguarding is embedded as a shared responsibility across all agencies. Implementation of weekly performance meetings and an establishment assurance framework in conjunction with the YCS Monitoring Team which includes a review of operational delivery on a monthly basis. 	Director of Oakhill STC YCS on site monitor	November 2025
Accountability and Culture	6	The Director will lead on instilling a child centred culture at Oakhill STC where children and staff feel safe, supported by:	Director of Oakhill STC	January 2026

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Oakhill Secure Training Centre (STC) Urgent Notification Action Plan

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visible and approachable leaders for both children and staff with daily management visits to all residential areas, interactions with non-residential areas such as education and the dining hall. • Annual refresher training for all operational staff on safeguarding, professional standards and information assurance. • Refresh of training packages and implementation of a communication strategy that promotes a child friendly ethos, where children have a voice and staff and children feel able to share concerns without fear of reprisal. • Acting on staff survey results to ensure key concerns are identified and action taken to address these. • Re-launching and strengthening training for new staff around professional standards and handling confidential information by the end of October 2025. 		
	7	In light of the concerns from the inspectorate, an immediate derogation was applied by the YCS for G4S to cease children donating from the weekly income provided by G4S to contribute towards a victims' fund. G4S will work with relevant stakeholders to determine how the remaining balance of the fund is appropriately distributed.	Director of Oakhill STC YCS DD Ops Semperian Senior Operations Manager	September 2025
Staff conduct and capacity	8	Staff conduct issues will be addressed through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased oversight through role modelling and regular supervision, reinforcing that inappropriate behaviour is to be escalated to trigger relevant training or HR procedures. • Ensuring concerns are shared with the YCS Monitor to enable discharge of statutory duties and that appropriate processes are followed. • A review of staff training delivered to both new starters and existing staff will be undertaken so that it is child-focused and aligned with professional standards. • Identification of any key themes in suspension and dismissal data to inform any amendments required to recruitment processes. 	Director of Oakhill STC	October 2025
	9	Oakhill STC will limit incidents of children experiencing unintentional pain during the use of physical restraints through:	Director of Oakhill STC	

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Oakhill Secure Training Centre (STC) Urgent Notification Action Plan

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate promotion of de-escalation, ensuring staff seek alternatives to resolving issues without the need for force. Where force is necessary, approved techniques that pose a lower risk of harm will be used in line with the current syllabus. • G4S/YCS will provide staff with the revised Minimising and Managing Physical Restraint (MMPR) training to ensure they are up to date with approved techniques. • Ongoing internal scrutiny of all incidents through the local MMPR meeting, ensuring staff feedback is provided where required and issues are escalated to senior leaders. • Continuation of six-monthly external scrutiny of use of force at Oakhill STC through the Independent Restraint Review Panel. Additionally, annual scrutiny of Use of Force at Oakhill is conducted by the Local Authority Children's Services team. 	YCS on site monitor	<p>Complete</p> <p>January 2026</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p>
	10	<p>Sufficient staffing levels will be achieved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily strategic planning meetings to assure that minimum staffing levels for the following day and beyond can be met to enable planning for a safe regime. • Implementation of robust management processes that maximise the availability of staff for deployment, informed by a review of absence management, including injury on duty. • Increased scrutiny of declared daily staffing levels by the YCS Monitoring Team. 	<p>Director of Oakhill STC</p> <p>YCS on site monitor</p>	October 2025
Health provision	11	<p>To address concerns around healthcare provision, the NHSE Commissioners and new healthcare provider (Dr PA Secure) are already undertaking a review of workforce, leadership and governance. Several activities are underway to resolve inherited concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to assurance and oversight through ensuring robust contract review, quality assurance and analysis of data and performance. • Expansion of the on-site team by bolstering the Leadership team and the workforce by recruiting an additional 8 members of staff by the end of the year. • The appointment of a Head of Primary Care due to start by the end of September. • Dr PA will appoint an interim Head of Mental Health whilst the post is out for recruitment. The Head of Clinical Operations will continue to deputise for the Head of Healthcare. 	<p>NHSE</p> <p>Dr PA Secure</p>	December 2025
	12	<p>To improve timely care for children known to have mental health concerns, since becoming the new health provider, Dr PA has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed a mental health pathway from admissions to discharge. • Signed off guidance on formulations and allocation. 	Dr PA Secure	August 2025

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Oakhill Secure Training Centre (STC) Urgent Notification Action Plan

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded the mental health team to include an onsite Psychiatrist, onsite Psychologist and assistant Psychologists. <p>Additionally, Dr PA will deliver training on the mental health pathway, that will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguarding, risk assessment and screening tools, Supporting Mental Health crisis and the Integrated care plan. 		
	13	Pharmaceutical expertise has been commissioned by NHSE to review and assure medicines optimisation and pharmacy services within Oakhill STC. The service will review governance arrangements, prescribing processes, workforce and adherence to the Royal Pharmaceutical Society Framework to provide commissioning assurance and oversight alongside improvement recommendations for the provider, commencing in August 2025.	NHSE	October 2025
	14	DrPA Secure will improve processes to protect children from known risks to health by implementing and ensuring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GP appointments take place during the week rather than at weekends. Staff have access to an on-call GP 7 days per week. Focused audit activity for the next 6 months to monitor investigations and test results being processed, to be reviewed in March 2026. Staff training on communication and escalation pathways as well as on the systems in place to support communication. <p>Oakhill STC in conjunction with the Health Provider, will seek to manage allergens in line with guidance provided to and followed by schools throughout the UK.</p>	Dr PA Secure Director of Oakhill STC	August 2025 September 2025
Living Conditions & Decency Standards	15	To improve cleanliness and decency standards, the centre contractor and G4S Facilities Management Team will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify all areas requiring repairs, replacements, decoration and cleaning through a site-wide survey. Develop a programme of maintenance works, prioritising residential living units, to implement improvements to standards across the facility. An assurance process will be introduced to carry out ongoing checks on cleanliness and maintenance. 	G4S Director of Facilities Management Semperian Senior Operations Manager Director of Oakhill STC	January 2026

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