

Immediate action to improve Oakhill

Press release

Prisons Minister Victoria Atkins has today (11 November 2021) outlined urgent action to address 'unacceptable' failings at a secure training centre run by G4S.



- Prisons Minister announces plan to address 'unacceptable' failings
- includes new director, fewer children onsite, more time spent out of cell
- contractor G4S closely monitored and must drive improvements

The steps taken at Oakhill STC, in Milton Keynes, include the appointment of a new director – the private sector equivalent of a prison governor – to improve leadership, bolstered staffing and training, more time out of cell and guaranteed access to 25 hours of face-to-face education each week.

The action plan comes in response to serious failings identified during an Ofsted inspection in October, which triggered an Urgent Notification (UN).

Prisons Minister Victoria Atkins MP said:

The findings at Oakhill were completely unacceptable and we are considering all options.

Action needs to be swift to ensure these vulnerable children are given the best chance to turn their lives around in a calm, safe and secure environment.

Since inspectors [issued their notification last month](#), improvements have been implemented:

- a new permanent director is being appointed to strengthen leadership and operational control
- specialist training is being provided for senior staff to bolster

safeguarding processes

- children are getting at least 12 hours per day out of their room
- a minimum of 25 hours of face-to-face education is being given each week
- the number of children at Oakhill has also been temporarily reduced to a maximum of 40, to provide further stability
- additional experienced staff are being deployed to help drive down violence and deliver more activities
- an expert in minimising use of force has also been recruited to give staff the confidence to challenge poor behaviour without the use of restraint
- more staff for the on-site safeguarding team to ensure faster and more thorough referrals to local authorities and healthcare teams when there are concerns
- refurbishment of the site

The Youth Custody Service will continue to monitor performance and ensure further steps are taken to improve the care and wellbeing of children at the site in Milton Keynes.

The government introduced the Urgent Notification protocol in 2017 to ensure immediate action is taken to address serious concerns identified by inspectors. The process is triggered when inspectorates write to the Justice Secretary following an inspection, with Ministers having 28 days to respond and set out a detailed action plan.

The [Justice Secretary's response and action plan](#) can be found on GOV.UK.

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