

Government Response to the Shelia Durr Report

The Government welcomes the independent report produced by Shelia Durr on safeguarding at Oakhill STC. His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), commissioned Shelia Durr to produce the report as part of its response in the Urgent Notification Action Plan that was [published in November 2021](#).

The Government accepts the 19 recommendations made in the report. It is noted that a number of the recommendations require input from statutory safeguarding partners and other statutory partners responsible for children. An update on progress against the recommendations can be found in the table below.

The report accurately reflected the safeguarding landscape at the time of the review at Oakhill Secure Training Centre, identifying the areas of future development required but importantly, alongside the full report, clearly highlights the improvements made by the centre since the Urgent Notification was issued. Oakhill children and staff now benefit from:

- Increased access to specialist support from Social Workers. Work is underway to introduce an on-call system for 24-hour coverage, should a child or member of staff require access it will be available at the time it is most needed;
- Increased safeguarding and resettlement team resources which have improved oversight and monitoring. Child protection referrals are more robustly followed up and the Youth Custody Service (YCS) Monitoring Team have not seen delays. There is evidence that resettlement issues are robustly followed up with colleagues in the community;
- Developing relationships with local strategic safeguarding partners supporting continuous improvement in safeguarding practice and strategies. This will also support the delivery of those recommendations aimed at partner agencies.
- Increased recording and sharing of information related to safeguarding to enable reviews and practice assurance whilst learning lessons along the way. The on-site teams also have access to key information that drives an individualised approach to care for each child;
- Oversight of all recommendations by the YCS Monitoring Team. The team will undergo continuing professional development in safeguarding led by the YCS Head of Safeguarding.

We are pleased to see that safeguarding at Oakhill STC has improved and children in our care are now safer than they were at the point of the urgent notification. The YCS is content with the initial actions completed by G4S in response to the safeguarding report by Sheila Durr.

The improvement in performance was recognised by a joint inspection led by Ofsted in May 2022 that praised the improvement in safeguarding. In particular, the decrease in use of force as a result of better use of de-escalation techniques, use of separation only when necessary, and more robust monitoring of safeguarding referrals. We continue to monitor and work closely with the site on their safeguarding practices.

In addition, the YCS Monitoring Team and Contract Management Team are focusing on the internal recommendations on development and holding the provider to account for improving safeguarding at the centre.

The YCS will agree next steps with G4S to embed the new processes, and to measure the impact of progress against those recommendations. The YCS will monitor action taken in response to all the recommendations.

Recommendation	Update
<p>Recommend that social workers are considered as such by Oakhill. G4S should ensure that there are enough qualified social workers to meet the needs of children and to deliver against the contract. This includes a suitably trained and qualified social worker always on call and available to speak to a child confidentially when needed or requested by a child, his family member, advocate or member of staff. Each social worker must have regular professional supervision, training and appropriate continuing professional development (CPD). Social workers, as a profession, need to be integral to and contribute to the Senior Leadership Team.</p>	<p>The Provider is implementing an on-call rota system to ensure social workers are accessible in the evenings and at weekends. Social Workers will be invited to attend sessions to support their Continual Professional Development (CPD).</p>
<p>G4S to ensure that the Head of Safeguarding and Transitions role is given a range of appropriate resources to strategically develop the Safeguarding and Resettlement Service, to maximise its effectiveness, influence, and impact on outcomes for children.</p>	<p>G4S has increased the size of both the Safeguarding Team and the Resettlement Team to ensure staffing resource is adequate to meet this recommendation.</p>
<p>In order to implement a sustainable shift towards a culture of safeguarding, I recommend that G4S develops for Oakhill a common set of safeguarding principles and makes explicit commitment to safeguarding within its vision and values. These principles and commitment to inform ways of working and behaving for all staff.</p>	<p>G4S is reviewing the Oakhill CARES document (Community, Achievement, Respect, Empowerment, Safeguarding), in partnership with the YCS to ensure that safeguarding children is suitably covered within it.</p>
<p>G4S for Oakhill should define the outcomes it aspires to achieve for children generally in a way that translates into aspirational and dynamic individual care plans for children. Staff must be supported to develop these aspirational outcomes for children via training, supervision and in meetings with children, their family, and their professional networks.</p>	<p>All children's allocated keyworkers to be invited to key meetings relating to the child to ensure that the child is able to contribute meaningfully to their own goals and objectives. As part of the Enhanced Support Services Model, each child to have individual care plans.</p>
<p>G4S to develop a data set to track priority outcomes across the cohort of children to show improvement in terms of their safety, their health, their education, employment and training and their rehabilitation. Also, to signal any deterioration in progress and to communicate and celebrate achievements.</p>	<p>Children to be tracked in line with their Intervention and Outcome Plans on a monthly basis by Resettlement as part of KPIs/KPTs. This work is in progress.</p>
<p>G4S to set out the remit, responsibilities, and ways of working for each professional group working in Oakhill. The different contributions each person makes to delivering better outcomes for a child should be clearly articulated. The Director and her Senior Leadership Team to focus on building teams around the child who are clear about and embrace their different roles, disciplines and professional standards</p>	<p>Child Safeguarding Lead has been appointed. Each function in the centre has a safeguarding lead that will create a 'ways of working' document to ensure clear roles and responsibilities.</p>

and who hold each other to account for high standards of practice.	
Re-set relationships with local strategic safeguarding partners (MK Together) to develop more meaningful engagement at both practice and strategic levels, e.g. looking at safe practices in recruitment, training, management of complaints, allegations, concerns and whistleblowing, accessibility of advocacy, management and treatment of self-harm and quality assurance of priority outcomes for children.	Previously, the relationships between the centre and local partners were not in useful place. The Director at Oakhill is now meeting regularly with key stakeholders (Police Commissioner, Director of Children's Services) to build relationships.
Under 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018' statutory guidance, the Safeguarding Children Partnership (MK Together) is required to review the use of restraint annually. It would make this a more effective exercise if Oakhill were to submit quarterly information on the data, quality assurance and learning around restraints as well as the monitoring undertaken by the national Independent Restraint Review Panel.	This is currently in progress. Data is shared monthly with Milton Keynes Local Authority detailing the status and any significant concerns with Oakhill's "Looked After Child" Cohort. A quarterly return for Use of Force, Violence, Self Harm, Safeguarding Trends and Complaints is also shared.
G4S to outline what it needs and expects from home local authorities and community services in order to care for children well, including before placement, during placement and after release. G4S should develop a monitoring system to ensure that local authorities responsible for children in Oakhill share timely and appropriate information and fully execute their statutory duties. Where this does not occur G4S to take prompt and evidenced action to ensure there is joint accountability to meet the child's needs and achieve the required outcomes for the child.	Work to define the key information and provision from stakeholders is taking place and a LAC database is to be implemented to track and monitor those at the centre.
G4S must proactively share records of safeguarding incidents with Home LAs/YOT and make it clear when it considers action is required on the part of the LA, including in respect of any medical or CAMHS follow up.	All safeguarding referrals relating to children are referred to the responsible local authority.
After every safeguarding incident a review of a child's needs should take place, including the child's views and feelings about the incident and observations of how custody is affecting a child's wellbeing.	The Oakhill Safeguarding Team have actioned this recommendation, progress of this recommendation has been over seen by the YCS Monitoring and YCS Safeguarding teams.
Record keeping in safeguarding will be improved by maintaining one contemporaneous chronological version of events relating to the incident and the investigation as it progresses. Evidence and ongoing analysis should be made available to the LADO and other professionals involved in the investigation as appropriate.	Record keeping relating to safeguarding work is now clear with an accurate timeline of events and activities. The YCS monitoring team and specialists have open access to these records.
G4S must ensure that it's safeguarding training is up to date for all staff who work with children in Oakhill. The YCS must ensure that the training is high quality, relevant and delivered regularly.	G4S will review the full safeguarding training package and ensure regular refresher training for all staff with oversight on quality provided by the YCS.

<p>The YCS must ensure that Monitoring Team have sufficient knowledge, capability and expertise to ensure that they can support and improve the safeguarding of children at Oakhill.</p>	<p>The YCS Monitoring team are carrying out a full training needs analysis exercise.</p>
<p>In order to embed herself in key partnerships working together to safeguard and promote the needs of children, the Director must meet regularly with Directors of Children's Services and their representatives for all children under her care in Oakhill.</p>	<p>The Director at Oakhill is meeting regularly with key stakeholders (Police Commissioner, Director of Children's Services) to build relationships.</p>
<p>I recommend that the Director develops the partnership forums prescribed by the G4S Contract. Making these forums effective will provide Oakhill senior leadership access to expertise, support and challenge to continue to improve and develop services. These forums include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Professional Forum – will meet at least four times a year to discuss criminal justice issues relating to the function of the STC and Trainees (now referred to as Children). • Membership: staff and employees, practitioners, management representatives in education, police, local social services, the YOT and voluntary agencies. • The Education Advisory Group – to meet twice per year and include a member of advisory services of the Local Education Authority, 2 people from a secondary school and/or schools in the area – visit the STC to observe education and vocational training and to advise. 	<p>Review of the terms of reference for the Professional Forum is in progress. The Education Advisory Group will meet twice per year and will engage with the Local Education Authority</p>
<p>YCS should ensure that G4S fully executes its duties under The Children Act 2004 and ensure that partnership working is effective and makes a positive difference to children's outcomes.</p>	<p>The YCS Monitoring team are embedding safeguarding and obligations from the Children Act into their assurance and compliance activity.</p>
<p>G4S to ensure that Oakhill's new permanent Director is given the full range of resources and support she needs to drive continuous improvement towards excellent, safe, nurturing care for children in custody.</p>	<p>The Director has appointed a Head of Safeguarding, resource has also been increased for Restraint Minimisation, Forensic Psychology, and Safeguarding team. G4S has made additional deployable and operational staff available to support Oakhill.</p>
<p>In order to embed and continue to drive improvements in practice, progress on all recommendations must be subject to regular planning, audit and review</p>	<p>G4S and the YCS are frequently reviewing progress of the implementation of the recommendations.</p>