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How Oberstown Children Detention Campus is using Softworks to manage employee rosters, HR, absences & holidays

Case Study

Oberstown Children Detention Campus is a national service that provides a safe and secure environment for young people remanded in custody or sentenced by the Courts for a period of detention. The principal objective of the campus is to provide appropriate care, education, training and other programmes to young people between 12 and 18 years with a view to reintegrating them successfully back into their communities and society. The framework for providing these objectives is through CEHOP which focuses on providing Care, Education, Health and wellbeing interventions, Offending behaviour programmes and Preparation for leaving.

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Project Background & History of Oberstown

In 2012 the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs announced funding for a three-year project to develop the National Children Detention Facility at Oberstown, Co. Dublin. The objectives of the project were to:

- Deliver sufficient new residential detention facilities at a single location.
- To allow the extension of the child care model of detention to all children aged under 18 ordered to be detained by the courts.
- To maximise the scope for ensuring best practice standards.
- To maximise operational efficiency.
- To allow the closure of St. Patrick's Institution and thus end the practice of detaining children in adult prison facilities.

A new legal entity – Oberstown Children Detention Campus – was formally established in June 2016. The new campus amalgamated 3 existing detention facilities, each of which operated independently with different structures, people, work practices and policies. The development provided new and upgraded detention accommodation, a centralised operations building, associated education, recreation, security and other ancillary facilities and systems.

Oberstown Campus Today

Today, Oberstown Campus has capacity for 82 beds and is licensed for 54 resident young

people. There are 7 operational residential units and each unit accommodates up to 8 young people. Each unit is staffed with 15-day care and 4-night care staff. The campus operates 24/7 throughout the year. There are 270 staff spread across 20 work departments including; Care Staff, Central Security, Medical, Finance, Logistics, Admin, Household, Teaching and Catering. Facilities on campus include a fully functioning secondary school and medical suite.

The Challenge – Managing Complex Rosters

Due to the nature of the organisation, Oberstown required a workforce management system that had the ability to manage very complex rostering. The system needed to be capable of managing 40 base rosters, plus 50 variants across the campus. Oberstown needed to ensure that they had sufficient and appropriate staff cover for all campus activities and functions over a 24-hour period, 7 days a week. Each department had its own rosters but there was interdependency between departments.

Historically rosters were managed via a spreadsheet. This spreadsheet contained a set of roster variants for each residential unit team and included the following;

- All shifts for all variants over a cycle.
- Staff rostered on / rostered off each day of the cycle.
- All leave including annual, sick, time in lieu and planned & unplanned absences.
- Shift swaps and overtime.
- Offsite escorts.
- Training.
- CSAO (Internal Mobility).

Within the spreadsheet they also needed to include notes about short notice/emergency

events. All roster cycle information for each unit team needed to be kept on one page. This was a huge challenge to achieve using a spreadsheet and required a dedicated full-time resource, as information was constantly changing and needed to be kept up to date.

Choosing Softworks

Softworks along with four other companies were invited to demonstrate their workforce management solutions. Oberstown used evaluation criteria to create a score card so that they could evaluate the best solution for their requirements. They shortlisted the two solutions that scored best and created a proof of concept test for the finalists, based on a real roster, that included many real-life challenges.

Softworks were the only provider that implemented a solution to the test and were able to address each element successfully. Oberstown were very impressed with how Softworks approached the test. Softworks demonstrated that their rostering solution could handle all of the project requirements. Oberstown awarded the contact to Softworks and chose the following modules from the Softworks suite.

- Employee Rostering
- Employee Self Service
- Absence Management & Holiday Tracking
- HR Management
- Honour Based Timesheets
- Training & Skills Tracking
- Alerts & Reporting

The Benefits

Oberstown are very pleased with the benefits that Softworks solutions have brought to the campus in terms of managing their workforce management operations and processes. Some of the significant features of Softworks for Oberstown are:

Ease of Reporting

It is now easy to generate real time reports on employee rosters, attendance, absence and activities. The system data is now leveraged for reporting. All roster, absence, balance and skills data are stored in one place and data is available within minutes. Furthermore, reports can be further customised and saved for re-use. Once the system is up to date and live there is no need for further intervention.

Leave & Absence Management

All absences are now easily tracked including sick leave, time in lieu, parental leave, legacy data and adherence to absence based legislative rules. There is now much better clarity around managing leave requests. System data can form the basis of more sophisticated analysis e.g. correlation between shift length and sick leave. Managers can make better decisions based on having this information to hand and can in turn target and examine specific trends accurately.

Roster Planning

Rostering has become much easier with the system enabling Oberstown to roster across rolling multi-week shift patterns, move staff between units, ensure adequate cover and forecast staff requirements and costs.

Reduced Manual Tasks & Administration

The system does most of the heavy lifting. Time and resources are saved by reduced administration, manual calculations and duplication.

Employee Empowerment

Line managers and staff are more empowered. Organisational processes are clear and easy to follow with no ambiguity.

HR Management

It is now much easier to access personnel details, payroll, employment, time & attendance and skills information fast and efficiently.

Skills Management

There is now a central area to store and track employee skills, training & qualifications and manage employee learning requirements including alerts when skills/training are due to expire.

The Results

The key objectives of the Oberstown project have been met and the feedback from staff using the system has been very positive. According to Tom Gannon from Oberstown;

“ The staff at Oberstown have embraced the system and particularly love Softworks Employee Self Service solution. They have more control over their own information and find it much easier to check rosters and book holidays and other absences. ”

Furthermore, Oberstown were particularly impressed with the way the Softworks team both listened and understood the complexity and requirements of the project. They felt that Softworks really listened to their requirements and worked with them to suggest solutions that would best fit their needs. Because of the nature of the organisation they had very specific requirements. Tom Gannon had this to say;

“ We found Softworks to be open, flexible and very enthusiastic about the project. We pushed some of the functionality in Softworks to the absolute limit in relation to managing our complex rostering requirements. ”

“ It's an excellent system and the only one that we came across that was able to meet our needs and allow us to achieve our objectives. The team at Softworks are very solution focused. We have had an excellent journey and experience to date. ”

ABOUT SOFTWORKS

Softworks helps organisations to streamline processes, increase productivity and reduce costs through improved management, scheduling and utilisation of labour resources. Softworks offer reliable, proven easy to use, intuitive solutions for Time & Attendance, Labour Scheduling/Rostering, HR and Absence Management allowing both private and public organisations to better ensure compliance, reduce errors, eliminate redundancies and improve reporting – while promoting a safe, positive working environment for all employees.

For further information about Softworks solutions:

Email : hello@softworks.com or Visit : softworks.com