

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DL026
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Name of Service:	Cockhill Community Pre-School & Childcare Centre
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Address of Service:	Clonbeg, Buncrana, Co. Donegal
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Eircode:	F93 FK18
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Name of Registered Provider:	Rena Donaghey
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	01/10/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	35	PM	15
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84
Inspection undertaken by:	K Folan
Title:	Early Years Inspector

Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
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Description of service

Cockhill Community Pre-School and Childcare Centre is an early years' service situated in a rural setting on the outskirts of the town of Buncrana on the Inishowen peninsula in County Donegal.

The service is registered to provide a three-hour morning sessional service from 09:30-12:30 and a separate afternoon sessional service between 12:30-15:30, Monday to Friday for 38 weeks of the year. The service can accommodate up to 80 children, aged between 2 to 6 years.

The building consists of a former bungalow dwelling which was upgraded for the provision of the pre-school service. There are two separate playrooms in the main building, and a third playroom is located in a separate prefabricated unit on-site. There are two outdoor areas provided for children's play.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service. There are seven adults employed in the service, the person in charge who provides cover for breacktimes and staff absences and six adults who work directly with the children. There is one additional adult in the service participating in an employment activation scheme.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was *unannounced* and focused on the area of *governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities*. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations *9,11,19,23,25,26 and 28*. However, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 8. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) The service was found to be operating outside of its registration status.

1. The service is registered to open from 09:30-12:30 Monday to Friday and provide an additional session from 12:30 to 3:30. However on the day of inspection it was found that the service is open from 09:00 to 14:00.
2. The service is registered to cater for children aged 2-6 years. However, on reviewing attendance records, it was found that a child that had not yet reached the age of 2 had attended the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. A notification of change in circumstances form was submitted to Tusla to change the services operating hours.
2. Dates of birth on all registration forms will be checked by two staff members.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Documentary evidence submitted.
2. Documentary evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Compliance Information

1)

The registered provider ensured that:

- a) There was a designated person in charge and a named adult to deputise in their absence.
- b) The designated person in charge was available on the premises throughout the period of inspection.
- c) There was a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee.

(2)

On the day of inspection, eight adults were present, the person in charge, six adults who were employed to

work directly with the children, and one adult on an employment activation scheme.

Staff files in respect of eight adults were reviewed and the following information was available:

- (a) Ten written and validated references from past employers for eight of the adults.
- (b) Six written and validated references from a reputable source for five of the adults.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for eight adults. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
- (d) Police vetting for three adults who lived outside the state for a period of 6 months was available on file.

(4)
Seven of the adult files reviewed, evidenced they held a major award at level 5 or above in early childhood care and education on the national qualification framework, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE) to meet the regulatory requirement.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

(1)
On the day of inspection, there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the preschool children attending the service.

(3)
The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained at all times throughout the inspection.
On the morning of the inspection seven adults cared for 35 children aged between 2 years and 4 years and 8 months.

- In the caterpillar room, two adults cared for eight children aged between 2 years to 2 years and 9 months.
- In the butterfly room, two adults cared for 12 children aged between 3 years to 3 years and 9 months.
- In the ladybird room, two adults cared for 15 children aged between 3 years and 4 years and 8 months.

In the afternoon, three adults cared for 15 children aged 2 years to 4 years.

- In the butterfly room, one adult cared for 6 children aged between 2 years to 3 years and 9 months.
- In the ladybird room, two adults cared for 9 children aged between 3 years and 4 years and 8 months.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)

Basic Need

- There is a healthy eating policy in place in the service.
- The children bring all required food from home to the service which is stored safely in refrigerators.
- Drinking water was available to the children throughout the day both indoors and outdoors.
- Children with allergies were identified in the service and staff had received training on administering medication in the event of an allergic reaction.
- Nappy changing was carried out at regularly and promptly throughout morning. Nappy changing time was used as an opportunity for warm one to one interaction between staff and children.
- Outdoor waterproof clothing was available for each child in the service.
- Each care room was spacious with enough room for children to move around freely.

Supporting relationships

- A key worker system was in place in the service with named staff members assigned the responsibility for designated children.
- The staff members were observed speaking kindly to the children and demonstrated warmth in their interactions with children.
- The staff were observed to support children to engage positively with one another in activities that required sharing and turn taking.
- Staff advised the inspector that a technology application was used to communicate with parents during the day. Each care room has a group on the application and pictures of events and outings are shared with parents.
- The service places a strong emphasis on connecting the children to the community around them. For example, the children had recently enjoyed a visit to a local nursing home. On the day of the inspection a member of An Garda Síochána visited the service to speak to the children about road safety. The children had the opportunity to sit in the Garda car and showed the Garda all the pictures they had made learning about road safety.
- There was evidence of enthusiasm and teamwork in the setting with staff communicating throughout the day in relation to the children's needs and activities.

Physical and Material environment

- The ladybird room was bright and spacious with well defined interest areas to cater to each area of children's development. For example, a well-stocked art area was available to the children throughout the session, items of clothing for dress up imaginative play, fine motor materials such as puzzles, a "bakery" had been arranged with associated play items, a variety of small world play items such as dolls houses, farm equipment and construction toys. A large sofa with cushions was set up beside the book area to allow the children a space to relax if they wished.
- Toys and equipment were neatly organised in labelled boxes which were placed on low level shelving.
- The room was decorated with evidence of the children's activities throughout September such as autumn themed art, the children's visit to the nursing home, "Beep beep" day posters and the children's birthday charts.
- The butterfly room was decorated with large educational posters, each with a different theme for example, letters of the alphabet, numbers and road safety messages. The equipment in this room

included plastic construction bricks, musical instruments, dolls and buggies, vehicles and a play kitchen.

The children had recently completed hedgehog craft activities, and these were on display in the room.

- In the caterpillar room, a birthday wall had been created, showing the different months of the year and a picture of each child who had a birthday in that month. This room had materials suitable for the younger age children in this group such as larger construction plastic bricks, a kitchen area, dress up and a selection of soft toys. An autumn table display was set up for the children to engage with.
- The service has two large outdoor areas available. One outdoor area is accessed directly off the ladybird room. This area has a large, raised sand box with buckets and spades. An outdoor mud kitchen, water tray and football goals were available in this area.
- The second outdoor area contained a variety of ride of toys such as balance bikes and scooters. On the day of the inspection, the children were observed using the balance bikes competently and energetically, incorporating their newly acquired road safety skills into play.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Compliance Information

General Safety:

- The main entrance was found to be secured on arrival preventing unauthorised access or exit from the premises.
- Warm running water was available for hand washing at a temperature below 43°C. in each of the sanitary areas and handwashing sink in the preschool rooms.
- Cleaning products and equipment were stored out of the reach of children.
- The outdoor area was secured with tall fencing.
- Fire exits were unobstructed.

Infection Control:

- Tables were observed to be cleaned prior to and after mealtimes.
- Foot operated pedal bins were available within the service for safe disposal of waste.
- Children were supported to attend to their respiratory hygiene when required.
- Staff ensured children washed their hands before mealtimes, after using the toilet and upon returning from outdoors.

- Cleaning schedules were up to date and available to review.
- The sanitary facilities were observed to be maintained and clean.
- Perishable food items were safely stored in a refrigerator.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff had received training on the use of medication needed for children with allergies.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- Garda vetting was available for two staff members. However, this vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.
- In the butterfly room, the lock on a cupboard door was broken, resulting in the preschool children having access to a washing machine.

Infection Control:

- In the sanitary accommodation, paper towels were provided for handwashing however they were stored in open containers, posing a risk of airborne cross contamination, reducing the effectiveness of hand washing.
- During nappy changing, the changing mat was not cleaned between changes, posing a risk of cross contamination.
- Personal protective gloves and aprons were not changed between nappy changes, posing a risk of cross contamination.

Administration of Medication:

- When asked, staff advised the inspector that temperature reducing medicines are not administered in the service. In the event that a child becomes ill or has a high temperature, parents are notified to collect the child. This is at variance with the services administration of medication policy, which states that medicine will be administered in an emergency situation.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Garda Vetting for 2 staff were renewed immediately.
2. The lock on cupboard door was fixed.
3. New paper towel hand dispensers have been purchased and put in place.
4. The settings nappy changing policy has been reviewed by staff, displayed in changing areas and a copy forwarded to all staff.

Infection Control:

5. The settings nappy changing policy has been reviewed by staff, displayed in changing areas and a copy forwarded to all staff.

Administration of Medication:

6. Temperature reducing medicine is available in the setting and will be administered in the event of an emergency, the medication policy has been reviewed by all staff.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence submitted.
2. Photographic evidence submitted.
3. Photographic evidence submitted.
4. Photographic evidence submitted.

Infection Control:

5. Photographic evidence submitted.

Administration of Medication:

6. Photographic evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 25 - First aid

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-

(a) is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and

(b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

Compliance Information

(1) One adult in the service was trained in First Aid and was available to the children at all times.

(2)(a)(b) There were two suitably equipped first aid boxes available in the service. The first aid boxes were stored in easily accessible positions.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-

(a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and

(b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-

(a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,

(b) an employee, and

(c) an authorised person.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) A record of fire drills carried out in the service was available with the most recent fire drill 26 September 2025.

(1)(b) Records were available to evidence that the firefighting equipment was last serviced on 27 August 2025 and smoke alarms were serviced on 18 September 2025.

(4) Fire evacuation procedures were displayed in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

On the morning of the inspection, the service did not have adequate insurance in place for children to attend for part time care. The service had insurance in place for 60 children in sessional care. It is acknowledged that following the inspection, adequate insurance to cover part time care was obtained and submitted to the inspectorate.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The insurance policy was updated immediately.

Supporting documentation submitted

Insurance document submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.