

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY374
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Name of Service:	Giraffe Childcare Elm Park
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Address of Service:	Elm Park, Merrion Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D04 XP26
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Name of Registered Provider:	Dearbhala Cox Giffin
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	29/04/2024
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Date 2 of Inspection:	30/04/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	61	PM	61
Day 2	AM	64	PM	60

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Dublin 8
Inspection undertaken by:	R. Brien & F. Carty
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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

Giraffe Childcare Elm Park is a full day care service provided by Giraffe Childcare Limited which provides 23 childcare services. The service provides full day and part-time care and caters for children from 0 to 6 years. The service is registered to operate from 07:30 to 18:30, Monday to Friday.

The service is located in an urban area and is part of a large development of apartment blocks in Dublin 4. It is a purpose built two storey building with seven care rooms. Six rooms were open on the day of inspection. Two rooms are located on the ground floor, Wobbler Kilimanjaro caters for children aged 1 year and Junior Preschool Kenya caters for children aged 2 to 3 years. There are four care rooms located on the first floor, Wobbler Acacia and Wobbler Baringo cater for children aged 1 year. Toddler Serengeti caters for children aged 2 years and Preschool Madagascar caters for children aged 3 to 5 years.

A dedicated cot room is also located on the first floor adjacent to the Wobbler Acacia and Wobbler Baringo rooms. A care room located downstairs which was closed had been repurposed as a sleep room. There are two, fully enclosed outdoor play areas, one to the front of the premises and one to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The service currently employs 17 staff including a manager. There were 15 staff working directly with the children on both days of inspection. This included two adults from two other centres operated by the registered provider who arrived following the inspector's arrival on the first day of inspection. A chef from another centre operated by the registered provider also arrived following the inspector's arrival on the first day of inspection. The service also employs a chef and a housekeeper.

The area manager arrived during the morning of the inspection on the first day of inspection and was also present on the second day of inspection. The registered provider does not work directly in the service and was not present during the inspection.

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, records and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

- 9(1)(a)(b),(2),(4)- Management and Recruitment,
- 11(1),(2),(8)(a) – Staffing Levels,
- 15(1) – Record of a Pre-school child
- 16(h)(i)(j)(k) - Record in relation to pre-school service
- 19(1)(a)(b) – Health, welfare and development of child,
- 20(1)(b) – Facilities for rest and play
- 23 – Safeguarding, health, safety and welfare of child

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulations:

- 15(1) – Record of a Pre-school child,
- 16(j)(k) - Record in relation to pre-school service,
- 19(1)(a)(b) – Health, welfare and development of child,
- 23 - Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Wobbler Acacia, Wobbler Baringo, Wobbler Kilimanjaro, Toddler Serengeti and Preschool Madagascar rooms.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 16(h) – Record in relation to pre-school service. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Wobbler Acacia, Wobbler Baringo, Wobbler Kilimanjaro and Toddler Serengeti rooms.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 20(1)(b) Facilities for rest and play. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Preschool Madagascar room.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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

(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)
(a)(b) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required who were both on the premises throughout the inspection.

(2)
Following a discussion with the manager it was confirmed that seven adults commenced working in the service since the last inspection on 19 July 2023. Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults and of three adults who were present from another service operated by the registered provider and met regulatory requirements as follows:

(a) Of the twenty references that were required, seventeen were available from a past employer and three were available from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for the ten adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was available for nine adults who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding six months as an adult.

(4) Records were available evidencing that eight staff members who were employed to work directly with the children held the required qualification or equivalent. One of these staff members held a letter of qualification recognition from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY).

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.

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 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) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

- (1) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.
- (2) The minimum ratio of adults to children for full day care services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were sixty-one children attending the service being supervised by fifteen adults on the first day of inspection. There were sixty-four children attending the service being supervised by fifteen adults on the second day of inspection.
- (8)(a) There were at least two adults on the premises at all times.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

- (1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:
- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;
 - (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;
 - (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;
 - (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;
 - (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;
 - (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;
 - (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;
 - (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;
 - (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

- (1) A sample of ten records were reviewed which demonstrated that a record was available in writing which contained the information required in (a) to (i) above.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(h) Details of the attendance of each child in the Wobbler Acacia, Wobbler Baringo, Wobbler Kilimanjaro and Toddler Serengeti rooms were recorded at the time of entering and leaving the service. The movement of children between care rooms during designated sleep times were also accurately recorded.

(i) The staff roster was available on both days of inspection and reflected the adults working in the service on each day.

(j) A sample of nine medication administration records were reviewed. These records were signed by staff and parents and were completed appropriately.

(k) A sample of twelve accident and incidents records were reviewed. These records were signed by staff and parents and were completed appropriately.

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)

The service had a healthy eating policy in place and staff reported that all meals are provided by the service. Children are offered breakfast on arrival and a fruit snack is provided during the morning. Dinner was served at 11:30. All children were given water with their dinner. Younger children were provided with bibs for dinnertime and were encouraged to feed themselves. Staff were observed sitting with children and engaging in conversation during dinner. Additional servings of dinner were available if requested and inspectors observed more food being offered and given to children.

Staff were observed cleaning children's hands and faces after dinner. Children were encouraged and supported to be independent including cleaning up after their play and meals. Children's nappies were changed regularly and staff were observed engaging warmly with children when providing this care.

The individual sleep needs of children in the Wobbler Baringo room were met, with children in this room placed to sleep when they displayed signs of tiredness. There was a designated nap time in the Wobbler Kilimanjaro and Toddler Serengeti rooms. Children from the Toddler Serengeti room who did not require a nap were brought to the Preschool Kenya room during nap time. Children from the Preschool Madagascar room who required a nap were facilitated in the repurposed sleep room on the ground floor.

Staff demonstrated a good awareness of the needs of each child in their care and responded to children's cues promptly. Staff interacted warmly with the children throughout the inspection and were observed supporting children in their play. Staff were observed to use encouragement, gentle tones and praise when promoting positive behaviour in line with the service's behaviour management policy. Staff provided an appropriate level of supervision whilst supporting the children's independence during play and mealtimes.

Staff described how they record information about each child's day using an online application detailing information on food, sleep, nappy changes and activities. Parents were observed in the service during drop off and collection times and staff shared information about the children with their parents at these times.

Care rooms were arranged to provide a range of play materials including small world toys, construction toys, musical instruments, libraries and rest areas. The care rooms provided developmentally appropriate play experiences for the children. The materials were observed to be accessible to the children on low level shelving. Low level tables and chairs were available in the care rooms. Family photos, birthday walls and children's artwork were displayed in the care rooms.

There were two fully enclosed outdoor play areas on the premises. One at the front of the building and one at the back of the building and both had shock absorbent surfacing. The areas were well resourced with a range of developmentally appropriate play equipment. Children from the Wobbler Kilimanjaro, Toddler Serengeti and Preschool Madagascar rooms were observed accessing the outdoor play area over the course of the inspection and were observed engaging in energetic and imaginary play supported by staff.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

1. On the first day of inspection, the sleep needs of two children, aged 1 year, in the Wobbler Acacia room were not met in a timely, child centred manner. Children were observed crying and displaying signs of tiredness at 10:35 and 10:45 respectively. The staff member based in the room was alone with four children and could not leave the room to place the two children to sleep. The staff member was observed phoning for assistance twice. The manager entered the room at 10:55 and the children were then placed to sleep.
2. Water was not accessible to children in the Wobbler Acacia, Wobbler Baringo and Wobbler Kilimanjaro rooms on both days of inspection. Children's beakers were stored in a cupboard out of reach and sight. This non-compliance was present on the last inspection on 19 July 2023. The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider did not prevent recurrence of this non-compliance.

- On the second day of inspection, the personal care needs of a child in the Wobbler Acacia room were not met in a timely manner. A child was observed with a runny nose which was not attended to for a period of twenty minutes.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- Additional part time staff were recruited for the setting to support transitional times such as sleep and rest/toileting times. Staff have received further training regarding calling for assistance and supports required when working alone. A lone worker policy has been put in place for staff that work in rooms alone. The management team will monitor transitional times and ensure support is available, they will ensure that working rooms are supported by a team of two carers and in the event of changes, the team will actively supervise the floor and aid where required. Staff will also receive regular training on this within monthly staff meeting and ongoing training within the centre.
- All rooms highlighted have re-labelled their beakers with names and photographs. Beakers are now stored on top of the counter where children can see them and gain access. Staff have been re-trained on the importance of water intake for children. The matter will receive regular checks underpinned by training from the management team to ensure that all children have accessibility to fluids throughout the day.
- Staff discussions were carried out and re-training commenced following the inspection. A training card has been signed off on the importance of caring for children's hygiene. Ongoing training will be facilitated on the hygiene levels of children in the setting.

Supporting documentation submitted

Written and photographic evidence was presented to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address these non-compliances. These actions will be assessed on the next inspection.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

Compliance Information

(1)(b)

The Preschool Madagascar room was equipped with a cosy area for children to rest or take time away from the group as required

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

The inspectors found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with staff and inspection of the premises that the registered provider had taken the following steps to safeguard children attending:

General Safety:

- The entrance door to the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised.
- Hand sanitisers and cleaning agents were stored safely out of reach of children.
- All storage facilities were inaccessible to children.
- The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection appeared in good working order.
- All blind cords were secured.

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing.
- A system was in place for effective sterilisation of soothers.
- Waste was managed appropriately with the use of pedal bins.
- Individual bed linen was provided for children. Staff stated that bed linen is laundered twice per week.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff adequately detailed the procedures for administering medication if required.
- Staff were observed taking appropriate safety measures when administering medicine to a child in the Toddler Serengeti room. A record was maintained detailing the name of the medicine, time and dose given, the staff member's signature and the signature of the second adult who witnessed the administration.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

Inspectors observed a number of practices which posed a risk of transmission of infection within the service:

1. Some nappy changing practices observed during the inspection in the service were inadequate for infection control purposes and at variance with the service's nappy changing procedure as follows:
 - Children's hands were not consistently washed following nappy changes.
 - Children's hands were cleaned with wet cotton wool following nappy changes which is not effective for infection control.
 - Staff did not consistently wash their hands after cleaning the nappy changing mat.
 - Staff did not consistently clean the nappy changing mat following nappy changes.
 - A child's hands were washed during a nappy change and not when the nappy changing procedure was complete.
 - A staff member was observed to put a new nappy on a child without cleaning the child who had a wet nappy.

This non-compliance was present on the last inspection on 19 July 2023. The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider did not prevent recurrence of this non-compliance.

2. In the Wobbler Acacia room on both days of inspection and in the Toddler Serengeti room on the first day of inspection children's hands were not washed before dinner. This non-compliance was present on the last inspection on 19 July 2023. The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider did not prevent recurrence of this non-compliance.

3. The children in the Wobbler Acacia room were of an age where they explored toys with their mouths. On both days of inspection, there was no attempt made to remove toys when mouthed despite the room having a designated box for this. The toys remained in use between the different children posing a risk of cross infection. This non-compliance was present on the last inspection on 19 July 2023. The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider did not prevent recurrence of this non-compliance.
4. In the Wobbler Acacia room, during dinner, a staff member was observed to give a child another child's beaker. The child had been drinking from their beaker posing a risk of cross contamination. This non-compliance was present on the last inspection on 19 July 2023. The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider did not prevent recurrence of this non-compliance.

Administration of Medication:

5. Practices in place for a child attending the service requiring emergency medication were contrary to the service policy, posing a potential risk to the health and safety of children. An auto-injector pen was observed loose in a child's bag on a low hook within reach of the children in the Preschool Madagascar room. The auto-injector pen was not stored in its original packaging and was not stored safely in a secure container contrary to the services medication policy.

This non-compliance was present on the last inspection on 19 July 2023. The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider did not prevent recurrence of this non-compliance.

Safe Sleep:

6. Practices in place in relation to safe sleep for children attending the Wobbler Acacia and Wobbler Kilimanjaro rooms were inadequate and contrary to the service's policy on safe sleep posing a potential risk to the health and safety of children as follows;
 - a. On the first day of inspection, sleep checks were not carried out every 10 minutes in the Wobbler Acacia room contrary to the service's policy on safe sleep. Between 11:25 and 12:00, one sleep check was carried out on a child, aged 1, who was sleeping in the adjacent cot room.

- b. On the second day of inspection, sleep checks in the repurposed sleep room where children from the Wobbler Kilimanjaro, Toddler Serengeti, Preschool Kenya and Pre-school Madagascar rooms were sleeping were not sufficient. Individual, physical sleep checks were not carried out on children from the Wobbler Kilimanjaro room who were sleeping in cots. Staff were observed checking children from one end of the room.

This non-compliance was present on the last inspection on 19 July 2023. The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider did not prevent recurrence of this non-compliance.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1.

- a. Staff have all been re-trained on importance of hygiene hand washing for children in their care following the nappy changing process. The management team will conduct regular training through observations and skill demonstration on the nappy changing policy and process with all staff weekly and bi-monthly.
- b. Staff have received refresher training on the steps outlined in our hand washing procedure, the training included children's hands to be washed under running water with hand soaps. Training and observations will be carried out on the task of handwashing with the staff team.
- c. The staff team have been provided with further retraining on the handwashing steps and process for their own hand hygiene before and after the task. Additional aids such as posters in different languages have been implemented to support the team actively carry out this process. Skill demonstrations have and will be completed by all staff regularly as part of the ongoing training plan implemented.
- d. Staff members have been re-trained on importance of cleaning down the changing mat after every use. The management will conduct regular checks on the process of nappy changing and the hygiene requirements to ensure that all staff are clear on what is expected to limit cross infection.
- e. Retraining on the nappy changing process has been done with all staff, skills demonstrations have been conducted to under pin the importance of this process. Continuous training with staff at training evenings monthly will include all of the above.

- f. The staff members have received further training on the importance of cleaning and wiping children after each change as occurred. The staff team have been made aware of the element of cross infection if the process is not carried out correctly. As mentioned above training is underway and will continue to be carried out with the staff team and new recruits joining out team.
2. The staff teams within the rooms mentioned have undergone supports and active measures to assist on accurate handwashing steps throughout phases of the child's day ie: garden time and preparation for meals times. The management will work closely with staff in all rooms to ensure this is being followed and handwashing is being completed correctly.
3. Sterilisation boxes have all been relabelled and staff have been retrained on the sterilisation policy for mouth toys within the baby unit to ensure cross infection is addressed. The management team will carry out spot checks to ensure sterilisation is being done in all rooms and within rooms where mouthed toys are in place.
4. The staff member on the day mixed up the children, to address this matter all beakers and cups have been relabelled with the child's full name and additional measure the child picture has been added to each beaker. The staff have been made aware of the importance of fluid beakers being accessible to children and following the implementation of the pictures and names alongside the position of beakers in an area for children, this will be monitored and observed by the team for correct practice.

Administration of Medication:

5. The staff team along with the management have re-visited the protocol for the attending child. In collaboration with the parents who now supplied us with 2 epi-pens with a pharmacy sticker on them. These have been placed in the child's bag within a stored container with all details available when required. The safety and storage of the child's bag is on a hook out of reach of the children and accessible to the adults only. The management team will monitor and carry out checks to ensure there is no loops hole for safety. The management team have implemented a check list that will monitor daily to ensure both epi-pens stay in a safe area, parent collaboration on this matter has been discussed with the family and the staff team.

Safe Sleep:

- The management team have actively reviewed the safe sleep protocols with all staff, they have carried out training and will continuously review the practices on the importance of recording and carrying out sleep checks. Regular checks by management will be carried out to ensure this is being done & ongoing training is being completed during staff training evenings and ongoing training in house on a weekly basis. The staff have undergone intense re-training on the importance of sleep checks, when to complete and documents the timings. Ongoing training with staff to ensure safe sleep is being adhered to.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Written and photographic evidence was presented to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Administration of Medication:

Written and photographic evidence was presented to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Safe Sleep:

Written evidence was presented to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address these non-compliances. These actions will be assessed on the next inspection.