

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015FL038 |
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| Name of Service: | Tigers Childcare |
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| Address of Service: | College Business & Technology Park, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15, Co. Dublin |
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| Eircode: | D15 YW11 |
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| Name of Registered Provider: | Therese Noonan |
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| Service type: | Full Day, Part Time, Sessional |
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| Date of Inspection: | 07/04/2025 |
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|-----------------------------------|----|-----|----|----|
| No of pre-school children: | AM | 107 | PM | 99 |
|-----------------------------------|----|-----|----|----|

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| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Tusla Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Nexus Building Block, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Dublin 15. |
| Inspection undertaken by: | E Hosford and Á Dunne |
| 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).

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| Conditions if applicable | Not applicable. |
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Description of service

Tigers Childcare is one of 18 services operated by the registered provider. The service operates from a two-storey purpose-built building located in a business and technology park in Blanchardstown, Dublin 15. The childcare services available include a sessional Early Education and Childhood Care (ECCE) service for children aged between 2 years 8 months to 5 years from 9am to 12pm during school term time and a full day care service for children aged from birth to 6 years from 7:30am to 6:30pm Monday to Friday. The service is no longer providing care to school age children.

There are 8 care rooms in the service, a reception area, five sleep rooms, a kitchen for the preparation of meals for the children and outdoor areas to the side and rear of the building.

The 8 care rooms in use on the day of inspection were:

Junior Discoverers (0-1 years)

Discoverers (1- 2 years)

Discoverers 1 (1- 2 years)

Senior Discoverers (1-3 years)

Explorers (2-3 years)

Junior Active Cubs (2-4 years)

Senior Active Cubs (3-5 years)

Active Cubs (3-5 years)

The inspectors spent time in the Junior Discoverers, Discoverers, Discoverers 1, Senior Discoverers and the Explorers care rooms.

Staffing

The registered provider employs 30 staff to include the designated person in charge, the deputy person in charge, a cleaning assistant, a chef, and 26 childcare staff. The registered provider, deputy person in charge and the Quality Development Manager facilitated 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

The unannounced inspection focused on an examination of compliance under The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 9, 11, 16, 19, 23, 26 and 27.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulations 16, 19, 23 and 27 as the inspectors spent time in the Junior Discoverers, Discoverers, Discoverers 1, Senior Discoverers and the Explorers care rooms and not the Junior Active Cubs, Senior Active Cubs and the Active Cubs care rooms.

Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment and Regulation 11 Staffing levels were assessed in all care rooms. 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 registered provider, deputy person in charge, Quality Manager, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(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

(2) The staff files of five employees employed in the service since the last inspection in July 2024 were reviewed along with three Tigers Childcare cover staff and two agency staff who were present and working directly with the children on the day of inspection.

(a) The following references were available for a past employer.

- Two validated written references were available for two staff, two Tigers Childcare cover staff and two agency staff.
- One validated written reference was available for three staff and one Tigers Childcare cover staff.

(b) The following references were available from a source other than a past employer.

- One validated written reference was available for three staff and one Tigers Childcare cover staff.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for five employees employed in the service since the last inspection in July 2024 along with three Tigers Childcare cover staff and two agency staff who were present and working

directly with the children on the day of inspection. The service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all staff employed.

(d) International police vetting was available for three staff employed in the service, three Tigers Childcare cover staff and one agency staff who were present and working directly with the children on the day of inspection.

(4) On review of documentation available five employees employed in the service since the last inspection, three Tigers Childcare cover staff and two agency staff who were present and working directly with the children on the day of inspection had evidence to demonstrate that they held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(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

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained as the table below demonstrates.

| Room Name | Age profile | On day of inspection |
|------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Junior Discovers | 0-1 years | 1 adult with 3 children in the morning and in the afternoon. |

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|--------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Discoverers | 1-2 years | 3 adults with 15 children in the morning and 3 adults with 14 children in the afternoon. |
| Discoverers 1 | 1-2 years | 3 adults with 10 children in the morning and 2 adults with 8 children in the afternoon. |
| Senior Discoverers | 1-3 years | 3 adults with 15 children in the morning and in the afternoon. |
| Explorers | 2-3 years | 3 adults with 16 children in the morning and in the afternoon. |
| Junior Active Cubs | 2-4 years | 3 adults with 15 children and 2 adults with 14 children in the afternoon. |
| Senior Active Cubs | 3-5 years | 2 adults with 16 children aged 3-5 years in the morning and 2 adults with 14 children in the afternoon. |
| Active Cubs | 3-5 years | 4 adults with 18 children in the morning and 2 adults with 15 children in the afternoon. |

(8)(a) On review of the service roster it was observed that two adults were on the premises during the operation of the service.

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:

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

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(k) On discussion with staff and on review of documentation available on the electronic application used by the service to communicate and engage with parents it was observed that accident and incident records were recorded and completed in respect of 33 accidents and incidents that had occurred.

(3) The information relating to accidents and incidents that had occurred in the service were available for inspection.

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

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Basic Needs:

- Children attending the service enjoyed a snack from home at 10am which was observed to be in keeping with the service healthy eating policy and consisted of fruit, yogurts, cheese and crackers. At 12pm a hot meal of spaghetti bolognese was provided to the children from an external catering food company. Additional food was offered and made available to the children during a sociable and relaxed mealtime. An afternoon snack of brown bread and cream cheese was available to the children at 3pm. Water was available in each care room for the children to drink at mealtimes and during the day.
- Nappy changing was carried out at scheduled times and when required. Staff were observed to encourage the children to be independent in managing their personal care such as handwashing.
- All children in each room were observed to enjoy outdoor play during the inspection.
- Children's need for sleep and rest were met through the provision of comfortable rest areas available. Cots and low beds with individual bedding were available to the children who required sleep and at sleep time, the rooms were darkened and soft music played to provide for a restful environment.

Supporting Relationships:

- Staff were observed to have warm and responsive interactions with the children using soft tones and positive non-verbal communication strategies such as being at the children's level.
- Engagement and communication with parents are via an electronic application which is updated regularly to reflect each child's sleep, food intake, nappy changes, accidents/ incidents and developmental achievements.
- Warm and positive interactions were observed between adults and children. The atmosphere in the service was relaxed and staff and children were observed to be familiar with the routine.

- Planned activities in the care rooms inspected were observed to be child led which promoted each child's independence and preference to undertake activities at their pace and interest.

Physical and Material Environment

- Low level shelving and child sized furniture supported children's independence.
- The materials and equipment provided to the children in the rooms were suitable to the age and stage of development of the children present. Children had the freedom to choose from materials and equipment available to them.
- Cosy areas were present in all rooms offering a quiet comfortable area for children to rest and relax during the day.
- The outdoor play environment to the rear of the premises were fully enclosed, the surface of which was covered with artificial grass There was an overhead shelter to enable the children to access the outdoor area during inclement weather. The outdoor toys were suitable and available and included a climbing frame with a slide, a playhouse, blackboards, a slide, a mud kitchen, ride on tractors, ride on bikes and seesaws.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Basic Needs:

- Children in the Junior Discoverers room were not encouraged or promoted to remove their soothers during the inspection. As a result, two children were observed to have their soothers in their mouth during the morning from 11.07am to 12.15am while they played in the outdoor play area and in the care room. At 12.15pm the soothers were removed from the children for dinner time. The two children did not show signs of requiring the soother as a source of comfort. Prolonged use of soothers limits the opportunity for language development.

Supporting Relationships:

- Staff members did not support each other in the provision of care to the children to ensure that transitions between mealtime and sleep time in the Discoverers 1 room were smooth and relaxed to ensure the care needs of the children. For example, when the children from the Discoverers 1 room entered the sleep area after lunch their beds, sheets and blankets were not prepared. As a result, this

created confusion for the children who lay on their friend's beds and had to be moved by staff to their own bed and one child had to be brought to the cot room to sleep in a cot

Physical and Material Environment

3. The outdoor play environments to the rear of the premises used by the Discoverers, Discoverers 1 and Junior Discoverers rooms were not equipped with materials and toys to fully engage the children and create opportunities for play and experiences. For example,
 - No supporting equipment present for the play kitchen in the playhouse and for the shape sorting push along toy.
 - No black paint on one of the blackboards.
 - Two broken sit on cars
 - Presence of plastic indoor toys with missing support play parts not suitable for outdoor play.
 - Toys in the outdoor area were dirty and therefore not appealing to play with.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Basic Needs:

1. In response to the non-compliance the service has stated that colleagues in this room were reminded of our practice to reserve the use of a soother for sleep time or if a child needs it to soothe for a limited time during the day. The importance of actively managing children's soother time as per our Food, Nutrition and Health Promotion Policy will be addressed at our staff meeting on 15th May 2025. Staff members will use their professional judgement to appropriately balance the children's need to soothe with the dangers of prolonged use.

Supporting Relationships:

2. In response the registered provider has stated that following the inspection a new procedure was agreed among staff members whereby beds and cots that are located away from the playroom are pre-prepared in advance to ensure children's smooth and relaxed transition from mealtime to sleep. The centre management will monitor the practice and offer support when required.

Physical and Material Environment

3. In response to the non-compliances the registered provider has stated that.

- An extensive order for additional play equipment was completed to include supporting materials for the play kitchen and playhouse.
- The chalk boards were repainted
- All unsuitable, broken toys or incomplete toys were removed from the area and the play equipment was cleaned

The educators in the room will be required to complete a quality and support practice guide self-evaluation tool on environments regularly so that the environment is reviewed, updated and changing according to the likes, needs and development of the children.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Food, Nutrition and Health Promotion Policy, planned meeting 15th May - draft agenda.
2. A copy of written procedure.
3. Picture of chalk board, outdoor boxes, purchase order for new items and picture of cleaned toys. Copies of self-evaluation tool.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances as identified.

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:

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- Children were supervised while in the reception area and exit from the service was restricted by an electronic lock which was positioned out of the children's reach.
- The outdoor areas were secured with a locked gate, high wall, and fence.
- All cleaning agents and sharp equipment were stored out of reach of the children in locked cupboards or on high shelves.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to the children on the day of the inspection.
- Blind cords and cables were all observed to be secured or out of reach of the children.
- All mattresses used in the cots had safety labels and met safe sleep guidelines.

Infection Control:

- Nappy changing facilities were available for the children and nappy changing was completed for the children at regular intervals and when required.
- Handwashing facilities for hand hygiene included thermostatically controlled water, soap and paper towels and pedal operated lidded bins for disposal of paper waste.
- Handwashing was observed after nappy changing, after bathroom visits, after outdoor play and before and after mealtimes.
- Nappy changing facilities were available for the children and nappy changing was completed for the children, at set times or when required.
- During sleep time, cots and floor beds were positioned with the recommended 50 centimetres between each child
- All mattresses used in the cots had washable wipeable covers present.
- Sand pits and activity tables used by the children in the outdoor areas were appropriately covered to reduce the potential risk of pest excrement.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff maintained ten-minute sleep checks on all the children to include their colour, breathing and position. Shoes and excess clothing were removed from children while they slept.
- Children under the age of two years that slept on low floor beds had a sleep assessment which had been completed with the parents of the child.

Fire Safety:

- Documentation available demonstrated that fire drills were completed in the service monthly. The emergency exit areas in the care rooms were observed to be unobstructed and clear of any obstacles during the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Staff did not ensure that the outdoor area used by the children in the Explorers and Senior Discoverers room was free of any hazards to reduce the potential risk of injury to a child. As a result, the following was observed.

- No visibility strips were present on the door leading into the Explorers garden.
- A rubber protective covering on the handlebar of a tricycle was missing and black ground matting was exposed and gaping which increased the potential risk of trips and falls in the Senior Discoverers room.

2. Staff attending to children in the two cots rooms located in the main reception area of the service did not have a means of contacting staff to request assistance while children slept. As a result, both inspectors were approached by staff to get assistance from their service colleagues.

Infection Control:

3. Infection control practices were not completed according to the service policy on infection control, this increased the potential risk of cross infection. For example.

In the Junior Discoverers room:

- When dinners were ready for the children, they were placed directly onto the floor, in front of each child's low highchair, while staff got organised for dinner time.
- At dinner time three children, sitting in low highchairs, had their dinner of spaghetti bolognese spooned directly onto the tray in front of them to eat, the staff member then spoon-fed the children from the table.

In the Discoverers room:

- Three children were using soothers while having their nappy changed, in the nappy changing at 11.49am, 11.53am and 12.00pm. Their soothers were not sterilised on return to the care room.

4. During sleep time, the cot room of the Junior Discoverers room was observed to be congested with equipment, this is not an appropriate storage area.

Safe Sleep:

5. The temperature of the cot rooms located in the main reception of the service were not maintained between the recommended temperature of 18-22°C while children slept. For example.

- Cot room 1, 24.4°C at 1.47pm and 23.1°C at 2.59pm.
- Cot room 2, 23 °C at 1.40pm, 2.07pm and 3.00pm

It is acknowledged that once staff were alerted to the temperature of the cot rooms by the inspectors, action was taken to reduce the temperature of the rooms.

6. While the inspectors recorded temperatures in the two cots rooms above the recommended 18 - 22°C, the service thermometer read 21°C.

Fire Safety:

7. Staff did not ensure that an accurate record was maintained on the electronic application of the children present in the service. For example, a child that was present in the Senior Discoverers room was accidentally signed out at 11.04am but was present in the service at 12.13pm.

8. A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed on the premises and in the care rooms, however, staff were incorrectly requested to ensure their written attendance record sheet, and their register book accompanied them on exit from the service. The service maintains an electronic record of children in attendance and no longer uses a written record.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. In response the service has stated that visibility strips for the door leading into the Explorers room were replaced and the bicycle was removed. Going forward a daily safety checklist for indoors and outdoors was

updated to include the above hazards. Staff members will be briefed at our Centre Meeting scheduled for 15th May to ensure Daily Safety Checklists are completed and actioned with any outstanding risks escalated to Management without delay.

2. In response the service has stated that staff members were reminded to use the monitors that are in place in the cot rooms to call if extra support is required. Staff members will be briefed at our Centre Meeting scheduled 15th May to ensure that they use the monitors to call if extra support is required.

Infection Control:

3. In response the staff members were reminded that we practice a family-style dining experience at Tigers Childcare where it is expected that staff members sit with children at mealtimes to encourage social chat and good eating habits and that food is served on plates and bowls for children to eat from.

Staff members read our Food, Nutrition and Health Promotion policy to familiarise themselves of how to model appropriate etiquette and hygiene at mealtimes. The whole team will be briefed at our Centre Meeting on 15 May 2025 to ensure that all mealtime practices as per our Food, Nutrition and Health Promotion policy are implemented at all times. Management will monitor mealtimes going forward.

Staff members were also reminded of our Nappy Changing Policy which states that soothers are not permitted in the nappy changing area including before, during, and after the changing process. Management will monitor nappy changing going forward.

4. Following the inspection the equipment was removed from the cot room of the Junior Discoverers room. It was agreed with the staff members that the equipment would either remain available to use by the children in the room or removed to appropriate storage. The whole team will be briefed at our Centre Meeting on 15 May 2025 to ensure that materials and equipment are always stored appropriately.

Safe Sleep:

5. In response air-conditioning units were installed in the cot rooms the following day.

A staff member is now assigned to monitor the temperature of the rooms throughout the morning and to take appropriate action to ensure that the room temperature always remains within the recommended range when children are sleeping. The whole team will be briefed at our Centre Meeting on 15 May 2025 to ensure that sleep room and playroom temperatures are maintained within the required range.

6. A new digital thermometer was purchased to replace the existing thermometer.

Management is responsible for checking existing thermometers periodically and replacing as necessary.

Fire Safety:

7. Following the inspection staff members were reminded of our Arrivals and Collection procedures to ensure that children are signed in and out in real time and that ongoing headcounts take place.

The Staff members read our Arrivals and Collections policy to familiarise themselves with the requirements of recording children's attendance in real time and completing regular headcounts.

The whole team will be briefed at our Centre Meeting on 15 May 2025 to ensure this procedure is always adhered to. Management will monitor attendance recording going forward.

8. The Fire Procedure notice was updated to reflect the electronic record of children's attendance.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Picture of visibility strips, daily outdoor safety checklist and agenda for meeting 15th May.
2. Picture of the monitor.

Infection Control:

3. Food, Nutrition and Health Promotion Policy, Nappy Changing Policy and agenda for meeting 15th May.
4. Picture of the cot room.

Safe Sleep:

5. Air-conditioning units in cot rooms and cot room temperature monitoring logs.
6. Invoice and picture of a new digital thermometer in cot rooms.

Fire Safety:

7. Arrivals and Collections Policy and agenda for staff meeting.
8. Picture of updated fire notice in place.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances as identified.

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 firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (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 written record was available of the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 13 March 2025.
- (b) A record was available of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the service. Fire extinguishers were serviced June 2024 and smoke alarms were serviced in March 2025.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed on the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Non-Compliance Information

1. From 3.02-3.17pm three children aged between 1-2 years of age that slept on low floor beds were not always supervised by staff to ensure their safety. Three staff members were in an adjoining care room and entered the sleep area to complete sleep checks at 10-minute intervals.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. In response the service has stated that there is currently a vacancy for an extra staff member to support the room during this transitioning period. Until this vacancy is filled, staff members agreed an interim procedure whereby the last group of children to wake remain in the sleeping area and engage in story-time until the children

are ready to transition with an educator to the Senior Discovers room. We are in the process of recruiting an extra support staff member.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Details of interim procedure and recruitment advertisement.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances as identified.