

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015FL224
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Mother Hubbards Childcare
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	19 Nephin Road, Dublin 7, Dublin 7, Co. Dublin
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<b>Eircode:</b>	D07 R27A
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Karen McGovern
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Sessional
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<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	24/11/2023
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	43	PM	42
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8 D08 X01F
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	E. Griffin and C. Harte
<b>Title:</b>	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.

### Description of service

Mother Hubbard's Childcare in Dublin 7 is one of four services owned by the registered provider. The service offers sessional, full day care and afterschool care. The service operates Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6:00pm and participates in the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECCE) scheme.

The service operates from a two-storey building and there are five care rooms in the service. The Wobbler and Toddler rooms are located on the ground floor along with sanitary facilities, a cot room, and an office. Preschool 1, Preschool 2, and the ECCE/School aged care room are located on the first floor along with sanitary facilities, kitchen, and a staff room. The ECCE/ School aged care room was closed on the day of inspection for preschool children. There are two outdoor areas on the premises; one located at that the front, and one located at the rear of the premises.

### Staffing

A total of thirteen staff are employed in the service. This includes the person in charge and the deputy person in charge who provide support to the service when required and two adults who are employed in ancillary roles as cooks. On the day of inspection there was a dedicated person in charge, a deputy person in charge and two ancillary staff. There were nine staff working directly with the children this includes two staff from another Mother Hubbard service who were scheduled to cover breaks that day. The area operations manager and the registered provider arrived shortly after and remained for the duration of the inspection. The registered provider does not work in the service.

### 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 areas of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation:

Regulation 9 (1)(2)(4)- Management and Recruitment

Regulation 11(1)(2)(8)- Staffing Levels

Regulation 19(a)- Health, Welfare and Development of child,

Regulation 23- Safeguarding the health, safety, and welfare of child.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Toddler room and the Preschool 2 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 registered provider, area operations manager, the person in charge, deputy 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
- (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)(a) There was a person-in-charge when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service. The registered provider has two named persons who can deputise when required.

(b) Staff rosters were available for inspection and indicated that the person-in-charge and/or the named persons who can deputise are on the premises during the hours of operation of the service.

(c) Staff members were aware of the management structure in the service.

(2) During the Inspection, the files of fifteen staff members were reviewed:

- (a) Nineteen validated written references were available from past employers.
- (b) Eleven validated written references were available from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting was available for all fifteen staff members.

(d) Police vetting was available in respect of five staff members who had lived outside the jurisdiction for longer than six months as an adult.

(4) Evidence was available to show that fourteen adults who worked directly with the children held 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.

### Non-Compliance Information

(4) There was not sufficient evidence to show that one adult working directly with the children held 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.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective Action

The registered provider has stated that the DCEDIY Letter was applied for that same day.

#### Preventive Action

The registered provider has stated that they will ensure that DCEDIY letters are available before the staff member starts if applicable.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

- Evidence of the DCEDIY application dated 21/11/2023

### Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance identified. The regulatory requirement has been met for Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment.

### 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.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) There was an adequate number of adults working directly with children at all times.

(2) The correct adult/child ratio was maintained in the service throughout the inspection as follows:

#### During the morning:

**The Wobbler Room** – One adult caring for five children aged between 1 to 2 years.

**The Toddler Room** – Two adults caring for nine children aged between 2 to 3 years.

**The Preschool Room 1**– Two adults caring for eleven children aged between 2 to 3 years.

**The Preschool Room 2** - Two adults caring for to eighteen children aged between 3 to 5 years.

#### During the afternoon:

**The Wobbler Room** – One adult caring for five children aged between 1 to 2 years.

**The Toddler Room** – Two adults caring for nine children aged between 2 to 3 years.

**The Preschool Room 1**– Two adults caring for eleven children aged between 2 to 3 years.

**The Preschool Room 2** - Two adults caring for sixteen children aged between 3 years to 5 years.

(8)(a) Two adults were present at all times in the service as evidenced from examination of the staff roster.

## 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:

- The service promoted healthy eating in the service. On the day of the inspection children were observed to eat cold chicken served in a brown wrap, with carrots and oranges on the side for their morning snack. Children were offered cooked ham, potatoes, and vegetables for dinner time. The service catered for different dietary requirements including vegan and non-dairy; this was observed at mealtimes. Staff reported the weekly food menu is shared with parents/guardians.
- The transition between 'garden time' and 'indoor time' was recognised and supported. For example, the inspector observed children been informed by staff that they had five more minutes to play outdoors before going indoors. During this five-minute transition time children were encouraged to put away toys that they had been playing with. While one of the adults sang a song to the children about finishing up playing outdoors and going indoors to wash their hands for dinner time.
- Childrens drinks were available within their reach throughout the day, there was a water fountain in the preschool 2 room where children could refill their cups/bottles as needed.
- Childrens behaviours were managed through age and stage appropriate positive strategies. For example, In the preschool 2 room staff were observed to support children to develop strategies around conflict. Children were given clear guidelines on what kind of behaviours are appropriate and children were encouraged to problem solve and think of ways to resolve conflict.
- There was a family wall and birthday wall in the preschool 2 room. This supports children to transition from home to the service and helps build a sense of identity and belonging.

### Physical and Material Environment:

- The furniture provided in the rooms was low level and suitable to the needs of the children. Equipment was visible and accessible enabling the children to independently access their choice of activity.
- The preschool 2 room had a range of play-based materials and equipment that offered stimulation, exploration, and imagination. Interest areas included a cozy corner with a large mat and a couch, an art area, a dress up corner, a home corner, a construction area, an Information Communications Technology (ICT) area, a music area, and a sensory area. In both the toddler room and the preschool room interest areas were observed to be well equipped, for example the home corner had a role play kitchen with a toaster, kettle, and a selection of real household materials.
- Children's language development was supported through one to one and group discussions, songs, and storytelling, which were observed during the inspection. In the preschool 2 room, the staff member read a book using visuals aids and the staff member acted out characters.
- Children had access to both outdoor areas during the inspection creating opportunities for gross motor movement and exploring different environments.
- Children's artwork and photographs of activities were displayed on the walls of the care rooms and throughout the service. This supports a sense of identity and belonging.

### Supporting relationships:

- A key worker system was observed to be in practice in the toddler room supporting partnership between parents/guardians and the staff. This promoted a welcoming sense for families and a sharing of learning experiences.
- There was documented evidence that staff carried out observations using a strength-based approach to support children. For example, staff recorded children's emergent interests using the 'Emerging Interest' planner on the wall. Staff discussed how the ICT office area in the preschool 2 room which included real equipment such as a computer, keyboard, headset, and phone had been developed based on the emergent interest of one of the children whose parent had started working from home.
- Relationships with parents were facilitated through conversations at drop-off and collection, and the use of an electronic software application where information on the child's day such as diet, sleep, nappy changing, and book of the day was shared with the parents.

- Children were given sufficient time to enjoy their snacks and dinner. Staff were observed sitting and chatting with children during snack and dinner times. This facilitated mealtimes to be a social occasion for children to engage with peers and staff.
- The service integrated with the local community. On the day of the inspection the person in charge had been out in the morning delivering toys donated by staff and parents/guardians to the local community toy box appeal. In addition, there was photographic evidence of a visit by An Garda Síochána meeting the children in the service.

### Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a) On the day of the inspection, it was observed that one child's basic needs were not met. Example as follows.

- At 10.46am it was observed by the inspector in one of the care rooms that the front of the child's jumper was visibly wet with a large damp patch. The child was not at a stage where they could remove the jumper themselves. At 11.41am when a staff member removed the child's jumper before sleep time the inspector noticed that the top under the jumper was also visibly wet. The underneath top was not changed before sleep time. Wet clothes can cause a child to feel discomfort.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

The registered provider has stated that all children's clothes will be checked for signs of wetness before being placed down to sleep. At the staff retraining management discussed the importance of staff being vigilant for spillages, signs of wetness and for staff to always check children before sleep for damp clothing.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

- Staff Retraining Agenda including staff signatures.
- Signatures of all staff who attended retraining.

### Summary Comment

The actions taken by the service have addressed the non-compliance identified. The regulatory requirement has been met for Regulation 19 Health, Welfare and Development of Child.

## 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:

- When the inspectors arrived unannounced at the service, access to the main door was monitored and controlled by staff to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises and to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised.
- Internal doors were adequately secured to prevent the children leaving the care rooms unsupervised.
- There were no flexes or cables observed that were accessible to the children.
- Cleaning agents and medication were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to the children throughout the inspection.

##### Infection Control:

- Children had individual labelled cups and bottles for drinking water.
- Windows were opened throughout the day to allow fresh air to circulate in the care rooms.
- Pedal operated lidded bins were used for the disposal of rubbish in the care rooms.

##### Safe Sleep:

During sleep time the following was observed:

- Shoes and heavy clothing were removed from children before sleep time.
- An ambient temperature of 16-20°C was maintained in the cot room for children under 1 year old.
- An ambient temperature of 18-22°C was maintained in the care room where children aged over 1 year old were sleeping.
- Lighting was subdued in the sleep rooms and soft music was played.
- Sleep checks were completed every 10 minutes by staff members during sleep time of children. Staff recorded each child's position, skin colour and breathing pattern and shared this information with parents using a software technology application.

##### Fire Safety:

- On the day of inspection, it was observed that all fire exit emergency lights above doors were in working order and that the emergency exit doors were clear from obstruction. This helps ensure the safe effective evacuation of children and staff in the event of a fire.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

- There was a wooden garden kitchen unit in the outdoor area. The wood had separated causing it to splinter and presented a risk of injury to children.

#### Infection Control:

On the day of the inspection the following was observed which poses a risk of cross infection.

- There was a soiled cushion in the toddler room with no cover.
- Three nappy changing procedures were observed and were not completed as per the service policy and best practice guidelines, for example:
  - One staff member did not wash their hands between two nappy changing procedures.
  - Three children did not have their hands washed after nappy changing procedures.
- There were not the correct systems in place to support hygienic hand washing. Examples as follows:
  - There was no hand soap available in preschool 2 room and the upstairs sanitary accommodation at 10.42am. In addition, the sanitary accommodation hand wash basins did not have warm running water.
  - Thermostatically controlled water was not available in the sink of two of the downstairs rooms to ensure that hot water is no hotter than the recommended 43°C. Water temperatures were recorded at 46°C in the changing bay at 1.17pm and at 46.7°C in the wobbler room at 1.34pm.

It is acknowledged that water temperatures in the two downstairs rooms had increased in the afternoon after the early years' inspector informed the person in charge that there was no warm water in the upstairs sanitary accommodation. However, the temperature of the changing bay was recorded at 45°C in the morning above the recommended 43°C. It is also acknowledged that the soap dispensers which had not been working at 10.42am had the batteries replaced and were working at 11.32am.

#### Safe Sleep:

5. Bed linen was observed to be stored on the individual beds which were stacked one on top of the other at 10.38am. Staff informed the inspector that bed sheets are washed weekly. The inspector observed that two beds in use were not labelled with children's names for identification purposes. In addition, bed linen was not individually stored and labelled. This poses a risk of cross infection.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### General Safety:

##### Corrective Action

- (1) The registered provider has stated that the outdoor kitchen was removed and disposed of on the same day.

##### Preventive Action

- (1) The registered provider has stated that the service will ensure staff know the importance of reporting maintenance issues to management.

#### Infection Control:

##### Corrective Action

- (2) The registered provider has stated that the soiled cushion was removed the same day after the inspection.

##### Preventive Action

- (2) Management has advised that the service will ensure soiled items are removed immediately for washing.

##### Corrective & Preventive Actions

- (3) The registered provider has stated that re-training on the correct nappy changing procedures was completed with all staff. Staff retraining involved management demonstrating the correct nappy changing procedures to be followed and all staff reading and signing off that they have read and understood the service's Nappy Changing Policy.

##### Corrective Action

- (4) Soap dispensers which had not been working had the batteries replaced on the day of inspection. The service had a plumber in as a precaution who checked all taps and thermostatically controlled them. Staff have been retrained to use the system and the timer for water and heat as management noticed on the day of inspection that the system had not been used correctly by staff and felt this may have been the issue. Staff have been checking the temperatures and they haven't risen above the 43 degrees since using the timer correctly.

##### Preventive Action

(4) The registered provider has stated that the service has added ‘check batteries in soap dispensers’ to their daily risk assessment. Staff will measure water temperatures and will report any discrepancies to management.

**Safe Sleep:**

**Corrective Action**

(5) The registered provider has stated beds have been labelled with individual children’s names. The registered provider has stated that the service has also reviewed their storage of linen and it is now stored individually and labelled.

**Preventive Action**

(5) Staff retraining covering the importance of checking daily that individual bed labels have not come off and that bed linen is to be individually stored with children’s names

**Supporting documentation submitted**

**General Safety:**

- Photographic evidence which demonstrates that the outdoor kitchen unit was removed.
- Staff Retraining Agenda including reporting any signs of damage to toys and furniture as soon as they notice it.

**Infection Control:**

- Staff Nappy Retraining Agenda including staff signatures of staff who attended.
- New Daily Risk Assessment including checking of batteries in soap dispensers.
- New Daily Risk Assessment including checking there is warm water in sanitary accommodation.

**Safe Sleep:**

- Photographic evidence of beds individually labelled with children’s names and bed linen individually stored with children’s names.
- Staff Retraining Agenda including bed labels and checking beds staff signatures of staff who attended.

**Summary Comment**

The actions taken by the service have addressed the non-compliances identified. The regulatory requirement has been met for Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety, and Welfare of the Child.

### 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) The registered provider ensured that an adequate number of adults were trained in First Aid Response.

(2) Adequately stocked first aid boxes were stored out of reach of children and were easily accessible and available to the adults caring for the children if required.