

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015GY268
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Tiny Tots Creche & Educational Preschool
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Enterprise Centre, Parkmore, Creagh, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway.
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<b>Eircode:</b>	H53 H5W3
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Jennifer Sheridan, Erol Moody
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	09/05/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	35	PM	34
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	TUSLA - Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Quality Assurance Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	H. Heagney & A. Kennedy
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

This full day care service is in the enterprise centre grounds, in Creagh, a townland of Ballinasloe, Co. Galway. The service operates a full day care from 8.00hrs to 18.00hrs. An Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) sessional care programme is also offered. The service caters for children aged 0 to 6 years. The service is registered for a maximum number of 54 children, at any one time. The service has a registered afterschool and holiday school aged programme, for school aged children. There are four ground floor playrooms, the Baby room, Toddler room, Junior Pre-school room and Senior Pre-school room. There is a designated kitchen where the main meal is prepared, cooked, and stored on site. There are two sleep rooms with two cots and three cots respectively, available for younger children's sleep provision. There is a designated outdoor area to the rear of the premises. There is an arrangement that the children have access under supervision to an outdoor grass area to the side of the premises and an outdoor play area of another childcare premises, with both under the maintenance of the other childcare service.

### Staffing

The two registered providers work in the premises. There is a designated person in charge and a named deputy person in charge. There are a total of thirteen staff including the two registered providers. Eleven staff hold at least a major award in Quality and Qualifications Ireland. The staff have documentary evidence of ongoing training and education. There are also two designated chefs who prepare cook and service the service meals. On the day of inspection, two adults over the age of eighteen years were on a childcare work placement and supervised when interacting with the children.

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

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.

## Additional Information

This inspection was triggered by information received by the Tusla inspectorate. The inspection process included a review of the regulations relevant to the information submitted.

## 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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;
- (b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and
- (c) these Regulations.

#### Compliance Information

- (1)(a) There was a designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputize in the service.
- (b) The person in charge was on the premises when the early years inspectors arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection.

Documentary evidence indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available, on the premises, when the pre-school children were present.

The files for the thirteen staff and two adults over the age of 18 years on a childcare work placement were reviewed.

- (2)(a)&(b) Thirty of the thirty validated written references on file in respect of the thirteen staff and two adults on a childcare work placement were from a past employer or a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the thirteen staff and the two adults over the age of 18 years on a childcare work placement. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Documentary evidence indicated that one of the staff members had lived outside the jurisdiction, for longer than 6 consecutive months, while over the age of 18 years, and had the required police vetting.
- (4) The eleven staff working directly with the children had evidence of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 5 to 7, in Early Childhood Care and Education.
- (7) The service showed evidence of a system that ensured that all employees, unpaid workers, and contractors were appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training. This included the relevant policies, procedures and statements of the service and the Regulations.
- There was evidence of training logs and an appraisal system for each staff member.
- There was evidence that the staff supervision policy was being implemented.
- There was evidence of the policy on managing behaviour being implemented. Relevant staff knew the requirements and had a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the policy on managing behaviour. There was documentary evidence that relevant staff had received training on the policy on managing behaviour.

### Part III – Management and Staff

#### Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

*A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures, and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.*

#### Compliance Information

The following policies were inspected -

Complaints Policy	Policy on Behaviour Management
Medication Policy	Supervision Policy
Staff training Policy	Accident and Incident Policy

The registered provider, showed evidence of a system for developing, approving, distributing, and reviewing policies, procedures, and statements in a consistent way. Policies and procedures were standardised for the pre-school service’s approach to implementing best practice and ensuring compliance with the regulations. Relevant staff had access to an up-to-date version of each of the policies, procedures, and statements.

### 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) At all times during the period of the inspection, the person in charge ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.
- (2) On the morning of the inspection, there were 35 pre-school children present. All children were aged between 6 months to 6 years. There were eight staff directly caring for these children.  
On the afternoon of the inspection, there were 34 pre-school children present. All children were aged between 6 months to 6 years. There were six staff directly caring for these children.
- (8)(a) The registered provider ensured that there were two staff on the premises at all times while the pre-school was operating.

### 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:*

- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

### Compliance Information

The registered provider, showed evidence of a system for developing, maintaining, storing, and keeping relevant service records.

- (d) The service offered a play-based programme of care. Staff advised that the service used a child-centred approach, creating an inclusive and diverse learning environment where each child has equal opportunity by a variety of means. A record was kept of the routines, experiences, materials, and activities within the service which reflected diverse backgrounds, identities, abilities, religions, skin colour, family structures, language, cultures, or additional needs in a positive way, which helped children to learn, become aware of and be respectful of differences.
- (k) Details were recorded of any accident, injury or incident involving a child attending the service in a bespoke accident and incident form, kept in each child's pre-school records.

### 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.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that no corporal punishment is inflicted on a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

#### Compliance Information

- (1)
- The staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities to support children's health, wellbeing, and development within the service.
  - Healthy eating was promoted within the service. Nutritious meals and snacks were served at regular times, but there is flexibility. Healthy meals and snacks were served no more than 3 hours apart. Meals and snacks were appetising and healthy for children. Snacks and water or milk were available to children when needed. Enough time was allowed for bottle-feeding and mealtimes. Infants younger than 12 months were held while bottle-feeding. Each child was given enough time to eat and enjoy their bottle, snack, or meal without being rushed.
  - The atmosphere during mealtimes was relaxed, with pleasant social interaction among the children and adults. The staff encouraged and supported the children to feed themselves independently, according to their age and stage of development. The crockery, cutlery and drinking utensils used were suitable for the children's ages and stage of development. Bibs were available for babies and toddlers at mealtimes. Children who have not eaten, or who were hungry were offered food at times outside routine meal and snack times, an alternative food option.
  - Children were seated at the table or in a highchair during snack and mealtimes, when their food is ready. Children sat at a comfortable height in relation to the tabletop. The tables and chairs were suitable to their age and stage of development.

- The privacy and dignity of each child was respected at all times. The staff responded to children’s individual personalities, sensitivities and needs in relation to nappy changing, toileting and toilet training. Toilet training was based on the child’s developmental level and their own readiness to start, rather than their age. Toilet training was agreed on and supported by parents and guardians. Nappy changing and toileting were a positive experience for children. Staff responded to children’s cues quickly. Children had unrestricted access to the toilet and did not have to wait to use the toilet. Children were allowed to take their time during toileting. Nappies were changed as necessary and in a timely manner. On the day of inspection twelve children from the Baby, Wobbler and Junior pre-school wore nappies. Staff used the correct language surrounding toileting and nappy changing.
- Children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their own level of independence. Picture and word reminders and instructions were displayed and used with the children to support personal care. Children were encouraged and supported to develop self-help and personal hygiene skills, for example staff showed children how to wash hands properly, and supervised children’s handwashing before and after snacks and meals, after toileting, after blowing their noses, after messy play and after outdoor play.
- Staff provided for each child’s comfort and ensured that each child’s need for sleep, rest and relaxation was met. The service worked with parents and guardians in relation to children’s sleep patterns and sleep needs. The staff allowed children to sleep or rest when they were tired, and not just at a designated time. Staff recognised children’s individual cues of tiredness indicating their need for sleep and rest.
- Children had opportunities to move about freely and explore their environment, both indoors and outdoors. The service had safe and comfortable spaces for infants, toddlers, or children not walking, to lie, roll, creep, crawl, pull themselves up, learn to walk, and to be protected from children who were more mobile. Children had plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practise and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance.
- The service supported children in forming and sustaining positive relationships with adults. For example
  - by assigning a key person to each child;
  - showing respect for each unique child and developing their trust;
  - being actively involved in children’s play, where appropriate (initiating games, joining in when invited to by children);
  - behaving in a way that creates a positive atmosphere (having frequent social conversations, joint laughter and showing affection);

- listening to the voice of the child as they communicate their needs, thoughts and experiences both verbally and non-verbally, by reading children’s cues, gestures and body language;
- encouraging children to think critically, ask questions and respond to them in a way that promotes sustained shared thinking;
- nurturing and comforting children;
- using soft tones, the child’s individual name, and getting down to their level and making eye contact.
- The staff recognised parents and guardians as the primary carers and educators of their children;
  - by communicating with parents and guardians in a sensitive, supportive and confidential manner, while being open and honest;
  - working with parents and guardians by sharing knowledge and observations of the child’s interests, strengths, developmental and care needs, approaches to learning, changes in their life, and any other concerns;
  - providing parents and guardians with daily information, including significant events or activities involving their child (for example, their child’s sleep and rest patterns);
  - providing opportunities for parents and guardians to be involved with service activities, considering the family circumstances, the parents’ or guardians’ particular interests and their time commitments.
- The service used a childcare application which allowed the staff to interactively communicate with parents and guardians on their child’s care needs and learning experiences. The childcare application captured a child’s attendance record, daily care needs such as food, medication, nappy changing and sleep provision. Learning and picture stories were collated showing the individual child’s likes, interests, and preferences. There were also photographs of children engaging in activities and their art and craftwork. There was also evidence that the staff participated in monthly planning.
- The older children had individual profile scrapbooks with the themes to date including of my first day, artwork, animals, Halloween, aeroplanes, three bears, Christmas, flowers, paper plate craft, tulips, Valentines, shapes, St Patricks day, Easter, and Spring.
- Transitions of children within the service were made as seamless and comfortable as possible. For examples, the children were made aware of routines and daily transitions so that they knew what to expect, and could prepare themselves for transitions like going outside, getting ready for dinner, or going for a sleep.

- The staff supported children to enter into social groups, develop friendships with other children, and to learn to help and positively engage with other children. The staff encouraged and praised children for specific, positive, and appropriate behaviours. Children were given positive alternatives, rather than just being told 'no'. Children were supported in preventing, managing, and resolving conflict.
- Children were supported to recognise, express and cope positively with emotions. Staff were observed listening to children in a caring, gentle way when they express emotions, and reassuring them that it is normal to experience positive and negative emotions at times. Staff responded to infants in a timely and appropriate way when they cry or became upset. Children who show signs of social and emotional difficulties were given the appropriate care and support within the service.
- The design, organisation and resourcing of the environment supported each child's wellbeing, learning and development, within the ethos and philosophy of the service. The environment was comfortable, inviting and laid out to accommodate the needs of all children and adults in the setting. The environment provided a range of challenging, diverse, creative, and enriching experiences for all children in line with their stage of development.
- The atmosphere in the learning environment was encouraging and unhurried. Staff encouraged children to interact and to engage with a range of materials, activities, equipment in the indoor and outdoor environment, based on the child's needs, choices, interests and age and stage of development.
- Materials and equipment were arranged so they were visible and readily accessible to promote independent access by children. There were different interest areas provided, where equipment and materials of similar use were arranged or grouped together.
- On the day of inspection children played predominantly outside. The children enjoyed running, chasing, climbing the house, on bicycles, playing house, on the swings, playing football, at group games, and having fun. In the playrooms the children played house, enjoyed drawing, painting, puzzle making, connecting, linking and construction. The equipment and materials in the outdoor play area supported children's play, movement, and exploration, and provides opportunities exclusive to the outdoors. Safe and comfortable outdoor spaces were provided for children who were not yet walking. The outdoor play environment provided activities and opportunities for fresh air; discovery; and spaces for the children to relax.

(2)&(3)

- The inspectors observed that practices or the threat of any practices that are disrespectful, degrading, humiliating, exploitative, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful were not carried out on any child while attending the service. Staff advised and documentary evidence indicated that corporal punishment was prohibited. The staff advised that they do not use any form of physical intervention.

### Non-Compliance Information

- Powdered infant formula for one child in the Baby room, was not prepared in accordance with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) best practice guidance, which advises that powdered infant formula should be made up at home. Staff advised that they made up bottles on site, as per parents' preference.

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

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of June 2024, the registered provider advised of the following;

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

- Our updated policy states that parents supply and prepare formula bottles at home in accordance to FSAI guidelines. Childcare staff place the made-up bottles in a dedicated fridge straight away. The bottle is labelled with name and date. The temperature of the fridge is kept at 5°C or less. The fridge has a thermometer so staff can check the temperature. All feeding bottles are sent home with parents when they collect their baby. We throw away any leftover feed and clean bottles. We have updated our policy; we have informed staff and parents of the necessary steps and the new guidance.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

- The powdered infant formula policy was submitted to the office of the early years inspectorate.

### Summary Comment

The inspectors have reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 19 has been adequately addressed.

### 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 door was secure to prevent unauthorised entry.
- The designated outdoor play area was secure so that children could not leave the area unsupervised and unauthorised persons could not enter the area.
- Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed.
- All cleaning agents were stored inaccessible to the children.
- Leads, cables, and flexes were wall mounted and secured to prevent any trip or strangulation hazard.
- The heating system was thermostatically controlled, to ensure the temperature was maintained between 18°C to 22°C.
- Windows were high and thereby inaccessible to the children.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition.
- Daily records of attendance were kept for all the children attending the service.

##### Infection Control:

- Children’s hands were washed before snacks and meals, after toileting and nappy changing, after blowing their nose, after messy and outdoor play.
- The children’s belongings for nappy changing were individually labelled and in designated storage baskets. The children’s barrier creams were clearly individually labelled and stored within the nappy changing area. The nappy changing areas had a leak-proof, sealable airtight container for the disposal of nappies. The nappy changing policy was displayed on the wall of the nappy changing areas and staff completed nappy changing sheet records for each child requiring nappy change, with a section for staff comment / remedial action taken.
- A cleaning and disinfection schedule was presented and available for inspection. There were cleaning schedules and records for the playrooms, sanitary areas, and outdoor areas and on the cleaning and disinfection procedure undertaken in the service.
- On the day of inspection, tabletops and work surfaces were cleaned with disposable paper towels and disinfectant spray.

- The playrooms were observed to be kept adequately ventilated with the windows left open whilst maintaining the room temperatures at the required levels.
- Adequate supplies of disposable tissues were readily available in the playrooms.
- The outdoor play equipment was cleaned after each child's use, and prior to each child's use with documented records maintained.

### Administration of Medication

- Medication was stored inaccessible to the pre-school children.
- Staff advised that currently there was no child on medication. The staff were familiar with the medication administration policy of the service if medication needed to be administered.
- Suncreams were supplied by the parents and guardians, and stored in the service, with dates of expiry checked on an annual basis. On the day of inspection, the staff applied sunscreen to each children, prior to children playing outside.

### Safe Sleep:

- There were two designated sleep rooms with two cots and three cots respectively, available for younger children's sleep provision. Stackable beds were available for older children requiring sleep if required. On the day of inspection, children were observed sleeping on demand.
- The sleep policy detailed the correct temperature, lighting, ventilation, space between cots and child safety requirements.
- The early years inspectors observed, and documentary evidence indicated that the staff physically checked sleeping children every 10 minutes. The service kept documented sleep records. Records for sleeping children included the room temperature, the position, colour and breathing of the child (as per the safe sleep for under 2's best practice guidelines for childcare services policy) and the signature of the staff member who physically checks the sleeping child.
- A digital thermometer was available in the sleep rooms and used as the method of recording the sleep room temperature and therefore taking remedial action when temperatures were above 20 °C and below 16 °C.
- A supply of clean linen was available for each child.
- Age /tog appropriate sleeping bags and or cellular blankets, which allow air to circulate were used for sleeping children under 18 months of age.

## Part VI – Safety

### Regulation 27 – Supervision

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

#### Compliance Information

The staff advised the inspectors that they understood their role and responsibilities in relation to always supervising children in the service, while maintaining the rights and dignity of each child. The inspectors observed that each child attending the service was always under the supervision of a qualified staff member. Children were supervised primarily by sight – that is, observation. Supervision for short intervals by sound (listening) was allowed, with relevant staff talking with children who were out of sight. For example: children could use the toilet independently.

The inspectors observed constant careful supervision by both sight and sound occurred to ensure children’s safety, where risks were higher for example climbing and using the swings in the outdoor area.

Staff advised that they consider the required adult: child ratio; the individual children’s needs; the activities being engaged in; and staffing levels so that supervision of children was not compromised due to unexpected staff absences. On the morning of the inspection, a staff member went off sick and a relief staff member commenced with 30 minutes.

### Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

#### Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (1) *A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-*
- (a) *the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,*
  - (b) *the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and*
  - (c) *the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.*
- (2) *A registered provider shall ensure that-*
- (a) *a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and*
  - (b) *the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider’s complaints policy.*
- (3) *A record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall-*
- (a) *include the nature of the complaint and the manner in which the complaint was dealt with, and*
  - (b) *be open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that there was a complaints policy in place in the service.

The complaints policy stated;

- (a) the procedures to be followed by a person who wished to make a complaint about the service,
- (b) the processes for dealing with the complaint,
- (c) the way the person who makes a complaint will be kept informed of how their complaint is being dealt with.

(2) The registered provider ensured that:

- (a) A written record was kept of any complaint made to the registered provider in respect of the service.
- (b) That complaints were dealt with in accordance with the complaints policy.

(3) Written records referred to in (2):

- (a) Included the nature of the complaint and the way the complaint was dealt with.
- (b) Were made available to the authorised persons.