

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KY105		
Name of Service:	Puffins Childcare		
Address of Service:	9 O'Connell Street, Caherciveen, Co. Kerry		
Eircode:	V23 Y884		
Name of Registered Provider:	Ashleigh Galvin		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	01/08/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	28	PM 22
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Social Work Dept, Hospital Grounds, Coolnagarrane, Skibbereen, West Cork P81 PD78		
Inspection undertaken by:	M Carney		
Title:	Early Years Inspector		
Authority to Inspect			
The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).			
Conditions if applicable	N/A		

Description of service

Puffins Childcare is a private service which is registered to provide an early year setting for children aged from 0 to 6 years. It offers a full day care, part time, sessional and after school service.

It operates from 08:30am to 17 :00pm daily.

The service is situated in a period style terraced premises in the centre of Cahirciveen town on the Ring of Kerry.

The service operates 4 care rooms, 2 of which were operating on the day of the inspection.

Facilities include toilet and nappy changing areas, a designated sleep room, sensory room and a designated rest room, a secured garden and staff quarters which include an office and kitchen.

The service benefits from a public car park to the rear of the premises for use by parents and guardians

Staffing

The registered provider is the manager and works directly with the children. There are a further 16 childcare professionals attached to the service. Each adult had certification of Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) in a childcare course, ranging from Level 5 to Level 8.

Methodology

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

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

The findings on inspection are based on:

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

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspections 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.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, deputy, staff and children who were present on the day.

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)

The registered provider managed the service and worked directly with the children. A deputy manager had been appointed to deputise as required.

(b)

On the day of the inspection both the manager and deputy were on the premises and available to facilitate the inspection process. Examination of the staff roster indicated that either the manager or deputy were on the premises for the duration of service provision.

(2)(a) & (b)

There were 17 adults in total attached to the service. On review of the staff rosters it was established that there were 2 new staff members appointed to the service since the previous inspection on the 28 August 2022, as this Regulation was compliant at that time only the 2 new files were reviewed. The following information was obtained –

There were 3 written past employer references available with 3 records of validation attached.

There was 1 written reference from a source that the registered provider considered reputable. A record of validation was attached.

(c)

There were 2 up to date Garda vetting disclosures on file, dated from April 2022 to August 2022.

(d)

Police vetting was not required as the 2 new staff members had not worked or lived outside the jurisdiction of Ireland for a period of 6 consecutive months.

(4)

Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) in childcare training were on file for both new staff members at Level 6.

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 manager reported that the service had been assisted to develop their policies by an associated childcare agency. The policies were available in both hard copy and digitally.

The following policies were reviewed in triangulation with the practices observed and information obtained verbally from the staff members.

The policy on safe sleep, policy on outings, infection control policy, policy on healthy eating and the policy on the administration of medication were found to be compliant.

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)

On the day of the inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.

(2)

There were 14 children attending the creche room aged from 10 months to 2 years. Eleven of the children were categorised as full day care. There were 6 adults in attendance.

Pod 3 had 14 children present aged from 2 to 5 years. Eleven of the children were attending on a full day care basis. There were 3 adults present. There were 3 adults present.

The adult child ratio was correct.

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)

Each of the children's registration forms attending on the day were reviewed to ensure that they obtained information in relation to Regulation 15 (a) to (i). A total of 28 forms were found to be compliant.

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*

- (c) details of the adult: child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (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

(1)(a) to (h)

It was reported by the registered provider that the parent's handbook had recently been updated to include new staff details. This document was reviewed and found to contain the relevant information of the service in respect of Regulation 16.

(i) The staff roster was reviewed; it provided details of staff breaks and it indicated that adult child ratios were suitably maintained at that time.

(j) A room leader reported that the service used a logbook for the recording of medications that had been developed by an agency allied to childcare provision. On inspection it was found that the correct and pertinent information had been recorded in respect of medications administered to the children. The most recent entry was recorded on the 02 June 2023.

(k) The service had a record book to detail any accidents or incidents that had occurred in the service. The last entry was recorded on the 15 June 2023 and involved a minor incident. The information had been relayed to the parents as evidenced by the counter signature.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

The registered provider reported that a new updated handbook had been devised for prospective parents and guardians, namely, ‘Starting Pre-School and Creche’. This was reviewed and found to contain the essential elements of Regulation 16 (1) (a) to (g).

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.

Compliance Information

- The parents and guardians supplied their children with all their meal and snack requirements whilst attending the service.
- Meals were offered in a timely manner with a morning snack taking place at approximately 11:am, lunches at 1:30pm and another healthy snack was offered about 15:00pm.
- Meals were eaten in the care rooms; in the creche room low chairs and highchairs were arranged in a sociable way for the younger children to observe and socialise with the older children as they ate their meals.
- The staff members sat with the children and patiently assisted with feeding as required and praised the correct table etiquette.
- The children were given ample time to eat at their own pace and chat with their friends.
- Single use bibs or wipeable bibs were used for younger children to protect clothes whilst eating.
- Toileting was gently supervised by staff members and children encouraged to independently wash hands, flush toilets and dispose of paper towels.

- Nappy changing was carried out in a flexible manner, and cues promptly acted upon by staff members if changing was needed.
- Child height hooks and storage shelving was available in both care rooms to encourage independent dressing and organisation of their personal belongings such as bags, outdoor shoes and art works to be taken home.
- Rest areas were available to the children in both the creche and pod 3 to allow the children to opt out play activities and relax if they so wished.
- The children had direct access to a secured garden which provided ample opportunities for gross motor skill play, change of scenery and fresh air. It was reported that the children were given 3 slots daily to enjoy the garden.

Physical and Material Environment –

- Puffins Childcare occupied a period style terraced building which had been suitably adapted, extended and modernised to provide a childcare setting.
- Only 2 of the 4 care rooms were operating on the day of the inspection and these were found to be clean, well maintained, airy and bright. The rooms had openable windows that allowed for that allowed for natural light and ventilation. In addition, air filters and fans were available in each room to manage ambient room temperatures during hotter weather.
- Each room was suitably furnished with clean and well-maintained child sized tables and chairs, highchairs, and low chairs.
- The rooms were suitably furnished with open shelving, mobile cabinets and box storage units to store and display, and to allow the children easy access to the wide range of play materials and equipment.
- The creche was laid out in a thematic manner for example, there was a large playhouse-climbing frame with slide to encourage mobility and fun, a playhouse and a corner niche with kitchen and utensils, a centrally installed tree displayed the children’s family photographs, the tabletop activities provided fine motor skill practice, arts and crafts and sensory play such as playdough.
- There were dress up items available to the children, cars, trucks and small construction.
- A reading unit displayed age-appropriate books with seating to encourage use of books and literacy.
- There were tables providing dinosaurs, animals and water play, the children were observed enjoying water play in a supervised and relaxed manner.

- The creche had a cordoned area for the babies which was clean and well maintained. It was furnished with soft furnishing, wall mounted activity centres and a wide range of age-appropriate toys such as mobiles and sound making equipment. There was a clean and comfortable chair for adults to sit and comfort and nurture the babies.
- A compact sensory room was situated within the creche room and although not used at the time of the inspection it was found to provide soft furnishing and a small ball pool. The dimmed lighting and blinds added to the ambient atmosphere where a child could be offered one-to-one time or just to chill and relax.
- Pod 3 was situated to the rear of the premises in a modern, purpose-built facility. It was clean and well maintained.
- The room was laid out in a considered a thematic manner which provided a wide range of play experiences and materials to ignite interest, imagination, and socialisation.
- There was a well-equipped home corner, small and large construction, tabletop activities and a white board which offered interactive digital entertainment.
- The room had a well-furnished rest area which included mats, cushions and a hanging chair. There was a generous display of books.
- The garden was laid with artificial grass for the children's comfort and safety. A hard surface path allowed for the ride on bikes, balance bikes, scooters and tractors.
- Hanging baskets and bunting from the graduation day added colour and decoration to the garden.
- There was a raided bed for the children's planting, many fence mounted activities, mirrors, a mud kitchen and a tunnel/slide activity.
- A canopied area with picnic benches and seating allowed for the children to enjoy the garden on wetter days.

Supporting Relations around the Children

- The staff members were observed to be kind, patient and caring to each child as observed during caring duties, facilitating play and one-to-one engagement.
- Only low tones were used during communication with the children.
- Children's cues for attention, comfort or toileting needs were readily addressed.
- The service was closely associated with events that had been organised in the community, for example they had participated in the St. Patricks Day parade and sponsored the Skellig Coat Rose of Tralee.

- Staff members had undertaken training to enhance childcare skills for example Children First training and new staff had completed E-learning.
- It was stated and evidenced that a staff member had recently represented the service and won Kerry Connect Businessperson of 2023 for contributions made to childcare.
- Communication with parents about service issues was active both by a hard copy and digital application.

Implementation of Programme of Care.

- It was reported by the registered provider that as the children were attending during the summer holidays a more relaxed and flexible programme was in place which was child led and attentive to their emergent interests.
- A daily timetable displayed in the creche room detailed that there was sufficient time allocated for free play, outdoor play, meals, rest and relaxation.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- Puffins Childcare operated a healthy eating policy and this was adhered to as observed by the healthy, nutritious and varied meals eaten at snack time and lunch time.
- All food and drink items were supplied by the parents and guardians.
- Hot meals were offered to each child attending on a full day care basis, for example pasta bakes, lasagne, potatoes, vegetables and meat dinners.
- Children in both the creche and pod 3 had access to their own labelled water bottle and were seen helping themselves to drink when thirsty.
- Plates, place mats and cutlery were available to the children as required.
- A receptacle for recycling was placed on the table to encourage the correct disposal of cartons and rubbish.
- It was reported that special diets were observed and only shop bought cake was offered to children to celebrate birthdays.

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 service was suitably secured. Admission was restricted and children were not able to leave the building unsupervised.
- Internal doors were suitably secured, for example the kitchen door and door to the stairwell.
- Emergency exits were unobstructed.
- Staff members personal belongings were store out of reach of the children.
- Cables and flexes were not accessible to the children.
- Highchair harnesses were in good condition.
- The children did not have access to nappy sacks.
- Openable windows were not accessible to the children and roller blinds had suitably secured cord brackets
- Cleaning products were out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

- The service was clean and well maintained.
- Sanitising units were placed out of reach of the children for adult use.
- Good hand washing practise were observed with children washing hands after using the toilets, after messy play and prior to lunch.
- The children had access to sufficient chid sized toilet and child high installed wash hand basins. They were clean and well maintained.
- Step ups and pots were available and stored off the floor when not in use.
- Additional sink units were installed in the care room to provide additional facilities for hand washing and clearing up after messy play.
- There was 3 nappy changing units with wash hand basins. They were clean and well maintained and steps were provided to permit ambulant children to walk up to the unit with adult assistance.
- Thermostatically controlled hot water was available and reregistered at 39 degrees Celsius throughout the service.

- Liquid soap, and paper towels were available for hand washing purposes and strategically placed hand washing posters were visible to the children to prompt the correct hand washing technique.
- Adults had their own toilet facility within the wheelchair access/nappy changing room.
- There was ample storage space in the toilet accommodation for the children's individual toiletries and nappies.
- Spare clothes were stored in labelled bags.
- Soothers were correctly stored in labelled individual containers.
- Non-contact bins were available for the storage of used nappies.
- Protective gloves and a single use apron dispenser was available to the staff members.
- Non-contact pedal bins were situated throughout the service.
- Tissues were available to the children for nasal hygiene.

Administration of Medication:

- It was reported that the staff members were familiar with the procedures that are to be followed in the event of a child requiring medications.
- There were currently no children attending the service that required medications.

Safe Sleep:

- The service provided a separate sleep room furnished with 5 standard cots that were suitably spaced and away from fall hazards such as the adult chair and linen storage box.
- A template displayed cot sharing use for the staff members information.
- Sleep room temperatures were within the recommended range and registered at 19 degrees Celsius.
- Fans had been installed in preparation to reduce warmer temperatures.
- The room was suitably dimmed, there were no blinds.
- The cots had well fitted mattresses.
- Clean bedding and cellular blankets were provided, and it was stated that each sheet and blankets were laundered after each use.
- A child was observed being settled, shoes and tight clothing were removed, and the child was placed on his back.

Sleep records were reviewed and found to be correctly maintained; detailing 10-minute physical checks observing the child's position, colour and breathing.

Fire Safety:

- The fire door was unobstructed.
- Fire cylinders were tethered to the walls.
- In conversation with the person in charge it was reported that staff were familiar with the procedures that are required to be followed in the event of a fire

Outing:

- It was reported that outings had resumed post Covid-19 pandemic. Children transitioning to national school had enjoyed a seashore safari in the nearby town.
- In conversation with the registered provider, it was stipulated that staff members and parents had duly adhered to the outing policy, for example each child had been given a Puffins Childcare high-visual jacket to wear in the event of a child getting lost.

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 stated that each staff member had completed first aid training and that d10 staff members had completed first aid responder training (FAR). On review of certification, it was observed that the expiry dates were October 2024.

(2)(a) & (b)

The service had well stocked first aid boxes which were out of reach of the children but accessible to the staff members. Temperature reducing medications were stored in the kitchen as per the manufacturer's instructions.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and
 - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (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) The service had displayed templates informed that monthly fire drills were carried out in the service. The most recent fire drill had taken place on the 20 July 2023. 13 children were present with 5 staff members supervising. The drill had taken 70 seconds.
- (b) A record was in place which detailed the number, type, and maintenance record of the fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms. The most recent fire safety and security service had taken place on the 07 May 2023. The firefighting equipment such the fire cylinders had been service in July 2023.
- (4)
- Fire evacuation diagrams were displayed throughout the service to provide visual guidance of the procedures that are to be followed in the event of a fire.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An up-to-date insurance certificate was displayed to indicate that up to 90 children were insured to attend the service on a full day care basis.

The expiry date was 28 February 2024.