

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH101		
Name of Service:	Lámha Beaga		
Address of Service:	St Patrick's GAA, Stamullen, Co. Meath		
Eircode:	K32 C433		
Name of Registered Provider:	Cliona Fitzpatrick, Doreen Darcy, Karen Brogan		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	09/09/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	34	PM -
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Hampton Court, Cootehill Road, Drumalee, Co Cavan. H12 YY84		
Inspection undertaken by:	S Mc Kenna		
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	Not Applicable.		

Description of service

Lámha Beaga is a privately owned sessional early years' service, which operates within St Patrick's GAA club house which is situated in a rural setting in Co. Meath. The service is registered to cater for a maximum of 40 preschool children aged 2 to 6 years for 38 weeks per year and delivers the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme from 9am to 12midday. Two care rooms are in operation, Seomra Dearg and Seomra Buí located on the first floor of the premises. The service has access to 2 all-weather pitches and to a large hall on the ground floor of the GAA club.

Staffing

The three registered providers and 2 staff members work directly with the children in the service on a daily basis.

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 and premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulation 9 Management & Recruitment, Regulation 11 Staffing Levels, Regulation 19 Health, Welfare & Development of Child, Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child, Regulation 25 First Aid, Regulation 26 Fire Safety Measures, Regulation 27 Supervision, Regulation 28 Insurance and Regulation 29 Premises.

However, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 16. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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 three registered providers, 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

(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 service had a designated person in charge, who is one of the registered providers and a named person to deputise in their absence.

(b) Following discussion with the one of the registered providers, it was confirmed that when the preschool service was in operation the designated person in charge or the named person in charge were on the premises.

(2) The files for 5 staff were reviewed.

(a) (b) Two written and validated references were on file for 5 adults.

A total of 9 written and validated references from a previous employer were on file.

A total of 1 written and validated references from a reputable source were on file.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 5 staff. The registered provider did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes for 4 staff, as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 5 staff employed to work with children, held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(d) The required police vetting for the one staff member who lived outside the State for longer than 6 months as an adult was not available on file.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Registered provider applied for vetting for staff member who lived in UK, we received email to say this has been processed and was posted on 31st Oct. Ensure adequate read through of CV's to make sure documents are up to date.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of completed police vetting certificate.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider and supporting documentation submitted has adequately addressed the non-compliance in Regulation 9 (2) (d).

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.

(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(3) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced and remained so throughout the inspection. The following adult to child ratios were observed when the service was operating at maximum attendance

Three adults cared for 16 children aged 2 years 9 months to 4 years 2 months in Seomra Dearg.

Two adults cared for 18 children aged 2 years 8 months to 4 years 4 months in Seomra Buí.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

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

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

Non-Compliance Information

(1) (h) It was observed upon the inspectors arrival at 9.28am that there were 16 children present in Seomra Dearg. Upon review of the attendance register at 10.24am the inspector found that there were only 15 children's details completed in the attendance register. The inspector notified the person in charge at this time that there were only 15 children recorded on the attendance register but 16 children were present. The person in charge reviewed the records and found that one child had not been recorded in the attendance register and confirmed that the child had commenced in the service on 01 September 2025.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Missing name from attendance register was added immediately, along with parent details etc. We explained to inspector that this child only confirmed their return to pre-school after we had completed the attendance register details, which would explain the over sight. Register will be checked by more than 1 member of staff before we commence our year start every August.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of updated and completed child attendance record.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider and supporting documentation submitted has adequately addressed the non-compliance in Regulation 16 (1) (h).

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

The following examples demonstrate how children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated in the service:

Basic Needs

Children had access to their drinks during their time in the preschool. Children were supported by staff at snack time where required.

The toilets are located away from the care rooms, and the staff were observed to take the children to the toilets as and when the children requested. The staff supervised and supported the children if needed during these times.

Rest areas to include sofas and cushions were provided in each of the care rooms.

The staff were observed to use soft and positive tones when interacting with the children. The children demonstrated confidence in playing within their indoor environment and were observed to be familiar with the staff who cared for them. The children were observed to call on staff for supports when needed, and staff responded promptly to the children's needs.

Supporting Relationships

- The atmosphere upon the inspectors arrival was warm and welcoming. The children were observed to be engaged in activities such as playdough, using free standing chalkboard and whiteboards, playing in the play kitchen, playing with blocks and cars on the floor and sitting with staff at the table playing with playdough.
- The staff were observed to promote positive behaviour, with praise given for positive interactions such as turn taking with toys.
- Communication with parents is upon arrival and collection times, and through the use of a digital messaging service. Parents are also given opportunities to arrange to meet with staff just before or after the preschool session daily.
- The staff team were observed to work well together, ensuring transitions were smooth when children proceeded between free play, snack time and planned activities.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured all reasonable measures were put in place to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children attending such as:

General Safety:

- The premises were secured to prevent a child from exiting the building unsupervised.
- Toys and play equipment used by the children was observed in good repair.
- Risk assessments were available for review and completed up to date.
- The kitchen and storage areas remained inaccessible to the children.
- Windows on the first floor in the care rooms were fitted with restrictive devices. Blind cords were secured out of reach.
- Floor coverings and stairways were maintained in good condition.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of the reach of children.
- Fire exits remained free from obstruction during the inspection.

Infection Control:

The inspector observed the following infection control measures in practice within the service:

- Warm running water, liquid soap and paper towels were provided for handwashing purposes.
- Sanitary areas were ventilated through means of mechanical ventilation.
- Children's lunches taken in from home were stored in the fridge until snack time.
- Cleaning schedules were available for review, and the service was maintained in a clean and hygienic manner.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The premises was not appropriately secured to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the preschool service. Doors leading from the first-floor hallway into the toilet area and on into Seomra Buí were not secured to prevent unauthorised access to these areas. The door in Seomra Dearg, when staff take children to the toilet was not secured to prevent unauthorised access to this room.
2. In respect of 4 out of 5 staff members, the service did not demonstrate compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years, as a period in excess of 3 years had lapsed since their Garda vetting disclosures were issued.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The service has consulted with the GAA premises caretaker to get permission to add a lock system to the doors. We have a locksmith coming next week to advise on what will work best.
2. The renewal vetting process has been started for the 3 registered providers with Tusla and 1 staff member with ECI.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence of two newly fitted coded door locks in place.
2. Copies of completed Garda vetting for the 3 registered providers and 1 staff member.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider and supporting documentation submitted has adequately addressed the non-compliances in Regulation 23.

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) Following review of staff files, it was evident that the registered providers ensured that there was a member of staff trained in First Aid Response (FAR) on the premises at all times, this was evidenced by 3 in date FAR training certificates.
- (2) (a) & (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available on the premises and were stored in each care room, and available at all times.

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) A record of the fire drills that take place was available. The most recent fire drill was recorded in June 2025. The service was closed for July and August.
- (b) The annual maintenance certificate for the fire extinguishers was dated 25 June 2025, and the smoke alarms was dated 01 July 2025.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedures were displayed through the service, which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire.

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

On the day of the inspection the inspector observed the staff members appropriately supervising the children in attendance.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had insurance cover in place for 40 pre-school children attending the service on a Sessional basis. The policy showed that the service had insurance in place from 28 March 2025 to 27 March 2026.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Compliance Information

(e) The sanitary facilities in the service were adequately equipped with wash hand basins and toilets for the number of adults and children in attendance. Thermostatically controlled warm, and cold water was available in all hand wash sinks. Nappy changing facilities were also provided.