

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015MN041
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Mol an Óige Community Childcare
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Inniskeen, Dundalk, Co. Louth
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<b>Eircode:</b>	A91 N4FH
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Valerie Finn
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	12/09/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	23	PM	No.
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate Child Wellbeing Centre Castleblayney Co. Monaghan
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	M. Flood
<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

Mol an Óige Community Childcare Ltd is a community-based service that has been in operation since 2009. The service provides sessional care and education to pre-school children aged from 2 to 6 years of age and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service caters for a maximum of 40 children and operates from 9:15 to 12:15 each weekday.

The service operates from a purpose-built premises on the grounds of the primary school. There are 2 care rooms in operation namely The Butterfly Room located on ground floor and The Caterpillar Room which is located on the 1st floor. Ancillary accommodation consists of sanitary areas off each playroom, a separate nappy change area, a kitchen, a utility room and an office area. There is also an outdoor area on the premises

### Staffing

The Registered Provider and six childcare staff are employed to work directly with the preschool children. Two additional adults who are present in the service are engaged on a community employment scheme.

### 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11,22,23, 25 and 28; 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 would like to acknowledge the cooperation of the 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) & (b) The service had a designated person in charge who is also the registered provider and a named deputy person to deputise as required. The deputy person was on the premises when the inspector arrived and was present throughout the inspection.

(c) When questioned staff were familiar with the management structure within the service and the roles and responsibilities of the various staff members.

(2) Ten staff files were reviewed including files for the registered provider, six childcare staff, 2 staff engaged on a community employment scheme and 1 staff who is a contracted music teacher. The following was observed:

(a) & (b) There were 2 written and validated references available for 7 staff members. Two staff members had 2 written references.

(c) A processed Garda Vetting Disclosure was available for all 10 members of staff. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes 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 seven members of staff, including the registered provider who work directly with the preschool children held at least the minimum required level 5 childcare qualification on the National Framework of Childcare Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent.

## Non-Compliance Information

(2) The following vetting procedures were incomplete:

(a)(b)

- The service file for the contracted music teacher who attends the services on a regular basis did not have documentary evidence of 2 written and validated references available for inspection.
- Two written references for two staff members, including one childcare staff and one staff member who was on a community employment scheme, were not validated.

(d) Documentary evidence of international police vetting was not available on file for the contracted music teacher.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Actions

(2)(a)(b)

- The registered provider validated references for 2 staff members.

All validations required for each staff member will be placed alongside each member's file.

(d) The registered provider has received international police vetting for the contracted music teacher plus 2 references.

Going forward, all vetting and relevant documents will be placed on the service files before commencement of any additional staff in the setting.

### Supporting documentation submitted

All vetting documents submitted

## Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliances. Based on this information the non-compliances under Regulation 9 have been addressed

### 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 staff members working directly with the children attending the service.

(3) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced at 10:30 and remained so throughout the inspection.

The following adult to child ratios were observed during the inspection:

- In the Butterfly Room there were 10 children aged 3 to 4 years being cared for by 2 staff members.
- In the Caterpillar Room there were 13 pre-school children aged 2 to 3 years being cared for by 2 staff members. One additional adult who was engaged on a community employment scheme was also present in the care room.

## 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.*

### Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a) A curriculum vitae was not available on inspection for 3 members of staff (1 childcare staff, 1 staff member engaged on a community employment scheme and the contracted music teacher), to confirm the qualifications, experience or the requirement of international police vetting if applicable.

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

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(a) The registered provider has received CVs for staff who had not submitted updated versions. All documents will be in place in staff files before staff commence their new roles within the service.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence submitted

### Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliances. Based on this information the non-compliances under Regulation 16 have been addressed

### 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

All children bring in their own snacks from home, with the perishable items being stored appropriately in the fridge. Drinks were accessible in the children’s own individual cups/ drinks bottles and were available for the children to access as required in both rooms. The staff reported that additional snacks were also available in the service in the event that a child forgets their lunch.

### 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

It was observed that the registered provider has taken the following measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service including:

#### General Safety:

- The external doors were appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised.
- All emergency exits were clear and unobstructed.
- All blind cords in the service were appropriately restricted.
- Visibility strips were observed on the glass patio doors in the Butterfly Room.
- Cleaning agents were appropriately stored out of the reach of children

#### Infection Control:

- There was a constant supply of thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and single use paper hand towels available to support effective hand washing practices.
- Effective hand washing practices were observed during the inspection, after toileting and outdoor play and prior to snack time.
- The pedal operated bins observed in use in the service, were appropriately maintained.
- The staff when questioned were familiar with the cleaning procedures for the toys and equipment in the service and documentary evidence was also maintained.

- Documentary evidence of regular pest control assessments, which are carried out by a contracted company were available for inspection.

## Non-Compliance Information

The Inspectorate is not assured that adequate steps have been taken to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service based on the following observations made during the inspection:

### General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for 10 staff members including the registered provider, 6 childcare staff, 2 staff who were engaged on a community employments scheme and 1 staff member who was a contracted music teacher. However, 1 of these vetting disclosures was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.
2. In the outdoor area where the children were observed to ride bikes and trikes, the low-level window cills did not have sharp corners/ edges protected which is a potential injury risk.
3. The press containing a 'bait box' under the sink in the Caterpillar room was open and potentially accessible to the children.

### Infection Control:

4. The bin used for the disposal of soiled nappies was unsuitable as it was not foot operated and required multiple touch points.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective & Preventive Actions

#### General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was applied for in July prior to setting closing due to holiday break. The registered provider has now acknowledged receipt of same. The management have taken note of renewal of garda vetting renewal dates required for each staff member in order to have renewed vetting applied for in advance of expiry date.
2. The registered provider has stated windowsills with have sharp corners will be 'rounded off ' Staff will be present at the windowsills, to prevent any injury to the children when on bicycles or running in that area until this work is completed.
3. Lock for bait box will be placed on press. This has been added to the daily checklist.

#### Infection Control:

4. A pedal bin has been placed in changing room and this has been added to the daily check list.

## Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliances together with documentary and photographic evidence. Based on this information the non-compliances under Regulation 23 have been addressed.

## 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 a person trained in first aid for children was at all times available to the children attending the service. Documentary evidence was available of an up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) qualification for four adults in the service.

(2)(a) and (b) The first aid boxes available in each of the care rooms and were stored in a conspicuous location where they were easily accessible in the event of an emergency.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

### Compliance Information

Documentary evidence was available of an up-to-date insurance certificate. Adequate cover was available for up to 40 preschool children attending the service on a sessional basis. The expiry date detailed was 30/05/2025.