

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015MN044
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Naíonra Ultain
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	VEC Education Campus, Cnoc A Chonnaidh, Bothar Ard Mhaca, Muineachán, Co. Monaghan
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<b>Eircode:</b>	H18 H263
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Brendan O Dufaigh
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<b>Service type:</b>	Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	24/10/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	41	PM	29
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Hampton Court, Cootehill Road, Drumalee, Co Cavan. H12 YY84
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S Mc Kenna
<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

Naíonra Ultain is a private Early Years' Service located within a primary school on the outskirts of Monaghan town. The service operates from two care rooms on the lower ground level, with sanitary accommodation located within each care room. The service provides a part-time and sessional service to children aged between 2 years 8 months to 6 years. The service is open Monday to Friday between 8.30am to 1:30pm and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. A roof top all weather surfaced outdoor play area is available. There is car parking available next to the primary school building.

### Staffing

Nine adults are employed of which 8 work directly with the children and 1 is ancillary. The registered provider is not service based.

### 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, 19, 23, 25 and 26. 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 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.

#### Compliance Information

(1) (a) The service had a designated person in charge, and a named person in charge to cover in their absence.

(b) Following discussion with the person in charge, it was confirmed that at all times when the preschool service was in operation the designated person in charge or the named person in charge were on the premises.

(2) The staff files for 9 adults were reviewed as follows

(a) (b) Two written and validated references from past employers, and or reputable sources in the absence of past employments were on file for 7 adults.

One written and validated reference from a past employer, was available for 1 adult.

Three written references were on file for 2 adults.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 8 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all employed staff.

(d) A review of the 8 available employment records, determined that 2 adults had lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months. The required police vetting was available for 1 adult.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that the 8 adults who are employed to work directly with children, held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

### Non-Compliance Information

(2) (a) (b) The registered provider had not completed the reference validation process in relation to three staff references.

(d) Police vetting for one adult who had lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months was not available.

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

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

(2) (a) (b) All the outstanding reference validations were completed immediately and sent to the inspector. All references will be validated immediately via telephone validation and recorded prior to the commencement of employment.

(d) The staff applied for the vetting and as soon as it was received by the service, it was forwarded immediately to the inspector. CV's will be screened thoroughly for prospective staff to ascertain if they have lived outside of Ireland for a period of 6 consecutive months and vetting from that country must be provided before employment can commence.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Validated references and copy of the Police vetting.

### Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the non-compliances in Regulation 9.

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

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced, the following adult to child ratios were observed:

Morning Time:

4 adults cared for 21 children aged 3 years to 4 years 9 months in Seomra Glas.

4 adults cared for 20 children aged 3 years 5 months to 5 years 3 months in Seomra Gorm.

Afternoon Time:

3 adults cared for 15 children aged 3 years 2 months to 4 years 9 months in Seomra Glas.

3 adults cared for 14 children aged 3 years 5 months to 4 years 9 months in Seomra Gorm.

The manager was supernumerary in the afternoon, with one adult carrying out cleaning duties at this time.

Both adults were close by and available to assist in the care rooms if required.

(8)(a)

A review of the staff roster, staff daily attendance records and a discussion with the person in charge confirmed that at all times while the service is in operation, there was at least 2 adults on the premises

## 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) An employment record for one adult was unavailable

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

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

The adult was a contracted employee, a current CV was sought immediately and forwarded to the inspector. CV's will be sought from every person working in the service, even from contractors to ensure safeguarding of all children in the service.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of employment record.

#### Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the non-compliances in Regulation 16.

## 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

(1) (a) and (b)

The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that the children’s learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service:

### Basic Needs

- The children were observed to consume healthy snacks on the day of inspection. An early morning snack is provided by the service, which is available between 8:45 – 8:55 each morning. A second snack taken in from home is served in conjunction with each care rooms routine. Children were observed to eat a selection of chopped vegetables, sandwiches, chopped fruit, yogurts, rice cakes, bagels and crackers. Drinks were available at snack times and throughout the preschool session. The children who attend on a part time basis receive a second snack provided for by the service.
- The children’s toilet routines were in line with their age and stage of development. Where some children may require additional support, the adults were observed to provide assistance suitable to the child’s needs. Aprons were provided for messy play, and children coats and spare clothes were available in each care room. Areas of rest were provided through the means of soft cushions/soft sofa in each room.
- The atmosphere in each of the care rooms was warm and welcoming, with children observed to be constantly engaged in activities. The adults were observed to sit with the children at snack time, chatting about Halloween and the upcoming party. Adults were also observed to sit with the children at a floor play activity with cars in the outdoor area. The guided adult support on these occasions was observed to encourage children’s concentration skills whilst also allowing opportunities of conversations in small groups.
- The children in both care rooms availed of physical outdoor play opportunities in the designated outdoor area during the inspection.
- Children’s individual care needs, plans, preferences and routines were adapted in to the daily schedule of the preschool. All children were supported to participate in activities. On the day of inspection all staff were observed to model inclusive practises, respecting each child’s individual wishes and requests, while providing children with a sense of security and belonging within their care rooms.

### Supporting Relationships

- The children were observed to positively engage with one another. Any minor disagreements observed were promptly addressed by the adults, using appropriate child focused discussions and encouraging words such as “lets share, be careful, take our turns”. The adults worked well with each other, and transitions were observed to be smooth with little to no interruptions.

- Soft warm tones were used by all staff in both care rooms during the inspection. The Irish and English language was used throughout the session, with most guidance and discussions with children occurring in Irish with some intermittent English words. The adults advised the inspector that English is used alongside Irish and more frequently where children are unfamiliar with the Irish language.
- The children appeared familiar with their surroundings and in their daily routine. Discussions about the Halloween party the following day was observed in both care rooms. Children discussed with the adults what they would dress up as, and displayed excitement throughout these discussions. The children in Seomra Glas were looking forward to tasting their spider jelly that they made the day before the inspection and were singing “jelly on a plate” song. The children in Seomra Gorm were observed to take part in an outdoor walk to “find skeletons” and showed excitement on their way to find the “skeletons”.
- Communication with parents is through a variety of methods, such as a digital messaging service to inform parents of updates, a newsletter each term is shared via email and daily written records/updates for parents are in place where required. Communication with parents also occurs at arrival and collection times. Collection time was observed on the day of the inspection with staff observed speaking to each parent/carerer briefly about their child’s day.

### Physical and Material Environment

- Both care rooms were laid out similar with designated play areas such as home corners, shop play, small world areas, sand tray, water tray, table top activities, construction toys, animals and creative areas. In addition, role play and dress up materials, balancing equipment, sensory equipment and toys, dolls and prams, construction toys, a rest area with an array of books and additional resources in large storage areas within the care rooms were also available.
- The equipment and materials to include the tables and chairs were suitable for the age and stage of development of the children in attendance. Materials and resources were positioned so they were available to the children at a time of their choice.
- Children’s creative work was on display to include paintings of witch’s cauldrons and autumn leaf rubbings. Children were facilitated to take home creative pieces they made on the day on inspection. Birthday charts and family walls were displayed and within viewing level of the children.
- The designated outdoor area is a roof top space, surrounded with high level walls and fencing. The ground surface is soft surfacing. A new wooden climbing structure with slide, a large selection of ride on trucks, large bean bags, mats and cars/trucks, a wooden play kitchen and bubbles were observed in use on the day of inspection. The adults advised that additional materials are available in the designated outdoor storage area.

The outdoor resources available were maintained in good repair. A large selection of play materials was available for the number of children in attendance.

### 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:

- Upon the inspectors arrival and throughout the inspection when children were present in the care rooms, the doors were secured to prevent a child leaving unsupervised and to prevent an unauthorised person gaining access. The outdoor area on the roof was observed to be accessible by the employed adults and children.
- The children were observed to be adequately supervised during the inspection. During transitions from indoor to outdoor the children were observed to be appropriately supervised on the stairways, with the four adults positioned to allow for supervision at the front, middle and end of the lines.
- Play equipment and materials were maintained in a good state of repair.
- Stairways were adequately lit, with suitable handrails provided.
- Storage areas remained inaccessible to the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of children.

#### Non-Compliance Information

##### General Safety:

Two blind cords were unsecured. One blind cord in Seomra Glas was broken, and one blind cord in Seomra Gorm was not securely fastened.

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

##### Corrective & Preventive Action

##### General Safety:

A window blind provider has fixed and replaced the broken cords. Regular spot checks of the blind occur on a daily basis to ensure that the blind and cord is not a safety risk to the children in the service. The cord and blind are checked at the beginning and the end of each day also to ensure they are fit for purpose and safe.

## Supporting documentation submitted

Photographs of secured and fixed blind cords.

## Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has 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 records, it was evident that the registered provider ensured that there was a member of staff trained in First Aid Response (FAR) on the premises at all times. Two staff with up to date FAR training certificates were present.

(2) (a) (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available in each care room, stored on accessible shelving and available for use.

## 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 firefighting 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 fire drills that take place was available, with the most recent fire drill recorded on 13 October 2024.

(b) The maintenance record for the fire extinguishers was dated July 2024. The maintenance of the smoke alarms was dated 23 November 2023.

(4) The fire evacuation procedures were displayed throughout the service, which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire.