

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MO092			
Name of Service:	Comhar Naíonraí na Gaeltachta Naíonra Acaill			
Address of Service:	Bun a Churraigh, Acaill, Condae Mhaigh Eo, Co. Mayo			
Eircode:	F28 XK57			
Name of Registered Provider:	Ray Mac Pháidín			
Service type:	Sessional			
Date of Inspection:	10/04/2025			
No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM	-
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, 2nd Floor, St. Mary's HQ., Castlebar, Co. Mayo.			
Inspection undertaken by:	M Farrell			
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

Comhar Naíonraí na Gaeltachta Naíonra Acaill is a sessional service located in a rural setting on Achill Island off the coast of Co. Mayo and is overseen by Comhar Naíonraí na Gaeltachta. The service is registered to provide sessional services to children aged from two to six years of age, between 9:30 to 12:30 hours. The premises is a single storey, purpose-built facility with an enclosed outdoor play area to the rear of the building. There are two large playrooms with interconnecting doors and two smaller playrooms in the building and at present only one of the larger playrooms are in use. The premises also has a kitchen, dining room and an office.

Staffing

There are four adults including relief staff working in the service. The registered provider does not work directly in the service.

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/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.

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*

(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) There was a designated person in charge and a named deputy to deputise when required.
- (b) The deputy designated person in charge was present in the service during the inspection.
- (2) There were four adults in the service including relief staff at the time of the inspection. The following vetting documents were available on file for the four adults:
- (a) Two written validated references from past employers particularly the most recent employer for three adults and one written validated reference from a past employer for a fourth adult.
- (b) One written validated reference from a source other than a past employer for one adult.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all four adults. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting for staff members every three years.
- (d) International police vetting was available for one adult who had lived outside of the state for more than 6 months as an adult.
- (4) Evidence of the required qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent was available for the four adults who worked directly with the preschool children.

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.

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) Throughout the inspection an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children attending the service. On the inspector's announced arrival to the service there were 2 adults working directly with 17 children.
- (3) The minimum ratio for sessional services providing care to children over 2 ½ years of 1 adult to each 11 children was adhered to with 2 adults working directly with 17 children during the inspection.

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.
- (3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-
- (c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

- (1) (a) to (i)

The inspector reviewed a random sample of ten children's records across children attending the service. The required written information for the child was obtained by the service.

(3) (c)

The required information was made available to the inspector by the designated person in charge on request.

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 secured on the inspector's arrival to the service. Internal doors were secured by the staff to control access by the children. Boundary fencing in the outdoor area to the rear of the building had been damaged in a recent storm. Temporary fencing had been erected following risk assessment by the staff with a plan in place to erect a permanent replacement during the upcoming Easter holidays. Cleaning products were stored out of reach of the children with storage areas secured. The toys and play equipment were in satisfactory condition and suitable for the ages and developmental stages of the children playing with them. Plastic covering was in place on the wooden surround of an outdoor sandpit to prevent the risk of splinter injury.

Infection Control:

Foot pedal operated bins labelled "boscaí bruscair" were available for the disposal of waste. The staff were observed to clean down surfaces such as tables after use. Printed cleaning schedules were on display in the playroom to guide staff on appropriate cleaning processes. Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were provided for handwashing, and the staff were observed to prompt the children to wash their hands at key moments such as before eating and after playing outdoors. The children lunch boxes (boscaí lón) containing perishable items were stored in a refrigerator in the service on the children's arrival in the morning. Windows were open in the service to ventilate areas.

Administration of Medication:

None of the children required medication to be administered to them while in the service according to the staff who informed the inspector that there was a policy on medication management to guide them should the need arise.

Fire Safety:

The emergency exits and routes were found to be unobstructed during the inspection.

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 staff kept records of the monthly fire drills (druil dóiteáin) carried out in the service. A fire drill was undertaken during the inspection on the 10 April 2025.
- (b) There was a record of the number, type and annual maintenance of the firefighting equipment showing that the firefighting equipment was last maintained on the 15 October 2024. Records showed that the smoke alarms were maintained on the 17 April 2024.
- (4) An evacuation map (plean éigeandála agus tine) with escape route and a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the playroom.

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 children were supervised mainly by sight by the adults but were out of sight when using the toilet if able to do so on their own. The staff were observed to position themselves in the playroom to ensure that children remained within earshot so that they could provide support if needed.

The staff sat with the children while they ate their food at snack time supervising them closely. After finishing their snacks some of the children wanted to play outdoors but some other children had not finished eating. The staff linked in with each other to organise supervision of the children to facilitate the children finishing eating their snacks indoors while others played outside. The staff were observed to move around the outdoor area while supervising them to keep them in sight. When carrying out a fire drill during the inspection, one staff member was positioned at the front of the line of children walking to the assembly point and the second staff member was positioned at the rear to allow close supervision by sight.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

A certificate of insurance covering the maximum number of children registered to attend Naoinra services in the premises was available for inspection valid until the 27 November 2025.