

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MO097		
Name of Service:	Newport Community Childcare Ltd First Friends		
Address of Service:	Knocknageeha, Newport, Co. Mayo		
Eircode:	F28 T025		
Name of Registered Provider:	Fiona McGee		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	01/06/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	12	PM -
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate, 2 nd 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

Newport Community Childcare Ltd First Friends is a community operated sessional service located in Newport, Co Mayo. The service is registered to cater for children aged from 2 – 6 years of age and operates a morning session from 9:00-12:00hours for 38 weeks of the year. The premises consists of a detached single storey building with two playrooms, sanitary facilities and a storeroom. The children have access to outdoor play areas to the rear and side of the building directly accessible from the larger playroom.

Staffing

There were two staff working in the service at the time of the inspection with two additional relief staff available to provide cover when needed.

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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 16, 23, 25, 26 and 28. 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) There was a designated person in charge and a named adult to deputise in her absence.
 - (b) The designated person in charge and deputy were available in the service during the inspection.
- (2) The designated person in charge informed the inspector that there was one new staff member working in the service since the most recent inspection of the 24 March 2021.
- The following vetting information was available for the staff whose vetting documentation had not been previously inspected:
- (a) One written validated reference from the staff member's most recent employer.
 - (b) One written validated reference from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána for the staff member.
 - (d) International police vetting was not required for the staff member who had not resided outside of the state for a period of longer than six months as an adult.
- (4) Certification of a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Qualifications Framework was available for the staff member new to the service since the last inspection.

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 inspector's unannounced arrival to the service, there were 2 staff members directly caring for 12 children in the service.
- (3) The minimum ratio of adults to children of 1 adult for each 11 sessional children aged from 2 years and 6 months to six years was adhered to with 2 staff caring for the 12 children present. A sample review of attendance records found that the minimum adult to child ratios were adhered to during the timeframes sampled.

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-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,
- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and
- (c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) (a) to (i)

A sample of 12 children's records were selected for review by the inspector from the 15 children currently enrolled in the service. Each of the records was found to be compliant and contained the required details as laid out under the regulation.

(3) (c)

The required information detailed in paragraph (1) was made available for inspection by the inspector on request.

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.*

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) The following information was available in the service:

- (a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of the staff members.
- (b) Information on the type of service type and ages of children that the service is registered to provide services to.
- (c) The adult: child ratios provided in the service.
- (d) The service's type of care or programme.
- (e) The facilities available in the service.

- (f) The service's hours of opening and fees.
 - (g) The service's policies, procedures and statements as required under Regulation 10.
 - (h) Details of the daily attendance of each pre-school child recorded in an attendance book each day.
 - (i) Details of the staff daily working hours recorded in an attendance book.
 - (j) A record book to record any medication administered to a child while attending the service to include signed parental consent.
 - (k) An accident/incident book with details of any accident, injury or incident involving children attending the service with the last incident recorded on the 23 May 2023.
- (3)
- Some of the records referred to in paragraph (1) were on display in the service with the remaining records 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:

Cleaning products were stored in a high cupboard in the staff sanitary area and were inaccessible to children. Securing devices were in place on the windows in the playrooms to prevent children from leaving the premises through them. A kettle was stored out of reach of children. Coloured national flags were in place on the glass patio doors highlighting the presence of the glass to children. The oil tank in the outdoor area was fenced off preventing access by the children. The toys and play equipment in use were in satisfactory condition and suitable for the age and developmental stage of the children using them. An alarm was in place at an emergency exit door at the front of the building to alert staff if a child tried to open the door.

Infection Control:

The staff placed emphasis on handwashing procedures prompting and supervising children as needed at different times during the inspection for example after using the toilet, following messy play and before lunchtime. Warm water was provided with liquid soap and paper towels for people to wash and dry their hands. The bins for waste disposal in the service were foot pedal operated. Boxes of tissues were available outside where the children spent most of their time playing as it was a sunny day for children to clean their noses with. The staff cleaned down tables after use and kept records of the cleaning and disinfecting undertaken in the service in line with their cleaning schedules.

Administration of Medication:

The staff advised the inspector that none of the children required medication to be administered whilst in attendance in the service. A medication administration record book was available should medication be required to be administered to a child. The service had a policy relating to suncream in place with the children to have suncream applied at home on sunny days prior to attending. Consent for staff to apply suncream if needed while in attendance in the service was sought at enrolment with supplies of suncream for the children available in the service.

Fire Safety:

The emergency exit routes were unobstructed during the inspection.

Outing:

The inspector was informed by the staff that an outing was organised to be undertaken by the service to a nearby playcentre in the coming days. A risk assessment was to be undertaken by the service in preparation for the outing.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

The securing mechanisms in place on gates in the outdoor area prevented children from leaving unnoticed however they did not restrict unauthorised entry of people to the outdoor area.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The service advised in a written response that:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

New securing mechanisms were purchased for the gates to prevent unauthorised entry of people.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence of the securing mechanisms in place.

Summary Comment

The actions taken and evidence submitted by the service has been reviewed by the Early Years Inspectorate and been deemed to have addressed the regulatory non-compliance found on inspection.

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) Two staff members held certificates of up to date First Aid Response (FAR) training course with expiry dates of the 7 June 2023 and the 26 January 2025. One of these staff members was present and available to provide first aid to a child should it be required during the inspection.

(2)

(a) A first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible location on high shelving in the playroom.

(b) The first aid box was readily accessible to the staff if a child required first aid treatment.

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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,
 - (b) an employee, and
 - (c) an authorised person.
- (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) Fire drills were conducted monthly in the service with records of the fire drills kept by the staff. The most recent fire drill was recorded as having been undertaken on the 18 May 2023.
 - (b) Records were available of the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The records showed that the firefighting equipment was last maintained on the 28 June 2022 and the smoke alarms/fire detection system were last maintained on the 4 March 2023.
- (2)
- (c) The records were made available in the service to the inspector on request.
- (4)
- Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed on a wall in the hallway.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had a certificate of insurance valid until the 27 March 2024 showing that adequate insurance cover was in place for the sessional service's maximum number of children.