

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WH063			
Name of Service:	Women's Community Projects Mullingar Association CLG			
Address of Service:	Parish Community Centre, Bishopgate Street, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath			
Eircode:	N91 AWH7			
Name of Registered Provider:	Liam Hughes			
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional			
Date of Inspection:	18/07/2024			
No of pre-school children:	AM	28	PM	9
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, SAP Office, St. Loman's Campus, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath			
Inspection undertaken by:	C. O' Connor Hughes & K. Murphy			
Title:	Early Years Inspectors			
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

This full day care service is a community-based service operated by the Women's Community Projects CLG. The service operates from 08:30 to 17:15 Monday to Friday. The age range of children enrolled in the service is 2 to 6 years of age.

The Early Years' Service is located in two separate purpose- built community premises. The crèche provides three pre-school rooms an office and a kitchen on the first floor. The ECCE room was closed for the summer period. The second premises, the pre-school building is a two- storey building that consists of two pre-school rooms on the ground level and one on the first floor. School age childcare is accommodated on the first floor. Two outdoor play areas are attached to the premises for use by children. The service is located in Mullingar town.

Staffing

Sixteen adults were working directly with children on the 18 July 2024. The designated person in charge and deputy were present. An administrator and cook were employed in the service. The designated person in charge and deputy attended the closing meeting. The registered provider does not work with children and was not present 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/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulations

Regulation 19 (1)(a) Health, Welfare and Development of Child.

Regulation 20 Facilities for Rest and Play.

Regulation 21 Equipment and Materials

Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child.

Regulation 27 Supervision

As a result, the scope of the inspection included:

The crèche room (aged 2-3 years)

The full day care room (aged 2 years - 3.5 years)

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the co-operation of the person in charge, deputy person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C (2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Compliance Information

The service submitted a change in circumstances in respect of the person in charge since the last inspection. This change was accepted by the TUSLA registration office.

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)

The designated person in charge and a named person to deputise were available as required.

(b)

The designated person in charge and a named person to deputise were present for the duration of the inspection.

(c)

There was a clear management structure in place in the service. Documentation detailed the roles and responsibilities of the staff working in the service.

Twenty-seven staff files were reviewed including the registered provider. The designated person in charge stated the board of management do not have contact with children in the service.

The following was noted:

(2)(a)(b)

The required number of written validated references were available from past employers and from a source other than a past employer in respect of twenty-six staff members and the registered provider.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of twenty-six staff members and the registered provider.

The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Police vetting was available in respect of four staff members who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

All staff members working directly with children attending the service and held a major award in Early Childhood

Care and Education at Levels 5 to 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d)

Police vetting was not available in respect of two staff members who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Police Vetting has been sought by the staff members from the relevant countries. The childcare management team assisted staff members with the process where needed.

One police vetting has been processed and translated.

Risk assessment carried out by the childcare manager on the situation.

Recruitment policy has been reviewed and amended.

Garda Vetting policy has been reviewed and amended.

A section on Police vetting has been amended for clarity in both the recruitment and garda vetting policy and relevant procedures.

Staff file checklist has been amended to include checks for Police vetting. Two members of management will now check that all required documentation is on file for new employees prior to their start date. Both will sign off that checks are complete.

Supporting documentation submitted

Police vetting for one staff member.

A risk assessment and written policies.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance remains outstanding in respect of one staff member. The registered provider shall submit the police vetting to TUSLA Early Years Inspectorate upon receipt.

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)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection.

(2)

There were twenty-eight pre-school children and eighteen school age children attending the service supervised directly by fifteen adults.

(8)(a)

The staff roster indicated that two adults are on the premises at all times.

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

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The crèche room and the full day care room were inspected, and the following was observed.

A range of developmentally appropriate experiences to meet children's learning needs was available in both care rooms. Children enjoyed the various play activities and experiences that included sensory, manipulative and creative play supported by the staff member. Children got the opportunity to avail of outdoor play activities and moved freely in the outdoor play areas.

Children in the crèche room were observed to choose when they wanted to eat their snack. Children were encouraged to self-serve their main meal in the full day care room. Staff members sat with children and assisted them as required. Conversations and interactions were noted between staff and children during the snack time and the main meal of the day in the full day care room.

Children were encouraged to be independent as they washed their hands before meals and went to the toilet. Nappy changing was carried out regularly and as required. Good communication was observed between the staff member and child. Individual needs led sleep was in operation if a child wanted to rest or sleep in the care room.

Staff members were caring and positive towards the children in their care evidenced by using individual names, maintaining eye contact during conversations and given positive praise on completion of an activity. Children requiring extra support and assistance was given by staff in a positive caring manner. Transitions were smooth as staff gave notice as to a change in activity from one activity to another in the full day care room. Good teamwork was observed amongst staff.

The service worked in partnership with parents, an open-door policy is in operation, a verbal handover is given to parents at collection. Information updates are shared with parents via a monthly newsletter.

The child’s learning journal depicting their play, work activities and child development observations was given to parents on their recent graduation day.

The service had made links to the community as the Gardai had visited the children in the service for the National Road Safety Authority “Beep Beep Day”. The local national schoolteacher’s liaison person met with the children moving onto national school in September 2024.

Evidence indicated that the curriculum planning that supported the Early Childhood Curriculum framework was implemented.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises, or

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Suitable play equipment was provided indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for construction, tabletop activities, arts and crafts, sensory play and home corners.

(b)
Cosy rest areas were noted in the crèche and full day care rooms for children to rest and relax. Low level beds are available or children to rest and sleep on. One child was observed to sleep on a low-level bed in the crèche room during the inspection.

(3)(a)
The outdoor play areas were safe and secure surrounded by high level walls and gates. Two sheltered play areas were noted. Toys and equipment included a wooden kitchen, sand play, tyres, bicycles and scooters. Hopscotch was noted on the tarmac. A climbing frame with a slide was available for children's use. A shed for the storage of equipment was noted.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

Adequate and suitable furniture, play materials and work equipment was available in the crèche and full day care rooms.

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

The service provides snacks and meals for the children attending the service on a full day care basis.
A menu plan was available in the service. Children's dietary requirements were accommodated.
At 11:00 children enjoyed a rolling snack in the crèche room that consisted of crackers, ham, cheese, with milk to drink.
At approximately 13:00 the cook served the main meal of mashed potato, chicken, ham, broccoli and carrots to the children in the full day care room.

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 entrance door to the service was secure to ensure the safety of the children within the service. The service is accessed through the main reception area of the community centre. The inspectors signed the visitors book on arrival.

The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents.

Infection Control:

The premises were visually clean. All toys and materials were easily cleanable. Cleaning schedules were available and reviewed. Warm water, paper hand towel and liquid soap was available in the sanitary accommodation. The water temperature recorded at the wash hand basins was 31 degrees Celsius.

Children were observed to wash their hands before snacks and after using the toilet. The nappy changing procedure observed was carried out as per the services' nappy changing procedure.

Foot operated pedal bins were available in the sanitary accommodation and in the pre-school rooms for the hygienic disposal of waste.

Natural and mechanical ventilation was noted in the pre-school rooms and in the sanitary accommodation in the crèche building.

Administration of Medication:

Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature and stored safely in the service. Medication was stored correctly in the service. The medication documentation was available and reviewed.

Fire Safety:

Fire exit routes were unobstructed and a fire assembly point was noted in the outdoor play area. Upon discussion with staff, it was noted that staff were familiar with the fire evacuation procedures from the service.

Outing:

The designated person in charge stated the service does not undertake outings.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1)

The records of arrival and departure reviewed verified that each child attending the service was checked in and out of the service by a nominated staff member.

(3)(a)

All entry to the service with the exception of (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) has to be approved by a staff member.

(b)

A visitor log was in place to record the details and purpose of all visitors to the service. The inspectors signed the visitor book on arrival.

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)
Nine adults were qualified in first aid response (FAR). The roster indicated that FAR cover was provided during the hours of operation.

(2)(a)
First aid boxes were available in prominent locations in the premises.

(b)
A first aid box was accessible to children in the pre-school service.

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 written record for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 11 June 2024.

(b)
A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The smoke alarms in the premises were serviced in May 2024.

The firefighting equipment was serviced in November 2023.

(4)
A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the pre-school rooms.

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

Children were supervised by staff during play activities indoors, outdoors and when using the sanitary accommodation.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for the number of children attending the service. The expiry date noted was 14 June 2025.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

(1)
The room measurements in the service met the required space allocations for the children attending the service on the 18 July 2024.

Crèche Building Room 1	Crèche Building Room 2	Crèche Building Room 3 Unoccupied	Pre-school Building Room 4 Ground floor	Pre-school Building Room 5 First floor
33.6m ²	34.8m ²	Main room 25.48m ² Second section 10m ² Third section 15.95.m ²	36m ²	54.2m ²