

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016MO005
Name of Service:	Tigh na Leanai
Address of Service:	Circular Road, Kiltimagh, Co. Mayo
Eircode:	F12 E825
Name of Registered Provider:	Marita Shannon
Service type:	Sessional
Date of Inspection:	04/12/2025
No of pre-school children:	AM 17 PM -

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's 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
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Description of service

Tigh na Leanaí is a registered sessional service in Kiltimagh, Co. Mayo and provides services to children aged from three to six years of age, between 09:00 and 12:00 hours. The premises is a detached, single storey building with one large playroom, a second playroom known as the den used mainly by school aged children and a small rest/sensory room. The children have direct access from the large playroom to an outdoor area located to the rear and side of the building. The service is registered to provide school age services

Staffing

There are seven adults in the service including the registered provider and a manager who also manages the nearby sister service in the town. Two of the adults are employed under the Access and Inclusion Model 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/ safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under sections of regulations 9, 11, 19, 23, 26 and 27. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation(s) 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 registered provider, 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

(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

- (2) There were seven staff in the service including childcare staff at the time of the inspection. The following vetting documents were made available for the seven staff:
- (a) Two written validated references from past employers particularly the most recent employer for five staff.
 - (b) Two written validated reference from sources other than past employers for one staff and one written reference from another source for one staff member.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all seven 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 with translation was available where required for one staff member.
- (4) Evidence of the required qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent was made available for the seven staff who worked directly with the preschool children.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2) (a) A written validated reference from a past employer was required for one staff member.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

- (2) (a)

The service advised in writing that:

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider and staff member were actively working on sourcing a reference from a past employer. Curriculum vitae will be thoroughly checked to make sure that the most recent references are in place before employment commences.

Supporting documentation submitted

Written reference evidence was submitted by the registered provider by email on the 21 January 2026.

Summary Comment

The action taken and evidence submitted by the registered provider was reviewed by the Inspectorate and found to have addressed the non-compliance found on 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 inspectors' unannounced arrival to the service there were 4 staff members working directly with the 17 children present.
- (3) The minimum ratio of 1 adult to each 11 children for children aged between 2½ to 6 years attending sessional services was adhered to with 4 adults working with 17 children. A 5th staff member was also present at times and worked directly with the children.

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 staff and children were preparing for Christmas celebrations and were practicing singing Christmas songs on the inspector's unannounced arrival to the service. A Christmas play was planned for the next week with parents and family members invited to attend in the service. The service planned activities around a winter theme during the inspection with children enjoying art activities in groups making snowmen and winter hats with art and craft materials. Each child had a learning journal scrapbook where the staff recorded information in relation to the children's progress in the service and engagement with activities. These books contained art that the children had made and photographs of the children in the service. A child was observed to enjoy looking at one of these books, carefully turning the pages over and looking at the content.

There was a key worker system in place with the children assigned to either a red or green group with named keyworkers. Signs stating then names of the groups that the children belonged to were displayed in the hallway and on the walls.

There was a daily programme of activities in the service incorporating outdoor play that was displayed on the playroom wall and followed on the day. The service had developed their outdoor play area since the most recent inspection with new green metal fencing, and concrete ground cover in place suitable for all year around use by the children. The metal fencing allowed the children to view spaces outside the service including a nearby school and playing fields. Staff advised the inspector during conversation that the children played outdoors each day. During the session children were observed to play on ride on toys, use low level balance beams and play on the rocker toys moving around freely without restriction supervised by the staff.

There was a variety of toys and play equipment available in low open storage systems accessible to the children in the large playroom. The children enjoyed playing with Montessori activities during a structured playtime for example a pink tower, knobbed cylinders and pouring and spooning activities. Children were also observed to select dress up outfits that were hanging u at a low level to dress up in. staff were observed to play in the home corner with the children making numerous “cups of tea”. Toys were organised in areas of interest and a group of children spent a substantial time playing with large coloured shapes making a large construction working together as a team.

Birthday and family walls containing photographs of the children and their families had been created in the playroom by the staff helping to foster a sense of belonging in the service. The children’s behaviour was observed to be managed positively by the staff through positive role-modelling and encouraging sharing and turn taking during activities. At collection time, the staff were observed to be warm and friendly in their interaction with the children’s parents/guardians. An electronic application was used to assist communication with the children’s families and record periodic updates on the children’s progress.

The staff were attentive to the children’s needs for example children were facilitated to eat at a different time to the structured snack-time if needed. The children’s food was provided from home and on the day children were observed to eat sandwiches, cheese, yoghurt, rice cakes and prepared fruits. A drink station was set up with the children’s individual drink containers available to them at all times should they feel thirsty and want a drink. At snack time, the staff were observed to sit with the children and help them as needed chatting to them. Children who were able to use the toilet by themselves used it when they felt they needed to.

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 was secured allowing the staff to control entrance of people to the service and to prevent children from leaving the service unnoticed. The inspector was admitted to the service following production of identification documents and review by the staff. The toys and play equipment were in good condition and suitable for the age and developmental stages of the children observed to play with them during the session. Cleaning products were stored in a high-level secured cupboard in the sanitary unit area and were found to be inaccessible to the children during the inspection. There was a half-door to the kitchenette in the main playroom that was secured by the staff to prevent access to the area by the children.

Infection Control:

The staff prompted children to wash their hands with warm water, liquid soap and dry them with paper towel disposing the wastepaper in foot pedal operated bins after use. Children were observed to have washed their hands before eating, after using the toilet and following messy and outdoor play activities. The staff were observed to clean down surfaces such as tables following art activities and mealtime. The staff recorded the cleaning procedures undertaken in the service on an electronic device. The children's snacks containing perishable food items such as cheese and ham were observed to be stored in a large refrigerator.

Administration of Medication:

The staff informed the inspector that none of the children required medication to be administered to them whilst in the service and displayed knowledge of safe procedures for storage and administration of medicine during conversation.

Fire Safety:

The fire exits and escape routes were observed to be free from obstruction with a clear escape route should this be needed 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.

Compliance Information

- (1) (a) Written records of the monthly fire drills undertaken in the service were kept by the staff. Records showed that the last fire drill was undertaken on the 27 November 2025.
- (b) Records were available of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment dated for the 11 March 2025 and for the smoke alarms dated 9 September 2025.

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 staff supervised the children primarily by sight in the service throughout the inspection. The children were out of sight when using the toilet but within earshot of the staff if they needed help or assistance. At snack time, the staff were observed to sit with the children to supervise them closely when eating in the playroom. The staff were observed to move around to keep children in their line of vision when playing outside in the service's L-shaped outdoor area.