

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2016MO011
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Naionra Beal an Mhurithead
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Quay Street, Belmullet, Co. Mayo
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<b>Eircode:</b>	F26H993
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Eamon O'Boyle
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	29/11/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	16	PM	-
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, 2nd Floor, St. Mary's HQ., Castlebar, Co. Mayo.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	M Farrell
<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

Naionra Beal an Mhurthead is a sessional service in Belmullet, Co Mayo. The service is registered to provide services for children aged from two to six years of age between 9am-12 midday. The premises is a single storey prefabricated building and there are two playrooms and sanitary facilities. There is a second smaller prefabricated unit to the rear of the service that is used as an office/storage area. The children have access to a large enclosed outdoor play area to the front and side of the building.

### Staffing

There are three staff employed in the service at present. One staff member is employed through the Access and Inclusion Model. 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/ 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, 15, 19, 24, 25 and 28; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 23. 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

*(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)

It was confirmed through discussion with the designated person in charge and review of documentation that there were three staff working in the service at the time of the inspection.

(a) Two written validated references from past employers particularly the most recent employer for three staff members.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all three staff. However, the service did not always adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d) Vetting documents showed that international police vetting was not required for the staff members.

(4)

All three staff members held the required qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent.

### 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 3 staff members working directly with the 16 children present. A review of a sample of records showed that there was always an adequate number of adults working in the service.
- (3) The minimum ratio of 1 adult to each 11 children for the age range of the children present attending sessional services was adhered to with 3 adults working with 16 children on the day of 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 sample of ten children's records were randomly selected for review by the inspector from the children currently enrolled in the service.
- (a) to (i)
- The ten records were found to be compliant with the required details as laid out under the regulation.
- (3) (c) The children's records were made available to the inspector in the service on request.

### 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

#### Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a)
- There were two playrooms in the service named the Seomra Glas (Green room) and the Seomra Dearg (Red room) named after the colours of the playroom doors. The staff told the inspector that the Seomra Glas was used mainly in the early part of the day and the Seomra Dearg provided a change of environment in the later part of the session. The Seomra Glas had several distinct interest areas with play equipment used to facilitate children's learning and development. These included a home area, shop area, construction area, doll area and rest area beside a book corner with books in Irish and English. There were rest areas with comfortable seats used by the children intermittently and tabletop activities available in low level, accessible shelving in both playrooms. When playing in the Seomra Dearg after lunchtime, some children played with playdough and cutters that was set up on a table.
- The service had their daily routine on display including free play and outdoor play activities. The weather on the day of inspection was very wet and wind. The children did not play in the enclosed outdoor area but did enjoy dancing and action songs with the staff in the Seomra Dearg after lunchtime. On the inspector's arrival to the service the children were enjoying free play in the Seomra Glas (Green Room). Some children were playing at a water table with warm water, bubbles and plastic toys. Plastic aprons were provided to protect children's clothing. Other children played with the toys in the well-developed home corner. The staff engaged with the children during play asking them questions for example relating to foods and colours of toys. Some tables had been set up with paper and colouring items where groups of children sat and drew pictures. The construction area had a range of toys including plastic building blocks that children played with on a floor mat. During the inspection one of the children chose a book from the book corner and the staff read it to them.
- During the inspection a child proudly showed the inspector a photograph display in the playroom with photographs of the children and their families, some celebrating events and others with their family pet.

The display created links between the children's homes and the service. The staff were beginning their Christmas celebration preparations with some decorations and Christmas bell artwork that the children had created on display. A show was being prepared for families to attend in a local civic building.

Positive approaches to managing the children's behaviour were used by the staff who facilitated child-led play activities. When preparing to transition between activities for example from free play to circle time, the staff used a timer to alert children to prepare them. The staff members held eye contact with the children when speaking and explaining things to them making sure that the children understood what was expected. The staff used Irish words and phrases mixed with English when speaking to the children. The children helped the staff tidy up toys before circle time where the staff and children named various weather types in Irish. Songs were sung by staff and children including Christmas carols helping the children's language development.

The staff showed the inspector examples of observations they had made of the children's progress and engagement in activities that they shared individually with parents on an electronic application. Some of the examples contained two-way communication with parents commenting on the information provided by the staff. At home time the staff were observed to greet parents/guardians warmly when collecting their children and providing them with information.

The children accessed the toilets (leithreas) when they needed to and were given help when required by the staff. There was an emphasis on handwashing with staff giving the children prompts in Irish to wash their hands. Children were encouraged to put on their own coats and jackets when it was time to go home encouraging their independence.

The children's drink bottles were accessible to them in the play areas if they wished to have a drink. At lunchtime the children sat in groups with the staff to eat their food provided from home. The service had a healthy eating policy in place and the food the children ate included fruits, vegetables, sandwiches and yoghurts.

## 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) A designated member of staff checked each child in and out of the service during the inspection and recorded the details in an attendance record book.

(3) (a) The registered provider ensured that a member of staff authorised the entry of visitors to the service.

(b) There was a written record kept in a record book that people visiting the service completed.

## 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) The three members of staff had undertaken First Aid Response (FAR) training with certificates available for inspection due to expire on the 16 September 2025.
- (2) (a) There was a suitably equipped and labelled first aid box stored out of reach of the children in the service. The first aid equipment was readily available if a child required first aid treatment in the service.

## 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 available for a maximum number of 22 children attending sessional services with an expiry date of the 27 March 2025.

## 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.*

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

- Two auto adrenaline injectors potentially required for emergency use were found to have passed their expiry dates during the inspection. The designated person in charge took immediate action once this was highlighted to her by the inspector to obtain in date replacements. It is acknowledged that the service

submitted photographic evidence of two replacement, in-date auto adrenaline injectors to the Inspectorate on the 3 December 2023.

2. Garda vetting was available for the three staff members. However, all of these vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years and were not in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

## Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider advised in a written response that:

### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

1. The child's parent was contacted straight away and informed. Replacement medication was sourced immediately. Going forward to prevent this from reoccurring, the manager will undertake a monthly check on medication dates. The dates will also be checked on medication when received from parents to make sure they are in date. A staff member will sign and date a monthly sheet to confirm that medication dates have been checked.
2. The service has submitted applications for garda vetting renewal. The service will forward on evidence once the documents are received from the national vetting bureau. To prevent the non-compliance from re-occurring, management will ensure to keep check on the dates of staff vetting.

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

Evidence of the replacement medication was submitted by the service on the 3 December 2024.

Copies of the required garda vetting renewals were submitted.

## Summary Comment

The actions taken and evidence submitted by the service has been reviewed by the Inspectorate and has addressed the non-compliance found on inspection under the regulation.