

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report School Age Services

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023DY018SA
Name of School Age Service:	Little Citizens Hub
Name of Registered Provider(s):	Katie Smyth
Address of School Age Service:	Inchicore Sports and Social Club, Library Square, Inchicore, Dublin 8, Co. Dublin
Eircode:	D08 PA07

Date of Inspection:	20 April 2026			
Number of school age children present during inspection:	AM	N/A	PM	26

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate	The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Dublin 8.
Inspection undertaken by:	R. Duff A. Byrne
Title:	Early Years Inspector

Authority to Inspect
Tusla's 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).

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Description of Service:

Little Citizens Hub operates a school age care service in a social club which is based in a residential area of Dublin. The school age service caters for children aged 4-12 years old. The service is open Monday to Friday from 1.00 to 6.00pm. During school holidays the service operates from 9.00am to 4.00pm. School age care is provided in a large room that has direct access to a large outdoor area. Sanitary facilities for use by school-age children are located off the main care room.

Staffing:

The service employs six adults, including the registered provider. On the day of inspection, there were six adults present in the service working directly with the children

Additional Information:

This inspection was triggered by information received by the inspectorate.

A referral was made to the Fire officer on 21 April 2026 due to observations made during this inspection relating to fire safety.

Legislation

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of School Age Services in Ireland, and its role is to promote and monitor the safety and quality of school age care provision in accordance with the following legislation:

- The Child and Family Agency Act 2013, Part 12.
- Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of School Age Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2022.
- The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Registration of School Age Services Regulations 2018 (S.I. 575 of 2018).

A school age service means any early years service, play group, day nursery, crèche, day-care or other similar service which:

- a) caters for children under the age of 15 years enrolled in a school providing primary or post-primary education,
- b) provides a range of activities that are developmental, educational and recreational in manner, which take place outside of school hours, the primary purpose of which is to care for children where their parents are unavailable, and
- c) the basis for access to which is made publicly known to the parents and guardians of the children referred to in point (a) above.

It is the responsibility of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of school age children and the above legislation authorises Tusla to assess compliance with the Regulations.

Inspection Methodology:

The inspection is unannounced to assess compliance with the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Registration of School Age Services Regulations 2018 (S.I. 575 of 2018), Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of School Age Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2022, and the Child Care Act 1991, Section 58 as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013.

The findings on inspection are gathered through a triangulation method, including:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation.
- Direct observation.
- Discussion with relevant staff.

This inspection aims to determine the extent to which service is appropriate for the care, safety, and wellbeing of children in accordance with the regulations cited above.

Inspection findings are documented in the School Age Services 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 corrected the non-compliance and how they will prevent them 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 CAPA 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.

Acknowledgements:

The inspector and inspection and registration manager wish to acknowledge the co-operation of the children, registered provider, and staff who were present on the day of inspection.

Statutory Notices		
Notice	Date Served	Detail
Immediate Action Notice IAN 0062	20/04/2026	Garda vetting was not available for one adult who was working with the children on the day of inspection.
Status	The registered provider took immediate corrective action which addressed the risk identified. Preventative actions were submitted by the registered provider which were accepted and addressed the statutory notice.	
Immediate Action Notice IAN 0063	20/04/2026	Translated Police vetting was not available for one adult who was working with the children on the day of inspection.
Status	The registered provider took immediate corrective action which addressed the risk identified. Preventative actions were submitted by the registered provider which were accepted and addressed the statutory notice.	
Improvement Notice IN0082	20/04/2026	On the day of inspection three fire doors leading from the service were locked. Two doors were locked using a sliding bolt and one door was locked using a thumb key. The three doors were identified as fire escapes.
Status	The registered provider took immediate corrective action which addressed the risk identified. Preventative actions were submitted by the registered provider which were accepted and addressed the statutory notice.	

Summary of Findings:

On the day of inspection, the registered provider was found to be compliant in:

- Regulation 9(1)(2)(4): Staffing levels;
- Regulation 11: Premises
- Regulation 12: Insurance

- Regulation 13: Complaints
- Child Care Act 1991, Section 58(G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013.

On the day of the inspection, the registered provider was found to be non-compliant in:

- Regulation 8: Vetting disclosures.
- Childcare Act 1991, Section 58(G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013.

Conclusion and follow up actions:

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider, in their corrective and preventive action plan for Regulation 8 and Child Care Act 1991, Section 58(G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013, have adequately addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection.

Regulation 8: Vetting disclosures

- (1) A registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service 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.*
- (2) The procedures specified in paragraph 1 shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the school age service.*

Regulatory Requirement not met

- (1) The inspection included a review of the required documentation for four staff members employed in the service since the last inspection dated the 29 January 2024. Garda vetting disclosures were assessed for each of the six staff members employed. The following documentation was available;
- (a)(b) Although it is acknowledged that five written and validated references were available for staff members, three written and validated references were not available for two staff members employed to work directly with the children.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for five of the six staff members. Garda vetting disclosures from all staff members were assessed to determine compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- See Statutory Notice section in relation to Immediate Action Notice IAN 0062 served.
- (d) See Statutory Notice section in relation to Immediate Action Notice IAN 0063 served.
- (2) Documentation reviewed evidence that the procedures specified above under 8

(1)(a)(b)(c)(d) had not been carried out prior to three adults commencing employment in the service

- (a)(b) Three written and verified references for two adults were not in place prior to them commencing employment in the service.
- (c) See Statutory Notice section in relation to Immediate Action Notice IAN 0062 served.
- (d) See Statutory Notice section in relation to Immediate Action Notice IAN 0063 served.

Corrective & Preventive Action Response submitted by the Registered Provider

(a)(b) The registered provider stated that the missing references were sought and validated immediately.

(c) Garda vetting was applied for immediately and the person was removed from the premises and asked not to return until garda vetting has been received.

(d) Certified translated Police vetting was sought for the staff member who required it.

A check list has been developed to ensure that all necessary documentation are in place in advance of a person commencing employment in the service.

Supporting documentation has been submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

Summary of Findings

The actions taken by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance. The regulation has been met. This regulation will be assessed on the next inspection.

Regulation 9: Staffing levels

- (1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of competent and suitable adults on the premises while the service is operating.*
- (2) Without prejudice to paragraph (1), a registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service shall ensure that there is a minimum ratio of 1 adult to 12 children at all times while the service is operating.*
- (4) A registered provider of a school age service shall ensure that the school age children attending the service are appropriately supervised at all times.*

Regulatory Requirement Met

(1)(2)(4)

During the inspection, the registered provider ensured that appropriate staffing levels were maintained. The 26 children attending the service were supervised directly by 6 staff members.

There were an adequate number of adults available during the inspection to meet the needs of the children present. The staff members were observed to work with small groups of children for the afternoon. For example, staff members were observed to sit with the children reading stories, join a role play game and support block play on the floor. This supported the building of relationships and also allowed staff members to provide additional support, if required.

Throughout the inspection, the children were supervised through sight and sound. The adults were observed to move to different areas of care room and observe the children from a reasonable distance. The children appeared familiar with the boundaries of the service regarding supervision also. For example, the children's school bags and personal items and were stored in the middle room, the boy's toilets were also located off the middle room. The children were overheard on many occasions to request to go to their school bags or use the toilet. During this time, a staff member remained close-by to observe the child and ensure they returned into the care room.

Regulation 11: Premises

A registered provider of a school age service shall ensure that-
(a) an outdoor space to which the school age children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises, or
(b) where no such space is provided, the school age children attending the service have access on a daily basis to an outdoor space.

Regulatory Requirement Met

The service has access to a large, natural grassed secure area behind the building. This is a shared area used by other service users in the earlier part of the day and used by the sports facility in the evenings and at weekends. The children also have access to a public park directly across from the service. The children were observed to use the public park on the day of inspection.

Regulation 12: Insurance

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

Regulatory Requirement Met

The service is insured for 30 children to attend at any one time. The policy was dated from 28 March 2026 to 27 March 2027.

Regulation 13: Complaints

- (1) A registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies—
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,
 - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and
 - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.
- (2) A registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service shall ensure that—
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the school age service, and
 - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.
- (3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall—
- (a) include the nature of the complaint and the manner in which the complaint was dealt with, and
 - (b) be open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.

Regulatory Requirement Met

(1) (a)(b)(c)

A complaints policy was available within the service for a person to make a complaint. The policy detailed the procedures to follow, including the assigned person responsible for dealing with a complaint, how complaints are dealt with and communication strategies in the case where a complaint is made to the service.

(2)(a)

The service's policy outlined that the service would retain the record of complaint and the timeframe of retention.

(3)

In discussion with the registered provider of the service, it was confirmed that the service has not received a written complaint. Therefore, records were not available for review.

Child Care Act 1991, Section 58(G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013

It shall be the duty of every person providing an early years service to take all reasonable measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children attending the service and to comply with regulations made by the Minister under this Part.

Regulatory Requirement Met

On arrival at the service the younger children were observed to be engaged in a variety of age-appropriate activities for example, arts and crafts, reading books, playing with foam blocks or footballs on the floor. The activities the children took part in were varied throughout the day and staff were observed to monitor each area to support or to extend play. When children arrived from school, they were offered fruit and a drink. A nutritious snack was offered at a later part of the day with a five-day menu shared with parents. Throughout the afternoon, children were observed to move around the care room freely to avail of alternative activities. Older children completed homework independently and with the support of the staff. The staff members were observed to move freely between the different groups of children and provide the children with guidance and support, as required. Children were taken to the outdoor area on two separate occasions and staff were observed to support this transition carefully. Interactions between staff and children was observed to be friendly, supportive and consistent.

Regulatory Requirement not met

1. See Statutory Notice section in relation to Immediate Action Notice IAN 0082 served.
2. On the day of inspection, the registered provider confirmed that the service was not adequately heated. The registered provider stated that the service uses two gas heaters to heat the room in advance of children arriving. Although it is acknowledged that the heaters were not in use when the children arrived, the care room was not effectively ventilated resulting in a persistent smell of gas present throughout the afternoon.

Corrective & Preventive Action Response submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated that:

1. Immediate action was taken on the day after the inspection and all identified fire exits were unlocked. Sliding bolts were removed from emergency escape routes to ensure fire exit were unobstructed. The door with the thumb lock is no longer a designated fire escape.
2. The two gas heaters were immediately removed from the service. They will not be used again. Heating systems will be reviewed regularly to ensure safe operation and adequate ventilation within the care environment.

Supporting documentation has been submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

Summary of Findings

The actions taken by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance. The regulation has been met. This regulation will be assessed on the next inspection.