

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023KY004			
Name of Service:	Tigh na Leanai			
Address of Service:	Ionad Caitlin Naofa, Ventry, Tralee, Co. Kerry			
Eircode:	V92 H4CA			
Name of Registered Provider:	Vanessa Duffy			
Service type:	Full Day			
Date of Inspection:	01/07/2025			
No of pre-school children:	AM	9	PM	9
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Department, Child & Family Agency, Hospital Grounds, Coolnagarrane, Skibbereen, Co Cork P81 PD78			
Inspection undertaken by:	Ms. O'Reilly			
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	N/A			

Description of service

Tigh na Leanai is a privately owned full day care service that first opened in March 2024. The service is registered to cater for children from 0 to 6 years offering a choice of sessional, part time or full day care service. The service operates from 08:00 to 18:00 hours each day Monday to Friday. The service is located in a single storey community building which is situated in the coastal village of Ventry in west Kerry. Tigh na Leanai operates from one part of the premise and the local Naíonra operates from another part of the same premise. The service consists of one care room, two children’s toilets and one nappy changing facility. There is one adult toilet shared with the staff from the Naíonra service. There is a designated separate sleep area, office cum storeroom, kitchenette and a utility room. The outdoor play area is beside the playroom. There is an ample set down parking area to the front of the building for the safe arrival and departure of children and parents to and from the service.

Staffing

At time of inspection, there were 6 staff, this includes the registered provider who is involved in the direct care of the children who attend. All staff who work with the children hold a relevant award in Early Childhood Care and Education or an equivalent qualification, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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.

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 wish 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

(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) There was a person in charge and a deputy to deputise as required.
- (b) The registered provider/person in charge and deputy were present when the inspector arrived at the premise on the day of the unannounced inspection and were present throughout the inspection process.
- (c) There was a clear management structure in place in the service.

(2)

Documentation was assessed in relation to the requirements of Regulation 9 for 6 adults. This included the registered provider.

- (a) There were nine validated references on file from past employers.
- (b) There were three validated references available from sources other than previous employers.

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available on file in respect of each of the six adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) A police vetting record was available on file for one of the adults who had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of 6 months or more, while over the age of 18 years.

(4) The six adults who worked directly with the children all held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education, or an equivalent qualification, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)

During the period of inspection, there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children in attendance.

(2) Taking into consideration the age range of the children present in the service and the duration of their stay, the adult to child ratios were maintained in line with the required ratios, as follows:

There were 6 children aged between 1 and 2 years. Two of the 6 children were attending the sessional service, and 4 children were attending on a full day care basis.

There were 3 children present aged between 2 and 3-years. One child was attending part time, and 2 children were attending on a full day care basis with 5 adults attending to the 9 children in attendance in the morning and afternoon.

Two children aged between 4 and 6 years that were attending the Naíonra summer camp in the morning commenced in the service at 13:00 hours (Naíonra is located in the same building as Tigh na Leanaí)

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.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a) to (i)

A sample of 10 of the children's registration forms were reviewed and were found to contain all of the elements of information as required by Regulation 15(1) (a) to (i) inclusive.

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:

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis.*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis.*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

- (h) The service had a register to record the children’s attendance on a daily basis. The records indicated the arrival and departure time of each child on a daily basis in the service.
- (i) On review of the weekly staff roster, the record indicated the time the staff commenced and finished in the service and the times the staff went on their lunch break each day.
- (k) There was an Accident and Incident book in the service. A sample of the accidents and incidents records on file were reviewed. All accidents and incidents records were signed by the parent and staff members. The parent/guardian received a duplicated signed copy at collection time following the accident /incident pertaining to their child.

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

Basic needs:

- The staff members were observed speaking with the children during snack time and using it as an opportunity to enhance social interaction with the children which promoted a relaxed atmosphere.
- The children followed a flexible timetable and were offered food and drink according to their daily routines.

- They were gently placed in highchairs, secured and assisted with feeding in an unhurried and sociable manner.
- It was observed that children's cues for tiredness were addressed. Children were prepared for sleep in a kind and caring manner, tight clothing was removed, and soothers were offered as required prior to sleep time.
- The requirement for sleep was child lead and all children were observed sleeping in suitable sleep equipment during the inspection.
- The adults were observed to demonstrate patience and kindness in their interactions with the children, as was noted when the children's efforts were readily acknowledged and when children were calmly assisted to resolve minor conflicts.
- Children's hygiene needs were promptly and sensitively attended to. The staff members were observed to supervise and assist where required each of the children when hand washing and hand drying, and the children were supported and encouraged prior to eating and after nappy changing, toileting and outdoor play.
- There was adequate space in the care room to accommodate a variety of play activities. A mixture of adult led play and child directed play was facilitated in the playroom and during outdoor play. The children were observed playing outdoors closely supervised by staff.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- The playroom was child friendly, bright, laid out with materials largely accessible to the children.
- There were an adequate number of highchairs available for the younger children and child sized tables and chairs for the older children in the playroom.
- For the younger children in attendance, there were a selection of age-appropriate equipment such as, a selection of books, shape sorters, activity centres, pull along toys, handheld toys for example farm and zoo animals, sound making materials and construction blocks.
- There was a selection of tabletop activities and games for the older children to encourage companionable interaction. There were cars and trucks, different sized blocks and a variety of art and craft materials. A fine motor skills area, a home corner suitably furnished with dolls, buggies, dress up and small utensils to prompt imagination and pretend play.
- Play materials in general were found to be in a good state of repair with no pinch points or sharp edges.
- There was a soft seating area and an enclosed area with soft matting in the centre of the room and staff informed me that this area allowed a child to opt out of play activities and relax if they so wished.

- Walls of the care rooms were decorated with birthday charts, family photographs and posters and the children’s arts and crafts.
- The playroom had direct access to the designated outdoor play area which had a natural grass and a hard ground surface. During the inspection, the door between the playroom and outdoor area was opened which allowed the children the choice to play indoors and outdoors and children were observed appropriately supervised by staff at all times during the inspection.
- In the outdoor play area, there were ride on and push toys and a slide to encourage the children to master gross motor skill play. There were child size picnic benches, a mud kitchen, playhouse and a sand area with accompanying play equipment to encourage imagination and pretend play. The children were observed to love the water play time that was closely supervised by staff while playing outdoors

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 children appeared to enjoy the nutritious food provided by their parents/guardians and were afforded ample time to eat and drink at a relaxed pace.
- All of the snacks and meals observed being eaten on the day were healthy, sufficient and nutritious such as yogurts and different fruits at the mid-morning snack.
- There was a hot meal provided by the parents/guardians and reheated for the children.
- The children had access to their own labelled water bottles so that they could help themselves to drinks when they were thirsty.
- The children were provided with appropriate cutlery and crockery at snack and mealtimes. time to eat and drink at a relaxed pace.

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 agents were stored out of the children's reach.
- First aid box was appropriately stored and inaccessible to children.
- Water temperatures at the wash hand basins were thermostatically controlled, so as not to exceed 43°C.
- The staff members bags and belonging were stored out of reach of the children.
- Emergency fire exit doors were unobstructed.
- The outdoor play areas were secured, fenced and gated with high bolts.
- The kitchenette was not accessible to the children so they could not access any hazardous materials such as sharp knives or cleaning products.
- Highchairs were clean and in good condition and fitted with the correct safety harnesses.
- There were no visible flexes or electric cabling observed.

Infection Control:

- Suitable handwashing facilities were available in the service for the number of children in attendance on day of inspection. Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were in place. Handwashing by the children was observed before mid-morning snack and lunch time meal and after nappy changing and using the toilet and following outdoor play.
- The children had access to a sufficient number of toilets, nappy changing facilities and wash hand basins which were clean and in a good state of repair.
- There were step ups and toilet seats available for the children's comfort and safety.
- The children's soothers were suitably stored in individual plastic containers when not in use.
- Personal waste including used tissues, and all cleaning waste was appropriately disposed of in foot operated pedal bins in the service.
- Non-contact bin was available for the storage of used nappies.
- The adults and children had access to sufficient toilets and wash hand basins on day of inspection.
- The children nappy changing toiletries were situated within labelled baskets beside the nappy changing unit.

- In general, the playrooms, toilets and nappy changing facilities in the service were visibly clean on day of inspection. There were weekly cleaning schedules on display.

Safe Sleep:

- A designated sleep room was located beside the playroom. There were 7 standard cots. Each of the mattresses was fitted with a waterproof mattress cover. There was 1 stackable bed available for the children over the age of 2 years that required a sleep.
- It was observed that sleeping children had ten-minute physical observations conducted, recording position, colour and breathing of the child.
- The air temperature of the sleep room registered at 20°Celsius.
- Individual clean linen was available for each sleep equipment. There was an adequate distance observed between each cot when children were asleep in the sleep room on day of 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) There were three staff working in the service on day of inspection that had current certified First Aid Responder certificate (FAR)

(2) (a) There was a sufficiently stocked first aid box available in the service, which was safely stored out of reach of children.

(b) At all times when the service was in operation, first aid supplies were accessible to the adults if in the event that a child may require 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.
- (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 record of monthly fire drills carried out was available and indicated that the last fire drill took place on the 30 June 2025
 - (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment was maintained. It was recorded that the fire equipment was last serviced in August 2024. The emergency fire alarm system was last tested and serviced in July 2025.
- (4)
- The fire evacuation procedure for the service which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed 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 registered provider ensured the service was insured, with insurance for 26 children valid until 27 March 2026. The records detailed the category of service covered, full day care. The name and address of the premises and details regarding public liability cover, fire, theft, buildings, and outings cover.