

# TUSLA REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT



**TUSLA Identifier:** TU2015KE022

**Name of Service:** Tir na N'og

**Address of Service:** Derryvarrogue, Donadea, Naas, Co. Kildare, W91 VY0T

**Email Address:** [smytanne@gmail.com](mailto:smytanne@gmail.com)

**Name of Registered Service Provider:** Anne Smyth

|                                    |                  |   |
|------------------------------------|------------------|---|
| <b>Type of Service Registered:</b> | <b>Part-time</b> | ✓ |
|                                    | <b>Sessional</b> | ✓ |

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|----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Date of Inspection: Day 1</b> | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| <b>Date of Inspection: Day 2</b> | 2 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 |

|   |           |    |           |     |
|---|-----------|----|-----------|-----|
| <b>No of Pre-School Children present during Inspection: Day 1</b> | <b>AM</b> | 10 | <b>PM</b> | 3   |
| <b>No of Pre-School Children present during Inspection: Day 2</b> | <b>AM</b> | 10 | <b>PM</b> | n/a |

**Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:** Early Years Inspectorate, Child & Family Agency, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Road, Naas, Co. Kildare. W91 X38W

**Inspection undertaken by:** Therese Duignan  
**Title:** Early Years Inspector

| Areas which were the subject of this Inspection |  |               |
|---|--|---------------|
| <b>Governance</b>                               | <b>Health Welfare and Development of Child</b> | <b>Safety</b> |

**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).

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**Conditions If Applicable**      Not Applicable

|                               |  |
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| <b>Description of Service</b> | <p>Tir na N’og was established in 1999 as a privately run childcare service for pre-school children aged 2 years to 6 years by Anne Smith, the registered provider. It is registered for part time, sessional care and education from 09.30am – 14.30hours Monday to Friday. The Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme operates from 09.15am – 12.15hrs.</p>   |
| <b>Premises</b>               | <p>The service is in a purpose-built premises and an adjacent prefabricated unit located within the grounds of the registered providers own home in a rural setting in Donadea. There is set down and parking available. The service consists of a large open plan room, a smaller room for arts and crafts activities and a sensory room for quieter activities. A secured outdoor play area is available at the rear of the service.</p>   |
| <b>Staffing</b>               | <p>Tir na N’og employs 5 childcare staff including the registered provider. The registered provider works directly with the preschool children. Four adults working in the service have completed a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education. One other adult was supernumerary as she was a student on placement. The registered provider was not present on day 1 of the inspection but was present for day 2 of the inspection.</p>  |
| <b>Methodology</b>            | <p>Tusla’s Early Years Inspectorate (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.</p> <p>The findings on inspection are based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information obtained through examination of documentation</li> <li>• Direct observation</li> <li>• Discussion with relevant staff</li> </ul> <p>This inspection was unannounced and focused on areas of Governance, Health, Welfare and Development of Child and Safety. Inspections may also focus on other areas as required. The inspection process has been amended to minimise the amount of time that inspectors spend in the service. 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.</p> |
| <b>Acknowledgements</b>       | <p>The Inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, staff and children who were present on the days of the inspection.</p>  |

## GOVERNANCE

### 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
- (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 Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.
- (7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:
- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5.

#### Compliance Information:

A sampling process was used to review the records. The records of two adults recruited since the last inspection were reviewed.

(1)

- (a) The registered provider ensured that the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who can deputise as required.
- (b) The designated person in charge was available on the premises throughout the period of Inspection and staff rosters indicate that the designated person or deputy was available on the premises at all times.

(2)

- (a) Two written and verified past employer references were available in respect of two adults employed in the service whose records were reviewed.
- (b) Not applicable, as the references were from past employers.
- (c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for two adults employed by the service.
- (d) Not applicable, as the adults had not lived outside the state for a period of more than 6 months as an adult.

(7)(a) The registered provider stated that the staff members were provided with information, induction and training with regard to the policies, procedures and statements of the service as specified in Schedule 5 prior to the reopening of the

## Part III - Management and Staff

### Regulation 9 - Management and Recruitment

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | service following Covid-19 lockdown closure and documentary evidence reviewed confirmed this.  |
| Non-Compliance Information:  | (4) There was no documentary evidence available for one employee who was working directly with children attending the service, that she had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications.  |
| Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider: | <p>The registered provider stated:</p> <p><b>Corrective action:</b><br/>(4) Qualification documentation are now on file.</p> <p><b>Preventive action:</b><br/>(4) We will endeavour to have evidence of qualification documentation for all adults employed in the service maintained on staff files.</p> <p><b>Evidence submitted:</b><br/>(4) Documentation.</p> |
| Summary Comment:   | The written response and documentary evidence submitted by the registered provider has been assessed by the Early Years Inspector. Regulatory compliance is met for regulation 9.  |

## Part III - Management and Staff

### Regulation 10 - Policies, Procedures etc. of Pre-school service

*A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.*

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|-------------------------|---|
| Compliance Information: | <p>The registered provider ensured that the required written policies procedures and statements specified in schedule 5 were in place in the service.</p> <p>The content of the following policies was reviewed and had been updated to meet the requirements and obligations set out in the Covid-19 National Protocol for Employers and Workers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk Management Policy</li> <li>• Infection Control Policy</li> </ul> |
|-------------------------|---|

## 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) There were ten children attending the service being supervised directly by three adults on day 1 of the inspection.  
There were ten children attending the service being supervised directly by five adults on day 2 of the inspection.
- (2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to on the two days of inspection.
- (8)(a) There were at least two adults on the premises at all times for the duration of the inspection on both days. This was confirmed following review of the staff roster for the service.

## 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:

#### Basic needs of Children

The service had a healthy eating policy; children's lunches were observed to be nutritious and healthy. Children could access their drinks at the drinks station whenever they wished throughout the morning. The staff members sat with the children during snack time and were attentive to their needs; conversations and interactions between the children and the adults were observed to be informative, educational and playful. The children attending on a part time basis had a second snack.

The children were encouraged to be independent, and they were supported by the staff members to be self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development including hand washing, toileting and caring for their belongings; assistance was given when needed. The service provided nappy changing facilities for children who were not toilet trained.

The children were observed enjoying freedom of movement within the different pre-school areas.

A quiet area with rest facilities was available to the children in the adjacent building. Staff members used this area with small groups of children for one-to-one activities also.

The staff members ensured that the children were appropriately clothed for outdoor play.

The staff members were experienced and confident looking after children. They demonstrated an advanced knowledge of the management of children's behaviour where there was an emphasis on praise and encouragement to promote positive behaviour.

#### Supporting relationships around children.

The children were cared for by the same adults which enabled them to form secure relationships, attachments and develop their confidence within the service.

On the day of the inspection the staff members were observed responding promptly to the verbal and non-verbal cues of each child. They were observed being warm, kind and respectful to all the children by using their first name, appropriate eye contact and gentle vocal tones when speaking to children. Children were encouraged to take part in activities and afforded opportunities to make choices. Individual preferences were accommodated as to what and how long children wished to engage with specific chosen activities.

The service demonstrated that they have very good engagement with parents/guardians and had implemented procedures and supports to meet specific Covid-19 pandemic requirements.

## Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

### Regulation 19 - Health, Welfare and Development of Child

Information was shared briefly with parents at the drop off and collection times while maintaining social distance and masks being worn; telephone, text and email contact are used also. Face to face meetings are arranged by appointment as necessary. A closed electronic communication system is used for group messaging to parents.

#### Physical & Material Environment

The curriculum was child led based on the children's natural sense of curiosity, inquiry and emerging interests. In order to facilitate this approach, the pre-school room environments were well planned, very well resourced and thoughtfully considered from the child's perspective. They were designed and decorated to create interesting spaces to prompt children to engage in self-directed and imaginative play.

The interest areas included a home corner, construction area, library and reading corner, mark making /arts and crafts area, puzzles, jigsaws, bricks and blocks area, small world areas which included dolls houses, a hair salon for role play, sand, water and playdough. There was plenty of props to support and extend the children's imaginative play experiences in the various interest areas.

The outdoor area had been developed further during the period of lockdown to enable the children to use it during inclement weather. It was directly accessible from the preschool room. There was a covered outdoor area with tables, chairs and a bench for tabletop activities. The wall adjacent to the covered area was covered with blackboard paint and had large chalk pieces available to the children. A mud kitchen with plenty of real-life props was available. There were two large wooden multi activity frames with slides, swings, a wooden bridge connecting the two units, a basket swing, a climbing frame, a see saw. There was an enclosed space for sand play. There was a designated sensorial area with sand, water, bark and a planting area. There was lots of props in each area to enable children to play imaginatively. Child sized furniture and equipment was in use in the preschool rooms.

The staff members facilitated the children in small groups to extend their play and learning. Children's choices and decisions were respected, and they were provided with the freedom to achieve mastery and success.

There was predictability and routine to the morning and the children responded to this very positively. All the children attending on the two days of the inspection were observed to be busy, engaged and very happy in their environment.



## 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 controlled by the person in charge to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service. The person in charge documented the inspectors visit to the service on arrival.

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

#### Infection control.

Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and paper towels were readily available for hygienic hand washing and drying. Hand sanitising units were placed at the entrance / exit points to the service and in the preschool rooms. Children were supervised by a staff member while handwashing to ensure that they washed their hands for at least 20 seconds. Foot pedal operated bins were in place in the service to facilitate the hygienic disposal of used paper hand towel and tissues. Personal protective equipment including plastic aprons, disposable masks and gloves were available.

The premises were observed to be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.

Written cleaning schedules were displayed and maintained for the preschool room environments including the outside play equipment.

Prior to the reopening of the service following the first pandemic lockdown the staff members had completed specific Covid-19 infection control training to ensure on-going adherence to current practices and to implement the supplementary specific infection control guidance relating to Covid-19.

The staff members were aware of the procedures to be followed in the event a staff member or child exhibiting symptoms of Covid-19. A separate area had been identified to accommodate a child who may present with any symptom of Covid-19 while attending the service.

The service had one designated entrance and physical distancing was adhered to during arrival and departure times.

Records were maintained of the children and staff members attending daily and for any person entering the service to facilitate contact tracing in the event of an outbreak of infection

#### Safe sleep.

A rest area was available for any preschool child who wished to rest or take a break from activities. Low level sleep beds with bed linen were available for children attending on a part time basis requiring sleep. The staff members were familiar with the expected practices while caring for sleeping children in the setting.



## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 23 - Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child

#### Administration of medication.

Staff members demonstrated a good knowledge of the administration of medication policy and the safe practices to follow when administering medication including parental consent. Medication was stored safely out of the reach of children.

#### Fire safety

Staff members were familiar with fire safety evacuation procedures from the service. Fire drills were completed monthly. Fire exits were not obstructed.

#### Outings

Operational procedures were in place for outings.

## 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) Persons were trained in first aid for children and were immediately available to the children attending the service.  
 (2)  
 (a)(b) The first aid equipment was safely stored, in a conspicuous position in each care room and was available at all times to the children attending 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 was available of fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill was on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2021.  
 (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. Firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were last serviced in March 2021 and 17<sup>th</sup> September 2021 respectively.  
 (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously

