

# Report of an inspection of a Designated Centre for Disabilities (Children).

## Issued by the Chief Inspector

Name of designated centre:	St Paul's Dromawling
Name of provider:	St. Paul's Child and Family Care Centre Designated Activity Company
Address of centre:	Dublin 9
Type of inspection:	Announced
Date of inspection:	22 May 2025
Centre ID:	OSV-0003768
Fieldwork ID:	MON-0038169

## About the designated centre

The following information has been submitted by the registered provider and describes the service they provide.

St. Paul's Dromawling is a designated centre located in a quiet estate in North Dublin. The designated centre provides a respite service for up to four children and adolescents between the ages of 5 and 18 years with a diagnosis of autism. The house is a five bedroomed house with ample communal space for children to use including a large sensory room. There is a well-proportioned garden to the rear of the centre with a seating area, swing, slide and other play equipment for children to play outside. The service is provided in partnership with parents and input from the children's school. The provider has a range of health and social care professionals employed such as occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, psychology and children also have access to the medical director and a child psychiatrist. The centre is staffed by a person in charge, nurses, social child care workers and care assistants.

**The following information outlines some additional data on this centre.**

Number of residents on the date of inspection:	2
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## How we inspect

This inspection was carried out to assess compliance with the Health Act 2007 (as amended), the Health Act 2007 (Care and Support of Residents in Designated Centres for Persons (Children and Adults) with Disabilities) Regulations 2013, and the Health Act 2007 (Registration of Designated Centres for Persons (Children and Adults) with Disabilities) Regulations 2013 (as amended). To prepare for this inspection the inspector of social services (**hereafter referred to as inspectors**) reviewed all information about this centre. This included any previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the provider or person in charge and other unsolicited information since the last inspection.

As part of our inspection, where possible, we:

- speak with residents and the people who visit them to find out their experience of the service,
- talk with staff and management to find out how they plan, deliver and monitor the care and support services that are provided to people who live in the centre,
- observe practice and daily life to see if it reflects what people tell us,
- review documents to see if appropriate records are kept and that they reflect practice and what people tell us.

In order to summarise our inspection findings and to describe how well a service is doing, we group and report on the regulations under two dimensions of:

### **1. Capacity and capability of the service:**

This section describes the leadership and management of the centre and how effective it is in ensuring that a good quality and safe service is being provided. It outlines how people who work in the centre are recruited and trained and whether there are appropriate systems and processes in place to underpin the safe delivery and oversight of the service.

### **2. Quality and safety of the service:**

This section describes the care and support people receive and if it was of a good quality and ensured people were safe. It includes information about the care and supports available for people and the environment in which they live.

A full list of all regulations and the dimension they are reported under can be seen in Appendix 1.

**This inspection was carried out during the following times:**

Date	Times of Inspection	Inspector	Role
Thursday 22 May 2025	10:30hrs to 16:00hrs	Karen Leen	Lead

## What residents told us and what inspectors observed

From what respite users told us and what the inspector observed, it was evident that children availing of respite in this designated centre were receiving person centred care and support, and were supported to access activities of their choosing both within the designated centre and the local community. This inspection had positive findings, with full levels of compliance with all Regulations inspected.

This centre provides a respite service for children and is registered to accommodate up to four respite users at one time. At the time of inspection, 20 respite users in total were availing of the service. Respite users are supported by the service in attending their school placement if availing of respite services on a weekday.

The house is located in a small housing estate in north Dublin. The house was a two- storey house with four respite bedrooms, one staff sleep-over room and three bathrooms. Downstairs, there was a staff office, a large kitchen/ dining area, a sensory room, a utility space and a bathroom. The provider had recently renovated two of bathrooms in the centre, which included extending the size of the bathroom located on the ground floor. Respite users had access to a large garden to the rear of the premises, which was equipped with a swing and ample space for respite users to relax and play in. The inspector was facilitated to do a walk through of the centre by the person in charge. The inspector found that the centre promoted an environment that supported child engagement and participation, with toys, jigsaws and communication aids in clear sight for each child to access.

The inspector of social services used observations and discussions with children in addition to a review of documentation and conversations with key staff to form judgments on the quality of children's stay in respite. Children in the centre largely communicated using speech, body language, eye contact and behaviours. The centre utilised a number of communication systems to enhance each child's respite stay. The inspector noted that a range of easy-to-read documents and information was supplied to respite users in a suitable format. For example, easy-to-read versions of important information such as the complaints process, meals, advocacy, safeguarding, fire safety and staffing information were available. Staff consulted regularly with respite users and established their preferences through the personal planning process and through their ongoing communication with respite users' representatives.

Written feedback on the quality and safety of care in the centre was received from four children's families which was positive and complimentary. One family discussed that their child is a non-verbal communicator and when they show their family member a picture of the support staff or of the centre they immediately get their shoes and are ready to go. Another family discussed that the staff team excel in communicating with families which is reassuring and helps the family to relax knowing the activities that their child is enjoying during their respite stay. In addition to clear lines of communication with the respite users families, one family

discussed the wider communication and review held by the team with external stakeholders such as the child's school placement to ensure that everyone is involved each individual child's development.

Another family discussed how their loved one enjoys having their regular and familiar routine facilitated and places they like to go. However, when they attend respite the support staff work to strengthen their social experience. Staff are aware of the supports their loved one needs in order to stay relaxed and enjoy small changes during each stay. The family noted that staff ensure that visual aids and suggested activities are adapted to suit their loved ones preferences.

During their stay at the centre, respite users had the opportunity to engage in a diverse range of activities. These activities included centre based activities such as playing games, cooking, arts and crafts, sensory play, giant Jenga, playing computer games and watching films. Respite users also enjoyed activities in the local community such as visiting the local zoo, playgrounds, beach walks, horse riding, watching horse racing, attending sports games, theatre shows and meals out with peers.

The inspector met with one child on their arrival to respite. The child was in the living room area of the centre sitting with support staff and completing a large jigsaw puzzle. The inspector observed the child to be smiling and laughing with staff while being assisted to complete their game and having a small snack.

The inspector met with one child on arrival to the centre from school. The child was excited to see support staff and quickly brought them to see some new items they had purchased on their way to the centre. Support staff were communicating with the child in relation to their recent holiday and discussed plans for the afternoon. The inspector observed that both children availing of respite for the evening were happy spending time together. Support staff and a family member discussed that both children had become friends since commencing respite together and that they both enjoy similar interests.

The inspector had the opportunity to speak to one family member. The family member informed the inspector that respite had become available to their loved one at a time when they really needed it. The family discussed with the inspector that allowing their child to attend respite had been a difficult decision for them as a family, as it was a new concept for their child and as a family they were extremely nervous. However, the family member went on to discuss that this apprehension was very quickly replaced due to the support of the staff and person in charge in the centre. The family member discussed that the centre provides clear lines of communication both during the stay and the lead up to a visit. The centre is seen a happy place for their child to visit and make new connections in the community and with new friends who also avail of respite services. The family member discussed with the inspector that since attending respite their loved one's inner circle has grown and developed with new faces, new activities and new interests.

The next two sections of this report will present the findings of this inspection in relation to the governance and management arrangements in place in the centre,

and how these arrangements impacted on the quality and safety of the service being provided.

## Capacity and capability

The purpose of this inspection was to monitor and review arrangements the provider had in place to ensure compliance with the *Care and Support Regulations (2013)*, and to inform a decision to grant an application to renew this centre's registration. On this inspection it was found that the layout of the designated centre, the governance of the centre, the staff team, and the compatibility within respite groups were conducive to providing a high-quality respite stay for respite users.

There was a qualified and experienced person in charge who was employed full-time. There was a clearly defined management structure in place that identified lines of authority and accountability. The person in charge reported directly to the director of services. Effective arrangements were in place to support staff when the person in charge was not on duty.

The education and training provided to staff enabled them to provide care that reflected up-to-date, evidence-based practice. The training needs of staff were regularly monitored and addressed to ensure the delivery of quality, safe and effective services for the respite users. Good quality supervision meetings to support staff performing their duties to the best of their ability occurred as per the schedule in place. Furthermore, the provider completed an annual training needs analysis for all staff in the designated centre.

On review of the referrals and admission procedure for new respite user's admission to the service, the inspector found that it was determined on the basis of transparent criteria in accordance with the centre statement of purpose and took into account the needs of all respite users availing of the services. New respite users were afforded the opportunity to visit the centre with their family before attending on a respite break. Depending on the respite user's preferences, they could also visit the centre during the day and for short stays until they became more familiar with the centre and staff before taking more extended respite breaks.

## Registration Regulation 5: Application for registration or renewal of registration

The application for the renewal of registration of this centre was received by the Chief Inspector of Social Services and contained all of the information as required by the regulations.

Judgment: Compliant

### Regulation 14: Persons in charge

The inspector reviewed the Schedule 2 information for the person in charge and found that they had the qualifications and experience to fulfill the requirements of the regulations. During the inspection the inspector reviewed the systems they had for oversight and monitoring and found that they were effective in identifying areas of good practice and areas where improvements were required.

Through interactions, the inspector found the person in charge to have good knowledge of each child availing of the respite service and an overview of each child's proposed plans for visits.

Judgment: Compliant

### Regulation 15: Staffing

The inspector reviewed planned and actual rosters for the centre from February and March 2025. Across the dates explored, the inspector saw that the staffing levels were maintained in line with the statement of purpose. The inspector saw that there were sufficient staff on duty on the day of inspection to meet the needs of respite users.

The inspector observed staff engaging with respite users in a respectful and warm manner, and it was clear that they had a good rapport and understanding of the respite users needs. Family members spoke positively of the support that they receive from staff and effective communication in place between support staff and families. The staff present during the inspection were found to be knowledgeable of respite users' specific needs. They spoke about the respite users in a very respectful manner and were caring and kind in all interactions observed.

Prior to the inspection the inspector reviewed three staff files in the providers human resources department and found good recruitment practices which ensured that staff had met all requirements prior to working with vulnerable people. The inspector reviewed staff files and saw that these contained all of the information required by the regulations including, for example, an up-to-date Garda vetting report and a copy of staff members' qualifications.



Judgment: Compliant

## Regulation 16: Training and staff development

There was a system in place to evaluate staff training needs and to ensure that adequate training levels were maintained.

All staff were up-to-date in key areas including safeguarding, Children First, fire safety, medication management, first aid and infection prevention and control. Staff spoken with were informed of their roles and responsibilities in particular in respect of protection and safeguarding and the rights of respite users. Staff had also completed human rights training to further promote the delivery of a human rights-based service in the centre.

Staff members were in receipt of regular support and supervision. The supervision records for three staff were reviewed by the inspector. The inspector saw that supervision provided an opportunity for the person in charge to review staff training needs and to encourage staff member's continuing professional development.

Judgment: Compliant

## Regulation 22: Insurance

The service was adequately insured in the event of an accident or incident. The required documentation in relation to insurance was submitted as part of the application to renew the registration of the centre.

The inspector reviewed the insurance and found that it ensured that the building and all contents, including children's property, were appropriately insured. In addition, the insurance in place also covered against risks in the centre, including injury to respite users.

Judgment: Compliant

## Regulation 23: Governance and management

There were clearly defined management systems in the centre and it was evident that the management systems were effective in ensuring oversight of the quality and safety of care. Provider-level audits such as the six monthly unannounced visits, health and safety review and IPC audits were comprehensive and informed detailed action plans. The inspector saw that actions were implemented and addressed in

between audits. Audits were discussed at monthly staff meetings to promote a culture of shared learning within the team.

An annual review of the quality and safety of care had been completed for 2024, which consulted with respite users, their families/representatives, and staff. As part of the providers annual review for the centre, the provider has sought feedback from respite users and their families. Positive feedback from families included: "the centre provides great social interactions and my child gets some skill building and independence. I believe it builds their confidence" and " the way the staff look after my child and how they are always looking for new ideas and things to do with them, they are excellent".

Regular staff meetings were held, and a record was kept of the discussions and required actions. The inspector reviewed the minutes of staff meetings from January 2025 to April 2025 and found that a member of the centre senior management team was in attendance at each. This led to concerns or issues presenting in the centre being escalated and addressed in a prompt manner. The presence of the person in charge in the centre provided all staff with opportunities for regular managerial supervision and support.

Judgment: Compliant

#### Regulation 24: Admissions and contract for the provision of services

The provider had systems in place for engaging with the children, families and relevant stakeholders prior to admission to the centre. Children and families were presented with opportunities to visit the centre before experiencing an overnight stay. Each respite user had a transition plan in place. The provider had completed compatibility assessments for each respite user and had arranged staffing and respite stays in a manner that promoted a safe environment for all respite users. For example, for children that required a low arousal environment their initial short visits to the centre happened without other respite users. This was then reviewed after each stay as the child became familiar with both the environment and the staffing support in the centre.

Prior to admission for a respite stay each family were issued with a welcome pack for the centre which included further information about the centre including the name and role of the keyworker. This was presented in an easy-to-read guide with pictures for the child to review. The inspector reviewed three recent admissions to the centre and found that the admission process was adhered to in line with the providers policy and procedure.

Compatibility reviews occurred in the centre to ensure that children were availing of respite breaks with other children of similar ages and where possible with similar interests.

Judgment: Compliant

### Regulation 3: Statement of purpose

The provider had developed a statement of purpose which accurately outlined the service provided and met the requirements of the regulations.

The inspector reviewed the statement of purpose and found that it described the model of care and support delivered to respite users in the service and the day-to-day operation of the designated centre. The statement of purpose was available to respite users and their representatives in a format appropriate to their communication needs and preferences.

In addition, a walk around of the designated centre confirmed that the statement of purpose accurately described the facilities available including room size and function

Judgment: Compliant

### Regulation 31: Notification of incidents

Documentation in relation to notifications which the provider must submit to the Chief Inspector under the regulations were reviewed during this inspection. Such notifications are important in order to provide information about the running of a designated centre and matters which could impact respite users. All notifications had been submitted as required by the person in charge.

Judgment: Compliant

### Regulation 34: Complaints procedure

The provider had a complaints policy in place. There was an up-to-date complaints log and procedure available in the centre. This was in easy-to-read format and accessible to all.

The inspector reviewed the complaints log and found that at the time of the inspection there were no complaints in relation to the centre. The inspector reviewed a number of compliments submitted by families following a respite stay for their loved one. One family had logged a compliment to the staff team that due to their loved one respite stay they had managed to have a short break away.

Judgment: Compliant

## Quality and safety

The inspector found that the centre provided a homely, pleasant and fun environment for respite users. It was evident that the person in charge and the staff met with during the inspection were aware of respite users needs and knowledgeable in the support practices required to meet those needs. The service was viewed as a vital service by the families that offered a high level of care and support to their family members. Information gathered from questionnaires, feedback from respite users, family representatives, and discussions with the person in charge and staff found a person-centred approach to service delivery.

There were good arrangements, underpinned by robust policies and procedures, for the safeguarding of children from abuse. Staff working in the centre completed training to support them in preventing, detecting, and responding to safeguarding and child protection concerns. Staff spoken with were familiar with the procedure for reporting any concerns, and safeguarding plans had been prepared with measures to safeguard respite users.

Positive behaviour support plans were developed for respite users, where required. The plans were up to date and readily available for staff to follow. Staff had also completed training in positive behaviour support to support them in responding to behaviours of concern.

## Regulation 13: General welfare and development

The respite users were actively supported and encouraged to experience a range of activities and relationships, including friendships and exploring new activities. Respite users' preferences, interests and assessed needs were carefully considered to ensure that the activities chosen were suitable and meaningful.

The inspector learned that some respite users had developed new skills and abilities since staying in the centre, which were noted by family members and school. These skills included expanding friendship groups, enjoying new activities and enhancing forms of communication. One respite user noted how the "team work to broaden my social experience" and "I am very happy here and love the sense of independence".

Judgment: Compliant

## Regulation 17: Premises

The registered provider had made provision for the matters as set out in Schedule 6 of the regulations. The registered provider had ensured that the premises was designed and laid out to meet the aims and objectives of the service and the number and needs of respite users. The centre was maintained in a good state of repair and was clean and suitably decorated. The centre aimed to promote a child friendly, safe and accessible environment to respite users. The inspector observed toys and interactive activities placed throughout the centre for children to avail of during their respite stay.

Respite users could store their belongings in individual wardrobes, drawers and lockers in their bedrooms, and laundry services were available for those who needed them. The centre was warm and clean throughout and well-maintained to provide a comfortable living environment. Outside was a sizeable garden and patio area with ample space for respite users to relax and socialise in the good weather.

The providers most recent six monthly report had identified the need for the exterior of the centre to be painted. There was a plan in place for the completion of the work following funding from the provider.

Judgment: Compliant

## Regulation 20: Information for residents

The provider had prepared a residents' guide which had been made accessible and contained information relating to the service. This information included the facilities available in the centre, the terms and conditions of residency, information on the running of the centre and the complaints procedure.

The provider and person in charge had also created a welcome pack for all respite users which is sent to children and their representatives prior to their first respite stay. This welcome pack is accessible for each child and also gives accessible information in relation to each child's identified keyworker in the centre during their stay.

Judgment: Compliant

## Regulation 27: Protection against infection

There were procedures in place for the prevention and control of infection. All areas appeared clean and in a good state of repair. A cleaning schedule was in place and staff had attended appropriate training and were knowledgeable about infection control arrangements.

The designated centre had completed bi-monthly audits in relation to protection against infection and the inspector found that the findings of these audits were shared amongst the staff team through staff meetings.

The inspector found that the centre had child friendly accessible posters in place in the centre to promote hand hygiene, sneezing etiquette and staying safe when cooking and baking with staff in the centre.

Judgment: Compliant

### Regulation 28: Fire precautions

The registered provider had implemented good fire safety systems including fire detection, containment and fighting equipment.

There was adequate arrangements made for the maintenance of all fire equipment and an adequate means of escape and emergency lighting arrangements. The exit doors were easily opened to aid a prompt evacuation, and the fire doors closed properly when the fire alarm activated.

The inspector reviewed fire safety records, including fire drill details and the provider had demonstrated that they could safely evacuate respite users under day and night time circumstances. Furthermore, the inspector spoke to five staff members during the course of the inspection and found them to be knowledgeable of fire procedures for the designated centre and supports in place for each respite users.

Judgment: Compliant

### Regulation 7: Positive behavioural support

The provider had ensured that where children required behaviour support, suitable arrangements were in place to provide them with this. The inspector reviewed one positive behaviour support plan and emotional well being support plans for two respite users in the centre. The inspector found that supports plans were reviewed regularly by an appropriately qualified person and included information gathering from support staff and family.

The inspector found that restrictive practices were regularly reviewed and those in

place were as a safety mechanism due to the nature of the designated centre and the children availing of respite.

Staff had up-to-date knowledge and skills to respond to needs of children who require a positive behaviour support plan.

Judgment: Compliant

### Regulation 8: Protection

The registered provider and person in charge had implemented systems to safeguard respite users from abuse. The systems were underpinned by comprehensive policies and procedures. Staff working in the centre completed safeguarding and child protection training to support them in the prevention, detection, and response to safeguarding concerns. At the time of the inspection there were no safeguarding plans in place. The inspector found that the provider had compatibility assessments in place to support each respite stay and had tailored the respite stay to support children who may require additional support or a quiet environment to enjoy their stay. Regular meetings to determine which respite users were compatible took place. This system reduced the likelihood of peer-to-peer abuse. Respite users, via their feedback, stated they felt safe when staying in the centre.

The inspector spoke with the person in charge and four support staff during the course of the inspection. Staff spoken with were informed of the safeguarding procedure and were knowledgeable about their role and responsibilities.

Personal and intimate care plans had been developed to guide staff in supporting respite users in a manner that respected their privacy and dignity.

Judgment: Compliant

### Regulation 9: Residents' rights

The centre was operated in a manner that showed respect for each respite user and their families. This was confirmed via respite user and family feedback captured in the centre.

Respite users were consulted prior to their stay and also on a one-to-one basis at the beginning of their stay to ensure the service provided would be tailored to their individual preferences and requests. Respite users were offered meal choices and room choices as well as choices in what activities they wished to engage in. Respite users' choices were promoted through practices such as advocacy meetings.

schedule boards, and choice boards on display.
Judgment: Compliant



## Appendix 1 - Full list of regulations considered under each dimension

This inspection was carried out to assess compliance with the Health Act 2007 (as amended), the Health Act 2007 (Care and Support of Residents in Designated Centres for Persons (Children and Adults) with Disabilities) Regulations 2013, and the Health Act 2007 (Registration of Designated Centres for Persons (Children and Adults) with Disabilities) Regulations 2013 (as amended) and the regulations considered on this inspection were:

Regulation Title	Judgment
<b>Capacity and capability</b>	
Registration Regulation 5: Application for registration or renewal of registration	Compliant
Regulation 14: Persons in charge	Compliant
Regulation 15: Staffing	Compliant
Regulation 16: Training and staff development	Compliant
Regulation 22: Insurance	Compliant
Regulation 23: Governance and management	Compliant
Regulation 24: Admissions and contract for the provision of services	Compliant
Regulation 3: Statement of purpose	Compliant
Regulation 31: Notification of incidents	Compliant
Regulation 34: Complaints procedure	Compliant
<b>Quality and safety</b>	
Regulation 13: General welfare and development	Compliant
Regulation 17: Premises	Compliant
Regulation 20: Information for residents	Compliant
Regulation 27: Protection against infection	Compliant
Regulation 28: Fire precautions	Compliant
Regulation 7: Positive behavioural support	Compliant
Regulation 8: Protection	Compliant
Regulation 9: Residents' rights	Compliant