



# Report of a Children's Residential Centre

Name of provider:	The Child and Family Agency
Tusla Region:	West
Type of inspection:	Announced
Date of inspection:	31 August – 01 September 2022
Centre ID:	OSV-0004201
Fieldwork ID	MON-0037730

## About the centre

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

Number of children on the date of inspection:	3
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## How we inspect

To prepare for this inspection the inspector reviewed all information about this centre. This included any previous inspection findings and information received since the last inspection.

As part of our inspection, where possible, we:

- speak with children and the people who visit them to find out their experience of the service
- talk to staff and management to find out how they plan, deliver and monitor the care and support services that are provided to children 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 summarize our inspection findings and to describe how well a service is doing, we group and report on the standards and related regulations under two dimensions:

### **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 children 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 standards 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
31 August 2022	10:00hrs to 19:00hrs	Sabine Buschmann	Inspector
01 September 2022	09:00hrs to 17:00hrs	Sabine Buschmann	Inspector

## What children told us and what inspectors observed

From what children said and what the inspector observed, it was apparent that children were provided with good holistic quality care and support. Children who spoke to the inspector were positive about the care they received. Children said they enjoyed living in the centre and spoke positively about the many activities provided by staff. From a review of files inspectors found that children were listened to and activities provided in the centre were based on children's interests, fostering existing hobbies, as well as providing children with new experiences. The staff team was proactive and innovative in providing care to the children and ensured they could pursue hobbies and activities they enjoyed. At the time of the inspection there were three children living in the centre.

The centre was a large detached dwelling located on a half-acre site on the outskirts of a town. The centre had recently been refurbished and was clean and homely. The inspector observed that the centre had been beautifully decorated which contributed to a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere. The centre consisted of three nicely decorated en-suite bedrooms, two en-suite staff bedrooms, three offices, two sitting rooms, a large kitchen come dining room, a utility room, a store room and pantry.

The inspector met with three children who were living in the centre. The children told the inspector that they liked living in the centre and that they found the staff to be kind, nice supportive, and easy to talk to. Children spoke about how much they enjoyed the activities offered, which included a range of outdoor activities including swimming, camping, surfing and go-carting. They told the inspector that they were consulted on all the activities that were on offer in the centre and their likes and dislikes were discussed with their respective keyworkers and at children's meetings.

Children described staff as *"nice, kind and very generous"* and *"staff are supporting me like real parents"*. Children also described some of their favourite activities:

*"Staff take us on day trips to visit other cities and that is a lot of fun."*

*"We go to fun fairs, have dinner out sometimes."*

*"I like woodwork, cooking, surfing and karate."*

*"I enjoy surfing, go-carting and swimming."*

Each child had their own en-suite bedroom. Children showed the inspector their bedrooms which they decorated to their own liking. There were photos, pictures and other personal belongings in their bedrooms. When children were asked if there was anything they would like to change about the centre they said they were happy but really would love a hot tub in the garden.

The inspectors spoke with one social worker and a social work team leader. Social workers said that the service provided by the centre was child-centred. They also said that the staff team provided therapeutic support tailored to each child's individual needs in consultation with the children, families and other professionals who are involved with the children.

Overall, the inspector found that the centre was a homely place for children, with a committed staff team who were sensitive to the needs of the children in their care where a holistic model of care was provided. The centre was portrayed by all who participated in this inspection as effective at supporting children to develop to their full potential and staffed by a team who worked in partnership with families and professionals to ensure the best outcomes for the children in their care.

The next two sections of this report provide the findings of this inspection on the governance of the centre and how this impacted on the quality and safety of care provided to children.

## Capacity and capability

The centre was well managed and adequately resourced. The governance arrangements in place ensured that the service provided to children was safe and of good quality. There was a management structure in place with clearly defined lines of authority and accountability. The centre manager was qualified and experienced. The manager was supported by a recently newly appointed deputy manager with many years' experience in social care and four care leaders. The centre manager reported to the regional manager, who had overall responsibility for the quality and effectiveness of services provided.

The centre was last inspected in November 2020. At that time seven standards inspected were found to be compliant and one standard was substantially compliant. This inspection found that the centre had maintained a well-managed children's residential centre, providing good quality of care to children.

The centre had a statement of purpose and function (SOP) which had been reviewed in September 2022. This was a comprehensive document which accurately described the full organisational structure, the ethos and philosophy of the centre, the model of care, and the policies and procedures that inform the daily care practice in the centre. Children in the centre were involved in the development of the SOP, which featured children's art work and a child friendly version of the statement of purpose and function was displayed in the centre and a copy was given to children and families availing of the services.

A national suite of policies and procedures had been introduced in May 2021 and was successfully implemented in the centre. The inspector found that records in the centre, such as care files, placement planning documentation, reportable events and child

protection referrals were well maintained and had appropriate oversight by the centre manager. All staff who spoke to the inspector were familiar with the centres therapeutic model of care and the individual approaches to children. Staff and management were knowledgeable and experienced in implementing the therapeutic model of care to ensure that children living at the centre could develop the knowledge and skills required to assist them in reaching their full potential.

Staffing resources in the centre ensured that children received a quality service from a consistent staff team. At the time of inspection there were 2.5 vacancies, but part time staff had increased their hours to meet this shortfall. The centre was staffed with a competent, experienced staff team who had implemented a considered and consistent approach in providing therapeutic model of care to the children. In addition to the two managers, the centre staff team consisted of four social care leaders, eight social care workers and two relief social care workers.

The staff rota was prepared by a social care leader two months in advance to ensure adequate staffing. The centre manager and deputy centre manager had oversight of the staff rota which was reviewed regularly and gaps could be identified and addressed in a timely manner. Generally there were three staff members on day-shifts and evening-shifts, and two staff scheduled to work during the night. The two managers were also in the centre on weekdays.

Staff felt supported by their managers in the performance of their duties. Social care workers who met with the inspector said that managers were accessible, both informally and formally through staff supervision, team and management meetings. There were no issues with staff retention and staff reported to being very happy in the centre and fulfilled in their roles. This ensured continuity of care for the children who came to the centre.

The managers operated a formal on-call system in case of an emergency in the absence of a national on-call system.

**Standard 5.3**

The residential centre has a publicly available statement of purpose that accurately and clearly describes the services provided.

The centre had a statement of purpose and function which clearly described the model of service that it delivered and the age range of children that the service catered for. There was also a children's version available, which provided children and families with information about life in the centre.

Judgment: Compliant

**Standard 6.1**

The registered provider plans, organises and manages the workforce to deliver child-centred, safe and effective care and support.

**Regulation 6: Staffing**

The management team ensured there were an appropriate numbers of staff with the necessary experience and competencies to meet the needs of the children.

Judgment: Compliant

**Quality and safety**

Children received care in the centre which was tailored to their specific needs. The staff team were experienced and skilled in identifying and addressing the needs of children, and they were creative in the ways in which they supported them. Inspectors found that staff were skilled and sensitive in responding to the children's needs. Inspectors observed that staff had respectful relationships with the children and interacted with them in a nurturing and positive manner. Staff were observed to role model respectful behaviours and re-direct children in an unobtrusive manner when behaviours required correction. Inspectors observed that children related to staff in a positive manner and that children not only appeared to feel relaxed in the company of staff but sought out their company and proximity.

The centre operated a holistic therapeutic model of care that was embedded in the service and tailored to meet each child's individual needs. The model of care focused on the development of healthy relationships which challenged and supported children without judging them. Children were involved in activities relevant to their interests and hobbies. Activities were planned weekly and on a daily basis, in line with the children's placement plans. Staff were proactive and innovative in supporting children to pursue their hobbies and interests.



Children had the opportunity to participate in the running of the centre in relation to the care they received. Regular children's meetings were held using a child friendly template, which enabled children to participate in the running of the centre as a group. In addition, children shared the task of minute-taking and chairing meetings to learn new skills. The minutes of the children's meetings were presented to the staff team meeting for discussion and feedback was provided to children's meetings.

Children were facilitated and supported to maintain appropriate contact with their families and significant others. Staff facilitated children to visit their families and significant others and supported them to maintain in regular contact through phone calls and social media. From a review of files, the inspector found that staff actively guided children to manage conflicts with family and significant others. Staff supported children and provided the necessary skills to resolve conflict to ensure that family contact could continue and relationships between parents, care giver and children could grow and be strengthened.

All children had up-to-date care plans and their individual goals were reviewed regularly or as required. Children who spoke to the inspector said that they were consulted on their care plans and that they had attended child in care review meetings and had their views heard and recorded. Two children told the inspector that they found the child in care review meetings "really *good and helpful*" and that they were listened to when they shared their views.

Placement plans were up-to-date at the time of inspection and were based on the goals identified in the care plans provided by the social work department. Children's placement plans were based on a therapeutic model of care. They were detailed and of good quality, outlining the children's needs and supports required to assist in meeting those needs including specialist services where required. Children who spoke to the inspector said they had contributed in the development of their placement plans and that they found the plans very helpful in developing skills. The inspector reviewed children's records and found that the aims and objectives of the placement plans were reflected and acted upon in key working sessions and planned activities. Inspectors reviewed 1:1 keyworking documents and found that the staff team were creative in providing supports in developing social and independent living skills as well as self care and protection skills. Social workers who spoke to the inspector said that children were presenting with more confidence, improved self care skills and newly developed skills from exposure to new and positive experiences and activities.

Behaviours were well-managed by staff. When behaviours required intervention, staff used positive behaviour approaches which were documented in children's case records. This involved an understanding of the reasons for the behaviour and considered the child as a whole, including their life history, physical health and emotional needs to implement ways of supporting the child. Managers and staff told the inspector that the model of care used in the centre encouraged positive self-worth, self-esteem building and focused on developing

existing strength and interests. In addition staff role-modelled positive behaviours and respectful interactions and used unobtrusive re-direction when children's behaviours required correction. Each young person had an individual crisis management plan and an absence management plan based on risk assessments. These set out the interventions to be used by staff.

Significant events were responded to appropriately. An inspector sampled some of the significant events records and noted these were appropriately managed with good oversight. There were two missing from care episodes in the twelve months prior to the inspection which related to non-adherence of curfews and were managed in line with policy. Records of these events were well maintained and significant events were reported to social workers, the monitoring officer, guardians' ad litem and parents/guardian. From a review of the center's reportable event log the inspector found that incidents for the centre were very low, but when they occurred they were notified in a timely manner. Social workers who spoke to inspectors said that they were notified of all significant events in an appropriate and timely manner.

While all staff were trained in a Tusla approved therapeutic model of managing challenging behaviours, physical interventions were not used within the centre. Children were not subject to any unnecessary restrictive procedures in the centre. The centre manager told the inspector that restrictive practice would only be utilised when an individual risk presented, was appropriately risk assessed and would be used for the shortest possible time with ongoing review. For example, in some instances, children were restricted in their use of mobile phones and access to social media. Where the centre had identified restrictive practice as necessary they had consulted with the child. The centres review process looked at the vulnerabilities and risks of each child and used this to identify opportunities to trial alternatives, i.e. analog phones, restricted social media access that still allowed for access to call friends and families and were less restrictive than an overall ban of mobile phone use.

Each child in the centre had an allocated social worker. The inspector reviewed children's files and found that the centre staff were in regular contact with children's social workers to provide information to follow up on issues that may have arisen during the week. Social workers who spoke to the inspector said that the centre kept them informed and described good communication with both staff and managers.

The therapeutic work undertaken focused on supporting children in the transition from childhood to adulthood. This was a key feature of placement planning in the centre. The inspector found that activities in the centre provided opportunities for children to develop independent living skills, appropriate to their age and development. This included independent living skills, such as cooking, baking, problem solving, exposure to new experiences, shopping and budgeting. The inspector found that staff sought opportunities

for children to develop independent living skills, appropriate to their age, development and capability and that this was incorporated into daily life and interactions.

Children's educational needs were outlined in care and placement plans and were supported by the staff team. Staff facilitated children to attend school, to complete home work, liaised with schools where required and children were encouraged in learning new skills and new experiences. In addition, staff facilitated and explored alternative educational paths for children who were not always suited to attend mainstream education to ensure that children were engaged in continuous learning and development.

Managers and staff were committed to the protection of the children. The centre had measures in place to promote the safety of children. Staff responded appropriately to child protection concerns by referring them to the relevant social work department in a timely manner and regularly liaised with the social work department in relation to these concerns. Staff and managers who spoke to the inspector had good knowledge of their obligations under Children First: National Guidance on the Protection and Welfare of Children (Children First), 2017. The centre had a safeguarding statement and a range of protective measures, which included completing collective and individual risk assessment in relation to any new risks that emerged. The inspector reviewed the child protection register and found it contained two child protection concerns which were open and were appropriately reported in line with Children First 2017.

Collective and individual risk assessments were a common feature of this centre in how it safeguarded children. Assessments reviewed by the inspector were found to be of good quality, and important in informing decisions about risk. Regular professional meetings were held where risks were identified which included social workers, guardian ad litem and other professionals. Minutes reviewed by the inspector showed that appropriate decisions were made to mitigate the risks.

Staff told inspectors that any concerns they had could be raised in the team meeting forum and that the managers were very approachable in the event that they needed to raise any issues with them. In sampling minutes of team meetings the inspector observed progress in how identified actions were appropriately followed up on.

The centre was clean, homely and provided a warm and inviting environment for the children. Both indoor and outdoor areas were tidy and well maintained. There was a large back yard with a swing and a basket ball hoop, outdoor seating and a shed. The grounds were well maintained and provided ample outdoor space for playing sports and outdoor games.

The centre comprised of three large en-suite bedrooms. There were two sitting rooms, two staff bedrooms, three offices, a large communal kitchen come dining room, a utility room, a pantry and a store room. The centre had been tastefully refurbished last June,

including a small extension that provided more space in the communal kitchen come dining room area. Children and staff who spoke to the inspector said that children had been actively involved in the architectural design and refurbishment of the centre and had made a significant contribution in making the centre comfortable and homely.

The centre had closed-circuit television (CCTV) in use at the front entrance, exterior and garden. There was appropriate signage visible in relation to the use of CCTV.

The safety statement for the centre was up-to-date and there was an identified health and safety representative. Appropriate fire precautions, including fire and smoke alarms, were in place. Fire safety training was impacted by COVID-19, however at the time of the inspection all staff had up-to-date training in fire safety. Staff completed fire checks as required and fire drills with children occurred on a regular basis. Vehicles used by the centre were maintained and serviced as required, with the relevant safety equipment held within each car.

The centre had interventions in place to support children's health and development needs. An inspector reviewed the health needs of three young people and found their needs were identified and addressed in a timely way. The centre had appropriate medication management systems in place. There was a medication management policy and procedure in place for the centre which guided staff in the administration, storage and management of medication in the centre. Medication management audits took place on a monthly basis, and the actions from these audits were completed. All staff had received appropriate training in medication management.

**Standard 1.5**

Each child develops and maintains positive attachments and links with family, the community, and other significant people in their lives.

**Regulation 8: Access arrangements**

Young people were facilitated to maintain appropriate contact with their families and significant others.

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Judgment: Compliant

**Standard 2.2**

Each child receives care and support based on their individual needs in order to maximise their wellbeing and personal development.

**Regulation 23: Care Plan****Regulation 24: Supervision and visiting of children****Regulation 25: Review of cases****Regulation 26: Special review**

Each young person had a placement plan and a placement support plan which was reflective of the person's individual needs as outlined in their most recent care plan. There was effective communication between the centre and the relevant social workers.

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Judgment: Compliant

**Standard 2.3**

The children's residential centre is homely, and promotes the safety and wellbeing of each child.

**Regulation 7: Accommodation****Regulation 12: Fire precautions****Regulation 13: Safety precautions****Regulation 14: Insurance**

All necessary safety and fire precautions were in place. Vehicles were well maintained with all necessary registration and insurance up to date. The centre provided a warm and comfortable environment for the children. There was an up-to-date safety statement in place. Appropriate fire precautions, including fire and smoke alarms, were in place. All staff had up-to-date training in fire safety.

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Judgment: Compliant

**Standard 2.6**

Each child is supported in the transition from childhood to adulthood.

Young people were helped and supported to prepare for adulthood. Activities provided and facilitated in the centre contributed to assisting children to develop appropriate skills into adulthood.

Judgment: Compliant

**Standard 3.1**

Each child is safeguarded from abuse and neglect and their care and welfare is protected and promoted.

Children were safeguarded in the centre and their care and welfare was protected and promoted. The centre had an up-to-date safeguarding statement and staff had a good understanding and working knowledge of Children First: National Guidance on the Protection and Welfare of Children (Children First), 2017.

Judgment: Compliant

**Standard 3.2**

Each child experiences care and support that promotes positive behaviour.

The centre had implemented a model of care that promoted positive behaviours and restrictive practices were not used in the centre. Relationships between staff and the children were respectful and children received the support and encouragement they required to engage in positive behaviour.

Judgment: Compliant

**Standard 4.2**

Each child is supported to meet any identified health and development needs.

**Regulation 9: Health care****Regulation 20: Medical examination**

The centre had interventions in place to support children's health and development needs. The centre had appropriate medication management systems in place. There was a medication management policy and procedure in place for the centre, which was adequate, up to date and fully implemented.

Judgment: Compliant

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

Standard Title	Judgment
<b>Capacity and capability</b>	
<b>Standard 5.3</b> The residential centre has a publicly available statement of purpose that accurately and clearly describes the services provided.	Compliant
<b>Standard 6.1</b> The registered provider plans, organises and manages the workforce to deliver child-centred, safe and effective care and support.	Compliant
<b>Quality and safety</b>	
<b>Standard 1.5</b> Each child develops and maintains positive attachments and links with family, the community, and other significant people in their lives.	Compliant
<b>Standard 2.2</b> Each child receives care and support based on their individual needs in order to maximise their wellbeing and personal development.	Compliant
<b>Standard 2.3</b> The children's residential centre is homely, and promotes the safety and wellbeing of each child.	Compliant
<b>Standard 2.6</b> Each child is supported in the transition from childhood to adulthood.	Compliant
<b>Standard 3.1</b> Each child is safeguarded from abuse and neglect and their care and welfare is protected and promoted.	Compliant
<b>Standard 3.2</b> Each child experiences care and support that promotes positive behaviour.	Compliant
<b>Standard 4.2</b> Each child is supported to meet any identified health and development needs.	Compliant