



**Health
Information
and Quality
Authority**

An tÚdarás Um Fhaisnéis
agus Cáilíocht Sláinte

Report of a Children's Residential Centre

Name of provider:	The Child and Family Agency
Tusla Region:	Dublin Mid Leinster
Type of inspection:	Announced
Date of inspection:	07 and 08 July 2020
Centre ID:	OSV 007766
Fieldwork ID	MON 0029903

About the centre

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

This was a recently renovated residential respite centre managed by the Child and Family Agency (Tusla). There were eight children registered for respite with the service at the time of inspection. According to the statement of purpose and function, the centre provided care interventions for children and young people who required respite from their current situation. The centre were able to accommodate up to four children between the ages of 5 and 17 years on respite on a nightly basis. The centre was also in a position to offer respite to a sibling or family group. The aim of the interventions was to build on the strength of the children and their families and support them to remain living in their local communities. The centre focused on the use of a therapeutic connection between children, their families and staff members in order to promote positive outcomes.

Number of young people on the date of inspection:	1
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To prepare for this inspection the inspector or inspectors 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 summarise 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
07 th July 2020	08:00hrs to 16:00hrs	Olivia O'Connell	Inspector
07 th July 2020	08:00hrs to 16:00hrs	Pauline Clarke Orohoe	Inspector
08 th July 2020	08:00hrs to 16:00hrs	Olivia O'Connell	Inspector
08 th July 2020	09:45hrs to 15:45hrs	Pauline Clarke Orohoe	Inspector

Views of children who use the service

Inspectors spoke with four children who attended the centre for respite. Children told inspectors that they were well cared for and felt safe when in the service. Staff were available to talk with them as they required. Children enjoyed staying in the centre and had good relationships with staff. They were provided with good care and lots of fun activities. Children told inspectors that they "can talk to staff if I'm not feeling safe" and also that "staff ask me what stuff I like to do, like the cinema or the arcade." Children told inspectors that they enjoyed taking part in activities such as the trampoline, cooking and baking with staff members. Children said that the centre was "a great place, get to do great fun stuff, other people should definitely come".

One of the children who had attended the centre on one previous occasion told inspectors that although "there is nothing wrong with it" and "they're lovely and all" the child did not wish to continue attending the centre.

Inspectors spoke with one parent who said that they felt their children were safe having respite, and that as a family they very much enjoyed their time in the centre. They described the staff as very welcoming and friendly saying that "the place was lovely and quiet. It gave us a great break".

Inspectors also spoke with two foster carers and four social workers over the phone during the course of the inspection. Social workers said that the service had provided good quality child-centred care. Social workers commented on the commitment that the staff had for children in their care. Both social workers and foster carers said that the service enhanced the children's care and safety plans by supporting their foster placements and providing respite for families in the community.

Capacity and capability

There was a management structure in place with clearly defined lines of accountability. The centre manager was experienced and competent. The centre manager was supported by an experienced and competent deputy manager and five social care leaders. Roles and responsibilities were delegated by the centre manager to the deputy centre manager, and these delegations were recorded and reviewed. The centre manager reported to the deputy regional manager, who had overall responsibility for the quality and safety of the services provided. The centre had established communication systems which ensured effective service delivery, such as management meeting, team meetings and handover meetings. The inspector found that minutes of meetings were not consistently signed off by staff members.

The staff team were experienced, and were committed to the children who attended the centre for respite. Managers and staff were diligent about keeping children safe in line with national policy, standards and legislation. The centre had adequate arrangements in place to provide managerial cover during the Covid-19 restrictions, and although this system remained in place at the time of the inspection, a formal long-term plan had not yet been agreed.

The centre had a statement of purpose that had been reviewed several times between January and June 2020 to respond to the needs of children during the Covid-19 crisis. This meant that children could be admitted on an emergency basis. At the time of inspection, the centre had returned to its original statement and function, as emergency provision was no longer required. The statement of purpose was comprehensive and accurately described the day-to-day operation of the centre and was approved by managers. A child friendly version of the statement of purpose was displayed on the premises, and was also given to children and families availing of the services provided by the centre.

Tusla had not updated the full suite of policies and procedures for children's residential centres since 2010. Strong leadership and governance arrangements are underpinned by current and relevant policies, procedures and guidelines. In their absence, the centre manager's capacity to monitor practice and performance effectively within an adequate framework was hindered.

There were effective systems in place to manage risk in the centre. The centre maintained a risk register which recorded and tracked centre risks. Risks were identified and described, and appropriate control measures were put in place to mitigate these risks. Risks assessments that had been completed included risks associated with the local area, impact of Covid 19 and the lack of updated policies and procedures. From reviewing children's files, inspectors found that good quality collective risk assessments were in place for individual children. The centre considered individual children's needs, and any impact on other children staying in the centre. While inspectors found that the risk register had been reviewed and updated, review dates were not recorded. This meant that timely reductions or increases in risk could not be measured effectively. This was brought to the attention of the centre manager during the inspection, and an updated risk register was provided.

There was a system in place for the notification of significant events. The centre saw an increase in the number of significant events while providing emergency placements between March and June 2020 which included for example, increase in incidences of children missing from care. Significant events were notified promptly, and managed in line with Tusla's national centralised notification system. There was independent monitoring of selected significant events in the centre through Tusla's significant event review group

(SERG) meetings for the service area. The centre had received feedback from the SERG meeting, stating that the incident reviewed had been well managed by the staff team.

The centre had a systematic approach to auditing which was tracked on an electronic spreadsheet on a 10 weekly cycle, with oversight from regional managers. Inspectors found that areas requiring action from the 10 weekly audits had been marked as completed, though had not been signed off by centre management.

The centre had a well maintained register of all children placed in the centre. The register provided clear details of the dates of admission and discharge of children to the service and the actual dates they were present in the centre.

Standard 5.2

The registered provider ensures that the residential centre has effective leadership, governance and management arrangements in place with clear lines of accountability to deliver child-centred, safe and effective care and support.

The inspector found that minutes of meetings were not consistently signed off by staff members, and the recording of dates when the risk register had been reviewed were unclear. While areas requiring action from the 10 weekly audits had been marked as completed, these actions had not been signed off by centre management.

Tusla had not updated the full suite of policies and procedures for children's residential centres since 2010. While the centre had a formal on-call arrangement in place at the time of inspection, the matter of agreeing a long term, sustainable on-call arrangement for the centre outside of business hours remained unresolved for a significant period of time.

Judgment: Substantially Compliant

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. There was also a children's version available, which provided children and families with information about life in the centre

Judgment: Compliant

Quality and safety

Children staying the centre received care and support that was based on their individual needs. The inspector found that appropriate care plans and child protection plans were available on the majority of files. The care plan for one child needed to be updated, and the centre had requested this from the child's social worker. One child's placement plan was being developed, and the remaining children had current placement plans in place. These were developed in line with the model of care provided within the centre, and were informed by the children's child protection plan or care plan in consultation with the social worker and family. Managers told staff that while the children were not involved in developing the placement plan on admission to the centre, there is a process in place to ensure they contribute to reviews of these plans.

Inspectors found that there was good communication between the centre and the relevant people in the children's lives. Social workers described good communication and collaboration between themselves and the centre manager and staff. Social workers received daily updates from staff during a child's stay within the centre, and were confident that they would be advised of any incidents or concerns. Where appropriate, the centre manager was included in care planning and safety planning meetings. Staff ensured that parents and or guardians were consulted and involved in decision-making processes, and were informed of progress during the child's stay in the centre.

Children were supported by staff to take part in activities that interested them. Discussions took place at children's meetings about activities and meal planning. The centre manager told inspectors that as children came to the centre on different days, the children's meeting process was under review to ensure meetings coincided with their planned overnights. Activities such as baking, fishing and cycling had been organised with the children and families who were staying in the centre.

Staff within the centre reported child protection concerns in a timely and appropriate manner to the relevant social work department. Inspectors found evidence that the centre manager also followed up with the social work department to get the outcome of reported concerns. All staff had up-to-date training and were aware of their responsibilities under Children First (2017). The centre managed children's absconds well in line with Tusla policy. The centre had systems in place to safeguard children, and ensure they were protected from harm. Staff were also aware of how to make a protected disclosure.

While the centre had not received any complaints at the time of the inspection, children had been provided with information about the complaints process. Information on the complaints process was displayed in the centre, and the children had access to a comments and complaints box in one of the communal rooms within the centre.

The care provided to the children staying in the centre was child-centred. The centre was implementing a national model of care which focused on understanding the children within the context of their overall life experiences. Children's needs were assessed and individual interventions were developed to meet these needs. These interventions were reflected in the children's behaviour support and individual crisis management plans.

The majority of staff were trained in an approved approach to managing behaviours that challenge. Training had been scheduled to take place in April 2020 for two staff who required full training, and also for staff who needed to update their training in this area. The centre manager told the inspector that due to Covid 19 training had been suspended, and the centre was awaiting an update as to when the training will resume. In the interim, staff were availing of online training on de-escalation skills.

Restrictive practices were not routinely used within the centre, and when they were, they were appropriately risk assessed, recorded and reviewed. Restrictive practices permitted in the centre included room searches and the use of physical restraint. These were found to be implemented only as required, based on presenting risks during the period when the centre was providing emergency placements. The centre did not have a clear process in place to ensure that parents and or guardians were aware that the use of physical restraint was permitted within the centre. The centre manager told inspectors that while this information was included on the individual plans for the children, this had not been explicitly discussed with parents and or guardians.

Managers and staff who spoke to the inspector explained that children attend the centre for respite voluntarily, and can be brought home during their stay if they no longer wish to be there. The centre manager told inspectors that the social worker agreed a suitable place of return for the child with the parents and or guardians, in the event that the parents and or guardians were not available. Social workers told inspectors that staff used encouragement to support the children in managing their behaviour while on respite.

Inspectors found that the health, wellbeing and development of each child was promoted and protected by the staff within the centre. Children's mental and physical health and wellbeing was promoted through direct work with children on relevant topics such as keeping safe during the Covid 19 crisis, internet safety, and physical activity and self-care skills. Children were asked their views on the food and meals they would like within the centre when they came on respite, and they were involved in cooking activities during their stay.

Interventions and supports provided by the centre were informed by assessments relating to the children's health and medical needs. The centre had copies of relevant medical and health information available within the children's files. Inspectors found that staff had also attended specific training in order to support children's healthcare needs while on respite.

Staff and managers told inspectors that the provision of respite services to the children was included on children's care plans and child protection plans as a therapeutic support to the family. The centre also visited the children and families in their homes to introduce the centre to the children, and support them to attend for respite in line with the recommendations of their care plan.

Children continued to be cared for by their own GP while on respite, and the centre had appropriate medication management systems in place. The centre manager had oversight of these processes, and completed medication management audits on a monthly basis which were effective, and had identified training deficiencies, which were being addressed. Staff maintained regular contact with the children's parents and or carers to keep up-to-date on their medication and healthcare needs.

Children staying in the centre were attending educational and training placements within their local communities. The centre supported these placements by providing transport for children where appropriate, and by helping children with homework when staying in the centre. Staff told inspectors that they were also introducing the Gaisce awards programme to children as an additional educational opportunity during their time in the centre.

Standard 2.2

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

Children were not involved in developing their initial placement plans.

Judgment: Substantially Compliant

Standard 3.1

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

Staff within the centre reported child protection concerns in a timely and appropriate manner to the relevant social work department. Staff and managers had up-to-date training in Children First (2017), and demonstrated appropriate knowledge of this aspect of practice.

Judgment: Compliant

Standard 3.2

Each child experiences care and support that promotes positive behaviour.

Staff required refreshers training, with two staff requiring the full training related to an approved model of managing behaviours.

Judgment: Compliant

Standard 4.1 The health, wellbeing and development of each child is promoted, protected and improved.
Interventions and supports provided by the centre were informed by assessments relating to the children’s health and medical needs. The centre had copies of relevant medical and health information available within the children’s files. Staff had attended specific training in order to support children’s healthcare needs while on respite.
Judgment: Compliant
Standard 4.2 Each child is supported to meet any identified health and development needs.
The centre had interventions in place to support children’s health and development needs. The centre had appropriate medication management systems in place. The centre manager had oversight of these processes.
Judgment: Compliant
Standard 4.3 Each child is provided with educational and training opportunities to maximise their individual strengths and abilities.
All of the children were attending educational and training placements which were supported by the centre when the children were on respite. Staff were introducing the Gaisce awards programme to children as an additional educational opportunity during their time in the centre.
Judgment: Compliant

Appendix 1 - Full list of standards considered under each dimension

Standard Title	Judgment
Capacity and capability	
<p>Standard 5.2 The registered provider ensures that the residential centre has effective leadership, governance and management arrangements in place with clear lines of accountability to deliver child-centred, safe and effective care and support.</p>	Substantially Compliant
<p>Standard 5.3 The residential centre has a publicly available statement of purpose that accurately and clearly describes the services provided.</p>	Compliant
Quality and safety	
<p>Standard 2.2 Each child receives care and support based on their individual needs in order to maximise their wellbeing and personal development.</p>	Substantially Compliant
<p>Standard 3.1 Each child is safeguarded from abuse and neglect and their care and welfare is protected and promoted.</p>	Compliant
<p>Standard 3.2 Each child experiences care and support that promotes positive behaviour.</p>	Compliant
<p>Standard 4.1 The health, wellbeing and development of each child is promoted, protected and improved.</p>	Compliant
<p>Standard 4.2 Each child is supported to meet any identified health and development needs.</p>	Compliant
<p>Standard 4.3 Each child is provided with educational and training opportunities to maximise their individual strengths and abilities.</p>	Compliant