

TUSLA REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015CC155

Name of Service: First Steps Creche

Address of Service: Tir Cluain,
Knockgriffin,
Midleton,
Co Cork

Email Address: firststepsmidleton@gmail.com

Name of Registered Service Provider: Ms. Rosaleen Cotter

Type of service registered: Full Day Care ☒

Date(s) of Inspection: 0 5 0 3 2 0 2 1

No of Pre-School Children present during Inspection: AM 16 PM 15

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: Early Years Inspectorate,
Early Years Services,
Administration Building,
St Mary's Health Campus,
Gurranabraher,
Cork

Inspection undertaken by : Ms. M O Reilly
Title: Early Years Inspector

Areas which were the subject of this Inspection		
Governance	Health, Welfare and Development	Safety

Authority to Inspect
The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Conditions If Applicable Not Applicable

Description of Service	First Steps Creche is an established privately owned early years' service in operation since 2009. This early years' service provides education and care to preschool children from 0 to 6 years offering a choice of sessional, part time or full day care service. A school age service is also provided. Its current opening hours are from 07:30 to 18:00 hours each day Monday to Friday. First Steps Creche operates from a purpose built child care facility located on the entrance to a residential estate in the outskirts of Midleton town, Co Cork. Four of the six early years' service rooms located on the ground floor were in operation on day of inspection; a Baby Room, a Wobbler Room, a Toddler Room, and a Montessori Room. A Preschool room and a Montessori Room and the rooms on the first floor were not in operation on day of inspection The service has a designated separate sleep room for the babies and wobblers. The Baby ,Wobbler and Toddler rooms have a separate designated outdoor play area to the Preschool and Montessori Rooms
Staffing	There were 11 adults present on the day of inspection and of these 10 were working directly with the children. The registered provider is service based.
Methodology	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. The findings on inspection are based on; • Information obtained through examination of documentation • Direct observation • Discussion with relevant staff This inspection was unannounced and focused on 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. A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19 health welfare and development of child and regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child. As a result, the scope of the inspection the care rooms inspected included Baby, Wobbler, Toddler and one Montessori Room and did not include one Preschool room and one Montessori Room as they were not in operation at time of inspection.

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	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.
Additional Information	An Immediate Action Notice was issued from the Registration Inspection Manager regarding the absence of an instantaneous supply of thermostatically controlled hot water in the wash hand basins in the children's toilets and nappy changing facilities in the service. A referral was made to the County Fire Safety Officer seeking clarity on the absence of an emergency fire exit door directly from the newly located sleep room area designated for the 0 to 2-year-old children in the service.
Acknowledgements	The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider/person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

GOVERNANCE

Part III - Management and Staff

Regulation 9 - Management and Recruitment

- (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.
- (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

- (9)
- (2) There were 10 new members of staff employed at the service since the last inspection carried out at the service on the 11th and 12th March 2019. The inspector focussed on this sample of files during the inspection.
- (1)(a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person assigned deputise as required.
- (b) The registered provider/person in charge was on the premises when the inspector arrived on the premises and remained for the duration of the inspection.
- (9)(2)
- (a) There were 10 references on file from past employers in respect of the 10 adults.
 - (b) There were 10 references on file from sources other than previous employers.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of each of the 10 adults.
 - (d) Police vetting was available in respect of 8 adults that had lived outside the jurisdiction for six months or more while over the age of 18 years.
- Curriculum Vitae were available in respect of each of the 10 adults.

Part III - Management and Staff

Regulation 9 - Management and Recruitment

- (7)
- (a) There was written documentation signed by each adult to demonstrate that they had received appropriate information and training on the services revised policies and procedures in relation to Covid19 including:
- Infection Control Policy
 - Risk Management Policy
 - Incident Plan Policy
 - Training on correct procedures for hand washing
 - Revised drop off and collection procedures
 - Revised cleaning schedules

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 written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 were in place for the service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A risk management policy was in place which identified any potential risks and the controls required to reduce or eliminate the risk. The policy had been updated in respect of the Covid19 pandemic. • The policy on infection control had been updated to include infection control measures for Covid19. |
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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.*

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| Compliance Information: | <p>(1) The person in charge ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children at all times.</p> <p>(2) On the day of the inspection there were 10 adults working across the 4 care rooms with 16 children present. During the period of inspection, the ratio of staff to children was maintained as per the regulations and an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children in each care room.</p> |
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Part III - Management and Staff

Regulation 11 -Staffing Levels

Baby room

There were 4 children aged less than 12 months old with 2 adults' in attendance.

Wobbler room

The 4 children in attendance were aged between 1 and 2 years with 1 adult in attendance.

Toddler room-

There were 3 children aged between 2 and 3 years with 2 adults in attendance.

Montessori Room

There were 5 children aged over 3 years with 2 adults in attendance.

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:

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS AROUND CHILDREN:

- There were 4 care rooms evident where adults and children played together. The Baby and Wobbler care rooms were considered one pod the other rooms did not mix with the children or adults in the other pods/care rooms. There were two outdoor play areas. The babies, wobblers and toddlers used the designated outdoor play area located to the side of the premises and it was noted that each of the pods/ groups were provided with designated periods of time to play outdoors independent from the other 2 pods.
- The Key person system was evident in the service which enabled children to form secure relationships with the staff caring for them and to facilitate easier contact tracing should there be a case of Covid19 in the service. The person in charge informed the Inspector that the rosters had been adjusted to ensure continuity of staff with the same group of children.
- The adults were observed to be caring in their interactions with the children and were observed to be interested in the children's activities and listened and spoke to them using soft tones of voice and positive language.
- Age appropriate posters were displayed on the premises to help children adapt to hand hygiene and other measures related to Covid19.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, Welfare and Development of Child

- Parents and guardians were welcomed at drop off times and collection times. However, the service had implemented changes such as pod had their own access door and using the outdoor play area at drop off and collection times in the Baby, Wobbler and Toddler Room to avoid the congregating of parents and guardians.
- The service operated in partnership with parents by providing them with care reports completed by using an electronic application by staff in relation to the care provided to children and these were accessible to the respective parents or guardians regarding their child.
- Parents were updated electronically regarding the amended policies and response plan for the service in relation to Covid19.
- Information and posters were displayed on the premises and on the notice boards to promote staff and children to practice safe hand hygiene and other measures related to Covid19.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- The full day care service was operated from a purpose built facility. The service comprised of 5 care rooms, sanitary accommodation areas, one sleep room and an outdoor play area.
- Each care room was furnished with a supply of adequate and varied play materials suited to the age and stage of development of the children in the respective rooms. The Person in Charge informed the Inspector that the quantity of play materials in each care room had deliberately been reduced to minimise the risk of cross infection and to facilitate easier cleaning.
- During the inspection four of the care rooms were inspected namely the Baby room, the Wobbler Room, the Toddler room and Montessori room. It was noted that each of the care rooms were bright, clean and attractively laid out for use by the children.
- The shelving was set low to display play materials which were mostly plastic and wooden in nature and easily washable. The low shelving facilitated easy access to the materials by the children.
- Defined interest areas were available to the children including reading area, construction area, shop, home corner; manipulative play area, Montessori area, and rest area.
- The Baby room had adult seating and defined interest areas for the children including soft mats, sufficient clear space, hand held toys and wall mirrors that adhere to safety regulations.
- The Wobblers, Toddlers and Montessori Room were observed playing in the outdoor play area which was secured by walls and gates. The designated outdoor area for the babies, wobblers and toddlers was resourced with age appropriate outdoor play equipment such as a slides, ride on toys, see saw toys and a climbing frame.

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 main entrance door leading into the building was adequately secured.
- A hand sanitising station had been set up inside the main door and a hand sanitiser was available in each of the care rooms in operation.
- Each care room had its own cleaning agents which were stored out of children's reach.

INFECTION CONTROL:

- A system was in place for staff to confirm to the person in charge that they were well and did not have any Covid19 related sicknesses at the start of each shift. The staff had been advised in relation to the requirement to self-isolate where appropriate.
- The person in charge and staff were aware of what to do if a child or adult became symptomatic while in the service and had a plan in place to move the child or adult to the isolation area whilst maintaining social distancing of 2 meters.
- There were designated isolation areas located in the service in rooms currently not occupied should a child or adult become unwell and have to be monitored whilst awaiting to leave the premises.
- A supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was available and used when required by staff in the service which included hand sanitizers, disposable single-use plastic aprons, non-powdered disposable gloves, shoe coverings and face masks.
- The care rooms in the service were cleaned each evening and a record of cleaning was maintained.
- A supply of cleaning agents and equipment were available in each care room of the service.
- Mouthing toys were individual to each child and not transferred between children, they were removed immediately after use and sterilised.
- Soothers and bottles were individual to each baby, wobbler and toddler and were labelled individually. Children's soothers were stored in individually labelled containers and were regularly sterilised. The babies' bottles were stored in the provided fridge.
- All toys/materials/equipment available to the children were cleaned each evening.
- Each child and adult had a spare set of clothes on site in case the clothes they were wearing became contaminated.
- The Sleep room adjacent to the Baby room contained 14 standard cots with safety mattresses. The eight children under two years in attendance all had their own designated cot.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child

- Bed linen was not shared between children and was washed regularly at the highest temperature suited to the fabric. Laundry facilities were available on the premises.
- Play rooms in operation were adequately ventilated as all had openable windows.
- Personal waste including used tissues and all cleaning waste was appropriately disposed of in foot operated pedal bins available in the Wobbler, Toddler and Montessori rooms
- A supply of liquid soap, paper towels and hand sanitizer was available throughout the service.
- Adults were aware of the correct measures for coughing and sneezing and therefore could help children follow this process if required.
- There was evidence that the service had implemented measures to maintain physical distancing by displaying clear signage on the premises and at the entrance doors. Parents and guardians were informed to go to designated doors at collection times to avoid congregating.
- Visitors or external persons had been restricted in the service.
- The registered provider ensured that complete and accurate daily records of attendance were kept for all children and adults to the service so that if required contact tracing could easily be carried out.

SAFE SLEEP:

- There was one separate sleep room. There were an adequate number of standard cots with safety mattresses and suitable bed linen available for children under 2 years.
- The older pre-school child's needs were met during a planned sleeping period when stackable beds were set up in the Toddler Room. There were a sufficient number of stacking beds available with designated suitable bed linen for children over 2 years who wanted a sleep while attending the service.

Non-Compliance Information:

GENERAL SAFETY:

1. The low level glass areas in the door of the Wobbler Room and on the two newly installed doors in the corridor were not fitted with visibility strips to reduce the potential risk of injury to the child.
2. A sink bowl stored loosely on the floor of the Toddler nappy changing room has the potential risk of causing injury to a child.
3. One of the glued carpet covering seating in the play bus in the Toddler Room was frayed with a lot of long loose carpet threads that had the potential risk of strangulation.
4. Stacks of chairs were stored in some of the care rooms and in the corridors which posed a risk of injury to a child.
5. There were no child proof locks on the fridge door located at child height in the Baby, Wobbler and Toddler Rooms.

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6. There were no child proof locks on the newly installed dish washers located at child height in each of the four care rooms in operation.
7. There was foam protruding from the adult leather chair in the Baby Room that had the potential to cause a choking injury to a child.
8. Due to recent storm damage a large part of the outdoor play area was in poor repair - A large timber climbing frame was no longer safely anchored to the ground and the artificial grass surface under the climbing frame and the surrounding surface area had been lifted and was now left in large folds which were considered a trip hazard in its present state.
9. The front gate into the baby wobbler play area was not adequately secured at time of inspection.
10. A number of sleeping cots not in use were stored beside each other in the sleep room, and thus may hamper effective fire evacuation procedure.
11. In the outdoor play area with the tarmac surface for the Montessori and Preschool Rooms the children had access to an open grid lock drain and the surface over the manhole covered area was uneven and considered a trip hazard in its present state.

INFECTION CONTROL:

12. There was no thermostatically controlled hot water available for hygienic hand washing in the wash hand basins in the adult and children's toilets and nappy changing facilities. This was especially concerning given that the service was operating during the Covid-19 pandemic and that hot water is required for effective handwashing. The service had already received a non-compliance on this issue on the last two previous inspections dated 23rd and 24th February 2017 and on the 11th and 12th March 2019. Following the 2019 report, the Person in Charge stated via CAPA that daily risk assessments would be carried out to monitor the hot water temperature, to ensure availability throughout the premise, however, this was not found to be in practice on day of inspection.

An Immediate Action Notice was issued from regarding the absence of thermostatically controlled hot water available for hygienic hand washing in the wash hand basins for adults and children in the toilet facilities on day of inspection.

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	13. The water pressure was low, running water insufficient, in the wash hand basin in the toilet facility designated for the Toddler room. This increased the risk of cross infection due to lack of sufficient water for proper hand washing technique. 14. The sleep room was cluttered with the following; • There were seven other cots not in use at time of inspection stored beside each other in the sleep room. With the cots stored so close the potential risk of cross contamination was increased. • There was play equipment stored in the cots and on the floor of the sleep room. • Adult and child sized chairs not in use were stored in the sleep room 15. The refuse bins located in the lobby of the Baby Room were not pedal operated. 16. The play equipment and materials in the outdoor play area for the Baby, Wobbler and Toddler Rooms were not cleaned after each pod/group and a record of cleaning was not maintained. 17. While staff stated the frequently touched surface areas were cleaned regularly during the day in the Baby and Wobbler Rooms, a record of cleaning was not maintained.
Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider	In the written response the registered provider/person in charge has stated the following: <u>CORRECTIVE ACTION</u> GENERAL SAFETY: 1. Visibility strips are now placed on all low-level glass. 2. The sink has now been installed in the Toddler nappy changing room and is in use. 3. The play bus has been removed as the materials to complete the repairs cannot be purchased at this time. 4. A new policy is in place in relation to the storing of chairs when not in use. Chairs not in use are stored in an area that children have no access to. 5. Child proof locks have now been fitted on the fridge door located in the Baby, Wobbler and Toddler Rooms. 6. Child proof locks have now been fitted on the newly installed dish washers located at child height in each of the four care rooms in operation. 7. The adult's chair has been removed for repair and replaced. 8. The garden is in the process of been repaired by a specialist in the area and the registered provider stated in her written response that works will be complete within two weeks.

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9. An additional lock has been put on the gate and staff are required to check that the gate is adequately secured prior to the children access to the outdoor play area.
10. To ensure safe fire evacuation procedure from the newly located sleep room, all items not in use in the sleep room including sleep cots have been removed.
11. The iron grid plate drain cover and uneven surface around the manhole cover area are now covered and secured, as an artificial grass surface cover has been installed and placed over both hazards.

INFECTION CONTROL:

12. A Plumber was called and the hot water issues in the service have been resolved and there is thermostatically controlled hot water available for hygienic hand washing in all wash hand basins.
13. A plumber checked the pressure of the water and this issue is now resolved.
14. All items have been removed from the sleep room and the cots are now placed in the correct position. Going forward no items will be stored in the sleep room. This was temporary due to changes to the layout.
15. These bins have been replaced with pedal bins.
16. The staff in each pod clean the outdoor play equipment immediately after use and a record of the daily cleaning is maintained and signed.
17. A record of cleaning is now maintained of the frequently touched surfaces in the Baby and Wobbler Rooms.

PREVENTIVE ACTION

GENERAL SAFETY:

Point 1 to 11 inclusive

The person in charge/designated person of each the pods/ rooms are required going forward to complete a daily safety risk assessment. The daily check sheet is a plan to ensure staff complete checks throughout the day in each of the play rooms this will include child proof locks are in place, items in poor repair removed or sent for repair or replaced and will include checking the outdoor play area that it is adequately secured. The assessment record will be signed off once completed. The registered provider or deputy will review this record daily.

INFECTION CONTROL:

Points 12 to 17 inclusive

All the room/pods are monitoring daily to ensure constant supply of thermostatically controlled hot water.

New daily check sheet is to be completed by staff in each pod. The daily check sheet is a plan to ensure staff complete checks throughout the day and sign off once completed. The list will include checking the sleep room and that a record of daily cleaning in each room is maintained.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child

EVIDENCE SUBMITTED

GENERAL SAFETY:

1. The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.
2. The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.
3. The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.
4. The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence and a copy of the policy regarding the storing of chairs was submitted
5. Photographic evidence of the type of child proof lock on the fridge door in each play room was submitted.
6. Photographic evidence of the type of child proof lock on the dishwasher door in each of the play rooms was submitted.
7. The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.
8. The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.
9. Photographic evidence of the lock on the gate was submitted.
10. Photographic evidence of the sleep room demonstrated that the layout of the sleep room was allowing for a safer fire evacuation.
11. Photographic evidence of the artificial grass surface mat cover placed over both hazards was submitted.

INFECTION CONTROL:

12. Photographic evidence of the invoice from the Plumber stating the work he had completed was submitted.
13. Photographic evidence of the invoice from the Plumber stating the work he completed in the service was submitted.
14. Photographic evidence of the sleep room showed a large number of standards cots are currently being used in the sleep room to cater for the number of children under two years that require a sleep and the photo demonstrated that the items that were stored in the sleep room on day of inspection had been removed.
15. Photographic evidence of the lidded pedal bin was submitted.
16. Photographic evidence of the daily cleaning of itemised outdoor play equipment was submitted.
17. Photographic evidence of the cleaning of frequently touched surfaces in the named rooms was submitted.

Summary Comment:

Correspondence and evidence were reviewed in the office of the Early Years Inspectorate.

The registered provider in her written response has stated the non-compliant issues have been addressed. The requirements have been met. These issues will be checked on the next inspection.

Additional Significant Risk(s) to Children Additional Significant Risk Identified

Regulation 8 – Change in Circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3) notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C (2) of the Act or regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Non-Compliance Information:	The registered provider had not informed the Agency that since October 2020 the named person in charge was no longer working in the service. The registered provider was now the person in charge of the service.
Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider	In the written response the registered provider/person in charge has stated the following: <u>CORRECTIVE ACTION</u> (1) (3) A change in circumstances form has been completed and sent to the registration office. <u>PREVENTIVE ACTION</u> The registered provider will notify the registration office of the Early Years Department 60 days prior to any change in the service detail on the register <u>EVIDENCE SUBMITTED</u> The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.
Summary Comment	Correspondence and evidence were reviewed in the office of the Early Years Inspectorate. The registered provider in her written response has stated the non-compliant issue has been rectified. The requirement has been met.

Additional Significant Risk(s) to Children Additional Significant Risk Identified

Regulation 29 Premises

A Registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are
(c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated
(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired,
(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities

Non-Compliance Information:	(c) The ventilation in all areas where mechanical ventilation was in operation (adult and children toilet facilities and nappy changing facilities and lobbies) were not adequately cleaned as all the vents were covered in dust particles. (e) There was a persistent malodour in the Toddler toilet room on day of inspection. The wall of this room in one area at child height was damp to touch and a visible hole was in another area of the wall. The registered provider when asked stated there was a history of a water leak in this area. She was advised not to use this children's toilet facility until issue was rectified. In the meantime, an alternate children's toilet located nearby was recommended for use by the children that were in attendance in the Toddler Room.
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Additional Significant Risk(s) to Children Additional Significant Risk Identified

Regulation 29 Premises

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider	In the written response the registered provider/person in charge has stated the following: <u>CORRECTIVE ACTION</u> (c) All vents noted on this report have been cleaned. (e) This was caused by a leak in a water pipe, this has been repaired. <u>PREVENTIVE ACTION</u> New daily check sheet is to be completed by staff in each pod. The daily check sheet is a plan to ensure staff complete checks throughout the day and sign off once completed. The list will include checking the mechanical ventilation is in a proper state of repair in each room. <u>EVIDENCE SUBMITTED</u> (c) The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence. (e) The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.
Summary Comment	Correspondence and evidence were reviewed in the office of the Early Years Inspectorate. The registered provider in her written response has stated the non-compliant issues have been rectified. The requirements have been met. This will be checked on the next inspection.