



# Report of a Designated Centre Special Care Unit

Name of designated centre:	Crannog Nua
Name of provider:	The Child and Family Agency
Address of centre:	Dublin
Type of inspection:	Announced
Date of inspection:	29 September 2020
Centre ID:	OSV - 0004216
Fieldwork ID	MON 0030425

## About the designated centre

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

In Crannog Nua Special Care Centre the young people are detained under a High Court order for a short-term period of stabilisation when their behaviour poses a real and substantial risk of harm to their life, health, safety, development or welfare. Crannog Nua Special Care Centre caters for both male and female, aged between 11 and 17 years and the group living units are mixed gender.

Our aim is to provide a safe, caring and therapeutic environment where young people learn to reduce their risk taking behaviours to develop their wellbeing to enable and support the young person to return to a less secure placement as soon as possible, based on the needs of that young person.

Our objective is the provision of effective and safe services designed to address the underlying emotional disturbance; to reduce unsafe and risky behaviours by the young person and to help with successful reintegration into less secure settings in the community. This requires the design of an individual programme, which promotes inclusion of the multi-disciplinary team while simultaneously creating a powerful therapeutic milieu within the programme.

The campus is described as a secure unit meaning it is locked and the young people are not allowed to leave without permission. The young people that we provide a service to have usually had a long history of challenging and risk taking behaviour before entry into the special care programme, the young person must be deemed inappropriate to an intervention in a less secure setting due to the seriousness of the risk presented by their presentation.

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

Current registration end date:	11 November 2021
Number of children on the date of inspection:	6

## How we inspect

To prepare for this inspection the inspector or inspectors reviewed all information about this centre. This included any previous inspection findings, registration information and information submitted by the provider or person in charge 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 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 regulations and the dimension that are reported under can be seen in Appendix 1.

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

Date	Times of inspection	Inspector	Role
29 September 2020	09:00hrs to 17:00hrs	Jane Mc Carroll Leanne Crowe	Inspector Inspector
30 September 2020	09:00hrs to 17:00hrs	Jane Mc Carroll Leanne Crowe	Inspector Inspector

## Views of children who use the service

This inspection found that children received care and support which was tailored to their individual needs. The staff team were creative in their approach to providing care to children. Children experienced appropriate interventions. Interventions and care practices afforded to children were continuously reviewed and monitored to ensure their effectiveness. There was a focus and drive to equip and empower children with skills for self care and protection, and this supported children to move on from the special care unit successfully and confidently.

Inspectors were onsite in the centre over a two day period, and had an opportunity to meet with children and staff, and observe interactions between them, both in the residential units and outside on the campus grounds. Children who did not meet with inspectors, contributed to the inspection by completing questionnaires. Inspectors also had an opportunity to talk with a child who had left the centre but continued to attend the campus school. Inspectors also talked with family members, staff and external professionals by phone and video-conferencing.

The inspector observed warm interactions between children and staff members, which clearly demonstrated positive professional relationship building by the staff team. The inspector heard some appropriate humour, laughter and fun occurring between children and staff in the centre. Children were accompanied by staff while they walked around the grounds of the special care unit. Some children were observed walking to the school, and others were leaving the campus to attend an appointment.

All children described feeling safe in the special care unit. They said that they liked the staff. One child said that 'some staff are grand, they sit down and listen and if I feel worried I can go to them.' Another child said they enjoyed being in the company of staff. Social workers and guardians ad litem provided positive accounts of the safeguarding arrangements in place in the centre and they were confident that the children received good quality safe care.

Children enjoyed a range of activities in the centre. One child told inspectors that they had fun with the staff, especially when they engaged in activities such as cycling, badminton and basketball. Another child said that they went camping with staff as part of their Gaisce award, and this was a really positive experience for them. Some children also said that they would like an opportunity to socialise with one another more often. One child who met with the inspector said that some of the units on campus had more facilities than others and they would like this to be addressed. For example, they said that some units had kitchen areas which were more accessible to children than others. Children also told the inspector that they missed having access to social media but they

could understand the reasons why this was not possible. The inspector was informed that due to the recent outbreak of COVID-19 in the centre, infection prevention and control requirements were in place in the centre, and this included minimising and preventing the crossover of children and staff in the centre as required.

The individual units in the centre where children lived were spacious and bright. Communal rooms and bedrooms were homely. There were soft furnishings, plants and storage units in the rooms. There were personalised wall murals, art work, pictures and certificates which the children were awarded on display. Each unit had its own kitchen and some of these had been refurbished since the last inspection.

Children spoke to the inspector about their experiences of keyworking. Keyworking sessions are times when staff work closely with children to help to identify and resolve challenges or difficulties which may compromise their safety and welfare. One child told the inspector that they had learned ways to manage their emotions with the help of their key worker. Another child told the inspector that they learned that their previous lifestyle was similar to being on a 'cliff edge'. They said that they were now learning ways to move away from this danger through keyworking sessions. Another child told the inspector that they were not satisfied with their keyworking sessions but they felt that this was because they had no plan for moving on from the special care unit. Children's guardians ad litem also spoke positively about the individual work and interventions with children in the special care unit.

Children knew how to make a complaint. They all said that they could speak to somebody if they had any concerns. One child said that they used the formal complaints process in the centre and they were satisfied with the outcome of their complaint.

Some children were unhappy about the length of their stay in the special care unit. One child said that it was boring being there for six months, and that they felt that they could not get on with their life. Another told the inspector that 'the system isn't good' and that they were 'still waiting on a placement.' Although child in care reviews happened, children stated that 'they could not trust them', as they had remained in special care longer than planned.

Children had good contact with their families and key professionals' involved in their care, and regular visits. One child told the inspector that their social worker was coming to have lunch with them in the unit and that their family had visited them recently. Another child said that the staff brought them to visit their grandmother and they really liked these visits. One parent told inspectors that the staff team involved them in all aspects of their child's care and kept them up to date on all relevant information.

## Capacity and capability

The special care unit was previously inspected in December 2019, when a risk-based inspection was carried out following changes to the physical premises of the centre, which had not been formally notified to HIQA. A satisfactory action plan to address non-compliances was put in place by the registered provider at that time.

This current inspection was carried out to monitor ongoing regulatory compliance with selected regulations, some of which had been judged as non-compliant previously. Inspectors found that governance arrangements at a local level in the special care unit had strengthened. There was effective leadership, governance and management arrangements in place. There were clear lines of accountability to deliver child-centred, safe and effective care and supports to children.

There was a defined management structure. There was a person in charge, suitably qualified and experienced, who was responsible for the operational management of the centre. She reported to the director of the service, who is a person participating in the management of the centre. There was a national lead for children's residential services, who fills the role of registered provider representative for the designated centre. The person in charge was supported by three social care managers to whom she delegated specific responsibilities.

Inspectors found that there was an experienced social care management team in the centre who were competent and assured of their roles. Each social care manager was assigned to one residential unit which could accommodate up to four children. There were deputy social care managers, social care leaders and social care workers also assigned to each unit. There were strong management systems in place to ensure that unit managers and deputy unit managers had effective oversight of the care practices in the units. Managers were present and available in the centre.

Inspectors found that the staff team were held to account for their practice. There was a culture of openness and transparency. The person in charge implemented and had oversight of monitoring systems to ensure quality of care to children, professionalism of her staff team and compliance with national standards and regulations. For example, there was a new staff practice register to ensure monitoring and review of practice and an auditing system to ensure compliance with regulations.

There were other effective monitoring arrangements in place to ensure that the care afforded to children was evaluated and reviewed through multi-disciplinary meetings, consultations with other professionals, senior management meetings and significant event review group meetings. Care practices were assessed in order to evaluate their effectiveness. This approach promoted best outcomes for children. Inspectors found that

staff supervision supported and enhanced staff competence. However, the frequency of supervision required improvement to ensure that it occurred in line with centre policy.

The special care unit was registered to accommodate a maximum of 12 children in the centre at any one time. The special care unit has had increased capacity to accommodate up to nine children in 2020, compared to five children in 2019. This was due to the expansion and growth of the staff team and good levels of retention and recruitment of staff to the centre. Inspectors found a real drive, led out by the management team, to develop and grow a cohesive and experienced staff team, in order to ensure that the special care unit provided good quality care to children in accordance with the conditions of the registration of the special care unit.

There were sufficient numbers of staff in the centre to cater for the needs of the children detained there. At the time of this inspection, there were six children living in the centre, with a total of 58 social care staff, 9 social care leaders, two deputy social care managers and three social care managers, as well as the person in charge and the director of the special care unit. There was a defined staffing structure in place. The person in charge had a workforce plan which identified workforce needs in order to expand the service and operate at full capacity. There was a human resource strategy in place to maximise recruitment opportunities. All staff were suitably qualified to work in the centre. The centre was reliant on agency staff but these staff worked regularly and exclusively in this centre due to infection prevention and control of COVID-19.

A new suite of Tusla national policies and procedures for special care had been provided to the centre and implemented on 28 September 2020, just prior to this inspection. There was a detailed implementation plan to ensure that staff were equipped with the knowledge and skills to implement these policies and procedures in line with the regulations. The person in charge and the director of the special care had developed innovative ways to provide ongoing and continuous training to staff on the full new suite of policies and procedures. This was a welcome development.

There was a statement of purpose for the centre which had been reviewed in January 2020, and was in line with the requirements of the regulations. The statement of purpose detailed the service objectives and aims and clearly described the model of service provision and the range of services and facilities. The conditions of registration were explicitly outlined and there was a child friendly version, which children received on their admission.

Systems to ensure that the activity of the centre were monitored had been improved. The registered provider or its representative is required to carry out unannounced visits to the special care unit at least every six months, since the commencement of the regulations in January 2018. Such a visit should be reflected in a written report alongside an action plan to respond to any issues identified. During this inspection, the director of



the service and the person in charge described that a system was being implemented to ensure the centre was subject to appropriate monitoring by the provider in line with the requirements of the regulations. There had been an unannounced visit to the centre in August 2020 by quality assurance officers under the auspices of the Tusla Quality Assurance Directorate. The centre was awaiting this review report at the time of this inspection.

### Regulation 5: Statement of purpose

There was a statement of purpose which was compliant with the regulations. The centre had developed a children's version which was made available to children on their admission to the centre.

Judgment: Compliant

### Regulation 6: Care practices, operational policies and procedures

A national suite of policies and procedures for special care was provided to the centre by the Child and Family Agency and they were implemented on the 28 September 2020. There was a detailed and thorough implementation plan developed. Procedures were being considered in relation to providing children with accessible information regarding care practices, operational policies and procedures in the centre, in line with regulatory requirements.

Judgment: Substantially compliant

### Regulation 14: Staff members and others working in the Special Care Unit

At the time of the inspection, there was a sufficient number of staff in the special care unit to cater for the needs of the children who were detained there. Children were appropriately supervised and there were advancements in the recruitment and retention of staff since the last inspection. Inspectors also found that timelines for staff supervision required improvement.

Judgement: Substantially compliant

## Regulation 24: Governance and management

Governance arrangements, at a local level, in the special care unit had strengthened since the last inspection. The centre had effective leadership and management arrangements in place. Governance arrangements at provider level were improving.

Judgment: Substantially compliant

## Quality and safety

Children are placed in the special care unit by a high court order for a 12 week special care programme which is an individualised programme of support and skilled therapeutic intervention to enable the child to stabilise and then move to a less secure placement based on the assessed needs of the child.

Inspectors found that children received good quality integrated care in the special care unit. There was a programme of care for each resident which was documented in designated folders. The programme of care contained care plans, placement plans, placement support plans, education plans therapeutic plans and psychiatric plans were appropriate and in line with the regulations. Documentation was kept up to date and secure and the inspectors found evidence that relevant information was shared appropriately with all key stakeholders. When updated care records or care plans were required from relevant social work departments, the person in charge has a process in place to ensure that this occurred.

Programmes of care were tailored to meet the needs of each young person and there was review and oversight by a multi-disciplinary team. Child-in-care reviews and professionals meetings took place fortnightly, on alternative weeks to consider the impact of the programme of care on the child. Parents and children were invited and encouraged to attend.

Staff implemented and used a model of care to guide their practice and determine particular interventions for children. This model of care emphasised the promotion of each child's wellbeing and the need for interventions that suited their individual needs. There was a culture of learning, reflection and questioning in relation to the effectiveness of care practices with children in order to ensure best practice and positive outcomes. Staff strived to develop appropriate professional relationships with children which was key to the effectiveness of interventions with children.

The programme of care had also been enhanced since the last inspection to include flexible and tailored responses to individual risks for children. There were new psycho educational programmes being delivered to children for example, to help children to identify and minimise risk taking behaviours. The person in charge told inspectors that she was developing practice to ensure that both wellbeing and risks for children were being identified and addressed simultaneously, as part of each child's programme of care. There was a focus and drive to equip and empower children with skills for self care and protection, to reduce their risks, so that children could move on from the special care unit successfully. Children themselves, social workers and guardians ad litem spoke positively about these initiatives.

The director of the special care unit also told inspectors that there was a concerted effort by the senior management team to improve and support children's transitions from the special care unit. Inspectors heard from staff and reviewed records which indicated that transition planning was well coordinated from within the special care unit. Efforts were made to facilitate familiarity and relationship building between children and staff at their follow on placement, in order to improve the quality of their experience of moving on. The special care unit had forged good relations with other community based services, social workers and external professionals, which contributed to good communication and integrated planning in relation to children's care and transition from the centre.

Inspectors found that the staff team responded to children's behaviour effectively, particularly during challenging periods for children. Children's needs were assessed in order to identify the approach to managing behaviour that best suited each child. These were reflected in children's behaviour support plans and individual crisis management plans. Inspectors reviewed records of incidents involving children and found that, in each case, staff attempted to calm the child and diffuse difficult situations. When necessary, the least restrictive procedure was used for the shortest duration of time. Inspectors found that the records of incidents and how they were managed were comprehensive. There were good management and oversight systems in place to ensure incidents were reviewed and these reviews provided learning for staff.

Inspectors found that the safety and welfare of children was protected and promoted within the service. Managers were proactive in the approach to managing risks or concerns relating to children's safety. All staff in the centre were mandated under Children First to report any concerns they may have to Tusla child protection and welfare services. In addition, there was a designated liaison person (DLP) who was the director of the special care unit. He had oversight of all reported concerns to Tusla. Inspectors found that allegations and concerns were reported appropriately, and there was evidence of persistent follow up by the DLP with social work departments in relation to the progress and outcome of any investigations. There were robust processes and procedures in place for any internal investigation of an allegation or complaint made against staff or incidents occurring in the centre.

Service risk management systems had improved since the last inspection. There were appropriate risk management systems in place for the identification, assessment and management of risk. The special care unit maintained a risk register which recorded and tracked centre risks. There was a clear escalation process whereby the director could appropriately raise and alert the provider to risks which required additional control, external to the centre. Risks were identified and described, and appropriate control measures were put in place. Prior to this inspection, the special care unit managed risks associated with an outbreak of COVID-19 effectively and promptly and their robust response curtailed and prevented the spread of infection in the centre. From a review of records in the centre and from speaking to staff, inspectors found that there was strong leadership and management of the incident.

The staff team were continuing to wear face coverings at the time of this inspection, in line with public health advice. However, the inspector observed one staff member not wearing their face covering correctly while in the company of a child. This was brought to the attention of the person in charge who addressed the situation immediately. Greater vigilance is required to ensure that protective measures are continuously complied with.

#### Regulation 7: Programme of care

There was a programme of care in place for each child in the special care unit. Children received good integrated care which tailored to address specific needs and risks. There was a focus and drive to equip and empower children with skills for self care and protection, so that they could move on from special care more successfully and confidently.

Judgment: Compliant

#### Regulation 11: Positive behavioural support

The staff team was proactive in their approach to understanding children's behaviours and they responded effectively, particularly during challenging periods for children. Restrictive procedures were appropriately recorded, reported and reviewed by managers. This ensured that restrictive procedures were not prolonged and were an appropriate response to immediate risk.

Judgment: Compliant

## Regulation 12: Protection

Children were safeguarded and protected in the centre. There were appropriate mechanisms in place for the identification, assessment and management of safeguarding concerns. Children were supported to develop self-care and protection skills in line with their individual needs. Staff members were aware of their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding and child protection.

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Judgment: Compliant

## Regulation 25: Risk management

Service risk management systems had improved since the last inspection. There were appropriate risk management systems in place for the identification, assessment and management of risk. Greater vigilance is required to ensure that protective measures are complied with in full.

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Judgment: Substantially Compliant

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

Regulation Title	Judgment
<b>Capacity and capability</b>	
Regulation 5: Statement of purpose	Compliant
Regulation 6: care practices, operational policies and procedures	Substantially compliant
Regulation 14: Staff members and others working in the Special Care Unit	Substantially compliant
Regulation 24: Governance and management	Substantially compliant
<b>Quality and safety</b>	
Regulation 7: Programme of care	Compliant
Regulation 11: Positive behavioural support	Compliant
Regulation 12: Protection	Compliant
Regulation 25: Risk management	Substantially compliant