



# CHILDCARE CAPACITY AUDIT – FRANKFORT CASTLE

PREPARED FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF A PROPOSED STRATEGIC HOUSING DEVELOPMENT ON A SITE AT FRANKFORT CASTLE, DUNDRUM, DUBLIN 14

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## 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pembroke Partnership Limited<sup>1</sup> have proposed a Strategic Housing Development (SHD) comprising 115 No. apartments (45 No. 1-bedroom units and 70 No. 2-bedroom units) on a c. 0.9-hectare site adjacent to the Green LUAS Line to the north of Dundrum Town Centre in Dublin 14. The proposed development will be located within the existing two-storey 'Frankfort Castle' and within 3 No. new blocks (Blocks A, B, C) ranging in height from three to five-storeys. A 2 No. level basement is also proposed below Block A. Additional development includes residential amenity areas, crèche (c. 80 sq. m – 20 No. spaces) and hard/soft landscaping.



Figure 1.1: Extract of Proposed Site Layout Plan. Source: Dwg. 19012-OMP-00-ST-DR-A-1000, prepared by OMP, 2021.

With respect to this development, a *Childcare Capacity Audit* was undertaken by Tom Phillips + Associates (TPA)<sup>2</sup> in June 2021 (updated from previous survey in October 2020) utilising desktop and telephone survey methods to determine the existing level of childcare services provision and potential requirement for additional facilities at this location. The results of the audit can be summarised as follows:

- The subject site is located in an established residential area in Dundrum Town Centre where there were 19 No. operational childcare facilities identified within c. 1.5km radius (equivalent to a c. 15-minute driving radius) at the time of the capacity audit (June 2021).
- A total capacity of 882 No. childcare places were being provided in the study area by these existing facilities at the time of the survey (c. June 2021), with some 115 No. childcare places potentially available for new enrolments (c. 13% of total capacity) to accommodate the demand generated by the subject development.

<sup>1</sup> Serpentine Business Centre, Suite 8, Serpentine Avenue, Dublin 4.

<sup>2</sup> 80 Harcourt Street, Dublin 2.



- We note that of the 115 No. units proposed, only the 70 No. 2-bedroom units within the development can reasonably accommodate families, which falls below the threshold for childcare provision established in the *Apartment Guidelines, 2018*. However; a new purpose-built childcare facility with capacity for 20 No. spaces is also proposed to be provided to accommodate potential childcare demand arising from the subject development.
- It is estimated that approximately 26 No. pre-school children may occupy the development once completed; however, childcare uptake for a new facility within the development is likely to be only 7-12 No. children with respect to recent demographic trends. The proposed childcare facility will adequately provide for the potential demands of the development.

## 2.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

### 2.1 *National Planning Guidance for the Provision of Childcare Facilities*

The *Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001)* produced by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government state the following with respect to the provision of new communities/larger new housing developments:

*“Planning authorities should **require the provision of at least one childcare facility for new housing areas unless there are significant reasons to the contrary** for example, development consisting of single bed apartments or where there are adequate childcare facilities in adjoining developments. For new housing areas, **an average of one childcare facility for each 75 dwellings would be appropriate...**”*

*The threshold for provision should be established having regard to the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of areas.”*

*[Our emphasis, Section 2.4, p. 5]*

### 2.2 *Development Plan Requirements*

The proposed development area is located within the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council administrative area and is governed by the provisions of the *Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2016-2022* and served by the representative Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Childcare Committee (DLR Childcare).

The *Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2016-2022 (DLRCDP)* supports the provision of new childcare facilities at appropriate locations, including residential areas, employment nodes, large educational establishments, major towns/district/neighbourhood centres and areas accessible by public transport networks. Specific policies for the development of childcare facilities within the *DLRCDP* area include:



Table 2.1: Childcare Policies included in DLRCDP 2016-2022	
Policy	Description
SIC11	<i>It is Council policy to encourage the provision of affordable and appropriate childcare facilities as an integral part of proposals for new residential developments and to improve/expand existing childcare facilities across the County. <b>In general, at least one childcare facility should be provided for all new residential developments subject to demographic and geographic needs.</b> The Council will encourage the provision of childcare facilities in a sustainable manner to encourage local economic development and to assist in addressing disadvantage.</i>
<b>[Our emphasis].</b>	

With regard to the development of childcare facilities within new residential schemes, the DLRCDP states:

*“Where a new residential development is proposed – with 75+ dwellings (or as otherwise required by the Planning Authority) – **one childcare facility shall be provided on site** in accordance with Sections 2.4, 3.3.1 and Appendix 2 of the ‘Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ (2001).*

*The provision of childcare facilities within new, and indeed existing, residential areas shall have regard to the geographical distribution and capacity of established childcare facilities in the locale and the emerging demographic profile of the area.”*  
**[Our emphasis, Section 7.1.3.6]**

For new residential developments, the *Plan* advises that the most suitable facility for the provision of full day care should be a purpose built, ground floor, standalone property. Detailed requirements and standards in respect to childcare provision are set out in Section 8.2.12.1 of the *Plan*, which states that the following criteria will be considered in the assessment of a Planning Application for any new facility:

- *“Suitability of the site for the type and size of facility proposed;*
- *Adequate sleeping/rest facilities;*
- *Adequate availability of indoor and outdoor play space;*
- *Convenience to public transport nodes;*
- *Safe access and convenient off-street car parking and/or suitable drop-off and collection points for customers and staff;*
- *Local traffic conditions;*
- ***Number of such facilities in the area. In this regard, the applicant shall submit a map showing locations of childcare facilities within the vicinity of the subject site and demonstrate the need for an additional facility at that location; and***
- *Intended hours of operation.”*

**[Our emphasis, Section 8.2.12.1]**

These criteria are addressed with respect to the proposed development in Sections 3.0 and 4.0 to follow, which provide information with respect to demographic profile of the area and the capacity of existing childcare facilities for new enrolments.





The *DLRCDP* also states that Council policies for childcare provision will be guided by the recommendation of the County Childcare Committee (DLR Childcare), which conducts strategic mapping exercises for the area at regular intervals. We note that a representative of DLR Childcare was consulted during the course of this assessment regarding childcare needs in the area<sup>3</sup>, but could not provide any recent capacity or vacancy data for review.

### 3.0 MAKE-UP OF PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

#### 3.1 *Indicative Population and Demographic Profile*

The proposed development comprises 115 No. residential apartment units as shown in Table 3.1. The average household size recorded by the 2016 Census was 2.75 No. persons per unit<sup>4</sup>, which generates an indicative population of 316 No. persons within the proposed development.

Table 3.1 - Proposed Schedule of Accommodation		
Unit Type	No. of Units Proposed	% of Total Development
1-bedroom	45	39%
2-bedroom	70	61%
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>100%</b>

The average number of children per family recorded in the State in the 2016 Census was 1.38, which generates an indicative population of 97 No. children (between the ages of 0-18 years) when applied to the 70 No. 2-bedroom units proposed which can reasonably accommodate families. Of this number, an estimated 26 No. children would be considered pre-school age (between the ages of 0-4 years) with respect to the age cohorts recorded for Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown<sup>5</sup> in 2016.

Table 3.2 – Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Population Under 18 Years of Age (CSO 2016)		
Age Group	2016 Population	% of Total Cohort
Pre-school children (0-4 years)	13,810 persons	27%
Primary school children (5-12 years)	21,302 persons	42%
Secondary school children (13-18 years)	15,651 persons	31%
<b>All children (0-18 years)</b>	<b>50,763 persons</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### 3.2 *Potential Childcare Uptake*

The proposed development contains 70 No. units of a size appropriate to accommodate families and based on the above calculations, has the potential to generate an additional 26 No. pre-school children within the area once fully occupied.

<sup>3</sup> By email May 2019 and October 2020 – Acting Operations Manager of DLR Childcare.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp4hf/cp4hf/hhlds/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/Statire/SelectVarVal/Define.asp?maintable=E3003&PLanguage=0>



If the average rate of non-parental childcare uptake for this age-group in the Dublin Region (incl. Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown) is applied (46%)<sup>6</sup>, it is estimated that 12 No. children would be likely to avail of childcare in the area. If the average rate of uptake for crèche, Montessori, playgroup and after-school services is applied (25%)<sup>7</sup>, it is estimated that 7 No. children would be likely to avail of childcare in the area from this population.

## 4.0 LOCAL CHILDCARE CAPACITY

### 4.1 Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Area Profile

The latest *Annual Early Years Sector Profile Report 2018/2019*<sup>8</sup> (EYSP) identified a low vacancy rate of 2% in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown equivalent to 173 No. vacant places across the Local Authority during the 2018/19 survey year, compared with a 4% vacancy rate (i.e. 224 No. vacant places) in the previous year.

County (Year)	Enrolled	Vacant places	Vacancy rate	Waiting List
DLRC (2018/19)	7,023	173	2%	892
DLRC (2017/18)	6,357	224	4%	880
DLRC (2016/17)	6,987	250	4%	1,241

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown also recorded a reduction in the total number of services (down three childcare services from the previous survey year). However, we note that the total number of services with more than 1 No. child enrolled in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown remained the same from 2017/18 to 2018/19, with 146 No. services providing childcare to an increased average enrolment of 48 No. children in 2018/19.

County (Year)	Population	Summary Statistics		
	Children enrolled	Total No. of Services	No. of services with (>=1) child enrolled	Average enrolled per facility
DLRC (2018/19)	7,023	185	146	48
DLRC (2017/18)	6,357	188	146	44
DLRC (2016/17)	6,987	194	150	47

### 4.2 Localised Dundrum Area Profile

With respect to the Dundrum area where the subject development is proposed, a representative of DLR Childcare was consulted during the course of this assessment regarding childcare needs

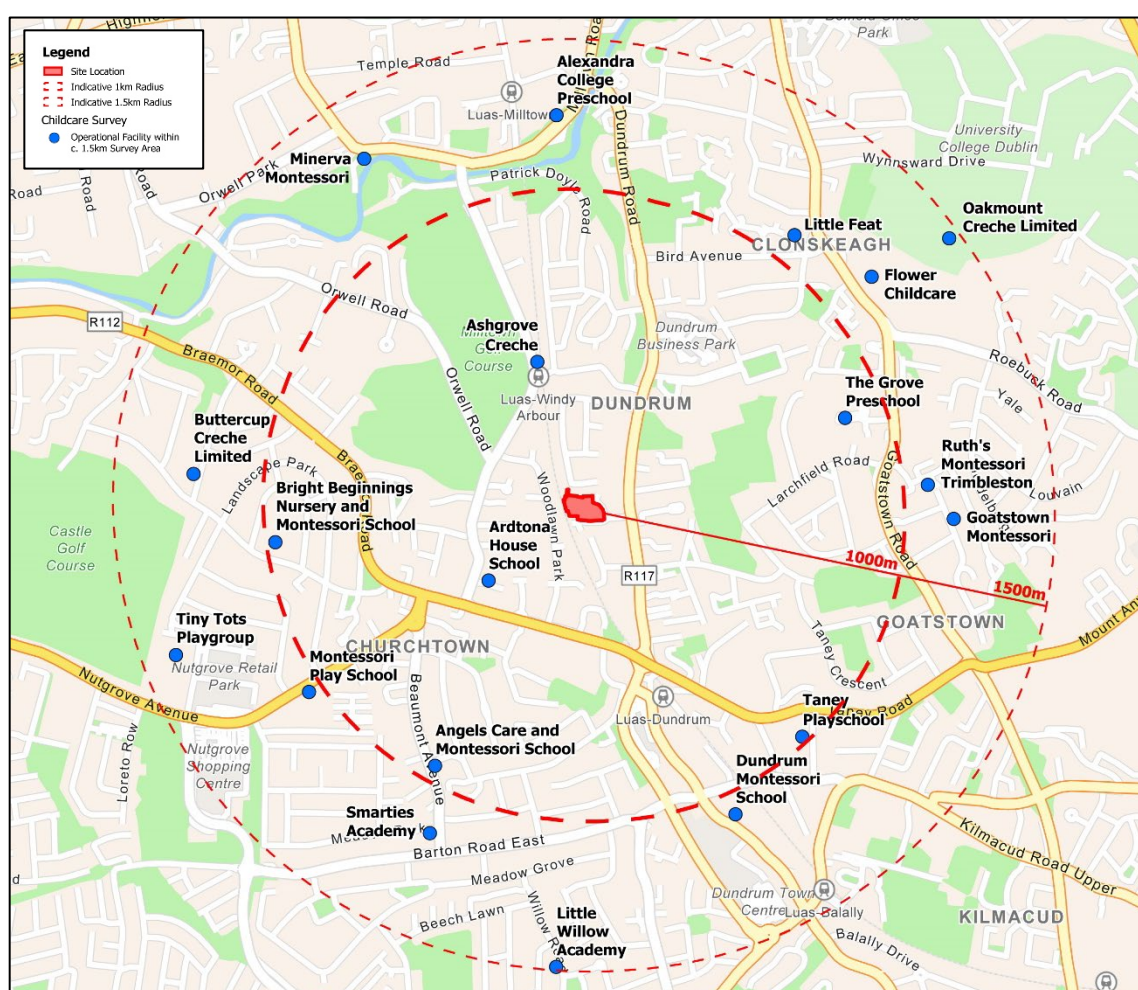
<sup>6</sup> Most recent CSO *Quarterly National Household Survey Childcare - Quarter 3 2016*, see *Table 3 – Types of childcare used by children, by school-going status and region Quarter 3, 2016*: <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/q-chi/qnhschildcarequarter32016/>

<sup>7</sup> Refer to Footnote No. 5 above.

<sup>8</sup> Published by Pobal, December 2019. We note that the 2020 version of this report is not yet available to the public, due to delays in reporting related to previous COVID-19 restrictions in Ireland. - <https://www.pobal.ie/app/uploads/2019/12/Annual-Early-Years-Sector-Profile-Report-AEYSPR-2018-19.pdf>.

in the area<sup>9</sup>, but could not provide any recent capacity or vacancy data for review. As the Early Years Sector Profile<sup>10</sup> data is only available at the county level and the DLRC Childcare Committee was unable to provide any localised childcare statistics, a site-specific *Childcare Capacity Audit* was conducted by TPA in June 2021 (updated from the previous October 2020 survey) to determine the capacity of existing childcare operators in the area. This survey identified a total of 19 No. operational childcare facilities within a c. 1.5km radius (equivalent to a c. 15-min driving radius) as shown in Figure 4.1.

Indicative capacity figures for the study area were drawn from the latest Tusla Early Years Inspection Report<sup>11</sup> available for each location during the audit period (June 2021). Where the inspection reports on record were more than 1-year old (i.e., published pre-2020), an e-mail/telephone survey was undertaken by TPA in an effort to determine current enrolment figures. Full details of the survey methodology are provided in Appendix A for reference.



**Figure 4.1:** Existing childcare facilities operating in vicinity of subject site. (Source: TPA, 2021).

<sup>9</sup> By email October 2020 – Acting Operations Officer, DLRC Childcare.

<sup>10</sup> Annual Early Years Sector Profile Report 2018/2019<sup>10</sup> (EYSP)

<sup>11</sup> 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*). Inspection Reports for active facilities are available online for public inspection and are updated at regular intervals by the service. Visit the Tusla website for more detail: <https://www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/creche-inspection-reports/>





#### 4.1.1 Reported Childcare Capacity

The results of the capacity audit indicate that there is a good provision of existing childcare facilities in the vicinity of the subject site, with a total capacity of 882 No. childcare places on offer within the 19 No. existing, operational facilities located within a c. 1.5km radius of the proposed development site at the time of the survey (June 2021).

A number of the facilities were identified as having some places available for additional enrolments (119 No. places) and that 5 No. of the facilities were currently catering for more than 50 No. children (i.e., Bright Beginnings Nursery, Angels Care and Montessori School, Little Feat, Dundrum Montessori School and Oakmount Creche Ltd (UCD)).

However, as some of the inspection reports were published more than 1-year prior and a number of operators could not be reached for updated enrolment figures, further survey work to verify capacity figures may be required. We note that the DLRC Childcare Committee (DLR Childcare) was consulted during the course of this assessment regarding childcare needs in the area, but could not provide any recent, localised data regarding childcare capacity or vacancies.<sup>12</sup>

<b>Table 4.3 – Results of Childcare Facilities Audit (Facilities located within c. 1.5km radius)</b>				
<b>No.</b>	<b>Name of Childcare Facility</b>	<b>Enrolment</b>	<b>Max. Capacity</b>	<b>Places Avail.</b>
1	Ashgrove Creche	34	44	10
2	Ardtona House School	27	27	0
3	Bright Beginnings Nursery	77	100	23
4	The Grove Preschool	42	44	2
5	Angels Care and Montessori School	75	75	0
6	Taney Playschool	20	22	2
7	Montessori Playschool	4	5	1
8	Little Feat	41	42	1
9	Flower Childcare	17	27	10
10	Ruth's Montessori Trimbleston	26	31	5
11	Goatstown Montessori	9	10	1
12	Dundrum Montessori School	69	71	2
13	Little Willow Academy	31	48	17
14	Smarties Academy	28	30	2
15	Tiny Tots Playgroup	55	66	11
16	Buttercup Creche Ltd	39	48	9
17	Minerva Montessori	40	40	0
18	Alexandra College Preschool	40	40	0
19	Oakmount Creche Ltd (UCD)	89	112	23
<b>Total</b>		<b>763</b>	<b>882</b>	<b>119</b>

<sup>12</sup> By email October 2020 – Acting Operations Officer, DLRC Childcare.



## 5.0 CONCLUSION

The national planning guidance and local development plan guidance in relation to childcare provision states that the planning authority should require at least one childcare facility per every 75 No. dwellings unless there are significant reasons to the contrary, with respect to the “existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of areas.”<sup>13</sup> With regard to existing childcare capacity in the vicinity of the proposed development, we note:

- The subject site is located at the edge of an established residential area north of Dundrum Town Centre, where there were 19 No. operational childcare facilities providing more than 850 No. childcare places to the local community at the time of the survey (June 2021).
  - Of this number, some 119 No. childcare places appear to be potentially available for new enrolments within the existing local childcare network (equivalent to c. 13% of the total capacity of 882 No. places) to accommodate the potential demand generated by the subject development.
- The proposed development contains only 70 No. units which can reasonably accommodate families, which falls below the threshold for provision established in the national childcare guidance<sup>14</sup>. Therefore, a new childcare facility is not required at this location.
  - The demographic profile of the scheme further indicates that c. 26 No. pre-school children will occupy the development once completed, with a potential childcare uptake rate of only 7-12 No. places.

As the proposed development contains a unit mix which falls below the threshold for childcare provision established in the national guidance and the potential childcare uptake for the development is estimated to be only 7-12 No. places with respect to recent demographic trends, a purpose-built crèche facility is not required at this location.

However, given the current uncertainties arising from the COVID-19 public health emergency and the potential resultant impacts on existing childcare facilities, a new purpose-built childcare facility (c. 80 sq. m) is proposed to be provided with the subject development. This proposed facility will have capacity for 20 No. childcare spaces and ensures that development population will be adequately provided for in terms of childcare without placing additional pressure on the existing childcare network.

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<sup>13</sup> DoHPLG, ‘Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ (2001), Section 2.4, p. 5.

<sup>14</sup> DoHPLG, ‘Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ (2001), Section 2.4, p. 5.



**Appendix A: Survey Record – June 2021**  
**Childcare Facilities Audited in Vicinity of Subject Site (c. 1.5km radius)**



Table A - Childcare Facilities Audit Record – Frankfort Castle, Dundrum, Dublin 14									
Childcare Facilities within c. 1.5km			Reported Figures				Final Survey Figures		
No.	TUSLA ID	Name of Facility	Inspection Date <sup>15</sup>	EYI Report Enrolment	Survey Date	Reported Capacity <sup>16</sup>	Survey Enrolment	Maximum Capacity	Places Available
1	TU2015DR074 Full Day Care	Ashgrove Creche	27.08.2020	AM – 34 PM – 33	2020 Inspection	44 places	34	44	10
2	TU2015DR151 Sessional Care	Ardtona House School	26.02.2019	AM - 27	27.01.2020 – 0 places 04.06.2021 – 0 places	27 places 0 available	27	27	0
3	TU2015DR097 Full Day Care	Bright Beginnings Nursery and Montessori School	04.03.2021	AM - 77 PM - 77	2021 Inspection	100 places	77	100	23
4	TU2015DR119 Full Day Care	The Grove Preschool	18.09.2019	AM - 39 PM - 9	28.01.2020 – 0 places 04.06.2021 – Places available	44 places 2 available	42	44	2
5	TU2015DR114 Full Day Care	Angels Care Montessori School (Beaumont Ave)	28.11.2019	AM - 47 PM - 45	27.01.2020 – 0 places 04.06.2021 – 0 places	75 places 0 available	75	75	0
6	TU2015DR087 Sessional Care	Taney Playschool	25.11.2020	AM - 20	2020 Inspection	22 places	20	22	2
7	TU2015DR103 Sessional Care	Montessori Playschool (Rainbow Days)	04.10.2018	AM - 4 PM - NA	13.10.2020 – No response 04.06.2021 – No response	5 places	4	5	1
8	TU2015DR136 Full Day Care	Little Feat	05.02.2019	AM - 44 PM - 23	13.10.2020 – 1 place 04.06.2021 – No response	42 spaces 1 available	41	42	1
9	TU2015DR145 Full Day Care	Flower Childcare	24.02.2020	AM - 17 PM - 11	2020 Inspection	27 places	17	27	10
10	TU2016DR034 Part Time Care	Ruth's Montessori Trimbleston	10.09.2020	AM - 26 PM - 8	2020 Inspection	31 places	26	31	5
11	TU2016DR014 Sessional Care	Goatstown Montessori	11.03.2020	AM - 9	2020 Inspection	10 places	9	10	1
12	TU2015DR095 Full Day Care	Dundrum Montessori School	30.04.2019	AM - 69 PM - 11	13.10.2020 – Places available 04.06.2021 – Places available	71 places 2 available	69	71	2
13	TU2015DR058 Full Day Care	Little Willow Academy	27.11.2020	AM - 31 PM - 31	2020 Inspection	48 places	31	48	17
14	TU2015DR192 Full Day Care	Smarties Academy	31.07.2019	AM - 6 PM - 6	29.01.2020 – 0 places 04.06.2021 – Only part time places available (morning)	30 places 2 available	28	30	2

<sup>15</sup> Date of most recent Tusla Inspection Report available online, as accessed by TPA c. June 2021.

<sup>16</sup> Capacity figures provided by each facility to TPA by telephone/email during the audit period (c. June 2021) or previous audit period (c. October 2020).



15	TU2015DR021 Sessional Care	Tiny Tots Playgroup	30.01.2020	AM - 55	2020 Inspection	66 places	55	66	11
16	TU2015DR026 Full Day Care	Buttercup Creche Ltd	17.08.2020	AM - 39 PM - 39	2020 Inspection	48 places	39	48	9
17	TU2015DY324 Full Day Care	Minerva Montessori	31.07.2018	AM - 37 PM - 20	13.10.2020 – 0 places 04.06.2021 – No response	40 places 0 available	40	40	0
18	TU2015DY394 Sessional Care	Alexandra College Preschool	26.02.2019	AM - 36 PM - NA	13.10.2020 – 0 places 04.06.2021 – 0 places	40 places 0 available	40	40	0
19	TU2015DR117 Full Day Care	Oakmount Creche Ltd (UCD)	30.09.2020	AM - 87 PM - 89	2020 Inspection	112 places	89	112	23
<b>Subtotals</b>							<b>763</b>	<b>882</b>	<b>119</b>



