

Inspection visit to Small Children's Shelter of the Tallinn Children's Home

Advisors to the Chancellor of Justice paid an unannounced visit to the Small Children's Shelter of the Tallinn Children's Home on 23 March 2018 to inspect its living conditions.

Children up to 1.5 years of age and children from 1.5 to 4 years of age are placed in two groups. There were six children in the shelter at the time of the inspection visit (three in each group), the youngest of whom was 10 months old and the oldest two years and eight months old. According to the staff, there are usually 10-11 children in the shelter, which has room for 16 children.

During the inspection visit, it was noticeable that the staff of the shelter is devoted to their work and they care about the children.

The shelter has everything necessary for looking after small children, including a selection of medicines suitable for children. The sinks meant for small children are installed at a suitable height, there are cots and small children's beds in the bedrooms. There are toys and children's books.

The shelter operates on rather small premises. There is no storage room for things that are not used every day (e.g. safety cots, spare clothes and footwear, blankets, pillows, extra hygiene products). The shelter also lacks a child-friendly visiting room where the children could spend time alone with their parents. A visiting room would also be a good place for meetings with the child protection worker of the local government, the representative appointed for the child, a psychologist or another specialist.

Some rooms of the shelter need renovation. For example, the window frames of the bathroom of the group of children up to 1.5 years of age are broken and wind blows into the bathroom. The employees cover the windowsill with a blanket to block the wind. The playroom in the group for children up to four years of age also needs renovation, as the paint has peeled off the wall in some places and plaster has fallen off the wall around the radiator. The bedrooms in the group of bigger children must be decorated to make them more child-friendly.