

Dundee Disabled Children's Association Support Service

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Telephone: 01382 826888

Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 23 March 2018

Service provided by:

Dundee Disabled Children's Association,
a Scottish Charitable Incorporated
Organisation

Service provider number:

SP2013012135

Care service number:

CS2013319623

About the service

Dundee Disabled Children's Association (DDCA) is a long-established local and independent charity providing activities and support for children and young people, with additional support needs, and their families. Activities included evening youth clubs, outings, and an annual holiday.

DDCA offers a service to children from 0-20 years. Sessions for pre-school children include parents so that by the time children are old enough to attend the evening groups - either the 'drop in' family sessions or the evening youth groups (should suitable space be available) - they and their parents are completely at ease in the building and have formed positive relationships with the manager and staff.

The service operates from unique, purpose-built premises that have been carefully designed and equipped to meet the needs of children with a wide and varied range of additional support needs. The premises comprise of a large central space offset by smaller rooms, accessible to all and allowing young people to find the space they needed to relax and feel comfortable. All of the rooms were well maintained, clean, and tidy.

The outdoor area was enclosed and safe with a separate parking area situated close enough to be easily accessible but safe for young people entering the building.

The service states its aim is to "provide a fun, active, and safe environment in which children and young people, who happen to have additional support needs, can play and socialise and where their families can feel relaxed and supported".

This service has been registered since 19 December 2013.

What people told us

We had a very positive response from families who use this service. We met with one parent during the inspection and spoke with seven others by phone.

We also met with several young people attending one of the evening activity groups and observed them having fun and enjoying a range of activities.

Without exception, those we spoke to gave an exceptionally positive view of the service and told us how much it meant to them and their family. All described a warm, welcoming environment with a manager, staff, and volunteers who went out of their way to be friendly, approachable, and helpful. They loved the building and outdoor space. They appreciated the opportunities their children had to participate in a range of activities safely and with the active support of enthusiastic staff and volunteers. They liked the fact that their child was able to attend a youth group which helped them to feel included in the same kind of activities as other young people of a similar age. A number of parents mentioned that attending the groups had extended their child's understanding (and acceptance) of other disabilities.

Some of the things people said included:

- "[Young person] has grown in confidence."
- "I am delighted to have a service that provides [young person] with the opportunity to be herself."
- "There are very few people I would trust this much."

- "It's such an easygoing place; kids just get to be themselves."
- "Having Friday night has had a really positive impact on [young person]. It also gives me a wee bit of time for myself."
- "The staff are fantastic. They bend over backwards to make you feel at home. You can use their knowledge - they're full of advice if you need it."
- "[Young person] enjoys it so much, he actually pushes me out the door now when I take him. He can relax and just be himself. He asks to go; although he is largely non-verbal, he can say DDCA."
- "[The manager] is fantastic. They're all so friendly, personable. Just knowing my child is having so much fun is great. He is always laughing when I go to pick him up."
- "All the volunteers have been so lovely. There is really strict vetting. We always get introduced to new people when they come in."
- "I have no qualms in letting him go. I 100% trust all the staff."
- "They really 'get' [young person]. They understand his behaviour and what he needs. He looks forward to every Monday. You've just got to look at other services and ask: 'Why aren't they like this?'"
- "We have every confidence in that service."
- "We have very good relationships with everybody - manager, staff, volunteers. They always ask how we all are. They are so welcoming and easy to ask about anything."
- "It's top class, 10/10. I feel really privileged to have gotten a place there."
- "We just love it. It's a lovely atmosphere. It's supportive. I always feel better when I've been there."

Self assessment

A self assessment form was not required for this inspection.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	6 - Excellent
Quality of environment	6 - Excellent
Quality of staffing	not assessed
Quality of management and leadership	not assessed

What the service does well

DDCA provides a consistently high quality activities-based support service in exceptionally well designed purpose-built premises.

Children, families, and visitors always experience an open, friendly welcome into a very safe, very happy, and extremely inclusive environment.

The quality of care and support experienced by children and families was outstanding.

As a small independent charitable organisation, DDCA offers support from 0-20 years. Sessions for pre-school children include parents so that by the time children are old enough to attend the evening groups – either the 'drop in' family sessions or the evening youth groups (should suitable space be available) – they and their parents are completely at ease in the building and have formed positive relationships with the manager and staff. They know each other really well. This is a key practice highlight. It is this sense of families growing with the service and receiving consistently very high quality personalised advice and support exactly when they need it which accounts for the excellent evaluation for the quality of care and support.

Children attend weekly groups where they are supported to engage in wide range of child-centred, child-led stimulating activities by experienced and skilled staff and a well trained, enthusiastic team of volunteers. We observed entirely positive, child-centred interactions which resulted in a lot of laughter and fun.

Communication was another key practice highlight. Highly individualised communication plans were very well backed by an impressive range of training and supported by experienced staff who used signing as a natural part of communication. This emphasis on communication reflected DDCA's inclusive ethos – removing barriers to understanding helped to empower young people to express their views and exercise choice.

The unique circular lay-out of the premises allows for privacy but also for really good supervision which promoted safety as well as enabling additional support to be offered if needed. There are plenty of social spaces and plenty of room for those who prefer peace and quiet.

Resources were of the highest quality and chosen to meet young people's needs and preferences.

The spacious outdoor area is equipped with robust play equipment chosen to provide children with disabilities with opportunities for active physical play, to extend themselves, and take measured risks.

We were impressed with the quality of risk assessments for the premises and for activities. This reflected a real understanding of the needs of young people and how they used the premises and equipment.

Every consideration has been given to promoting privacy and dignity. For example, the service had recently purchased new hoists, as they were a better design for supporting young women who required assistance with personal care, promoting a greater degree of independence, as well as dignity.

Although the primary aim of DDCA is to enable children to have fun in a safe and stimulating environment, the outcomes for children and families were much more significant and far-reaching. Some of the ways that children had benefitted from their time at DDCA were:

- Increased confidence and independence.
- Improved physical co-ordination and concentration as a result of well supported play opportunities.
- Improvements in behaviour supported by the use of social stories to help young people with cognitive impairment make sense of social situations.

- Opportunities for social interaction and the formation of lasting friendships which extended beyond DDCA.
- Opportunities to have age-appropriate group experience. One parent said: "[Young person's] sister has Guides and [young person] has her club at DDCA. It's great that she has something of her own to be involved with".
- Developing a greater understanding and acceptance of other people with different types of disabilities.
- A sense of belonging.

What the service could do better

The service should continue to build on the very high standard of practice we found at this inspection. In particular, it should further develop the way that it records children's progress and achievements.

The service is demonstrating excellent initiative by already using the new Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) and should continue to build on this to evaluate its practice.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings
23 Mar 2015	Unannounced	Care and support
		5 - Very good
		Environment
		5 - Very good
		Staffing
		5 - Very good
		Management and leadership
		5 - Very good

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