

# Ellon Day Opportunities Support Service

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**Type of inspection:**  
Announced (short notice)

**Completed on:**  
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**Service provided by:**  
Aberdeenshire Council

**Service provider number:**  
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**Service no:**  
CS2003000290

## About the service

Ellon Day Opportunities, operated by Aberdeenshire Council, provides tailored day support, group activities and care at home for people with learning disabilities in Aberdeenshire.

The service base is in the centre of Ellon and is conveniently located near transport links, shops and community services. The service supports up to 35 adults, with 33 people accessing day support and one person receiving care-at-home at the time of the inspection.

## About the inspection

This was a short notice announced inspection which took place on 10, 11 and 12 February. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included, previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with 12 people using the service
- spoke with four of their family members
- spoke with eight staff and management
- spoke with three visiting professionals
- reviewed completed feedback forms from staff, families and professionals
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

**Key messages**

People were treated with the upmost dignity and respect, which enhanced their feelings of self-worth and belonging.

People and their families were included in how the service runs, which made them feel included.

People were supported to manage any potential stress or anxiety, which improved their well-being and enriched their lives.

Support was innovative, creative and personalised, meaning people got the most from their support and felt happy and empowered.

People were supported by an experienced team who knew them well, making them feel comfortable and at ease.

Staff were supported by a high-quality management team, which enhanced team performance and improved the quality of care.

Staff communicated very well with each other, leading to positive outcomes for people.

**From this inspection we evaluated this service as:**

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

## How well do we support people's wellbeing?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

People's experiences were exceptionally positive due to the warm, compassionate and encouraging support provided by staff. People smiled and laughed with staff, creating a relaxed and joyful atmosphere in the centre. People supported at home praised staff for always listening to them and being considerate. Staff had created a culture of treating everyone with the upmost dignity and respect. People were overwhelmingly positive about their experiences using Ellon Day services because of this.

People expressed their views, thoughts and wishes through various tailored methods. Pictures helped people visualise choices, whilst symbol systems supplemented verbal communication. Staff actively promoted Makaton, running groups to develop skills for both staff and people using the service. This approach enabled more people to express themselves, positively impacting their well-being. Representatives, such as family members, were also listened to; their input was valued and considered. This involvement improved outcomes and enriched people's lives, making people and their families feel connected and respected by the service.

People and their loved ones were involved in how the service runs. This included, regular meetings, tailored surveys to gather feedback and listening to people when they shared their thoughts. This meant people's voices were always heard, which strengthened the personalised support provided, making people feel included. As a result, of this inclusive approach, people and their families considered the service their own. This contributed positively to people's overall emotional well-being.

Staff helped people access health and wellbeing support, benefitting their lives. As staff knew people so well, they were alert to signs of deteriorating health and provided necessary support. For example, staff assisted someone to get medication for an infection from the pharmacy and helped someone else access an occupational therapist for mobility aids. Additionally, the service maintained strong connections with external professionals including, speech and language therapists, social workers and nurses. This joint-working approach improved people's experiences, by helping them access the right care and support. People's health and well-being outcomes were therefore improved, leading to better quality lives.

People took their medication safely and at the right times. Staff understood medication protocols, stored medication safely and accurately recorded administration. Management audited records and observed practice, reducing medication errors and enhancing safety. Furthermore, medication plans were regularly updated and staff felt confident in their roles, contributing to safer medication administration. This ensured people took their medication as prescribed, improving their health.

Staff supported people with potential anxiety. Staff talked through issues and concerns with some people at home, helping them plan for stressful situations. At the centre, we observed a calm environment, which people and visitors confirmed was consistently peaceful. This meant people felt comfortable and at ease. Furthermore, staff were trained to support people in managing potential distress. For example, most people disliked disruptions to their routines. Therefore, if an activity might be cancelled due to bad weather, staff informed people and families the day before, allowing preparation for change. This proactive and respectful approach reduced agitation and promoted stability, helping people feel calmer and safer.

Staff supported people with meals. Staff assisted a person at home to prepare meals to freeze and eat throughout the week. In the centre staff provided help to those who needed it to eat and drink. For example, a staff member helped someone during lunch, sitting nearby, smiling and interacting respectfully. This thoughtful and dignified approach made dining experiences positive. Furthermore, staff followed dietary guidelines and ensured compliance. A speech and language therapist confirmed that protocols were followed, indicating individuals were well-supported and safe. The service maintained relevant documentation on eating and drinking guidelines, further reducing risks. As a result, people's nutritional needs were met safely and enjoyably.

Personal plans and reviews documented an exceptionally high standard of individualised support. Planning maximised people's ability to have their voices heard. For example, when someone was unhappy with their Review Form's wording, they informed the service. The service quickly changed the paperwork and talked to the team about using simpler language. This showed people could take the lead, whilst improving the service for everyone. Furthermore, where people could not express their preferences, the service included people's family and legal representatives. This demonstrated the service's commitment to working within legal frameworks, which helped keep people safe. This increased people's trust and confidence in the service, enhancing satisfaction and improving well-being.

People's support was creative and innovative. The service educated and supported a group of women about menopause. They also helped people access person-specific support. For instance, they connected a person with a particular fear to a psychologist. Initially, a support worker attended sessions with them but this support reduced, empowering the individual. This person told us their fear decreased, allowing them to feel happier in the community. This demonstrated the service were forward thinking and focussed on what mattered to people. Consequently, people felt empowered, enabled and motivated.

People took part in meaningful activities that positively impacted their lives. People participated in group activities such as, sensory play, arts and crafts, cooking, computing, woodwork, recycling and gardening. People were observed joining in and having fun. People with complex needs, with support, made remarkable efforts. They showed their delight through smiles and laughter. Other people shared their enjoyment, someone told us, "I love doing the cooking group; it's so much fun, and we get to eat it together when it's ready". This demonstrated enjoyment and engagement in activities which improved life skills. Additionally, people and their families shared their achievements. For example, someone had learned to swim independently whilst another could use the bus on their own with reduced support. Furthermore, a person using the service told us, "They help me to manage to do things better so I can then do them on my own". This highlighted staff support and encouragement towards independence, empowering people and increasing fulfilment with their lives.

Overall, Ellon Day services provided tailored support, fitting people's needs and abilities. The support was individualised, helping those capable to increase their skills and independence. Furthermore, the service enhanced the lives of people with more complex needs, by enabling them to participate in activities they enjoyed and found meaningful. High-quality staff supported individuals to get the most out of life, improving their overall health and well-being. Consequently, people's outcomes were very well met and they felt happy, respected and empowered.

### How good is our staff team?

**5 - Very Good**

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Staffing arrangements met people's needs very well. Management completed rotas in advance and regularly assessed staffing requirements. If someone was unable to work, the service did not use agency staff; another staff or management member stepped in. Staff turnover was extremely low, which meant people were familiar with the team. This provided consistency and continuity in the service people received. As a result, people knew staff well, enhancing their relationships and experiences. Furthermore, people had a say in who supported them. For example, if someone's key-worker was leaving, people using the service took the lead in choosing their new lead worker. This approach was inclusive and empowering, making people feel included.

Staff and management were highly valued and respected by people and their families. Staff dedicated time and made significant efforts to establish meaningful connections with people. Someone using the service told us, "They make me laugh and smile all the time, I like all of them". People and families said staff were never rushing and we observed staff respectfully, calmly and kindly engaging with people. A family member told us, "The staff here are all top-notch; they spend time with people, nobody is left out". This showed the service had the capacity to support people, increasing people's satisfaction with their care.

Staff were very well supported by management. Staff praised their induction, noting it prepared them well for their roles. Colleagues were commended for their mentoring approach, with new staff learning a lot from experienced team members. Supervisions reflected on good practice, with time spent considering national care standards and how to improve practice. Regular team meetings offered opportunities for shared learning and staff told us that management were always available for assistance. This support enhanced staff satisfaction and improved team performance. Consequently, people using the service received more consistent and high-quality care.

Staff were up-to-date with people's needs, due to the productive and effective communication within the team. Each morning, staff and management held a meeting to discuss people's needs, schedules and staffing arrangements. Minutes of the meeting were sent to any staff who could not attend, ensuring everyone had the latest information. Additionally, staff were observed communicating during shifts and updating records and systems. This very good communication and teamwork meant staff were well-informed and people received the right support. Furthermore, communication between the service and people and their families was also exceptionally good. A family member told us, "They email or phone if there is anything. The communication is excellent and nothing is ever missed. We know everything that is going on!" This meant people and their families also had the most up-to-date information, making them feel included and involved.

Staff collaborated very well with external professionals. Professionals spoke highly of the service and commended them for their approaches with people. Professionals described staff as forward-thinking and always prioritising people's needs. One professional told us, "The service is so good I actually can't think of anything they could improve upon". Additionally, the team and management were praised for their open communication, which benefitted the people they supported. Consequently, people's experiences were enhanced through a collaborative care approach.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

Detailed evaluations

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	5 - Very Good
1.1 People experience compassion, dignity and respect	6 - Excellent
1.3 People's health and wellbeing benefits from their care and support	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
3.3 Staffing arrangements are right and staff work well together	5 - Very Good

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