



Youth Arts Open Fund

Case studies



Dundee and Angus ADHD Support Group

Dundee and Angus | £13,700



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

Dundee and Angus ADHD Support Group

About us

Dundee and Angus ADHD Support Group works to support children and young people affected by ADHD and related additional needs, alongside their families. The organisation aims to reduce isolation, improve wellbeing and create inclusive opportunities where young people can build confidence, develop skills and feel a sense of belonging.

Through supportive, community-based provision, the group focuses on creating safe, understanding environments where children and young people are accepted for who they are and where their strengths are recognised and nurtured. Arts-based activity forms an important part of this approach, offering flexible and engaging ways for young people to connect, express themselves and thrive.

The Project

“Emotions in Motion” was a youth-led arts project designed for children and young people with ADHD and related additional needs. The project focused on helping participants explore, understand and express their emotions in positive and creative ways through a wide range of artistic activities, including painting, drawing, crafts, music and digital media.

Weekly arts and crafts and digital art sessions were delivered in Dundee and Arbroath, Angus, in the evenings after school. Sessions alternated between hands-on creative activities such as painting, clay work, fabric crafts and sewing, and digital activities including drawing, animation, photography and design. This flexible approach ensured young people could engage in ways that suited their interests, strengths and sensory needs.

“This is the first time I’ve finished something & shown people.”

Young people played a central role in shaping the programme. They chose themes, planned projects, suggested skills they wanted to learn and, in some cases, led sessions themselves. One participant organised and led a week-long

photography workshop, supported by staff, which culminated in a photo exhibition. This youth-led approach helped build leadership skills, confidence and a strong sense of ownership.

The project was developed in response to the challenges young people with ADHD often face in traditional settings. Art offered an alternative way to support focus, emotional regulation and self-expression, while also encouraging peer interaction and relationship-building. Sessions were intentionally relaxed and welcoming, creating a space that felt safe, flexible and enjoyable.

“When I’m drawing, my brain feels quiet.”

Barriers to participation in arts experiences

Children and young people with ADHD face significant barriers to participating in arts and creative activities. Difficulties with focus, impulsivity and hyperactivity can make structured environments challenging, often leading to frustration, low confidence and disengagement. Emotional regulation difficulties and intense emotional responses can also affect relationships with peers and adults, contributing to social isolation.

Many young people experience stigma and misunderstanding, both in education and wider society, which can negatively impact self-esteem and mental health. Busy environments, long instructions and sensory overload can further limit participation. Emotions in Motion was designed to reduce these barriers by offering flexible, supportive sessions that prioritised individual needs, choice and emotional safety.

Impact

The project supported 87 children and young people facing additional barriers to accessing artistic and creative activities.

All 87 participants reported the following outcomes:

- Feeling better connected to their peers and communities

- Feeling better able to express themselves through involvement in arts activities
- Improved mental health and wellbeing through their participation in artistic and creative activities

Qualitative feedback from young people and parents highlighted increased confidence, improved emotional regulation and a strong sense of pride in creative achievements. The end-of-project exhibition provided public recognition of young people's work and reinforced their sense of accomplishment and belonging.

