

LOUD *and* CLEAR

For friends of Sense Scotland
Spring 2021





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On the cover:

*Matthew has a home-based art
session supported by
Louise and Sandra.*

Stay Connected



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Going digital

Lessons from the pandemic

As many of the people we support shielded at home, our TouchBase centres remained open, albeit with greatly reduced capacity. Our added value services, the things which make Sense Scotland unique, ground to a halt. No music, no art, no social groups, no play sessions, no bake-offs. No fun.

As the whole world stopped and everything went online, we knew that was where we also needed to be. But was it possible?

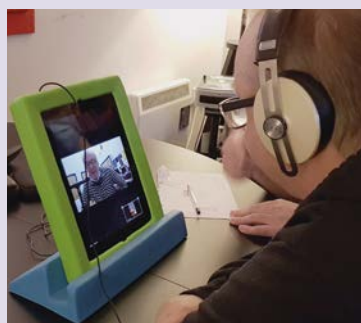
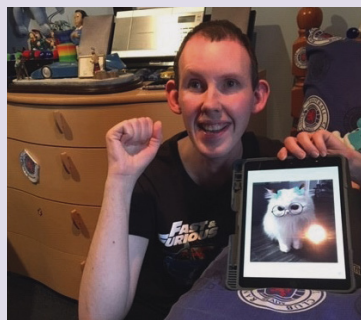
Because of their complex needs, we didn't know if using technology to participate in virtual activities or keep in touch with family and friends would work for the people we support. Did they have the necessary tools and skills? Did we? There was only one way to find out.

Our IT team sprang into action, purchasing equipment and software. Our staff learned how to adapt their work to online delivery. Our Family Advisory Service helped families source funding for equipment. With support from Connecting Scotland, our fundraisers secured iPads and internet connections for the people we support.

Now tools such as Teams, Skype, Zoom and WhatsApp are used on a daily basis to connect, communicate and have fun. It's brought people together in ways we never imagined; connecting staff, families and the people we support, from the Highlands to the Borders.

Over the past year, the most incredible lesson we have learned is how resilient and adaptable the people we support are. They proved that what we thought was impossible ... **is possible.**

Although we can't wait until we are able to meet again face to face, it looks like digital is here to stay.



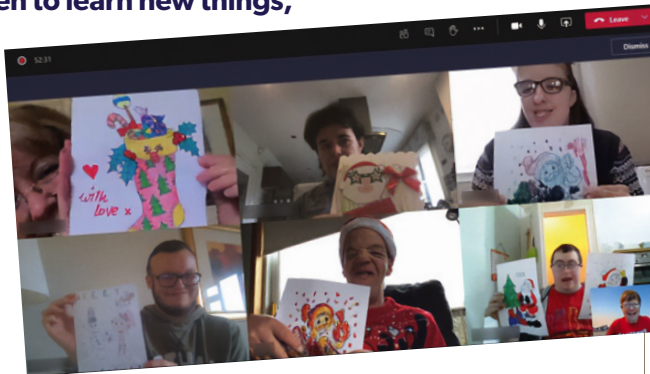
With a little help from my friends



Our One Giant Leap team kept members active and connected through online sessions. They famously love to party, but are also keen to learn new things, so sessions varied from storytelling to baking, arts and crafts to bingo.

Football

Many of our young people are passionate about the beautiful game. They enjoyed football banter as well as discussing latest results, tactics and performance of their team.



The sessions were a big hit with parents too: one said, ***"It's a godsend as he can channel his football obsession positively and not drive the rest of the house round the bend with it!"***

Music

Virtual music sessions included karaoke, quizzes and themed parties ending with a dance off! These sessions helped lift spirits and were fantastic fun exercise too.

"Online has allowed me to get to know members from across the country and I have made some fantastic friends."

Photography

In our photography sessions we analysed each other's images by using a three-step technique. What can you see? What do you think is going on? Does this make you wonder anything about the image? Members rated each other's images, researched different styles of photography and assigned themselves a task each week.

"I feel proud of myself for creating and hosting the music quiz."

Our One Giant Leap programme has entered its own transition. The programme, as we know it, ended on 31st March and we hope to relaunch later this year, once pandemic restrictions ease. It ended on a high with a week of parties and graduations.

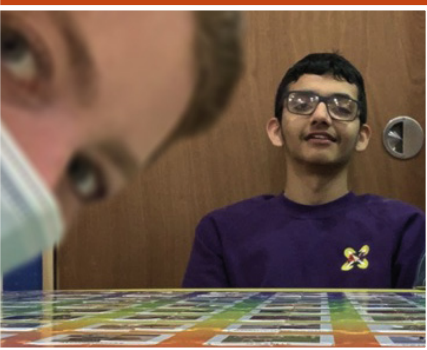
School's out

In a world where people are increasingly isolated, we've continued to bring children together in a safe, fun and stimulating environment where they can be themselves, explore their creativity and develop their abilities alongside their peers. This gives an opportunity for friendships not only to develop, but to flourish.



Even though schools were closed, activities continued in our TouchBase centres for children not shielding at home.

In Glasgow, Zaid and Forbes have become firm friends, having bonded over their shared enjoyment of board games and solving puzzles. Support workers Kirsty and Zainab love joining in the fun too!



Ruth uses colour to identify the days of the week when at school. During lockdown, Ruth attended TouchBase every Monday, which is “Yellow Day”. Children and Young People’s Services staff are enjoying supporting Ruth with sensory stimulation based around this theme which includes her song for the day, “Uptown Funk”! This benefits her overall wellbeing by keeping consistency and routine as well as having lots of fun. Ruth’s dad Brett explains,

"Keeping the routine going gives the session a context and is meaningful and they've been innovative - linking to the sensory arts project and making papier-mâché fruit - yellow fruit for the Monday theme. Thanks to the workers helping Ruth, especially Zoe and Zainab."



Early Years

Question: What do these items have in common?



pasta



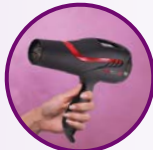
bubbles



cotton wool



Ice cubes



hair dryer



boxes



spices



sponges



empty bottles



balloons



toilet paper



tin foil

Answer: They can all help children with sensory needs explore, discover, connect and communicate with their world.

At Sense Scotland, our Early Years Team are not only experts in fun, making gloop and singing; they are also experts in helping families connect and communicate with their disabled children through play.

Whilst play comes naturally to most children, it can be much more difficult for children with sensory and communication needs. But, with the right support and guidance, families, siblings and carers can support their little one to explore, learn and communicate through discovering a whole new world of sensory play.

We provided families with a variety of themed Home Activity Packs and also created an online library of additional sensory play activities.

These activities use common household items so no need to purchase expensive sensory toys. Just add imagination and a sense of adventure!



During lockdown, the team encouraged families to:



Sensory Stories

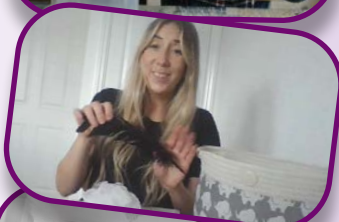
Much-loved children's books like the Hungry Caterpillar are turned into a fully immersive sensory experience, with some simple and fun preparation including a kitchen roll caterpillar, fruit, a torch and a blanket.

5 Senses Scavenger Hunt

Explore your home to find things that: make a crunching sound, smell good, taste sour, feel soft, are all the same thing, are the colour blue.

Body Tapping

This involves gently tapping areas of the body with your fingers, incorporating humming and breathing exercises. This is good for relaxation, circulation, creating new neural pathways in the brain and helping with proprioception; for example closing your eyes and touching your nose with your index finger.



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Communicating through the power of music

Our Music Team are currently working from home to deliver a full programme of online group and one to one sessions. Here is some of the amazing feedback they've received.

"To see our son's reaction to hearing David's voice and the sounds he knows so well, after so many months was very moving. Despite a long, isolated gap of over 9 months, he had not forgotten how to interact and to use his voice in turn-taking. When lockdown happened, he was isolated, stopped from any activities and we have had to create our own entertainment for him in the house. To link back up on a regular basis with music in this way is a lifeline and a highlight in his week."

"Thank you so much for all the patience with both myself and Jen. She really loves her music session and seeing you every week. Since coming off today's session, Jen has had encouragement to strum with her right hand and feels really excited and proud of herself! She thought she wouldn't be able to. (So proud of her- she's a fighter). If you saw how happy this new style of playing and using that right hand is making her, it's brilliant! Thanks millions!"



"Yesterday's online session really made Douglas' birthday come to life. We had excited chat and music all afternoon and into the evening, in addition to the 'prep' that he had started from lunchtime. We were both thrilled that you managed to make it so special for him at a really difficult time and through the medium of IT."

"I just wanted to say a huge thank you for making time to tutor Eilidh this afternoon. She had been a little low today and it really lifted her spirit. Eilidh's dad said he could hear her in the street as he was coming home and thinks all the neighbours heard her too. In terms of the session, Eilidh really enjoyed it. Putting her hands on the laptop also enhanced her experience. She was able to follow what was happening as she could follow your signing and it was useful for her when you held the instruments up to the camera. She was in a much better mood afterwards. Thank you again."



As we went to print, we received the great news that Creative Scotland has awarded us a grant of almost **£100,000** to continue to develop at home digital music and art sessions.

SENSATRONIC
HOME LAB

articulate



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

When the going gets tough... the tough get creative!

Halloween and Christmas parties cancelled?
Get dressed up and join in the fun online!

Missing coffee and cake?
Let's make our own!

Family and friends unable to visit?
Zoom, WhatsApp or FaceTime calls help
keep loved ones connected.

Art group cancelled?
Art tutors posted out creative materials and
ideas to do at home.

For the people we support in their own homes, life during lockdown has been even more fun than usual, thanks to the creativity of their support staff! In fact, it's been so good that two of our supported living services in Glasgow were awarded a 5 (Very Good) in their recent Care Inspectorate Report for Wellbeing and Safeguarding during lockdown.



Last year felt like an uphill struggle at times. But Irene, who is deafblind and is supported by us in Fife, deals with hills by conquering them!

Irene trooped up Falkland Hill with the help of her wonderful support worker Nicola.

As an avid walker, Irene has embarked upon many challenges in the past including walking the Camino de Santiago in Spain. However, her future plans remain closer to home with the West Lomond Hill first on the list when the drier weather comes.



A communication lifeline

"The Braille Library is closed due to Covid. I have nothing to read. Please can you help me find Braille Books?"

"My daughter is profoundly deaf and relies on lip reading to communicate with others. It's so difficult for her when people wear masks. What can we do to help her?"

"My 4 children share an iPad for schoolwork and to stay in touch with their friends and it's causing so much 'bickering' and family stress. We can't afford to buy more devices. Who can help?"

"My son turns 16 next month. We need to get his guardianship sorted. How can we do this if we can't meet with a lawyer?"

"Is it safe to get the vaccine?"

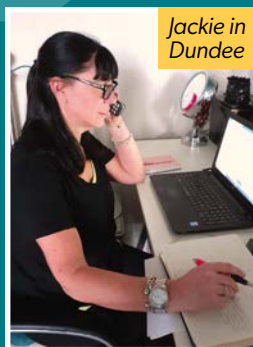
"We have been asked to isolate, so all of my daughter's support services have stopped for the next couple of weeks. How will I cope with no support to get her showered and dressed in the morning? How will we get our food and medicines?"

Just some of the hundreds of questions asked of our Family Advisory team during the pandemic.

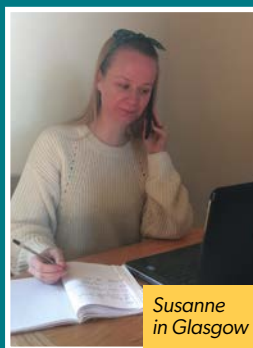
Families from across Scotland have got in touch by text, mail, email, phone, Facebook, Facetime, Skype, Zoom.... every which way but smoke signals and pigeons!

Responding to these families, who are often overwhelmed and feeling out of options, is the job of Jackie, April and Susanne, who between them cover the whole of Scotland.

Our Family Advisory Service is largely funded by donations received from Sense Scotland supporters and has been an integral part of our help to disabled families since 1985. Thank you.



Jackie in Dundee



Susanne in Glasgow

Global Pandemic: update from Malawi

As COVID-19 spread across Malawi, all schools closed and children have remained at home, with no access to formal education.

This has been a huge blow to our local Sense Scotland team, who have worked tirelessly to identify and ensure disabled children are given the opportunity to be educated, valued, recognised and accepted in their communities. They challenge negative attitudes towards disability and foster an understanding of inclusion; at home, at school and in the community.

Fortunately, the team of 12 staff, supported by volunteers, have been able to continue some, socially distanced, key areas of work. They have increased the number of teachers trained in inclusive education techniques. They have met with parents and Parent Teacher Associations, ensuring that COVID-19 prevention messages are accessible to people with communication support needs. They have worked with local government to ensure that children with additional needs will be safe once schools re-open.

Thanks to this amazingly dedicated team, many of whom rely on bicycles for transport and are logistically unable to work from home, the lives of thousands of disabled children and their families continue to be transformed every day, despite the pandemic.



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Shop till you drop

Our charity shop staff and volunteers look forward to welcoming back 'well-kent' faces – and new ones from the end of April (all being well). Donations of both small and large items, including furniture (collected free of charge) will be most gratefully received and taken immediately. Three new shops will open – in Leven, Motherwell and Rutherglen – whilst our Falkirk store has moved, just along the High Street.

We will also be restocking our eBay shop, which will be selling some of the unique and niche items donated to us. www.sensescotlandebay.co.uk



Click and shop online

Fed up of click and collect or socially distanced queuing?

Now you can shop from the comfort of your own home, with delivery straight to your door.

Our Spring collection is inspired by the people we support and how they use their senses to connect with the world around them. Wind chimes, sun catchers, candles reflecting scents found in nature as well as fun items to cheer up any garden are all available to order online.

www.sensescotland.org.uk/support-us/shop

or contact us to request a catalogue:

0300 330 9292

fundraising@sensescotland.org.uk



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You shop. Amazon gives.



Christmas Appeal
£56,100

Christmas Appeal

Our Christmas Appeal raised **£56,100**, with a further **£6200** raised from Christmas card sales.

This year we aim to offer a selection of exclusive cards and a calendar, designed by our own Sense Scotland artists.



With fewer opportunities to spend cash, is it burning a hole in your pocket?

Why not pop it into a Home Money Box?
Your small change can help us make a big difference.



Kiltwalk

The Virtual Kiltwalk takes place on 23rd-25th April 2021. Anything goes this year as long as it adheres to COVID-19 guidance. All Sense Scotland Kiltwalkers receive free entry and a t-shirt. Register by 13th April. If you can't make our Virtual Kiltwalk, sign up for the Glasgow Kiltwalk on 29th August instead.

Paws
for Sense Scotland



Save the date!

Our annual doggy sponsored walk will take place on Sunday 19th September. Four legged fundraisers (and their humans) will be raising smiles and funds to support people with communication needs as they sniff, wag and woof round their favourite route. Each pooch will receive a limited edition Sense Scotland doggy bandana.

**To find out more call us on 0300 330 9292
or email: fundraising@sensescotland.org.uk**

A socially distanced Christmas



Our virtual Christmas Night In and Online Auction showcased the incredible talent of Sense Scotland staff, musicians and artists, raising **£7,500** from top bids and donations.

Streamed online, it featured Sensatronic musicians playing a Christmas medley with Siobhan on piano, Matthew on synthesiser, Peter on vocals and Allan on drums; Murray duetting with folk music legend Phil Cunningham; Katherine captivating us playing harp and David performing with The Bluebells.

Watch again: www.youtube.com/SenseScotlandCharity



Artistic endeavours

Meet some of our Sense Scotland Artists, who contributed to our Online Auction.



★ Sense Scotland ★
Online Auction ★

Gerard Simpson

I love trying out new processes and experimenting with different art materials. Because of my lack of vision, I work in a very tactile way, exploring materials fully.

Mark Niven

As a result of my autism and cerebral visual impairment, I see things differently from 'normal'. My art enables me to explore my thoughts and feelings about the world that I live in.

Martin McGraw

I have a number of autoimmune disorders and have lost most of my sight, but through the use of technology, I have found a way to express my creativity.

Ann Neeson

Ann chose birds as her theme for her commission, using a variety of media including ink, silk painting and print.



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£

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Visa / Mastercard / Switch / AMEX / CAF Card

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Expiry Date Valid or Issue Number Security Code

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I want Sense Scotland to treat all my gifts made in the last 4 years and in the future as Gift Aid donations. I confirm that I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the current tax year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

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I would like to donate a regular gift of: ☐ £10 ☐ £20 ☐ Other £

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☐ This is a new donation ☐ This replaces a previous donation

Name

Address

Signature

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Please pay Sense Scotland Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction, subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Sense Scotland and if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

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Bank:

Address:

Post Code:

Name of account Holder(s):

Signature:

Sort Code



Account Number

For office use:
Originator's Identification
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Date

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Reference