

LOUD and CLEAR

For friends of Sense Scotland **Autumn 2022**



When the going gets tough ...

**We care.
We connect.
We communicate.**

LOUD and CLEAR

Issue 61 - Autumn 2022
ISSN 1358-5290

This publication is available in
accessible formats on request.

Patron:
HRH, The Princess Royal
Scottish Charity No: SC022097

Sense Scotland is a company
limited by guarantee,
registered in Scotland
No: SC147570

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Front cover: Friends and family of Ryan
Picton-Doherty take on the Tough
Mudder challenge at Drumlanrig Castle
raising £2,580 for Sense Scotland

**Sense Scotland is a Scottish charity
and specialised social care
provider supporting people with
communication support needs
associated with complex and
sensory disabilities, and their
families, where individual needs
and choices come first.**

Our charity was originally started in 1985 by a
small group of parents from the Glasgow area, all
of whom had deafblind children. Sense Scotland
now supports hundreds of families all across
Scotland. We are recognised as leaders in our field
and still hold true to our family values, caring for
children through adolescence and into adulthood
whilst supporting them through all the challenges
and opportunities along the way.

Your donations fund all the things that make
Sense Scotland unique. Music, art, social groups,
play and communication sessions - fun, fun and
more fun. But serious stuff too – making sure
people we support are included in decisions which
affect their life, are able to choose where they live
and how they spend their time.

**Our phenomenal
Kiltwalkers put their
best foot forward once
again, raising a fabulous
£11,887**



**Thanks to the Ladies of
Hamilton Golf Club for
choosing us as their
Charity of the Year. They
raised an incredible total
of £4,738!**

... the tough get going



Coming out of COVID only to fall into a cost-of-living crisis has been tough. On everyone. On you, on me, on our wonderful staff. But, most worryingly, on the families and carers of the people we support.

In addition to increased financial costs, having complex disabilities incurs costs which might not be obvious. Employment is often not a realistic option; 24 hour care and support places emotional pressure on families; fear of the future can often mean putting off what needs done today; lack of understanding from others can lead to loneliness and isolation. Every day, our families have to fight for things that others take for granted. To suddenly put them under extreme financial pressure is both cruel and unfair.

But experience, understanding and knowledge brings acute insight. At just the right time, our fundraising team secured a grant from Barclays 100x100 Programme to provide Welfare Rights Advice. It has proved to benefit not only the people we support and their families, but also our under pressure staff too.

On top of that, another timely grant from Creative Scotland is enabling us to expand our arts provision across Scotland, meaning we can reach more families, providing meaningful activities and a break from the ongoing hardships of caring.

Undoubtedly times are tough. Like many other charities, we have witnessed a decline in our donations. I'm sure you are feeling the pinch too, and I thank you for continuing to support us in whatever way you can.

Enclosed with this newsletter is information about our new Sense Scotland lottery. It's a great way to give, with the added bonus of the chance to win a cash prize. Fingers crossed you will be a winner of the fantastic £25,000 weekly jackpot!

Together we will continue to get through this.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Angela Bonomy'.

Angela Bonomy,
Chief Executive Officer

Financial Lifeline

Our new Welfare Rights Service is helping families weather the cost-of-living crisis.



Sense Scotland has teamed up with Glasgow North West Citizens' Advice Bureau to deliver a new Welfare Rights Service to people we support and their families /carers. Thanks to funding from Barclays 100x100 Programme, three dedicated Advisors provide face to face, telephone and home visit advice and support to families all across Scotland.

The team offer a range of support but, most importantly during this cost of living crisis, they ensure that household income is maximised to meet the increased costs of caring for someone with complex disabilities - which can add up to an extra £583 per month on average. Specialist food, hoists, beds, breathing equipment, powered chairs and the energy it takes to run these are not optional extras that can be cut back. This is vital, often life-saving, equipment.

Fighting Your Corner

"My name is Tania and I am a single mother of two boys. My son Luka, 10, was born premature, with a diagnosis of cerebral palsy and is a full-time wheelchair user. I consider ourselves lucky to discover the services of Sense Scotland and after discussing many different things with Family Adviser Susanne, I was referred to Anna in the Welfare Rights Team.

From the first appointment I discovered that even though I thought I have reported every circumstance of my family life to the authorities, we were not awarded a certain element of Universal Credit and therefore were underpaid for almost a year. With Anna's help it was not only discovered, but it was resolved successfully."

Tania had provided all the correct information to DWP, and was entitled to specific additional benefits which she did not receive. When our Welfare Rights Team discovered this and asked for it to be backdated, it was refused. The team wouldn't let it go and fought hard for Tania and son Luka, almost taking it to an Appeal. Their determination resulted in Tania receiving approximately £5000 of backdated benefit and an additional £411 per month - allowing her to

reduce her working hours and focus on giving her son the care he needs.

"I felt so supported and will be forever grateful. I now feel I have someone to talk to and trust about the many issues that come with having a child with disabilities. Thank you Susanne and Anna, thank you Sense Scotland!"



This service is funded by Barclays 100x100 Programme for one year. Thereafter we will depend on your donations to continue to provide it.

We connect



Family Fun – For Free!

Children across Scotland are enjoying picnics, playing games, making new friends and having fun this Summer thanks to our Early Years Team, Better Breaks and your wonderful support.



"I just wanted to say that we really appreciated being able to take the kids to Blair Drummond. I feel that it's not the type of day out I would usually attempt with the two of them (too busy, noisy, crowded). However, knowing that we had a nice quiet tent to escape to for lunch made a huge difference, and saved us worrying about finding seats, queueing for food etc. The cost of days out like these can really add up so we really appreciated the generosity of yourselves and Better Breaks. Thanks again! "

Not every family can afford a summer holiday, or even find one which can safely accommodate the needs of a child with complex disabilities. That's why our Early Years Team pull out all the stops to make sure that every family we support has the opportunity to relax and have fun, even if for only one day.

Gillian Bell, Early Years Advisor explains, *"When we are putting our summer holiday programme together there is so much to think about. The children we support have a wide range of communication support needs arising from a learning disability, a physical disability or a dual sensory impairment. This means that for some families having extra support to access appropriate facilities makes the day out more accessible and stress free. For example providing an appropriate space to reduce sensory overload, specialised feeding areas and accessible changing facilities"*.



First and foremost, our activities have to be accessible – ensuring that our families can safely take part, their needs can be accommodated and as many families as possible can benefit. Secondly, they need to be fun – memories are precious and these activities offer respite from the day to day demands of caring for a disabled child. And thirdly, they need to be inclusive - allowing siblings and parents to enjoy, as well as offering space for the child to be their natural self. We also ensure that a member of the Early Years Team is there, a safe meeting or breakout space is available for all to use, and that families have the opportunity to come together for friendship and peer support. We always have a great response – 37 families attended Blair Drummond whilst another 34 attended Connect and Play sessions.”

Connecting People with Funding

Families struggling with the cost of living can't even begin to think about saving for specialised equipment which their child needs. This is when our Family Advisory Team rise to the challenge.

Recently they have helped families secure funding for the following:

Sensory equipment £1500
Washing machine £400
Wheelchair powerpack £800
Vibration plate £1000

Your donation helps to fund the work of our Family Advisory Team.

We care

If you can dream it,

Sense Scotland has teamed up with Unity Lottery to offer you an exciting opportunity to support our work.

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The leaflet features a vibrant beach scene with a palm tree, a striped beach umbrella, and two lounge chairs on a sandy shore under a clear blue sky. At the top, the text 'Sense Scotland' is in a bold, dark blue font, with 'LOTTERY' in large, pink, bubbly letters below it. A row of six colored circles contains the numbers 2, 1, 16, 8, 23, and 5. In the bottom right corner, a dark blue circle contains the text '£1 to play'. The bottom left corner has the text 'Your chance to win up to £25,000' in large, bold letters, followed by the slogan 'Dreams can come true!' in a cursive font. The Sense Scotland logo is in the bottom right corner.

Sense Scotland
LOTTERY

2 1 16 8 23 5

£1
to play

Your chance to win up to
£25,000

Dreams can come true!

sense
Scotland

The Sense Scotland weekly lottery offers a jackpot of £25,000 plus other great cash prizes. It's a win-win for everyone. For just £1 per week, you'll have a chance of winning the £25,000 top prize, £1000 or £25, whilst supporting our work all across Scotland. Fifty pence of each ticket is donated directly to us.

The lottery draw takes place every Saturday. Six numbers are chosen at random. Prizes are issued when three, four, five or all six digits of the winning numbers are drawn in the correct sequence. Prizes are sent direct to winners, via cheque or direct to your nominated bank account.

A leaflet is enclosed with all the details on how to play and – fingers crossed – win!

16

23

23

1

you can do it!



You can sign up online at www.sensescotland.org.uk/lottery or complete the Direct Debit Instruction in the enclosed Sense Scotland lottery leaflet and return in the pre-paid envelope.

To enter you must be 16 or over.

You can check your weekly results online and see a full set of rules at www.unitylottery.co.uk.



How would you spend £25,000?

We polled the Sense Scotland staff and these were the results:

- 1. Home improvements**
- 2. Go on holiday**
- 3. Celebrate and party**
- 4. Help a friend or relative**
- 5. Donate to charity**

BeGambleAware.org[®]

Bargain Hunting

**In tough times,
everyone loves
a bargain.
None more so
than our
Stewardship
Manager Wendy,
a charity shop
convert.**



“I love shopping. I love a bargain – I hate paying full price. I’ll happily spend my day looking for the best deal, online or on the high street. Nothing feels better than saving a few pounds – except when the purchase is from a charity shop. Then it feels twice as good!

I fell in love with charity shop shopping when, randomly, on a mystery bus tour hen do, we stopped in a wee village for a tea

break. Wandering into a charity shop just to pass the time, I couldn’t believe my luck when I spotted a Spode limited edition plate of Arabian horses for £2 and a book on how to draw horses for £1. That was it. I was hooked! (I also love horses by the way).

Fast forward a few years to working for Sense Scotland and I couldn’t wait to immerse myself in the fundraising side of our charity

shops – 16 of them. Volunteering in my local Motherwell shop I had the best time ever! Chatting to customers, accepting donations, helping people find just what they were looking for, trying on hats, sorting out books and CDs - we even had dancing and singing! What a fun day. Of course, I purchased a few charity shop chic items of clothing, which were greatly admired when I returned to the office. I also found a kindred spirit in colleague Bernadette, who provides admin support to the shops. She loves a bargain too and we regularly compare charity shop outfits.

Since then, Sense Scotland charity shops have remained close to my heart. I recruited my sister to work as a volunteer, encouraged family and friends to make donations and even organised the biggest and best tombola (in my opinion) for our Ukraine fundraising day.

Our charity shops provide a really important source of income which supports our charitable work. They are sustainable, ethical and environmentally friendly, provide work experience and volunteering opportunities, contribute to the local community and, most importantly, help those struggling

with the cost of living find affordable clothing and essential goods.

They are also a wonderful treasure trove of unique items, hard to find items, just what I was looking for items and things I never knew I needed items.

Your support is invaluable to them – whether donating, purchasing or giving your time to help. So, next time you're out and about or having a clear out, pop in and engage in some retail therapy with a conscience. Happy bargain hunting!

Did you know?

- We can claim back Gift Aid on all donated items sold
- We can collect suitable items of furniture
- We recycle goods not suitable for sale

A full list of our charity shops can be found at
www.sensescotland.org.uk/our-charity-shops

All in a Day's Work

At Sense Scotland we believe that everyone should have the opportunity to achieve their goals and realise their ambitions. Which is exactly what The Sensatronics are doing in 2022 – performing on stage to live audiences and being paid for their talents.

The Sensatronics and DJ Mathew Ward were booked for “Doune The Rabbit Hole”, a major music and arts festival near Callander, attracting 12,000 revellers over a 4 day period 14 – 17 July.

The Sensatronics took to the big Comhla stage on the Saturday at 2pm after they'd all taken a walk around the site to take in the festival vibe in beautiful sunshine.

John and Jaqui introduced the band and songs, giving wonderful performances of some of their own compositions and a few favourite cover songs. As their set built momentum, the crowd got bigger. Halfway through, it was time for Dylan to take to the stage, bringing his incredible improvised rapping abilities to the audience with a high energy, personal narrative set. Many of Dylan's lyrics are about his life journey and his identity.

As the Sensatronics shifted up a gear again, playing their original material, Dylan conducted the crowd in some good old fashioned audience participation. The set built to a crescendo - each and every member giving their all to leave the audience wanting more.

Absolutely buzzing by the end, friends, family and crew congratulated them on their dynamic performance. They had done it! Their first major festival and





another great recognition as bona fide, fee-paid artists! This was inclusion at its best and was certainly an aspiration of all performers in the Sensatronics band. With Dylan happily handing out autographs left, right and centre, we hope that this is the first of many more to come!

SENSATRONIC LAB

Sensatronic Lab is our experimental music, art and technology project. Its main aim is to work with young people with additional support needs to design new types of digital musical instruments.

After playing synthesisers with the band, Mathew, also a DJ known as ‘The Mighty Rave Ward’, went on to play a one hour set in the Dance Tent, with a stunning mix of underground dance grooves, soulful house, trance and full-on techno.

Afterwards each individual was supported to go and experience their own choice of music and performance from other bands and DJs on the various stages and tents of the Festival.

The Sensatronic Lab Project team also provided workshops throughout both Saturday and Sunday for Festival attendees, with throngs of children and families playing and experimenting with our home-designed digital and electronic instruments.

Funding from Creative Scotland has helped us establish this ground breaking programme but it now relies on donations from the public to move forward.

Bus Stop Blues

Using public transport should be easy. But for people with additional support needs, it's not always straightforward.

Craig and Gillian are great friends who enjoy meeting for coffee and going shopping in Dundee. As someone with a visual impairment, Craig relies on his local bus service to get out and about. A lack of safe road crossing spaces forced him to use a particular bus stop, which was on a very busy main road. Buses would pile up behind each other, drop people off, let more on, then leave, never actually arriving at the bus stop. Craig was often unable to see if his bus had arrived and, on many occasions, would be left standing at the bus stop, only to find out from other passengers that his bus had gone.

Gillian, who has mobility issues, also found herself regularly stranded at bus stops but had additional difficulties in navigating uneven and high kerbs to safely get on the bus.

It all came to a head recently and Craig decided to ask for help. Tina from our Partners in Communication



Under the Equality Act (2010), transport providers have a duty to provide accessible transport.
www.equalityhumanrights.com

Disability Equality Scotland has an Accessible Travel Hub with information on accessible transport.
www.disabilityequality.scot



team met up with them both to discuss. Craig felt strongly that he wanted to take their issues to the bus company direct. Gillian, who is a representative for Dundee on Sense Scotland's Our Voice consultation group, had also co-facilitated inclusive communication training to NHS staff at Ninewells Hospital and Dundee City Council. Her experience would help Craig voice his frustrations and strive to find a solution.

Tina arranged for Craig and Gillian to meet with a senior manager from the bus company in a local coffee shop. This allowed them to sit down and communicate informally and have a rich and meaningful discussion. The meeting went really well - the bus company made some

suggestions and were willing to explore changes to future bus routes to accommodate Craig. Whilst they could not help with the maintenance of bus stops, Gillian was signposted to a contact within the City Council.

Both parties listened to and learned from each other. Craig and Gillian felt empowered and very proud of themselves for taking their issues forward and for the positive impact it could have on other bus users. The bus company are now better informed about the needs of their passengers with additional support needs which should lead to better practice. A win-win all round.

We communicate

We would love your feedback

What did you think about this issue of Loud and Clear ? Please tick appropriate box.

Did you read it all? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Which article did you most enjoy and why? _____

Do you feel informed about how your donation is used and the impact it has? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Were the articles ☐ too long ☐ too short ☐ just right

What would you like to read more about? _____

What article did you enjoy? _____

Any other comments or observations? _____

KEEP IN TOUCH

If you no longer wish to receive information on our charitable and fundraising activities by post, please tick here to let us know. ☐

If you would like to be kept up to date via email, please provide your email address:

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PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND RETURN IN THE SAE PROVIDED

Or you can email your response to fundraising@sensescotland.org.uk

If you would like to send a donation call us on 0300 3309292 or
www.sensescotland.org.uk/donate

Don't forget to fill in your Lottery form!