

February 2023

Issue #11



Welcome!

In this edition of Care and Connect, voice your input on our 2023-26 strategy, read an update from our Fundraising Team, and discover our upcoming events near you.

Send your feedback to communications@sensescotland.org.uk.

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Update on Recruitment and Retention from Angela Bonomy, Chief Executive Officer

I wrote to you in November last year to update you on the recruitment and retention challenges affecting Sense Scotland and the social care sector in Scotland. I wanted to provide you with an update.

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Currently, we have 2849 hours of vacancy to fill. That equates to 77 full-time equivalent posts across Scotland. The majority of these vacancies are in our social care services, and as a result:

- We are not yet providing 100% service to the people we support in Adult Day Services and our Respite Services – we know this negatively impacts the people we support and you, their families.
- Our staff are tired as they help to compensate for vacancies in their service by working additional shifts - this is exhausting and cannot be sustained.
- We need to supplement our staffing by using agency workers – this costs us more and puts more pressure on our staff that need to train and supervise agency workers.

What are we doing?

There are several initiatives underway. We are:

- Reviewing our staff benefits to identify additional ways we can thank our staff.
- Organising recruitment events to enable potential employees to meet with our staff, find out about Sense Scotland and complete an interview - there and then.
- Increasing our advertising budget to ensure more people see our vacancies.

What are others doing?

In their budget announcement in December, the **Scottish Government** increased the Scottish Living Wage to £10.90 (due to be implemented in April 2023). However, they erased the Social Care hourly rate. Previously, this rate was 60p more per hour than the Living Wage. This means, from April, staff in social care will now receive £10.90, the same as staff working in other sectors across Scotland. Disappointingly, this does not recognise the skills, qualifications and responsibilities our staff hold.

In response, the **Coalition of Care and Support Providers** (CCPS), of which Sense Scotland is a member, have written to the Government asking them to take immediate action to address this situation.

CCPS is calling on the Scottish Government to take four steps to Fair Work now:

1. Immediately implement the updated Real Living Wage (£10.90), backdated to 22 September 2022, as a minimum uplift for ALL social care support staff in the third and independent sectors.
2. From April 2023, implement a Scottish Social Care Living Wage by committing to a 2023-24 social care uplift for all staff, to an hourly rate of at least £12.
3. Pay all uplifts on 100% contract value to ensure employers can invest in all their staff fairly.
4. And publish a three-year timetable in the next Programme for Government to deliver Fair Work in Social Care through parity of pay and key terms & conditions.

What can you do?

You can help us to raise awareness of the recruitment and retention challenges by writing to your MSP. Letters/emails written from your perspective are more effective than standard letters. If you can take the time to write, please include:

- Your name, email address or postal address to enable the MSP to respond to you directly.
- State you are writing to share the recruitment and retention challenges which Sense Scotland and other providers face.
- Share how these challenges impact you and the person you care for. This may include a reduction in service, lack of choice, limited respite opportunities etc.
- Explain what you would like to happen next, for example, an increase in the rate of pay for support practitioners, parity for social care staff with NHS colleagues or promotion of social care as a rewarding career etc.

For ease, we have uploaded a template letter which you may wish to edit, sign and send: bit.ly/3XLDwDU. You can email your MSP using the website www.writetothem.com or you can write to your representative. You can find contact details for your MSP here: www.parliament.scot.msps.

Despite these challenges, we continue to receive good Care Inspectorate grades in recent inspections. This is a testament to the hard work, commitment and dedication of our staff. We only wish we could do more to recognise and reward them.

Strategy 2023-26

We have been working hard to develop our strategy for the next three years, outlining our aims based on input from the people we support, their parents and carers, our staff, and our Board. We are especially thankful to those of you who completed our respite survey, which has helped us inform this strategy.

We are now interested in the key actions you would like to see Sense Scotland take in order to achieve our strategic aims. Please consider taking a few minutes to voice your input here: forms.office.com/e/wXwGcg3stD.

Fundraising and the Cost of Living

We know that the cost of living crisis has affected people's willingness to donate, which is perfectly understandable. As a result, we are always looking

for new donors who are interested in supporting the work that we do. If you know someone who may be keen to become a donor, please consider directing them to sensescotland.org.uk/donate-now.

Fundraising Events

If you can't donate, we have a number of upcoming fundraising events in which you may want to get involved! The big focus at the moment for us is the Kiltwalks:

- Glasgow Kiltwalk - 30 April 2023
- Aberdeen Kiltwalk - 4 June 2023
- Dundee Kiltwalk - 20 August 2023
- Edinburgh Kiltwalk - 17 September 2023

There are three distances to choose from, and you can sign up for free and start raising money for Sense Scotland at sensescotland.org.uk/kiltwalk.

To keep up to date on our latest fundraising news and events, you can subscribe to our fundraising newsletter at eepurl.com/glx06D.

We also release our Loud and Clear publication twice a year, which keeps you in the loop about news from across the organisation and how your support makes a difference. You can view past issues at sensescotland.org.uk/loud-and-clear and email fundraising@sensescotland.org.uk to receive future copies.

Youth Philanthropy Initiative

The Youth Philanthropy Initiative (YPI) empowers young individuals to contribute to their local community while developing essential skills. As the largest independent initiative in Scottish education, YPI gives schools the opportunity to direct their students to win a £3,000 grant for the charity of their choice.

We encourage young people everywhere to choose Sense Scotland and make a positive impact in the lives of children, young people, and adults with complex and sensory disabilities. If you know a young person who may be interested in getting involved in YPI, please ask them to email fundraising@sensescotland.org.uk.

Physical Activity and Wellbeing

At the end of 2022, we were lucky enough to secure funding through the Health and Social Care Alliance to recruit a Physical Activity and Wellbeing Lead for two years. Caitlin Bain joined Sense Scotland in this role in December and has been hard at work delivering physical activity sessions for the people we support, getting them involved in games of boccia - among other things!

Caitlin is looking for parents and carer volunteers to get involved in these sessions. If you're interested, don't hesitate to get in touch with her at caitlinbain@sensescotland.org.uk. Not only will you be a part of delivering these activities to the people we support, but you'll also get some physical activity under your belt too!

Upcoming Events

Arts Taster Sessions

Our free arts taster sessions are continuing in Glasgow throughout March, with spaces still open for people of all ages with communication support needs. Find out more and book now at bit.ly/3lugA0K.

Environmental Art Sessions

Our Arts Tutor Imelda is offering sessions in the Glasgow area, with each session focusing on a different aspect of environmental art, including den building, nature scrapbooking, and journey mapping. Find out more at bit.ly/3S9LipG.

St Patrick's Night Dance

Fancy some Irish dancing? TouchBase Dunbartonshire is holding a St Patrick's Night Dance on Friday, 10 March in Bishopbriggs, with proceeds funding rebound therapy equipment. To book a ticket, or for more information, contact the TouchBase on [0141 772 5588](tel:01417725588).

Glasgow Family Forum

The next Glasgow Family Forum will take place on Friday, 17 March at 10:30am. This is a chance for you to meet other parents and carers over coffee and biscuits. For more information about the Glasgow Family Forum, visit bit.ly/3Z0xX5m. If you are interested in setting up a local family forum in your area, please contact joanneodonnell@sensescotland.org.uk.

Please let us know what you think of Care and Connect. Send your feedback to communications@sensescotland.org.uk.