

## October 2023

Issue #19



## Welcome!

### In this issue...

- Find out about the winners of our Staff and Volunteer Awards 2023
- Read a summary of the latest National Family Partnership Forum
- Meet a recent visitor to Sense Scotland all the way from Australia
- Learn about our upcoming Christmas Appeal (and TV advert!)

## **Staff and Volunteer Awards 2023**

In September, we held our annual Staff and Volunteer Awards which, for the second year in a row, were held at the Village Hotel in Glasgow, and which provided an opportunity for the Sense Scotland family to recognise our caring, talented, and inspirational staff and volunteers. Expectations were high after the success of last year's event (the first since before COVID) - and we are pleased to say that, in every way, they were exceeded!

Towards the end of the evening, we revealed the winner of our Employee of the Year award: Leanne Cameron, who is a Support Practitioner at TouchBase Glasgow. Leanne was nominated by people we support and their family members, and was particularly praised for the special relationships she has with the people she supports and for personifying the Sense Scotland core values. Well done also to Mary Allison and Caroline MacDougall on being runners-up for this award.

The full list of winners is as follows:

- Volunteer of the Year - Karen Light
- Big Idea - Rachael Ferguson
- Directors' Award - Heather McCrae
- Inspiration (Operations) - Kirsty Reekie
- Inspiration (Non-Operations) - Gabriel Robinson
- Employee of the Year - Leanne Cameron
- Chief Executive Award - Shops Team
- Team of the Year (Non-Operations) - Learning and Development
- Team of the Year (Operations) - TouchBase Lanarkshire

## **National Family Partnership Forum**

Our National Family Partnership Forum (NFPF) met virtually on 29th September 2023. The purpose of the NFPF is to ensure that the voice of parents/carers and their family members is heard and shapes Sense Scotland's future. Items discussed at the meeting:

## **Strategic Projects Update**

Joanne O'Donnell, Sense Scotland's Director of Planning, Development and Engagement, shared information on the six Strategic Projects which have been identified for 2023/2024. Each of the individual projects have action plans and representatives from across the organisations form part of the steering groups.

## **Communications Team**

Gabe Robinson, Digital Content and Engagement Officer, provided information about the various communication channels that are used to share information with families and staff. The Sense Scotland website, updated last summer, is now more interactive and 90% of visitors are new users. Interactive pages include the online shop and a contacts page which allows individuals to send queries to the relevant person/team. Facebook, Twitter (X), Instagram and LinkedIn are used to share different types of information. There are also three newsletters: one for families, one for staff and one for professionals.

## **Social Care Sector**

Angela Bonomy, Chief Executive Officer of Sense Scotland, provided an update on the Adult Social Care rate. The hourly rate for our support practitioners will rise to £11.20 per hour from October (backdated to 1 April 2023) which is higher than the Scottish Living Wage of £10.90 per hour which may aid recruitment and retention. Work is ongoing with the Coalition of Care and Support Providers Scotland on their 4 Steps to Fair Work Campaign – which is about ensuring the rates paid to those in third sector social care are aligned with the NHS and local authorities.

## **A Visitor from Australia**

In July, we received a visit from Claire Fraser, Deafblind Consultant and Creative Arts Therapist at Able Australia. Over the summer, Claire travelled across Europe as part of a trip, funded by the Winston Churchill Trust, to research different approaches to deafblindness across the world.

For the Autumn edition of Touching Base, our newsletter for professionals in health and social care, she spoke with us about her background in deafblind research, the different countries she's visited, and what makes Sense Scotland unique in our approach. You can read the full interview at [bit.ly/claire-fraser](https://bit.ly/claire-fraser).

## **Christmas Appeal**

We are excited to announce that we will be launching our upcoming Christmas Appeal in November. The appeal focuses on Theo, a 2-year-old boy with brain damage and a cerebral visual impairment, and who is supported by our Early Years team. The appeal emphasises the importance of play and socialisation for child development, especially for children with sensory impairments. Since his birth, Theo has not left the hospital - but parents Sarah and Gary are hoping that he will be home for Christmas.

In a first for Sense Scotland, our Communications and Fundraising teams have been working closely with the Creative team at STV to develop and air a television advert promoting Theo's story. The advert will be shown on STV and STV Player to homes in the Central Belt of Scotland from mid-November. Keep your eyes peeled around this time for the advert, and make sure you're following our Facebook page at [facebook.com/SenseScotlandCharity](https://facebook.com/SenseScotlandCharity) for updates regarding the appeal.

## Upcoming Events

### **Twinkle Tots - TouchBase Glasgow - Every Tuesday**

Our weekly toddler group continues on Tuesdays between 10:30am - 12pm. The group is suitable for children aged 0-5, and includes nursery rhymes, storytelling and sensory play. Book your slot at [bit.ly/twinkletots](http://bit.ly/twinkletots).

### **Online Coffee and Connect - Wednesday, 15 November**

Join us online for a catch up and a cuppa. Coffee and Connects are a great way to catch up with the advisors and other parent/carers from across the country. Check our Facebook page at [facebook.com/SenseScotlandCharity](https://facebook.com/SenseScotlandCharity) for a link to register for this event.

### **Online Connect and Play - Sunday, 19 November**

Join the Early Years team and Music Tutor Dave Stephens online for a winter musical adventure. Families will have the opportunity to catch up on line and take part in our music sing-along. Check our Facebook page at [facebook.com/SenseScotlandCharity](https://facebook.com/SenseScotlandCharity) for a link to register for this event.

Please let us know what you think of Care and Connect. Send your feedback to [communications@sensescotland.org.uk](mailto:communications@sensescotland.org.uk).