

Care and Connect *for families*



May 2025 Issue #38



Welcome!

In this issue of Care and Connect...

- Find out about **Take a Break Scotland**
- Read an update about possible **industrial action**
- Join our open day at **Blantyre Short Breaks**
- Meet Keith Notman, our new **Director of Finance**
- Get involved in our **upcoming fundraising events**
- Check out our **upcoming events**
- Read **news from your service**

Take a Break Scotland

Exciting news - applications for Take a Break Scotland are now open until 30 June 2025!

Take a Break provides grants to parent carers (unpaid carers and eligible kinship carers) of disabled or seriously ill children and young people, aged 0 to 17.

The aim of this fund is to improve unpaid carers' quality of life, health and wellbeing by providing cash grants to help them access a short break from the day-to-day routine of caring. Take a Break grants can be used flexibly, to help meet the interests and circumstances of the carer. To find out more, go to takeabreakscotland.org.uk.

Carers of young people aged 18 to 20 are encouraged to apply for a Time to Live grant. To learn about the Time to Live grant, go to sharedcarescotland.org.uk/short-breaks-fund/time-to-live.

Industrial Action

At some point in the last couple of weeks, you will have received a letter from us informing you about the possibility of industrial action by Unite the Union members. We are disappointed that Unite the Union have chosen to issue an industrial action ballot; still, we understand they feel this is an effective way to raise awareness of low pay within the social care sector. We agree that £12.60 per hour does not appropriately reward the commitment or recognise the responsibility that our support practitioners demonstrate every day. However, the Scottish Government, not Sense Scotland, set the Social Care Rate at £12.60, thereby determining the funding we receive to pay our staff.

We are doing everything we can to avoid industrial action given the significant impact it would have on the people we support and their families, and we welcome the opportunity for further discussion with Unite the Union and the Scottish Government.

The ballot to determine whether industrial action will go ahead is currently out to Unite the Union members and will close on Thursday, 5 June. After this, we will be in touch to let you know the result of the ballot.

Blantyre Short Breaks

On Friday, 6 June, from 11am – 2pm, Blantyre Short Breaks will be opening its doors to visitors interested in accessing our respite service, which offers short holidays for people over 16 with additional support needs.

At Blantyre Short Breaks (117 Auchinraith Road, Blantyre, G72 0XX), guests have the opportunity to have the break they want, no matter where in the country they live. People are supported to go to the cinema, go bowling, visit parks, go to the beach, enjoy discos – or anything else they want to do.

During the open day, guests will receive a tour of the building, an overview of what the service provides, and how Sense Scotland can support those interested with next steps. To find out more or to RSVP, please call us on 01698 714 930.

Meet Keith

Last month, we updated you on the news that David Donnelly, our Director of Finance since 2019, had made the difficult decision to leave Sense Scotland. We also told you that we had appointed a new Director of Finance, Keith Notman, who started with us at the end of April. You can read a few words from Keith below.

“I’m Keith Notman, the new Director of Finance for Sense Scotland.

I am a qualified Chartered Accountant who worked in the private sector in property and construction for nearly 30 years. I have also helped with local charities in the Stirling area and my most recent role was with a Housing Association in the East End of Glasgow.

So, what does a Director of Finance do? Well, to be honest, it will involve me being incredibly nosey and looking into all aspects of the how the charity works to ensure that we provide value for money for all of the people we support. I also have the responsibility for managing cash to ensure that Sense Scotland can continue to carry out the good work across Scotland.

Outside of work, I have four kids to “manage”: Ross, Abbie, Ethan, and Joel (even though they are aged between 17 and 25). I love music and going to gigs in small, overcrowded venues and I really enjoy most sports, especially football, although my playing days are over.”

Fundraising Opportunities

Sense Scotland is a charity. Many of our services rely on funding from trusts, foundations and the public. We need to raise at least £1million every year. Can you, your family, friends or employer help? To find out more about our fundraising activities and opportunities, please sign up to our fundraising newsletter at bit.ly/sense-scotland-fundraising, give the team a call on 0300 330 9292 or email us at fundraising@sensescotland.org.uk.

Kiltwalks

Places are all but gone for the next Kiltwalk of the year in Aberdeen, but there are still two more events after that for you to tackle – in Dundee and Edinburgh! The Dundee Kiltwalk will take place on Sunday, 17 August, with two distances to choose from (the 20-mile Mighty Stride and the four-mile Wee Wander). After that, the Edinburgh Kiltwalk will take place on Sunday, 14 September, with three distances to choose from (the 20-mile Mighty Stride, the 11-mile Big Stroll, and the five-mile Wee Wander). To find out more, and grab your free entry code, visit sensescotland.org.uk/kiltwalk.

40th Anniversary Ball

Glitz and glamour more your thing? Why not join us at the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum on Saturday, 15 November and celebrate our 40th Anniversary in style. Enjoy a wonderful event hosted by top host Alex Fleming, with platinum, gold, and silver tables to choose from. Book now at sensescotland.org.uk/anniversary-ball.

Upcoming Events

Twinkle Tots – Every Wednesday, 10:30am – TouchBase Lanarkshire

Our weekly toddler group for children aged 0 - 5 with additional support needs continues at our TouchBase in Lanarkshire (43 Leys Park, Hamilton). Book your tickets at <https://bit.ly/twinkle-tots-25> or email advisory@sensescotland.org.uk to find out more.

Open Day – Friday, 6 June - Blantyre Short Breaks

Come along to our open day at our respite service in Blantyre for people over 16 with additional support needs. During the open day, guests will receive a tour of the building, an overview of what the service provides, and how Sense Scotland can support those interested with next steps. To find out more or to RSVP, please call us on 01698 714 930.

Connect and Play – Saturday, 14 June – TouchBase Ayrshire

Come along to our drop-in session at TouchBase Ayrshire from 10am – 1pm and take part in spring-themed activities! These sessions are suitable for children aged 0 - 12 with communication and sensory support needs, their siblings, and family. Due to messy activities, old clothes are recommended. Book your free ticket at <https://bit.ly/connect-play-tba-june-25>. Please note that tickets will be available for this event from Friday, 30 May.

Connect and Play – Sunday, 22 June – TouchBase Glasgow

Come along to our drop-in session at TouchBase Glasgow from 10am – 1pm and take part in spring-themed activities! These sessions are suitable for children aged 0 - 12 with communication

and sensory support needs, their siblings, and family. Due to messy activities, old clothes are recommended. Book your free ticket at <https://bit.ly/connect-play-tbg-june-25>. Please note that tickets will be available for this event from Friday, 30 May.

Coffee and Connect – Tuesday, 24 June – Online via Zoom

Come along to our online Coffee and Connect session at 10am for parents and carers of people with additional support needs, and catch up with families across the country, along with Sense Scotland's advisors. Book your free ticket at <https://bit.ly/coffee-connect-june-25>. Please note that tickets will be available for this event from Friday, 30 May.

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

You can find past issues at sensescotland.org.uk/care-and-connect.