

Care and Connect *for families*



August 2025 Issue #41



Welcome!

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Voluntary Recognition Agreement

Sense Scotland believes that staff should be properly represented by recognised Trade Unions, and is of the opinion that truly representative and effective Trade Unions enhance employee relations. We are committed to trade union recognition, and have voluntarily recognised Unite the Union for over 20 years.

Our Board of Trustees is concerned that Unite the Union does not democratically represent the breadth of the Sense Scotland Workforce, and believes that it is good practice to review any voluntary arrangement which has been in place for such a lengthy period of time. As such, Trustees have this month served notice to de-recognise Unite the Union. The process will take six months to complete.

During the six-month notice period, Unite the Union's mandate for strike or industrial action remains in place, and Unite the Union will still be our voluntarily recognised union. At the end of the six-month notice period, a voluntary union recognition arrangement will continue. At no point will Sense Scotland not have a voluntary recognition agreement with a union in place.

To help us identify which union any future voluntary recognition agreement should be with, we are asking Sense Scotland staff members to join sessions with an independent, external facilitator, who will hear our staff's views and preferences. No members of the Board of Trustees or Executive team will be present at these sessions.

We look forward to updating you on the outcome of these sessions.

Big Give

This year, we're excited to be partnering with Big Give as part of our Big Birthday Christmas Appeal campaign. Big Give is the UK's leading online match-funding platform, matching your donation to double the difference you can make in support of charitable causes.

By pledging to donate to Sense Scotland by 5pm on Friday, 29 August 2025, your donation will be doubled. For example, this means that by pledging to donate £200 now, you'll help raise £400 for people with communication support needs and sensory disabilities.

If you or your workplace is looking to raise funds for a charitable cause, this is the perfect opportunity to make the most of your donation. Please note that pledges must be a minimum of £100. We're not looking for any money at this point – just a promise. Big Give will then contact pledgers between 9 December 2025 and 6 January 2026 to arrange payment.

To find out more, visit sensescotland.org.uk/big-give.

Free BSL Courses

Through a partnership with the National Deaf Children's Society, the Royal Association for Deaf people is now offering free accredited BSL courses Levels 1, 2 and 3 for families of deaf children aged 0-5 years. By empowering parents and carers to learn BSL, the courses can help families build stronger communication, deeper bonds, and brighter futures, starting from day one.

To find out more and to access these courses, visit royaldeaf.org.uk/courses/ndcs-partnership-accredited-bsl-courses/.

Arts Update

Over the past few years, our Arts Tutors Dave Stephen and Roman Dare have delivered music and art sessions to the people we support in Ayrshire, Glasgow, Lanarkshire, Dumbartonshire, Dundee, and Fife. Sadly, Dave and Roman have both decided to move on from Sense Scotland at the end of August 2025. Dave and Roman have both provided quotes to explain their decision and to express their thanks.

Dave: "I have had a wonderful time working at Sense Scotland over the past seven years as part of the Arts team. It has been great to work across so many different services and support individuals' and groups' creativity, communication and confidence. I have loved having a front row seat to the difference the arts can make to people's lives and witnessing the wonder the people we support get from the performances I've been a part of here. I am going to miss everyone at Sense Scotland a great deal, and I want to thank all of the people we support, support practitioners, colleagues and volunteers for helping me develop as an Arts Tutor and making me feel so welcome everywhere I was delivering."

Roman: "Sadly, I have decided to leave Sense Scotland in order to pursue further education in the arts. During my time at Sense Scotland, I have had the privilege of watching all the wonderful people I work with develop and gain confidence as artists. The relationships I have built with them over the last few years are very special to me and I am devastated to say goodbye. I have learned so much about art and creativity whilst working together and I will take that knowledge with me as I move on to the future. I wish everyone the very best."

If your loved one was supported by Dave or Roman, we are aware that this news may disappoint you and them. During this time, we will do our very best to continue to provide an arts offer to the people we support. While we recruit for another full-time Arts Tutor, this arts offer may be on a different day or in a different type of art than your loved one may be used to, but please rest

assured that both Arts Tutors are providing us with a full handover to ensure that, when our new Arts Tutor is in post, there will be a seamless transition for everyone who received sessions.

Roman's last day in post will be Wednesday, 27 August. If your loved one was supported by Roman, please contact the manager of the service your loved one attends if you wish to say goodbye. Meanwhile, Dave's last day will be on Saturday, 30 August. A farewell event will be held from 1pm – 3pm on this day at TouchBase Glasgow. Please feel free to drop in if you would like to wish him well for his future.

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.

Edinburgh Kiltwalk

Spaces for the final Kiltwalk of the year are filling up fast! Sign up today and get free entry when you pledge to support Sense Scotland at the Edinburgh Kiltwalk on Sunday, 14 September 2025. Whether you're looking for motivation, a cheerful group activity or a chance to raise funds for Sense Scotland, the Kiltwalk is the activity for you. Grab your free space now at sensescotland.org.uk/kiltwalk.

Freefall from the Forth

Are you ready to tackle an exciting challenge? In September, take on a 165ft freefall abseil down the iconic Forth Rail Bridge, landing on the sandy beach below, with our Freefall from the Forth challenge! Whether you're a seasoned adventurer or a first-timer, this is your chance to conquer the bridge and raise funds for Sense Scotland in the process.

To sign up now, visit www.sensescotland.org.uk/abseil.

40th Anniversary Ball

Our Fundraising team are gearing up for another glamorous ball at the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum on Saturday, 15 November. Why not join us and celebrate our 40th Anniversary in style? Enjoy a wonderful event hosted by top host Alex Fleming and with entertainment from nine-piece band Big Vern 'n' the Shootahs, 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.

Coffee and Connect – Tuesday, 26 August – TouchBase Glasgow

Come along to our in-person wellbeing-themed Coffee and Connect session 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 bit.ly/coffee-connect-aug-25.

A Night at the Races – Friday, 5 September – Bishopbriggs Golf Club

On Friday, 5 September, TouchBase Dunbartonshire are holding a Charity Race Night from 7pm till late! Come along to Bishopbriggs Golf Club on Brackenbrae Road for a night of races, games, and more. Tickets cost £5. To find out more, call 0141 772 5588.

Glasgow Family Forum's 40 Years of Sense Scotland Celebration - Sunday, 7 September – TouchBase Glasgow

The Glasgow Family Forum, run by parents and carers for parents and carers, is celebrating 40 years of Sense Scotland on Sunday, 7 September 2025.

The event is open to all, and will feature live music from DJ Matthew Ward, dancing and entertainment from Little Sunshine Dance Entertainment, arts and music activities, a chillout room, a raffle, fundraising stalls, and light bites to eat.

To book tickets, please visit bit.ly/gff-sense-scotland.

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.