

Care and Connect *for families*



October 2025 Issue #43



Welcome!

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- Find out the winners at our **Staff and Volunteer Awards 2025**
- Check out Mecoco's **seasonal scents**
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- Get involved in our **upcoming fundraising events**
- Check out our **upcoming events**
- Read **news from your service**

Unite the Union

We are delighted to announce that our pay offer for 2024/25 and 2025/26 has been accepted by Unite the Union members. As a result, there will be no industrial or strike action across the organisation.

The pay offer includes the introduction of pay differentials for Support Practitioners dependent on their length of service, in addition to the payment of SSSC fees for support staff and managers, a contractual Christmas premium, and a job evaluation exercise for non-support staff.

We are very pleased to share this good news and will share further updates when we have them.

Staff and Volunteer Awards

Earlier this month, our 2025 Staff and Volunteer Awards took place, hosted by our friends at the voco Grand Central Hotel in Glasgow. It was a night of glitz and glamour, recognising and celebrating Sense Scotland's staff and volunteers who go above and beyond in making sure the people we support can live their best lives.

Co-hosted by Edward Reid and Angela Bonomy, the ceremony recognised individuals and teams across several categories, as well as those who had reached significant milestones in their time at Sense Scotland and those who had achieved professional qualifications over the past year.

The winners in each category are listed below:

- **Volunteer of the Year** - Douglas Donaldson, Volunteer (TouchBase Ayrshire and Mecoco)
- **Big Idea** - TouchBase Lanarkshire
- **Directors' Award** - Michelle Holloway, Finance Officer
- **Inspiration (Operations)** - Paula Celi-Hernandez, Support Practitioner
- **Inspiration (Non-Operations)** - Sarah Wroe, Learning & Development Manager
- **Chief Executive's Award** - Malgorzata Dutkiewicz-Pluta, Support Practitioner
- **Employee of the Year** - David McLean, Support Practitioner
- **Team of the Year (Operations)** - Supported Living Glasgow 1 & 2
- **Team of the Year (Non-Operations)** - The Admin team

After all of the awards were handed out, DJ Matthew Ward took to the stage to deliver a fantastic 80s-themed set, which had the whole room jumping.

Thank you to everyone who nominated staff members and volunteers in the Employee of the Year category.

Mecoco's Seasonal Scents

We are excited to announce that Mecoco – our charitable enterprise which works with disabled people to produce candles and scented products – has updated their website to include new seasonal scents. “Heebie Jeebies” (pumpkin spice), “Sugar & Spice” (nutmeg, cinnamon, orange and clove), “Snow Angel” (pear, vanilla and musk), and “Merry Berry” (festive cranberry) are now all available to purchase at www.mecoco.org. The Mecoco team are working on a new Christmas scent unlike anything they've done before, so stay tuned to their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/mecocouk to find out when it's available.

Many of Mecoco's products can be found in Sense Scotland's charity shops across the country. To find your nearest shop, go to www.sensescotland.org.uk/find-your-nearest-shop.

If you've purchased from Mecoco, why not consider leaving a review on the website? Every piece of feedback helps. You can do this by going to the page of the product you bought, and clicking the 'Reviews' tab.

40 Ways to Play

Last month, we told you that our Early Years team have been putting together some excellent how-to activity guides, with instructions on helping children and young people with additional support needs to play at home. The team have recently launched more activities, with some autumn-themed guides to help your loved ones embrace this time of year. To view these activities, go to www.sensescotland.org.uk/play-at-home. Stay tuned for further materials!

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.

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.

As usual, we'll also have an online auction the week before the event, so stay tuned to our Facebook page to make sure you don't miss out on any unique items at competitive prices.

Ho-Ho-Hoedown

Our Fundraising team is excited to announce an all-new event for Sense Scotland supporters – Ho-Ho-Hoedown, a Christmas-themed country dancing event at Glasgow's Grand Ole Opry on Wednesday, 3 December 2025. Tickets will soon be available for this event. In the meantime, please contact fundraising@sensescotland.org.uk to express your interest.

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, 28 October – 10am – 11am – Online via Zoom

Join our online 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-oct-25.

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.