

# Care and Connect *for families*



November 2025 Issue #44



## Welcome!

In this issue of Care and Connect...

- Hear from **Shauna Wright**, Unite the Union's lead officer for social care in Scotland
- Find out about a range of support available for carers
- Learn about the **Force for Good** programme
- Read our **Christmas Appeal**
- Check out our **online Christmas Shop**
- Get involved in our **upcoming fundraising events**
- Check out our **upcoming events**
- Read **news from your service**

# Shauna Wright

Shauna Wright is the newly allocated Unite the Union official for Sense Scotland. With the Chancellor's Budget due later this month, and the Scottish Budget due in January, we will be working alongside Shauna – and Unite the Union as a whole – in the coming months to continue to campaign for increased rights and pay for social care staff. You can hear more from Shauna below.

“Hello all,

My name is Shauna Wright, and I am the Lead Officer for Community Youth, Not for Profit Sector within Unite the Union, and as of this month, I am now the allocated Unite the Union official working with Sense Scotland going forward.

I have a background within Unite that dates back to being a paid official in 2017. Before that, I was a Workplace Rep within a Local Authority as a Social Worker and then as a Mental Health Officer within the Social Work Department. Prior to being a paid official, I wanted to bring about change to make sure that the voices of members were heard and that we had a strong union voice within the workplace. This aim has not changed.

Now, as a Lead Officer for your sector, my role is to work with the workplace reps, highlight the concerns and lack of funding that the sector needs, and allow the voices of our members to be heard at the highest level. I am the lead for Fair Work in Unite, and as part of this, I meet with government bodies and organisations to stress the need for appropriate funding and to recognise the valuable work done by our community teams and those who provide support daily.

I would really appreciate any support for the campaign that Unite is running, which puts the demands of social care workers at the centre of the solutions needed to fix the crisis impacting the sector. You can get involved directly by signing a digital open letter to your MSP and by sharing it with everyone you know. The louder the voice, the better.”

You can find out more about Unite the Union's campaign here: [bit.ly/unite-campaign-social-care](https://bit.ly/unite-campaign-social-care).

You can sign the digital open letter to your MSP here: [bit.ly/unite-digital-letter-social-care](https://bit.ly/unite-digital-letter-social-care).

## Support for Carers

mygov.scot has recently published an updated leaflet outlining the range of support available to carers in Scotland. This includes support like access to short breaks, information on benefits and grants, emotional support, and social activities. To find out more, visit [bit.ly/helping-hand-carers](https://bit.ly/helping-hand-carers).

## Force for Good

We've been incredibly lucky to have had the support of a brilliant team of software developers from JPMorgan Chase's Force for Good programme over the past nine months. They've worked closely with us to create something really special - a new performance dashboard that brings together live information from across Sense Scotland, helping our managers make quicker, clearer decisions that benefit everyone we support.

This clever new system brings together live information from all our different teams and locations into one place. That means our managers can see what's happening across our services right now, helping them make quick, smart decisions and spot anything that might need extra attention. Most importantly, it helps us keep people safe and make sure everyone is getting the best possible care.

The team from JPMorgan Chase gave so much of their time and talent to make this happen, and we can't thank them enough. Their support means a lot to us, and it's going to make a real difference in people's lives.

## Christmas Appeal

Our Christmas Appeal – which follows the story of twins Gerard and Martin, and their parents Gary and Maureen – is now available to read at [sensescotland.org.uk/donate-now](https://sensescotland.org.uk/donate-now). You can read a short excerpt below:

"Imagine this... It's the summer holidays. Every day, your husband is at work and you're home alone with your five-year-old twin boys – both blind, barely able to walk or talk, each with learning disabilities and health challenges.

It's been a summer of endless rain, but finally, a dry day. You decide to take them to the park.

You manage to find two empty swings – a small miracle. But then another child comes over and says, "*It's my turn now.*" They don't understand your boys can't just hop off and run to the roundabout. But you do it, you take him out the swing – and your child screams. And people stare.

They always stare. And in that moment, you want to shout:

*"Don't you realise how hard this is? How unfair this feels? What we've been going through for the last five years?"*

But you don't. Because no one really understands what it's like. Except maybe you.

That was our life. We're Maureen and Gary, parents to twins Martin and Gerard. That day at the park wasn't unusual. Everyday life was difficult for our little family – exhausting, isolating, relentless.

Then, by chance, a wonderful social worker told us about Sense Scotland. And suddenly, a door opened."

Continue reading at [sensescotland.org.uk/donate-now](https://sensescotland.org.uk/donate-now).

If you'd like to donate to our Christmas Appeal, please **consider waiting until between 2 December and 9 December** – by waiting until this time, every pound you donate to Sense Scotland could be doubled by The Reed Foundation and our generous pledgers through The Big Give.

If you have any questions about this, please email [fundraising@sensescotland.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@sensescotland.org.uk) or give us a call on 0300 330 9292.

## Christmas Shop

Have you visited our all-new online Christmas Shop yet? Every card, candle, and festive treat you buy helps make a difference to the people we support and their families. Choose from items such as Christmas cards, including designs made by the people we support, candles and wax melts created by our volunteers at Mecoco, and festive scented products like our Christmas Fruit Organza Bag.

Check out our Christmas Shop now and order in time for Christmas at [www.sensescotland.org.uk/mecoco](https://www.sensescotland.org.uk/mecoco).

## 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](https://bit.ly/sense-scotland-fundraising), give the team a call on 0300 330 9292 or email us at [fundraising@sensescotland.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@sensescotland.org.uk).

### Santa Paws

If you're the owner of a four-legged furry friend, Santa Paws is the event for you! We're excited to be bringing back Santa Paws on Saturday, 6 December and Sunday, 7 December for a fun and festive weekend in aid of Sense Scotland. You choose the time, distance and location – all that

matters is that you raise a minimum of £40 in aid of the people we support. There'll also be prizes for those taking part, including Best In Snow (best-dressed pup) and most picturesque location.

To sign up, go to [www.sensescotland.org.uk/santapaws](http://www.sensescotland.org.uk/santapaws).

## 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](mailto:advisory@sensescotland.org.uk) to find out more. The last session of the year will be on Wednesday, 17 December.

### **Christmas Fayre – Monday, 1 December, 5:30pm – TouchBase Ayrshire**

TouchBase Ayrshire's (41 Princes Street, Ardrossan) Christmas Fayre will start at 5:30pm and include local crafters, items from Mecoco, refreshments, home baking, a raffle, face painting, and a visit from Santa!

### **Christmas Fête – Saturday, 6 December, 11am – 2pm – TouchBase Glasgow**

Join TouchBase Glasgow (43 Middlesex Street, Glasgow) for their annual Christmas Fête from 11am - 2pm - featuring a tombola, a raffle, home baking, crafts made by the people we support, face painting and more.

### **Christmas Party – Thursday, 11 December, 4pm – The Venue, Kirkcaldy**

Join our Finglassie service at their Christmas Party at The Venue in Kirkcaldy! All are welcome. RSVP: 07368 699 320.

### **Christmas Party – Saturday, 13 December, 11am – 1pm – TouchBase Ayrshire**

Join our Early Years team for a Christmas Party! Drop-in any time between 11am and 1pm and take part in Christmas activities. These sessions are suitable for children aged 0 - 12 with communication and sensory support needs, their siblings, and families. Book your free ticket now at [bit.ly/christmas-party-tba](http://bit.ly/christmas-party-tba).

### **Christmas Party – Sunday, 14 December, 11am – 1:30pm – TouchBase Glasgow**

Join our Early Years team for a Christmas Party! Drop-in any time between 11am and 1:30pm and take part in Christmas activities. These sessions are suitable for children aged 0 - 12 with communication and sensory support needs, their siblings, and families. Book your free ticket now at [bit.ly/christmas-party-tbg](http://bit.ly/christmas-party-tbg).

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

You can find past issues at [sensescotland.org.uk/care-and-connect](https://sensescotland.org.uk/care-and-connect).