

Charity awarded £15,000 community connect funding



SANDS Lothians have become the latest big winners from Scotmid's Community Connect initiative – being awarded funding of £15,000 to help them to provide baby bereavement care for families in Edinburgh and the Lothians.

Scotmid launched the initiative in 2017 to help support charities, community projects and good cause groups continue the valuable work they do in communities and previous £15,000 award winners in the East Region have been Blood Bikes Scotland and Health in Mind.

The funding for the initiative, which sees local groups win a share of £25,000 to support their ongoing work in the local area, has been generated from the sale of single-use carrier bags.

The other Community Connect award winners were Carers of West Lothian and Richmond's Hope, who both received £5,000.

Scotmid members collected votes by swiping their Community Connect card after every in-store purchase and then voted for their preferred good cause group either in the shop or by attending last night's Ordinary General Meeting at Murrayfield

Stadium (Monday 30 September).

Based in Craiglockhart, SANDS Lothians support local bereaved families in Edinburgh and the Lothians who have lost their baby. The Community Connect award will be used to fund a specialist baby bereavement counsellor for a whole year.

SANDS Lothians CEO Nicola Welsh said: "Thank you so much to all the wonderful members, who voted for us in Scotmid's Community Connect programme. We are so incredibly grateful to everyone who took the time to learn about our work and cast their votes in support of our project. As a small charity, support like this makes the world of difference and enable us to continue supporting bereaved parents in the local community.

"This funding will enable us to provide specialist baby bereavement counselling sessions to parents. Through our counselling service, we provide a safe space for families to talk and get professional support, at the most difficult time in their lives. Baby loss can lead to social isolation, depression, anxiety, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and suicidal thoughts, so it is absolutely essential that they can access our services. All our services, including counselling are provided for free and for as long as is needed.

"We are a lifeline for local families, struggling to come to terms with the trauma of losing their baby. This funding will enable us to support families and help them be better able to cope with their grief, which will in turn have a positive effect on their life with wider family, friends, community and work colleagues."

Scotmid President Harry Cairney said: "Congratulations to SANDS Lothians and all the latest Community Connect award winners.

"This was our third Community Connect awards in Scotmid's East Region – local charities have now benefited from £75,000

funding – and, once again, the vote was close, so thanks to all our members who helped to determine the outcome.

“Our core purpose is to serve our local communities and improve people’s everyday lives and Community Connect goes towards enabling us to achieve those goals.

“We very much look forward to seeing all these projects come to life and working together to improve the quality of life for people in our local communities.”

The short-listed Good Cause Groups for the next cycle of Community Connect funding will be announced next week and the award winners will be announced at Scotmid’s Annual General Meeting in April.

Photo (left to right): Scotmid President Harry Cairney, SANDS Lothians CEO Nicola Welsh, SANDS Lothians COO Angie Alexander, Scotmid CEO John Brodie.