

HOT
CHOCOLATE
TRUST

FUTURE
PERFECT:
AHEAD OF
OUR TIME

ANNUAL
REPORT
2017

FUTURE
PERFECT



HOT
CHOCOLATE
TRUST

Hot Chocolate Trust (HC) is a youth work organisation based in the Steeple Church, Dundee. Since 2001, HC has worked with thousands of young people who hang out in the city centre, building relationships and supporting them to navigate the changes towards adulthood and positive futures. We have big imaginations, big hearts, and big ambitions for our amazing community (and city!). But how we work is actually really simple and is based on our core values which include...

**Future.
Perfect.**

These have been two important concepts for HC this year.

We've spent a lot of time thinking about where we've come from in life, what might lie ahead of us, what steps we can take to create our ideal future(s), and who we hope to become as a result.

This wee book is the story of what we've done and what we've learnt through 2017.

In it are 60+ different voices of young people, team, parents and partners, each sharing their perspectives of the journey we've been on together.

As you'll soon see, we've time-travelled forwards and backwards, (lightsaber) battled and bonded, raged about the injustices of our world and raved under UV lights.

**We invite you into
Future Perfect: Ahead Of Our Time.**

1) Viewing young people as whole people: supporting their holistic development which realises physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual potential.

2) Growing a community with young people which is safe, welcoming and affirming to all.

3) Building relationships based on respect and trust, relationships which are voluntary and two-way.

4) Ensuring that plans and activities are owned by young people, adapt with the culture, and bring positive change for all involved.

5) Embracing a culture of reflective learning where we learn from our own experiences (even our mistakes).

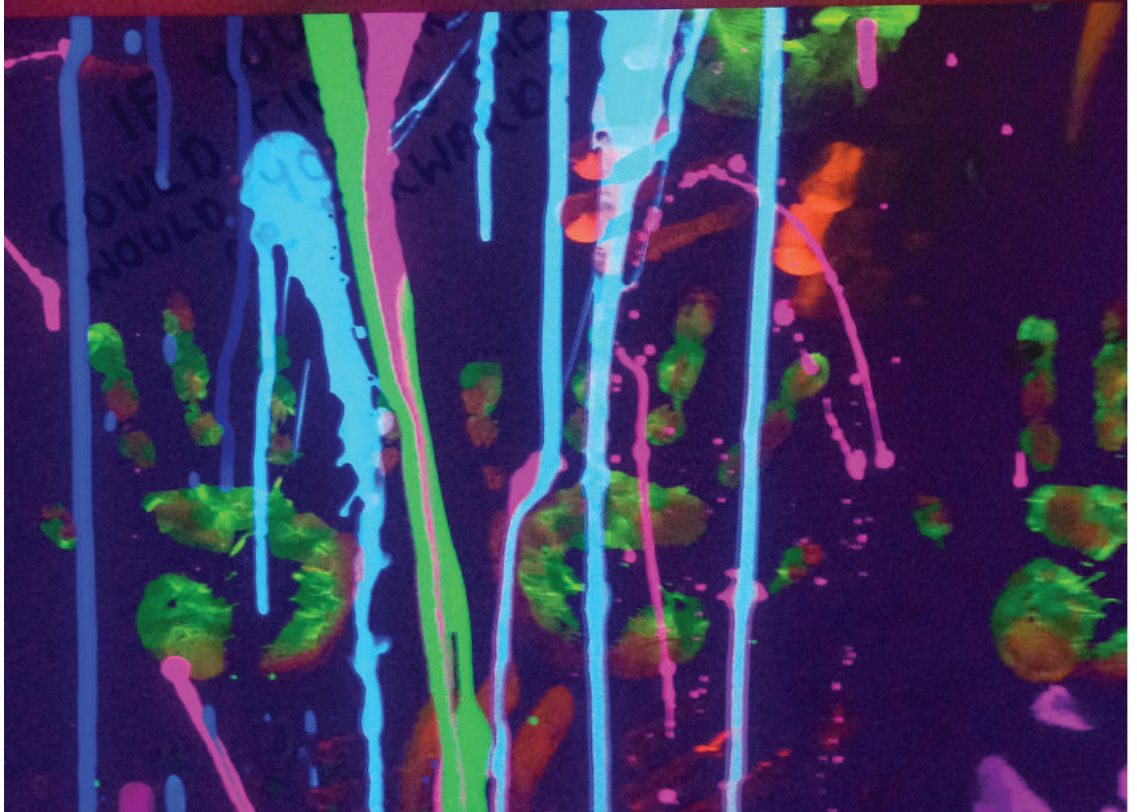
6) Knowing what we're good at - and not so good at: working with other people and organisations who can provide specialist opportunities for young people that we couldn't make happen on our own.

HC is open to all young people without prejudice or distinction of religion, race, culture, disability, gender identity, sexuality or politics. The only restrictions are of age: young people must be in 1st year of high school up to 21 years of age (although we do sometimes continue to work with folks on an individual basis after that).



DREAMS FOR THE

The best way to predict
the future is to create it



VIBES

-
There's no judgement here - there's nothing but support. It's like having another set of parents who give us unconditional love no matter what.

Jack R, 21

-
It's a very safe space where you can talk about your problems. <3 Xx

Tammie, 17

-
I had a hard time at school and for a few years I just shut myself away and became a total recluse. But a friend told me about this place and it's helped me make loads of new friends - loads. It's amazing the difference that just one person can make to you.

Alex, 18

-
It's chill. Warm. I see all my pals.

Clara, 15

-
Hot Chocolate is... good. Really good. It's a place where everyone can be themselves.

Erin, 15

-
HC feels very close, very warm. Everyone here is different, and we just embrace it. There's a lot of LGBT people - and so many drag queens! It's a safe space and a good place to get help. I'm friends with quite a few people who have been kicked out of home because of their drag. It's terrible. When it comes to Christianity, a lot of people take the little excerpts that fit their thinking, but don't look at the bigger picture. But actually it's about love thy neighbour rather than ostracising them. So the fact that HC is a Christian organisation that is actively welcoming and inclusive to LGBT people is great. I hope it sets an example.

Zeo, 21

-
HC is perfectly situated making it easily accessible to young people from all over the city. They come together there and feel safe, secure and free to be themselves. The facilities on offer are excellent giving them a fantastic opportunity to develop their interests and skills while building positive relationships with their peers.

The team are very positive and enthusiastic about their work and offer a great deal of support to the young people attending.

I have always felt welcome and hope that the young people feel safe and reassured by my visits to open sessions.

PC Kerry Thomson-Craig, Police Scotland

-
I like how when the police have been around, they've felt kinda like HC team - friendly and interested in us.

It makes them less scary when we know they're not here for any negative reason, but just to get to know us and make sure everyone's safe.

If we're having problems, it makes it easier for us to approach them in the street.

Jade, 18

-
Amazing. Spectacular. Absolutely bonkers.

Craig, 15

-
It's welcoming, very welcoming. You feel content here. You're accepted, and it's free: some people want to be left alone and chill, others want to talk to team. There's always someone to speak to if you want.

Meesh, 16

-
Everyone here can be themselves: drag queens, mohawks, whoever.

I feel less lonely when I'm here.

Quin, 14



2017

January

Youth Team launch
Visit TAG games

March

New cocoon room built!
New Youth Worker (Arts)

April

OPEN NIGHT!
Annual report launch

February

Singing group
Motorbikes with Hedzup
EET residential (Shielbrae)
RSA New Contemporaries
Exhibition

May

DJCAD degree show trip.
Outdoor residential (Ardeonaig)
New Youth Worker (Young Volunteers)

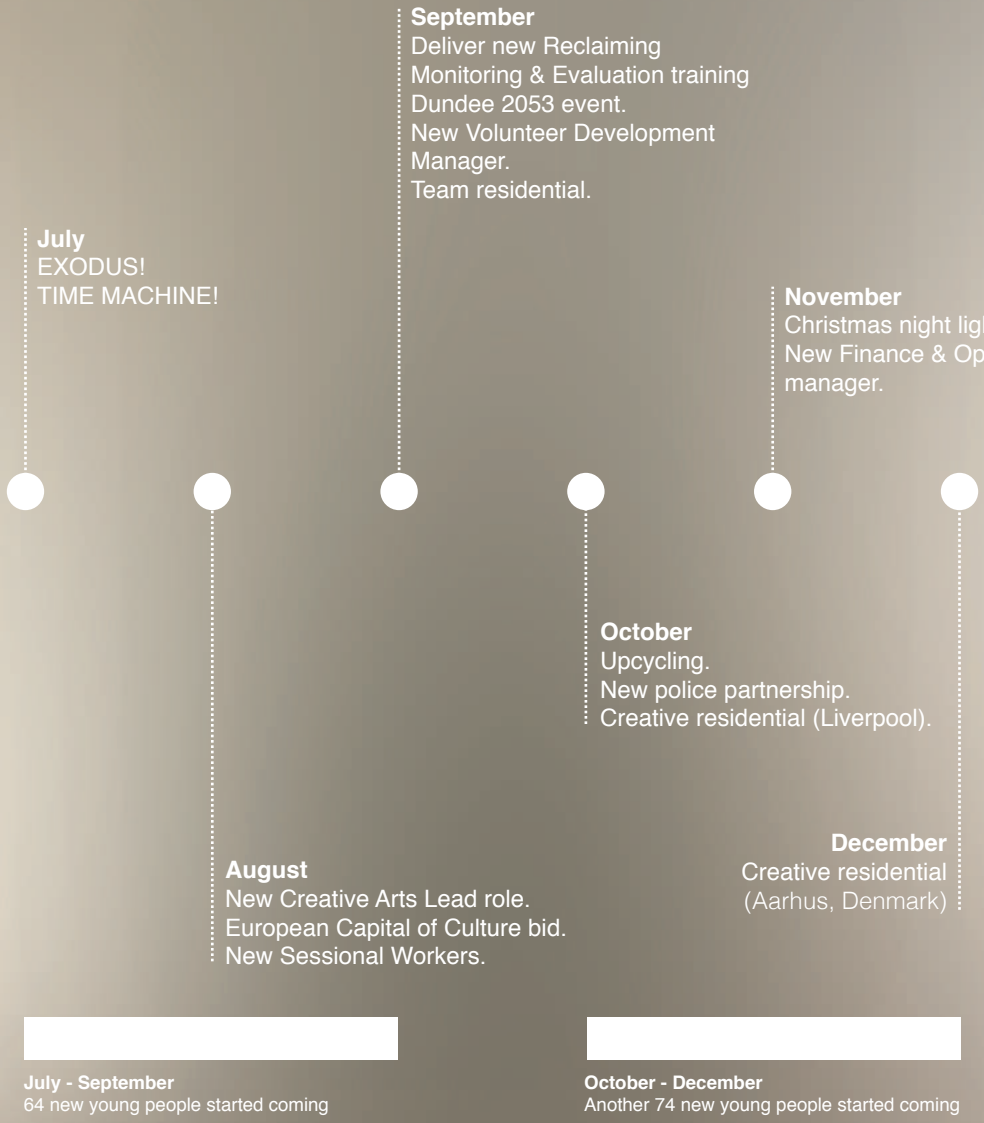
June

Rep trips
Job club

157 open sessions / 311 individual support sessions / 75 groups / 25 trips / 4 residentials

Where do you find hope for the future?

In tiny little things and great big massive things too. My friend would never leave the house but after three weeks of me calling her phone and showing up at her door, she started going out again. That gives me hope that anyone can change. Mhairi, 18



OUR NORMAL RHYTHMS OF LIFE

OPEN SESSIONS

(150 each year)
TUESDAY 7-9pm
WEDNESDAY 7-9pm
SATURDAY 2-5pm.

-

Informal and unstructured drop-ins where young people come to build relationships, have a safe place to 'be', develop new skills and explore new ways of thinking.

-

For most of us, open sessions are like our second home. You've got couches at the door; the sports hall for basketball and stuff as well as pool tables and a piano down the other end; the cocoon room as a quiet space; the art and music rooms; and the chilling room where you can speak to pals and team and play music and games.

The Steeple's fun and cosy - and everyone makes new people feel really welcome.
Jordyn, 17

-

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

(350-400 each year)

-

When a team member and a young person meet 1 to 1 to explore issues, interests, ambitions that matter.

-

Most people go through life feeling like they've got no-one to speak to. But it's important to have someone who you can spill your heart to. I have 1-1s with Nicole and they get really deep.

You have to have a lot of respect for your worker, and I really do. In my darkest hour this place gave me a sense of hope.

HC's helped me find who I am.
ChloeAnne, 15

-

YOUTH TEAM

-

A supported and accredited volunteering programme where 10-15 young people each year take on extra responsibility and develop skills and confidence.

-

I've been trying to build my confidence through Youth Team. I'm terrible with names or talking to new people, so for my first challenge I had to go and learn people's names. It's given me a reason to talk to people, so I feel like it's become easier to build up conversations.

My next challenge is to organise a games night. It feels like I've got responsibility because I've got to make decisions for everyone, not just myself. I'm not big on gaming, but I know lots of people here are - so that's why I said yes to organising it.

Quin, 14

-

GROUPS + PROJECTS

(50-100 each year)

-

An important part of Hot Chocolate's life, responding to the needs and interests of the community.

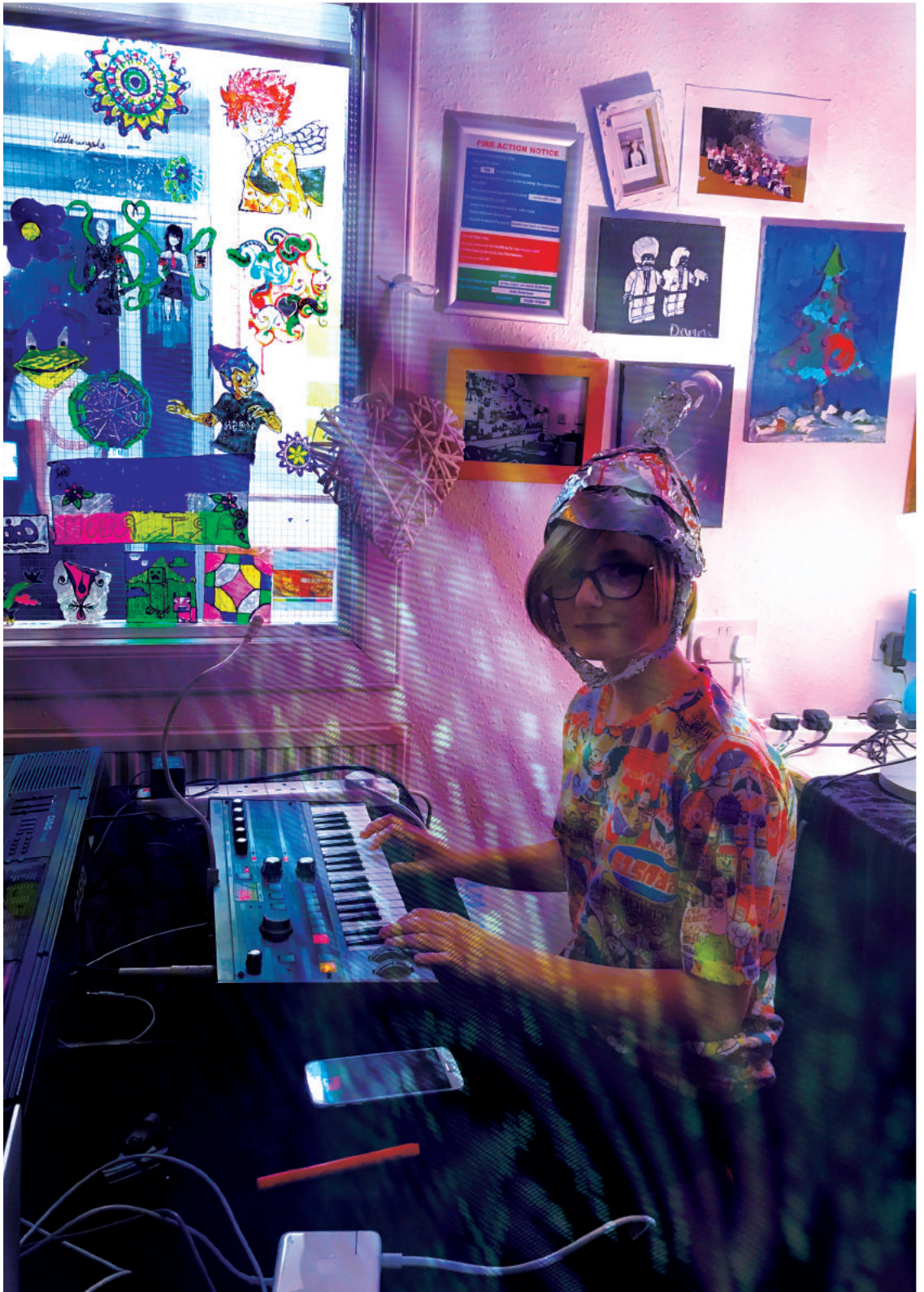
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There's always loads of different things happening here. It's good to have stuff in common with people and get to know new people too. It's not actually about what the activity is that's important - it's who you're doing it with and how you're doing it.

Brooke, 14

-





EXODUS

One of the main ways we explored the theme of **FUTURE PERFECT** this year was through Exodus, our three week summer programme, co-created with the young people, which involved building an epic time machine, working with Vox Liminis to create electronic music, a range of trips and discussions, film-making, lightsaber workshops, community meals, creating our first ever podcast, and celebrating it all with a hot dog feast and UV rave!

-
Exodus made me re-examine what's important in life.

Aiden, 19

-
Young people created and evolved a 'time machine' installation piece. There was lots of neon colours and they loved the UV lights - they were such a novelty. It was pretty ambitious, but it was great for allowing people to get involved who wouldn't normally come to the art room. Art is such an important way for young people to have their voices and emotions heard.

Esther, Youth Worker (Arts)

-
We made pinhole cameras out of boxes and bits of aluminium. I took a photo of the trees by leaving the camera still for a few minutes. Then we made a dark room to develop the photos. I've never done anything like that before - it was fun.

Brooke, 14

-
I enjoyed the art stuff. I made my own drag outfit with some odds and ends. Tesco bags have never looked so good!

Jack, 20

-
As a musician, DIY electro was a great experience - being able to record your own music and find your own unique sound.

Mhairi, 17

-
I just enjoyed getting out to Steeple every day and hanging out with everyone here.

Liam, 18

-
What a privilege to be welcomed into such a reflective, supportive community, buzzing with creativity and compassion.

There is a reason the young people take ownership of HC, continually investing in it and reshaping it – it works, it helps, and it's really bloody fun!

Rollo, Vox Liminis

-
The food was damage. I love food...

Now I'm getting hungry.

Hamish, 16

-
The big meal at the end was a really good idea. It brought everyone together. We were in charge of rolls. It provided the opportunity for some excellent bun puns.

Maddie, 16 and Eve, 15

-
The videos were hilarious. I was in the one about the perfect sandwich. Mine was cheese, ham and onion chutney...

mmm... I love sandwiches.

Kayley, 17

-
My highlight was the rave. Nicole was the best dancer. Eilaine tried though.

Jemma, 17

-
HC are doing some phenomenal work, using creativity to build community. The place is full of energy, full of life - it's buzzing. Over the course of Exodus we had various young people come in to the recording room and spend 2-3 minutes answering a question*. Once they had answered they could create their own question for someone else to answer. The conversations we had absolutely blew me away.

Ryan McLeod, Podcast Producer
(Creative Chit Chat)

* several of these questions and responses are woven throughout this book - but do listen to the podcast for the full sense of how great this project was!

You can find it at www.cccdundee.com

(episode 44 - Hot Chocolate Punch In Punch Out)

ACTIVISM

Do you think perfection exists?

Not really, because everyone is different. And because of that, who can you really hold up to being perfect? The closest thing to perfection is kindness, being passionate and enjoying life as it should be.

Whilst perfection might not be possible, we take our role in making a difference to the world very seriously, both within HC...

I feel like, as a young person, you don't always get taken seriously by adults. But there's none of that here - everyone's heard equally. We're so involved - everything's based around us, what we want, and how we could do things for the place.

Team are always so onboard with our ideas. If we want equipment, or to change up something, we can. We have to work for what we want though, but I think that's a good thing coz it gets us involved and we can really tailor the place to the way we want it.

It's a really nice feeling.

Jade, 18

-

...and in the wider world

If I ruled Dundee...

I'd help the homeless and the hungry

-

I'd fix the child mental health system

-

I'd sort the bullying in the schools

If I ruled the world...

I'd change the way people think about LGBT

-

In America I'd have black people with equal rights, there'd be no Mexican border standoff and they wouldn't be trying to bomb Russia

-

I'd try and make everyone more equal - especially the poorer countries - we could help them if we want to, we just choose not to.

-

I'd get rid of every nuclear weapon on the planet

You have to stand up for what you believe in - you have to start somewhere.

SHARON'S STORY

(not her real name)

-
I grew up in a really happy family. You could almost call my childhood perfect. But when you move out of your parents' place at 16 and get your own home, then find out you're pregnant, it's a shock! I was totally overwhelmed.

It was after my first baby that the abuse started. She was only 6 weeks old at the time. He abused me physically, emotionally and sexually and it got so bad it became daily. I was hospitalised 36 times in 8 weeks. My friends and family could see the pattern and were really worried about me, but I made out that they were all accidents. He nearly killed me on several occasions. I put up with it because I was petrified about what he might do to me if I left. I hid it from everyone because I was so ashamed of myself - I felt so dirty, so disgusting. I cried myself to sleep every night, thinking it was my fault.

One day I was sitting outside the Steeple and I just thought: 'I need to get him out my life'. I came into the office and made a phone call to the police. I don't where the strength came from that day, but I knew that if I didn't do something I was going to die. When I got home he'd been arrested. I felt such relief. He decided to plead not guilty at the last minute, so I had to go to court as a witness. I was terrified. The first thing I did was pick up the phone to HC. Jules and Eilaine came to court with me. Them being there gave me the courage to tell the judge everything. He had to stop proceedings because he and the jury were so upset by what they heard. I was completely broken.

That was the turning point. He got sentenced to two years and I finally cut all ties with him.

I'm in such a different place now. The girls are at school. I've been to uni and got a law degree. I've got a brilliant job and a good salary. I live in a beautiful house with my amazing girls. I still hear his voice in my head: 'You're no good. You're worthless, You're an unfit mum. You deserve to be on the street.' And I still have nightmares about what he did to me. But I get counselling and it's really helping. I'm proud of myself for managing to get as far as I have... but I know that my limits definitely haven't been reached yet.

I recently got a national award for having the courage and strength to speak out and tell my story, and I've become an ambassador for the Princes Trust around domestic violence.

I don't want pity. What I want is for young people who are going through the same thing to know that they're not alone; that they don't have to put up with it; and there's so much support out there. No-one should be ashamed of what they've been through.

**This is what I want my life to be about.
The sky's the limit these days. I'm free.**

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CREATIVE

-
Our arts and music work has continued to go from strength to strength; with a growing creative team, increasing partnerships, and of course multitudes of talented and passionate young people developing new skills and pursuing new opportunities. This year, these have included: graphic design, singing, up-cycling furniture, music recording, fashion design, band rehearsals, laser cutting at DCA, music tuition, seeing the DJCAD degree show, songwriting, designing and building our new cocoon room, and getting stuck in with the European City of Culture bid (just to name a few).
-

But there are a couple of questions that are asked a lot about culture & the arts; What difference do the arts make? Why do they even matter? Shouldn't we just spend the money on 'proper' things like education and health? Well, as part of a research project, we asked some of HC's young people and here's how they responded:

If you can't express then you're just like a robot. Everyone tries to be the same and it's boring. Expression is like music. Many songs are just the same four chords. They're the same but its the different melodies, harmonies, ordering, tempo etc - these layers make it different and bring it alive.
-

Creativity makes positives out of negatives. People make amazing songs about terrible things, which people relate to and find helpful.
-

It can calm my anxiety and communicate my feelings. It's like a release instead of speaking. It can be difficult to talk, so it's a safer platform which builds my confidence.
-

-
HC fulfils a vital role of putting young people at the centre of decision making, and using creativity and the arts to do this, on their own terms. Dundee is incredibly fortunate to have such an innovative and ambitious organisation leading this work, and we look forward to continuing to collaborate during the Year of Young People 2018, to enrich our city and open up even more opportunities for young citizens living here. Gillian Easson, Director, Creative Dundee

-
I do contemporary dance which is a way to show emotion - it's a release, a weight off the shoulders - that's why I do it, in my own style.
-

Anyone can use words, but if you want to understand their feelings - there's the tone, the soul, the brushstrokes, a song can make someone cry - it's deeper.
-

Making your own things gives you the freedom to f*ck up/make mistakes - no one notices but you.
-

I like just sitting talking, but also music, which is an extension of the same - it helps you chill out, gives perspective, helps reflect. I might get angry but can deal with it musically.
-

Art is a big one. It distracts me from whatever I'm thinking about, a way of processing and escaping. When I paint it's very relaxing and therapeutic.
-



ROBOT ME

IT'S A BADASS



TRIPS

When young people and team go on a purposeful adventure together, to somewhere outside the Steeple.

These might have a cultural/outdoor ed/volunteering/exploration focus - or simply be for some much needed escape and banter.

The focus will depend, as always, on the desires/needs of the young people. And through 2017 we have done a record breaking 25 trips!

We went to see Lu Over the Wall at the DCA. The anime was really good but it had a confusing end, like: 'I love you but I don't want to see you again'... but yeah, I'd love to go on a trip like this again.
Stephen, 17

I went to the Rep to see Room. It was intense. Emotional - like you feel it in your gut. It was a good play though, and it was the first time I really got to know other young people properly.
Jordyn, 17

Ryze was amazing. It was tramp-tastic!
Craig, 15

It's not every day you get to hit somebody with a laser. I'd love to do it again next year.
Kamil, 17

It was my first time at Glasgow skate park and I'd love to go again. I had loads of fun and I managed not to fall!
Ryan B, 17

RESIDENTIALS

When groups of young people and team head off to a house in the country or outdoor centre and spend a weekend making music/creating art/developing skills/exploring themes/having adventures/escaping the city.

This year we also did our first INTERNATIONAL residential, whoop!

Residentials are so important for bonding - with both young people and team. It's like you shortcut six months worth of open sessions, you get to know people that much better. In my situation I don't have the money or the ability to organise something like these weekends - I don't have access to transport or anything. But HC gives us the opportunity to have these amazing experiences - that's why there's always such a queue to sign up for them! They give us the chance to escape, to get away from things, to have a break without worry and to get new perspectives on ourselves and the world.

Going to Denmark was the greatest experience of my life. It was pretty stressful coz I signed up quite last minute and I didn't have a passport. But I knew I didn't want to miss this, so I made it happen and I have no regrets. Aarhus was so beautiful - the most chilled place I've ever been to. No sirens, no car horns, people who were so relaxed and welcoming. The Art Museum with the rainbow panorama was the best bit - it was so peaceful.

I've never felt more free than stepping out of my life and going across the water to explore a new territory I've never been to before. I definitely want to go back.
MK, 18



IMPACT

The informal, responsive and creative ways we work is not accidental: we choose to work this way because we know that it makes a real difference in the lives of the young people! Here's some statistics to prove it...

ACTIVITY

In 2017 HC have worked with around 350 young people. There have been:

- 157 open sessions
- 311 1-1s (with 81 different young people)
- 100 groups & trips (with 102 different young people)
- 4 weekends away (with 24 different young people)
- 13 young people have been on Youth Team

OUTCOMES

Throughout our various activities, we ask young people to reflect on their lives, journeys, experiences, learning - and how they're changing. These reflections, along with the team's observations, are recorded on our now legendary database, letting us understand in more detail about the difference we make. So, in the past year, we have supported young people to develop in the following ways:

- 200 have grown in self-worth
- 199 have grown in self-knowledge
- 230 have improved their social skills
- 188 have increased in understanding that they can positively impact their lives and communities
- 150 have acted to positively impact their lives and communities
- 148 have improved their ability to plan ahead and stick to goals
- 23 have increased in their awareness and understanding of their spirituality

A big part of HC's impact with young people is also around education, employment and training support.

HC has supported many young people to move on to 'positive destinations'...

- 16 in education
- 19 in employment
- 13 in training
- 81 in volunteering (18 gained accreditation)
- 21 have gained work experience
- 34 were supported to remain in their 'positive destination' despite significant barriers (eg financial, housing, family)
- 103 were supported towards employment, education or training (eg writing CVs, interview prep, references)
- 30 accessed external support to overcome barriers EET

One particular highlight this year was the way young people became involved with the Classic TT Race on the Isle of Man: I took a group of young people, including two from HC to marshal for the week. It can be daunting, but they just mucked in with the team. Some of the situations they have to handle can be difficult - accidents for example. It's a huge responsibility. But they were awesome, and they loved it.

Ian Pert, Hedzup

The trip to the Isle of Man was amazing. Seeing behind the scenes, being so close to the bikes, getting trained, meeting new people, working together with the other 500 volunteers, planning for the weather, meeting the racers - it was amazing and everyone was so encouraging. Ian really helped us see that we were all special in different ways, and that we all have our unique things about us to bring. That's going to be something I treasure for the rest of my life. I'm now doing a mechanics apprenticeship. It's meant to take 3 years, but they've told me that because of the rate I'm learning I might be able to do it in two and half - or maybe even just two years. Then I'll have a guaranteed job with them.

Dione, 16

WIDER IMPACT

HC is by no means perfect, but after 17 years' worth of youth work, we do have a lot of experience, learning and resources that we try to share wherever possible. Our vision is not just for the young people who come to the Steeple, but for young people across the whole city and country to thrive!

-
HC has done the hard yards in questioning how best to embed evaluation that keeps true to their values and good youth work. It's exciting to learn from an organisation that approaches evaluation with curiosity and creativity, and is committed to understanding and learning from what is going on - for the benefit of their young people and workers, not simply to report to funders. HC's practices and tools resonate well beyond just youth work!

Colleen Souness, Evaluation Officer, The Robertson Trust

-
I have been delighted to discover how informed HC is on the issue of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES). There has been an explosion of interest across Scotland in this newly emerging science, which has alerted us to the long-lasting biological consequences of childhood trauma. Most individuals and organisations are only beginning their journey of ACES understanding. HC, though, is ahead of that curve, and has been integrating ACES information into their work with young people for several years. That's important, because many of the young people who need their support are likely to have suffered a high number of ACES. Recognising this gives team a greater level of empathy and understanding about behaviour than they would already have had. This depth and courage in their thinking renders HC one of the cutting-edge thinkers in the country. I admire their willingness to be leaders and am proud to work with them.

Dr. Suzanne Zeedyk, Research Scientist & Founder, Connected Baby

-
By finding imaginative ways to engage with young people who might be at higher risk, HC genuinely offers a chance to change the course of a young person's life. They do it in a completely person-centred and non-stigmatizing way, helping us in our efforts to turn around the unacceptable levels of inequality in Dundee. The levels of trust and positive results that they achieve by walking alongside young people are the envy of most other services and I believe they represent best practice in Dundee.

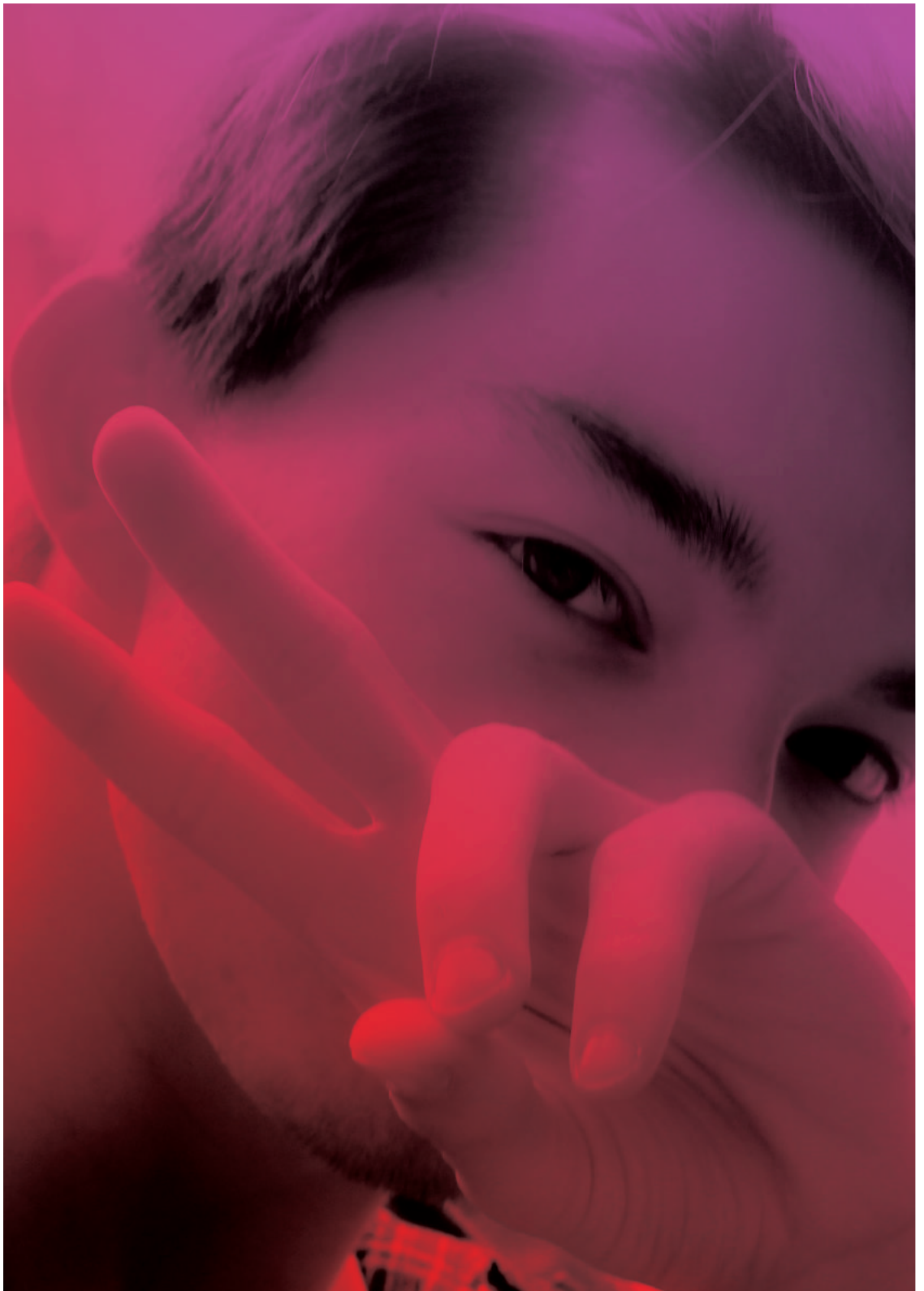
Peter Allan, Community Planning Manager, Dundee City Council

-
HC constantly inspires us with their mission: striving to understand the needs of young people, maximising their resource, pitching their message and delivering what they do with such brilliant impact. And on top of all of that they then generously share with beginners like ourselves! We aspire to deliver with the wisdom, the passion, the tone and the creativity of HC. With their support, we have moved closer to the needs of our young people, better refined our objectives and fettled our resources. Exciting days lie ahead as we explore the possibilities for motivational recording and telling of the amazing journeys of our young people.

Susan Duncan, CEO, BREAKTHROUGH Dundee

-
HC values relationships, they are built on honesty and integrity, and they operate by giving both young people and partners opportunity to participate in the Hot Chocolate methodology, to join the family, to come home. In this family, this home, I found creativity and innovation in their approach, both in delivery of services to young people and how they speak about their work and how they demonstrate their work. They seem to balance the informality of family with production of outcomes and outputs for young people, enabling transformative change.

James Fawcett, CONCRETE London



CENSUS

Most years we do a HC 'census' so we have a better understanding of what is happening in the lives of the young people and can therefore better support them to achieve their dreams and overcome their challenges. Here's some of the headlines.

AGE

20% 12-15 years old //
68% 16-18 years old //
12 % 19-21 years old //

GENDER

46% Male //
44% Female //
10% Trans/non-binary

SEXUALITY

38% straight //
16% gay/lesbian //
36% bisexual //
10% other/unsure

WORRIES/PRESSURES/ RESPONSIBILITIES

84% have been bullied at school //
24% are not in employment, education or training //
24% have experienced homelessness //
62% identify as having mental health problems //
14% are care experienced //
76% had someone close to them die //
72% have been a victim of crime //

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACEs)

We asked questions about young people's experiences of ten specific tough things that might have happened in their childhood (like family imprisonment, or mental health issues at home).

56% of young people had experienced 4 or more of these //
24% had experienced 7 or more //

I'm so glad you asked me those questions. A lot of bad stuff has happened in my life, and no-one's ever asked me about it. But I want to talk about it!
Anon, 17

Fate, destiny, free will: can we change anything? If so, what?

You can't control everything - there's other forces out there at work and you can't stop them, so you've got to accept that. When something negative happens you can either learn from it or be down about it. And if you learn from it - how to avoid it, or how to work with it - that'll make life easier.
Anon, 20

SPIRITUALITY

As a Christian organisation, HC offers opportunities for young people to explore their spirituality, if they want to. With a wide range of faith perspectives and worldviews across the community (team and young people alike) we always include questions around this in our census.

-
DO YOU BELIEVE IN GOD/
THE SUPERNATURAL?

Yes 16% //

Maybe 16% //

No 68%

-

WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE IN HC?

_Help with confidence and panic attacks, and maybe help revising

_Nothing, their support system in my opinion is very good. 10/10 recommend.

_Nothing, HC have helped when I needed it. I'm independent for my problems now.

_To be honest, go more in depth with my issues; I don't start conversations about them so they just build up and get worse.

-
HC has really helped me take control of my life.

Jack, 20

-

IF YOU COULD ASK GOD A QUESTION, WHAT WOULD YOU ASK?

_Why don't you show yourself?

_Why do you let people suffer?

_Who do you want me to be?

_Am I made for great things?

_Why do you let people I love leave me in times of need?

-
When you're a terrified LGBT young person and you come here for the first time it's scary! I was concerned because it's in a church and lots of church don't accept LGBT people. But I was pleasantly surprised. There's not many churches that would have a gender neutral toilet. You get to be who you want to be - you don't have to be someone else.

Niko, 17

-

-

Describe why the future is bad, without using the word Trump...

Data. I'm paranoid about the government watching me. Not that I'm doing anything wrong - but that they could make it look like I'm doing something wrong. It's kind of like the Truman show.

-

If you could travel to any time, where would you go and why?

I'd travel back in time and stop my brother from taking his life.

-

Failure is not an option. True or false?

I'd say that's true. I think you can stumble. Failure is giving up on something. I don't think you should ever give up trying. Failure's just a word. If I tried to jump two metres in the air, but couldn't, have I failed or is that just my first attempt?

-

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The future of HC is...?

_ To be more recognised, for other people to realise how much difference it makes to us.

_ To be around forever.

_ Still home, still creative.

_ To keep llamas on the grass.

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What does your future hold?

_ To help change people's perspectives on life.

_ To not have a plan: to flow like water.

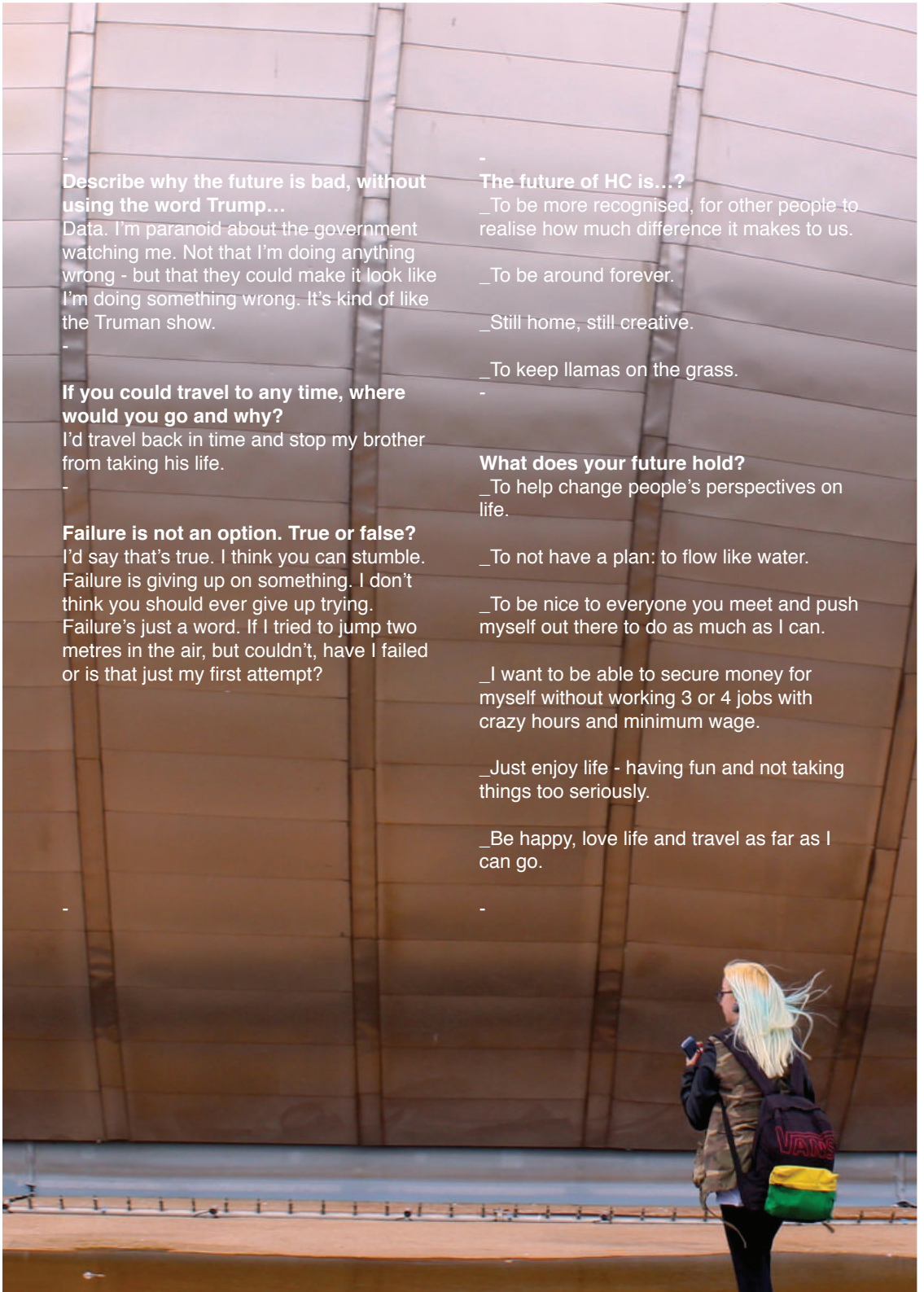
_ To be nice to everyone you meet and push myself out there to do as much as I can.

_ I want to be able to secure money for myself without working 3 or 4 jobs with crazy hours and minimum wage.

_ Just enjoy life - having fun and not taking things too seriously.

_ Be happy, love life and travel as far as I can go.

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LOOKING BACK + LOOKING FORWARD

As an organisation, HC has had a pretty significant year of changes:

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_Our team job descriptions and structures have been updated to reflect the changing priorities and opportunities in our youth work.

_We've been taken on by Charities Aid Foundation's Resilience programme, to help strengthen our management systems and structures, and to make us more fit and healthy for the years ahead. Whoop!

_We've secured new money for new roles - both office based and in the youth work team. Hurrah!

_We had a record breaking 138 new young people join us over a six month period, with open session numbers regularly over 90. Eek!

_We've undertaken a big strategic review with young people, volunteers, staff and board members, to identify what the next five years might look like for us.

And to paraphrase the young people, who publicly shared their vision for Dundee in 2053: "we don't really mind what happens in terms of 'things' - we care about who we become and what kind of society we're part of." Ooft.

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As well as character development and social justice, in the year coming up we also have some specific priorities to pursue:

_Space!
Where do we put everyone in our expanding community?

_Transitions!
How can we ensure that people are always at the heart of our changes?

_ACEs!
Where else can we be strengthening our practice, and how?

_The law!
How can we make sure the changes in European laws around data protection will help, not hinder, our youth work approaches and values?

_Strategic plans!
What do we do first, second, third etc?
(This probably won't include the suggested pet llama on the grass though, alas).

BOARD

I continue to be impressed by the contribution of our Board in aiding and supporting our priorities this year.

The Directors have been active in advancing the operational dimension of our governance review, and reporting, training and strategic planning for the future benefit and expansion of the Trust. We welcomed three new Directors Pam, Debbie and Chris who are settling in well and bringing new professional expertise and experience to our Board. We continue to value the on-going support from the Rev. Robert Calvert, the Kirk Session and friends at The Steeple Church.

Together with the help from a widening circle of external sponsors and donors they contribute generously in time and resources to help us realise our work and vision. In particular this has allowed us to expand our staffing, complete some building projects to increase space and improve safety within our premises in a way that honours the contribution of our young participants. This fabric and physical development has now been integrated into our annual budget projections for the future. We continue to value greatly all the personnel who deliver and support high quality youth work with the young people often under difficult and multiple pressures of time and numbers.

Looking forward to 2018 we are pleased to commence our joint development support partnership with The Charities Aid Foundation that will offer resources to strengthen our forward planning and governance support. We expect to continue to expand and realise the completion of our development work in our second generation of our computer-based management systems to allow easier input from young people to charting their achievements with us and to allow future promotion of the system with external organisations.

The expansion in numbers of young people using our services are evidence that our identification of their needs remain close to our vision of supporting and working with young people holistically to achieve their potential and ambition. We at Board level continue to be amazed and humbled by their contact with the Trust and we feel privileged to offer resources to continue to serve in this capacity.

In His Service, Tony Boffey.
(On behalf of the Hot Chocolate Board)

Mr Tony Boffey
Chairperson

Mr Richard McCallum
Vice-Chairperson & Treasurer

Mrs Amy McDonald
Vice-Chairperson

Mrs Julia Brown

Mr Stephen Elwell-Sutton

Mrs Deborah Farley

Mr David Johnstone

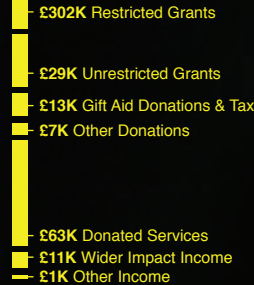
Mrs Deborah Johnstone
until December 2017

Mrs Chris Lafferty
from October 2017

Ms Pamela Mellstrom
from April 2017

Analysis of Income 2017

Total Income £426K



Analysis of Expenses 2017

Total Expenses £396K



Funds at 31 December 2017

Total Funds £170K



These rounded figures are from our draft accounts and may be subject to change. Our full accounts will be available on our website in due course.

FINANCES

At HC, we couldn't do what we do without the generous grants and donations from our funders and donors.

Most of our money is spent on salaries, as, in order to build and deepen relationships with young people, we need to spend time with them.

As with most charities, we need to do a lot of fundraising so we can continue to respond to the young people's needs.

At HC, we have been grateful to receive funding, donations or donations in kind during 2017 from the following funders, fundraisers and donors:

Aldi Scottish Sports Fund / Alexander Moncur Trust / Bank of Scotland Foundation / BBC Children in Need / Boots the Chemist Social Club / BT South of Scotland SCF / CAF Resilience / CashBack for Communities / CashBack for Creativity / Colin Grant Charitable Trust / Comic Relief / Creative Scotland: Youth Music Initiative / Evelyn Ferris Mudie Charitable Trust / Gannochy Trust / Gate Church International SCIO / Inspiring Scotland / MAKE Trust / Mike Soutar / Northwood Charitable Trust / Novum Trust / People and Communities Fund / Robertson Trust / Saints and Sinners Club of Scotland / Souter Charitable Trust / Tay Charitable Trust / The Corra Foundation / The Church of Scotland: Northwood Grant / The family and friends of Mr Steven Wilkinson / The Henry Smith Charity / The James Hutton Institute Social Club / The Joseph Rank Trust / The St Katharine's Fund / The Sheldon Trust / The Stafford Trust / The Steeple Church: Dundee (Church of Scotland) / The Tudor Trust / Tillyloss Trust / William S Phillips' Fund / WM Sword Charitable Trust

and all our individual donors and fundraisers

PARENT PERSPECTIVE

I never had many friends when I was younger because I was so shy and didn't have much confidence, but ever since I came here my friendship group has expanded so much. When I came here it's like it opened a whole new world. It's helped so much. And when someone or something helps you, I like to give something back. I try to do that here.

Aiden, 19

He was going out with his mates and hanging around parks and stuff; I didn't like that. Then he said he's started going to HC. I thought 'I like the sound of that'. Then there was the open night and I was just blown away. I was so glad to come down – everyone was so friendly. So many different rooms and the amount of kids that were here. It's amazing that you've put all that together for them; there's someone for them when they're down; and they can meet their pals. I didn't realize at first that you did all that but then he told me that you can get support and that and I thought great - that's brilliant! Trust is a big thing - listening and talking is really important for young people. Aiden's deep – sometimes he'll talk to me, but sometimes it needs to be someone else that he can talk to. He loves it here - it's a big part of his life. And since he's been here he's really blossomed – this is magical, this place is.

Ann, Aiden's mum

TEAM

The HC team of volunteers, interns, students and staff is made up of a wide variety of backgrounds, worldviews, and skills. But we are all wholly united around our love for the young people and wanting to support them towards healthy, happy and purposeful futures.

It's different here because of how the team handles things. You guys are very involved. Because you know us personally, you just know if something's up. Sometimes all someone needs is to be noticed. You'll ask us if we want to talk, but never force it - it's always our choice. Team are always there if we need you, and you always have a smile on your face.

ChloeAnne, 15

"And what do you want to do in the future?" This question is a hard one for me, as I used to feel a sense of shame for not knowing. As a volunteer and student, it's the general theme that's played a lot in my life: as so much seems unpredictable and consequently negative. Words can hardly express how fortunate I was to be a part of HC for the last year, as the experiences are truly unforgettable (cooking over 150 hot dogs with 6 young people leaps to mind). To be a part of something that breathes genuineness is an honour, which I wouldn't trade for anything. The letters from the team at the end of Exodus convinced me that much (leaving me both overjoyed and in tears). I owe a great deal of gratitude to the young people and team I have worked alongside so far, as I now feel accepted for being myself... While the future looks bleak and miserable on the off day, the time I spend at Hot Chocolate reassures me that the future, and whatever it holds, is bright.

Alastair, Volunteer & CLD student



DANIEL'S STORY

(not his real name)

-
I've lived with my aunt and uncle since I was three. My parents are both drug addicts, and they split up before they lost me. I can't remember most things from my childhood, but I do remember that there was a police raid and they didn't realise I was in the house. The door was kicked in, my mum was screaming and my dad was fighting with them. I ended up in a police car and it was one of the most horrible experiences of my life - I had nightmares for a long time about that. Social work got involved and for a while it looked like I'd go into foster care. That's when my aunt and uncle stepped forward and agreed to take me.

School was shit too. I got bullied a lot and it took until second year to work out that I was badly dyslexic. People were telling me that I was just thick and that I wasn't going to go anywhere in life and I believed them. It brought me down and I thought that I'd end up just like my parents. My whole mental health deteriorated and eventually I was kicked out.

But now I'm working and doing really well - I get a lot of good feedback from my boss and I really enjoy what I do. And I've decided to stay with my aunt and uncle a bit longer - I'm too young to put myself under the pressure of having my own place. I'm really proud of myself for where I am now.

When I first came to HC I was really shy and I didn't know who I really was as a person. I was dealing with this stuff for years and years but never realised it was a problem. But here I started to realise that it was a problem, and started to face it. HC's like the family I didn't have growing up. I know that if I had an issue, I could speak to any team here, and that I could be myself. I don't have to hide. When my mental health got really bad you got me some counselling and the help that I needed. I've been self-harm free for about a year now.

The other young people help shape you too because you get introduced into a music genre or a new art form or sports or music. Everybody brings a little something to HC and it gets shared between us all. That helps develop you as a person. I don't know where I'd be if I hadn't started coming to HC.

This is honestly my favourite place.

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Design:

Angus Duncan / Brooke Beattie / Cael Kelly /
Cait Lamb / Erin Hardie / Jack Ross /
Jordan Johnston / Lauren Poynter / MK Giannico /
Nathan Beattie / Niko Cavanagh / Quin Beattie /
Rhori Bartley-Jones / Stephen Kilcullen /
Verena Stephens / Zeo Motus / Andy Robertson

All fancy pictures and big words
by the Hot Chocolate family.
Stories curated by Charis Robertson.
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“It’s like we’re writing a story together,
and each week is a sentence.”

That’s what one of our incredibly wise
volunteers said about life in Hot Chocolate,
and those words seem particularly apt at
the end of this annual report.

We’re really proud of the ‘chapter’ we’ve
written as a community throughout 2017,
and are equally excited about the one that
will come next.

Whilst we’ve definitely learnt this year that
perfection might not be attainable, we’re
100% certain that the world can be - and
must be - a whole lot better than it is right
now. And we most definitely want to be part
of that.

For that reason, the title of our next
‘chapter’ will be Fully Alive: what does life in
all its fullness look like? ... both for us as
individuals and for society as a whole?

**Where do we find happiness? fulfilment?
purpose? community? hope?**

**These seem like critical questions,
at a critical time.**

We can’t wait to dive in to them.



Hot Chocolate Trust

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