

ODYSSEY



Hot Chocolate Trust Annual Report 2022

Hot
Chocolate
is...

A really cool,
fun and safe place

fun

free

home

cosy

a hot beverage

Steeple

awesome, you
get to meet new
friends, socialise
and get to feel
more comfortable
with yourself

maste

pure awesome

brilliant

the best

amazing,
there's no
judgement here,
it's a really
safe place

bangin

good

pretty fun

amazing

cool

helpful

a calm space

In 2022, we went on an odyssey together, exploring the many journeys we go on every day; where we are starting from, what we take with us, the obstacles we face, and the people we meet along the way.

What has your journey looked like up until now?

How would you survive on a desert island?

Would you rather live inside or outside your comfort zone?

Where do you feel most at peace?

Will aliens ever meet humans?

What is the biggest adventure you've ever been on?

Have you ever been lost?

What matters most, the journey or the destination?

This year has been full of all kinds of adventures, physically, mentally and emotionally, both as individuals and together. What follows are the unfiltered voices of the young people, team and partners from the HC community, sharing some of the journey we have been on together over the last year.

Welcome to...

ODYSSEY

ADVENTURES INTO THE UNKNOWN

Tiffany's story

(Name & some details have been anonymised)

When I started high school my parents were still together.

Arguing consistently, I thought that was a normal relationship, I thought you were supposed to shout at your partner. Then they split up. I loved school until then. It was a big change, and I hate change as is. I'd go from a different house to another house, week on week off. Things with my mum got really difficult. She started to become manipulative and mentally abusive towards me. I'd go into the house and she would just scream at me.

I was this little scaredy person. I didn't know who I was, what I was doing, and I was so scared to talk to anyone. I started having panic attacks, which was rough cause I didn't know what was going on. I'd go to class, then I would just cry, then I would leave. Guidance didn't help, and I just stopped going to classes.

I first came down to HC for a community meal. I remember being so scared to ring the doorbell that I couldn't even ring the doorbell, someone else had to do it for me cause I was just like, 'I can't do this. This is so scary'. I just kind of hid in the corner. But afterwards I was like, 'Know what? I'm gonna try and come down again', so I started coming to sessions.

I'm so glad I did it. If I hadn't done that I wouldn't have the friends I have now, I wouldn't have had all the opportunities I've had, or the things I've helped out with. Now I'll even speak to the younger ones. I suppose in a way they're in that period of being like 'I'm so scared'. I've had 1-1s here too, they've really helped. They made me realise that what was going on with my mum wasn't okay. I felt listened to and that I could chat about whatever I want.

I decided I wanted to stay at my dad's house. Things are a little better now, and I see my mum every so often. Life isn't brilliant, sometimes I'm like 'f*ck this, I hate this', but I actually really enjoy my life now. It helps knowing that it's not going to be a forever thing, things are going to be okay. I'm proud of how far I've come, and I'm hopeful to see how far I can go again.

Hot Chocolate Trust (HC) is a youth work organisation based smack bang in the centre of Dundee, in the Steeple Church. Since 2001, HC has worked with thousands of young people (YP) who hang out in the city centre, building relationships and supporting them through their journey to become agents of change in their lives and communities.

We're a community of around 400(ish) young people and 25(ish) staff and volunteers. We're a quirky, colourful, noisy bunch, with big hearts and often big challenges in life.

The way we work is simple (but not easy). We throw open our doors and welcome all YP who come in*, and grow a community together based around the needs, interests and ambitions of the YP. (Our website gives more info on what happens from week to week: www.hotchocolate.org.uk)

*HC is open to all YP without prejudice or distinction of religion, race, culture, disability, gender identity, sexuality or politics. The only restrictions are of age: YP 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).

CORRE VALUES

There are a few key principles that really matter to our community, guiding us on our adventures wherever they take us. These are:

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

HC's had a really big impact. I used to have really bad depression and stuff, I was so scared of talking to people, even my parents, I'd barely ever talk to them cause I was just so scared, and just coming here, I'm just so much more confident. Ivy, 15

GOLDEN

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

I just feel like there's a lot more respect for the young people here than other youth clubs, a lot of other places just see the young people as kids that have to be looked after for an hour or two, but in here you actually feel like you're part of a wee community. Rosa, 19

Growing a community with YP which is safe, welcoming and affirming to all.

What keeps me coming back is just being able to feel like myself, doing what I don't do - making friends and trying to socialise more. And it keeps me coming back cause there's people here who have been through the same stuff I have, who I can relate to. It feels like my own second home in a way. Kieran, 18

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

You get treated with trust, you're trusted, and you get treated like a person rather than a child, you get involved in decision making, and that's good for kids cause they get a bit of responsibility, a bit of learning how to do stuff themselves with it also being a safe space, so they can experiment with stuff, and have fun, but be safe. Robin, 18

Moving into 2022 the numbers and needs of YP coming down to open sessions increased. As we listened, we realised that a shift in our youth work could play a vital role in ensuring that everyone could be seen and heard. During consultation some YP came up with the idea of changing one of our open sessions to a time where YP could book out a space to use as they wanted (within reason!) - and with that bookable spaces was born! This change has had a huge impact on building relationships, and continues to play a vital role in YP building ownership of HC. Eilaine, Youth Work Manager

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

You make a mistake, you mess up on something, you break something, then you learn as a person from that mistake. And you build on that, then you move on from that mistake eventually, then you go onto another mistake, and another one. It builds on your skills. Reign, 14

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

I've had the pleasure of working alongside passionate, caring and incredibly awesome young people at Hot Chocolate delivering Applied Suicide Intervention Skills (ASIST) training. Watching young people come through the door, willing to be engaged in a subject like suicide first aid and witnessing their desire to help make their communities better is so inspiring.

Hot Chocolate provides safe space for young people to be open and vulnerable, talk about whatever matters to them and, through doing so, feel loved and respected. Delivering ASIST with young people who are part of Hot Chocolate is life affirming. It shows what is best about young people and youth work. Kevin Ditcham, ASIST Trainer

Helping build a more just & fair world.

We went on the Reclaim The Night march, which was basically about women's rights. I feel like it spread this cause, and if more people support the cause, there's more chance change will happen. Madaki, 15

There are also some specific issues and opportunities we work with young people around.

Home Fae Home

It's important that we get asked about plans cause this place is for us – you get us involved rather than making decisions and expecting us to like it. Home Fae Home is our big building renovation project. It looks cool as f*ck so far, and it's using areas that were left dormant to create new spaces. I think it's gonna be a really good place to have. It's been a bit weird while the work's been happening, but it's been fine – nothing is gonna compare to being outside during Covid! Jordan, 21

Housing

In the past year I've moved into my own flat and I'm settled here now, I wouldn't have managed without the help of team though. Glen helped me fill in forms and applications and told me other ways to get it sorted quicker because the waiting lists can be long. Team are really helpful – they make sure you're aware of all the pros and cons of living independently, but if there's ever anything you need sorted they're willing to give you a hand. I've noticed a lot more chat about housing and the realities of it and it's good to have those conversations because it's not all great, but you learn as you go to just try and do things little and often. Rachael, 21

EET (education, employment & training)


The study group was a peaceful, calm environment for me to study along with my fellow studying peers. Life at home can be chaotic and very busy, so I don't get the time nor pleasure to sit and study like I do when I study at the study group. Lewis, 18

Activism & Volunteering

In YLVT (youth led volunteering team) you get paired with a member of team and then you organise an activity for the end of it. It was brilliant, Peter's a top guy. I organised a football tournament, and it didn't go to plan, but we used our initiative and we sorted it out. I learned communication, and teamwork. Boudi, 15

Mental health

The work you do at Hot Chocolate provides the very cornerstone for support in the community, early intervention and prevention and shifting the balance of care. Fiona Lees, Chair, Independent Oversight and Assurance Group on Tayside's Mental Health Services



I like doing art because art is soothing to me, it gives me time to think and breathe and put everything on paper. Noah, 16

I really enjoy booking the music room with friends because it helps us practice instruments and learn new things on them. I use the drums and bass guitar. It's important because you can become closer with the team, and being allowed to work on the instruments and learn new stuff. Myles, 16

Little Lights

Little Lights was a chance for young people to express their mental health in a creative way, instead of just dealing with it and being sad it gave us a chance to make stuff, draw, make music, perform music, make crochet, badges, t-shirts, patches, it was just really nice. Getting to make a song and perform it to a completely different type of group was really important, cause it was all centred around mental health and I got to talk about mental health in a way that I usually like doing, instead of just sitting down and talking about it, it was about making it into something and getting help with that. Lewis, 18

Little Lights was a real heart-felt, fun and authentic showcase of emotion, creativity and ideas - something young people do so well. I loved how immersive the live performances and activities were, it was a perfect way to engage and create conversations around mental health. The HC relaxed and inclusive ethos was transferred into Blend that night, I loved the atmosphere! Lots of food for thought.

Laura Cooney, Mental Health Education Officer NHS Tayside CAMHS

Creative

Creativity and the arts are a huge part of life at HC. Whether it's a jam in the music room, sharing skills with others, or organising a public showcase, creativity helps us explore life's journey and draws us towards new horizons.

My favourite space is probably the music room, just because it's one of the more quieter, isolated spaces that is purely just creative, there's not really any drama in there, it's all just creative and you can let creative stuff happen.
Emily, 17

I've decorated Christmas baubles, I've made stuff on the walls, and painted stuff. It's relaxing and it feels like you're doing something productive, it's calming.
Caspian, 15

Community Wardrobe

It's been amazing to see how much fun everyone had and how they completely surprised themselves with the creative projects they completed. Some of the young people had never tackled a project like this and came away so enthusiastic to learn more sewing or knitting skills and to show other people what they had made. A few even wanted to get involved showing others how to do this too which is wonderful.
Sandra Cassidy, Sew Confident

It was a really fun process planning it all, from researching different techniques and ideas to running the event. On the day I ran a workshop showing people how to make tote bags out of old t-shirts - it was good. I was really nervous because I'd never done anything like that before, but it felt easier because it was here - that gave me confidence and the other young people seemed to really enjoy my workshop.
Holly, 19





Exodus

Exodus is our summer programme – this year we took up our Odyssey theme and embarked on an epic quest of community, creativity and self-discovery.

Exodus is about giving young people things to do over the summer and letting them connect with HC more – you can still do that during the school year, but it's easier with more time. We do fun stuff, trips, activities, more sessions which is nice. It changes every year to fit the theme, but the biggest thing is connecting with young people. This year's theme was Odyssey – the whole thing was about adventure, and the whole thing about Exodus is the adventure of getting to know each other and the adventures that everybody goes on every day.

I was involved in HCTV news, which was about giving everyone updates about what was happening in the summer. It was really fun. We had different co-stars every week and we got other young people involved in filming in nice little ways, like answering a question of the day. That was probably my favourite thing we did.

I like Exodus as a whole. I started coming to Steeple during Exodus 2017, and it was fun cause it gave me a good introduction to HC, and I'm still coming now, so obviously it's good or I wouldn't have kept coming. I like the fact it's different every year. You try to make sure that you're thinking about what everyone would want and things that they'd find fun, and things they would benefit from, and then you make this big thing happen. Young people always feel really involved which is a big part of it, and that's the whole point, cause HC's a family.

Alex, 21



We reflected on our personal journeys.

Odyssey was about adventures and going out your comfort zone and doing loads of things we wouldn't normally do. Life's just a mad adventure. You don't need to get on a plane and go somewhere you've never been by yourself for it to be an adventure, it could literally just be going to Tesco, but if that's a big thing for you then it's an adventure. It's always about doing things that you're a bit uncomfortable with and going into the unknown territory. Rachael, 21

We adventured to new places.

We went to Edinburgh Dungeons in Edinburgh, obviously. We went around the Dungeons, got the history and went on the ride at the end, and got a McDonalds on the way back, so it was pretty good! Doing trips like that mean some people get to do things they wouldn't normally get to do, like in their day-to-day life, cause maybe they can't afford it or anything and it's with people that you love that you come here with so it's vibes. Kyle 17

We mapped it out through a creative project.

During Exodus I was involved in making art for the walls. I liked being part of decorating the walls – especially painting the mini vinyl records and just doodling random cool things to suit the theme – like an axolotl, a Demogorgon, a dragon. I made a 3D snake too, and an angler fish that's eating Glen. I think the wall looks amazing now after Exodus is finished, it's very interesting to look at even if you've seen it before as there is so many things going on! Amella, 15

We crossed paths with partners who joined us on our quest.

[Working with HC] was a beautiful experience - helping young people explore ideas of hope and inspiration while challenging them to think of what obstacles might get in the way. The young people obviously feel comfortable and safe in the space and with team, and were willing to take part in discussions and artistic activities. I was and still am very impressed with the work HC do and feel it's an anchor for many of the young people who attend. Gordy Craw, Artist

And we had fun along the way!

Wider impact

HC really cares about making sure the experiences and voices of young people reach beyond our own walls and make a difference in the world. We love hosting visits, being part of purposeful networks, and supporting other organisations to grow – and want to make sure that young people are at the forefront of that.

We were extremely impressed with the young people and team at Hot Chocolate. They made us feel so welcome and we were blown away with the enthusiasm and sense of pride and support for their youth centre. Some shared with us how the youth centre and youth workers helped them to believe in themselves and to make positive life choices – ultimately changing their life's path. Clare Taylor-Brown, Senior Community Learning & Development Worker, Aberdeenshire Council

I thoroughly enjoyed giving the visitors from Aberdeenshire a tour. It felt great to show off all of the things we have done as a community and I hope that they are able to achieve the same level of pride that I have for Hot Chocolate Trust and everything they do for us. Stormy, 16

Our 'outcomes database' puts YP and values at the heart of our monitoring and evaluation. It's called TECKLE DATA and it's now available for other youth and community organisations to buy. Find out more at www.teckledata.org.uk

It's been a really useful tool for me to be able to see my journey. It's quite emotional to see the growth from a young person to an adult. It's also super special to me that the team record all these little moments that we've shared, it's nice to look back on the memories. Mikaela, 22, former young person

Teckle Data is really straightforward. It's useful to record conversations and we can use that evidence to apply for grants in a way we couldn't before. The add-ons are great – especially child protection, for any youth club that's essential. It's a cracking bit of kit. Richie Adams, Chief Executive, FetLor Youth Club.

Team

HC has a brilliant team – a diverse bunch of staff and volunteers, ages and stages, perspectives and worldviews, who all bring their unique skills and gifts, and who all share the same commitment to young people.

The team are really nice and easy to speak to, they're always there when you need them. Orla, 16

Team are there to make sure HC stays safe and support young people with any issues they may be having or help them find support.

I see team as friendly faces who can sit and have a blether with you, or sit and play board games!

They encourage us to try new things and become more mature and skilled for us leaving when we turn 22. For me though, I see team as part of my family: they have seen me grow from a silly teenager who was a bit cheeky into a (little bit less cheeky) adult!
Tammie, 22, former young person

Being part of the HC team is such a unique feeling, it's like this big supportive family made up of people with different life experiences, skills and personalities who all share a goal of wanting better opportunities and outcomes for young people.

I get a lot out of volunteering at HC, I've learned so much that will be invaluable to my practice in the future. As well as lots of training opportunities, I feel like I learn and develop every single open session. There's so much opportunity to reflect with other youth workers and learn from their practice. It also just brings me a lot of joy, it's an absolute privilege to get to know so many amazing young people and hear their stories, it feels like being part of something special.

Completing my placement at HC was an excellent experience. I was able to expand my knowledge and understanding of CLD, with support and encouragement from the team to take on different responsibilities. We'd often use the phrase 'it depends', which was part of my learning – you can make a plan but sometimes you need to think on the hoof – everything depends on the young people involved.

Being a former young person myself I know first hand the difference HC makes. It's somewhere for young people to feel seen, loved and supported, not everyone gets that at home or school. There are so many opportunities for young people to be unapologetically themselves, to have fun, to learn new things, to express themselves and to grow.

HC makes a huge difference to young people's lives. I saw YP's confidence flourish through the safe space they have at HC, which they might not have outside, where they feel represented and respected. Siobhan, 2nd year Community Education student

The best part is the young people choose to be involved and they keep choosing that, which speaks for itself about the difference it makes to young people.
Sam, Volunteer



Finances

At HC, we couldn't do what we do without the generous grants and donations from our funders and donors. Most of our spending is on salaries, as, in order to build and deepen relationships with young people, we need to spend time with them. As with most charities, fundraising is vital to enable us to continue to work with the young people and respond to their needs. At HC, we have been grateful to receive funding, donations or donations in kind during the continuing challenges of 2022 from the following funders, fundraisers and donors:

Adapt and Thrive • Alexander Moncur Trust • Balgay Children's Society • BBC Children in Need • Benefact Trust • CashBack for Communities Youth Work Fund • Community Innovation Fund • Creative Scotland: Recovery Fund for Cultural Organisations • Creative Scotland: Youth Arts Access Fund • DCC Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework • Dr Guthrie's Association • DVVA Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund • Gannochy Trust • Garfield Weston Foundation • Inspiring Scotland • Investing in Communities Fund • Life Changes Trust • MAKE Trust • Miss AM Pilkington Charitable Trust • National Voluntary Youth Work Organisations Support Fund • Northwood Charitable Trust • Paul Hamlyn Foundation • Rank Foundation • Robertson Trust • Saints and Sinners Club of Scotland • Scottish Police Authority Community Partnership Fund • Souter Charitable Trust • Spinner's Trust • STV Children's Appeal • Swire Charitable Trust • The Baird Trust • The National Lottery Community Fund: Young Start • The Steeple Church: Dundee (Church of Scotland) • The William Syson Foundation • Tillyloss Trust • Walter Craig Charitable Trust • YouthLink Scotland Social Isolation and Loneliness Fund •

and all our anonymous or individual funders, donors and fundraisers

Analysis of Income 2022

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| Restricted grants | £455k |
| Unrestricted grants | £63k |
| Gift aid donations and tax | £14k |
| Other donations | £10k |
| Donated services | £89k |
| Wider impact income | £11k |
| Bank interest | £5k |
| Total income | £647k |

Analysis of Expenses 2022

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| Charitable activities | £614k |
| Fundraising | £31k |
| Total expenses | £645k |

Funds at 31st December 2022

| | |
|--------------------|--------------|
| Unrestricted funds | £171k |
| Restricted funds | £238k |
| Total funds | £409k |

*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.

Emma's story

(Name & some details have been anonymised)

I didn't want a baby. My partner did though.

He was always like, 'I want to have a baby before I get too old'. But I didn't realise it was a really toxic relationship. He was nine years older than me. I wasn't in a good place with the rest of my family. He was all I had so I pure clung to him. I wanted to give him everything he wanted, even though he treated me like absolute sh*tte. He begged me to get pregnant so he could be a dad. And then I had the baby and he just wasn't interested, so I just packed my stuff and left.

I never wanted to be a parent, but being a single parent was definitely not what I wanted to do. When I got my own place, I didn't know anything. When I lived with him I didn't get to put any of my stuff anywhere, I had to pack it up and put it in storage. I had my clothes and toiletries, but I didn't even have a drawer. I wasn't allowed to put anything on the walls or move anything. I wasn't allowed to do any bills, he just controlled everything. When I moved into my own flat I didn't know how to do anything. The housing officer handed me the keys, then I never heard from her again. I was so scared all the time. It was really isolating.

I love being a mum, but it's stressful. Especially being a single mum. His dad just doesn't take an interest in him at all. It's hard juggling things like work and college. It's difficult to be my own person, especially at such a young age.

I love my son, he always makes me smile. When I've had a really bad day there's nothing better than getting a hug or a kiss or just him telling me about his day. He's done more for me than I'll probably tell him. When I was younger, I was in a really bad place, I didn't want to live. He's given me a reason to stick around and now I'm trying to build a life and gain qualifications because I know I'm going to be here in 10, 20, 30 years.

I'm proud that I'm here, and I'm an actual adult. I'm very proud that me and my son are like a team. Because it was about this age where my mum was really struggling to be a parent and just totally gave up, and I got taken away. I'm determined that's not happening this time around. I'm making an effort, I've applied for uni next year, I'm gonna have a career.

I just hope that Hot Chocolate stays the same, cause if it helped me then it can help anyone, I hope. I think it's only gonna get better to be honest. Ivy, 15

As we embark on our next adventure into 2023, we hope so too.

We hope we stay the same, keeping young people at the centre of what we do and the decisions we make together, and growing a community where young people feel accepted, safe and valued.

We think it's only gonna get better; with new connections being made every week, new safe spaces in our building (co-designed by young people), new and existing partnerships being developed.

What we do know for sure is that, despite the odyssey we've been on, there's still a whole lot more out there left to explore.

The future remains uncharted territory and, depending on our point of view, that can seem either super scary or full of hope and promise.

So tell me, what do you see?

#perception23

HOT
CHOCOLATE
TRUST

Big words & fancy pictures by HC family and friends.

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Hot
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2023



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