

HOT CHOCOLATE TRUST //// BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Thank you for your interest in the post of Volunteer Development Manager at Hot Chocolate Trust. In the following paragraphs you will find background information on the role, the recruitment process and us. We hope this will help you to work out whether you are a good fit for the role and, if you decide to apply, to show us that. We also hope it will inspire you to want to come and work for an organization we love.

Where has the role come from?

This role originated 4-5 years ago when our then youth worker became the Volunteer Manager, recognizing that because we have volunteer youth workers than paid employees every investment in the quality of their work improves young people's experience of Hot Chocolate and the progress they are able to make through our support. Thus Andy developed systems to identify the right volunteers, induction and continuous development and support, and administrative systems to keep everything on track.

Now that he has moved into a new role, leading our arts youth work and partnerships, we are looking for a new Volunteer Development Manager, or job-share partners, to take the role forward again - investing in our young people and youth work through investing in our volunteers.

This comes at a very exciting time of development in Hot Chocolate with increasing numbers of young people engaging, new partnerships opening up (from Dundee's European Capital of Culture bid to work with young people round trauma, from developing our organizational resilience and strategy to a relationship with the Boozy Cow restaurant), and other new team members joining (currently this post and an Administrator/Book-keeper and in the new year a further full-time youth worker with a focus on activism and volunteering).

The recruitment process

This role has a direct impact on our youth work, the heart of Hot Chocolate, both through your individual youth work practice and through the large team of volunteers. For this reason we are very keen to find the right match for both the role and for the organization.

Obviously the first important date is the deadline for applications: Thursday 30th of November at 1pm. We will invite short-listed candidates into a two-stage process: an informal visit and a formal assessment day.

The formal assessment will be on Thursday 14th December and will take several hours. This allows us to use both a panel interview, and a more informal group process with Hot Chocolate team and young people, giving you different ways to present your abilities.

The informal visit will function as preparation for this process and will not be assessed. On either Wednesday 6th or Tuesday 12th December short-listed candidates will have the chance to visit a Hot Chocolate Open Session (the backbone of our youth work) and to find out everything you want to know about Hot Chocolate and how we function.



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Since 2001 Hot Chocolate has been supporting isolated, wary young people to take up and sustain opportunities that become transformative, building the vision and resources to live fuller, healthier lives. The young people (around 300 each year) come from all across Dundee: marginalized in their own neighbourhoods the city centre is their place. We build community with young people, rather than provide services for them, giving them the trust, responsibility, and support to decide, plan and implement day by day activities with team and shape longer-term plans.

"You don't understand what the Steeple is until you've walked through that door. It's like a whole different world. You walk in and it's like all the bad stuff just washes off, and you're free from pressure and judgement for the time you're here. You're just free to be who you are." MK, 15

Hot Chocolate's approach centres on building community with young people, not service provision, for many reasons: the young people we engage with are wary of programmed approaches and resist or have already 'failed' in such contexts; assuming their competence and responsibility in their own lives and community from the start builds confidence and brings deeper change; it ensures we remain acutely responsive to the real needs of young people.

"The community feel of belonging created by the team and young people at HC provides a platform where healing can begin. From this place of safety and relational support, young people can begin to process the traumatic experiences which are the cause of so much stress in their lives."

Steve Sweeney, Barnardo's Scotland Rollercoaster Service

What are the challenges facing young people in Hot Chocolate?

Because the young people are a gathered sub-culture from all over the city, and beyond, there is no independent research which describes them. Our own research recently showed:

- 68% are aged 16-18; 46% male, 44% female and 10% transgender/non-binary.
- 24% are currently not in education/employment/training.
- 84% were bullied at school (10% currently), 46% were excluded and 80% skipped classes. 40% identified additional support needs (mostly dyslexia, ADHD, autism).
- 19% drink alcohol most weeks and (an additional) 5% most days.
- 25% use drugs most weeks and (an additional) 31% use most days, mainly cannabis.
- 72% have been a victim of crime (mostly theft, assault, "spiking") and 68% a perpetrator (mostly theft, graffiti, assault).
- 44% have diagnosed mental health conditions; 70% have self-harmed, 44% have had an eating disorder, 74% have had panic attacks, 82% had suicidal thoughts and 42% attempted suicide.
- 56% have been looked after outside the parental home, 32% have had carer responsibilities.
- Most have experienced significant loss - 56% through parents separating, 76% bereavement, 28% imprisonment of family members.
- 56% lived with someone suffering mental ill health, 34% with problem drinking, 32% with illegal drug use; 56% experienced verbal abuse and 34% physical hurt.



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What happens in a year?

150 open door youth work sessions (Tues/Wed 7-9pm; Sat 2-5pm; 40-70 YP per session) - young people and team co-create group activities around art, sport, music, cooking, issues, employability et al. Team spend time alongside young people drawing out their needs and ambitions, creating opportunities for support and learning. Open Sessions also create a context for connecting young people with other agencies (e.g. Princes Trust, Penumbra, Women's Aid, The Corner) and with other opportunities.

"The main learning from Hot Chocolate is to put young people first and allow them to lead. The co-production ethos is key to the success of the project... young people get the most out of it by making the decisions themselves." from an independent evaluation of Creative Scotland's Youth Music Initiative.

350 Individual Support sessions with 70 young people - youth workers and young people identify issues or ambitions and collaboratively explore, set goals and act to make change. Common themes are: mental health, volunteering, confidence, school support, loss, employment, relationships, violence & safety.

"School doesn't prepare me for life but Hot Chocolate does. When my friend called and said she had tried to commit suicide nothing at school had prepared me for that, but everything at Hot Chocolate had..." Anon

60 Group work sessions with 70 young people - Group work will begin with a desire expressed by young people, a theme recognized by team, or an offer from an outside agency.

"You guys are interested in stuff just because we're interested in it. That's how much you care about us. I've never known anyone go out of their way, for no apparent reason, just to make me happy." Ross, 21

Around these 3 core methods of engagement:

- 3-4 Residential opportunities - deepening relationships, stretching skills and horizons.
- "Exodus" Summer programme with 150 young people - Exploring a theme over three weeks through multiple youth work approaches and a large scale collaborative art work. This year's theme "FuturePerfect" helped young people explore ideas about the future (both personal and social) and unpick assumptions about perfection and imperfection: <https://youtu.be/9ATesfdbKmQ>
- Youth Team with 12-20 young people - a supported, accredited volunteering programme.
- Facebook youth work - over the last few years in our youth work Facebook has shifted from vehicle for simple contacts and information into a valuable platform for youth work engagements.

Young people will choose their own pathway through these options which makes it difficult to describe a typical 'journey' but ensures that our work is as relevant and responsive as possible to each individual: the right support at the right time to make a real difference. Robust systems of evaluation and team work underpin this fluid approach: <https://vimeo.com/73729688>

"This place is where my life started. My real life, where I got to know who I really am. Who I wanted to be & who I realised I could become... You never really leave Hot Chocolate, it becomes part of you." Jemma, 25.

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A learning culture

Working at Hot Chocolate is a phenomenal learning opportunity - for all of us. A reflective culture that embraces risk and works to understand failure combines with a richly varied team with skills from CLD, art, music, organizational development, financial management, design and much more to make a genuinely stimulating environment. Our structures and processes facilitate growth too from our approach to everyday youth work, to creative and scheduled internal training and reflective opportunities, a developmental approach to regular Support and Supervision, and allocated budgets to support external training for all staff. We want to learn from you too.

Making a wider impact

We aim to make a wider impact on youth work practice and young people's experience across the country by sharing the experience, practice and resources we have accumulated. This responds to increasing invitations but, on the premise that the young people are the experts of their own experience, it also brings them and their voices into local and national discourse and decision-making. Last year this included:

- 6 conference presentations and workshops, and 4 articles/chapters, sharing from our practice and principles.
- 18 Learning visits from practitioners, students, politicians and funders.
- New training “Reclaiming monitoring and evaluation” alongside sales of the unique Hot Chocolate Outcomes Database.
- Youth work practice coaching for training practitioners.

What is Christian about Hot Chocolate?

Hot Chocolate Trust is a Christian organisation, and this underpins how and why we do what we do. Our staff, volunteers and young people are a mixture of faiths and backgrounds and we welcome everyone without prejudice or distinction of religion, race, culture, disability, gender or sexuality, the only requirement is a sympathy with our core values. Our team, comprising both Christian and non-Christian, reflected on what this commitment looks like in practice:

- **Radical inclusivity**
- **An exploratory approach to truth**
- **A tenacious hold on hope**
- **A safe place for the whole person**

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If you would like to know more about this aspect of Hot Chocolate Trust we will be glad to talk about it.

“This place could be under a cardboard box, and we’d still be a family. There’s so many different people, so many different cultures and sexualities and backgrounds - and the team somehow just tie everyone together. It shows that everyone can come ‘under the roof of the Lord’ and still be accepted, whether you believe in God or not. It doesn’t feel like a church, it feels like a home.” Jenna, 16

