

HS4LC Newsletter

Harrogate Skills 4 Living Centre

Welcome to our 2020/21 Newsletter!



Our Chair of Trustees

My comments in last year's newsletter ended with a suggestion that readers kept watch on our future development and enterprise.

2020 certainly challenged both - As with all communities, Covid has caused us massive disruption but in spite of this our delivery of care, comfort and learning has been maintained to an excellent standard. The Trustees have been amazed and reassured by the commitment and resourcefulness shown by all staff in ensuring that our beneficiaries, whether in our homes, day centre or enterprise group, have remained protected, supported and stimulated.

Our planned expansion of services, especially the training café and the 'bean to bar' chocolatier production have been frustrated but we are getting there.

I hope you find the following articles of interest. If you wish to learn more or support us please get in touch.

Let us all hope that 2021 is much better!

Trevor Lincoln

Launch of the Harrogate Chocolate Factory!

In 2020 we celebrated our tenth year of Harrogate Skills for Living Centre, and to mark the occasion we launched The Harrogate Chocolate Factory with the help of the Forbes Foundation.

As a charity trying to help our disadvantaged beneficiaries overcome the barriers they face to leading a normal life we realise how important it is to

have opportunities to gain vital life and work skills. In 2018 we started running a 12 month supported employment program where students have the chance to work for an organisation with additional classroom sessions designed to enhance the skills needed to survive in employment.

We realised early on that many of our students are not ready for this without significant support and time invested in developing their confidence and skills. Bearing this in mind we thought about how we could provide the right kind of environment in both a safe and real way. This is when we hit on the idea of a social enterprise – one that makes chocolate. In fact, a chocolate making enterprise is perfect because the production process follows a series of routine steps that can be taught and mastered relatively easily. As an enterprise too, we cover all the elements of starting-up and running a small business. To develop a viable enterprise from start-up through production, to point of sale, is no mean feat and our students have been part of that journey.

What makes Harrogate Chocolate Factory special is that we make our dark chocolate starting from raw cacao beans; a process known as bean to bar. Firstly we sort the cocoa beans and then roast them. After the beans cool down – they are cracked and winnowed (removal of outer shell) to separate the chocolate nib. These nibs are ground to refine the rough chocolate before adding the rest of the ingredients (coconut palm sugar, cocoa butter and vanilla pod) which are then mixed further; known as the refining and conching process. Before being ready to pour into the mould the chocolate must be tempered which in simple terms gives us a finished product with a professional sheen, snap and taste. Once the chocolate has cooled in the mould it is ready for packaging and of course sampling.

We have a new website launching very soon with an online ordering facility, so please keep an eye on our social media channels for updates.



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Awards and Achievements

The Matrix Standard is a unique quality standard designed for organisations to access and measure their advice and support services. It looks at how we offer information, advice and guidance which ultimately supports individuals in their choice of career, learning, work and life goals.



We are pleased to announce that at the end of 2020 we passed our third year continuous improvement check.

The EiC is an outcome-based framework, demonstrating an establishment's commitment to improving and sustaining improvements in the quality of care and service user experience. Excellence in Care was re-assessed in February 2020 where once again our Brackenley Care Home upheld and maintained their accreditation and our Briardene Care Home was assessed for the first time and achieved the standard.



 Keep up-to-date with our latest news by visiting our blog and following us on social media!

Our Care Homes

It's been an extremely challenging year for everyone in the world and no different for our care homes Brackenley and Briardene. All of the residents have coped remarkably well with the changed world. It's been an opportunity for all of us to see what is truly important to the residents we support, a chance to assess what things have we missed, and what things have we learnt about ourselves and each other. The entire staff teams and their Managers have been outstanding throughout the year, even in the light of personal tragedies, they have continued to keep spirits up and creativity flowing; all with the additional pressures of PPE, testing and stringent measures to keep everyone safe.

Our day service staff have continued to provide essential outreach support throughout most of the pandemic. Whilst having weekly tests to make sure everyone is kept safe, staff have supported our residents to maintain both their physical and mental health and wellbeing. Sessions have included, personal fitness, mindfulness, zoom music, board games and letter writing.

Delivering the highest standard of care and support to our residents remains high on our HS4LC agenda, our care staff continued to study and progress throughout 2020 achieving NVQ's and studying towards specialist subjects to support lead roles in Positive Behaviour Support, Autism, Care Planning and Medication and Activities.

We recently all received our first dose of the Covid Vaccine, it felt like a triumphant moment and surprisingly emotional as we cautiously and optimistically step into 2021 with a level of resilience we never knew we had!

We are an established charity working for the benefit of adults with learning disabilities and autism.



Skills Bridge Programmes

In September 2020 we welcomed new learners on to our Supported Internship and Preparation for Adulthood programmes. All learners have settled in well and risen to the challenges this year has given us!

With the impact of coronavirus on local business, many of our partner organisations have not been able to offer the placements they have previously. However, this hasn't stopped our learning. The Christmas enterprise project was established by our Supported Internship group and supported by staff, and has been a huge success. Selling over 500 hampers and 70 gift sets, all including chocolate factory produce. Our intern cohort were able to experience the development of small enterprise business and build on their work skills, particularly around team work, organisation and meeting deadlines. The run up to Christmas had a real production line workshop feel to it. All were delighted when our targets were achieved and deadlines met. There wasn't a single bar of unsold chocolate left!

Our first cohort of Preparation for Adulthood learners started with us in September, this programme is for young people, who are leaving school or college with Education and Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and are looking to make further steps towards adulthood. This is a personalised programme built around the four preparing for adulthood outcomes: Moving in to paid employment or higher education, Independent living; having choice, control and freedom over your own life, Participating in society; having friends and relationships and being part of your community, Being as healthy as possible. Learners on this programme participate in a variety of sessions depending on their personal targets, this may include developing work skills in our Chocolate Enterprise, learning skills for independence in our Learning for Living sessions, increasing understanding in our Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) lessons, spending time with our personal trainer as well as working on literacy and numeracy skills through our functional Skills English and Maths programme.

Like our internship programme Supported Employment has been impacted by coronavirus, however we continue to provide job coaching support to employees at Sodexo and staff are working closely with local business establish internship placement and employment opportunities for adults with learning disabilities and Autism. We also have a member of staff currently completing the Level 3 Certificate for Supported Employment Practitioners which is a great achievement and were delighted to have her input in this area.

Special mentions and thanks to:



We offer three targeted programmes for young adults to achieve independence and employment.



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Our CEO says...

To be honest I've been dreading writing this – how do I even begin to try to put 2020 into perspective? However I try, the words just don't do justice to the challenges that have been faced and will continue to be faced, as we hopefully come through this horrible pandemic.

It has been a rollercoaster year for sure! With downs though come ups even in this topsy-turvy world. We've shown an amazing resilience across the organisation with staff continuously going the extra mile and putting beneficiaries first regardless of their own anxieties. We have managed to provide safe and secure services and we've found new ways of carrying on – regardless. Sometimes being pushed – brings out the best of us and we've responded to the challenges with great skill. That is what we do at – Skills – after all.

Anxiety was without doubt the most common emotion in 2020. Change and uncertainty has rocked even the most secure foundations and we have to be very mindful of each other's needs as we venture through still unsure territory – even though there is light at the end of tunnel.

This time last year nobody would have predicted where we are now; so let's not take anything for granted, be grateful for what we have - above all, be you, be happy and enjoy the moment. 2021 has to be the year of Compassion – towards ourselves and all others.

Apparently German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche first stated, "Out of life's school of war—what doesn't kill me, makes me stronger." Here's to getting stronger in 2021.

One of my New Year's resolutions is to dance daily so I hope you'll join me as we continue our 'skilful' dance through 2021 and beyond.

Hadyn Moorby-Davis, CEO



The Local Lotto

The Local Lotto is a fundraising opportunity for local voluntary and community groups such as HS4LC, which enables players to be in with a chance of winning cash prizes whilst also supporting local organisations they care about.

In the last year HS4LC have raised a steady £500 through The Local Lotto. You can still support us and purchase tickets through the HS4LC Local Lotto page. Every ticket has a 1 in 50 chance of winning, that is better odds than the National Lottery and The Health Lottery. Good luck and thank you to all our supporters!



Our vision is to reduce inequalities, overcome barriers and help people lead fulfilled lives.



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