

# Hope Opportunity Trust Annual Report and Audit Certificate

01 04 24 to 31 03 25.

Charity Number: 1164043

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## 1. Overview

HOT is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation whose mission is to change lives and transform the opportunities available to young people with extraordinary talent and potential. Our students are young people who have been denied opportunities but have risen to life's challenges in a unique and inspiring way.

We offer students fully funded bursary places at some of the finest schools in the UK. These bursaries are supported by the Royal National Springboard Children's Foundation (RNCSF) and by direct funding from the receiving/host schools. We are proud to be in partnership with the RNCSF, and since 2013, this has realised over £10M of bursary place investment for over one hundred and twenty students with minimal operating costs.

Our aims are clear and practicable, but their impacts can be incalculable. Our outputs are transformed lives: nurturing young citizens who will reach their potential and are enthusiastic about giving back to their communities and society.

*'The most significant impact of the bursary is that it has broadened my viewpoint of my future and the world. I was able to challenge myself amongst some of the brightest students in the country- something that the competitive part of me loved and continues to build on. My world has extended, and I have built a network of people I would never have met without the bursary. I couldn't be more grateful for this opportunity and what it has enabled me to do for my community.'* - **A HOT student.**

## 2. Our values and how we work

### Collaboration

In meeting our formal objectives, we balance our responsibilities to our students, school partners, and communities by working with state schools through a focused, supportive partnership. This helps the whole school and its local community to raise aspiration and achievement.

### Create Opportunity

The student, their family and community are our most important considerations, and we do whatever is in their best interests to nurture talent that might otherwise be lost to society. We are not motivated by politics or ideology, but we were mindful of the history associated with boarding

school education and the perceived culture of privilege. The chance to challenge and change that culture has been fully vindicated. We are also mindful of the obstacles and barriers that impact the outcomes for young people who live and are educated in areas of high social disadvantage. Our programme prepares students to overcome those barriers, ensuring our young people reach their true potential. Both the sending and receiving communities benefit from this initiative.

### **Make a positive difference.**

The positive impacts we have witnessed, and our students' personal stories, drive us forward and inspire HOT to continue its mission.

*'As a parent, I cannot believe the opportunity that my daughter has been given, and she has seized it with both hands. Through this programme, she was guided and supported to achieve excellent A Level results and a first-class degree. She is now forging a career and has a network of friends and colleagues that she would never have met without this opportunity.'*

*As a family, this programme has changed us too. Anything is possible with hard work and the right direction. This has been life-changing for us all. '*

*'We, as a family, are extremely happy that Roya has been given such an amazing opportunity. This bursary has shown both Roya and her siblings that hard work does not go to waste, and is rewarded. Roya's siblings are inspired, and they are hoping that in the future they may be able to get similar opportunities. This scheme has also helped Roya to keep up her hard work and her good grades as she sees that it is paying off and that she is getting a rewarding feeling from it.'* – **A Parent.**

### **How we work**

HOT operates through a close and collaborative partnership network, working hand in hand with the Royal National Springboard Foundation, state schools, boarding schools, students, and their families. This partnership model is fundamental to HOT's mission, enabling a joined-up approach to supporting young people and ensuring that all parties are actively involved in the process.

Within HOT Member schools, bursary students are identified by their teachers and Heads using strict and consistent criteria. These criteria focus on family income, challenging personal or familial circumstances, and the anticipated benefit to the student of a fully funded boarding school experience. This careful selection process ensures that places are awarded to those who stand to gain the most from the programme.

The HOT operating model is relatively unique, placing the state school and its community at the centre of its engagement approach, setting it apart from similar initiatives. Partner schools regularly provide testimony to the positive impact of their collaboration with HOT, underscoring the value and effectiveness of this approach. The impressive resilience and determination shown by the students, combined with consistent and personalised support from the HOT team, have contributed to the programme's success.

The diversity of HOT's student body reflects a commitment to equality, equity, and access to the bursary programme. Students are selected regardless of gender or ethnicity, ensuring that opportunities are open to all who meet the established criteria and stand to benefit from the scheme.

## **3. Impact**

The most powerful testimony on behalf of our work is the stories of our students. Their words, achievements, and lived experiences can be more eloquent than mission statements or measurable outputs. They validate our fundamental conviction that by radically changing prospects and opportunities for individuals, we can begin to deliver positive social change in ways we could never have predicted or imagined.

We have many stories to give, but here are just two comments from more detailed assessments of the student's experience to indicate the impact.

#### **From Marcel's story**

*"The programme has shown me that life is a box of opportunities, and anything is possible with hard work and self-belief."*

#### **From Amber's story**

*"I cannot believe what happened to me. I am following a path that I didn't know existed."*

## **4. Charity structure, status & governance**

HOT is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. This legal entity is specific to the charity sector and ensures that HOT follows all charity rules and regulations and is 'safe' to invest in.

Our objective is *"the advancement of education for students from existing and emerging socially and economically deprived communities by providing ongoing support and bursaries to enable access to further education."*

### **History**

The founding idea came from the CEO of a Cheshire-based housing association, who saw no reason why talented students from estates labelled as "disadvantaged" would not flourish if given access to schools such as Rugby, Cheltenham Ladies' College, and Eton.

Working with the CEO of Urban Hope, the then Heads of, Blacon High School, Chester, and Eton the Hope Opportunity Trust Charitable Incorporated Organisation (HOT) was launched at a partnership event held at Windsor Castle on 31st October 2012, with an aspiration to send at least one student to Eton College, which has been met and exceeded beyond all reasonable expectations.

In 2013, two students from Liverpool attended Eton 6th form. Since then, circa 200 students from HOT Member schools in Cheshire, Merseyside, and now Stoke have benefited from boarding education at one of many welcoming public schools across the UK.

### **Royal National Children's Springboard Foundation**

HOT, proud of its longstanding membership of and partnership with Royal National Children's Springboard Foundation (RNCSF) ([www.royalspringboard.org.uk](http://www.royalspringboard.org.uk)), without which HOT would not have grown into the charity it has now become. Both organisations were founded around the same time and have built a strong, collaborative relationship that has enabled many young people to experience two years of sixth form boarding.

## **People**

HOT is a small team with a unique range of skills and experiences. It provides the knowledge, expertise, and networks to reach deep into northern communities and build relationships, ensuring that the bursary programme delivers a positive 'ripple' effect into the wider community. This is evidenced through the outcome of our joint work in Blacon, Cheshire, and across Merseyside.

### **Trustees - Volunteers**

- **David Owen- Chair**  
Barrister 1984-2013. Consultant, Trainer, and Independent Investigator since 2011.
- **John Denny – CEO and Trustee**  
Hot founder and CEO.
- **Sue Yates – Director of Operations and Trustee**  
The former head of Blacon High School, the founding school for the HOT initiative in the North West.
- **Colette Wilkinson- trustee**  
The first project manager for HOT.
- **Paul Knight**  
Social Housing Consultant

### **Colleagues**

John Denny CEO

Sue Yates, Director of Operations

Sue Tedford, Project Manager

Robin Oldman, Project Manager

Clare Hamm, Finance Manager

## **5. Some highlights from 2024-25**

In 2024-2025, the financial contribution made by Springboard to HOT, along with the membership contributions from our member schools for the financial year, has maintained the ongoing sustainability of the Hope Opportunity Trust (CIO) to continue:

### **Supporting Students:**

HOT has supported 50 students from Years 11, 12, and 13, as well as students moving from Year 13 into university places or gap years. In addition, we support Year 10/11 students preparing to apply for places, and this usually involves around 20 students. In this period, 27 students entered the programme from year 10.

**In years 10 and 11**, the support covers one-to-one mentoring and group sessions on pertinent topics, including guidance on securing grades, interview preparation, liaison with key personnel in boarding schools, accompanying students on visits, exam preparation, and revision. In effect, our programme managers have devised and delivered a planned programme in schools to support and build the confidence of our potential bursary students.

**In Years 12/13**, the support includes mentoring from a student who was previously on the bursary programme. The programme is based on a scheduled meeting every three weeks, focused on a carefully crafted personal development plan. The mentors and mentees are trained to make the most of mentoring and receive ongoing support and guidance. They also provide feedback,

informing us of positive changes and amendments to continually improve our mentoring programme and better meet students' needs.

All students mentored through this programme in the last year have benefited, and many have volunteered and received training to begin mentoring next year.

In addition, our programme managers support students whose needs are identified through the RNCSF STEER process, not forgetting the invaluable relationships that students build and benefit from with their boarding house masters and mistresses.

Our alumni are also supported. We maintain a directory of our alumni and make direct contact each year to keep our links up to date and ensure that our students' profiles are accurate. This year, we have linked with seventy alumni and added their progress to our directory.

### **Supporting parents/ carers and families**

We offer a planned support and guidance programme for our parents/ carers. This year, Sue Tedford, one of our programme managers, led this. Sue has delivered sessions on relevant topics and led a parents' WhatsApp group. This has been actively used to support parents/carers with any questions or issues they have encountered. It has also been a vehicle for celebrating achievements and building resilience and confidence.

Our programme managers are the link between students, parents, and boarding schools. They provide uniform and financial information from the boarding schools to parents, and, with the boarding schools, arrange travel at weekends and half term, for example, and provide support as and when appropriate to students and parents. This aspect of the programme has a positive impact on the students' transition from a home state school to the boarding environment. It also builds bridges among students, parents/carers, and the boarding school, increasing the likelihood of a more successful bursary for all involved.

RNCSF is increasingly focused on reaching young people with care experience, and HOT will do whatever it can to support that development.

### **Supporting our schools and growth**

This year, Sue Tedford and Robin Oldman continued to strengthen the role of the in-school coordinators of our member schools. They ensure that good practice is shared across our family of schools. From this, they continue to craft a process to ensure that all schools have a solid, efficient, and equitable method for identifying and supporting potential bursary students.

The internal restructuring undertaken in previous years has effectively increased resources to support schools and students in Stoke and the North West. This approach ensures comprehensive support for bursary students, their families, and both state and independent schools. Such outcomes have been achieved through HOT's dedicated partnership with RNCSF and their shared commitment to creating opportunities that enable young people to embark on transformative journeys benefiting themselves and society as a whole.

So, it's been a great 2024/5 for HOT, but that's really down to people from all walks of life who care enough to make life better and do something about it. So, a huge thank you to Sue Yates, whose love and passion for helping young people to realise their potential is just wonderful and a massive part of what HOT is.

*John*



John Denny

CEO and Trustee

## 7. Audit Certificate and Reserves Policy

As a CIO, HOT, with a gross income above £25K but below £500K, requires an independent examination, the certificate for which is given below.

HOT's reserves policy is to hold sufficient cash in the bank to ensure that all responsibilities to our students and partners can be fulfilled for two years should the trustees of HOT find it necessary to cease operations.

**PRO FORMA AUDIT CERTIFICATE**

**Section 1: TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PERSON AUDITING THE UNOFFICIAL FUNDS**

I have examined the records and supporting documents relating to the following unofficial funds belonging to HOPE OPPORTUNITY TRUST

	Fund Name	Period Audited	
		From	To
1	HOPE OPPORTUNITY TRUST	01.04.24	31.03.25
2			
3			

I verify that they form an accurate record of the transactions which have occurred and the balances which are held.

Signed J. Parker Date 08.01.26

Please print name in full Jane Parker Bookkeeping Services Ltd

Address 5 Newry Court, Chester

Cheshire Post Code CH2 2AZ

Telephone Number 07957 858742

Qualification/Experience to act as Auditor Over 30 years + experience in all aspects of Accounts and Audit preparation

Fund Auditor's Comments

Further information on any aspect of our work is available upon request.

Contact: John Denny, CEO at john.denny2013@gmail.com

