



Annual Report 2020

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Welcome

Ben Walsh, Chair

The Junction's Annual Report 2020

We have chosen the theme of learning for our 2020 Annual Report. The Junction is a learning organisation and we recognise that there are different types of learning. Given the theme, we have decided to structure our annual report around various types of learning. This includes:

- An introduction from our Patron, Irvine Welsh (Page 2);
- Exploring Learning and Listening (Page 3)
- An overview of our Evaluation Development (Page 4)
- Young People's Learning (Page 5)
- Learning Opportunities we provided for young people (Page 7)
- How we share our learning further through influencing (Page 8)
- Outlining our Financial Information for 2019/20 (Page 10)
- Our outgoing Director and Senior Counsellor - Sam and Hayden conclude the report by leaving us with some of their 16 years of leading and learning at The Junction (Page 11)
- Offer of thanks to all the people that enable us to learn (Page 12).

I would like to begin by thanking our staff for their hard work, perseverance and compassion during these strange times. Their dedication to supporting young people before and throughout the Covid-19 crisis has been uplifting. A big thank you to our Service Manager, Suzanne, in steering The Junction through these choppy waters. I'd like to thank the Junction Youth Advisers for their insights and support of the organisation; their input has been invaluable. Thanks also to our board for their continued support in ensuring effective governance and supporting where appropriate. Their time and input are greatly valued and appreciated. I'd like to particularly thank our outgoing trustees, Karen McCallum and our previous chair, Andy Mason, who have both contributed massively to The Junction.

A big thank you to our funders, without whom we couldn't provide our services, develop our learning organisation approach and support young people. Finally, I would like to extend a special thanks to Sam, our founder, for her vision (without which we wouldn't exist) and incredible work, support and leadership at The Junction and Hayden for his amazing leadership of our counselling service and wider support to the organisation. Looking back over the past year I have learned to value the importance of human connections. Covid-19 has radically changed the way in which we engage with one another. These digital tools have supported effective directive meetings. However, I have yet to find a suitable alternative for a catch up over a hot chocolate where conversations may meander over a wide range of topics and facial cues help you understand how another person is feeling. I'm working hard to solve this problem but, for now, I'll try my best to make digital conversations more real.

Looking forward, the biggest learning for all of us is how we adjust to the lasting impacts of Covid-19. For the Junction, in the short term this has meant learning how to provide services safely and effectively by using technology. In the medium term, as an organisation, we will have to learn to manage with increased levels of uncertainty and how to develop and deliver effective hybrid services. Our learning here will be informed by listening to Young People who have told us that digital services are important and should continue along with face to face work. Longer term we are unsure what the future holds, but I am looking forward to reporting it to you all in next year's Annual Report.

Learning, what is it and what do I know?.....

Irvine Welsh, Patron

So learning, what is it? And what do I know? I know it's good to be home as I tentatively step into the cold Edinburgh air, the autumnal light and the darkness. Ah, the darkness: unknown, waiting and unsure. How it notices the waves of fear coming up through your body, shaking with it. In addition, with it comes a deep courage and understanding. The two always go hand in hand.

As I think on learning, I think of youth, the possibilities, the vastness of the world and the smallness. How overwhelming and exciting, and what a beautiful mixture. I think about Leith, then the Junction. What that space represents to me, but more importantly to young people in the community who use it. A safe port of call on their voyage, which presents the opportunity to explore their external and internal worlds. A place and space to gain comfort in the scary times and celebrate the good ones.

The Junction has been learning what works for almost 16 years and knows it is a refuge to anchor, and build the connection, trust and compassion that offers heartwarming in the chill. As Sam and Hayden bid The Junction a fond farewell, I know they've helped to ensure that this learning is strongly embedded, continuing to pulse as we welcome in the new.



Learning and Listening

One of our strategic aims is: Affirming The Junction as a learning organisation & developing a working definition of a learning organisation.

Workstreams exist in three areas in relation to organisational learning: Developing a working learning organisation definition, developing a learning framework for The Junction and developing our capacity to listen and learn as an organisation.

As of September 2020, the working definition is as follows: **“The Junction is an organisation where we continually learn within our roles, share our learning throughout the organisation, and collectively use our learning to solve problems, improve the service, and make informed future planning decisions”** This definition provides a basis for how we conceptualise organisational learning, and what we consider its ultimate purpose to be. It is designed to be simple, robust and reflective of The Junction's culture and the context we work in. The definition creates a foundation for the development of the learning framework for The Junction.

This framework outlines the features which an organisation with the above definition may have. From this we were able to evaluate, based on feedback from the team, which learning features are already in place at The Junction and which need to be developed. When surveyed on key features, staff felt that the environment at The Junction was conducive to learning, that their ideas are listened to and that learning is a part of their role. They did however note that more instances of informal training would be useful, that the transfer of knowledge throughout the organisation could be improved, and that on occasion assumptions are used over data in decision making processes. If The Junction is to be affirmed as a learning organisation as per the framework and above definition, these are the areas which must be improved.

Overlapping with organisational learning is listening. In last year's annual report, becoming a Listening Fund partner and how The Junction listens to young people was discussed. Listening practice has changed more quickly than expected due to the move to remote working. The Junction Youth Advisors have been meeting remotely to give their views on the development of our new services. The annual Voice Your Choice survey moved online and young people who use the Digital Drop-In have been asked to give their feedback. Processes to embed both structured and informal listening into the learning framework will be explored in order to ensure that what is learned from listening to young people is recorded, analysed, shared and incorporated into service development decisions.

In terms of next steps, given the overlap between listening and learning, key listening features will be incorporated into the overall learning framework, which will also be simplified. Upcoming development days will explore ways to develop desired learning features, and will look to identify where responsibility for learning should rest within The Junction.

Evaluation Development

Throughout 2020, the team have developed a new evaluation suite for The Junction, consisting of a new theory of change, evaluation framework and evaluation tools. This aims to replace current evaluation systems with a more simplified, streamlined and centralised package. Initial consultation for the development of the evaluation suite took place in late 2019. Work on its development started in January 2020, with Chris (Rank Foundation Intern), Ruth Edmonds and Deborah Livingstone (social development consultants) leading on the process.

The consultant's final copies of the theory of change, evaluation framework and evaluation tools were handed over to The Junction in July. Subsequently, rounds of feedback have taken place to establish which parts of the package need to be edited or changed before it can be used. As of now, the evaluation tools need to be tailored to individual services before they can be used. The theory of change and evaluation framework have been completed.

The next step for the evaluation suite to become fully useable is a programme of implementation and testing, to be led by Chris and involving all service delivery staff. The evaluation tools were designed for use under pre-covid circumstances and therefore we need to find flexibility for the way forward. Following full implementation, we can expect the evaluation suite to enhance our ability to produce useful evaluation data, strengthening our capacity for organisational learning and potentially our capacity to produce useful information for current and potential donors.

The commitment and effort put into the process by the team deserves significant praise. Despite difficult circumstances, the team continually offered their time, insight and energy to what was a complex and drawn out process. Interest, passion and a determination to improve were apparent throughout.

Young People's Learning

Over the last year, young people at the Junction have been learning through singing, talking, reflecting, volunteering, writing, sharing, painting, walking and playing. They have been learning in The Junction, at their school, in Victoria Park, along the Kirkgate, up North Berwick Law and in their homes. They have been learning in classes, groups, with their friends and in one-to-one sessions.

Every young person's experience of learning at the Junction is unique. Our approach means that young people create their own learning journey by setting their own goals, building on the strengths they already have and engaging in ways that meet their interests and needs. Consequently, when we asked young people what they've learned during their time with The Junction, the responses were diverse!

Learning about health and wellbeing needs: Across the Junction's services, young people have learned more about their own health and wellbeing needs:

Now I understand what brings on my anxiety, so I can avoid it or sort of manage it better -that makes me feel proud of myself

Through Mosaic, Positive Pathways and Creative Express groups, young people tried out different self-care activities including yoga, breath-work, visualisations, poetry, walks and mindfulness. This has helped young people learn what coping mechanisms work for them:

In group I have learned about ways to manage stress and anxiety and I can use these in my day-to-day life.

Being in contact with other people through the group helps me get a better understanding of my and others health.

By going to the weekly Creative Express "Write To Express" sessions I learned how to express myself and how to explore my emotions through writing.

Positive Pathways helped me think about ways I can look after myself , Now I know more about how the outdoors can help me cope with emotions.

Young People's Learning

Learning Skills: Taking part in group-work with the Junction has provided a space for young people to learn skills and confidence for building healthy relationships and working with others.

"I'm more confident now and meeting more people. I'm more confident speaking to people."

"I have learnt how to listen to others more successfully."

One-to-one support, groups and volunteering have also helped young people to learn to value themselves and what they have to say:

I feel less embarrassed of being connected to a mental health group and accept my own mental health more

One thing that always seems to come to mind is confidence in my own opinions, not being afraid that I have a different one from other people I know or that it's different.

Being part of the Listening Fund showed me that The Junction listens to YP and values what YP think. Things we said were included in the application

Learning to engage with opportunities and make positive choices: learning at The Junction is focused on supporting young people to ultimately make informed choices about their wellbeing:

"The other day someone called me a name and I managed to just ignore it and walk away. Positive Pathways has helped me with this- you guy's support and advice."

"It's become a bit more cope-able. I pay more attention to subjects now. Subjects I'm more interested in."

"Being a Junction Youth Advisor has made me feel more involved with The Junction and closer to the other workers. It's made me more confident in accessing other services and more comfortable in the space."

"I think the sessions were very good and I learned a lot about what drugs can do to me."

"Before I use to let things sort of beat me, get the better of me and then I would just shut down and not go (to school). Now I am feeling more positive and I can manage to keep going more."

"This helps me think about what I want for myself in the future."

Learning Opportunities provided from April 2019 March 2020

429 sessions of
One to One Support
for **52** young people -
including 16 young
people supported with
their substance use

Through the
Junction Youth
Advisors,
15 young people,
contributed over **45**
hours to The Junction

386 Sessions of
Counselling
supporting **32** young
people

Positive Pathways
8 Outdoor Group Work
Programmes
for **27** Young People

93
Drop-in / Walk-In
Sessions resulting in
324 engagements
with young people

Creative Expressions
55 One to One Support
Sessions for **11** young
people
18 Group Work Sessions
for **17** Young People

65
Street Outreach
sessions
resulting in **623**
engagements

Group Work
21 Small Group Work Sessions
for **28** Young People. Including
Mosaic Project in partnership
with Multi Cultural Family Base

144 School Substance Use Inputs
reaching **1111** young people

25
School Outreach
sessions with **1140**
engagements

Influencing

Taking our learning further - Sam Anderson Director

Right from its beginning The Junction has been a partnership. Little did our small group of pioneers- Youth Aloud young people's group, committed partnership practitioners, supportive politicians and community members imagine the wonder we were creating when The Junction-Young People, Health and Wellbeing began its life on Jan 17, 2005.

This creation was grounded in a local action research project, which had gathered local young people's voices alongside professional experience of limitations in other services and with a strong desire from myself and others to create the kind of holistic, relational experience, we would have so welcomed during our adolescence journeys. The Junction has grown from an idea into a strong, shareable example of what can be offered when your approach is relational, preventative and strengths based. The idea was simple, how would it be to offer a relational, preventative and strengths based approach to health and wellbeing experiences for young people aged 12-21 who wouldn't have to fit themselves into a particular silo and instead would be welcomed as their whole complex selves in a safe space just for them. The last four years I have had the good fortune, alongside the challenge, of capturing and sharing our learning with others interested in developing an offer together with the intention of hoping to influence some of the wider systems that impact on young people's lives.

Capturing our approach Developing and revising our Theory of Change: The Junction's Theory of Change was developed in conjunction with the team and Junction Youth Advisors. We then worked with researchers at The Scottish Collaboration for Public Health Research and Policy at Edinburgh University to validate it. Following on from this we have worked with Social Development Consultants at Keep Your Shoes Dirty to revise our Theory of Change. Based on the research recommendations we incorporated the importance of our peer based approach with workers and their development. We also designed an evaluation framework, which is even better at capturing our holistic approach. Our Rank 'Time to Shine' Leader Chris ably supported the later aspect of this work. You can hear more about the research here:

https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/scphrp/2018/11/05/the_junction_2018/

Sharing our approach with other communities

There have been a few wrong turns along the way, trying to franchise box a relational model.....it doesn't work!! However, these have been learnt from and for the last 18 months I have been working relationally with communities in helping them explore how a relational, preventative and strengths-based approach like The Junction's might be for their area.

I have had the privilege of leading on this work, being very skillfully supported in this by Junction Youth Advisors and the staff team who have helped express the key elements of how we work and why it is impactful with lots of interested people. These include a range of politicians, policy makers, academics, media, funders, students and leadership programme participants. Some examples of this work are our engagement with The Youth Commission on Mental Health Services, who explored The Junction model with us and what a similar offer in other areas could mean for other young people.

For more information see:

<https://www.youngscot.net/observatory/youth-commission-mental-health>

The Orygen and World Economic Forum partnership has created a framework for worldwide use that reflects much of the Junctions approach. We hosted visits from the partnership and continue to stay connected to this worldwide work. <https://www.orygen.org.au/Policy/World-Economic-Forum-partnership>

Key Learning from Influencing Work

A summary of key learning from this work for The Junction and for the wider context:

- Importance of investing in workers and young people's development
- Importance of relationships, particularly when exploring relational models
- There are lots of good people doing what they can, where they can
- Important to keep showing up
- Some of us are heavily invested in the current system - how do we speak to this and recognise our own potential gains and losses in relation to systems change?
- Resilience is needed to be able to speak to the incongruence we experience internally and externally.



Junction Youth Advisors meeting with Dame Denise Coia and Clare Haughey - Minister for Mental Health

These areas of The Junction's work have been made possible thanks to investment from The Paul Hamlyn Foundation and First State Investments.

Finance Report

Year Ending March 2020

Income

Edinburgh Alcohol and Drugs Partnership and Health and Social Care Partnership - for Substance Use Work	£27,566
City of Edinburgh Council – Children and Families Grant	£93,202
NHS Lothian – Health Improvement Fund	£29,996
National Lottery Community Fund for -Community Counsellor	£48,259
First State Investments	£42,500
Paul Hamlyn Foundation	£30,000
Gannochy Trust – Creative Express	£10,000
BBC Children in Need Small Grant – Creative Express	£9,708
BBC Children in Need Main Grant - One to One Support	£38,370
Corra Foundation - Listening Fund	£14,978
KPE4 Charitable Trust	£15,000
Rank Foundation - Time to Shine Intern	£19,626
Volant Charitable Trust - Positive Pathways	£10,000
Other Grants Below £10,000	£36,600
Donations	£2,174
Fees and Other Income	£20,495
Premises Rental	£16,493
Total Income:	£464,967

Expenditure

Staff Costs	£369,848
Rent and Property Costs	£50,812
Office Running Costs	£10,258
Publicity	£3,197
Professional Fees	£10,654
Direct Project Costs	£6,681
Fundraising Costs	£216
Depreciation	£2,282
Total Expenditure	£453,948

The uncommitted free reserves of the charity are represented by the general fund, which presently stands at £194,794. The aim of the charity is to maintain reserves at the level of at least 3 months' expenditure, which is considered a reasonable level to ensure short-term continuity in the event of a break in funding. The present free reserves are equivalent to around 6 months' expenditure based on the 2020-21 budget. Given the future uncertain funding environment and the possible impact of COVID-19 on the charity's finances and operations going forward, the trustees are content with the level of reserves held.

Final Thoughts

As our Director Sam and Senior Counsellor Hayden prepare to move on from the Junction they leave us with some of their learning.....

It can be a scary world. For children and young people, for adults for us all. As we leave the Junction and reflect on the beginning and the now, there has been so much learning. Rich with joy, sadness, horror, frustration, excitement and fear. It is often the hard learning that sticks the grit in the wheels - that, if open to it, we learn from and flourish. In reflecting on our learning which underlines the complexity of life we are reminded of the words of Rumi

This being human is a guest house.

Every morning a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
As an unexpected visitor.
Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
Who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.
Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

The spirit of The Junction has always been to engage with this complexity - to not offer silo responses - and contribute to fulfilling our vision of us all reaching our full potential. To do this we had the working hypothesis that our work at The Junction needed to be relational and our learning is that this is true. Externally, 'the relationship' seems quite topical again with numerous strategies referencing the importance of this. We notice this as an interesting cycle, and hope it will gain more traction this time round with policy that enables - rather than dismantles relational work into boxes and silos - as the healing power of the relationship has been known throughout time. At the Junction, we have been proud to embody the importance of a trusting, understanding and compassionate relationship, and the conditions needed to create this. A safe, welcoming environment, where young people and their strengths feel seen, heard and trusted. Concurrent to this, our learning has been that workers need to create the space to reflect and explore themselves. That it becomes part of each worker's gentle discipline to take time to ask the question what is happening now - for the young person in the relationship, for the worker, for the young person's place in the systems they live in - school, college, family, community. This is complex work and requires workers to be open to learning themselves, including the discomfort that often arises.

We have endeavored to help create this relational working environment and sympathize with statutory sector colleagues where so much emphasis is often put on attachment theory to diagnose and inform practice decisions but little space to reflect on the power dynamic of their relationship with young people and what patterns may often be replayed, including one of power. We would say that often the experts are the young people, with all their insight, strength, courage, fear, wisdom, belief and wonder. Our frustration is often having a sense of what works, and noticing that change takes time, whilst sometimes people in power have short memories or an attachment to status quo.

We remember being heartened by the Christie Commission report and its findings, which were reflective of our Junction experience - especially the following:

1.8 We are clear that our system of public service delivery is in need of a significant transformation. Above all, we need to design and deliver services with and for people, rather than forcing people into pre-determined systems.

1.9 A key goal of this process should be to nurture and encourage the many new approaches, which are already harnessing and utilizing the resources and energies of a significant number of communities across Scotland.

1.10 What distinguishes these positive approaches is that they are grounded in people's lives, and the lives of communities (of place and of interest). Typically, people, communities and services work together to decide priorities and how to achieve their delivery while the focus is on fitting services to people, not people to services. They also maximize all the resources and assets available, and the process itself builds the capacity of all those involved.

We try not to become too despondent at what little it feels has actually changed, mindful the report highlighted that large organisations fight change consciously or unconsciously. We are appreciative of those who are aware of this and champion change, though it feels like a collective energy is yet to emerge. We observe that in times of systemic stretch, often, organisations and individuals within them become more siloed, more polarized and less open to exploring with curiosity. We notice the possibilities of these tendencies emerging in both ourselves and in terms of many practitioners in partner agencies having less time to work together due to the demands of caseloads, waiting lists etc. meaning there is a struggle to create the space for partnership working at a time when it is needed more than ever. We are appreciative of the enlightened funders we have, while frustrated that we continue to find ourselves in a challenging funding context.

At times, the tension between mitigating today's systemic dysfunctions or co-creating holistic, preventative and strengths based possibilities continues with too little consideration of what else might be conceivable. There continues to be a drive to be looking for something new and creative rather than investing in what we know works. Again, as the Christie report highlighted, there needs to be a move away from short-term funding. We need to be investing long-term in young people. Fifteen years in, it continues to be reassuring and heartwarming to see young people at 12 accessing preventive services at The Junction, then seeing them access The Junction as and when they need to throughout their adolescence. It is encouraging to see that these young people know they can access support when experiencing hard times, and trust a local organisation embedded in their community - a safe space - knowing they are welcome.

The dynamic of relationships: they are fluid, they are not fixed and they are rich with possibilities - this is what we model at the Junction. However, this is hard to do when larger systems become stuck, fixed and polarized. Life can be complex. We have learnt so much from young people and colleagues about being in this world and being in relationships. We hope we have also helped facilitate learning and growth. As we reflect on all the relationships we have been a part of at The Junction, we feel so fortunate to be a part of a shared learning experience. As we say goodbye to The Junction it is with sadness, joy, excitement and hope.

Thank you to the young people and colleagues who have enriched our learning and lives.

Thank You

The Work of The Junction would not be possible without the contributions of:

Staff and Volunteers: Sam Anderson, Suzanne Campbell, Hayden Kilpatrick, April Wendy Hayes, Ian Higgenbotham, Danni Szerszynska, Helen Munro, Caroline Crosier, Adele Ewing, Jacqueline Green, Alice Heywood, Vicki Watson, Lindsey Chalmers, Mo Ford Asia Korzya, Michael McNaughton, Fiona Baker, Louise Gaw, Ana Puljic, Yvonne Fieldhouse, Nishi Ravo and Alikhi Chiotaki

Board of Trustees: Ben Walsh, Sam Jelf, Anne Gribbon, Jamie Dunlop, Anne Sutherland, Linda Duncan, Christine D'offay, Matt Landburgh. Extra thanks to Andy Mason and Karen McCallum who left us during this year. Board members were recruited through advertisements on our website and social media pages.

Funders, Partners, Organisations and Individuals: Young Person's Substance Use Service * Citadel Youth Centre * Port of Leith Housing Association * Edinburgh College * RS MacDonald Charitable Trust * Drummond Community High School * BBC Children in Need * Leith Academy * Big Lottery * Trinity Academy * C:Card * The Oasis Foundation * City of Edinburgh Council: Children and Families Department * The Rank Foundation * Edinburgh Drugs and Alcohol Partnership * Foundation Scotland * Comic Relief * YouthLink Scotland * The Clore Social Leadership Programme * Youth Scotland * GlaxoSmithKline * Robertson Trust * Healthy Respect * Health Opportunities Team * Leith Benevolent Association * Tesco Great Junction Street * Leith Rotary Club * Everyone who has used our 86 Space * Leith Victoria Swim Centre (Edinburgh Leisure) * The King's Fund * All of our individual donors * NHS Lothian * The Paul Hamlyn Foundation * Crew * Our partners in Peer Works * Jane Bruce * Audrey Birt * Emma Crawshaw * Noble House * First State Investors * Gannochy Trust * Calton Youth Ministry * The Listening Fund * Corra Foundation * Andrew Macdonald * Denise Coia * The Children and Young People's Commissioner * Public Health Place to Be Leadership programme * BBC-Reporting Scotland * Radio Scotland * Radio 4 * STV News * Scottish Parliament * Paul Hamlyn Foundation * TRIUMPH network * Kay Tisdall, Professor of Childhood Policy at Edinburgh University * Holly and Hannah's 30th Birthday Celebration * Rock'n'Rose Hairdressing * Maple Trust * The Plum Trust * Austn and Hope Pilkington * Nancie Massey * Volant Charitable Trust * The MacRobert Trust * Crerar Trust * Soutar Trust * Hugh Fraser * Thistle Down Trust * I F Harvey Charitable Trust * Lothain Community Health Forum, EVOC Children and Families Network.

