

17th January 2017

HOTEL CHOCOLAT GROUP PLC
("Hotel Chocolat", the "Company" or the "Group")
Trading Update

Hotel Chocolat Group plc, a premium British chocolatier and omni-channel retailer, today announces the following trading update for the 13 weeks ended 25 December 2016.

Total Group revenue for the period increased 16.2 per cent compared to the prior year (14.6 per cent on a proforma* constant currency basis).

Retail growth was driven by increases in footfall and items per basket, with customers also choosing to buy more higher-priced gift items. The digital business showed similar momentum, and in January a new website launched; improvements include optimisation for smartphones and tablets, a bespoke 'gift creator' service for delivered gifts, and better integration of the tasting club subscription service.

The business opened 10 new stores during the six months ended December, and now has 90 stores in the UK. Seven of the new stores included the signature drinks offer of Hot Chocolat, coffee-chocolate and light cocoa infusions.

Trading since December continues to be in line with management's expectations. The Board expects to announce the Group's results for the six months ended 25 December 2016 on 22 February 2017.

Angus Thirlwell, Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer, said:

"The growing strength of the Hotel Chocolat brand has enabled us to perform well. Our seasonal ranges included many new innovations and our cafe drinks offer adds a new dimension to our experience."

"Being a UK manufacturer gave us the flexibility to maintain good stock availability right up to the end of the season. I would like to thank the whole team for their energy, enthusiasm and tireless commitment to delivering on our plans."

*The group acquired Hotel Chocolat Estates (St Lucia) Ltd in April 2016. The proforma results include the sales from St Lucia in 2015 and 2016.

This announcement contains inside information for the purposes of the Market Abuse Regulation.

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Notes to Editors:

Hotel Chocolat is a premium British chocolatier with a strong and distinct brand. The business was founded in 1993 by Angus Thirlwell and Peter Harris and has traded under the Hotel Chocolat brand since 2003. The Group sells its products online and through a network of stores in the UK and abroad. The Group has two restaurants in the UK and a cocoa plantation and hotel in Saint Lucia. The Group was admitted to trading on AIM in 2016.