



Midterm Evaluation of the 2021 Holiday Activities and Food programme

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#SummerOfPlay

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Project background

School holidays are a period of concern for some families. The negative impact summer holidays may have potentially makes this period important in closing the outcomes gap between more and less disadvantaged children³.

Research conducted prior to the COVID-19 pandemic showed deprivation continuing to be a major concern. Young people from low-income families were more likely to experience isolation during school holidays. Their parents could not afford costly enriching activities, so they had fewer opportunities to develop life skills (e.g. creativity, flexibility, teamwork) compared to their more affluent peers. (Evaluation of the 2019 holiday activities and food programme, 2020)

Between 2018 and 2020 to help close the existing evidence gap, The Department for Education committed investment that delivered free healthy meals and fun activities to disadvantaged children in pilot Local Authorities.

The Holiday Activities and Food programme was expanded in 2021 so that children on free school meals in England could be offered free healthy meals and enriching activities over the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays. With an investment of up to £220 million delivered through grants to all local authorities.

The indicative allocation for Sandwell was £1,932,480 and an interim delivery report was submitted to the Department of Education February 2020. In Sandwell there are over 17,000 who have risk factors aligned to requiring FSM (Holiday activities and food programme 2021, 2021)

A number of actions were agreed to support the delivery of the programme:

- Sandwell governance for this scheme would be through the Children and Young People's Strategic Commissioning Partnership.
- SMBC Play Service were identified as the lead service to steer this programme
- An interim steering group was identified to support the programme which includes a wide representation of internal and external partners.



HAF REPORTING STRUCTURE



Historical delivery in Sandwell

Prior experience of delivering similar programmes created a developed understanding of what was required in deciding how the programme moved forward in Sandwell.

- Let's do Lunch Model - Two previous small-scale delivery models and evaluations to learn from involving primary aged children

Although these projects were well received by the recipients and the families, take-up was only between 10% and 25 % despite them being marketed widely. This may be attributed to families having to attend a specific venue at a specific time to access the food offer or multiple age groups in families.

Based on the financial model applied to these pilots the overall cost to continue with this model would be £2,154,240

Request a copy of the report email: Samantha_harman@sandwell.gov.uk

- 2019 HAF Model - A scaled up 2019 HAF application detailing a three spoke delivery model – through schools and community centres, parks and CV sector organisations.

Based on the financial model applied to this proposal the overall cost to continue with this model would be £709,185 although it needs to be noted that some of these costs were not scrutinised due to the speed the application had to be submitted and would need revisiting. A disadvantage of this model assumed that uptake would be low, and potentially exclude 65% of the target group from accessing HAF.

Request a copy of the full application Samantha_harman@sandwell.gov.uk

The aims of the Sandwell HAF21 programme were agreed in January 2021

- To have a strategic quality centred approach that encourages CYP who meet risk criteria aligned to the purpose of FSM to participate in activities that stimulate growth and development.
- To connect partners to people to access activities and food provision that improve physical health outcomes for CYP.
- To support VCS infrastructure through preferred supplier network and charter mark.
- Develop robust systems and processes to issue vouchers that reduces schools transactional burden.*
- To provide a range of activities that empowers parents and carers to access experiences that stimulate growth and development.

*We need to note that the development of a voucher activity programme after discussion with the DfE was subsequently disallowed.

Key statistics

6934

**Children
reached**

59,989

Contact hours

**48 voluntary &
community
organisations
grant funded**

**18,359
Meals
delivered**

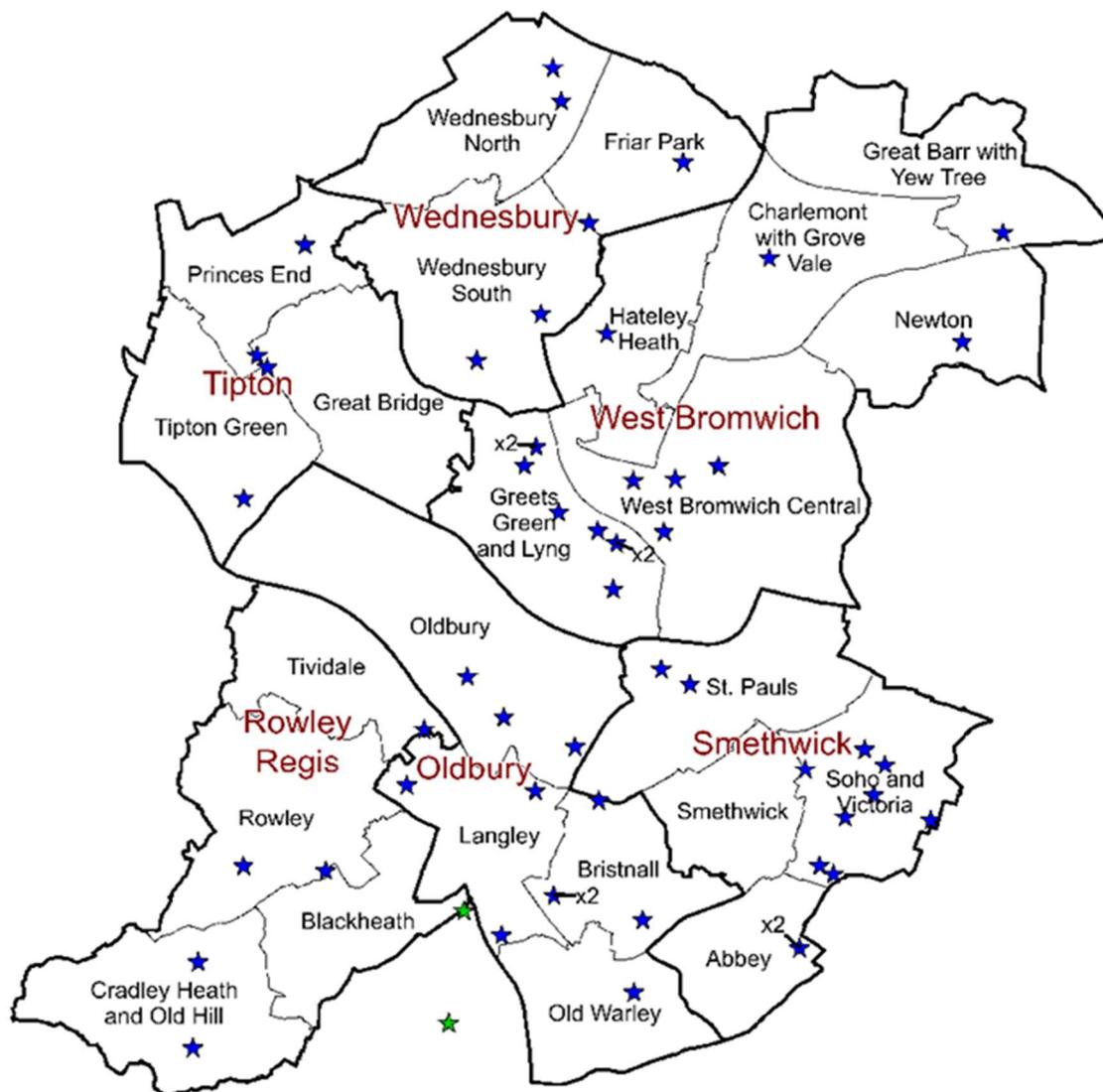
893

Sessions

Data Analysis

Location & project breakdown

Delivery Partners' Locations



Research
Sandwell

Contains Ordnance Survey data.
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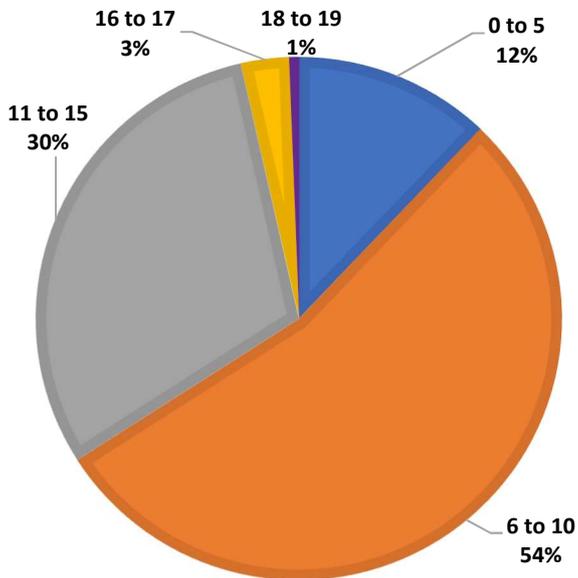
Legend

- ★ Sandwell Location
- ★ Non-Sandwell Location

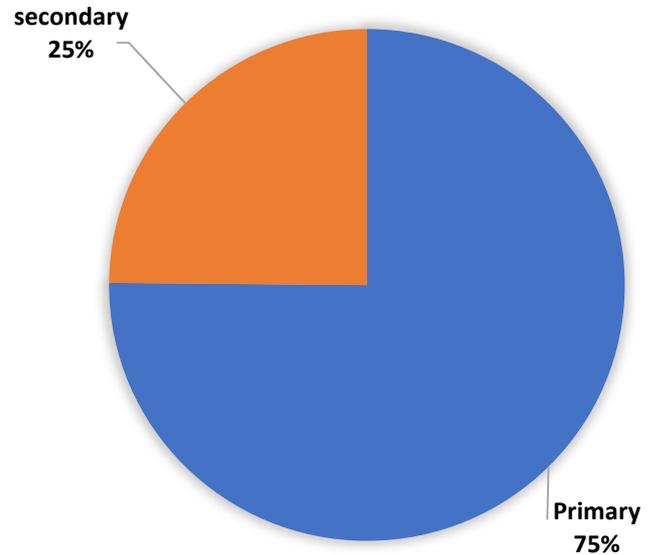
This map shows the locations of face-to-face project delivery across Sandwell as part of the Easer and Summer offer.

Data Analysis

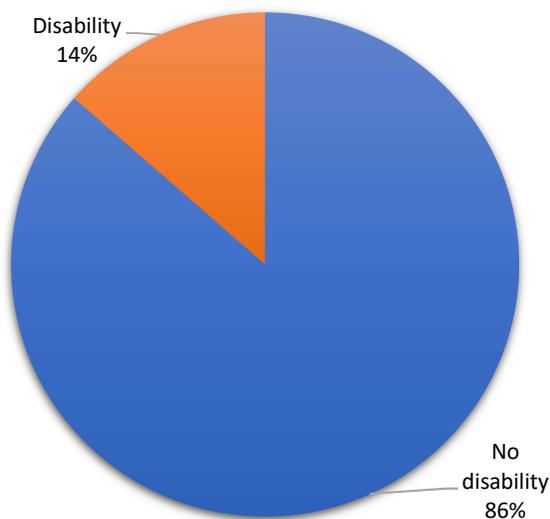
Age range breakdown of registered participants



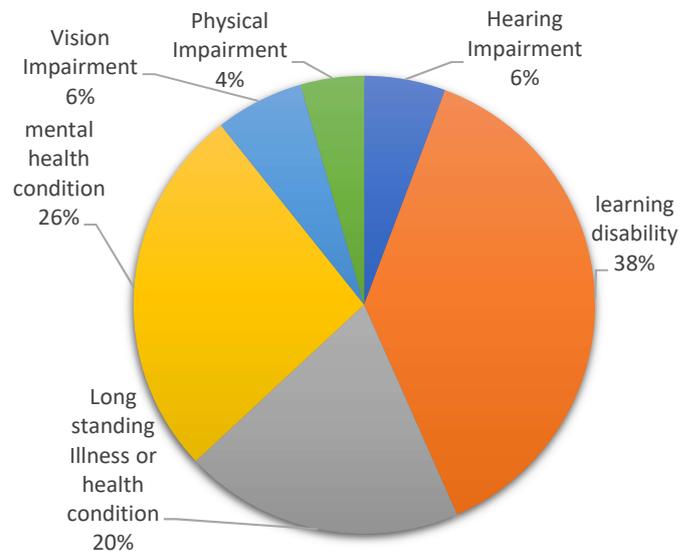
Age range breakdown by school



SEND data of registered participants

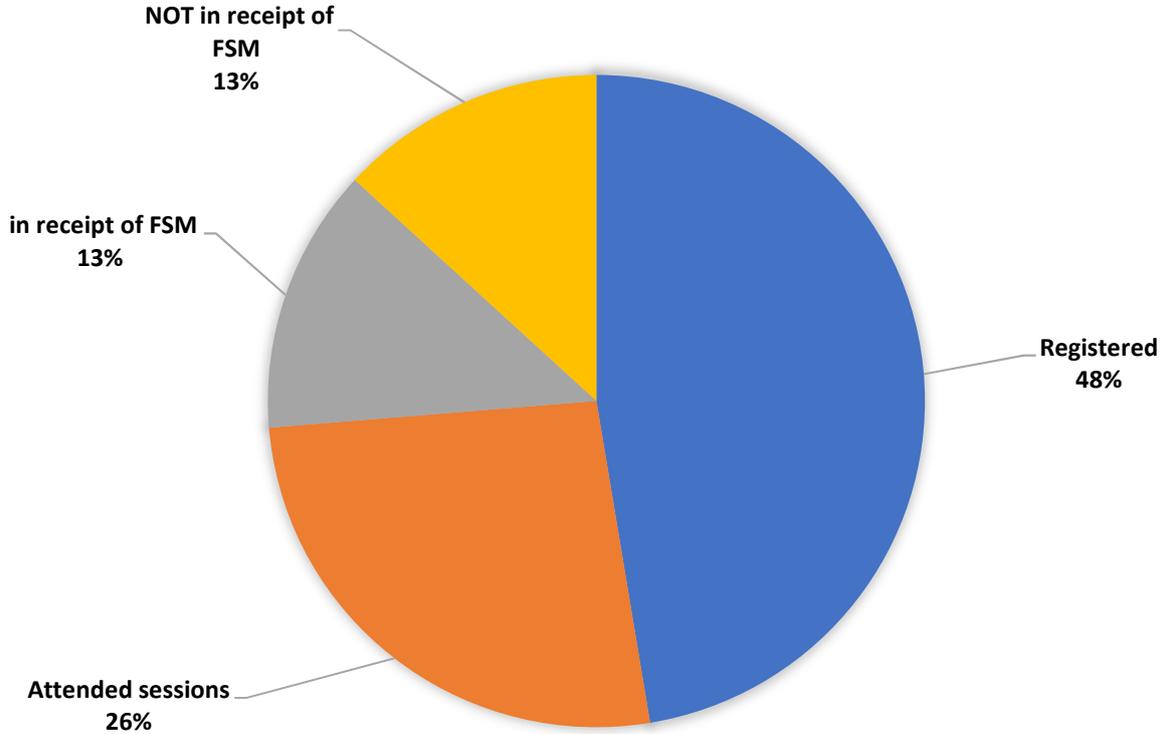


SEND data broken down by area of need

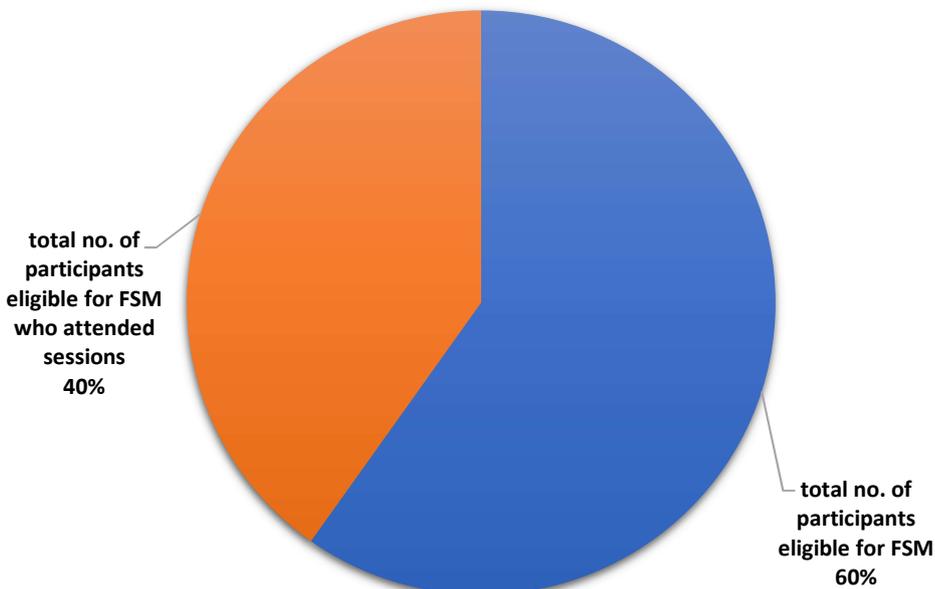


Data Analysis

Young people's attendance

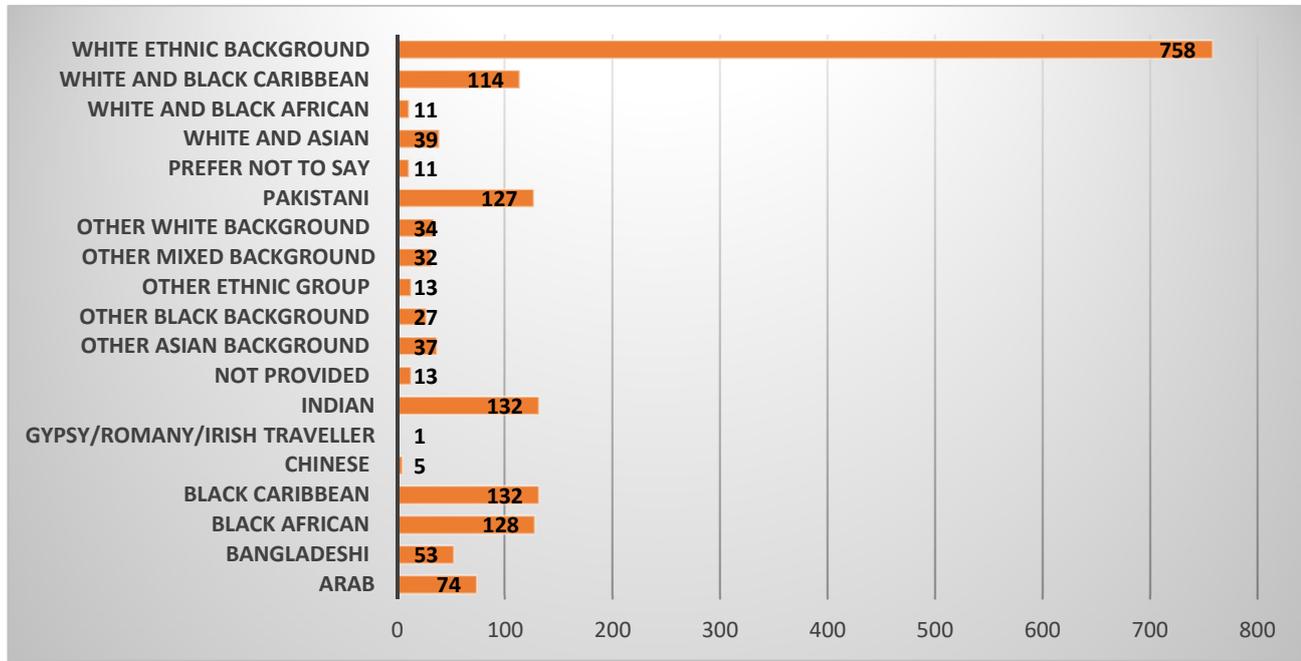


Free School Meals data



Data Analysis

Ethnicity data



Parent/carer survey analysis

60%

of parents/carers
found registering
easy

76%

Of parents/carers
rated the quality of the
sessions excellent or
very good

54%

Of parents/carers
rated the free meals
excellent or very good

95%

Of parents/carers would allow their children to
take part in sessions again

Testimonials

“All sessions were amazing, and my children enjoyed the activities and the food provided. We have been very pleased with all of the sessions.”

“Amazing, so good of council to start activities up for our youth they really need this to thrive especially after all that Covid has meant them in missing out.”

“My children loved the activities that were provided during the summer holidays. All staff were always friendly and excellent with the children. It was nice to have something for them in our area as we have never had anything like it available before”

“My 2 children loved it and would love to do it again, they learned new skills and enjoyed everyday off and the staff was great we did them at West Bromwich Leisure Centre.”

Testimonials

“My child loved the Summer Playscheme this year! Lion Farm Action Centre put on a fun activities that my child came home to tell me about and she made many new friendships. The staff were fantastic with the children and were always happy to help with any questions I asked: and always met the children with a smile. The meals were lovely I could run through the menu which was email to me with my child and see what she was going to eat each day, I received recipe cards from Lion Farm Action Centre which I have found very useful. There was a good selection of different meals and healthy salads to go with each meal. I would be very happy sending my child to playscheme again. Thanks”

“My son loved going to the summer holiday club, he made new friends and got to do lots of fun activities. The food that he was offered was tasty and plentiful and he would love to do the holiday club next year too if possible.”

“The YCA did a fantastic job at keeping my child active and engaged during the summer holidays. She enjoyed the meals and I was happy that they were made in a healthy way which encouraged her to make some changes in the way she eats at home. This was definitely needed after all the lockdowns!”

“There was a wide range of activities offered which I found was really good. I hope this continues in the future. The outdoor activities with Sandwell farm and nature reserve were excellent. My children accessed play scheme, sports camp, go outdoor activities and they thoroughly enjoyed them all. They also attended an activity with action for children were they do some kickboxing, received gloves pads and a free membership for over the summer. This is something they have continued with and they attend weekly.”

Testimonials

“My son enjoyed the sport activities and it was a breath of fresh air to have something for Children that can't get away for a holiday during these long weeks. New friends are also made and physical exercise helped the children both mentally and physically as they all came away with smiles on their faces.”

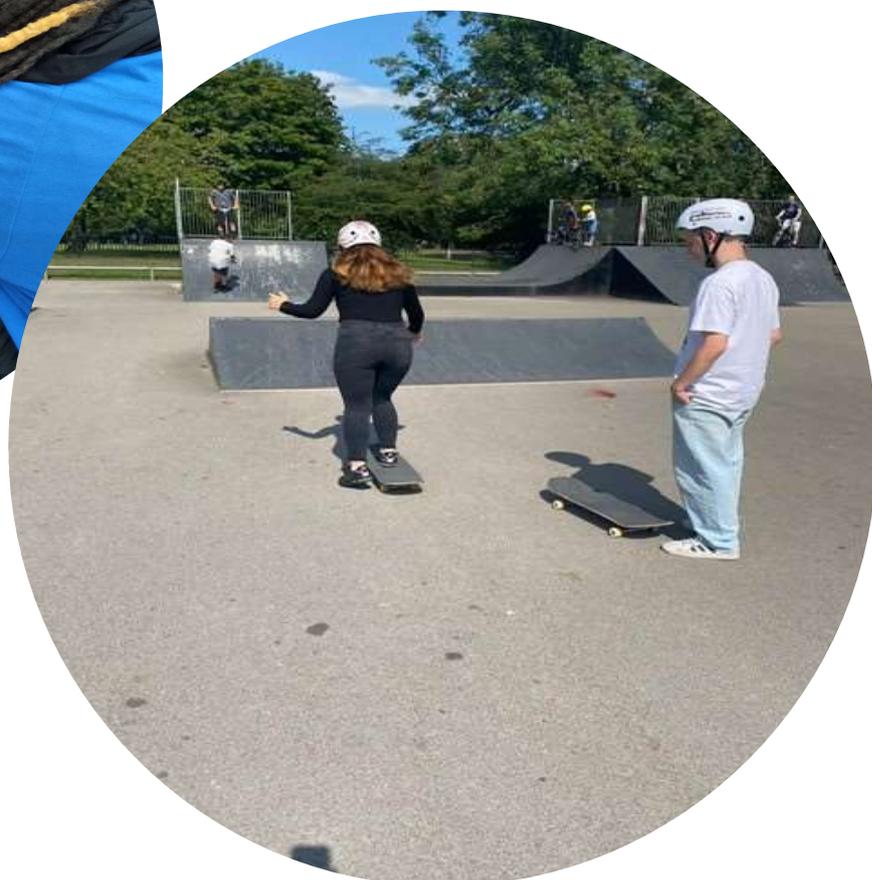
“The session was really interactive, and the instructors were very encouraging. My children were 7 and 12, and both were able to access and enjoy the session at their relevant levels.”

“Sessions was brilliant. My son enjoyed very much and he asking when something like that will be on again. People who do Bushcraft were excellent.”

“Me and my children loved the activity packs and the meal packs, we made a meal and dessert together and really loved the whole experience”

Lessons Learnt

- Marketing and communication require development to drill down and identify how we gain traction with families that convert to attendance without applying stigma to the offer.
- Further discussions need to be had with schools to identify how we can access premises and offer activity on a greater scale.
- Observations have identified that when we implement a universal offer the uptake improves exponentially and this in turn reduces perceived bias with those not in receipt of benefit related free school meals.
- Commissioning and procurement of services proved challenging due to timescales defined by the DfE mechanism need to be in place to support future delivery.
- The positioning of HAF strategically as a mechanism to support the wider determinant of inequalities that are linked to food insecurity and equal access to activity for our children and young people.



Delivery partners

We would like to thank all our local delivery partners who engaged with the programme and made it happen.



Delivery partners



Delivery partners



Bibliography

GOV.UK. 2021. *Evaluation of the 2019 holiday activities and food programme*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-of-the-2019-holiday-activities-and-food-programme>> [Accessed 17 November 2021].

GOV.UK. 2021. *Holiday activities and food programme 2021*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/holiday-activities-and-food-programme/holiday-activities-and-food-programme-2021>> [Accessed 17 November 2021].