



Cheshire West & Chester Council

Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) Programme Annual Report 2022

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Introduction and purpose of the Programme

Background

On 27 October 2021, as part of the Autumn Budget and Spending Review, the Government announced over £200 million a year for the continuation of the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme, providing enriching activities and healthy meals for disadvantaged children during school holidays. This annual review focuses on the programme in Cheshire West and Chester across the Easter, summer, and Christmas holidays in 2022.

(HAF enables children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and other vulnerable groups to access healthy food and take part in fun activities over the school holiday periods. The programme is funded by the Department for Education (DfE).

Between 2017 and 2020 funding for HAF was offered by the DfE as a bidding grant fund process for the summer holiday period only. In this period, funding was received into the borough and coordinated in the following ways:

- 2018: The Welcome Network coordinated funding within the Feeding Britain Pilot.
- 2019: Partnership between Edsential, the Council, The Welcome Network and Cheshire West Voluntary Action. Edsential led this partnership and received the grant from the DfE.
- 2020: The same partnership was in place, with Edsential also overseeing work in neighbouring local authorities of Wirral and Halton.

In 2021, the funding from the DfE came directly to local authorities for delivery and covered the provision of free holiday places and the coordination of the programme locally.

We were delighted in 2022 to continue to work alongside Edsential CIC, using their expertise and knowledge to support the programme.

Aim of the programme

The programme provides free places to children eligible for free school meals for the equivalent of at least 4 hours a day, 4 days a week, 6 weeks a year. The funding should cover 4 weeks in the summer and a week's worth of provision in each of the Easter and Christmas holidays.

The programme was developed as a response to national research that found that these school holidays can be pressure points for some families. For some children this can lead to a holiday experience gap, with children from low-income households being:

- less likely to access organised out-of-school activities
- more likely to experience 'unhealthy holidays' in terms of nutrition and physical health
- more likely to experience social isolation

The evidence shows that free holiday clubs can have a positive impact on children and young people, and that they work best when they:

- provide consistent and easily accessible enrichment activities
- cover more than just breakfast or lunch
- involve children (and parents) in food preparation
- use local partnerships and connections, particularly with the voluntary and community organisation sector

The programme offers provision for school aged children aged 4 – 16 years, (and post-16 for young people with SEND). While focused on children eligible for Free School Meals, each local authority has discretion to use up to 15% of funding to offer provision to other children & young people who would benefit from HAF. All local authorities have been issued with a framework of standards that all HAF providers are expected to adhere to [accessible here](#)

The funding received from the Department for Education for Cheshire West and Chester to support provision across the three main holiday periods was split centrally between lead providers as follows:

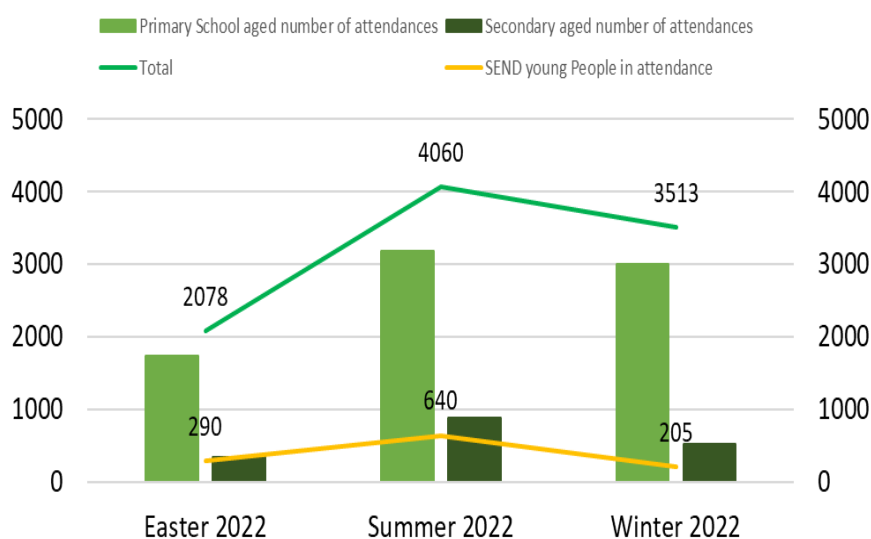
- Edsential CiC commissioned to oversee a majority of the provision for providers primarily from local community, health and education.
- Local authority Youth Service provision in line with the aims of the programme but specific to the needs and asks of young people in each locality in the borough.
- Brio leisure, the local leisure provider, deliver programmes across the borough. They were able to offer a range of activities to meet the needs of all age groups, this included providing important swimming skills and for the older age group a qualification in lifeguarding.
- Local authority commissioners ensured the provision of a range of face-to-face SEND provision.

A robust application process for each of the three holiday periods ensured that provision was commissioned that met the needs of our children, young people and their families and was appropriate to the holiday period in question.

How we delivered the programme



Attendance at HAF provision by education type and SEND



Canoeing – “I have never done this before, it’s been great fun, I would normally just stay at home and help mum and my younger brother, I get a bit fed up during holiday time but this year, I have really enjoyed being with Cheshire Buddies.Mum is pleased to see me smile again!”

“Today was boss because we got muddy, I made new friends and football was fun”

Breakdown of HAF Provision in Cheshire West & Chester 2022



“J C, A boy who started the week very quietly, wasn't particularly communicative and appeared to prefer his own company, often sitting on his own. Initially he was reluctant to join in any of the sporting activities. However, our coach, Molly encouraged him and kept talking with him until he eventually started to participate, this in turn led him to strike up some brand-new friendships. These new friends then brought him out and we started to see a boy light up and be prepared to try anything, with his newfound friends!!”

“Dean, you, and your team should feel so very proud of yourselves in what you have accomplished for the youth group and their families over the summer, it's been outstanding.
I feel so highly I've sent an email to the Council Leader; I thank you so very much, Thought the normal Thursday evenings were so good but this summer has been amazing”

Budget and expenditure

The guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) set out that Local authorities had the flexibility about how they deliver this level of provision to best serve the needs of children and families in their area.

The funding is provided to cover:

- provision of free holiday places
- co-ordination of the programme locally

“Oh, thank you so much! You don’t know how much this will help; I’ve just had to borrow money from the neighbour for electric (mum of 8)”

The DfE recognises there are administrative costs with the setting up and running of the programme, and as such local authorities are able to use up to 10% of their total allocation to cover such costs and at least 90% of the funding to be used on the provision of free holiday club places with food for eligible children. In addition, funding can be used to purchase equipment, (up to a maximum of 2% of the overall programme expenditure).

Cheshire West and Chester received a funding allocation of £1,014,220 for 2022. In November 2022, the DfE indicated that £6million of additional funding would be available across eligible areas that are on track to utilise their allocation. On November 30th it was confirmed that Cheshire West would be entitled to receive an additional £49,650 in this financial year to use for the programme. This funding was utilised as follows:

	Easter	Summer	Winter	
Face-to-face holiday club provision	£142,906.49	£524,039.36	£108,126.83	£775,072.68
Remote holiday club provision	£0.00	£0.00	£83,500.00	£83,500.00
Publicity / communication	£2,466.79	£3,768.00	£3,361.71	£9,596.50
Capital expenditure over £2,500	£0.00	£0.00	£2,799.99	£2,799.99
Management and administration	£30,250.43	£52,091.50	£24,045.07	£106,387.00
Other costs	£6,075.00	£8,600.00	£63,686.28	£78,361.28
TOTAL FOR EACH PROGRAMME	181,699	588,499	285,520	1,055,717

"I have struggled financially, having four children and a single parent, I try my best to give them lots of opportunities, but everything costs so much and I have to be careful with my money. This summer, buddies have been a great support in providing fab activities that all my children have enjoyed"

Working with our Local Authority Partners

The working relationship between our local authority partners has been fundamental to the success of the programme.

The programme has a steering group and partnership board in place. The partnership board provides oversight and financial and quality assurance to the HAF Programme. The board receives updates from the operational steering group, which includes programme leads for HAF delivery and future planning. The board is responsible for making decisions escalated via the steering group, and provides assurance on the delivery model, including ensuring quality and financial control. The partnership board reports to the Cheshire West and Chester Children’s Trust Early Help and Prevention Sub-Group.

The partnership board meets following each HAF delivery period, (Easter, summer, Christmas). This gives opportunity to update on the most recent HAF delivery period, and outline plans for the next HAF programme. The meeting will be used to discuss challenges and opportunities identified by the steering group, and a forum to resolve any issues encountered by the HAF teams.

Memberships will include representatives from:

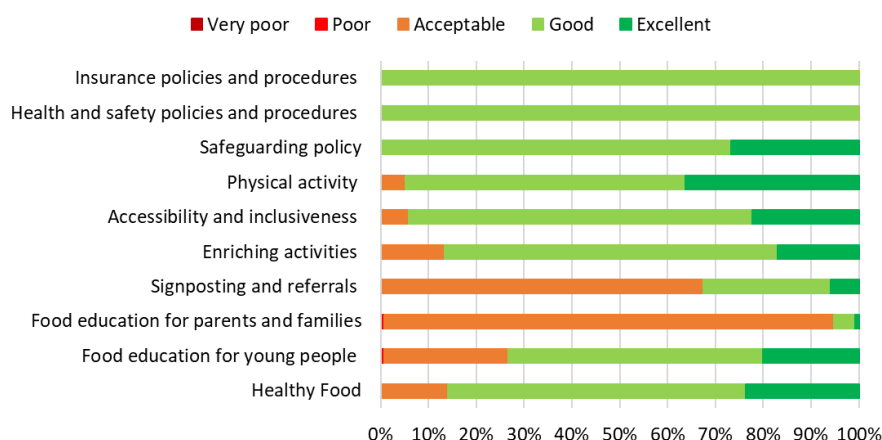
Partnership Board	Steering group
Local Authority (LA) representations for the board included <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director of Childrens Services/senior managers • HAF Programme lead • HAF Project co-ordinator • Public Health • Youth Service • Commissioner SEND • Poverty Truth and Advisory Board (PTAB) • Finance • Insight and intelligence • Edsential CiC HAF Project manager/their HAF Co-ordinator • Brio Leisure CiC • Parent Carer forum • Integrated Care Board • Cheshire West Voluntary Action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LA Programme leads • Senior manager • HAF Project co-ordinator • Public Health • (SEND) Commissioning officer • Youth Service Practice lead • Brio Leisure CiC • Cheshire West Voluntary Action • Cheshire West Food Hub (Changing lives)

Youth Service /Brio Leisure “My nephew JL who attends the youth club received a pass. He and his sister usually go into the river to swim, we explained to her that her brother was given the Northgate pass to stop him from going into the river, we got her, her own pass to go with him and this prevented both the kids going into the river.

CWaC Public Health/Cheshire West Food Hub was able to fund 2500 hampers which was a meal/desert for 4 people, over 2/3 days with recipe card designed by the services Public Health lead. All ingredients were sourced from local supermarkets through the food hub to make the meals, promoted as “Let’s Cook”, so families could cook together.

Quality of provision

Outcome of quality assurance/monitoring visits (2022)



One young lady that attended the "Mindfulness Day" arrived extremely shy and quiet (Parents advised she is suffering with anxiety). She left the session with a big smile on her face and left us a feedback note to say the best part of her day was "making a new friend!". Parents later contacted us to thank us for giving their child that experience and that she came home "Buzzing". We referred parents to an "anxiety support group/help your child" being held at the Centre following week - parents have booked on!

Cheshire West and Chester working alongside Edsential has a robust monitoring framework to ensure HAF Provision is of a high quality and will make unannounced visits to providers. The Framework contains eight sections, each focusing on HAF standard as defined by the DFE:

policy and procedures, physical /enriching activities, food education for parents, carers young people, healthy food being provided, programmes can demonstrate accessibility and inclusiveness also they are confident to signpost and make referrals for our families an example shared by one of our providers.

We are pleased to see that across a range of these factors, there is provision rated as excellent, around physical activity, healthy food and safeguarding policies. These elements are asked within the application process to gather evidence to support the criteria for funding and these are monitored during the provision itself.

The food element of the programme has been key focus and through free training offered to providers, sharing best practice whether through 1-2-1 meetings, provider forums and also encouraging the use of local food providers in the community. Alongside this, food

workbooks designed locally through public health will continue to raise awareness to our young people and families.

All providers were able to demonstrate the level attained was at least acceptable in every criteria and we will continue to work with providers to further improve ratings from this monitoring in future.

Highlights from the 2022 programme

- ✓ Supported over 9,500 young people.
- ✓ Mapping provision across the borough enabled as many young people and families as possible to be reached and to be able to attend provision.
- ✓ Several new providers, community groups and schools joined the programme.
- ✓ Introduction of provider forums and 1-2-1.
- ✓ Partnership work to establish programmes with new providers such as Youth Justice Service, Care Experience Young People and Vivo Care Summer Teen Pilot – Northwich.
- ✓ **2,500** Christmas Let's Cook boxes put together by Cheshire Food Hub volunteers for families to be able to cook together using the ingredients in each box and use recipe cards for future meals – The recipes within boxes and also for the summer “food and drink” activity workbook were designed to support food nutritional education as part of the programme.
- ✓ Westminster Families community group nominated for national HAF Community Award.
- ✓ HAF providers designed and delivered a programme for the young people of the Refugee Project living at a bridging hotel in Cheshire West at short notice over the summer.
- ✓ Edsential and Cheshire West and Chester Council supported providers to be able to arrange/access free training to support their roles, such as food nutritional education sessions delivered by Food Active, with further resources made available to support delivery.
- ✓ Edsential introduced an interactive map for families, young people and professionals for each holiday period on the activities available across the borough
- ✓ Supported the local cost of living programme
- ✓ Increased scrutiny of food and nutrition provided within monitoring visits.

- ✓ Able to support in the purchasing of equipment through HAF Funding for programmes

Case Studies

Chester Football Club Community Trust

Each day, around snack and lunch times, we laid out a table just outside of our main function room with all different kinds of foods. Some standard fruit and vegetables that we knew stereotypically children would enjoy. However, we made sure each day we included a food/food type that was a little different. During the second day of the event, we included a bowl of pickles on the table and nearly all children did not touch it and would often say 'EW!' if we tried to encourage this food. One child named LP), liked pickles and proceeded to tell everybody else about this.

Due to LP being a big character amongst the group, he started walking around the room parading his plate of pickles and showing all the other children how much he enjoyed eating them. Suddenly, more and more children started coming out of their seats and walking to the snack table and asked to try pickles! Some kids enjoyed the pickles and started asking for more and contrastingly some kids did not like them and spat them in the bin. Nevertheless, it was still a fun activity where everyone was trying the food!

This was a great case as it not only shows these young people trying new foods but the power of the social aspect of trying new foods. Due to LP and his big personality, we were able to utilise this experience and involve everyone!

SEND BRIO

"I have 9-year-old twins, one of my twins has autism and learning difficulties. We find it hard to get out as a family and days out are normally cut short because of my son Larry can't cope. Sometimes we just can't afford to pay for an activity just to have to leave shortly after starting. Opportunities like this take a big weight off our shoulders. It also gives my boys experiences together that they wouldn't get in a normal environment. The fact that it's a SEN session will ensure that Larry is calmer. It also gives me an opportunity to be with other families in a similar situation. Being an SEN parent can be very lonely and hard. To be able to experience the activity as a family is a lifeline especially for my other son Logan who is a young carer for Larry. We really would be very isolated without this wonderful service provided".

"The SEN sessions have been invaluable for me and my son. He is 4 and has autism. It's been wonderful to meet families in similar situations and have an environment that is suitable for my son. AJ and Jo were wonderful and welcoming, thank you"

Youth service

We were able to reach as many children and young people as we had hope and more. We managed to reach our young people who attend Lache Youth Café but also we were able to reach the younger children within the community, by providing our Pop Up events on a Wednesday evening, along with joining up with Sanctuary Housing and St Marks Church

youth club on a Friday evening for their young people aged between 7 years old to 11 years old (Primary School). As well as providing the community with two family fun days.

Brio passes that we had provided for the young people were absolutely amazing, and such a great success. The young people loved them and had nothing but positive feedback regarding these. That it allowed them to do something on their terms which was free and stopped them from swimming in Chester River.

Our last two pop up events on Sycamore Field, these went well as it allowed us to engage more with the local community and provide activities for young people. The young people enjoyed being given prizes for participating, having food that they could choose and doing arts and crafts. We had parents approaching us and praising the event and saying that it has had a positive impact on the community during the summer and they have seen a change in the young people's behaviour.

Storyhouse

Within the Arts Award format, the young people on our 2022 summer club explored Storyhouse and the art within (and outside) of it. Many lovely comments feature with their logbooks developed to go alongside their exploration. One particularly nice entry read "I improved my oratory skills and built up my confidence. I enjoyed all of it, especially going to the play. I learnt that art can be anything and everything."

"I want to share my drama with others because I want to make people happy."

Also, the majority of young people over the 2 weeks were seemingly introduced to hummus for the first time! Served alongside sticks of carrot and cucumber by our wonderful kitchen, I was perplexed by the chorused claims of 'it's spicy' and initially assumed the young people were mistaken. As is often the case, it was me who was wrong – the hummus was indeed a bit spicy (harissa, I think?!) and proved to be a hit with some (not all!)

Outcomes and impact: Young people who previously haven't had access to the arts were given the opportunity to explore a variety of arts forms and visit a professional performance and meet a host of professionals, hopefully opening their eyes to potential avenues for them to explore in the future, both personally and professionally. It isn't just actors that work in a theatre!

Thank you

We would like to say a massive thank you to all who contributed and made our 2022 programme a success.



Action Transport Theatre
Ash Tree day Nursery
Avenue Services
AW Coaching
Barnton Football Club
Best of Us Cheshire
Bishop Wilson Primary School
Blacon Children's Centre
Bridge Community Gardens
Central Cheshire Buddy Scheme
CEPD
Charles Darwin Community Primary School
Cheshire Young Carers
Chester Blue Coat CE Primary School
Chester FC Community Trust
Chester Swimming Association
Chester Zoo
Christleton High School
Climbing Hut
Dandelions Day Nursery
Darnhall Primary School
Dee Point Primary School
Dee Point Primary School - acting on behalf of Blacon Education Village
Dorin Park School & Specialist SEN College
Ellesmere Port Catholic High School
Endorphins
Farndon Primary School
Frodsham Youth Club
GGO community Group
Golfstarz
Grange Community Nursery & Primary School
Helsby Community Sports Club
HETTY Nursery
Highfield Community Primary School
Huntington Community Primary School
HYPE Merseyside - Vauxhaul Sports Club
Impulse Dance Studio
J H Godwin Primary School
Kiddiecare Day Nursery Ltd

Little Actors
LIVE
Majestic Academy of Performing Arts
Malpas Young Peoples Centre
Maple Grove School
Mill View Primary School
Minerva Arts
Multiflex Ross
Multiflex Sports
Multiflex SS
Neston Primary School
NWSE
Peninsula Football Coaching @ Rivacre
Peoples Pantry - Stanney Grange Community Centre
PES - Elton
Pinewood
Portside Children Centre
Queen's Park High School
Rivaca Primary School
Rudheath and Witton Together (RWT)
S4YC
Save the family
SGsports
SPACE
SR Sports Ltd
St Chads CE Primary School
St Clare's Primary School
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
St Luke's Catholic Primary School
St Nicholas Catholic High School
St Werburgh's Primary School
St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School
Stanlaw Abbey Children's Centre
Striker Academy Foundation CIC
Summer Teen Pilot - Northwich TC
Superstars holiday Club Limited
Sutton Green Primary School
Tarpорley Church of England Primary

Tarvin Pre-School & Day Nursery (Adventure Camp)
The Acorns Primary and Nursery School
The Arches Community Primary School
The Boaty Theatre Company
The Endorphins Group
The Lache Primary School
The Whitby High School
Tree House @ Kingsley Community Primary & Nursery School
UK Storyhouse Ltd
Upton Westlea Primary
Upton Westlea Primary School
Vara Education
Vara sports
Victoria Road Primary School
Weaverham Primary School
Westminster Families Community Group
Whitby Heath Primary School
William Stockton Community Primary School
Winnington Rugby Club
Winsford Youth & Community Forum
Woodlands Primary School



Delivered in partnership with Edsential CIC, Brio Leisure, Cheshire West Voluntary Action, Cheshire