

Worcestershire HAF Annual Report 2023 to 2024

Introduction

The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme is a Department for Education (DfE) funded initiative. The Programme was initially trialled in 2018 and success saw the programme expand across the whole of England to every Local Authority from 2021.

Since 2022, LAs have provided 10.7 million HAF days to children and young people across the country, with year-on-year expansion ensuring families in most need can access school holiday club provision for their children and young people.

HAF provides:

- Enriching, engaging activities that operate to a minimum number of hours & sessions, supporting family employment.
- Healthy, nutritious meals with educational value, encouraging children and young people to eat well.
- Opportunities for children and young people to have fun, socialise and try new experiences within a safe setting.
- Encouragement for children and young people to develop their skills or interests, consider future aspirations through a varied programme of activities that may support career development.

The Aim of HAF

The aim of the programme is to reduce the pressure for families during school holidays, by offering free access to a wide range of clubs that deliver exciting, engaging and varied programmes alongside nutritional meals and further family support – that may include signposting to other council services, such as financial advice, accessing SEND support, safeguarding or other children's services.

Research has shown that children from low-income families are:

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

In response to this, the DfE established the HAF programme to ensure children and young people countrywide can:

- Maintain a healthy level of physical activity in a fun, stimulating environment
- Receive healthy, nutritious meals that may otherwise be missed where low-income households may be struggling with cost of living
- Make new friends, try new activities, develop new skills and interests
- Improve wellbeing and social confidence
- Return to school feeling energised, focussed and engaged for continued learning

Worcestershire's Approach

Worcestershire Children's services appointed Sutton Croft as the service provider to manage and run the HAF programme for the county from summer 2023.

Worcestershire HAF is primarily aimed at children and young people between the ages of 5-16, in receipt of benefits-related Free School Meals (FSM). There is some limited flexibility in the programme guidelines to offer places to other vulnerable cohorts including families considered to be 'just about managing', young carers and looked after children (LAC)

Our HAF programme has significantly grown since the start of the initiative and works collaboratively with holiday club providers, schools, charities, community groups, youth groups, family hubs, local SEND offer teams and other organisations to offer an inclusive, varied and flexible programme for eligible children.

With a confirmed government grant of £1,647,370 for 2023, our joint partnership allowed for a dedicated team to deliver the high standards of the HAF programme – meeting family needs, responding to parent/carer/CYP feedback positively and achieving key programme targets.

Through provision mapping, identifying need, careful planning and attention to quality assurance monitoring, Worcestershire HAF offers a full programme of activities that caters to a wide range of interests whilst supporting healthy lifestyles through physical activity and nourishing meals.

Our offer continues to develop and grow, shaped by our family and provider feedback, ever changing interests and trends for activities and new provisions and developments across the county. We work with a core group of committed providers – many of whom have been with the HAF programme since inception. Through their local and community knowledge of our families, schools and societal issues or concerns that our children and young people face, we're able to design the HAF provision for the best possible outcomes, together.

2023 Highlights

- £1,647,370 spent on face-to-face provision
- 35,608 places offered
- Activities offered in 2023 include drama, cricket, arts and crafts, dance, forest school, kayaking, football, mindfulness, swimming, life skills, horse riding, and team building

Easter 2023

- £244,390 spent on face-to-face provision
- 44 holiday club providers
- 8378 holiday club places offered
- 86% of places offered were attended
- 6041 places attended by primary-aged children
- 1164 places attended by secondary-aged children
- 1.6 average days attended
- 4515 unique children supported by HAF

- 825 children with SEND supported by HAF
- 84% of children were primary-aged
- 16% of children were secondary-aged

Summer 2023

- £970,480 spent on face-to-face provision
- 69 holiday club providers
- 20,823 holiday club places offered
- 83% of places offered were attended
- 14379 places attended by primary-aged children
- 2945 places attended by secondary-aged children
- 2.6 average days attended
- 6724 unique children supported by HAF
- 1479 children with SEND supported by HAF
- 83% of children were primary-aged
- 17% of children were secondary-aged

Winter 2023

- £238,741 spent on face-to-face provision
- 47 holiday club providers
- 6407 holiday club places offered
- 83% of places offered were attended
- 3540 places attended by primary-aged children
- 589 places attended by secondary-aged children
- 1.8 average days attended
- 2300 unique children supported by HAF
- 675 children with SEND supported by HAF
- 87% of children were primary-aged
- 13% of children were secondary-aged

How We Deliver HAF

Worcestershire's HAF programme is determined by two key factors – FSM data and parent/carer/Child and young person feedback.

Provision mapping enables us to plot potential providers against the highest areas of FSM, to ensure the spread and reach of all provision meets with the local needs of those accessing. Our heat maps lead our review of geographical reach alongside quality of provision, number of places available, type of activities offered, support for SEND families and other target groups, plus value for money and are regularly reviewed with as part of the delivery model.

Feedback Monitoring

Parent/carer/child and young person feedback surveys issued after each holiday period give significant insight into the success of HAF delivery – we're able to understand what works, what doesn't and learn from our findings to shape the next holiday delivery and implement improvements measures where necessary. In particular, we ask our families to rate the range of provision on offer, including type of activities, location and accessibility and quality of provision, to include ease of booking, communication with the HAF team and providers, quality of provision staffing, and meals offered.

This also assists our longer-term objectives and supports us in establishing strong community links and influence, with a focus on HAF legacy and sustainability for youth provision across the county.

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, we work closely with our community partners to ensure our HAF offer is diverse and inclusive of a wide range of needs for children and young people across Worcestershire.

You Said, We Did

In response to parent/carer and child and young person feedback, we share this learning with the steering group and key stakeholders, to inform and determine our objectives for each holiday period.

We have expanded provision in rural areas to reduce isolation risk, there has been an increase in family-friendly activity programmes to boost accessibility and support connecting families to wider support agencies in the community. We have increased the number of providers able to support children with SEND including specialist SEND. We have worked on a focused plan with youth groups to provide a more bespoke teenage offer, recognising their needs are different to young children, whilst maintaining the HAF values and bolstering commitment to the activities.

Quality Assurance

We use the DfE quality framework to ensure all of our partners deliver provision that meets, or exceeds, standards. Careful monitoring, site visits by the HAF team and self-assessment ratings against the framework through provider reporting safeguards our HAF values and ensures the highest standards of care, safety and quality are achieved for all families throughout.

All holiday club providers must self-assess at the end of each holiday period against quality standards. Key quality standards, with the winter 2023 average provider rating for each standard are listed below:

- The food offer quality standard was rated excellent
- The signposting and referrals quality standard was rated excellent
- The accessibility and inclusion quality standard was rated good
- The physical activity quality standard was rated good

- The enriching activity quality standard was rated good

Survey Snapshot

The results listed below are from the winter 2023 parent/carer feedback survey:

- 92% of parent/carers rated the winter HAF programme as Excellent, Very Good, or Good
- 95% of parent/carers said their child or children enjoyed HAF activities
- 94% of parent/carers rated the staff at winter HAF activities as Excellent, Very Good, or Good
- 97% of parent/carers asked at winter would use HAF again in the future
- 97% of parent/carers asked at winter would recommend HAF to other eligible families

Case Study: Aidan and Worcestershire Cricket Foundation

The following case study was written by Worcestershire Cricket Foundation.

Our HAF multi-sports programme is a fantastic way to engage with children and young people through sport, providing exit routes for them to succeed.

We deliver a lot of cricket in schools that have high % FSM through our chance to shine funding that we receive through our NGB. This funding in 2023 has allowed us to deliver in both Oasis Warndon and Great Malvern, both schools are our HAF host venues. This means that we have a direct line to market to high % FSM children through the relationships we build with the schools. The HAF programme then runs, and we engage with participants and parents, giving them information about the FREE local cricket sessions we have on offer. Through the above process we discovered Aidan.

Aidan is 10 years old and has ADHD. Aidan is one of HAF participants that came to camp and fell in love with cricket after playing it one day at camp. He attended one of our free community cricket programmes after mum received information from a coach at sign out and never looked back. Through this pathway we have now identified a cricket club for Aidan to play at, which he does regularly. Playing and training and least two times a week with Old Elizabethans Cricket Club.

Aidan has documented how playing cricket had helped with his ADHD and has really helped him to calm down. Worcestershire Cricket have supported Aidan with bursary funding at his local club to cover sign up costs, provided support with meeting the club and getting to know the cricket landscape, and provided Aidan with free hardball cricket equipment. We have also offered Aidan fully funded places on our softball cricket camps this summer, which he has attended and met the New Zealand cricket team! Without HAF Worcestershire Cricket's and Aidan's paths may never have crossed, now he's telling me he wants to be a professional cricketer and play at New Road!

Case Study: Happy Healthy Kidz

The following case study was written by Happy Healthy Kidz.

I met this child on the first day of the HAF programme at our St Clement's Primary School site. The child was very nervous and was reluctant to leave her mother for the day, and after speaking with the parent I discovered that the child had issues with anxiety and mentioned that the child gets nervous in new environments and is rarely willing to join in new activities. Our first steps as a team were to introduce ourselves one by one, this giving the child a chance to know some names and faces, and to reassure them that if they have any issues, concerns, or worries to let one of the staff members know. We then asked another child on the programme if they would be okay to buddy up with the nervous child, again this giving them someone to feel comfortable with, in the overall aim of comforting the child and encouraging them to give the HAF programme a chance.

On day 3 and 4 we noticed a clear difference with the child- they were willing to join in more activities, speak to a few more children and overall came across very comfortable in the environment. We could clearly see a change from meeting them at the start of day 1 - seeing a nervous, anxious child, to then seeing a more confident, open child at the end.

We could clearly see a change in the child's approach to the environment from day 1 to day 4. I feel the support from the coaches was a positive move, and the buddy support was also very helpful. One way of measuring the success of our approach, on day 1 and 2 the child wouldn't say good morning/hello, however on day 3 and 4 the child came to us first to say hello – something simple but also great to see the change in their approach to the programme. The parent also commented on the change on their child's attitude toward the HAF programme, saying that towards the end its all they would talk about, and wanted to go back as soon as they could.

The parent said 'It was really reassuring to know that my child was in a safe place - but more importantly - a place where they are looked after with a team that were aware of the challenges and were prepared to support each one of them. It was great to see the support given to my child specifically and was amazing to see when I picked her up, she wouldn't stop talking about the day and couldn't wait to go back.'

The child said 'At the start of the week I was really scared and didn't want to get out of the car and leave mummy. But I really enjoyed the games we played, and I liked my new friend. I want to come back next time.'

Parent Feedback

The following quotes are from children and parents of children who attended HAF in 2023:

- 'I've had so much fun – I loved everything! Maybe the water sports were my favourite, but I also really enjoyed forest school and pony riding.'
- 'This is such a great thing to do - it keeps the kids active and the parents that can't afford extra activities not left feeling guilty after the school holidays.'
- 'He is a young carer for his younger brother who has intellectual and physical disabilities, so it was great for him to get some respite from his caring role and in a happy place for him. He really enjoyed the kickboxing and gymnastics.'
- 'It's just fabulous that children can experience such a wide variety of clubs - my daughter has had a wonderful time. All staff were excellent towards my daughter'

- Without this programme my children wouldn't have adequate childcare. Also, the offerings give them opportunity to join in groups I otherwise couldn't afford e.g. horse riding.'
- 'HAF gives my children much needed fun and freedom away from daily pressures and financial struggles. They get to be kids whilst we go to work.'

Marketing and Communications

Throughout 2023 we utilised a multi-pronged communications strategy to promote HAF, with a focus on targeting less-engaged audience segments.

Schools can be disengaged through confusion and misunderstanding of the HAF programme. We aimed to combat this through email bulletins, offering a responsive communication channel and providing HAF information in easily digestible formats.

Ensuring their understanding of HAF is key to accessing more families in need. We also provided schools with marketing packs for sharing with their families and offer site visits to further inform on the HAF programme and provide marketing materials or hand outs where possible.

For families who may otherwise have been unaware of HAF offers, we use in-person customer outreach through community events. This includes introducing the HAF programme to potential users, sharing flyers, offering guidance for signing up and more. More generally, to inform and remind families about HAF, we produced flyers, social media posts, and programme brochures.

Expenditure

For 2023 HAF, Worcestershire Children First (WCF) received a grant of £1,647,370.00 from the Department of Education. This was primarily disseminated directly to holiday activity providers for face-to-face provision.

The table below shows the expenditure breakdown of this year's grant. No additional funding from external sources was spent on HAF.

Expenditure	Amount
Face-to-face holiday club provision (including provider costs, holiday club staff, venue costs, activity costs, food/meal costs and other costs directly associated with the provision of free holiday club places directly funded through the HAF programme)	£1,453,617
Remote holiday club provision	N/A
Publicising the scheme to eligible families and other communications	£18,790
Capital expenditure (e.g., catering or sports equipment for clubs)	N/A
Management and administration of the programme by the LA	£148,264
Other costs (e.g., translations, transport, provider staff training, booking systems etc)	£26,699
Total expenditure	£1,647,370

Partners

With the greatest of thanks to all of our providers (listed below) who delivered the HAF programme in 2023 – thank you for your continued support, understanding and dedication to delivering the best provision possible for our families across Worcestershire.

ACTIVE DISCOVERY CAMPS
ACTIVE LIVES ACTIVE COMMUNITIES CIC
ACTIVE YOUTH OUTREACH SERVICES
ALL SORTS OF PERFORMING ARTS
ARROW VALE YOUTH CENTRE
ASPIRE ACTIVE CAMPS
AVONCROFT
BDHT
BIRCHENSALE MIDDLE SCHOOL
BOUGHTON PARK LAWN TENNIS CLUB
BROMSGROVE DISTRICT & REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCILS
BROMSGROVE IDC
BSLC
BUILDING BRIDGES
CHADDESLEY CORBETT ENDOWED PRIMARY SCHOOL
CONFI-KIDS HOLIDAY CLUB
EMPOWER ACTIVE CIC
ENERGISE LTD
EVESHAM ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND ASSOCIATION
FIT4SPORT
FOREST FAMILIES
FREEDOM LEISURE
GATEWAY TO FMA LTD
GLOVERSPIECE MINI FARM
HAPPY HEALTHY KIDZ
HEART OF ENGLAND FOREST
HOLY REDEEMER
JUST CAMPS LTD
KA KITS ACADEMY
KDYT
KINGSLEIGHS EQUINE CENTRE
KITSUNE MARTIAL ARTS
LITTLE OAKS PRESCHOOL/BIG OAKS HAF HOLIDAY CLUB
MALVERN CUBE SPECIAL PROJECTS
MINDFULLY EMPOWERED
MUSEUMS WORCESTERSHIRE
NORTHLEIGH
OASIS COMMUNITY HUB
OFFMORE PRIMARY SCHOOL
P&E SPORTS CIC

PAL FITNESS & EDUCATION
PAMPERED PONIES
PERDISWELL YOUNG PEOPLE'S LEISURE CLUB
PERSHORE RIVERSIDE YOUTH CENTRE
RB GYM & SPORT
REDDITCH UTD
REDGATE SPORTS
REACH
RIGBY HALL
RUBICON LEISURE
RYCE
SHAUN PAUL DANCE ACADEMY
SHINE OUT OF SCHOOLS CLUBS
ST BARNABAS CE PRIMARY SCHOOL
SUNFLOWERS HOLIDAY CLUB
THE BUGS GROUP
THE FOOTBALL FUN FACTORY
THE HUB
THE WORLD OUTSIDE
UNIVERSITY OF WORCESTER
WORCESTER COMMUNITY TRUST
WORCESTER SNOEZELEN
WORCESTER THEATRES
WORCESTERSHIRE CRICKET
YMCA WORCESTERSHIRE
YOUR IDEAS
YSS WORCESTERSHIRE YOUNG CARERS
WYRE FOREST SWIM CLUB