

HAF 2023-24 Local Authority Annual Report

Section 1 - LA details

Which local authority is this report about?

Kent

Section 2 – Highlights

Funding

In 2023-2024 we spent **£4,915,905.02** on the HAF Programme. This was mainly spent on direct delivery of activities across the three holidays and some for administration and organisation of the HAF Programme (within the allowance of 10% of the overall budget).

Number of Children/Young People

The majority of our delivery partners are made up of schools, charities, community groups, sports organisations and leisure centres,

Easter 2023

We had **120** Programmes deliver over the Easter holidays, providing **5216** places, with **4955** eligible children and young people taking up a place.

Summer 2023

For this holiday we had **146** Programmes deliver through our main application process, providing **5421** places and **10,247** individual children accessing at least one day of a HAF Programme. For this holiday, we have supported Kent County Council (KCC) Youth Services, Commissioned Youth and short breaks in providing the HAF Programme through their existing services.

KCC Open Access- **2124** places offered.

KCC Commissioned services- **2175** places offered.

Short Breaks – **10** places offered.

Christmas 2023

113 Programmes delivered **4147** places (a place is generally 4 days a week, for one week). **4765** children and young people accessed at least one HAF Programme place. All

Programmes had the opportunity to apply for additional funding for an extra activity and/or to provide additional food hampers for children/young people attending.

KCC Open Access and commissioned services delivered an additional **71** Programmes, these opportunities saw **1545** children and young people accesses a HAF Programme place.

Steering Group

Our steering group is made up of representatives from KCC, Early Years and Childcare Service, Safeguarding, Schools, Early Help, Early Years and Childcare settings, the voluntary sector and Public Health.

Key Strategies for 2023-24

Our focus for this year was to develop more HAF Programme places and opportunities for children of secondary age and those with a Special Education Need and Disability (SEND).

Section 3 – Children and families feedback

The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme [website](#) is live and was updated with information for 2024.

The HAF Programme Kent has a [Facebook page](#).

Link to our promotional video on the KCC web pages <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/free-school-meals>

Feedback from children and families

- R has really enjoyed attending the Summer Scheme. Having a routine in place has been really beneficial for him as well as an opportunity to be independent by making his way to and from school.
- Really helped to settle her. To focus. To have some routine and familiarity.
- He enjoyed it so much he asked to attend a second week. It meant he made new friends and got exercise each day he was there.
- My son has really enjoyed the activities and it had helped him to transition in September not knowing any other peers.
- He seems much more excited about starting in September and has made so many new friends which is just amazing. It gave him some time in his new environment, and he seems more independent already.
- Helped her to make new friendships. She was worried about starting in September prior to the Summer Scheme and now she cannot wait to start.
- She loved going to the summer holiday scheme, she enjoyed the more creative stuff especially and liked her bit of freedom from her brother she also enjoyed making her own subway for lunch.
- Minimised meltdowns from lack of routine and missing school. Freed up time to spend with another child on one to one basis.
- It was lovely for my child to explore his secondary school in his own time.

- It has lifted some of the stress of providing something to do to fill the time and was reassuring to know she had somewhere to go that was free and safe but also enabling the formation of new friendships and gaining familiarity with the adults and school building. I also liked that as there was availability, we could book additional sessions.
- We had the opportunity to work with one young person in particular who was in Y6 and transitioning in September to Y7. On the first day, this young person was incredibly anxious, shy, didn't want to come in, was almost attached to her mum and was really hesitant about getting involved. Mum signed her up to all 4 weeks to try and encourage her to get to know the school, meet some new people and have some fun outside the house. As the weeks progressed, the young person really came out of her shell and began to get involved in more and more activities, began talking to some of the other young people there and naturally putting herself into groups for activities.
- It has been lovely for me and G for children to approach us and shout our names and give us a hug because they know us from HAF - so many positive relationships are built which set the children up to feel secure, confident and happy. Children in class in particular have not stopped talking about it and the fun they had and daily I am being asked when the next club is. Some children have been suggesting activities we can do in class based on the activities that were set up in HAF. Also, I would like to say both my granddaughters attended HAF and both had such a positive, happy time and I was amazed at their confidence, happiness and how secure they felt, I never really saw them which was amazing.
- We were approached by a family that had previously struggled to find a HAF placement for their son who has a high level of SEND. We invited the parent and child along to a previous scheme to meet with them, let them see the environments, meet the staff and have a discussion about what we may be able to offer, to make sure we could meet the child's needs. He was a flight risk, non-verbal, no understanding of danger or boundaries and needed personal care. With the help of additional HAF SEND funding we were able to provide one to one support for the child and we worked with the school to make sure the site was secure at all times. The child attended all 11 sessions booked with us and both parents were amazed at how well he settled. They had observed him become more vocal, try different foods and his sleep routine improved during his time with us.
- XXXX has an EHCP at school as she has ADHD, she's under SEN supervisions at school and the F51 holiday club has been the most amazing confidence builder for her. My daughter attended the club and during this time I have seen such a massive improvement in her Mental Health and well-being. Before starting she was feeling lonely and isolated as she struggles to make friends, by the end she has made some friends for life and the staff at F51 have had a tremendous impact on her outlook at skills skateboarding.
- Another great time was had by all 5 of my children, as a single dad life is not easy for us, this holiday camp gives me peace of mind and provides much more than just a fun day, the manager and staff listen and support my children and are always so

friendly, nothing is too much trouble, my eldest daughter is really struggling mentally and the staff here have really helped her, they got to know what she likes and provided activities to engage her, it really made her feel valued and she's not stopped smiling and talking about it !! It is a real lifeline,

- S (14) - This is amazing. I never get food like this and now I can have it all week, and I get to meet up with my mates too.
- K (14) - You guys are legends. We struggle a bit at home and you've looked after me and my brothers all week.
- D (10) - Thank you. My sister did this thing at her school, but it wasn't at my school. So I'm really happy I could come here with you, and it's fun here with the youth club team. And thank you for my bag of food. I have a big family and my Mum will be so happy.
- O (12) - I like cooking and I've learnt how to cook new food, like fajitas. We got to eat really nice food each day and I loved the banoffee pie too. I also feel safe here because I know the adults.
- G (14) - I came each day with my brother and we stayed all day. Food was so tasty and it was fun doing the competitions and games too.
- B (12) - Me and my mates all came when we found out about it because it's alright here and then we got to eat proper nice food each day, which I ate as much as I could.
- S (13) - I came from Rushenden coz my friend's said you guys were alright and doing food and stuff. Food is way nicer than I thought it was gonna be. You guys (Youth Team) are cool too and get on with everyone.
- T (14) - Thanks for doing this, and nice one for the bag of food.
- A (15) - This is a good place for me. I liked having hot food and I felt quite relaxed and normally I struggle with busy places.
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Section 4 - Food

We required that all HAF Programmes provided one hot nutritious meal a day. Following feedback, we agreed that partners could look at a combination of hot and cold meals across the week and particularly where trips were planned and weather conditions did not suit a hot meal. However, the expectation was to offer mainly hot meals and that any other combination should still be a full meal.

The meals were delivered in a combination of ways, with some cooking onsite, some using third party caterers, some utilising school catering companies and some where the children/young people were fully involved with food preparation.

Feedback and observations from visits have told us that there are children and families who still prefer a packed lunch option and/or supplying their own food. A few HAF Programmes report that they have seen higher levels of leftover food, as a hot meal is not always the preferred option. While we will continue to promote the hot option, we also see there needs to be flexibility in the approach of how/what meals are provided.

Section 5 – Enriching Activities

All HAF Programmes are asked to provide varied and engaging enrichment activities. Types of activities that Programmes have provided have included: -

- Tabletop activities
- Arts and craft
- Horse riding
- Helicopter rides (offered by one partner who has multiple sites)
- Music workshops
- Drama
- Outdoor activities
- Forest school
- Sailing
- Wall climbing
- Storytelling
- Outdoor cooking
- Team building activities
- Yoga
- Mindfulness/wellbeing activities
- Games
- IT based games and activities
- Pool
- Air Hockey

Over summer and Christmas 2023 we were able to make some of the funding available for HAF Programmes to apply for and deliver additional enrichment activities for the children and young people.

These activities included: -

- Arts and craft activities
- Trips to the seaside
- Theme Park trip
- Days out to local attractions
- Music workshops
- Bowling
- Cinema trip
- Workshops
- Reptiles/animal visits
- Inflatables onsite/offsite
- Cooking classes
- Laser tag
- Wall climbing
- Pantomime trips or visiting pantomimes
- Christmas themed activities

The varying range of enrichment activities was a strength of our HAF Programmes in Kent. We had different types of organisations offering a range of experiences and this was generally the area we could see received the most positive feedback from children and their families.

Section 6 – Physical Activities

All HAF Programmes are expected to deliver physical activities appropriate to the age range and needs of the children they cater for and in line with the current physical activity guidelines. They detail through their initial application how they are going to deliver this aspect and this was then evaluated through monitoring and visits.

The types of physical activity that was offered included the following: -

- Team sports
- Swimming
- Sailing and water sports
- Wall climbing
- Forest school activities
- Bike riding
- Nature walks
- Dodge Ball (very popular)
- Football
- Inflatables
- Tennis
- Volleyball
- Cricket
- Trim trails
- Trampolining
- Dance
- Yoga
- Wake Up and Shake Up sessions
- Circus Skills
- Horse riding
- Street Football

This was a strongly delivered element across the HAF Programmes, with creative and new ideas implemented by some Programmes, to encourage children and young people to be more active.

Section 7 – Nutritional Education and the promotion of healthy living/lifestyles

All the HAF Programmes were expected to deliver activities to educate participants about nutrition. The ways in which these were delivered varied across the Programmes and included some of the following:

- Planned session with children and families about nutrition and healthy choices
- Cooking activities that included discussions about nutrition
- Physical activities to teach about health, wellbeing and nutrition
- Weblinks to information and activities, leaflets and information about recipes and healthy choices.
- Arts and craft activities that were focused on healthy choices

Families were involved in the HAF Programme in a number of ways and the level of activities available to them, varied across the county.

Activities included:

- Receiving information and links to nutrition advice, healthy lifestyles and support networks
- Being invited into Programmes to share activities with their children
- Invited to a cooking activity and sharing a meal with their children
- Shared breakfast times with their children and Programme team members.

We hope that children and young people who attended the HAF Programme have a better understanding of healthy choices and nutrition and that where they have attended a Programme across the whole year, they have had more opportunity to be immersed in the activities and experiences and this will help them have a better understanding of how to develop and sustain a healthy lifestyle. Feedback tells us that children and young people enjoyed their experiences and wanted to go back to Programmes to meet with friends, have new experiences and re-visit activities they have enjoyed.

Section 8 – Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND)

We require all of the HAF Programmes to be inclusive and to work with families to meet the needs of their children. In Kent and in conjunction with the Early Years and Childcare Service's Equality and Inclusion Team we created a HAF Programme inclusion webinar and audit tool to support all HAF Programmes with reviewing the practice, environment and training needs. We also provided a template 'All About Me' form for Programmes to share with families and gather key information about how they can best support a child's needs.

In addition to the main funding, HAF Programme partners could apply for extra funding to support children who had an Education Health and Care Plan in receipt of High Needs Funding to access their activities. This allowed some programmes to employ more staff/resources to support access and engagement.

This year we provided funding to the KCC Short Breaks Service, to support them in offering more families access to activities and experiences and we also funded KCC Open Access and Commissioned Youth Services, to support them in offering specific groups/activities for children with SEND and expand their offer to support more children/young people.

To ensure all partners were delivering an inclusive and accessible HAF Programme, we evaluated practice and quality through a range of methods. These included visits, written feedback from partners on their delivery, feedback from families and other organisations. All Programme partners have to detail in their application how they are going to meet the needs of children and detail what changes they may need to make.

We have a number of HAF Programmes who are highly skilled and experienced in working with children with SEND and their families. The types of high quality practices they put in place include,

- Contact with the family early on in the booking process, to ensure there is time to plan for the child's attendance and correct support is in place,
- Use of the 'All About Me' form,
- Working closely with the child's school
- Employing school based staff to work in the Programme and offer continuity of care and support for the child and family.

Feedback shared by HAF Programme parts which demonstrates the impact on children with SEND and their families.

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The child attended all 11 sessions booked with us and both parents were amazed at how well he settled. They had observed him become more vocal, try different foods and his sleep routine improved during his time with us.

While we feel that the majority of families had a positive experience of the HAF Programme, we did still receive feedback from families who were not able to find a Programme in their area that could meet the needs of their child. We plan to do some targeted work with partners, special schools and specialist organisations to provide more SEND specific Programmes across the county.

Section 9 – Key challenges

Easter 2023 was the first holiday we are using the sliding scale of paying on levels of bookings and levels of attendance. We predicted that this would see some decrease of spend for direct payments to partners, and this was the case for some partners. We will continue to evaluate this and adjust budgets accordingly. However, it has meant that funding has been directed more at places attended and less at vacant/non attended places. We recognise that some partners had higher levels of non-attendees than others and through the data analysis of previous holidays, levels of free school meals in the area and other local factors such as types of activities and distance travelled, we cap numbers where appropriate.

At Christmas 2023 a number of our schools finished later in the term, which meant that families did not always have the option to book their 4 days and this may have impacted booking levels.

While we have been able to offer more dedicated places for children with SEND and those of secondary school age, this is still an area for development which will continue to plan for. The links with KCC services has been very positive and opened up opportunities for children, young people and their families.

Due to the size of Kent and the diversity of the geographical locations and communities, we have seen areas of the County that still need more provision and/or a different approach to accessing places. This could be transport links and/or review of the delivery models.

Section 10 – Marketing and Communication?

We have used a range of methods to market the HAF Programme and communicate with families, schools, colleagues and partners. We have a planned strategy that includes.

HAF Programme partners

- Regular newsletters

- Network meetings held between each holiday period.
- Website page that includes details on the application process and links to key organisations and support
- Roller banners, flyers and fence banners
- Social media page
- Email and phone support.

We find that our HAF Programme partner network meetings are well attended and this year we introduced an additional drop in session for partners to discuss their individual Programmes needs and questions. The roller and fence banners have supported Programmes to advertise in their communities and spread the word of the HAF Programme.

Families

- Dedicated page on the HAF Programme website
- EVouchers sent to eligible families via the contracted external booking system.
- Social media advertising
- Information sent to schools to share with their eligible families.
- Links with other organisations who work with families, to ensure the message is shared.
- Social workers and early help workers expected to discuss with their families and encourage attendance.

We receive contact from families on the lead up to holidays asking about available activities, support with booking and eligibility questions. These questions have helped up shape our website information, social media posting and inform what we share with schools to support families.

Schools

- Letters and flyers set to each school on the lead up to each holiday, with details about the HAF Programme, social media support and information for eligible families.
- Dedicated page on the HAF Programme website

This year schools have had the opportunity to automate the sending of the EVouchers to eligible families. We have had a high take up of this service and it has ensured families receive their EVoucher early on and have more time to book activities. Feedback is that this is well received by schools.

Section 11 – Additional resources, partnerships and aligning with other priorities

As a Local Authority we did not access any additional funding to support the HAF Programme. However, some individual Programme partners did partnership with local supermarkets, businesses, charities to support their delivery of the HAF Programme. These partnerships included the donation of fruit, vegetables, food, resources, experiences, support and advice. Through our regular communication strategies, we encourage all HAF Programme partners to reach out to local organisations to ask if they can support them and/or donate resources. We also strongly encourage all partners to link with local charities and organisations who already support families in their community, in order to provide more streamlined support, sustainability and joined up working for shared goals.

The increased work with Open Access and Youth services has allowed more children and young people to access activities and experiences in their community and expanded the reach for these already established services and support networks.