



HAF 2024-25 Local Authority Annual Report

Section 1 - LA details

Kent

Section 2 – Highlights

Funding

In 2024-2025 we spent **£5,257,888.11** on the Holiday Activities and Food (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

Our delivery partners are made up of schools, charities, community groups, sports organisations, leisure centres, early years and childcare providers and Kent County Council services.

Easter 2024

139 Programmes delivered over the Easter holidays, providing **17,064** places, with **6,564** eligible children and young people taking up a place. **13%** of attendees were of secondary age and **33%** had SEND.

Summer 2024

For this holiday we had **164** Programmes deliver activities, providing **89,593** places and with **14,886** individual children accessing at least one day of a HAF Programme. **22%** of attendees were of secondary school age and **34%** had SEND.

Christmas 2024

115 Programmes delivered **14,208** places. **6,313** children and young people accessed at least one HAF Programme place. **24%** of attendees were of secondary age and **31%** had SEND.

Steering group

Our steering group is made up of representatives from Kent County Council (KCC), Early Years & Childcare Service within The Education People (TEP), Safeguarding, Schools, Integrated Children's Services, Early Years and Childcare settings and Public Health.

Key strategies for 2025-26

Our focus for 2025-26 is to establish and embed the new process for engaging and commissioning HAF Programme activities and build on the partnership working between all services and organisations who are delivering HAF Programme activities.

Section 3 – Children and families' feedback

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

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

A link to our promotional video is available on the [KCC web pages](#)

Feedback from children and families

"We have had parents who have been initially nervous and said their child struggles in school environment, doesn't make friends and is amazed that at the end of the day they can't wait to return and have had the best day, and even better have made friends!"

"It's been 2 ½ years now and everything is in place for us providers to go and deliver our camps. The information is always provided early and there is always someone to answer a question if one arises. I love working with you and I look forward to the summer."

"We had one young attendee, 'M' who has not been to our project before; she booked on to all four days this Easter. Her mum told us how much impact this had on M as she is a young carer for her elder sister and very rarely gets to take part in anything that is 'just for her.'. M made friends with some other attendees of a similar age and staff noted how happy and engaged she was. Mum is hoping to be able to find a way for M to take part in more regular activity with us. We have signposted to a local organisation which may be able to assist with the cost of lessons, and we have also offered M our own subsidy."

"Thank you so much for having my girls at the HAF Programme. They really enjoyed themselves and I will definitely be signing them up for future sessions. The variety of foods are great and my girls enjoy eating with you. I get great peace of mind knowing I am leaving my girls in a safe and fun environment. We look forward to seeing you all again soon."

"We have a number of young carers who attend with the siblings they care for. I had a very lovely conversation with a mother who was so grateful for giving her young carer the opportunity to access activities that he loves and has made very good friend groups."

“*** says it's been really good. It's been lovely to hear her enthused about playing music - something she doesn't get to do at school.”

“They've come home talking about it nonstop every day. They love learning songs and hanging out with their new friends. It's making them very happy.”

“Amazing no other words describe it. Thank you for this opportunity.”

“R***** can be very picky about the extra activities in summer, but really wants to come back, even if we need to travel to get to you. Also, I am being repeatedly asked to buy a piano keyboard now, so there is definitely an impact.”

“Wonderfully safe and kind to R**** with ASD. She has made friends and it has been confidence building.”

“My two daughters attended 8 morning sessions throughout the summer. It was a godsend. My girls enjoyed getting to socialise with the other children, they really enjoyed the activities and all the staff were lovely. The food was great, my youngest daughter even tried things that she wouldn't normally eat. It is very expensive to take the children out to places during the summer holidays so having this programme really helped give them something to do, to break up the boredom they get during the summer. I really hope that the programme will be available next year.”

“Child B has been struggling with her confidence and self-esteem, she often refuses to attend school. Attending HAF gave her the opportunity to be with staff and children in a different environment making this a much more positive experience for her.”

“Parents have commented how well the children that attend HAF settle into school and also attending school throughout the Summer enables them to see staff and the classroom etc which helps with anxiety etc.”

“Mum shared with practitioner how the sessions created an opportunity for her two autistic boys to make friends. She shared that the children do not have friends at school and felt the events helped her children socialise whilst enjoying the activities. They particularly enjoyed the inflatables at the sports centre. I observed the children interacting with other children and enjoying the equipment with new friends. There was lots of laughter as they engaged using the assault course.”

“A Mum with 3 children, 2 of her girls loved dancing and were looking forward to that but her 3rd has SEND and found that too overwhelming, she was happy to engage in craft activities and to talk to members of our team whilst her sisters did the dancing. Mum commented that it was nice that all 3 children could do what they wanted in the same place, not something

that can often be achieved and definitely not without spending a lot of money that she couldn't do."

"I'm so impressed with the whole session. And it's free! Thank you."

"The children have enjoyed themselves."

"Very entertaining and inclusive."

"Child has ASD and loved making fruit kebab."

"The food bags have been a lifeline as living in temporary housing."

"Having hot lunches has really made a difference as I can't afford to give kids hot food during school holidays."

"These free days have really helped during school holidays as can't afford to go away."

"After a really tough December for me and my children, receiving the activities pack was a blessing my son really enjoyed. There was so much variety for him to choose and do he was delighted. The hamper we received was unexpected and so needed money was tight this December we received a huge hamper filled with so much food enough to last one-week."

"I have had the most amazing time and I wish I could have stayed longer. I have learned how to make pizza boxes and I won a prize for my plane. I was also given lots of football sticker with famous footballer I have seen on TV."

"This year has been tough, my children's first year on FSM, the hamper made a real difference to our Christmas and this year I would not have been able to afford a pantomime, thank you"

"Once I saw everything in the hampers, I was able to use some of my weekly food budget to buy my children some Christmas pyjamas, thank you so much."

Section 4 - Food

We required that all HAF Programmes provided a hot nutritious meal a day. Following feedback and reflection on last year, 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 nutritious meal.

The meals were delivered in a combination of ways, with some programmes 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 still some children and families who prefer a packed lunch option and/or supplying their own food. The Programme partners have become very creative in how they deliver their hot meal and worked hard to encourage take up and participation. While we will continue to promote the hot option, we also see there still needs to be flexibility in the approach of how/what meals are provided.

At Christmas, some Programme partners applied for additional funding to supply food and activity hampers for their families. This addition supported a number of families over the Christmas holidays and gave them the opportunities to cook together and share activities. Due to the Bank Holidays over Christmas, we saw more Programmes delivering a two day model with additional hampers and packs. This allowed more families to access some face to face sessions and benefit from food and support.

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
- Helicopter rides (offered by one partner at summer, who has multiple sites)
- Music workshops
- Drama
- Outdoor activities
- Forest school
- Sailing
- Wall climbing
- Inflatables
- Storytelling
- Outdoor cooking
- Team building activities
- Yoga
- Mindfulness/wellbeing activities
- Games
- IT based games and activities
- Pool
- Air Hockey.

Over summer and Christmas 2024 we were again 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 additional 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.

We saw more Programmes applying for the additional funding in order to enhance their offer and build partnerships with other organisations.

This year we also funded a pack of resources from KCS Education [School & Early Years Supplies | KCS Education](#) to enhance arts and craft at the Programmes and provide new ideas for activities.

The impact of children and young people being able to access enriching and new activities has been profound and demonstrated through both visits from the HAF Programme team to see the activities and experiences in action and feedback that has been shared with us from families, children and young people.

Section 6 – Physical activities

All HAF Programmes are required 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.

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 element of the HAF Programme was one of the strongest elements that we saw delivered and therefore children and young people had consistent access to physical activity and support in trying new games and sports.

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, the activities and level of participation, 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 always strive to ensure 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.

This summer we were able to fund sunscreen resources to the HAF Programmes via Melanoma Fund [About Melanoma - Melanoma Fund UK](#). Programmes who received resources were asked to become 'Sun Protection Accredited' through Melanoma Fund and continue to promote the importance of sun safety with children, young people, families and their staff.

Section 8 – Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND)

All HAF Programme partners are required to meet the needs of the children and young people booking a place with them. We have seen this year an increase in Programme partners actively making contact with families prior to delivery, to discuss their child's needs and any adaptations they need to make to ensure the places is accessible. We have provided an inclusion audit to support with planning and delivery and access to National resources that support inclusion and SEND.

Over 2024, we saw an increase in applications for the SEND funding, which HAF Programme partners can apply for to support children who have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or in receipt of High Needs funding in school.

Summer 2024

272 children/young people were supported through this additional funding

4% of children/young people booked a session but did not attend

50% of children/young people attended all the sessions they had booked

46% of children/young people attended some of their booked sessions

46% of the above attended one of the four SEND specialist Programmes we funded.

This shows a high percentage of the places booked for children/young people with an EHCP or in receipt of High needs funding are attended and that it is likely the additional funding supports the Programmes in meeting the needs of these children. **99** of the above children also accessed a place at Easter 2024, which demonstrates the consistency of the HAF Programmes in meeting children's needs and confidence from families in regularly attending a Programme.

In addition, we had over **1000** children and young people who may not have previously attended other HAF Programme activities, attending a Short Breaks Programme. Over **100** Children/young people with SEND attended HAF Programme activities through the Family Hubs.

The next steps would be to analyse how this funding is being used to support children/young people and if any learning can be shared with others. There will also be other children who fall into the above categories that partners did not apply for the additional funding to support, as they are already able to meet their needs within current resources.

Following analysis of visits and in response to feedback from HAF Programme partners as to how they could better support all children to access a HAF Programme, we provided autism training delivered by the Autism Education Trust. This was well received and we hope to continue to offer additional training opportunities into 2025.

Section 9 – Key challenges

The key challenges for the 2024 HAF Programme in Kent have been ensuring all children and young people who are eligible for the Programme have access to a place, if they want one. These challenges were impacted by differing factors, which included location, SEND, places for secondary age range, timings and/or popular sites being over booked.

While we have increased the number of places available for secondary aged young people since 2023, it remains an area for development.

Working with KCC services and the development of SEND specific provision has allowed children and young people who would have otherwise not attended a Programme to take up their eligibility. We will continue to develop these opportunities.

The timings at Christmas due to Bank Holidays and accessible venues, meant that there were less places available than previous holidays. However, the two -day model did allow more children and young people to access activities.

We encourage HAF Programmes, where they can, to over book places in order to minimise non-attendance and offer more children and young people access to activities.

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:

- Regular newsletters
- Network meetings held between each holiday period. The focus for these being celebrations, support from external agencies and reflection on areas for development. One of the sessions was run by colleagues in The Education People's, Education for Sustainable Development team. The shared practical examples of how children can be supported in learning about sustainability and environmental issues.

- Website page that includes details on the application process and links to key organisations and support
- Social media page
- Communication with schools
- Email and phone support.

Section 11 – Additional resources - This section should include any additional, match funding, partnership working, 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 Kent County Council 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.

Section 12 – Any other information

In Kent, we contributed to one of the Childcare Works Bitesize sessions- marketing and communication.

[Communication and promotion of HAF places to increase bookings and attendance](#)
and

[Communication and promotion for the HAF Programme](#)

A Kent programme partner features in the second webinar.

We provide HAF Programme partners a specific safeguarding e-learning, which all Programmes are encouraged to access and complete. This is kept updated by KCC's LADO Education Safeguarding Advisory Service.

In Kent we have the very valuable and accessible [ReferKent](#) platform, which allows organisations to access signposting information and make referrals for families to a number of different local services in one place. The Referkent team attended a HAF Programme network meeting and from that we requested all Programmes sign up to the platform, so they have access to local services for signposting and information.

On 13 August 2024 we were privileged to host a visit from Stephen Morgan MP to one of the HAF Programmes in Gravesham. The HAF Programme team, delivery partner (T W Tutors), children, KCC colleagues and families very much welcomed the visit. Everyone enjoyed showing MP Morgan the wonderful activities and experiences they had on offer and the positive impact the HAF Programme has on children, their families and staff. Local media covered the visit and we were very proud to be given the opportunity to show case a HAF Programme in Kent.