

**University of
Northampton**

Evaluation Report

Holiday Activities & Food Programme

For Northamptonshire Sport

Full Report



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Executive Summary

According to the Department for Education, there are 1.63 million children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM). Within Northamptonshire there are estimated to be 184,308 children and young people, aged 0-19 years old, of which 14% are eligible for FSM¹. As FSM eligibility is a proxy for socioeconomic disadvantage, these statistics highlight that a significant proportion of children in Northamptonshire are from disadvantaged backgrounds. Due to increased costs and reduced income, children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to experience a gap in learning and have 'unhealthy holidays' during the school holiday period. To bridge this 'gap', the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme was created by central Government.

This report evaluates the HAF Programme that was delivered in Northamptonshire during the July to August 2021 Summer Holidays. 2,490 children and young people attended the HAF Programme (15.12% of FSM eligible children), from areas across Northamptonshire, with a catchment area of approximately 2,335 km² and 215 schools were engaged in the Programme. The HAF Programme's 'Holiday Clubs' were delivered by 46 Providers across 103 different locations, which offered a variety of activities and enrichment opportunities in a range of environments (e.g. soft play, outdoor education, schools). Central Government's offer was for FSM eligible children to receive the equivalent of at least six weeks of provision over four days a week for a minimum of four hours a day over a year. The daily hour requirement was met by all 46 Providers, and the days per week and number of weeks requirements were often exceeded by most providers. Likewise, there were several other Government Aims and Standards that were met by Co-ordinators and Providers and some that were not met (see [table 1](#) below). Overall, the Northamptonshire HAF Programme was positively received by parents and children, with hopes that the Programme would continue to run in the future.

To investigate the attainment of the Government's Aims and Standards for the HAF Programme, a mixed methods approach was used, utilising focus groups, surveys and a child focussed activity (Tree of Hope). To gain a well-rounded holistic perspective of the HAF Programme, data were collected from Co-ordinators of the HAF Programme, Providers of the HAF Programme, Parents whose child(ren) attended the Programme, and the children who attended the Programme. As some Government Aims addressed multiple measurable components, the aims were broken up into smaller Evaluation Objectives. These data were then triangulated and analysed in relation to the Government's Aims and Standards. The results ([table 1](#)) showed that there were several aims that were met, several that were not met, and several wider factors that impacted upon the delivery of the HAF Programme, with the major hinderer being the late award of Programme contract, which in turn impacted upon the attainment of the Government's Aims and Standards.

Attainment of these Government Aims and Standards was influenced by several factors that facilitated and hindered the HAF Programme Provision.

Provision was facilitated by:

- Co-ordinators and Providers with existing links with one another, (further developed by Co-ordinators visiting during the Programme) as well as schools/facilities/communities prior to start of the HAF Programme.
- Providers who already had sufficient training to deliver 'Holiday Clubs'.
- Both Providers and Parents receiving sufficient information regarding the HAF Programme.
- Providing transport that was able to overcome travelling barriers to attendance.
- That Parents perceived the 'Holiday Clubs' as safe places for their child(ren).

¹ Health and Wellbeing: Children's Services (2015) Joint Strategic Needs Assessment of Children and Young People in Northamptonshire. *Northamptonshire County Council*.

Provision was hindered by:

- Late awarding of the HAF Programme contract, which severely impacted on the planning and resourcing of multiple components of the Programme.
- There needed to be greater uptake of training in relation to the guidance about the Government's Aims and Standards and how they could be met. Likewise, there was greater need for training on food standards.
- The online booking system was difficult to use and navigate for both Providers and Parents.
- There were challenges to providing nutrition education for both children and parents.
- There were challenges when providing for older children and young people.

Further findings of this report highlighted the need for future HAF Provision to consider how to be more sustainable to continue to help children/young people and their families in the future.

Overall, perceptions from Co-ordinators, Providers, Parents, and Children demonstrated that the HAF Programme had a positive impact for children and young people and their families. The wider emerging message highlighted that there is a need and a high demand for the Programme to continue in the future and that there should be similar Programmes conducted throughout the year. At the end of this report, there are suggested recommendations (tables 13 – 15) to help facilitate the planning and delivery of future programmes in the hope that they can improve and continue to aid children and young people and their families for years to come.

Table 1. Identifying which Government Aims and Government standards were met by the Programme. Table key: ✓ means that the aim/standard was met, O means that the aim/standard was partially met, and X means that the aim/standard was not met.

Evaluation Objective	Aligning Government Aim	Aim Achieved?	Aligning Government Standard	Standard Achieved?
Child Focus				
1. To examine opportunities for healthy eating	1. Eat more healthily over the school holidays.	O	1. Providers must provide at least one meal a day (breakfast, lunch or tea) and all food provided at the holiday club (including snacks) must meet school food standards.	✓
			2. Our expectation is that the majority of food served by providers will be hot. However, we acknowledge that there will be occasions when this is not possible and a cold alternative may be used.	O
			3. All food provided as part of the programme must comply with regulations on food preparation and take into account allergies, dietary requirements and any religious or cultural requirements for food.	O
2. To examine opportunities to engage in for physical activity.	2. Be more active during the school holidays.	✓	4. Holiday clubs must provide fun and enriching activities that provide children with opportunities to develop new skills/knowledge, consolidate existing skills/knowledge and try out new experiences.	✓
			5. This could include physical activities, creative activities or wider experiences (for example, a nature walk or visiting a city farm).	✓
			6. Local authorities/Co-ordinators should set out how they can support providers to deliver a rich and varied mix of fun and enriching activities that are age-appropriate.	O
			7. Holiday clubs must provide activities that meet the <u>physical activity guidelines</u> on a daily basis.	✓

Evaluation Objective	Aligning Government Aim	Aim Achieved?	Aligning Government Standard	Standard Achieved?
3. To examine the development of health and wellbeing outcomes (such as resilience, character, wellbeing and educational attainment).	3. Take part in engaging and enriching activities which support the development of resilience, character and wellbeing along with their wider educational attainment.	✓		
4. To examine opportunities to engage in enrichment activities.	3. Take part in engaging and enriching activities which support the development of resilience, character and wellbeing along with their wider educational attainment.	✓	4. Holiday clubs must provide fun and enriching activities that provide children with opportunities to develop new skills/knowledge, consolidate existing skills/knowledge and try out new experiences.	✓
			5. This could include physical activities, creative activities or wider experiences (for example, a nature walk or visiting a city farm).	✓
			6. Local authorities should set out how they can support providers to deliver a rich and varied mix of fun and enriching activities that are age-appropriate.	O
			7. Holiday clubs must provide activities that meet the <u>physical activity guidelines</u> on a daily basis.	✓
5. To examine social opportunities.	4. Be safe and not to be socially isolated.	✓		
6. To examine opportunities to improve knowledge of health and nutrition.	5. Have a greater knowledge of health and nutrition.	O	8. Providers must include an element of nutritional education each day aimed at improving the knowledge and awareness of healthy eating for children. For example, activities such as getting children involved in food preparation and cooking, growing fruit/vegetables and taste tests.	O
7. To examine opportunities to be more engaged with school and other local services.	6. Be more engaged with school and other local services.	X	10. Holiday clubs must be able to provide information, signposting or referrals to other services and support that would benefit the children who attend their provision and their families.	X
Parent/Carer Focus				
8. To examine opportunities to improve understanding of nutrition and food budgeting.	7. Develop their understanding of nutrition and food budgeting.	X	9. Providers must include at least weekly training and advice sessions for parents, carers or other family members. These should provide advice on how to source, prepare and cook nutritious and low-cost food.	X
9. To examine signposting opportunities to other information and support (for example, health, employment and education).	8. Be signposted towards other information and support, for example, health, employment and education.	X	10. Holiday clubs must be able to provide information, signposting or referrals to other services and support that would benefit the children who attend their provision and their families.	X

Acknowledgements and contributions

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Furthermore, thank you to all the co-ordinators, managers, providers, staff, volunteers, young people, and parents/carers who elected to participate in this evaluation and who contributed their views and experiences. Your input has been invaluable, and this report would not have been possible without you.

The researchers that undertook the data collection and analysis include Natasha Bayes, Amy Stringer and Dr Declan Ryan, from the University of Northampton. The overall data collection and analysis was overseen by Dr Declan Ryan.

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Background

The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme

The school holidays can be a period of concern for some families due to increased costs (e.g. food and childcare) and reduced income. This can lead to children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds experiencing a gap in their learning and development due to them being less likely to access organised activities² and thus being more likely to experience ‘unhealthy holidays’ (e.g. less nutritional food/smaller portions, less physical activity³, and greater social isolation⁴). According to the Department for Education⁵, there are 1.63 million children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) and as FSM eligibility is a proxy for socioeconomic disadvantage, these statistics highlight that a significant proportion of children are at risk of experiencing further inequalities during the holiday period. These issues have been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, families have experienced limited contact with others as well as increasing use of foodbanks and reliance on food charities⁶, with reports also showing that applications for FSM have increased (due to changes in family circumstances, such as furloughing and redundancies)⁷. To help reduce the impact of these issues and reduce the gap between children and young people from disadvantaged communities compared to children from less disadvantaged backgrounds⁸, the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme was created.

The HAF Programme was first initiated in 2018, with the aim of providing healthy food and enrichment activities for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. In November 2020, the UK Government announced that the HAF Programme would be launched across the whole of England in 2021, with local authorities receiving £220 million, to coordinate the provision of free holiday enrichment activities and healthy food. To ensure that a high-quality and consistent offer of enrichment and food was provided to FSM eligible children and young people across England, the Government⁹ created several aims (see [Box 1](#)) and standards for the HAF Programme (see [Box 2](#)).

² Kellogg's Foundation (2015) *Isolation and Hunger: the reality of the school holidays for struggling families*.

³ The Sutton Trust (2014) *Extra-curricular Inequality Research Brief. Life Lessons: Improving essential life skills for young people*, The Sutton Trust.

⁴ Gill and Sharma (2004) *Food poverty in the school holidays*, Barnardos.

⁵ Department for Education (2021) *Free School Meals: Autumn Term*.

⁶ Moore and Evans (2020) *Tackling childhood food poverty in the UK*.

⁷ Sinha, I., Lee, A., Bennett, D., McGeehan, L., Abrams, E., Mayell, S., Harwood, R., Hawcutt, D., Gilchrist, F., Auth, M., Simba, J. and Taylor-Robinson, D. (2020) Child poverty, food insecurity, and respiratory health during the COVID-19 pandemic. *The lancet: Respiratory Medicine*. 8, 8. P762-763.

⁸ Long, M., Stretesky, P., Graham, P., Palmer, K., Steinbock, E. and Defeyter, M. (2017) The impact of holiday clubs on household food insecurity – A pilot study. *Health and Social Care in the Community*. 26, 2. P261-269.

⁹ Department for Education (2021) *Holiday Activities and Food Programme 2021*.

Box 1: Government Aims for the Holiday Activities and Food programme

The Government aims for each child and young person who attends the programme/club to:

1. Eat more healthily over the school holidays.
2. Be more active during the school holidays.
3. Take part in engaging and enriching activities which support the development of resilience, character and wellbeing along with their wider educational attainment.
4. Be safe and not to be socially isolated.
5. Have a greater knowledge of health and nutrition.
6. Be more engaged with school and other local services.

Additionally, the Government aims also for each family/parent/carer who participates in the programme/club to:

7. Develop their understanding of nutrition and food budgeting.
8. Be signposted towards other information and support, for example, health, employment and education.

Box 2: Government standards for the Holiday Activity and Food programme

The government has several standards that each provider/holiday club were expected to meet:

Food

1. Providers must provide at least one meal a day (breakfast, lunch or dinner) and all food provided at the holiday club (including snacks) must meet school food standards.
2. Our expectation is that the majority of food served by providers will be hot. However, we acknowledge that there will be occasions when this is not possible and a cold alternative may be used.
3. All food provided as part of the programme must comply with regulations on food preparation and take into account allergies, dietary requirements and any religious or cultural requirements for food.

Enriching activities

4. Holiday clubs must provide fun and enriching activities that provide children with opportunities to develop new skills/knowledge, consolidate existing skills/knowledge and try out new experiences.
5. This could include physical activities, creative activities or wider experiences (for example, a nature walk or visiting a city farm).
6. Local authorities should set out how they can support providers to deliver a rich and varied mix of fun and enriching activities that are age-appropriate.

Physical activities

7. Holiday clubs must provide activities that meet the [physical activity guidelines](#) on a daily basis.

Nutritional education

8. Providers must include an element of nutritional education each day aimed at improving the knowledge and awareness of healthy eating for children. For example, activities such as getting children involved in food preparation and cooking, growing fruit/vegetables and taste tests.

Food education for families and carers

9. Providers must include at least weekly training and advice sessions for parents, carers or other family members. These should provide advice on how to source, prepare and cook nutritious and low-cost food.

Signposting and referrals

10. Holiday clubs must be able to provide information, signposting or referrals to other services and support that would benefit the children who attend their provision and their families.

Policies and procedures

11. Organisations and individuals involved in the delivery of the Holiday Activities and Food programme must be able to demonstrate and explain the safeguarding procedures and checks that they have in place for the holiday activities and food programme.
12. They must have relevant and appropriate policies and procedures for safeguarding, health and safety, relevant insurance policies and accessibility and inclusiveness.

Local context – Northamptonshire

Northamptonshire is the largest area of growth outside of London, with a population of more than 700,000⁹. The districts that make up Northamptonshire are a mix of very rural (Daventry and South Northamptonshire), mostly rural (East Northamptonshire) and urban (Northampton, Kettering and Corby), with a total of 422 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA)¹⁰. 24 of these LSOAs are in the top 10% most deprived areas in England with a further 38 in the top 20% most deprived areas¹¹.

Of the 700,00 people in Northamptonshire, 184,308 are aged 0-19 years old¹² with 14% of these children and young people eligible for FSM¹³. However, this figure was produced prior to the COVID-19 pandemic during which the number of applications for FSM increased¹⁴ as a result of furlough and redundancies.

Northamptonshire Sport was commissioned by Public Health Northamptonshire to co-ordinate the county-wide role out of the HAF Programme, by overseeing and arranging the Providers (individuals/companies/charities running the 'Holiday Clubs') as well as ensuring that all FSM eligible children and young people had free access to the provisions. The Programme offered health and well-being activities and food for a minimum of four hours a day, four days a week, over a maximum four-week period¹⁵.

The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme Evaluation

In July 2021, Northamptonshire Sport commissioned the University of Northampton to evaluate the HAF Programme in Northamptonshire. This report presents the summative findings on the 2021 Northamptonshire summer holiday HAF Programme. The evaluation captured the experiences of the Co-ordinators, Providers, Parents/Carers and Children involved in the HAF Programme to investigate the achievement of the overarching Government HAF aims and standards as well as providing recommendations for future iterations of the Programme.

In addition to evidencing the impact of the Programme on the health and wellbeing outcomes for children and families, this report also provided a process evaluation to determine the factors that shaped Northamptonshire's ability to deliver the HAF Programme in line with the Government aims and standards.

Evaluation aim:

To evaluate the impact of the HAF programme on the health and wellbeing outcomes for children and families from deprived backgrounds in Northamptonshire. See [table 2](#). for the Evaluation objectives and aligning Government aims and standards that were investigated in this report.

¹⁰ Northamptonshire County Council (2015) *Health and Wellbeing Children's Services: Joint Strategic Needs Assessment of Children and Young People in Northamptonshire*.

¹¹ Northamptonshire County Council (2019) *Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 Profile: Northamptonshire (County)*.

¹² Northamptonshire County Council (2020) *Northamptonshire Demography Insight Pack: JSNA Insight Pack 2020*.

¹³ Northamptonshire County Council (2015) *Locality Profiles: Health and Wellbeing Services: Corby*.

¹⁴ BBC News (2021) *Covid: Will free school meals continue over the summer holiday?* Available from: [Covid: Will free school meals continue over summer holidays? - BBC News](#).

¹⁵ Northamptonshire Council (2021) *Holiday and Food Activity Fund Update (HAF)*. Available from: [Holiday and Food Activity Fund Update \(HAF\) | North Northamptonshire Council \(northnorthants.gov.uk\)](#).

Table 2. The evaluation objectives and aligning Government aims and standards being investigated in this report.

Evaluation Objective	Aligning Government Aim	Aligning Government Standard
Child Focused		
1. To examine opportunities for healthy eating	1. Eat more healthily over the school holidays.	<p>1. Providers must provide at least one meal a day (breakfast, lunch or tea) and all food provided at the holiday club (including snacks) must meet school food standards.</p> <p>2. Our expectation is that the majority of food served by providers will be hot. However, we acknowledge that there will be occasions when this is not possible and a cold alternative may be used.</p> <p>3. All food provided as part of the programme must comply with regulations on food preparation and take into account allergies, dietary requirements and any religious or cultural requirements for food.</p>
2. To examine opportunities to engage in for physical activity.	2. Be more active during the school holidays.	<p>4. Holiday clubs must provide fun and enriching activities that provide children with opportunities to develop new skills/knowledge, consolidate existing skills/knowledge and try out new experiences.</p> <p>5. This could include physical activities, creative activities or wider experiences (for example, a nature walk or visiting a city farm).</p> <p>6. Local authorities should set out how they can support providers to deliver a rich and varied mix of fun and enriching activities that are age-appropriate.</p> <p>7. Holiday clubs must provide activities that meet the <u>physical activity guidelines</u> on a daily basis.</p>
3. To examine the development of health and wellbeing outcomes (such as resilience, character, wellbeing and educational attainment).	3. Take part in engaging and enriching activities which support the development of resilience, character and wellbeing along with their wider educational attainment.	
4. To examine opportunities to engage in enrichment activities.	3. Take part in engaging and enriching activities which support the development of resilience, character and wellbeing along with their wider educational attainment.	<p>4. Holiday clubs must provide fun and enriching activities that provide children with opportunities to develop new skills/knowledge, consolidate existing skills/knowledge and try out new experiences.</p> <p>5. This could include physical activities, creative activities or wider experiences (for example, a nature walk or visiting a city farm).</p> <p>6. Local authorities should set out how they can support providers to deliver a rich and varied mix of fun and enriching activities that are age-appropriate.</p> <p>7. Holiday clubs must provide activities that meet the <u>physical activity guidelines</u> on a daily basis.</p>
5. To examine social opportunities.	4. Be safe and not to be socially isolated.	

Evaluation Objective	Aligning Government Aim	Aligning Government Standard
6. To examine opportunities to improve knowledge of health and nutrition.	5. Have a greater knowledge of health and nutrition.	8. Providers must include an element of nutritional education each day aimed at improving the knowledge and awareness of healthy eating for children. For example, activities such as getting children involved in food preparation and cooking, growing fruit/vegetables and taste tests.
7. To examine opportunities to be more engaged with school and other local services.	6. Be more engaged with school and other local services.	10. Holiday clubs must be able to provide information, signposting or referrals to other services and support that would benefit the children who attend their provision and their families.
Parent/Carer Focussed		
8. To examine opportunities to improve understanding of nutrition and food budgeting.	7. Develop their understanding of nutrition and food budgeting.	9. Providers must include at least weekly training and advice sessions for parents, carers or other family members. These should provide advice on how to source, prepare and cook nutritious and low-cost food.
9. To examine signposting opportunities to other information and support (for example, health, employment and education).	8. Be signposted towards other information and support, for example, health, employment and education.	10. Holiday clubs must be able to provide information, signposting or referrals to other services and support that would benefit the children who attend their provision and their families.
10. To examine opportunities to improve health, wellbeing and home life.	Evaluation objectives 10 and 11 are not linked to any government aims as they were created for the purposes of this evaluation to help provide greater insight into the HAF Programme provision.	
Process Evaluation Focussed		
11. To examine what factors facilitated or hindered the implementation of the programme and the attainment of outcomes (aligns with Government standards 11 -12).	Evaluation objectives 10 and 11 are not linked to any government aims as they were created for the purposes of this evaluation to help provide greater insight into the HAF Programme provision.	

Methods

Evaluation design

A mixed methods approach was conducted by utilising a variety of quantitative and qualitative methods along with the inclusion of multiple perspectives (parents, children, providers, co-ordinators). These methods and viewpoints were triangulated to get a rounded account of the effectiveness of the HAF Programme in the attainment of short-term outcomes for children and families (outcome evaluation), and to understand the process of implementing the HAF programme, such as what facilitators and barriers were in place (process evaluation). The data collection tools that were used for each evaluation objective are outlined in [table 3](#), with further method details for each tool outlined below.

Ethical approval for the evaluation was provided by the Faculty of Arts, Science, and Technology Ethics Committee, University of Northampton. Informed written consent was provided by parents/carers, providers, and co-ordinators. Whilst consent for children's participation was provided in loco parentis by Northamptonshire Sport, as the organisation responsible for the safeguarding of children during the HAF Programme.

Table 3. Summary of data collection tools used to achieve each evaluation objective.

Evaluation Task	Evaluation Objectives	Government Aims	Government Standards
Tree of Hope for Children and Young People	1 - 6	1 - 5	1 – 7
Focus Groups with Parents/Carers	1 - 11	1 - 8	1 - 10
Focus Groups with Providers	1 - 11	1 - 8	1 – 12
Focus Group with HAF Co-ordinators	1 - 11	1 - 8	1 – 12
Survey completed by Parents/Carers	1 - 11	1 - 8	1 – 10
Survey completed by Providers	1 - 11	1 - 8	1 - 12

Data collection phase 1: Children's activity – the Tree of Hope

The purpose of this activity was to capture the opinions and experiences from children who attended the HAF Programme to understand what they liked about the Programme and the benefits it brought them. The 'Tree of Hope' was designed to be an activity similar to what the children have previously completed in school whilst also investigating objectives 1 – 6 of this evaluation. The activity was conducted across 10 holiday clubs and completed by approximately 95 children and young people.

The children and young people were given a tree with several questions, related to the five ways to wellbeing, written on the branches, which asked questions about various aspects of the Holiday Camp that they were attending. [Figure 1A](#) shows the tree that the children were given and the questions that they were asked. The children provided responses to these questions by writing their answers on leaves that were cut out and then stuck onto the branches as shown in [Figure 1B](#). Many of the answers given by the children were short or one-word responses. Therefore, this activity was analysed using a deductive approach, selecting examples of the answers given that were most pertinent to the aims of this evaluation.

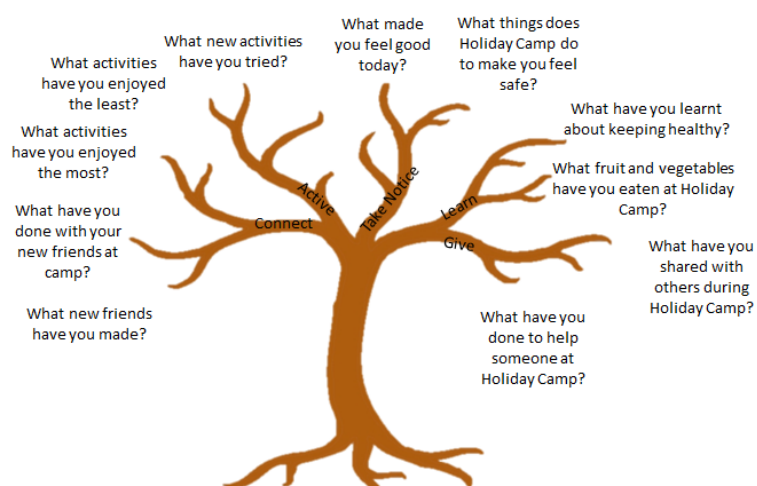


Figure 1. A) Blank Tree of Hope that was given to the children and young people to fill in. B) Example of a Tree of Hope that has been filled in by the children.

Data collection phase 2: Parent/Carer interviews and focus groups*

The purpose of this activity was to capture the opinions and experiences from parents and carers, whose child(ren) or themselves attended the HAF Programme, to understand what was successful and what could be improved to help enhance the delivery of the Programme in the future. A mix of online and in person focus groups or interviews were conducted with 17 parents from 8 holiday clubs. This activity aimed to investigate objectives 1 – 11 using a semi-structured interview schedule that allowed the participants to discuss experiences and opinions.

Data collection phase 3: Provider interviews and focus groups*

The purpose of this activity was to capture the opinions and experiences from providers (i.e. individuals/clubs that facilitated the HAF Programme and delivered physical activities and food provision) (referred to as Providers from this point onward) of the HAF Programme to understand what was successful and what could be improved to enhance the delivery of the Programme in the future. Eleven Providers participated in online focus groups. This activity aimed to investigate objectives 1 – 11 using semi-structured questions that allowed the participants to discuss experiences and opinions.

Data collection phase 4: Co-ordinator focus group*

The purpose of this activity was to capture the opinions and experiences from co-ordinators of the HAF Programme (i.e. individuals within Northamptonshire Sport that aided the organisation of the HAF Programme) (referred to as Co-ordinators from this point) to understand what was successful and what could be improved to help the organisation and delivery of the programme in the future. Seven Co-ordinators from Northamptonshire Sport participated in an online focus group. The focus group utilised semi-structured questions to allow the participants to discuss experiences and opinions to investigate objectives 1 – 11.

*Each of the focus groups and interviews from the above data collection phases were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim, following which a deductive, thematic approach was used to analyse the findings¹⁶.

Overview of data collection locations and participants

For the tree of hope and parent focus groups, the evaluation targeted 11 Holiday Clubs to participate in order to obtain data from at least 1 - 2 clubs within each locality of Northamptonshire. These targeted Holiday Clubs were based in churches ($n=1$), soft play centres ($n=2$), schools/colleges ($n=4$), leisure centres ($n=3$), and art and creative centres ($n=1$). For the tree of hope activity approximately 95 children participated from 10 holiday clubs. For the parent focus groups, 17 parents participated ($n=3$: one-to-one interviews; $n=4$: two-person interviews; $n=2$: three-person focus groups) from 8 holiday clubs. See [table 4.](#) for a breakdown of holiday club details.

For the Provider focus groups, all Providers across the county were invited to participate, but particularly the Providers from the 11 targeted holiday clubs. Nine Providers participated (focus group 1: $n=5$; focus group 2: $n=2$; focus group 3: $n=2$) from 8 holiday clubs.

Table 4. Breakdown of holiday clubs and the data collection phases they were involved in.

Holiday Club Number	Location	Number of participants per data collection phase (n)		
		Tree of Hope	Parent Focus Groups	Provider Focus Groups
1	Rushden	3	2	1
2	Northampton	10	3	0
3	Kettering	10	0	0
4	Corby	10	0	1
5	Wellingborough	12	3	1
6	Kettering	10	2	0
7	Corby	0	3	1
8	Kettering	10	0	2
9	Brackley	10	1	0
10	Northampton	10	1	1
11	Wellingborough	10	2	0
12*	Northampton	N/A	N/A	1
13*	Northampton	N/A	N/A	1
Total number of participants:		95	17	9

*Holiday clubs 12 and 13 were only contacted to take part in the provider focus groups and therefore there are no data for the child tree of hope activity or parent focus groups. N/A – Not applicable.

Data collection phase 5: Parent/Carer survey

The purpose of this activity was to evaluate the impact of the HAF Programme on Children's and Parent's/Carer's wellbeing. Data were collected via an online survey (open between 3rd September – 8 October 2021) that was emailed to the Parents/Carers of children who attended any of the Holiday Clubs that were on offer as part of the HAF Programme. The survey comprised of 37 questions that focussed on the HAF Programme's ability to:

- support healthy eating
- provide a range of physical and enrichment activities
- provide a safe and socially inclusive environment

¹⁶ Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*. 3, 2. p77-101.

- provide education on healthy lifestyles
- support engagement with school and local services
- provide nutrition and meal planning support to families
- provide signposting to wider services

This activity aimed to investigate evaluation objectives 1 – 11 using multiple choice and open-ended questions to gain insight into Parent/Carers' and children's experiences and opinions. The survey was completed by 81 Parents/Carers and the findings were analysed using a deductive approach.

Data collection phase 6: Provider survey

The purpose of this activity was to evaluate co-ordination and delivery of the HAF Programme from the Providers perspective. Data were collected via an online survey (open between 3rd September – 8th October 2021) that was emailed to the providers that offered Holiday Clubs as part of the HAF Programme. The survey comprised of 21 questions that focussed on the providers opinions and experiences of the Programme in relation to:

- Planning and preparation
- Areas of strength and improvement of delivery
- Recommendations for next year and/or next HAF Programme

This activity aimed to investigate objectives 1 – 11 using multiple choice and open-ended questions to gain insight into parent/guardian's and children's experiences and opinions. The survey was completed by 27 providers (there were 44 Providers in total therefore, a 61.4% response rate) and the findings were analysed using a deductive approach.

Data triangulation

This evaluation adopted a mixed methods approach by utilising a variety of quantitative (surveys) and qualitative (interviews and focus groups) methods¹⁷ along with the inclusion of multiple perspectives (Parents/Carers, Children, Providers, Co-ordinators). The data were triangulated in using the following process:

1. Analysing and reporting (in the findings section) each dataset in isolation to develop an understanding of the Programme from the specific participant perspective (e.g. Parents' perspectives from data collected in the focus groups).
2. Summarise the collective findings (in the conclusion section) to understand the overall effectiveness of the programme and its implementation from all participant perspectives.
3. Coding of transcripts by multiple researchers (NB, DR, and AS).

¹⁷ Carter, N., Bryant-Lukosius, D., DiCenso, A., Blythe, J. and Neville, A. (2014) The use of triangulation in qualitative research. *Oncology Nursing Forum*. 41, 5. P545-547.

Findings – Outcome Evaluation

In this section of the report, the results of the evaluation are presented in 12 subsections. Subsection 1 provides an overview of the demographics of children who attended the HAF Programme and a description of the Programmes offered across the County. Subsections 2-11 reports the findings of evaluation objectives 1-10 about Holiday Club provision and outcomes; these sections are further broken down by Parent-perspective, Provider-perspective, and Co-ordinator-perspective. The final subsection, subsection 12, reports the findings of the process evaluation to evidence the strengths and challenges of planning and delivering the HAF Programme; this section is broken down by themes that were identified by Parents, Providers and Co-ordinators during the focus group phases of the evaluation (e.g. programme marketing, resources, etc.).

Although the data have been reported in specific subsections, it is important to note that the evaluation findings overlap and interlink across the subsections. For example, details about the food provision in the Holiday Clubs have been discussed in evaluation objective 1, but some of factors influencing the food provision (such as lack of kitchen facilities or children's food preferences) have been discussed in evaluation objective 11.

Recommendations are coded (e.g. [C1]) and hyperlinked throughout the findings sections to identify the evidence that informed the suggested recommendation.

Site and demographic data

The HAF Programme was attended by a variety of children of different ages and ethnic backgrounds with an attendance rate of 73.2% (see [Box 3.](#)). The HAF Programme was attended by children from all over Northamptonshire, and in some cases further afield, covering an area of roughly 2,334.6 km² (see [figure 2.](#)). [Figure 3.](#) shows the Providers ($n = 46$) that participated in the HAF Programme across 103 different sites.

Box 3: Summary of HAF Programme attendance.

- 18,795 attendances were recorded over the summer.
- 5,040 further bookings were made but the person who was booked on did not attend.
- Average number of sessions attended per child was 9 sessions and 6 sessions for Primary and Secondary School age groups, respectively.
- 2,490 unique individuals attended the Programme.
- 435 unique individuals booked sessions but did not attend anything they had booked.
- Children from 215 schools attended the Programme.
- 15.12% of FSM eligible children attended the Programme.
- 89% were of Primary School age and 11% were of Secondary School age.
- 44% of attendees were female; 56% were male.
- 19% stated that they were an Ethnicity other than White-British.
- 16% said they had a disability.

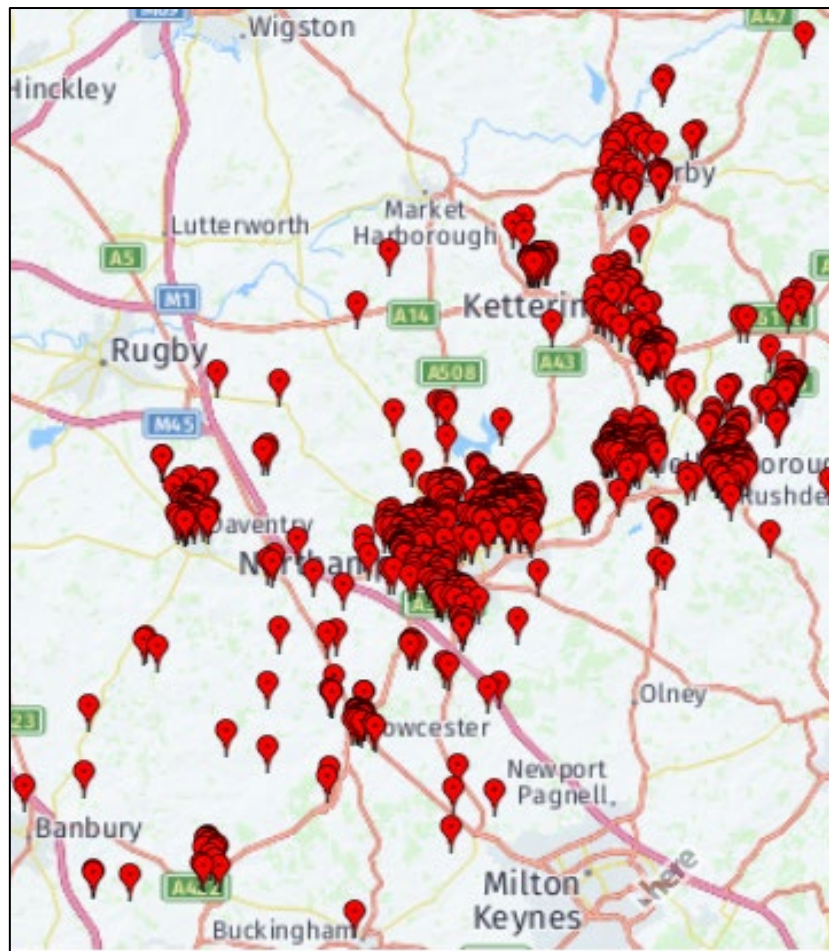


Figure 2. Map to show the area of postcodes recorded for children who registered to attend the HAF Programme, data displays attendees and non-attendees.

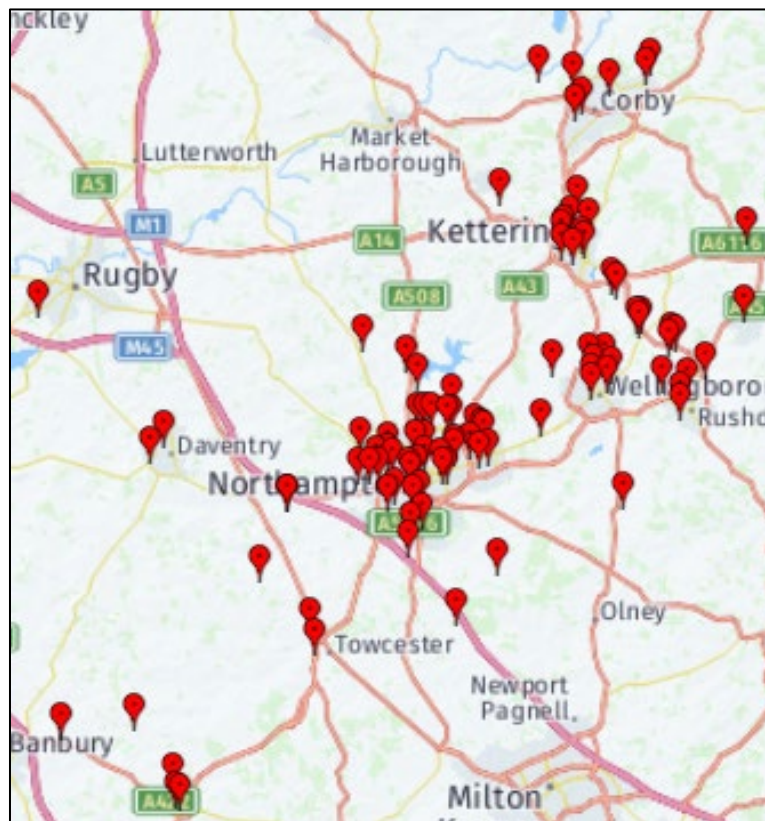


Figure 3. Shows the location of Holiday Clubs, according to postcode, that delivered the HAF Programme.

The majority of the Providers were able to meet the required four weeks of provision for four days a week with each session being a minimum four hours long however, there were some who did not meet these requirements (See table 5). Of the 46 Providers that participated in the HAF Programme, all 46 were able to meet the Government standard of 4 hours of provision per session. The majority of Providers ($n=41$) were able to meet the four days per week of provision requirements and 36 Providers were able to meet at least four weeks of required provision, with Providers often offering more than four weeks of provision.

Table 5. The number of Providers according to how many weeks they provided, how many days in a week they provided and how many hours each day they provided.

Number of weeks of provision			
1 week or less	2 weeks	3 weeks	4 weeks or more
2	5	3	36
Number of days per week of provision			
1 day	2 days	3 days	4 days
2	2	1	41
Number of hours per day of provision			
1 hour	2 hours	3 hours	4 hours
0	0	0	46

Evaluation objective 1: Opportunities for healthy eating

This evaluation objective provided data relating to Government aim 1 (eat more healthy over the school holidays) and Government standards 1 - 3. Data for this objective emerged from the Co-ordinator perspective (focus group), Provider perspective (focus groups and surveys), Parent perspective (focus groups and surveys) and the Child perspective (tree of hope data).

Co-ordinator perspective (focus group)

The Co-ordinators oversaw the food provision by ensuring that the Providers had access to the facilities needed to provide food or, alternatively, had access to services that food provision could be outsourced to. The Co-ordinators, in some cases, visited the different Holiday Club Providers to ensure the quality of the provision.

In the focus group there were comments about how the food provision was not necessarily the healthiest because the Providers were not provided with the necessary training to deliver healthy food options [C1]:

"I think some better information to the delivers around what is a nutritional meal would be useful because some of the ones I went to technically they probably did meet the food standard. But an egg Mayo sarnie from Greggs... Isn't the most healthy sandwich. But they'll be saying, well, it meets the criteria. Yeah, does it? The chocolate yoghurt. Yeah might have small bit of dairy. Is it the most nutritional?"

The Co-ordinators also reflected that the food provision was impacted by the short time frame that the Providers had to arrange and organise [F3]:

"I think the problem that's referenced is that a lot of the venues that, had they had pre warning would have made their kitchen staff or their catering facilities available 'cause a lot of them are outsourced. They had already finished and gone home. So I think that was the problem. Certainly that was the feedback we had from one of the catering companies who looks after the schools in the north of the county is if they had had more warning that they would have kept their kitchens open at all the sites where we were using, but they'd already given their staff this summer holidays. They'd already closed half their kitchens. So you know what they did provide was a kind of lastminute.com"

Provider perspective (Survey)

When asked in the surveys about the meal provision, 25 Providers responded that they did deliver food and two Providers responded that they did not deliver food. To analyse if the meal provisions met the Government standards relating to food (standard 2), the Providers were further asked “How frequently did you provide hot meals?”. Figure 4 shows that 9 Providers delivered hot food for every meal, 1 delivered a majority of the meals, 3 delivered an even mix of hot and cold meals. 4 delivered some meals, and 8 delivered no hot meals.

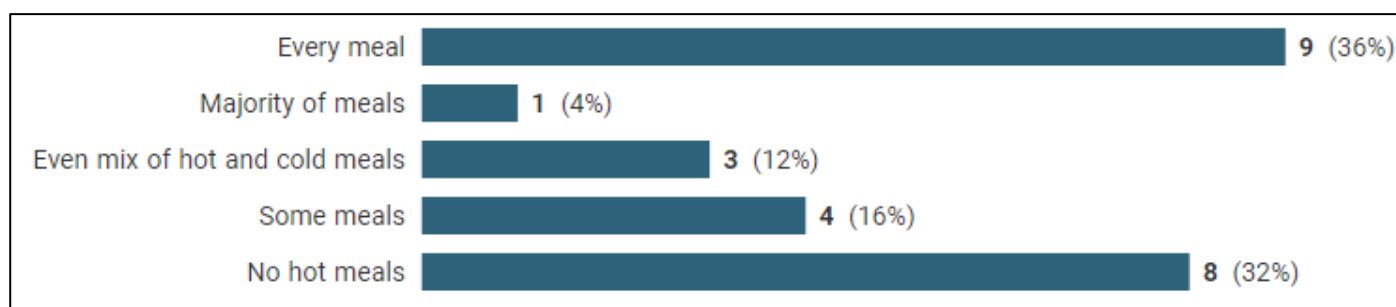


Figure 4. The answers given by providers in response to the question “How frequently did you provide hot meals?”

When asked, within the survey, what helped to facilitate the provision of the hot meals, Providers highlighted that they had the facilities on site to be able to cater hot meals, for example: “*Kitchen onsite used for school meals*” and “*We have an American diner on site so could provide meals from our menu*”. Some Providers explained that they were able to outsource their catering and it included hot meal provisions:

“We used a catering company who delivered with hot boxes to our site allowing the food to stay hot for an hour after transport”

“We used a school catering service that provides school lunches in term time and provides food for 52-week nurseries in holiday time.”

When asked what hindered and prevented the provision of hot meals, Providers explained that there was a lack of facilities or sufficient time to find catering that could deliver hot meals [F3]:

“Last minute planning made it hard to find a hot caterer, other than fast food chains which we didn't want to use. The kitchen facility we had could not cook enough hot meals for the amount of children attending.”

“No cooking provision on site, which made it unfeasible to provide hot food. Transport of hot food not possible. Would have gone with a provider that could have provided hot food if available.”

“Our venues did not have sufficient cooking facilities to provide hot meals”

When asked to give an example of some of the types of healthy meals that were provided, a range of answers were given by the Providers, which included both healthy and less healthy examples:

“Lunch bags - sandwich, fruit pot, salad pot, sweet treat, yoghurt and drink.”

“Pasta with cheese or chicken. Rice with vegetables and fish cakes. Jacket potatoes cheese and beans. Wraps with choice of fillings and salad. Reduced fat sausages with waffle and sweetcorn.”

“Lasagne. Sheppard's Pie. BBQ Chicken. Jacket Potatoes”

“Grilled chicken salad. Vegan burgers. Fillet chicken nuggets. Skin on fry chips. Hot dogs”

One of the Providers highlighted that fact that whilst they offered healthy food and meals the children did not enjoy it, so they opted for alternative meals as they wanted to prioritise the children eating something:

"We provided healthy snacks in am and pm and a healthy lunch every day. Examples were, a variety of fruits, yoghurts, various flavoured pastas, wraps, vegetable snacks and humus, crackers and cheese, Bagels and honey/Jam/cheese, fruit smoothies, Cereal and yoghurt, dried fruit, cereal bars, milkshakes, fruit juice, lots of water.

However, some children did not like eating the healthy food, so we ended up getting more and more choice and selections to cater for children. It was more important to us that they were fed and full over the fact of whether it was 100% healthy. I know that this may have been an issue with other schemes as trying to change eating habits overnight is not easy."

Provider perspectives (focus groups)

Many of the Providers reflected on their food offer, where some offered packed-lunch style meals while others provided a hot food menu. During the focus groups, one of the Providers reflected on the importance of making the food provision 'child friendly':

"It's quite fancy. Little pots of yoghurt in like this or yeah, I was a bit like is this, is this child friendly? But I think that's generally, I mean the restaurant at the [venue name removed] is very, very posh, so yeah...if I was, if I was doing that myself, I'd maybe not give nuts or sort or a compote." - (Provider focus group 3, site 5).

Providers gave some examples of healthy food options provided to the children such as "jacket potatoes" and "a piece of fruit" (provider focus group 3, site 1). However, some of the Providers highlighted that their food provision was not varied enough [P1], and that healthy eating was not enough of a focus in their programme delivery [P2]:

"With regards to the meals that were provided. If we will focus in on healthy eating and giving these children an opportunity to have good food, then that box wasn't ticked up because it was white bread and long life white rolls and then at times it was put some brown bread, but you know the yoghurts weren't were very long life and not that enjoyable. There was no...the fruit was an apple or an orange, or you know it just wasn't varied enough, but I would say it didn't focus on healthy eating." - (Provider focus group 1, site 7).

One Provider highlighted that the healthy eating "dropped off because there was no preparation time" (Provider focus group 3, site 1), highlighting the importance of sufficient preparation time to effectively plan and implement the programme.

However, one of the Providers highlighted that a core part of their food provision involved encouraging children to sit and eat together, as this provided broader learning opportunities for children [P3]:

"They would all sit down at a table and eat lunch; [that] was quite a big part of the day. And that was that was not, you know, we weren't told to do that. It's just kind of an active thing that we chose to do...I think that the act of sitting at a table and eating with other young people, I think is something that you don't often do, probably so you might do that at school but I'd say that you might not do that...I think there is something in it, the act of sitting at table eating with other people understanding the importance of mealtimes and taking time for meal times, and it being an integral part of the day rather than just something that you need to get through. And learning how to act around other people and seeing how other people eat and their attitudes to food." - Site 5, group 3.

Parent/Carer perspective (Survey)

To analyse the HAF Programme food provision, Parents/Carers were asked “How would you rate the quality of the food provided at the Holiday Activities and Food Programme?”, with the majority of the answers being “Satisfactory”, “Good Quality” and “Very Good Quality” (see [figure 5](#)).

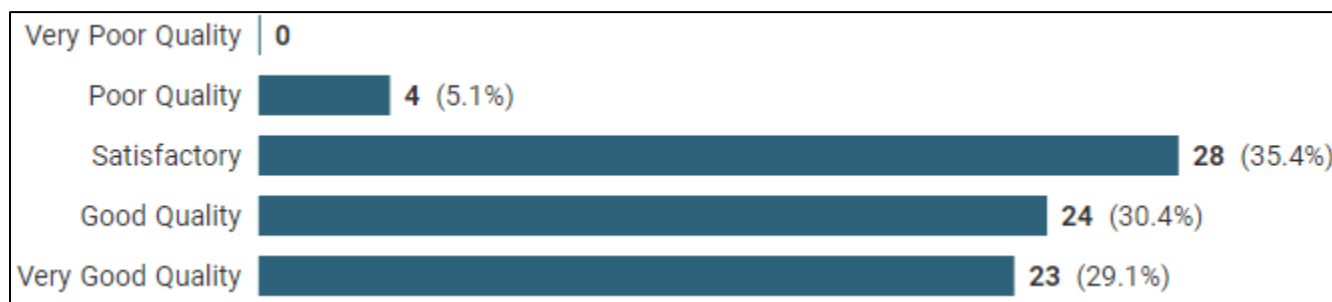


Figure 5. The answers given by Parent/Carers in response to the question “How would you rate the quality of the food provided at the Holiday Activities and Food Programme?”

When asked to elaborate on their answers, within the survey, the more positive feedback highlighted that “*The children were happy*”, “*...enjoyed all that was given to them*” and that “*the children always told me about the lovely food they had at each venue and they were well fed with nutritious food*”. Several answers highlighted that clubs “*...catered for my children’s needs*” and were able to cater for ‘fussy eater’:

“[name removed] is a poor and fussy eater and he seemed happy and fed.”

“my son really enjoyed the selection of food from.”

“Food was fresh and enjoyed very much by my fussy eating child.”

“My children are very fussy. They were offered the opportunity to select their own lunches. Boys were very satisfied.”

Several of the Parents/Carers provided further information on the food that was provided, which included both healthy examples:

“Fruit and vegetables were provided.”

“The children were provided with fruit and sandwiches of choice Nice sandwiches and presentation and lots of drinks on offer.”

“Rice, Chicken Nuggets and Prawn Cracker.”

“Nice healthy cooked meal choice of 2 options, pasta or curry and a piece of fruit and juice to drink.

“At [club name 1] the children had the option of homemade curry/rice or a tomato pasta bake. This came with garlic bread, juice and fruit. Little pack ups were provided at [club name 2], lovely variety. At [club name 3], the children went to the next-door pub and ate a hot meal of their choosing. At [club name 4] the children were able to choose any meal from the children’s menu, plus they received a jug of squash each, they could order toast and jam for snack and could select a piece of fruit.”

And unhealthy examples:

“...no food was provided, only sweets and treats”

“Could have had more yoghurts and fruits and lunch boxish things. But was a decent lunch. Just doughnuts is not what I call healthy.”

Several responses highlighted that the Holiday Club was unable to cater for their child's needs sufficiently [P1]:

"My autistic son wouldn't like anything on offer and despite discussing and agreeing an alternative with the provision, it wasn't provided and led to my son becoming distressed".

"Good choice of food for my 2 children, not so much variety for my dairy free child."

"At [club name removed] they had limited choice for vegetarians or lactose free children...she came back bloated most days"

"...the main food item provided to my vegetarian child was a cheese sandwich every day for the 5-days she attended."

"Everything that he was allowed to eat was finished. Halal only so food was limited to what he can have."

The more negative feedback also highlighted that the food provision *"...was very basic and not particularly inspiring"* and *"It was the same for a every day he attended"*. Several answers explained that the food provision was not a good standard and their child(ren) was unsatisfied [P2]:

"Same every day. Water bottle included in lunch not touched as couldn't open it. Dry sandwich and a piece of fruit. They always came home starving."

"Not much options, only sandwiches. Same food every day. No fresh cooked food. Small vegetables/fruit portions. Not nutrition"

"[club name removed] was aimed up to 16 years old my 14 year old attended but only got 4 crackers was not suitable amount of food for his age"

"There wasn't enough for her, especially after physical activity. She was still hungry and required more food when she got home straight after lunchtime!"

"It been advertised as healthy eating- sandwiches is not in the healthy food category".

Some of the Parents/Carers also highlighted that there was no food option available and that they had to provide packed lunches for their children:

"I don't know anything about food or drink that was offered - no one ever told me food or drink was offered so I provided my own"

"My son didn't eat on camp. He had only some small snack during the day and brought his own lunch"

"no food provided"

"I still don't really know what was offered as I had no information regarding the food."

The additional explanations and examples that were given by the Parents/Carers during the survey in response to this question highlights that in some cases the food provision met the Government standards and there were opportunities for healthy eating for the children. However, in some cases the food provision did not meet the Government standards and was unable to meet the needs of the children. This suggests the food provision at the different Holiday Clubs varied from Provider to Provider.

Parent/Carer perspectives (focus groups)

Most of the Parents/Carers highlighted that the Holiday Clubs provided food as part of their provision and gave examples of the types of food offered. In many of the clubs. Parents/Carers said that a packed-lunch style food offer

was provided *“like fruit, yoghurt, bottled water...”* (site 11), while a few said that hot food was offered such as *“chicken, little fish fingers, jacket potato”* (site 1).

Some Parents/Carers briefly reflected on the healthfulness of the food provided however, other factors such as children’s liking of the food provided and the appropriateness of the food for children were important characteristics of the food provision. For example, site 1 said:

Researcher: *What was the food like?*

Participant 2: *The kids enjoyed it so [laughs]...*

Participant 1: *This was, this was just bog-standard soft play food.*

Participant 2: *Yeah.*

Participant 1: [Audible] *They’re happy. I don’t care.*

Participant 2: *Yeah. They were happy, yeah.*

- Site 1.

In another example, one Parent/Carer described how the food was healthy but simple and child-friendly:

“I mean, it’s quite kiddy friendly food. Which is good because kids can be quite fussy. I wouldn’t say...At home, we tend to do a bit more, like, intensive cooking, like a good Caribbean curry or other Caribbean stuff. It’s more light, but healthier, in a way. You know, and then fruit. Here you’ve got chicken nuggets, and you are encouraging fruit, which is quite good. So I, I find it quite good, you know? Simple but healthy, you know? A good balance.” - Site 10.

A few of the Parents/Carers highlighted that their holiday club provided a level of choice for their food provision however, the majority of Parents suggested that there was a limited choice of food and the Holiday Clubs would therefore benefit from offering more variety where possible to account for children’s food preferences and dietary needs [P1]:

“Here she’s like, mummy it’s cheese sandwich every day, cheese sandwich [laughs]. But I think I understand, because she’s vegetarian sometimes it’s a bit more complex to find something vegetarian for her every day, which is understandable so I said to her well you just have to deal with it because children who eat meat they might be getting a tuna sandwich or a ham sandwich but with you there’s not much they can offer you because you don’t eat egg either. So then it’s bread and cheese all the time [laughs]. Cuz that’s all they can find for her to eat anyway.” - Site 5, group 1.

A couple of the Parents/Carers highlighted that there is sometimes a surplus of food that their children bring home when the holiday club finishes:

“There seems to be, sometimes there seems to be a surplus of food and other- I’ve bought her something to snack on and she goes, no I’ve got this, and on other days when I don’t bring her something, she hasn’t got something. So, erm, but yeah it seems to be.” - Site 5, group 2

“Sometimes there’s been extra’s available and they say do you want to take an extra bag or whatever, the children have been happy” - Site 6.

Children perspective (Tree of Hope)

When the children were asked what fruits and vegetables they had eaten during the Holiday Club there were many one word answers given in response. [Table 6.](#) shows the answers that were given and the number of times the answer was repeated by other children. As the table shows there were more answers given regarding fruit than there were vegetables.

Table 6. The types of fruits and vegetables eaten by children throughout the programme.

Vegetables	Total number of mentions by different children	Fruit	Total number of mentions by different children	Other	Total number of mentions by different children
Carrots	8	Strawberries	11	Salad	1
Cucumber	7	Raspberries	3	Yoghurt	2
Sweetcorn	4	Apple	13	Orange juice	2
Cabbage	1	Pears	1	Lettuce	2
		Tomato	3	Pasta	1
		Grapes	14		
		Orange	9		
		Melon	9		
		Watermelon			
		Blueberries	2		
		Kiwi	1		
		Pineapple	2		
		Cantaloupe	4		
		Banana	2		
		Plums	1		

Overall, the Government aims and standards related to this evaluation objective were partially met as the provision of food varied from one Provider to another although generally, the parents perceived the food offer as satisfactory to very good quality. The variety of provision relates to the presence or lack thereof of hot meals, a greater range of food options for children, and greater consideration of dietary needs.

Evaluation objective 2: Opportunities to engage in physical activity

This evaluation objective provided data relating to Government aim 2 (be more active during the school holidays) and Government standards 4 - 7. Data for this objective emerged from the Co-ordinator perspective (focus group), Provider perspective (focus groups and surveys), Parent/Carers perspective (focus groups and surveys) and the Child perspective (Tree of Hope).

Co-ordinator perspectives (focus groups)

Co-ordinator site visits identified that programmes provided physical activity opportunities in a variety of ways, from structured sports to soft play centres.

“Yeah, just think from my perspective see the visits there are such a variation in terms of the providers and what they were providing and how they were done from your sort of traditional hobbies, sports activity clubs as it were through to just soft play kind of thing where it was very much a here's the facility and here's your food away you go and play kind of thing but the consistent thing throughout all of those there is that I saw young people are having fun which is going to be the most important thing in a safe environment.”

The focus group highlighted that one Holiday Club specifically focussed on providing a club for children with disabilities and additional needs and was able to overcome barriers to participation and increase the physical activity of these children/young people:

“One I went to was specifically for disabled people, and actually that's in life is a barrier often to the [inaudible] and things. And out of the two I went to see, one was being delivered in a very rural village sort of setting, and so traditionally that wouldn't work or would very rare, but they managed through the transport they've got already to do pick-ups around, not just the [inaudible], but across the county to get them over there and to take part. So that was both great to see, but again, a model if we're looking to attract more disabled young people to the programme and then it's again finding the right provider. Or a link with the Community transport provision that can provide that as well and not just reliant on the parents and carers.”

Provider perspectives (survey)

The Providers were asked “How frequently were you able to provide at least 60 minutes of physical activity per session?” to which all but one provider responded every session (see [figure 6](#)).

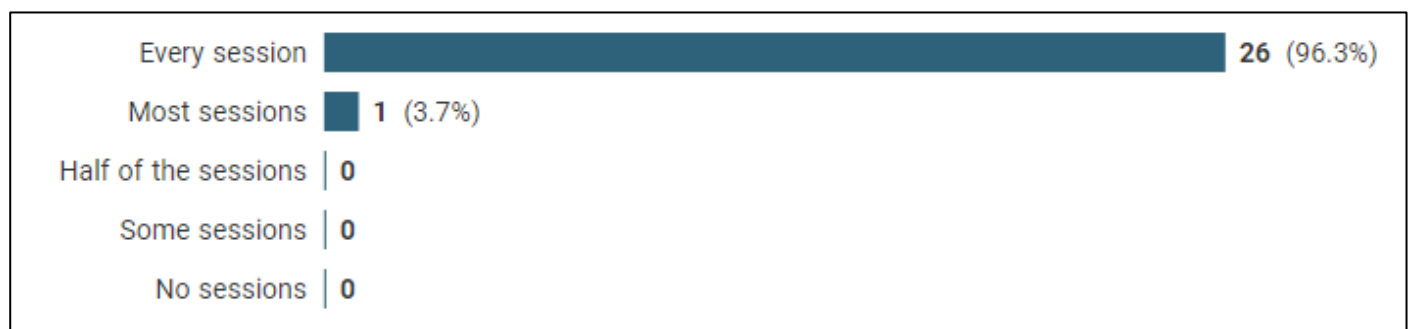


Figure 6. Answers given by providers in response to the question “How frequently were you able to provide at least 60 minutes of physical activity per session?”

Provider perspectives (focus groups)

A few of the Providers reflected on the physical activity provision available within their Holiday Club during the focus groups. Some highlighted that they incorporate physical activity into their provision, and others highlighted that sport and physical activity was the core focus of their provision:

“They've [the children] got loads of physical activity and in our centre, that's what we're all about.” – Site 1, group 3.

One of the Providers highlighted that although their Holiday Club was predominantly focused on physical activity, their provision also covered a range of broader opportunities and outcomes for children:

“So our course is actually called the [programme name removed] and had a lot of physical activity in it. But it was also, the aim was to focus on them developing as individuals, meeting new people, meeting friends, but also bring in children out of their shell” - Site 12, group 1.

Parent/Carer perspectives (survey)

Within the survey responses the Parents/Carers highlighted that in most cases the HAF Programme helped to increase the physical activity levels of their child(ren) (see [figure 7](#)).

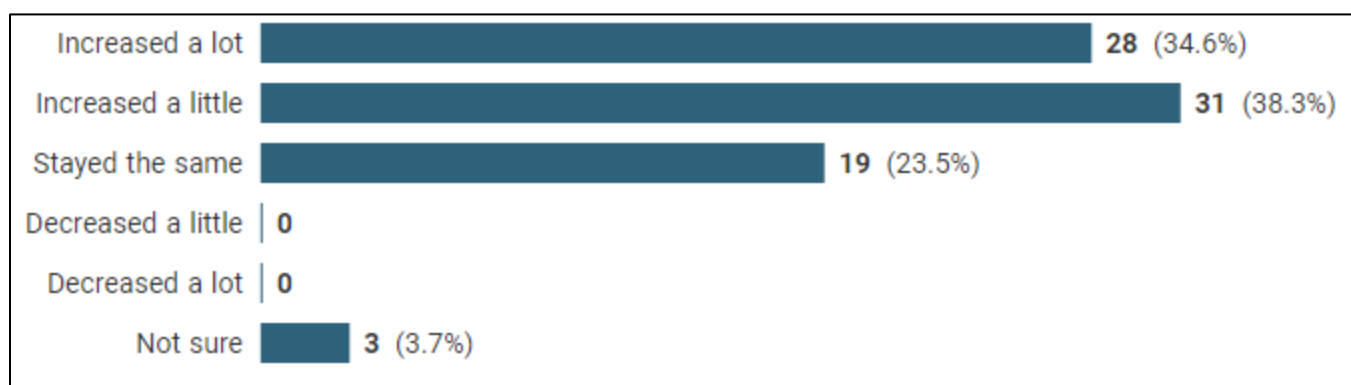


Figure 7. The answers given by parents in response to the question “By attending the Holiday Activities and Food Programme, has your child(ren)’s activity levels changed from what they normally are in the Summer?”

The Parents/Carers also highlighted that in the majority of cases there were opportunities for their child(ren) to participate in new activities (see [figure 8](#)).

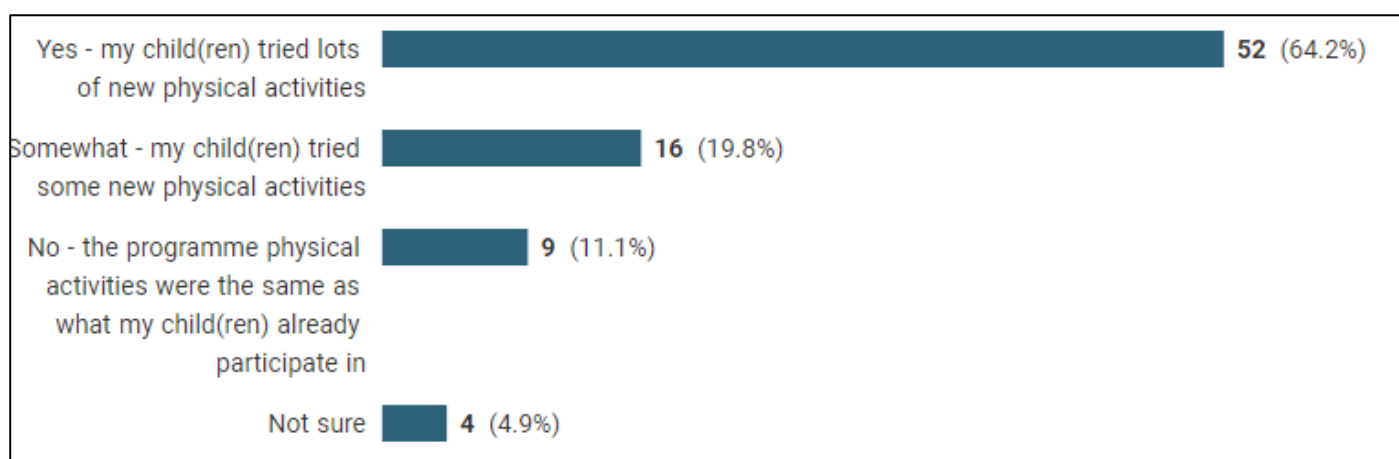


Figure 8. The answers given by parents in response to the question “Did the programme provide opportunities for your child(ren) to try activities that they would normally not be able to try?”

Parents/Carers were also asked about the wider impact of the physical activities within the programme and if their child(ren) had been motivated to try the physical activities elsewhere. Several parents/carers provided further information within the survey explaining that their children were inspired to join new sports clubs:

“MMA and joined the cricket club”.

“Cricket, he now has a cricket set at home and has asked to join a cricket club”.

“We are enquiring about Yoga at her school”.

“Wants to try archery club”.

Several Parents/Carers highlighted that their child(ren) were being more active in their local environment:

“Playing football frequently – at home, the park & out with neighbours!”

“They practice what they have learnt at home”.

“Football at the park”.

“Going on the trampoline a bit more and trying more afterschool activities at his school”.

“He would like to do more scooting, I cannot afford to go to the indoor so we have continued to go to the local outdoor stake park”.

Some of the Parents/Carers gave further information about how the physical activity within the programme has impact other aspects of their child(ren)’s lives:

“He will now cycle to the park which he did not have the confidence to do before”.

“Getting involved in PE at school more happily. Also we are going swimming every week now.”

Parent/Carer perspectives (focus groups)

The discussions with Parents/Carers from different Holiday Clubs suggested that the provision of sport and physical activity provision varied across the clubs. A couple of Parents/Carers highlighted that there did not appear to be any sport related activities provided at the holiday club. In the majority of clubs, sport and physical activity was provided, though Parents/Carers reflections highlighted a spectrum of provision across the club. Parents/Carers highlighted that their holiday club provided a range of sport and physical activity opportunities for children:

“Mine have done a variety of things erm, basketball, football...I’m sure they-I’m sure they’ve come home and said they’ve done archery, they’ve played rounders, they played- I think they played tennis. So they’ve done a variety of physical activities.” -Site 7.

Similarly, some Holiday Clubs were focused on sport and physical activity as a predominant part of their Holiday Club provision:

“This is more sporty, running around...which I have two boys, one of them really likes the sport more than the other one but they’ve both enjoyed being out in the fresh air which is kind of what I wanted them to do.” -Site 6.

A few of the Parents/Carers suggested that their holiday club could incorporate more sport or physical activities into their overall provision [P4]. For example:

“I think they could have used the space and, ya know, taught the children a bit of golf or maybe just play on the grass, get some fresh air, ya know.” - Site 5, group 1.

Children perspective

To identify the types of physical activity that the children completed whilst they were at the various clubs the children were asked what activities they enjoyed the most (see [table 7](#)) and what new activities they had tried (see [table 8](#)). Overall, the Government aims and standards aligned with this evaluation objective were met. Children were provided with a wide range of physical activities and gave them opportunities to try new activities. The HAF Programme increased children’s physical activity levels and encouraged them join new clubs and continue activities at home.

Table 7. The activities that children enjoyed the most and the number of times the answer was repeated by different children.

Activity	Total number of mentions by different children
Sports	
Football	13
Rugby	1
Gymnastics	1
Gym	2
Volleyball	1
Cricket	1
Basketball	1
Hockey	3
Tennis	1
Netball	3
Golf	1
Physical Activity	
Play or free play	9
Tag	3
Bench ball	4
Chaos Tag	3
Park	2
Playing outside	3
Running around	1
Wink murder	4
Sandpit	5
Games	2
Frisbee	2
Bottle flips	1
Dodgeball	12
Bull dog	1
Climbing frame	2
Spiderman Tag	1

Table 8. The new activities that the children had tried during the Holiday Clubs.

Activity	Total number of mentions by different children.
Sports	
Tennis	1
Badminton	1
Cricket	1
Fencing	1
Hockey	1
Football	1
Rounders	1
Basketball	1
Physical Activity	
Spiderman Tag	4
Sport Nite	1
Line Tag	4
Cross for Free	1
Chaos Tag	1
Monkey bars	1
Playing museum games	2
Chaos Tag	1

Evaluation objective 3: Development of health and wellbeing outcomes

This evaluation objective provided data relating to Government aim 3 (take part in engaging and enriching activities which support the development of resilience, character and wellbeing along with wider educational attainment). Data for this objective emerged from the Parents/Carers perspective (focus groups) and Provider perspective (focus groups). Data did not emerge from the Co-ordinator focus group, Provider surveys, Parent surveys or Child perspective.

Provider perspectives (focus groups)

The Providers highlighted that the Holiday Club provision enabled a range of important personal, social and developmental opportunities for the children such as mental health, wellbeing, social skills, behavioural improvements and the development of life skills. For example:

“On the health and wellbeing and mental health, I think it was a fantastic opportunity to get them out the house to get them mixed in with other children and for us to set great life skill standards for them with a behaviour management programme...there was also many great things that those children, young leader schemes - getting the children that were challenging to become children that were helpful and seeing the benefits of that helped keep them in our program. And will hopefully change a lot of their futures. That's what I can see for miles.” - Site 7, group 1.

“If I use the case study of a boy, the first time he came, he sat by himself, very quiet, couldn't really talk. By the time he came the second time or by the end of the programme, he had the loudest laugh among the people because he has so changed...he has really opened up, you know, playing and laughing and like, this was the boy on this first day that couldn't even say anything, you know, yeah, so I think it has a big impact on their wellbeing. Some of them, whatever problems they have at home, when they do those kind of sessions, they don't have time to think about it. Because they can put that aside and focus on what they are doing. That's giving them those few hours from whatever is going at home.” - Site 10, group 2.

Similarly, some of the Providers highlighted that providing wellbeing talks/sessions with the children enabled children to develop emotionally, become more aware and sensitive to the needs of themselves as well as others and how to develop their wellbeing. For example:

Provider 1: The leaders are able to communicate with the children and understand their needs differently and then doing wellbeing sessions with the children so they understand their emotions and how best they can display them in camp and how they can communicate better.

Provider 2: We did wellbeing discussions every day at the end of our camp for the last 15 minutes. We looked at things like, what physical activities they do with family or themselves or how...Why is it important? We had we looked at sleep. We looked at friendships.” - Site 7 and 12, group 1.

The following Provider quote emphasised the importance of the Programme in enabling children to be safe, thriving, happy and enriched during the summer:

“It's when you get to know them as individuals as well. When you see their growth. Because I've worked for [holiday club name removed] for a long time and you never have the same child day one week one as you do the last day of week six, they grow and they will come and to be able to offer them stability and to be able to do that in a fun way with exercise and to watch them lose a little bit of that inhibitions or their reluctance and start becoming different people...I think it's really brilliant and I think what it has to be stressed about this is it we are providing a safe space for these children and we're monitoring them and getting to know them and finding things out that may have necessarily not come to the forefront unless they were in this safe space with stable, welcoming and friendly leaders who they have chosen to get to know and build a rapport with and lots of things and contribute to keeping them safe or just contribute to them being happy and having a better life.

In general, I think that really has to be stressed because there's not enough of that going on at the moment."
- Site 8, group 1.

One of the Providers highlighted that the Programme provides opportunities for children to engage with new experiences:

"For some of those young people, the experiences that they're having were first time experiences. So they've got, you know, they've never been to a drama workshop before, or they'd never sat in a hammock in the in the wood before. And so I'd say that, for us it was like, yes, brilliant. Let's get these young people in." – Site 5, group 3.

One of the Providers also highlighted that an outcome of the Programme was that it has increased the visibility of the broader youth provision they offer locally to children, and the Programme therefore, enabled the wider local community to become more aware of and involved in the opportunities available to children locally:

"It's just helping to build those relationships within the wider community and not just the young people...giving the community more opportunity to see us actually what we do...The charity has been around for like 9 years now. Some people still don't know what we do and they tell us 'oh we didn't know that was available'. We didn't know that, so I think that system gives the charity kind of exposure...other people could like see what we do as well and come, so it's a good system." - Site 13, group 2.

Parent/Carer perspectives (focus groups)

The Parents/Carers highlighted that the Holiday Club provided important opportunities for their child(ren) such as enabling a sense of routine, providing stimulating opportunities for children that they could not achieve at home, encouraged children to enjoy themselves, and enabled children to use their energy positively:

"The energy is going in a positive way. And I am quite one for that, anything that uses positive energy, then feel free." - Site 10.

The following quote highlights the beneficial role of affording children with routine during the school holidays:

Participant 1: *And I think that they benefit from being organised, as in organised activities to do...*

Participant 2: *Routine.*

Participant 1: *...Because it's not something we could do at home, we couldn't do that at home with them.*

Researcher: *Yeah. So routine is quite important to you as a family and to your children?*

Participant 1: *Yeah, definitely, I think they thrive on it.*

Researcher: *What do you think it is about that, that makes them thrive, like what's so important about it?*

Participant 1: *Erm, I just think it makes them feel safe because they know what's happening next. It's like a bit when they go to school, they know they do this, this, this and this.*

Participant 2: *Yeah, same here. Exactly what [parent name removed] has just said, you know... the fact that they know that this is what's going to happen these days. Gonna get up at this time, this is what's gonna happen, we go here, and this is what's gonna happen, then I'm gonna have my lunch and this gonna happen then mum is gonna pick me up, like...*

Participant 1: *Exactly.* - Site 7.

Alongside the opportunities for children, many of the Parents/Carers reflected on some observable changes in their child(ren) during their time at the Holiday Clubs in relation to their wellbeing, behaviour and overall personal development. Some Parents/Carers noticed improvements in their child's confidence:

Researcher: *And have you noticed any broader changes in your children's health and wellbeing or any personal characteristics about them during the period they've been going to the camp?*

Participant 2: *Confidence massively. I've noticed a massive change in confidence in both of mine.*

Participant 1: *I would agree confidence as well.*

Researcher: *Yeah. And what is it that's improved their confidence, do you think?*

Participant 2: *Like being able to speak up more.* - Site 7.

Similarly, some Parents/Carers reflected on improvements in their child's wellbeing:

Researcher: *So, have you noticed any changes in your children's...*

Participant 3: *Happier.*

Participant 1: *Happier.*

Participant 3: *Much happier. He's very erm, he's very emotional... he's a really, really unhappy child. But since he's come here, he's a happy child. I'm getting upset now...* - Site 2.

Parents/Carers from this Holiday Club also highlighted that part of the reason for the improvements in their child's wellbeing is attributed to the rewarding environment created by the Holiday Club staff:

Researcher: *So what is it about this place you think, that makes them so happy?*

Participant 1: *The staff. You've got to give them a lot of credit.*

Participant 3: *Not been told off, thinks he's been good.*

Participant 1: *They reward them, like you said with the tattoos and the cake [inaudible]... like wow.* - Site 2.

Some Parents/Carers reflected on how their child had improved educationally, behaviourally and developmentally. For example, being involved in enriching activities such as craft activities enabled their child to discover new skills, they did not know they had, and being involved in activities such as food preparation helped to foster independence. The following quote provides examples of how attending the holiday club helped to improve a child's behaviour as it provided stimulation, routine and social opportunities:

Participant 2: *Like I said about [child name removed]...at the beginning of the holiday, her behaviour was, almost like hormonal, but not hormonal, up and down, up and down, and this, with the routine and meeting new people, her brain has been challenged a bit each day. It's worse, it's not easy for us so... we all bounce off each other. But uh yeah, her behaviour has improved. She was never awful ya know, just with mum.*

Participant 1: *They're just frustrated I think and that's why they needed something like this.*

- Site 6.

In addition, Parents/Carers from one of the Holiday Clubs reflected on how a 'young leaders' model, where older children support younger children at the holiday club, enabled their children's behaviour to improve as well as enabling them to develop, progress and gain a sense of responsibility:

"So, on Friday, last Friday, my two-my twins were made 'young leaders'. Which actually made me really proud as well that actually, ya know what, it just shows... that you can follow right from wrong...And like it's a godsend because it gives children that sense of mmm well if I do this, I'm not gonna get this but if I do this this way then actually, I can get higher up. And it gives them that feeling of having a little bit extra responsibility. Like a little bit of erm... what would be the word to use...erm... authority. Feeling a bit like special, I would guess. Feeling oh well actually I can help the younger ones and I can help with planning like certain things and have an input. So I do think that that young leader role that they had the opportunity to work towards is amazing." - Site 7.

The Government aim aligned with this evaluation objective was met as the HAF Programme provided a structure to the children's days, which helped manage their behaviour and expectations as well as personal development.

Evaluation objective 4: Opportunities to engage in enrichment activities

This evaluation objective provided data relating to the Government aim 3 (take part in engaging and enriching activities which support the development of resilience, character and wellbeing along with wider educational attainment) and Government standards 4 - 7. Data for this objective emerged from the Co-ordinator perspective (focus group), Provider perspective (focus groups and surveys), Parents/Carers perspective (focus groups and surveys) and child perspective (tree of hope).

Co-ordinator perspectives (focus groups)

Several of the Co-ordinators commented on the fact that there were a range of activities and were able to cater to a range of different children:

"So couple of ones I went to visit where specific provision for disabled young people. So again, it's fantastic to see some of those that had expanded out of things that currently just gone on alternate weekends, but now obviously provided that right throughout the summer holidays..."

However, there were several gaps when it came to providing opportunities for older children and teenagers [P8]:

"Plus, you've also got the issue of.... Trying to get a teenager to do a kid's session. I mean I know I've got two teenagers and as soon as you make it sort of 12 that was it, anything to do with going to like a play scheme or a club or anything like that. That was a- just a no, it was a no. So I think moving forward we would have to really look at some source of you know, interesting provision for the older ones to try and get in there".

The Co-ordinators reflected that the lack of provisions for older children and teenagers was a result of a lack of training for the providers [F14]:

"...obviously one of the big challenges is that older age group trying to get the delivers out of the mindset of nine o'clock start... Secondary school age teenagers, they're not going to be there for 9:00 o'clock. Get them there two o'clock onwards. Uh, have that kind of drop in drop out feel to it. So if the teenager only comes for the meal, they're coming for the meals get them involved in something, just to do a check in with them. Uh, and a lot of the delivers were probably aimed at the primary, and that's where their skillset is... So I think that some of the big work is around that secondary offer."

The Co-ordinators did comment that there were some provisions in place for teenagers however the short preparation time meant that it was inadequately advertised which affected attendance:

Participant 1: That at last minute nature of... of getting out there and some of the providers what they put on. Didn't fully reflect what they were offering so if I was a teenager I wouldn't sign up to it. But we knew as Northamptonshire Sport that's probably a perfect one for the teenagers. It just wasn't sold to them in the right way.

Participant 2: Yeah, I think, just briefly, I didn't mention about the provision for the older ones. We weren't really seeing a higher group of older kids, but I think [name removed] right that's some of that has to do with not the activities. There were activities there, but not necessarily marketed in the right way at the older ones.

Provider perspectives (survey)

Figure 9 shows that when asked about the delivery of enrichment activities, 13 Providers delivered activities every session, nine delivered activities for most/some of the sessions and four delivered no sessions.

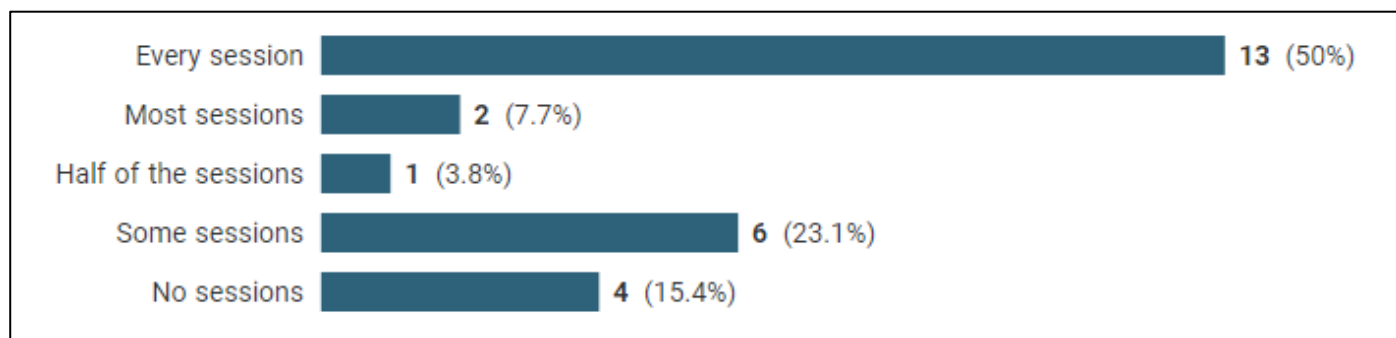


Figure 9. The responses given by Providers in response to the question “How frequently were you able to provide enrichment activities per session? Examples could be learning or practicing new skills or visiting nature and historical sites.”

When asked to expand upon their answers, within the surveys, Providers gave examples of craft activities such as “Dream catcher making” and “Story jars” and cooking activities such as “Cookie decorating”. Others described theme days where skills and learning were incorporated, such as “Sherlock Holmes Detective Day”, “Harry Potter Day” and “Recycling Week”. Some Providers gave examples of activities such as “Tents and BBQ (on school field)”, “Walk to the park”, “Visit to a farm”, “Blackberry picking” and “Forest Schools”. One provider explained how they used the activities as a means to improve wider skills:

“Confidence building - design and deliver an obstacle course to the group, improving communication skills. Listening skills - one child describing, another drawing.”

Provider perspectives (focus groups)

Many of the Providers reflected on the enrichment opportunities they provide to children through numerous craft, art and food-related activities. Craft and art-related activities included role playing activities, wilderness experiences and film-making experiences. Examples of food related activities included “baking session[s]” (Provider focus group 2, site 10), “seed planting” (Provider focus group 3, site 5) and involving children in cooking:

“What we do is because we do cookery classes as part of our camps. And we got the children to, under supervision, obviously to cook, and we use that for the for the snack programme, so it supplements the snack programme and gives the children some great insight into cooking.” (Provider focus group 1, site 8).

Parent/Carer perspectives (survey)

To identify if there were opportunities for the children to take part in enriching activities, the Parents/Carers were asked if the programme allowed their child(ren) to try new skills or topics, the majority (81%) of the answers confirmed that there were new opportunities for their child(ren) (see [figure 10](#)).

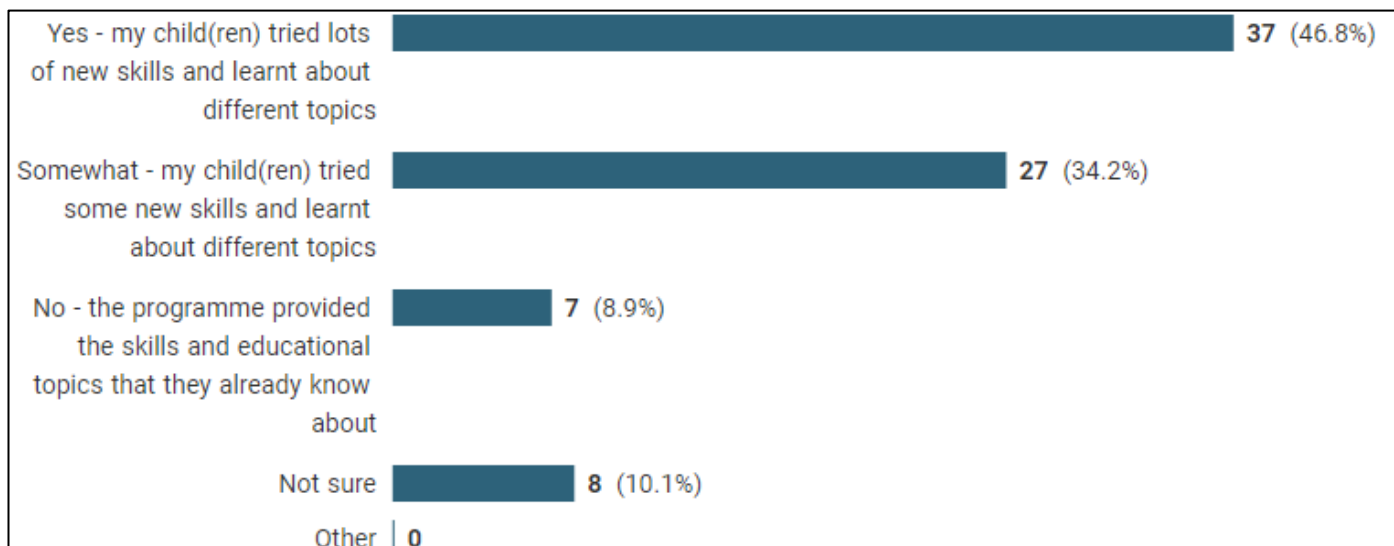


Figure 10. The answers given by parents/carers given in response to the question “Did the Programme provide opportunities for your child(ren) to try new skills and learn about new topics that they would normally not be able to do in the Summer holidays?”

When asked to further elaborate on their answer’s Parents/Carers responded that the children learnt/tried both new physical activities and cooking activities:

“Cooking different foods/meals. Learning about mini beasts”.

“Forest school. He would not normally engage in this sort of session”.

“Son – boxing. He loved learning how to stand, how to stay safe and how to keep fit”.

“Karting as they haven’t done it before”.

“Making flap jacks and pizza”.

Several Parents/Carers highlighted that learning the new skills and topics had several wider reaching impacts such as confidence and social skills:

“Swimming – they have gained so much confidence!”

“Learning to wait her turn. Waiting doesn’t come easily due to her autism”.

“Go Karting, he loved it, got his heart pumping and he made new friends”.

“Remembering routines, hand eye coordination, teamwork and Sign Language...”

“They took so much away from everything, cannot pinpoint any particular activity”.

Parents/Carers also highlighted that their child(ren) were in the most part (75%) motivated to continue developing these skills or learning about the new topics after the Programme was finished (see [figure 11.](#)) often “*at home*” or “*local parks*” with some children joining new clubs. Although one Parent/Carer said that the skills and knowledge are not being developed because “*...we can’t afford it*” [P7].

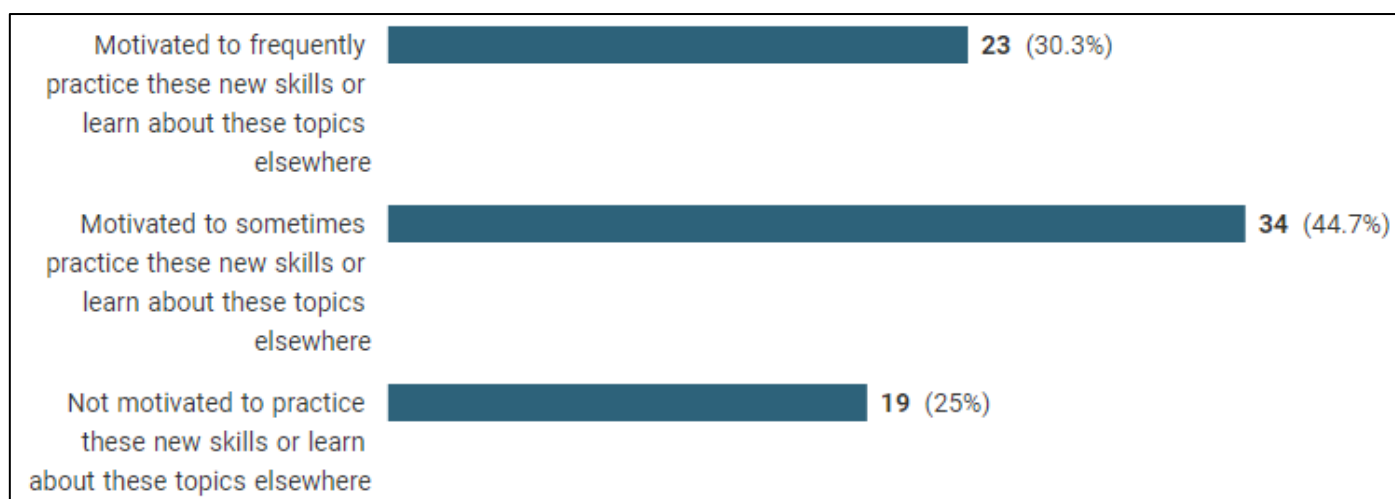


Figure 11. Answers given by parents in response to the question “After experiencing these new skills and educational topics at the Holiday Activity and Food Programme, has your child(ren) been motivated to continue developing these skills or learning about these education topics elsewhere 9such as at home, in the park, or joined a local club)?”

Parent/Carer perspectives (focus groups)

Most of the Parents/Carers were able to provide examples of enrichment opportunities provided to their child(ren) by the Holiday Clubs. These were typically craft-related activities, art-based activities, and food-related activities.

Examples of craft-related and art-related activity included “making jewellery” (Site 7), making “parrots made out of toilet rolls” (Site 9), “sewing” (Site 10), “doing arts and crafts...dress up as superheroes...designing her tote bag and...catch the killer, you know, where they’re trying to find who’s done the crime?” (Site 5 group 1), and a “Punch and Judy show” (Site 5 group 1).

Food-related activities were typically simple activities such as occasional cake-baking activities, although Parents/Carers from one of the focus groups highlighted that their child(ren) were involved in regular and substantial food-related activities including food preparation, baking and cooking:

Researcher: *And erm, just in terms of like food related activities, are you aware of any food related activities that they’ve done with the children?*

Participant 1: *Yeah, they did food related things every day according to my son. He made things and that was his favourite part of the day.*

Participant 2: *My children have the same, they’ve made various different things and really enjoyed that-that side of it.*

Researcher: *And what sorts of things did they make?*

Participant 1: *Erm, well he said that they made lasagne, pasta bolognaise, different cakes and I can’t remember the other thing, but every day they did some kind of cooking which he really likes. - Site 7.*

However, there were several Parents/Carers that highlighted that there were no food-related activities provided within the Holiday Clubs that they were aware of. For example:

Researcher: *So there weren’t like any food related activities like cooking or...?*

Participant 1: *No. Nothing like that, nope.*

Participant 2: *No, it was done for you and bought out to you.*

Participant 1: *We don’t, we haven’t really seen them, have we?*

Participant 2: *No, no we haven’t no. - Site 1.*

Some Parents/Carers said they were keen to see the Holiday Clubs build on the incorporation of food-related activities, whether that includes beginning to incorporate simple food activities such as chopping vegetables, or incorporating more extensive activities such as cooking a full meal:

Participant 2: *...Maybe it would be nice to involve all the children like the dinner side of things erm... because even if it was just the preparing and then cook it later on...Or, we helped to make their dinner, we helped too.*

Participant 1: *Yea, maybe if there was a plan of what they were going to do and when, you could decide to let your children stay later one day to do it, if they're going to make pizza, for example, and you know your child would like it that...might be quite good.*

Participant 2: *It might be quite hard to plan for that.* - Site 7.

Within this quote, Parents/Carers recognised that these types of food-related would require some logistical thinking and planning by the Holiday Club Providers. However, in another focus group, Parents/Carers discussed how, if there were logistical challenges to incorporating extensive food-related activities, even simple activities such as encouraging the children to “*make their own sandwiches*” (Site 2) and teaching children to chop food would be implementable and a meaningful activity to involve children in:

“I think they could have, not really cooking because then again that’s about finding a suitable venue where they can cook, and that’s a bit more complex. But obviously learning how to maybe cut fruit or do shapes with cookie cutters on food, and then doing fruit kebabs or learning how to plate food, cut up food, I think that would have slightly added to the interest of children plating up their food and learning how to eat what they’ve plated.” - Site 5, group 1.

Some of the Parents/Carers highlighted that involving children in food-related activities could have some positive broader outcomes for their children, such as helping to improve their knowledge and behaviour around healthy eating [F2]:

“Yeah, it’d be a good idea [to involve children in food-related activities] cuz it gets them aware of what they shouldn’t really eat and what’s bad for them. Yeah so I think definitely there should be that sort of....teaching in it within the group and I think they learn a lot by it rather than mum telling em cuz they won’t listen to mum.” - Site 5, group 2.

Moreover, the Parents/Carers highlighted that involving children in food preparation can increase their willingness to taste new and healthy foods offered to them:

“I think that if they did erm, foods like that, erm like fruits and vegetables, they would be more keen to try those healthy options as oppose to, you know, when they’re at home, if they see a fruit platter or just raw food, they might not want to eat it but because, if it’s part of an activity they might want to eat it and try it because everyone else is doing it, everyone else might encourage, you know, each child is looking at the other for inspirations and they might be inspired to eat.” - Site 5, group 1.

Child perspectives

To identify the types of enrichment opportunities that the children completed whilst they were at the various clubs the children were asked what activities they enjoyed the most (see [table 9](#)) and what new activities they had tried (see [table 10](#)). The tables show that there were a number of different enrichment activities relating to art and craft, cooking and social activities.

Table 9. The activities that children enjoyed the most and the number of times the answer was repeated by different children.

Creative Activities	
Activity	Total number of mentions by different children
Arts and crafts	6
Colouring	4
Building Dens	1
Science Experiments	2
Making mazes	3
Painting 5	5
Coin games	3
Pens	1
Bucket Drums	1
Painting	1
Jewellery making	7
Tie dye	2
Making earrings	1
Ceramic painting	1
Card making	1
Face Painting	1
Puzzles	1
Food Related Activities	
Cooking	5
Food	1
Making chocolate	1
Cookies	1
Apple crumble	1
Baking	2
Social and Role Play Activities	
Talking to them	1
Nintendo	1
Pirate Day	1
Lego	1
Playing museum games	1
Playing with my friends	2
Costumes	1
Toys	1
Playing on iPads/TV	1
Making new friends	1

Table 10. The new activities that the children had tried during the Holiday Clubs.

Activity	Total number of mentions by different children
Social and Role Play Activities	
Acting stories and performances	1
A show on the stage	1
Card games	1
Lego	1
Creative Activities	
Painting and crafts	3
Spaghetti tower	3
Lava lamp	4
Exploding head	2
Bucket drums	1
Shuttle rainbow	2
Vending machine	1
Making stickers	2
Tie dye	1
Jewellery	2
Puzzle	1
Colouring	1
Making kites	1
Food Related Activities	
Oat cookies	1
Cooking new food	2

The Government aim and standards aligned to this evaluation objective were met as children were able to try new activities across a wider variety of provision such as, crafting, food preparation, physical activity, and arts.

Evaluation objective 5: Social opportunities

This evaluation objective provided data relating to Government aim 4 (be safe and not be socially isolated) and Government standards 11 - 12. Data for this objective emerged from the Provider perspective (focus groups), Parent perspective (focus groups and surveys) and the Child perspective (Tree of Hope). Data did not emerge from the Co-ordinator focus group or the Provider survey.

Provider perspectives (focus groups)

A few of the Providers briefly highlighted that their Holiday Club provision enabled children the opportunity to socialise:

“There's obviously lots of children. Then they can meet new people and, you know, there's a huge amount of benefits for what is just seen as play. Uh, so that there'd be lots of benefits in that meeting new people, interactions and all sorts of things like that.” - Site 1, group 3.

Parent/Carer perspectives (survey)

Parents/Carers were asked if the HAF Programme has impacted upon their child(ren)'s ability to socialise, in which more than half responded that their child(ren)'s ability to socialise had increased (see [figure 12](#)). Parents/Carers further explained that this was in part due to the impacts of COVID preventing socialising opportunities and the HAF Programme allowed the children to meet other children, socialise and make friends. Some Parents/Carers also pointed

out that the clubs had different children attending each day/session which meant that their child(ren) had to interact with a wider selection people rather than their usual pool of friends.

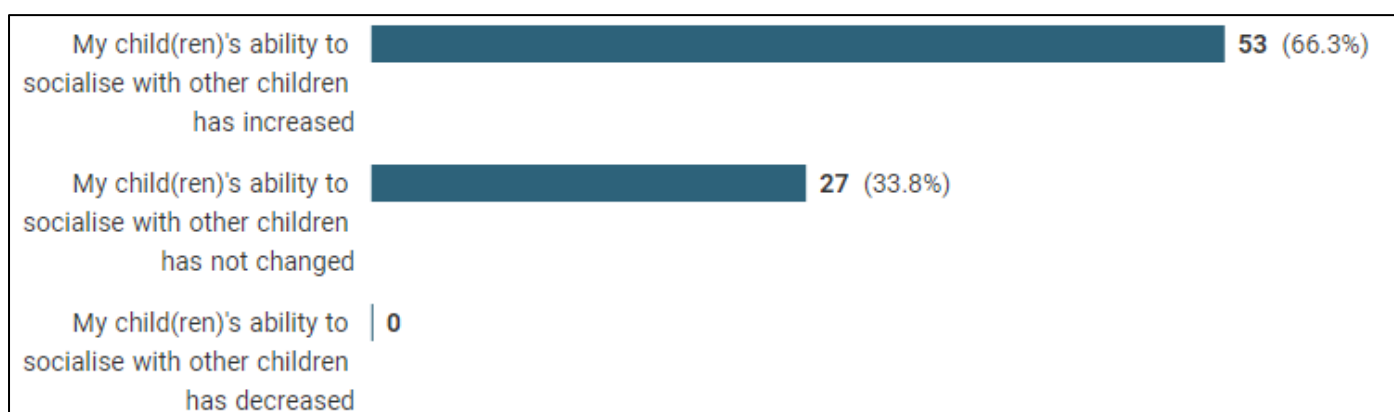


Figure 12. The answers given by parents in response to the question “Has attending the Holiday Activities and Food Programme changed your child(ren)’s ability to socialise with other children?”

Parents/Carers were also asked if the HAF Programme impacted upon their child(ren)’s confidence in meeting new people, in which more than half responded that they had seen an increase in their child(ren)’s confidence (See [figure 13](#)).

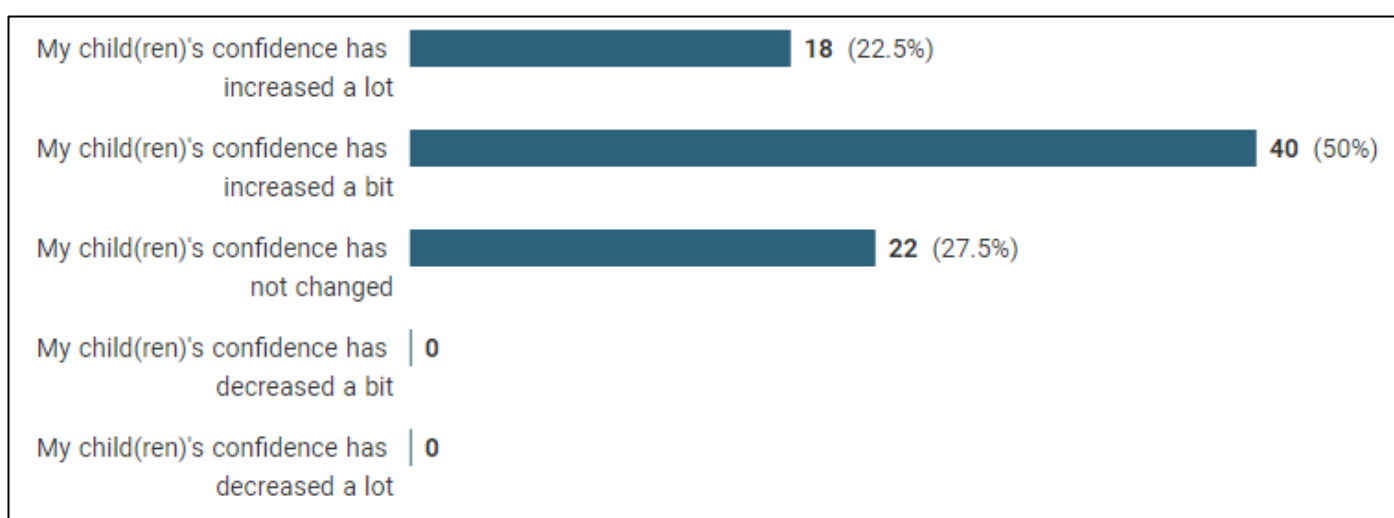


Figure 13. The answers given by parents/carers in response to the question “Have you seen any changes in your child(ren)’s confidence in meeting new people since attending the Holiday Activities and Food Programme?”

When Parents/Carers were asked to explain their answer in the survey further they highlighted that being in a friendly and safe environment whilst continually interacting with different children and making friends has helped their child(ren) to build confidence. For example:

“Talking to new people when on holiday (making friends with other children)”.

“By being around friendly staff and children”.

“My children both came home from each day they attended happy and fulfilled. My son is more easily pleased but my daughter often doesn't enjoy these activities or places/people that she is unfamiliar with however she asked to return to one of the places after attending the first session which was a great feeling for me given her usual withdrawal from socialising and lack of confidence”.

"They went to a new club for the first time and came out having made new friends who we have remained in contact with."

"They are now happy to go out and talk to new friends at parks".

"She has loved mixing with children from different backgrounds with different needs physical and mental and has been able to build friendships and understand that we everyone is different in their abilities but the same when it comes to building friendships".

To examine what contributed to a safe environment, which helped to improve children's confidence, Parents/Carers were asked "When your child(ren) attends the Holiday Activities and Food Programme, how do you feel about their safety?" within the survey. Most Parents/Carers identified that they felt happy about their child(ren)'s safety (see figure 14).

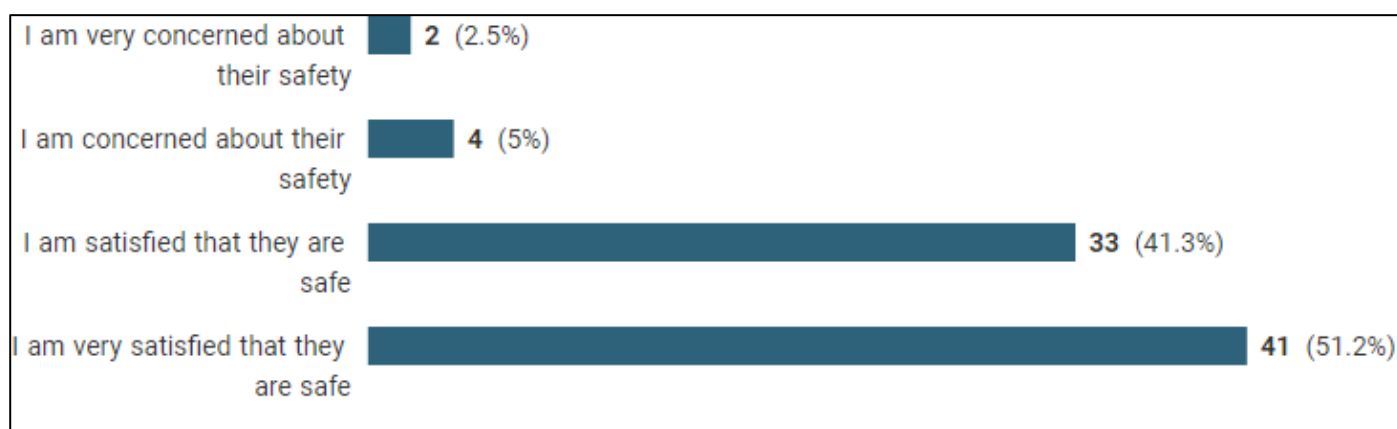


Figure 14. The answers given by parents/carers in response to the questions "When your child(ren) attends the Holiday Activities and Food Programme, how do you feel about their safety?"

When asked to further explain their answers the majority of Parents/Carers emphasised that it was the staff and their efforts that made them and their child(ren) feel safe:

"Communication was always excellent".

"The staff made a conscious effort to make sure that my child was safe by explaining everything checking they had the correct contact number".

"DBS checked".

"Any problems they would notify me".

"The leaders didn't let children go home unless the person picking them up gave them a password".

"They are keen to go back and love seeing the staff and friends they have made. This makes me feel like they are well looked after and emotionally ok. The consistency is reassuring for them. The staff are attentive and always happy".

Several Parents/Carers also highlighted that the environment that the club was conducted in contributed to their feelings about safety:

"Good environment, well trained staff".

"Secure doors so nobody can come inside and outside..."

"They were enclosed and watched safely by staff".

Additionally, Parents/Carers stated that one of the other main reasons that contributed to these feelings was their or their child(ren)'s familiarity with the club or environment as there was previous knowledge of the environment and/or the child(ren)'s needs [C2]:

"As run by [name removed] he knows my children's condition".

"Being at a club that she is familiar with and being specific for disabled children means I know she will be safe and it is inclusive".

"The club was at my daughter's school so I felt she was safe as I know the school and their security standards".

"Same company work with her school".

Those Parents/Carers that did not feel happy about their child(ren)'s safety explained that this was due to a lack of information regarding the staff, clubs, environment and knowledge of their child(ren)'s needs [P6]:

"Would be nice to get confirmation that all staff DBS and background checks done. Staff ratio increase. Extra info about available first aiders etc".

"One of my boys, particularly, has social and emotional difficulties. He may become unregulated and disruptive if triggered from time to time - but now not so often... I worry about his effect upon other children but also about the staff being able to manage."

"At the first session they had no record of them attending therefore no emergency contact details for me as a parent."

"First time, anxious and didn't know any of the volunteers or their backgrounds."

Parent/Carer perspectives (focus groups)

Many of the Parents/Carers highlighted that the most important aspect of the Programme provision was related to the social opportunities and enabling the children to meet new people. For example:

"For me it was the social aspect of being an only child really, getting him mixing so that was the most important for me." (Site 2).

Some of the Parents/Carers highlighted that these social opportunities were supported through other elements of the Holiday Club provision. For example, offering sport and physical activity enabled a platform for children to be social. Similarly, enabling children to sit and eat together during mealtimes was socially beneficial, and could create broader health and behavioural benefits such as encouraging children to eat their food, which may also help to alleviate children's fussy eating:

Researcher: *And what does she like about it?*

Participant 1: *Erm, I think she just likes to be a part of the team and then she enjoys it so that helps her to eat what's put in front of her.*

Participant 2: *Yeah eating with the other children.*

Researcher: *So seeing other children eating encourages her to do the same?*

Participants 1 & 2: *Yeah.*

Researcher: *That's that peer level influence in children.*

Participant 1: *It is for her because she's a bit of a fussy eater really. - Site 5, group 2.*

A few of the Parents/Carers reflected on the improvements they have seen in their child's social skills as a result of attending the Holiday Club. For example:

"Because of Covid, they've had a lot of time off because of that as well. So I think the kids really need it [the holiday club]. It's [the holiday club] important for their social skills; I've noticed a big difference with both my children, their social skills, so this has probably helped them...with our massive period off [referring to the Covid-19 pandemic], they've come back, they've not really been themselves with other children, they've struggled to open out and, you know, make friends and stuff. Whereas here, they are going into groups, they have teams, they cheer each other on and all that, and half the time, I've noticed the kids be more positive about it all compared to what it was." - Site 11.

Child perspectives

To identify social opportunities the children were asked 'What new friends they had made?'. Some of the children wrote a single name whilst others wrote several names. Some of the children explained that they made friends with people within their local community:

"I met [child's name removed] and I'd seen her before at the Hindu Centre and it was nice to see her again." - Site 5.

And others mentioned how they were making efforts to continue their friendship outside of the Holiday programme:

"[Child's name removed] is my best friend because he is funny and coo coo and crazy. We are going to get our mum's to swap numbers so we can talk again." - Site 5.

The children were also asked 'What things does Holiday Camp do to make you feel safe?' to examine Government Aim 4. Some of the children identified that the social aspect of the Holiday Club made them feel safe for example, *"Friends"* (Site 8) and *"It is happy"* (Site 10). Whilst others highlighted that the staff and the action that they took made them feel safe:

"Coaches and young leaders." - Site 6.

"The things on Holiday Camp that make me feel safe is that the teachers help us and look after us if anything happens." - Site 11.

"Being supervised has kept us safe. They made sure there are no fights. Being able to bring comforters. Having siblings here." - Site 5.

"Locking the doors." - Site 10.

"Help us when we get hurt." - Site 3.

The Government aim aligned to this evaluation objective was met as children had the opportunity to socialise with each other as well as the adults who were caring for them. The social aspect of the HAF Programme was viewed as one of the greatest benefits for the children.

Evaluation objective 6: Opportunities to improve knowledge of health and nutrition

This evaluation objective provided data relating to the Government aim 5 (have a greater knowledge of health and nutrition) and Government standards 8 - 9. Data for this objective emerged from the Provider perspective (focus groups and surveys), Parents/Carers (surveys) and child perspective (Tree of Hope). Data did not emerge from the Parent focus groups or the Co-ordinator focus group.

Provider perspectives (survey)

When asked about the delivery of nutrition education, Providers gave a range of responses in relation to frequency of delivery, with the most popular response (37%) was that nutrition education was delivered on “Some sessions” (see [figure 15](#)). Seven Providers reported that they delivered nutrition education “Every session”, 14 Providers reported that they delivered nutrition education “Most sessions”, 3 reported “Half of the sessions”, 10 reported “Some sessions” and 3 reported “No sessions”.

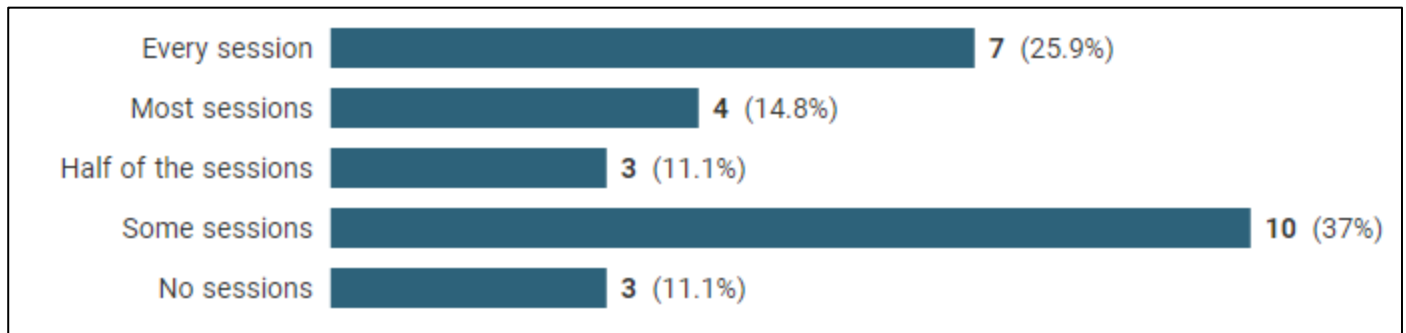


Figure 15. Answers given by Providers in response to the question “How frequently were you able to provide nutrition education per session?”

When asked to expand further on what this education included some Providers explained that this was from conversations around healthy eating and through discussions during cooking sessions:

“Design a healthy diet/food plate. Taking examples of certain foods and seeing content on labels and having discussions.”

“We talked about the food we were eating and had discussions with the children about food although most said they would like a McDonalds or similar.”

“Staff did activities like healthy plate, made smoothies, talked about healthy eating and tried new and healthy food options. Also the children helped prepare snacks with staff.”

“We ran a cooking workshop every other day providing children with knowledge of how to make healthy snacks and meals”

And some Providers used external sources and providers to deliver the education:

“Looked at what makes a healthy plate - using resources from [name removed]”.

“Also had 3 afternoons of [external provider removed] come in with the children to make and learn about healthy eating.”

“[Provider name removed] contacted [health care name removed] weight management team with whom we have worked with in the past to provide leaflets and dietary information for children and their parents.”

Therefore, the Providers used a range of activities and methods through which to deliver knowledge of health and nutrition. However, these activities may not have been the most successful at imparting knowledge to the children (see ‘Provider perspectives (focus groups)’ section below).

Provider perspectives (focus groups)

Of the Providers who discussed the delivery of activity to improve children's knowledge of health and nutrition, some described some provision that supported this Government aim, while other Providers highlighted various concerns about achieving this Government aim.

One Provider reflected on how their food-related enrichment provision was beneficial for improving children's knowledge of healthy eating, as children can learn what is in their food and learn that healthy food can be tasty [links with F2]:

"We have the baking session whereby children make a big pizza from the scratch. You know, so that they know they don't have to always buy it outside. You can make it at home with the flour, and then you can choose the amount of butter and things like that you put in and you can decide what you put on top. You know, making healthy, you can make like a vegetarian one or put some meat in and like teaching them that they can actually make cheaper, which would be more filling. They can make it thick based pizza as well, which is getting them to know that. So getting to know that that was one topic that I did and then having to make things like Flapjack using, you know using reduce sugar, teaching how to make that because when you buy the ones outside, you don't know how long it's been sitting in store somewhere. For even though they say it's organic, you don't know how organic or, how many sugars or preservatives used to actually keep it. Teaching them how to make this thing from scratch was very good, you know." - Site 10, group 2.

Another Provider highlighted that their craft-related activities enabled the children to learn about food budgeting:

"They did some nice activities where they make their own dinner plates that with craft items, so it opened up a lot of conversations and I think they did some work about budgeting in the shop, 'cause that's what it is. It boils down to education on that side of things" - Site 13, group 2.

One Provider highlighted that although it was part of the Programme contractual agreement to support children's knowledge of health and nutrition, they did not feel they achieved this aim. They also expressed uncertainty about how successfully they could achieve this aim, highlighting that children are more interested in other activities that are available at the Holiday Club rather than learning about health and nutrition [C1]:

"That was actually a part of the thing that we were meant to provide and that was in the contracts that we were meant to provide nutritional and information...but then again I think in our environment, I don't know whether we would have achieved that because I could say kids come through the doors and they're gone and they don't want to sit down and chop up a tomato or cucumber and taste it, or anything. You know, they just want to go and play. So I'm not sure how much of that we would have achieved anyway." - Site 1, group 3.

Another Provider highlighted that improving knowledge and behaviour related to healthy eating is challenging due to lack of education and engrained eating habits within the family that are difficult to change [C1]:

"The healthy eating feeling yeah. We can encourage it and we have lots of conversations and stuff, but I think that is a longer process. Because you're trying to change habits that are embedded in them. You know, a lot of the parents haven't got education, so you will see young people will turn up in really expensive clothes. Like trainers and track suits, but they're starving. So that is just a long process, isn't it? It goes further than just the young person, I think. And how would you get people to eat vegetables when they've never eaten vegetables? You don't." -Site 13, group 2.

Parent/Carer perspectives (survey)

Parents/Carers were asked "What, if anything, has your child(ren) learnt about how to look after their health and nutrition by attending the programme?". This was an open answer question where Parents/Carers could provide examples of the knowledge of what their child(ren) had learnt. Of the 72 responses given 43 responded with "Nothing", "None" or "Not sure". The Parents/Carers that did respond often explained that their child(ren) had knowledge prior to the programme or alternatively gave examples such as:

"They learned that staying active is essential."

“Balanced diet is necessary and not just sweets and chocs.”

“To drink more water every day he learnt there.”

“They have learnt more about healthy eating”.

“That keeping active is good and can be fun when doing something you enjoy. Being with others can be fun and so makes you feel good. Learning new skills gives you confidence.”

“Physically my child has been able to do other sports which he may not have thought to do. He is a very active person as it is so don't have any concern. Re nutritionally, I have always explained what's good for him and he understands that eating things in moderation is good for him. His mental health I believe has also improved as others have commented on I feel that is because he has been allowed to grow in himself. He's made some new friends and also learnt how to help others more.”

The lack of answers and specific detail given in some of the answers may be an indication that this aim was not met by the various providers and HAF Programme [C1].

Child perspectives

To identify what knowledge the children had learned about healthy nutrition they were asked “What have you learnt about keeping healthy?” Several of the answers involved food (specifically sugar and fruit) and physical exercise:

“Eating lots of fruit.” - Site 4.

“Eat healthy food.” - Site 4.

“Play outside.” - Site 8.

“Sports, fruit, water.” - Site 6.

“Eating vegetables and fruit 5 times a day. Water. Exercise.” - Site 5.

“I learnt to keep healthy by eating less junk food and more fruit...” - Site 5.

“I have learnt to use and eat less sugar in some certain foods so I can be healthier.” - Site 10.

Whilst others highlighted the importance of hygiene:

“Don't put a lot of sugar in one meal. Wash our hands before touching ingredients. Eat healthy and yummy fruit.” - Site 10.

And the importance of mental health as well as physical health:

“Eating fruit and veg. Hand sanitising before we eat. Eating chocolate in moderation. Being active. Interacting with other people keeps our minds healthy.” -Site 5.

The Government aim and standard aligned to this evaluation objective were partially met as the provision of health and nutrition education varied across Providers. The above evidence provides some helpful examples of activities that can engage children in health and nutrition education that Providers could implement into their provision.

Evaluation objective 7: Opportunities to engage with school and other local services

This evaluation objective provided data relating to the Government aim 6: children to be more engaged with school and other local services. Data for this objective emerged from Parents/Carers perspective (focus groups and surveys). Data did not emerge from Co-ordinator focus group, Provider focus groups and surveys, Parent surveys or children's perspective.

Parent/Carer perspectives (focus groups)

This objective scarcely featured in Parents/Carers discussions. However, one of the Parents/Carers highlighted that, as a result of attending the holiday club, their child has signed up to other local leisure provision:

“Since coming here, [child name removed] dad has actually got her a membership now for [leisure facility name removed].” - Site 2.

The lack of emerging finding from the data collection may suggest that the aim of engaging children in school and other local services may not have been attained or that further investigation is required to establish any long-term changes in children’s behaviours.

Evaluation objective 8: Opportunities to improve understanding of nutrition and food budgeting

This evaluation objective provided data relating to the Government aim 7 (develop parents’ understanding of nutrition and food budgeting) and Government standard 9. Data for this objective emerged from the Co-ordinator perspective (focus group) and the Parents/Carers perspective (surveys). Data did not emerge from the children’s perspective, Parents/Carers focus group or Provider focus group and survey.

Co-ordinator perspectives (focus groups)

One of the Co-ordinators mentioned that the programme did not meet the objective of developing parents’ understanding of nutrition and food budgeting:

“... Cuz it's all well and good educating the 8-year-old child on healthy eating. They can go home and nag their parents. But unless the parents are taught how to how to make these, how to do it themselves? Uh, how to cook something in the microwave because they might not have enough money to get their gas hob working. That's crucial.”

And that one of the solutions may be to offer an additional hour at the end of the day’s activities that specifically cater to educating parents [C3]:

“...and a few nutri- cooking companies have said is there the option to do like an hour at five where it's the families coming in with that one day a week to do nutrition? Afterwards, so the parents, when they picking up, can they do an hours cooking class? As a family afterwards.”

Parent/Carer perspectives (survey)

To analyse this objective, Parents/Carers were asked “Did you as a parent/guardian/carer attend any family sessions on health and nutrition?”. As [figure 16](#) shows there were no positive answers, therefore, the objective of developing parents understanding of nutrition was not met by the programme [C3].

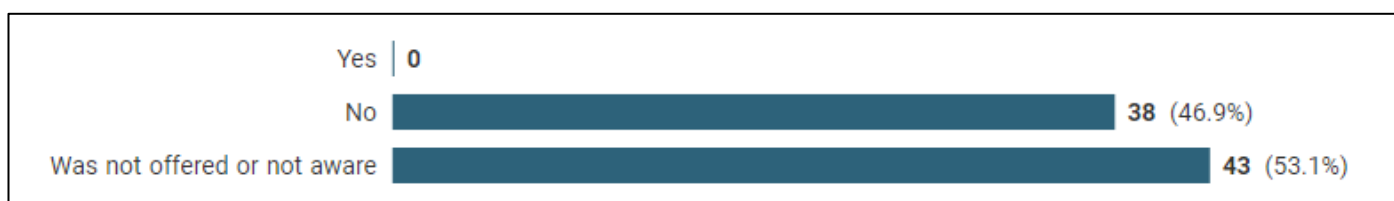


Figure 16. The answers given by Parents/Carers in response to the question “Did you as a parent/guardian/carer attend any family sessions on health and nutrition?”

Parents/Carers were also asked to what extent do they agree/disagree with the statement “The provision of meals for the children at the programme helps support our meal planning at home”. Just over half the Parents/Carers agreed (58.3%) with the statement whilst 26.6% were unsure and 15.2% disagreed (see [figure 17.](#)).

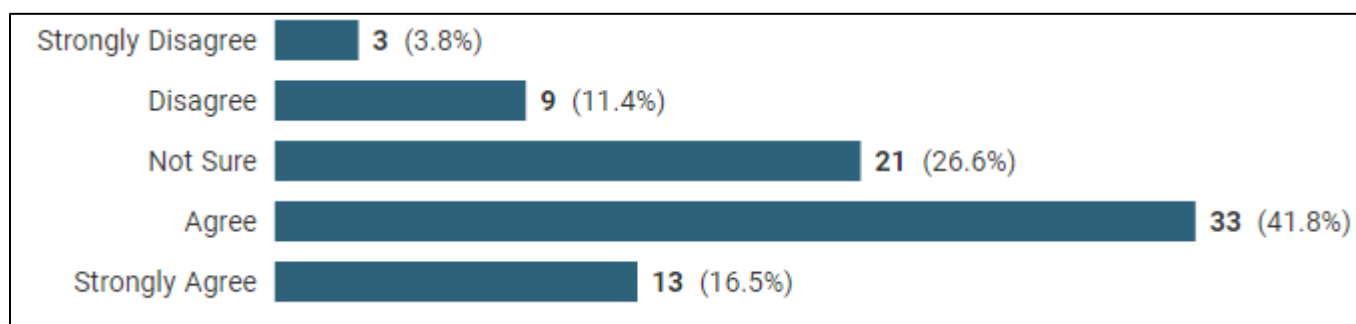


Figure 17. The extent to which parents agreed/disagreed with the statement “The provision of meals for the children at the programme helps support our meal planning at home”.

When asked to expand upon their answer, several Parents/Carers explained that no food was provided by the club so it had little impact, whilst others highlighted that it helped with food costs:

“It really helped me to spend less on food, which I don’t have a lot of money for.”

“One less meal I needed to provide my child, as money is tight at home being a single parent on a low income.”

Others highlighted how they were grateful that their child(ren) were receiving something nutritious and could plan other meals around this:

“So much easier knowing the children were getting a nutritious meal at lunch time”.

“Knowing they’ve had a nice full meal allows me to provide an appropriate dinner or supper.”

“Knowing that they had eaten a good healthy lunch. Only a hot evening meal was needed.”

“[Club name] was a hot meal I only had to provide a light supper.”

Overall, there appeared to be a lack of activities that were targeted at the parents/carers therefore, Government aim 7 was not achieved and future planning should be done to incorporate parent focused activities into the Holiday Clubs. However, the provision of food at the Holiday Club tended to make it easier for parents/carers to plan their existing family meals and food budget.

Evaluation objective 9: Signposting opportunities to other information and support

This evaluation objective provided data relating to Government aim 8: parents to be signposted towards other information and support, for example, health, employment and education. Data for this objective emerged from the Co-ordinator perspective (focus group). Data did not emerge from the children’s perspective, the Parent perspective (surveys and focus group) or Provider perspective (focus groups and surveys).

Co-ordinator perspectives (focus groups)

One of the Co-ordinators highlighted that once the Programme finished there was no information or opportunities for the club to continue or be accessible for those children that participated [P7]:

“But once it finished once that summer holiday is finished, then there's no there wasn't any scope to linking to ongoing membership or ongoing sessions.”

However, another Co-ordinator mentioned that there were discussions with a different Provider around making the club/facilities more accessible from a financial perspective:

“...without the help of the HAF programme kind of thing that those children won't be able to afford to go and use that centre. So some were looking to go and work with that provider going forward is can they look at their payment model membership prices so that kind of thing to see if they can make a more attractive offer to make those families want to go on a more regular basis or more affordable them to do...”

Parent/Carer perspectives (survey)

To identify wider opportunities that would inform and support Parents/Carers and their child(ren) the Parents/Carers were asked in the surveys what recommendations they have for the HAF Programme that would help their child(ren) to continue engaging in physical activities and skill/knowledge development after the Programme finishes. Many of the Parents/Carers identified that they would like the Programme to continue in more holidays and more opportunities as their child(ren) are missing out due to financial constraints however, there are no opportunities for this to occur [P7]:

“I think it would be good if the children could continue attending the holiday and food programme even when back at school. My children enjoyed the activities they did and wanted to continue them but are not able to now they are back at school and most activities after school cost a lot of money which I don't have.”

“Have activities offered during other holidays. Plus during term time.”

“Continue the free clubs! Unfortunately parents like myself don't have the luxury of paying for clubs but my kids absolutely loved every second”.

“To signpost to after school or weekend activities that are not too expensive!!!”

“Only recommendation would be to extend the programme throughout the year at a reduced cost to help people continue with the activities”.

One parent/carers also identified that the criteria for the Programme should be more inclusive as there are those families that do not qualify but are still in need [F15]:

“Some families who I know whom just didn't quite reach the criteria expressed to me that they would have liked to send their child but couldn't. “

The findings suggest that links between the HAF Programme Holiday Clubs and existing term-time clubs need to be strengthened so there is a clear continued offer that families can be signposted to, so the children continue to benefit from continuous engagement in enrichment and socialising opportunities.

Evaluation objective 10: Opportunities to improve health, wellbeing and home life

This evaluation objective does not relate to a specific Government aim; rather, it is a theme that emerged from the data captured in this evaluation. Data for this objective emerged from the Co-ordinator perspective (focus group) and Parent perspective (focus groups and surveys). Data did not emerge from the children's perspective or the Provider perspective (focus groups and survey).

Co-ordinator perspectives (focus groups)

One of the Co-ordinators mention that they had received communication from Parents expressing their gratitude that the Programme had gone ahead and were hoping for more provision in the future:

"...And it was nice at the very end of it we did get, you know, a few emails coming through from very very grateful parents saying how wonderful scheme was, and you know they were hoping to be on in October, but it's not running October it won't be running till Christmas now."

The Co-ordinators also mentioned that there needs to be additional scope within the Programme to help those children and young people that are vulnerable but do not qualify for FSM [F15]:

"And then that just leaves us with the children that technically they don't qualify because they don't get free school meal benefits for those but they might have a poorly parent at home, or they might be a carer- a young carer so they would still fall within that category. So that definitely is something I know we could be looking at for the Christmas provision."

Parent/Carer perspectives (focus groups)

Many of the Parents/Carers reflected on some personal benefits in engaging their child(ren) in the programme. Some Parents/Carers highlighted that the programme enabled them to have some 'downtime' and some 'me time' while their children have been at the holiday club. The Programme enabled some Parents/Carers to feel 'less stressed' and more able to undertake more of their parental responsibilities as a result of bringing their child(ren) to the Holiday club. For example:

"It's exhausting because they are like 'Mum, can we do this? Can we do that?' and it's like, hold on. Whereas here, they have got so many different activities and so many different helpers, and some of my friends are single parents, and you've got so many responsibilities yourself and you haven't got any help or whatever. So here, they can help with the children." - Site 11.

Many of the Parents/Carers also reflected on how the Programme helped to alleviate financial pressures during the holiday periods. Within that, parents highlighted that there is pressure to spend money in order to entertain their children during the holidays:

Participant 2: They want to do an activity there, which I'd been promising for ages so I had to save up for it because it's expensive, the climbing tree activities and even- I mean that was a hundred and thirty pounds for the children to do that...You couldn't do it all the time. Not for the price it is.

Participant 1: I do find that some things are really...I went to the cinema here, thirty pounds, for me and two children. And I'm just like thirty pounds just to go and watch Space Jam I'm just...I'm not gonna lie I took our own food in... I bought them a drink, but I took me own food. I'm just like, it's so expensive.

Participant 2: Even with a family deal for two adults and two children...And also not only that, I've got five children, so it doesn't benefit me. - Site 1.

One Parents/Carers highlighted that, as a result of the high costs of taking children out during the holidays, without the Holiday club, their summer "wouldn't be so stimulating...because then it gets down to cost, you know?" - Site 10.

Similarly, some Parents/Carers highlighted that financial pressures increase during the summer as a result of needing to spend more money than usual on food for their children. For example:

Participant 1: Yeah, I've noticed a massive difference. Even with food, just like paying for their lunches, the amount of money you save...

Participant 2: Definitely. I definitely have. Because half the time, a lot of things just go out of date, because you think I'll buy this lot, and then you don't get round to eating it, and then you just forget because you go out for a bit longer, and then you have to go and get them a McDonalds or whatever, the shop to get some bits, and then the stuff at home is going off. Whereas here, we don't have to worry about that. - Site 11.

The following quote highlights the importance of providing free Holiday Club provision in order to alleviate financial pressures of families:

Researcher: *Are there opportunities for you to access it again in the future, do you know?*

Participant 1: *If it's free, if it's paid it's not going to happen [laughs]. I can't afford it, I've seen it, but I've never been able to do it cuz I've got twins and it's fifteen-twenty pounds a head and you've got to provide the lunch so I'm like yeah, I can't deal with those things. So um...It was important that it was free, it was important that food was provided, they did actually give us the money for school meals, which I didn't expect but I was so pleased because they eat like crazy, they're growing lads, so I still use that. But the two things together just been a benefit this year. - Site 6.*

Overall, the HAF Programme helped alleviate financial and time pressures that are often experienced by parents/carers. The Programme allowed parents/carers more time to focus on other duties that were important to maintaining a stable home-life, safe in the knowledge that their children were being cared for at the Holiday Club.

Findings – Process Evaluation

Evaluation objective 11: Process evaluation exploring the factors facilitating and hindering the programme attainment and implementation

This evaluation objective does not relate to a specific Government aim; rather, it is the process evaluation to understanding the factors influencing the planning and implementing the HAF Programme, and the strengths and challenges of the delivery. Data for this objective emerged from the Co-ordinator perspective (focus group), Provider perspective (focus groups and surveys) and Parent perspective (focus groups and surveys). Data did not emerge from the child perspective (Tree of Hope). [Table 11](#) provides a summary of the facilitators and hinderers to the delivery of the HAF Programme, with a detailed outline of the factors provided below.

Table 11. Facilitators and Hinderers to the delivery of the HAF Programme across different stages.

Facilitators			
	Co-ordinators	Providers	Parents
Inputs	Having links with Providers prior to Programme beginning.	Having links with schools/facilities/communities prior to the Programme beginning.	
Activities	Visiting providers during the Programme helped to build relationships.	Training on safeguarding, health and safety and inclusion and accessibility were helpful in meeting standards.	Being willing to travel great distances for children to attend the programme.
Outputs	Providing transport overcame attendance barriers.	Providing transport overcame attendance barriers.	Information about the HAF Programme was easy to find. HAF Clubs were considered as safe environments.
Hinderers			
	Co-ordinators	Providers	Parents
Inputs	Late announcement of contract.	Late announcement of contract. Lack of catering options. Need for clearer communication of aims and standards.	
Activities	Unsuccessful marketing the full offer of activities.	Need for nutritional training. Unsuccessful marketing the full offer of activities. Booking system – uploading and downloading information.	
Outputs	Limited focus on healthy eating and nutrition education.	Limited offer for young people. Limited spaces for children.	Booking system – unable to cancel bookings.

The Co-ordinators, Providers and Parents reflected on various aspects of the Programme and highlighted from their respective perspectives that there were many factors that impacted upon the implementation of the HAF Programme. Sections 1 to 14 below expand upon the concluding summary in [table 11](#) and how the various factors facilitated and/or hindered the Programme and ultimately the attainment of wider Programme outcomes.

1. Programme timings

Co-ordinator perspectives

The Co-ordinators mentioned that the last minuteness of receiving contract confirmation and funding for the Programme impacted several aspects of the programme and that more time is needed to be able to fully plan the HAF Programme and reach those individuals that need it [F3]:

"...then obviously find out 10 days before for some of the we were doing it, but it's something that... Is so crucial... For both us as an organization to be supporting. But also for the young people, and it's opened so many doors for us, as an organization to new partners."

The short timing also impacted upon the advertising of some of the different clubs and some children/young people missed out on the opportunity as a result:

"That at last minute nature of... of getting out there and some of the providers what they put on. Didn't fully reflect what they were offering so if I was a teenager I wouldn't sign up to it. But we knew as Northamptonshire Sport that's probably a perfect one for the teenagers. It just wasn't sold to them in the right...The right way."

Additionally, the last minuteness of the confirmation meant that schools were not contacted in a timely manner with the necessary information. This caused issues later when Parents could not contact anyone to access their unique code, that provided free access to the Programme, and likewise several Parents did not realise that they had access to this Programme and therefore missed out [F3]:

"...that made life harder in the very beginning was obviously getting that information out to parents and getting the parents and the children being the unique code they need to actually physically book-So of course it was so last minute and a lot of the schools were virtually on the verge of shutting for the summer. And I do know that some of the schools the email was just sitting there in box because they just didn't have the time to pick it up."

"Schools really should be the main route into communicating with people that there sending their children to these sessions. So if we can, if we can get that information out through the schools promptly and the schools are available to answer those questions when they arise. Because this summer we've got the information out probably... before, the week before or even for some schools after they'd shut. So there was, there was no opportunity for a parent to go into a school and ask the school at the school office. Can I have my code? You know? What do I do about this? What do I do about that?"

The food provision was also impacted due to the timing of the programme and as a result the food provided was not the healthiest options because providers were outsourcing their food provision:

"I think the problem is that that's referenced is that uh a lot of the venues that had they had pre warning would have made their kitchen staff or their catering facilities available 'cause a lot of them are outsourced."

A further issue as a result of the last minuteness of the programme resulted in issues with organising and arranging staff:

"We have very little time to prepare and plan for it, and I think that was that had more of an impact in terms of in terms of staff resources than anything else. 'cause if we if we had a three-month lead in time and you can put those sort of things in place..."

Provider perspectives

From the survey findings the majority (66.6%) of the Providers highlighted that they felt that they had little time to properly prepare for the Programme when asked if the lead-in time was sufficient for preparing their programme. (see [figure 18](#)).

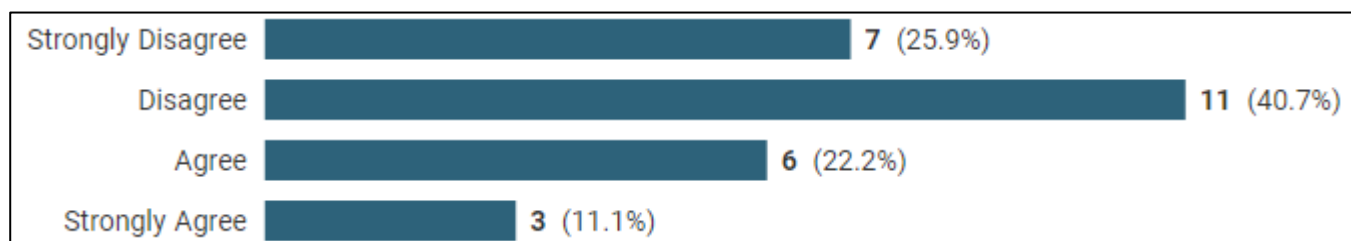


Figure 18. Answers given by providers in response to the question “Please state your level of (dis)agreement to the following statement. The lead-in time was sufficient for preparing our Holiday Activities and Food Programme”.

The Providers, who attended the focus groups, reflected on timing aspects of the HAF Programme and Holiday Club provision that could be improved. Many of the Providers said that the programme contract was confirmed very last-minute:

Participant 1: *Fortunately, it did get started back at Easter, and we got involved in that. And that ran reasonably well, although it was very tight on time and getting it all set up, which was the same issue we had with the summer programme, that it took a while for the government to actually agree to run the programme in Northampton. Then it took even longer.*

Participant 2: *I echo everything [participant 1] said in terms of late-last minute.*

Participant 3: *Again, echoing [participant 1] it was obviously, yeah, quite late in terms of how they were able to process things to get things up and running.* - Site 4, 8 and 12, group 1.

The Providers highlighted that the last-minute nature of the HAF Programme contract confirmation was significant as it had a ripple effect on numerous aspects of the planning and delivery, including the marketing of the programme to families, the booking processes, resource provision such as the recruitment of staff, facilities and food procurement. These specific factors will be written in the relevant subthemes of this process evaluation.

Some of the Providers acknowledged that the last-minute nature of the Programme contract was likely as a result of broader structural issues at central government level:

“I appreciate that probably it was a more structural issue, and I imagine that the confirmation from higher up was delayed, so I imagine that there’s a big structural issue that they’ve got all this money all of a sudden and they need to do something with it and then being pushed down and push down and push down until you get to providers who, by the end of it, has got a week to organise things.” - Site 5, group 3.

The Providers therefore wanted the Programme contract to be communicated in a timelier manner in order to enable them to plan and implement their provision more effectively [\[E3\]](#):

Participant 1: *I would say maybe here though that part of that might not have been NSport’s choice to leave it that late if they were not confirmed as the tender until then...*

Participant 2: *Just so you know, I’m not saying that that’s what...what I’m saying is, going forward [it] would be ideal if it came from government or from an authority to say these are the providers. This is what you need to look for and then we then follow up that email with ‘hello’.*

Participant 1: *Yeah, unfortunately with government, I don't think you're ever gonna get that, 'cause look at things like sports premium for even in school funding...head teachers not getting told until two or three weeks before the end of the academic year by government that it's continuing. So it's the same, isn't it?* - Site 7 and 12, group 1.

Within the surveys, many of the Providers in the survey's expressed their sympathies with the difficulties that the Co-ordinators had experienced as they understood that the confirmation of the Programme and funding was last minute:

"I sympathise enormously with Northamptonshire Sport who I think have done a good job under the circumstances, but to make a tender available at such a late stage in the year to deliver 5 weeks of provision was disappointing. We would normally allow for 10 weeks of planning time for a 5-week holiday which would encompass recruitment, venue planning, activity planning and marketing. Instead to be left with 10 days before funding was confirmed I feel the scheme was disadvantaged".

"I understand it was not Northamptonshire Sports fault as they received confirmation of funding very late, but we were invited/registered our interest 5 days before our first event. A lot of schools were not aware of the HAF scheme and did not know they were required to send out codes and information. Received guidance on [Online booking system] set up 4 days before our first event."

"This was all very last minute, no fault of Northamptonshire Sport."

The turn around was very tight as a consequence of a late tender process. Northamptonshire Sport have our sympathies.

Some of the Providers felt that it was hugely beneficial that their HAF Programme provision became part of their already established holiday provision organisation, as this meant that they were able to plan before the Programme contact was confirmed, and react more quickly to the last-minute contract confirmation by using their existing provision as a platform to implement the HAF Programme. In the focus groups one Provider said they may not have been able to implement the HAF Programme if their existing provision had not been in place [F4]:

"Fortunately for us, we are a business, so we were open anyway. If it had been different and we would been doing this just as a provider, and we were getting food in and getting places and things, that potentially wouldn't have worked for us, it would have been too last minute and too complicated. But as we were a business, we're open. We had a kitchen and a cafe or restaurant. So all that was fairly easy for us, but I think that did mean that a lot of the other [provision] bits dropped off because there was no preparation time." - Site 1, group 3.

One of the Providers also highlighted that an additional benefit of being an existing organisation was their ability to expand their provision for children due to the HAF Programme [F4]:

"It felt quite joined up in the sense that it was an expansion of an existing offer which was targeted to a particular group, that felt really nice and felt really good. So I think if that can be repeated again that would be brilliant." - Site 5, group 3.

Parent/Carer perspectives

A few of the Parents/Carers, in the focus groups, highlighted that they were informed about the programme last minute and would have benefitted from being told about it sooner [F2]:

Researcher: *"When did you hear about it, about what was available?"*

Participant 2: *Well it was literally the first week of summer holidays.*

Participant 1: *Hopefully if they do it next year, hopefully they might advertise it a bit earlier.*

Participant 2: *Yeah so you can get... pre-plan your weeks cuz you don't know what's... cuz in our house we don't know what's happening from one week to the next, so I try and be organised, but I have to be adaptable so." - Site 2.*

It is evident that the late confirmation of the Programme contract caused a ripple effect that disrupted planning across all levels of the HAF Programme and Providers acknowledged that this issue needs to be addressed at a central Government level to enable Co-ordinators and Providers sufficient time to prepare and thus, be more likely to achieve all of the Government aims and standards.

2. Programme marketing and sign-up

Co-ordinator perspectives

During the focus group the Co-ordinators reflected that some of the Holiday Clubs were not advertised as well as they could have been leading to instances where children and young people were missing out on the opportunities available and there was miscommunication about what the different clubs were providing resulting in parents being displeased [C4]:

Participant 1: Didn't fully reflect what they were offering so if I was a teenager I wouldn't sign up to it. But we knew as Northamptonshire Sport that's probably a perfect one for the teenagers. It just wasn't sold to them in the right...The right way.

Participant 2: Minor complaints from parents of around provision and some of that, I think, is a bit of miscommunication rather than there actually being a problem with any provision or any provider itself.

Additionally, several of the Co-ordinators commented on how schools, in particular the Bursar's in schools, are key individuals that need to be contacted in order to effectively roll out the Programme and contact the relevant parents/children [C9]:

"Schools really should be the main route into communicating with people that they're sending their children to these sessions".

"No, I think part of the problem was that we were relying on school support and managers to give us key people in schools that they knew of. So obviously we're then relying on that information to trickle down. But in reality...the Bursars. They are key. They are the people that gave it because they are the ones that control the school. So they're the ones we actually need to engage with...They're the ones that have all the interactions with the parents."

Provider perspectives

Many of the Providers reflected, within the focus groups, on the importance of taking time to form meaningful relationships with schools, as they are core gatekeepers to enable families to access the Programme. However, due to the last-minute nature of the Programme, the providers experienced challenges in forming these relationships and working with schools. One provider highlighted that some schools did not seem to be informed directly about the HAF Programme, instead they heard about it through social media [F8]:

"A lot of schools saw what we were doing on social media and didn't know these offers were out there, and were saying 'oh we'll be a venue for you there, we'll be a venue, that looks really good'." – Site 12, group 1.

One of the Providers therefore reflected on the need for schools to be provided with more information about the HAF Programme and what to expect [F8]:

"Is there a lot of discussion in the local authority before these things are delivered? I don't know whether it maybe went through the health and wellbeing board. There is a lot to be said for maybe the chair of their health and wellbeing board at Northampton Council dropping a letter or message to schools in that area to say that it's [the HAF programme] on the agenda for the meeting and that it could potentially go through, and you may potentially be contacted about that. I don't think that's a huge thing to ask." – Site 8, group 1.

Another Provider highlighted difficulty in communicating with schools about the HAF Programme as there lacked a core member of staff to liaise with at the school [P6]:

"I don't know if anyone else found as well though, like we've, especially with everything with Covid, schools were in and out of the members of staff that you were actually trying to locate and talk to. Then they're in isolation or they were off for whatever reason or classes were off...people didn't know who to contact and talk to." - Site 4, group 1.

In addition, one of the Providers highlighted that, even in more favourable conditions, schools are wary of cold-correspondence from external people as they receive lots of unnecessary correspondence. This impacted on provider's ability to establish buy-in from new schools to market the Programme, and the Programme would have therefore benefitted from schools being more formally introduced to the HAF Programme and what communications to expect to receive and from whom [F8]:

Participant 1: I think I would also say that some schools as well didn't even really know what they had available to them and how brilliant it could have been. A lot of schools were not as engaging as you'd expect when you approach them with such a brilliant offer. It was almost like they thought you were like a marketing ploy. Just emailing them to try and hand something over. I don't think like the legitimacy of the programme and the foundations of the programme got through to the schools. And it [an email] came from me, and I think they were really, really wary of what it was...they almost like "What is that? Who are you? Why are you emailing me? Why do you want information from me? Why do you want me to send things out to kids?" I think, like the publication of the of what's available in the amazing opportunity was not there in the schools.

Participant 2: Ideally, if NSport were communicating with the schools to say these are the organisations who will who have been authorised to deliver the programme and when you receive communication from them. This is, you know it's coming from government, potentially through straight into the schools so that they are listening. They're prepared, the ones that the schools that have worked with us previously were very comfortable in getting things set up and engaging with us. But like [participant 1] says, new schools were very reluctant at times to buy into what we're offering. – Site 7 and 8, group 1.

As a result of these challenges, some Providers felt that the marketing of the programme was not as successful as it could have been and was not carried out in an efficient way by the providers. Indeed, Providers found that these challenges were also impacting on families, as some parents did not receive their HAF Programme codes before the schools closed for the summer holidays, making it even more difficult for parents to receive their codes:

"I don't know how this a lot of kids and parents didn't know their codes. In fact, a lot of schools didn't know their HAF codes. I would contact the school contacts who were still in, or maybe the host person from my school venue, and they didn't often know their HAF codes. They had to find out from someone else 'cause...I think it was 'cause it was so late." - Site 12, group 1.

More lead-in time would enable Provider's more time to develop meaningful relationships with schools to facilitate more effective marketing of the programme marketing [F3]:

"If we had more time at the very beginning, we could have got into schools 'cause I would have gone to all my schools and done assemblies that were holding the course. Now, luckily as soon as we hit the ground we were like right, let us go out that Thursday, the next day. Friday I was in somewhere like [area name removed] and I drove and said look to both the contacts with deputy heads at school at [school names removed] where we are, 'Can I come now?' I just talked to the kids, they pulled them out the classroom...the free school meal children and I was able to speak about it. But it was not enough 'cause I needed the parents and I needed a bit more time." – Site 12, group 1.

Parent/Carer perspectives

When asked in the survey, Parents/Carers stated that they first heard about the programme through various forms, which included discovering the Programme directly from the government website, through posts shared on social media, and through word of mouth through friends and family (see figure 19).

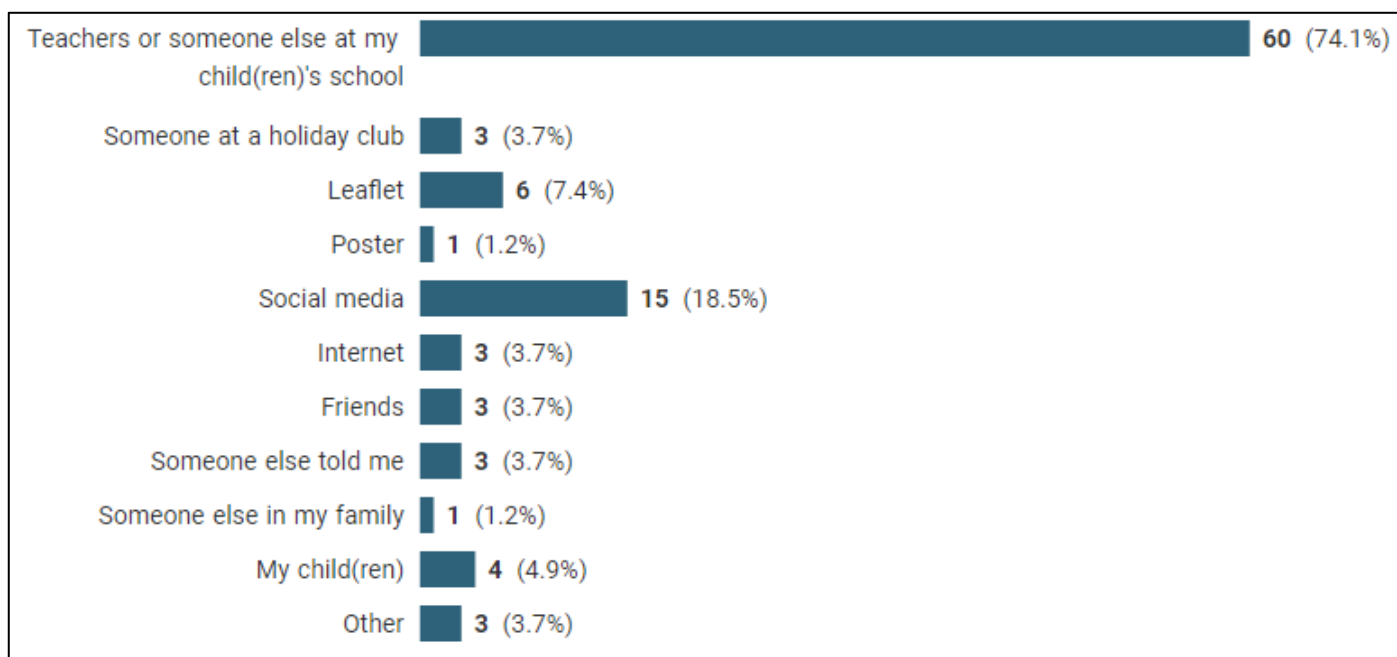


Figure 19. The answers given by parents/carers in response to the question “How did you find out about the Holiday Activities and Food Programme?”

However, the majority of Parents/Carers typically heard about the Programme from staff at their child’s school, highlighting that schools were key gatekeeper’s for families to access the Programme. Many of the Parents/Carers, within the focus groups, described a simple process of “It was school. An email from school just before they broke up, with a code, saying log onto this [government] website.” (Site 1), and from here they “put in a code and erm, enrol my child on activities” (Site 5). However, one Parents/Carers felt that it was not made entirely clear what the codes were provided for [F6]:

“The schools did send me some codes, but it wasn’t very clear how wide a range...they did tell me about a few sessions, but it was more like learning sessions like maths and stuff like that. But then, when I started to volunteer, the lady that runs [holiday club name removed] said to me ‘you know, if they are on free school meals, you can get them booked into the craft’. I didn’t know. And then she told me...that’s how I realised that these codes can do a lot more than what I thought. So yeah. I just didn’t have any idea that I was sitting on a goldmine there not knowing what I had really.” - Site 10.

In addition, one of the Parents/Carers felt that the process of receiving the programme codes were convoluted and bureaucratic and resulted in their child missing some of the programme provision, suggesting that the sign-up process could in some cases be simplified [P8, linking with F3, F8 and F10]:

“...My personal experience was erm... by the time we actually got the code from the council to get on the website to log on the activities it was too late cuz there was so much back and forth with emails and bureaucracy and it could have been avoided cuz when the school had told us it’s not that they sent that email to all the parents, they’ve only sent it to parents of eligible children so they knew what they were doing. And then when I went to erm, the council asking them for the code over email they did not respond for two days... when they did finally respond it was like, can you prove that you’re eligible and I was like, what would you like me to send you? Again no response for another 2 days and by the time everything was sorted a week and a half had already gone passed and then they...somebody emailed me back and said can you go back to the school, and I was like no the school has broken up for the summer. So, they’ve asked me rightfully to contact [holiday club name removed], so could you please let me have a code. And then when I sent them my eligibility paper, my benefits paper, then they were like ok here’s the code and then they sent me the code 2 days later. So a week and a half was wasted doing all of that back and forth of emails which could have been avoided....the school could have just directly given me the code instead because the school knew my child was eligible for a free school meal anyway so they could have just sent me the code, I could have gone on the website and quickly enrolled her on activities.” - Site 5, group 1.

The evidence suggests that establishing strong links between the schools, co-ordinators, and providers is essential to ensure every FSM eligible family is made aware of the HAF Programme. Furthermore, each school requires a key person of contact who is responsible for managing communications related to the HAF Programme.

3. Using the booking system

Co-ordinator perspectives

In the focus group the Co-ordinators reported that they received several inquiries and complaints from Parents regarding the booking system because:

“...it was very difficult to use, not intuitive, they couldn't cancel sessions, they couldn't check their sessions and they didn't really seem to get any confirmation...”

The Co-ordinators also reported that the difficulties in using the booking system resulted in the providers being demotivated because there was a large amount of children not arriving to the sessions and the session were overstaffed:

“...some of the negatives from some of the providers that I've met and that I'd say was around the booking system and people not showing up. So obviously they're expecting 20, but there's only 10 or 15 or whatever and some of that may have been around that the issues around booking you know. Not being able to view bookings and things like that. Umm so they felt that kind of down in the ground obviously had got maybe a couple of staff in for the numbers to be safe...”

The Co-ordinators also highlighted the fact that not all parents had access to the booking system as they had no mobile phone device or internet access. Therefore, the booking system being an online booking service was excluding those individuals that may need the HAF Programme the most:

“Umm one of the challenges that I found that we had certainly throughout programmes, those parents that didn't have access to any online source, so they didn't have a mobile phone or Internet access or anything like that. That made it very difficult for them to book and just say the schools were then shut. So they were unable to help with any booking provision...”

The Co-ordinators suggested that one method of overcoming this was to utilise more public services such as libraries that may be able to help if the library staff were given adequate knowledge and training [C6]:

“...if you're sign posting them to libraries. But people in the library network know they could potentially have parents or grandparents or carers coming in asking for help. They know how to help them, they know what they're talking about, so I think that's something that we do need to look at for Christmas...”

Provider perspectives

Some of the Providers said that the booking system was straightforward to use. However, others experienced technical difficulties such as the system crashing and being difficult to use. This mix of experiences was reflected in the surveys (see [figure 20](#)).

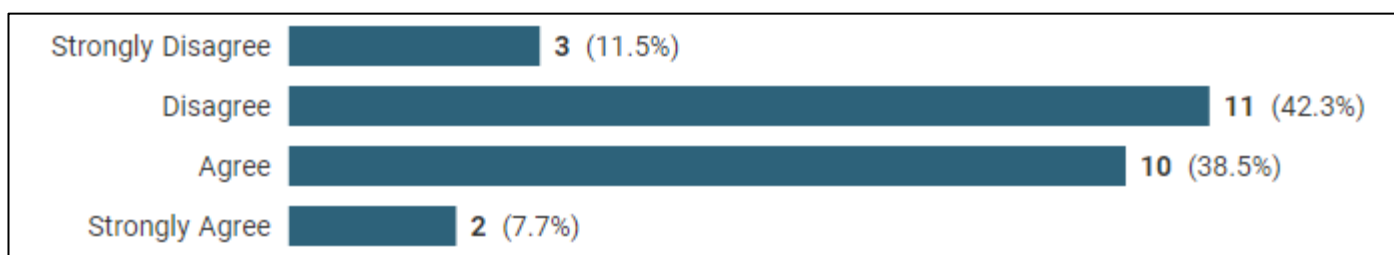


Figure 20. Answers given by Providers in response to the question “Please state your level of (dis)agreement to the following statement. The booking system was easy to manage.”

When asked to give further explanation to their answers within the surveys, there were very few positive comments, most highlighted some of the challenges that had been faced:

“I’m not sure if it was just me but I found the [online booking system name] portal very un-user friendly when trying to add bookings and couldn’t find any support for this.”

“It was not very intuitive and I found it highly frustrating. For example, adding a new user through the add tab on the activity page never worked. Eventually I found that if you went in through a different page it would.”

“On the last event we held 40 more people arrived than had been booked in. a failure in the booking app may be to blame”.

During the focus groups, some Providers highlighted that the booking system had cut-off dates and times in which Parents would book their children onto a Programme session. In circumstances where Parents experienced difficulties and delays in accessing their HAF codes [see ‘[programme marketing and sign up](#)’ subtheme], the cut-off dates/times would result in families accessing the booking system too late and therefore, unable to book their child onto the HAF Programme provision [reinforcing the need for recommendation [F3](#) – HAF Programme contract to be announced sooner].

“Trying to book them [children] on the booking system before they come to the session was virtually impossible. And then by the time they come to the session the booking was closed. So then we couldn’t book them on.” - Site 13, group 2.

An additional concern raised by one of the Providers was that it is possible that the reliance on an online booking system may provide exclusionary experiences for families who struggle to access digital platforms, whether due to lack of access to the internet and/or technological devices, or due to a lack of skills in how to utilise them [F9]:

“The thing is, as soon as you say ‘sorry’ to a parent, ‘you need to put your child on here and fill out our form,’ they don’t want to do it and they don’t. hey don’t. Not all of them have access and not all of them have the skills to do it. I think it was a bit of a barrier.” -Site 13, group 2.

“It was very time consuming as we booked on behalf of our families, as many of them do not have access to booking systems. It would have been easier for us to record own registers on school system.” – Provider surveys.

Many of the Providers highlighted that they had not been made aware that they would need to utilise a centralised booking system for the HAF Programme. Consequently, these providers developed their own booking, some of which had already began taking bookings for the programme and therefore unable to switch booking systems, while other providers had to abandon the booking system they had designed [C7]. For example:

“Because, we were fairly certain that we were going to get a [HAF] provision, we went ahead and organised [it] and through our own website, set up the booking system. So we were all set up ready to book, and sent out all this information to schools so that parents could book on. We were already taking bookings. Uh, and then NSport came along and said, ‘oh, you’ve got to use this centralised booking system.’ Yeah, we started tearing our hair out. How are we going to manage to do that? So we spoke to NSport and we sorted it out. We said, ‘look, you know we’re going to have to carry on with the way we’re doing it because there’s so many people already booked, so we prevented people booking our camps via Play ways and we did all the bookings or own system.” - Site 8, group 1.

This was also reflected in the survey when asked about the online booking system regarding whether or not the Providers felt that they had sufficient guidance on how to use the system (see [figure 21](#)). Despite the majority agreeing that they had sufficient training there was still 37% that felt they it was lacking with additional comments highlighting that “...the training was not very clear. A written workflow guide would have been very helpful”, “The training video did not help us understand how to use the portal. online portal was very difficult to use and took a lot of time” and “Needed phone support from [online booking system provider]”.

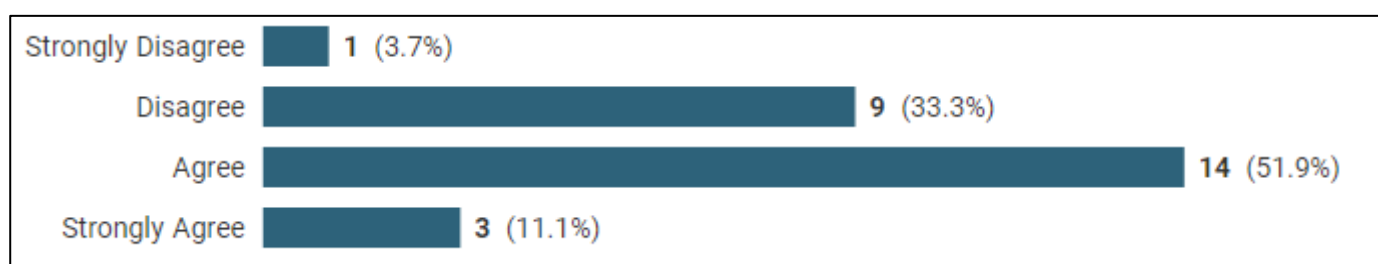


Figure 21. Answers given by Providers in response to the question “Please state your level of (dis)agreement with the following statement. We were provided with sufficient guidance to feel confident about creating the online booking portal.”

Some of the Providers highlighted that, when experiencing technical and functionality issues with the booking system, it was difficult to contact the staff who manage the booking system to overcome the difficulties experienced in a timely way, which was particularly crucial given the time constraint of distributing the HAF Programme funding last minute. The Providers therefore highlighted that, if the booking system continues to be the centralised booking system for future HAF Programmes, it needs to have a quicker and more responsive support (e.g. a telephone helpline) mechanism to overcome system related issues [\[F10\]](#):

“[The booking system] as a whole, there needs to be a better way for us to talk to people at [the booking system] to resolve issues. You write to them as there is no way to phone them. You email them through their system and you go on automatic response, ‘we will get back to you within two days.’ Two days is not enough. You know, it needs to be one hour, or 10 minutes. It needs to be immediate. A lot of these questions have to be answered really quickly. We need a direct line into [the booking system]. If they’re gonna continue working with [the booking system], they can’t sit back and say, you know, we’ll deal with it in two days. It just isn’t possible to work with that. I mean, I can understand why there is a want to have a centralized system because then they got all the information together and they can do their analysis very easily. But it needs to be a system that we can work with and works with us, you know?” – Site 8, group 1.

“The guidance to set up [online booking system name] was OK for short notice. However, we receive lots of negative feedback and frustrations from Parents having difficulties booking. [online booking system name] would only communicate via email, (where as a phone call could have resolved quicker) and this was very time consuming, a lot of issues did not get resolved and we felt disappointed with their service. I feel the [online booking system name] errors made our company look incompetent.” – Provider surveys.

“Amending programme details was difficult. We had a problem with accessing the portal for 24 hours and no support could be obtained. This meant we went in blind to one of the events regarding number of children and meal details” – Provider surveys.

One of the Providers also suggested the functionality of the booking system to provide auto-alerts to the providers when a child is flagged as having additional needs that need to be accommodated [F7]:

“Our own system of booking, which has been established for quite a few years now, and one of the things that we do automatically is, when a child is flagged as having particular medical or other issues, we get emailed that detail. So that we can go and talk to the parents and say, ‘what are the real issues and how do we deal with it? How do you deal with it? What are the ways that we can look after this child better? And what are the triggers if they've got bad behaviour, how can we control them?’ So that's one of the things that I think is a big issue because on the booking system, that doesn't happen. You would have to go in and look at every single booking to see what the what the medical or behavioural issues.” Site 8, group 1.

Parent/Carer perspectives

As seen in figure 22, the majority of the Parents/Carers agreed when asked in the survey, that booking their child(ren) onto the HAF Programme was easy as the “Website was straightforward” and that it was a “simple booking system, easy to use”.

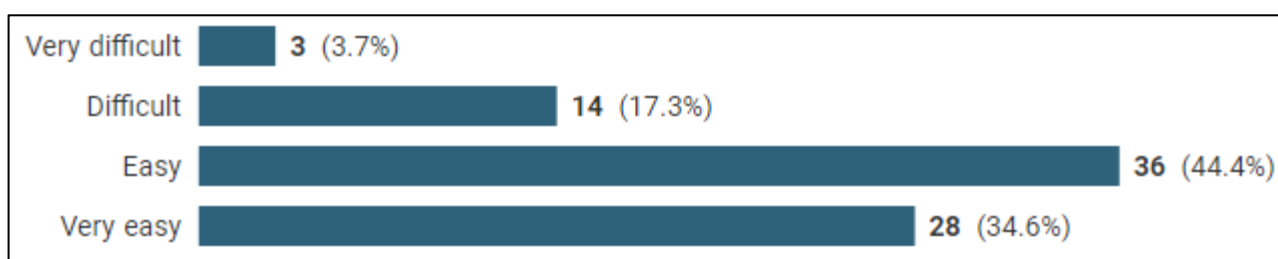


Figure 22. Answers given by Parents/Carers in response to the question “Please select the answers that best reflects your experience. Booking my child(ren) onto the Holiday Activities and Food Programme was...”

The 21% that replied that booking their child(ren) onto the HAF Programme was difficult further explained that this was because the website used was hard to navigate, for example:

“The online booking was confusing”.

“Website was very awkward to navigate as it was host site that moved to a different site”.

“Awful system. For example [club name] weren't expecting my sons on the first session. No easy way if checking what had already been booked”.

“Some activities were easy but some [club name] wouldn't load and had strange dates so you couldn't book. Also it was difficult to filter events by age as it wasn't clear if it filtered by minimum or maximum age. Having 2 children it was difficult to find activities for both of them to do together.”

This was also reflected in the Parents/Carers focus groups where most of the Parents/Carers described a number of challenges in using the booking system. Such as the system crashing before they were able to complete their booking, and being generally slow, convoluted and clunky [F7]:

Participant 1: *There was an app wasn't there? So I downloaded it, that absolutely had no sense. I think it just... I dunno how to explain it. A bit more simple.*

Participant 2: *Yeah, I didn't download the app. I just done it through the website and erm it crashed on me a couple times and kept on wouldn't for some reason wouldn't accept any of my details, wouldn't accept the code. And I didn't know what I was doing wrong. And then I was like, oh I won't do I'll just leave it. And then I*

thought no I'll try again but obviously I couldn't get that bit cuz it was fully booked up after I tried to do it but then it let me for today and another day. - Site 1.

Similarly, many Parents/Carers highlighted that once they were able to book sessions for their child(ren) to attend, it was difficult to amend the bookings, for example, cancelling one session would cancel all other sessions, which caused parents to feel reluctant to cancel any bookings they were unable to attend for any reason: [F7]:

"I was trying to book them in advance of the deadline but if you want to cancel a session it wants you to cancel all of the sessions. So I don't want to cancel the sessions and then you've gone past the time when you can rebook the sessions, so I just didn't want to touch anything because I didn't want to lose anything." - Site 6.

Some Parents/Carers highlighted concerns that their difficulties in not cancelling their sessions on the system would result in them being reprimanded:

Participant 1: *"Cancelling was an issue. I forgot about that..."*

Participant 2: *You end up thinking people are expecting her and she's not there but that's just kinda how it had to be.*

Participant 2: *Or it'll tell you system error and you'll keep trying to cancel, system error so I tried, I'll screenshot it in case anyone tries to tell me off.*

Participant 1: *Somebody rang me up and said your children were expected and I said I cancelled three times. So you know....*

Participant 2: *You can only do what you can do."* - Site 6.

Moving forward, the online booking system will require refinement to make it more intuitive and functional to overcome booking issues in addition to developing a non-internet booking option for families who may not have internet access.

4. Communication and information about the programme

Co-ordinator perspectives

This theme has already been mentioned in relation to other subthemes already discussed (see Evaluation Objective 11 sections: 'Programme timings' and section 'Programme marketing and sign up').

Parent perspectives

With the survey, Parents/Carers were asked about their experience of locating information regarding the HAF Programme (see [figure 23](#)). 70.4% of the responses stated that the information was easy to find and when asked to further expand, stating that they *"...had an email from the school which had a link to the holiday activities website. I was able to read on the website about the holiday activities and food programme easily"* and that the *"Instructions were very clear to understand and follow"*.

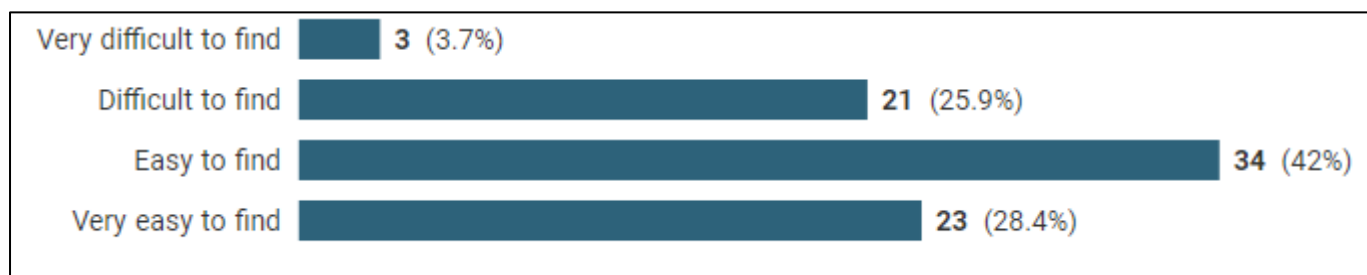


Figure 23. The answers given by Parents/Carers in response to the question “Please select the answer that best reflects your experience. Finding information about the Holiday Activities and Food Programme was...”

29.7% of the responses stated that the information was difficult to find and many of the Parents/Carers highlighted (in both the focus groups and surveys) that the information they received about the Programme/Holiday Club provision was fairly limited which made it difficult to know what sessions to book their child(ren) onto and to know what activities their child(ren) had been involved in through the day. Some of the Parents/Carers therefore suggested that future programme provision could offer Parents/Carers more detail about what activities are offered in the holiday clubs to enable them to know what to sign their child onto and to have a general idea of what their child(ren)’s day has consisted of [P8]. For example:

Researcher: *“Brilliant. And is there anything about the programme that you think could be improved in anyway, other than the teething issues with the sign up, stuff like that.”*

Participant 1: *I think some of them would say that this [holiday club] is like a multi activity one, to try and explain what that might mean more. Because some of them don’t and I think people might have booked and thought ‘oh I thought it was going to be this and it was that’. So I think just explaining the activities more.” - Site 6.*

“I didn’t feel that the provision was advertised very well. I found out by chance through an online post on Facebook and the schools didn’t notify people until I asked them for the required code, indicating that they were also unaware.” – Parents/Carers survey.

“The information wasn’t released to the very last minute. Then they were very few places available at each venue, which made it very difficult to book.” – Parents/Carers survey.

“I did not know about the HAF programme until towards end of summer and struggled getting information on it” – Parents/Carers survey.

“I found it by chance on a facebook post from a neighbouring school promoting it [school name]. I then contacted my school [school name] who knew little about it, but eventually came up with an eligibility code. By then most places were unavailable” – Parents/Carers survey.

Similarly, some of the Parents/Carers also felt it would be beneficial for the Holiday Clubs to provide more information about what food they plan to provide the children [P8]:

Participant 2: *“It would have been nice to have some sort of indication of what was going to be provided in the sandwiches, so that even if it meant just providing your kids with sandwiches and they would eat then they would eat the rest of the packed lunch that was provided.”*

Participant 1: *Yeah, yeah, I think that’s a good idea. Like saying, like a week of these things, like sort of like what the schools do, where you like, this week this is what we’re having for lunch, sort of thing would be ideal.*

Participant 3: *Yeah, that would be useful.” - Site 7.*

The evidence suggests that further details of the activities on offer could be provided in the future to help inform parents/carers of the specific activities the Holiday Clubs are delivering on a given day.

5. Non-attendance and drop-off rates

Provider perspectives

During the focus groups, some of the Providers said that there was significant drop-off in the number of children who attended the Holiday Club compared to the number of children booked onto the provision each day. As a result of this, Providers said that some of the bookings were wasted and that children who did want to book and attend not being able to benefit from the holiday provision:

“Everything got booked quickly and then when the session started, the first week was great, and as weeks go by the attendance was really, really, very bad...you know that maybe they were not interested in those session, but when you have booked sessions that were like sold out, and then some people that still want to come, could not come in. And having people that booked or not showing up.” -Site 10, group 2.

One of the Providers also highlighted that the non-attendance rates also resulted in a high amount of food surplus (parents also recognised a food surplus – see objective 1 results) and general wasted resources, although they also acknowledged that at times, this meant they were able to provide additional resources and activities to a smaller group of children.

One of the Providers suggested that it was possible that the drop off-rates were as a result of the functionality of the centralised booking system not enabling families to cancel their booked sessions [reinforcing the need for recommendation F7 – improvements being made to the booking system].

“I don't know if there was the ability to cancel a space, and that was a big problem. But when they can't cancel, it then means those places are lost.” -Site 1, group 3.

Some of the other Providers suggested that the high drop-off rates may be due to the Programme being free of charge, and families presuming their bookings did not need to be a firm commitment:

Participant 1: *“When we were making phone calls, there was responses like, ‘oh, I didn't realize they needed to come every day. I just was booking on’, or ‘we didn't realise this.’ Or now there's a last-minute holiday that's booked, so ok, well you need to inform us of that so that we can offer the place to others.*

Participant 2: *Just like what you just said [participant 1] as well, I think we missed out on people, if it was nice weather, then they wouldn't be there. And we'd speak to them after when they were there, and they'll be like, ‘well, actually mum decided that morning because it's so nice [weather], we went to the beach’, or they went and did whatever.” – Site 4 and 7, group 1.*

One of the Providers suggested that a solution to the non-attendance problem would be to give Providers the power to adapt bookings on the booking system, as well as to add a ‘waiting list’ function to the booking system, to enable the Providers to invite other families to attend the Holiday Club if there were non-attendances [F7]. Another provider highlighted that spending more time explaining the HAF Programme and attendance expectations to the families might help to manage the non-attendance rates [F6]. Additionally, some of the Providers debated the use of rewards and punishment to overcome the non-attendance problem; Providers were generally in agreement that issuing punishments were not an appropriate as *“we're not in the game of punishing, are we?”* (Site 8, group 1) and therefore felt that incentives were an appropriate approach [F11]:

Participant 1: *“If they put some stuff aside or gave us the funding, then we organised our own gifts, great. Or NSport provided a daily gift...something little, it doesn't have to be much, but an incentive for them to keep coming back every day. Just throwing that out there.*

Participant 2: *Brilliant idea.*

Participant 3: *Yeah, I mean, we already do daily and weekly prizes for the star of the camp and things like that. So yeah, I mean, that would be a great idea to incentivise that everybody to turn up. And if NSport did it, they could do it as a global thing for the whole provision across the whole county, and that would make it relatively cheap per unit. We need to take that to NSport, sorry.” - Site 7, 8 and 12, group 1.*

However, one of the Providers suggested that, if a family repeatedly fails to attend sessions they have booked their child onto despite the processes and incentives suggested, there should be a system in place to ensure families do not continue to 'repeat-offend'.

Parent perspectives

A couple of parents highlighted that there were some sessions/venues that were fully booked, which the researchers anticipate may have been in-part of not being able to cancel sessions [see the '[Using the booking system](#)' subtheme], and therefore may have resulted in some children missing out on the opportunity to book a space at the preferred session.

Overall the findings suggest that drop-off rates in attendance were a result of the lack of a 'cancel booking' option within the booking system. Drop-off rates need to be monitored in future iterations of the Programme, once a 'cancel' booking' option is provided, to determine whether drop-off rates still persist.

6. Child factors and how they influence the programme provision and delivery

Co-ordinator perspectives

Within the focus group the Co-ordinators reflected that there were some Providers that made provisions for children with disabilities and additional needs. They were able to overcome the barriers to attendance by providing and arranging transport:

"...[arranged] transport for some participants if it wasn't on their doorstep there. As I mentioned earlier, could- err one I went through where we're specifically for disabled people, and actually that's in life is a barrier often to the [inaudible] and things. And out of the two I went to see. I guess again, it was the providers that we're doing them... Uh, one was being delivered in a very rural village sort of setting, and so traditionally that wouldn't work or would very rare, but then managed through the transport they've got already to do pick-ups around, not just the [inaudible], but across the county to get them over there and to take part. So that was both great to see, but again, a model if we're looking to attract more disabled young people to the program and then it's again finding the right provider. Or a link with the Community transport provision that can provide that as well and not just reliant on the parents and carers."

The Co-ordinators also reflected that there were limited provisions for older children and teenagers because of the miscommunication when advertising the different providers (previously mentioned) and a lack of training for providers to have knowledge necessary to overcome the barriers:

"Uh, and a lot of the delivers were probably aimed at the primary, and that's where their skillset is..."

One Co-ordinator suggested that engaging with current trends it would engage more children and young people in the activities available. For example, mixed martial arts are popular at the moment and therefore more could be done to appeal to children and young people using that as a medium [F12]:

"MMA is massive at the moment all the teenagers or sport, seems to be talking about that. How could we get centres like that to be offering HAF?"

Provider perspectives

The Providers reflected on a range of child factors that should be considered when designing and delivering the HAF Programme. One of these factors related to the age of the children and the Providers recognised the importance of considering the age of the children they were engaging in their provision. One Provider during the focus groups said that, during the HAF programme delivery they engaged a mixed age group due to limited time-resources, but in their usual provision they would typically split up their provision into different age groups:

"So what we did was we mixed all of our ages together as well for four hours. 'cause it had to be the same young people for the whole four hours, whereas normally we do a younger group and an older group. Obviously, we couldn't do that, otherwise we'd be working eight hours delivering and we haven't got the facilities to do that. And so there was that we were mixing quite a lot of different age groups for four hours."
- Site 13, group 2.

One of the Providers reflected on the importance of identifying ways of encouraging older children to attend the club provision [P9]:

"Keep the young leader scheme going and to build this programme are something that can continue on to children who are older. Like that's a real key factor I think is once we get them at the younger age, how do you keep them so that they're still there when they're older so that they don't fall into some of the traps that are going on in the moment? So that's a really key thing to think about going forward is [ensuring] we are nourishing them and nourishing them all through this primary school age and then, unless you have something like a young leaders programme and unless they are the type of child that wants to take on a young leaders programme, then potentially losing their safe space to come and be fed and have those basic things that they might not get anywhere else. So a good thing to do, but I think for me to ponder would be - how do you keep this HAF programme running throughout a child's later years?" - Site 7, group 1.

In recognition of the differing needs of children from different age groups, one of the Providers also reflected on their plans to develop a project within their Programme specifically for older children and also transitioning children (e.g. those transitioning from primary to secondary school).

Similar to the reflections related to the age of the children, a few of the Providers reflected on the need to consider the appropriateness of Programme provision for children with additional or complex needs [P10]. For example:

"I kind of think that four hours was too long because for some children, like, you have several children they have they ADHD. How do you keep them? Actually, if you have volunteers are not specialise in those areas, how do you manage? I have a lot of those children. You know, they will come, they can't really settle down." - Site 10, group 2.

Many of the Providers also discussed the need for them to consider children's preferences in terms of what food is provided and what activity is offered when planning and implementing their Programme provision. One Provider highlighted that, as children have a range of activity preferences, it might be worthwhile holiday Providers reframing their provision to be about developing the health and wellbeing of children and offering a range of provision in order to accommodate a range of children's activity preferences:

"It's like the sports premium that's in schools. It shouldn't be called PE and sports premium. It should be 'wellbeing premium' to allow to cater for children who are not into sports. Physical activity is never going to be the turn on...art, creative arts...anything that unlocks the child's potential and their talents is what it should be used for." - Site 12, group 1.

Similarly, Providers reflected on their ability to respond to a range of food preferences and fussy eating among children within their food provision. Providers felt it was challenging to achieve this, but recognised it was important to respond to children's food needs and ensure the foods provided are child appropriate, especially when it is a dietary need for the children. Providers highlighted that some children show signs of fussy eating simply because they are not familiar with the foods they are being provided as they have never tried them before:

"They [children] are used to eating other things, like pizza and chips and chocolates and everything. We have a platter of food for them...they can eat and they drink options of juice, water and milk, you know, because we understand the fact that they might not really have these things at home...they might be used to drinking fizzy drinks and we don't want that to happen. They have to drink water, you know?" - Site 10, group 2.

Parent/carer perspectives

During the focus groups the Parents/Carers discussed a range of child factors that should be considered when designing and delivering the HAF Programme. One of these factors related to the age of the children with one Parent/Carer reflecting that the Holiday Club had provided meaningful provision for children of all age groups, however some of the Parents felt that some of the provision was not appropriate for children of younger (e.g. age under 5 years) or older (e.g. teenagers) age groups [P9]. For example:

Researcher: *"Is there anything that you think could be better about anything that is on offer here..."*

Participant 2: *Yeah, just age appropriate. So here is perfect for the under elevens but over that you need to think more older. As a mum of older children, you know teenagers as well as young children I need to try and find something that will benefit all of them. Cuz I've got the sixteen-year-old and the thirteen-year-old sitting at home."* - Site 1.

Similar to the reflections related to the age of the children, one Parent/Carer also reflected on the need for Holiday Clubs to consider the appropriateness of programme provision for children with additional or complex needs [P10]:

Participant 1: *I'm not being rude to anyone or anything, but it would be nice if they tried to prioritise the needs, the special needs first.*

Participant 3: *Well yeah but it's not fair...*

Participant 1: *I don't mean that in bad way, otherwise it'll all be booked up and you can't get them a place anywhere, ya know.*

Participant 3: *What about the ones that haven't got. I see both sides of that. I know [child name removed] needs the help also but it's not fair on the children that haven't got...*

Participant 2: *Perhaps a certain amount of places for each, do you know what I mean?* - Site 2.

A few of the Parents/Carers reflected on the importance of Holiday Clubs considering emotional and behavioural aspects of their children. For example, one Parents/Carers highlighted that their child can be anxious about trying new things and going to new places, and therefore holiday clubs should be sensitive to these types of experiences for children. Some of the Parents/Carers highlighted that staff in the holiday clubs were helpful in managing child behaviour related issues within the holiday club:

"Well there was an incident today, and they called me straight away to inform me. Yeah, so. Two brothers, just having a little bit of a to do. Yeah, so straight away, they called me back and dealt with the situation, they kept me up to date with it all, and they showed me on the camera, that's what happened, so that I was fully aware. So yeah, it was just nice that the fact they didn't just brush it under the carpet, they were serious about it and said 'look, that was unacceptable, we're just going to let you know about it'." -Site 11.

Many of the Parents/Carers also discussed the importance of Holiday Clubs considering children's food and activity preferences when planning and implementing their programme provision. For example, some children may like to engage in a variety of activities within the holiday club, while some children might be more sport oriented than creatively inclined, or vice versa [P8]:

"I found out through the school, the school sent us an email and then when it was all released we had a look through and I thought this would be good because when they first went on a lot were cricket club or football club and she's not really sport orientated but crafts and activities and things as well that's why we went for this one." - Site 5, group 2.

In relation to food, some Parents/Carers acknowledged their children have a range of preferences and dietary needs, and some display fussy eating behaviours. With these factors in mind, Parents/Carers recognised that Holiday Clubs have a challenging task of providing appropriate food for groups of children. One Parent/Carer highlighted that the food provided was appropriate because *"it's quite kiddy friendly food, which is good because kids can be quite fussy"* (Site 10). Another Parent/Carer felt that providing 'simple' options is important for children, as 'fancy' foods may be inappropriate for children who prefer plain food options:

“I sent my children with packed lunches cuz the first day that they went, I didn’t, and they came home and said that they hadn’t really eaten cuz the sandwiches that were provided for them weren’t plain as such. I know that sounds crazy... but so like my little boy thought he was getting a cheese sandwich, but when he went to eat it was cheese, onion and mayonnaise or cheese and onion. And they’re very plain janes. And the other one wanted just a ham sandwich but it was smoked ham and cheese...wasn’t an issue but we just opted for putting them with a packed lunch because that way they can’t grumble and they’re gonna eat.” - Site 7.

Additionally, another Parent/Carer felt that the holiday club had effectively catered for their children’s dietary needs:

“My boys loved it. Yeah, they don’t eat pork cuz of the religious reasons and so they were given alternatives like they had Quorn sausage and mash, loved it. But bless they, it was, because I put ‘no pork’ on the dietary requirements they had put them down as vegetarian because halal, but my kids, cuz I’m not Muslim, my kids will eat meat even though it’s not halal. So when they saw, said are they vegetarian I said no, just because of pork so every time that they had stuff that wasn’t pork they were- it was offered to them as well, my boys had a choice which.” - Site 9.

However, in an earlier theme of this analysis, one Parent/Carer highlighted that the holiday club lacked variety in food options for children with vegetarian diets, and therefore these findings highlight an overall need for holiday clubs to consider how to provide sufficient variation for children while also accounting for different dietary needs [P1].

Overall, the evidence demonstrates that there is not a one-size fits all approach to attend to childrens’ needs and thus Providers need to cater to a range of preferences and needs by offering a range of activities and food choices.

7. Staffing

Provider perspectives

Within the survey, the Providers reflected on a range of resources needed in order to effectively deliver the HAF Programme, including staffing, facilities, funding, partnership working (to facilitate food procurement, facility identification, etc.) and information and training resources for staff. When asked about staffing in relation to the Government standards the Provider survey highlighted that the majority (92.5%) of Providers felt that they were able to meet the standards (see figure 24).

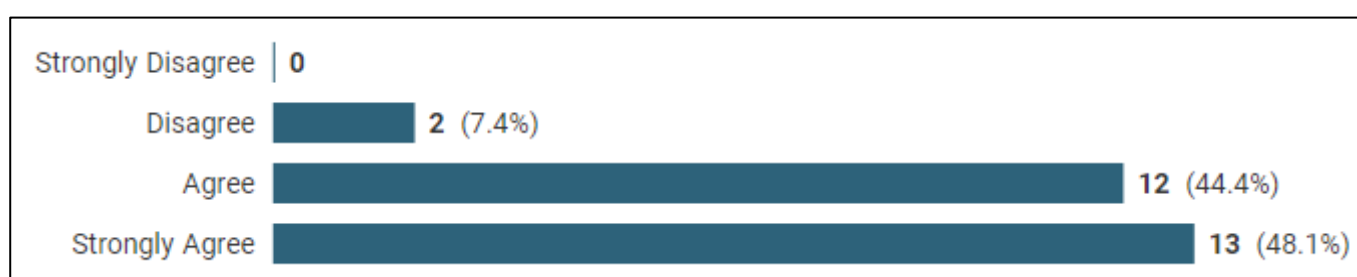


Figure 24. Answers given by Providers in response to the question “Please state your level of (dis)agreement with the following statement. We had sufficient numbers of staff to meet the Programme Standards.”

Several of the Providers within the focus groups expanded further, making reference to the impact of COVID-19 on staffing and that several adjustments had to be made. Providers also highlighted that they became over-staffed as a result of significant drop-off rates however, many of the Providers emphasised challenges related to staff shortages when delivering the programme; this was in-part caused by a lack of preparation time due to the last-minute contract award, as well as issues related to Covid-19 such as staff sickness and needing to self-isolate.

One of the Providers highlighted that a consequence of being short-staffed was that the Holiday Club was unable to provide for the demand that existed in the local area:

“We were quite short staffed throughout the summer anyway, and we found, because of Covid, we've lost members of staff who were casual members of staff and available. And so where we might have been able to increase the numbers of what we were able to offer, we weren't able to.” (Site 4, Group 1).

Providers highlighted that more preparation time would have enabled them to recruit more staff and enabled them to work to the capacity of the venue [F3]:

“We had to cut our numbers...so the facility would have been able to hold 70 children, but we had to cap our numbers at 50 at times to stay within our ratio of 1 to 15 per staff member so...if we could get [more] time and preparation, so having more time gives you more recruitment opportunities and plenty of time to get the camps booked up.” - Site 7, group 1.

On the other hand, some highlighted that their staffing levels were appropriate because they were already an established provider with the staff resources in place to accommodate the HAF Programme delivery [F4]:

“In terms of the staffing and things like, we had all of our usual pool of freelance facilitators that facilitate for us, and some of them are already booked in as part of as part of the holiday projects that we're delivering anyway, so that was quite good, it really made sense.” - Site 5, group 3.

One Provider also highlighted the importance of ensuring the wellbeing of staff when delivering the Programme, and therefore more preparation time would help to account for staff wellbeing also.

“We had to call in extra staff and bank to support the scheme. Including myself who worked all summer and I wasn't supposed to be working in numbers - which is why it's disappointing when children didn't turn as staff and food / resources were already paid for !”

The evidence suggests that many of the Providers had sufficient numbers of staff to deliver their Holiday Club and any issues were mostly related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

8. Training

Provider perspective

The Provider survey highlighted that Providers were happy with the guidance that had been given to them in relation to safeguarding (see [figure 25](#)), meeting health and safety standards (see [figure 26](#)) and meeting inclusion and accessibility standards (see [figure 27](#)). 96.6% of Providers felt that they had been given sufficient guidance to meet safeguarding standards, with only one Provider disagreeing that there was not enough guidance. Additionally, 95.3% of Providers also felt that they had been given sufficient guidance to meet health and safety standards, again with only one Provider disagreeing. Finally, 88.4% of Providers also agreed that they were given sufficient guidance to meet inclusion and accessibility standards, with three providers (11.5%) disagreeing.

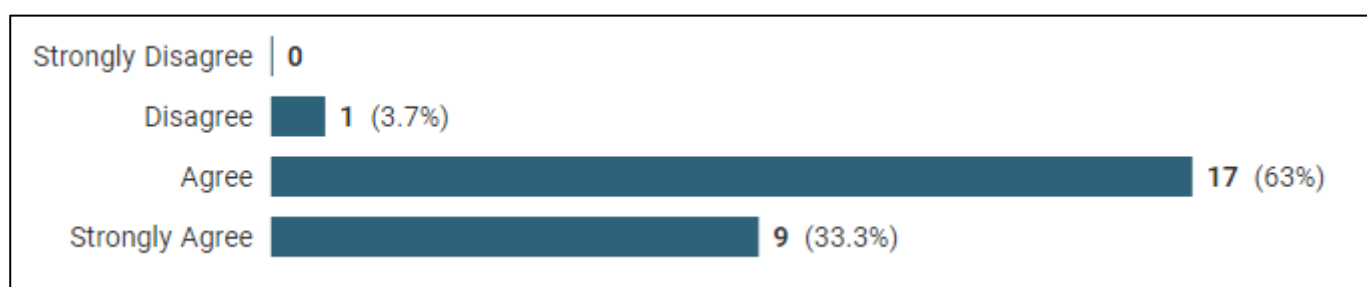


Figure 25. Answers given by Providers in response to the question “Please state your level of (dis)agreement to the following statement. We were provided with sufficient guidance to feel confident about meeting safeguarding standards.”

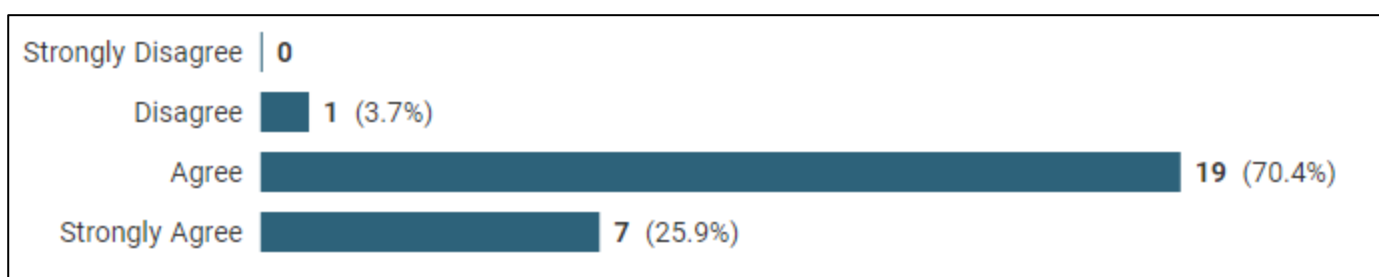


Figure 26. Answers given by Providers in response to the question “Please state your level of (dis)agreement to the following statement. We were provided with sufficient guidance to feel confident about meeting health and safety standards.”

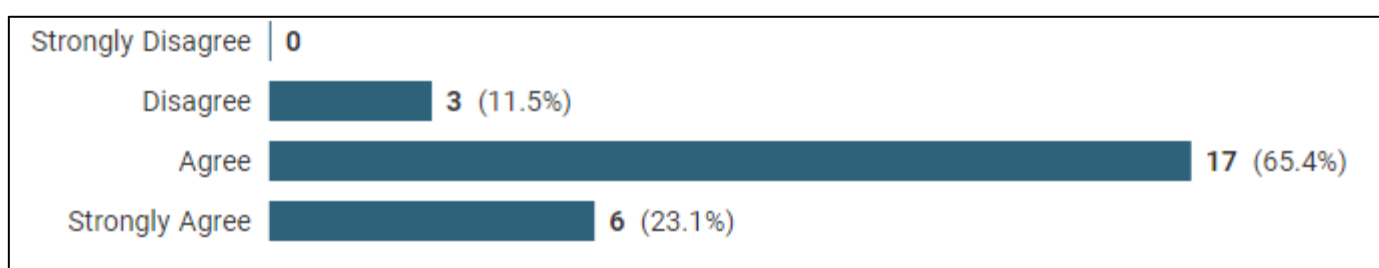


Figure 27. Answers given by Providers in response to the question “Please state your level of (dis)agreement to the following statement. We were provided with sufficient guidance to feel confident about meeting inclusion and accessibility standards.”

However, within the focus groups, many of the Providers reflected on the need for them to have access to training and information resources in order to support them in the delivery of various aspects of the HAF Programme provision. One of the Providers highlighted that they felt this information and training should have been provided as part of a HAF Programme delivery package at the point they were funded to deliver the programme [F14]:

“We were meant to have safeguarding information about different stuff and this, that and the other. Uh, where we had very little ability to put that into place, and I think that needed to be something that was driven by, that was provided by the HAF programme in that, here are your materials, this is what you need to deliver. And then it would have gone out across the everybody going out the same way. But uh, rather than having to rely on people in making them...might not be their specialism to provide nutritional classes and education and materials like that.” – Site 1, group 3.

In addition, one of the Providers highlighted that they would have benefitted from receiving these information and training resources to provide ideas about how to achieve the HAF programme government aims:

“I don't know whether there was like, you know, even just like a really visual PDF that says something about the outcomes that, you know, the kind of outcomes that we're looking for. Something that's really like in your face visual. We can't miss 'cause I think in the rush to get them all sorted, reading the small print is tricky, right?” – Site 5, group 3.

One of the Providers highlighted that some of the role requires staff to “*learn as they went*” (Site 4, group 1), for example identifying children that have specific needs that require specific support. However, training to support this would bolster their confidence to support children effectively. Therefore, a particular training need that the staff reflected on was to understand how to deal with sensitive questions that children ask such as ‘why do some children have free food provided to them at the holiday club while other’s do not’:

“I think the other problem was, not so much a problem, but little things that we faced were simple questions like ‘why are they having a free lunch?’, you know? And it was quite a basic question. It's actually quite a hard one to answer more for a child to sort of answer. It's just probably being in the awareness of actually how to

sort of answer those questions, and we might have been like awkward as well because, you know, how do I answer for this child that they're getting food and they're not?" - Site 4, group 1.

Another Provider highlighted they had *"a wellbeing lady who comes in and does wellbeing activities with our children and she is a pro at answering questions like that with really beautiful words that everybody can understand"*, and highlighted that staff within the Holiday Club have learnt through the wellbeing practitioner about how to respond to children's questions honestly, appropriately and sensitively. The Providers therefore highlighted the need and benefits of receiving training and information resources to enable them to better work with children and deliver the HAF Programme [F14]. Nevertheless, one of the Providers recommended that a solution to the differences in food provision between HAF Programme and non-HAF Programme children could be to charge non-HAF Programme funded parents a little more to have their child's lunch catered for, so that all children receive the same food provision at the Holiday club [P11]:

Participant 1: *Could we potentially provide an option for parents [who pay for their child's attendance] to pay for the hot lunch so that their children can choose to pay for lunch and then it becomes an equal?*

Participant 2: *Yeah, we need to take that forward to the chat with NSport.* - Site 7 and 8, group 1.

This suggests that despite the indications from the survey, Providers would have felt more confident if they had received more training or more effective training on various aspects of the HAF Programme standards.

However, Providers did highlight that the visits from the Co-ordinators were useful and helped to ensure that they were meeting the Programme standards (see [figure 28](#)) [F14]. One Provider further explained that the visits *"...gave me confidence in knowing I was achieving what the programme expected and that it gave me a chance to ask questions concerning HAF"*. However, another Provider commented *"...we didn't personally take anything from the visits but I hope that Northamptonshire Sport did."*

Overall, the findings suggest that additional training resources could be delivered to Providers to help with the achievement of Government aims and standards.

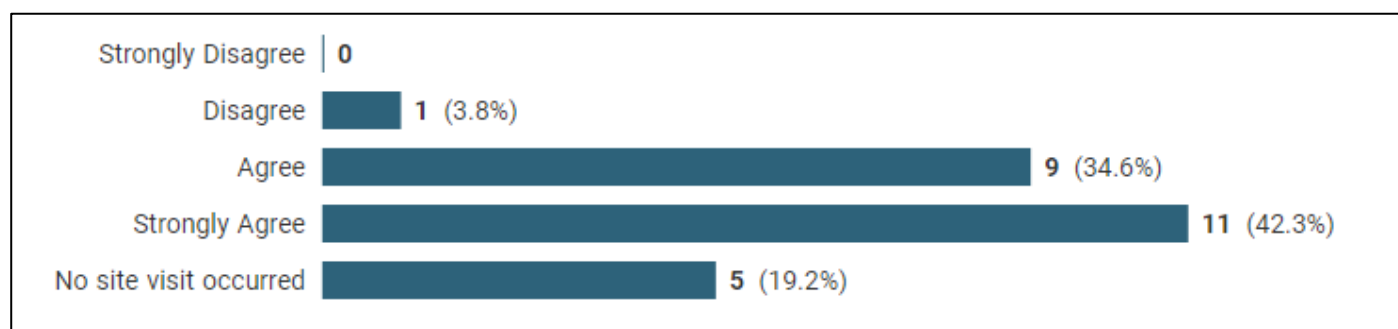


Figure 28. Answers given in response to the question "Please state your level of (dis)agreement to the following statement. Site visits from Northamptonshire Sport were helpful for ensuring we were meeting the Programme standards."

9. Food provision

Co-ordinator perspectives

Several of the Co-ordinators reflected that due to the last minuteness of the programme launching, there were several issues relating to outsourcing the food provisions, particularly when the venues used had catering facilities available [F3]:

“...I think the problem is that that's referenced is that uh a lot of the venues that had they had pre warning would have made their kitchen staff or their catering facilities available 'cause a lot of them are outsourced. Um they had already that had finished and gone home. So I think that was the problem. Certainly that was the feedback we had from one of err the catering companies who looks after the schools in the north of the county is if they had had more warning that they would have kept their kitchens open at all the sites where we were using, but they'd already given their staff this summer holidays. They'd already closed half their kitchens. So you know what they did provide was a kind of lastminute.com...” – Co-ordinator focus group

Provider perspectives

In relation to training and meeting standards the surveys highlighted that the Providers felt that they received sufficient guidance on meeting the food standards (see [figure 29](#)).

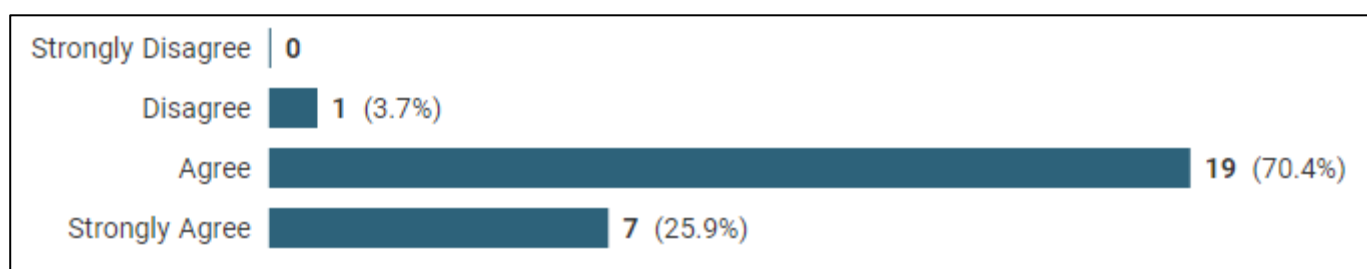


Figure 29. Answers given in response to the question “Please state your level of (dis)agreement with the following statement. We were provided with sufficient guidance to feel confident about meeting food standards.”

Despite the guidance, Providers faced challenges when planning their internal or external catering for their Holiday Club food provision. Many of the Providers found it difficult to cater in-house due to lack of time, staffing or facilities to do this, and therefore had to outsource their catering provision [F3]. Consequently, some Providers outsourced their food and catering provision to an external food supplier however, the staff highlighted a number of challenges of doing this: there was a lot of food surplus as the food was not always enjoyed by the children; there was a lack of time to develop meaningful relationships with local food suppliers and lack of time to plan to food provision collaboratively; due to the high demand for external food suppliers to cater for the HAF Programme, and this resulted in a shortage of food suppliers to cope with the programme demand. In all of these challenges, more preparation time would have facilitated the food and catering plans for the HAF Programme [F3].

Nevertheless, during the focus groups, some of Providers reflected on their desire to plan how they could do their HAF Programme catering in-house during future programme provision:

“Maybe we could recruit a cook or a chef or somebody to work through the holiday. Because we have, we do have some facilities in some of the venues.” - Site 8, group 1.

A concern highlighted by some of the Providers related to their ability to cater hot meals for the Programme:

“The challenge for Christmas is it will be, they want to go down the hot food route...I'm not sure whether [catering provider name removed] would be able to do hot food deliveries to schools.” – Site 8, group 1.

The findings suggest that there are sufficient catering options to help meet Government aims and standards however, a longer lead-in time is required to book and prepare catering services.

10. Venues, facilities and resources

Co-ordinator perspectives

Several of the Co-ordinators mentioned in the focus groups that when completing quality assurance checks they were able to link with individuals within the community and create relationships:

"...many of the colleagues was enlisted to go out to do some of the sort of site visits to ensure everything was running OK and that worked quite well with my roles to work in two of the priority areas in the county crossing Rushden and Daventry. So I was able to combine some visits to see those which is involving local people which is what most important about it and my work and to see and talk to them. So it worked out quite well for my role and perspective."

"No, I'm I, uh similar to [names removed] that..., during the run of it, just mainly on the ground during the quality assurance checks. So all over the east of the county. Which was really useful for meeting up with groups and people haven't seen for years, 'cause I work on another area so it's good to see what was going out and what was working well."

The Co-ordinators mentioned that the Programme allowed providers to build relationships with the local community that hadn't previously existed [F1]:

"...more in the Community groups and new providers and non sort of traditional Holiday club providers is great to give that opportunity to... Venues and new venues that with new community groups that you know... Uh, we give them the opportunity to provide local provision to their, you know their communities. And when I went to visit again it was it was great to see that."

One of the Co-ordinators pointed out that the more successful Providers and clubs were those that already had existing links with schools:

"Like I said, they're all successful in their own ways, but the ones that seem to work best were where you had providers that already had associations with those schools that were already there, delivering lunchtime clubs or after school clubs. So one was in Wellingborough and the guy that I used to work with their previously actually, will say that they already had a relationship with the children with their families. The numbers were really good as a result of that, the children felt comfortable in the environment 'cause in a lot of the case it was their own school anyway. There were within walking distance to get there, so there wasn't the transport barriers."

Provider perspectives

During the focus groups, a few Providers reflected on the difficulties they faced in identifying an appropriate venue to deliver their Programme provision as a result of receiving their HAF Programme funding last-minute.

"The first school that we had organised for the first week had also backed themselves up in case it [the HAF programme] didn't happen as we wanted it to, and they ran one through their wrap around care provision. So then it became difficult for us to use that venue because they're already tied into a lot, and there wasn't enough time to then ask parents to join because there was like a four day window after we got the go ahead for the end of school to get letters out." - Site 12, group 1.

This challenge reinforces the need for the HAF Programme contract to be announced in a more timely manner, to enable providers to establish relationships with partners who can provide relevant venue and facility provisions for the Programme delivery [F3].

11. Travel and transport

Provider perspective

Some of the Providers recognised during the focus groups that there is a need for Providers to consider whether Parents of children attending the HAF Programme have the appropriate transport arrangements in place to enable them to attend the provision. Parents from disadvantaged backgrounds who do not have the means to travel to the Holiday Club are at risk of being excluded from the Holiday Club provision that was designed specifically for people in disadvantaged communities [P11]:

"I think transport...because the people we're targeting are the people who are less likely to be able to get around, they're less likely to drive, have cars, have access, you know? Or have money for public transport and things like that. And although we were doing this great thing of giving them a place session and feeding them, they had to be able to get to us. And I think unless you are local to our centre in [location removed], walking distance, or you know, even just had the money to get on the bus, 'cause that that then put a lot of people out of it." - Site 1, group 3.

Parent/Carer perspective

During the focus groups, Parents/Carers highlighted that the distance of the venue is a consideration for some families, as some families may have access to transport and can therefore travel to different venues, while other families have limited transport access and therefore need to consider the distance of the holiday club or what travel options are available:

"I went through the activities because I don't drive and tried to find whatever was convenient and nearby. And a walkable distance and then I enrolled her on those activities" - Site 5, group 1.

This was also reported in the survey completed by parents whereby, 25.9% of the Parents/Carers either walked to the Holiday Club or used public transport (see [figure 30](#)). This therefore highlights the potential need for holiday clubs to consider making transport arrangements available to families who might need it [P11].

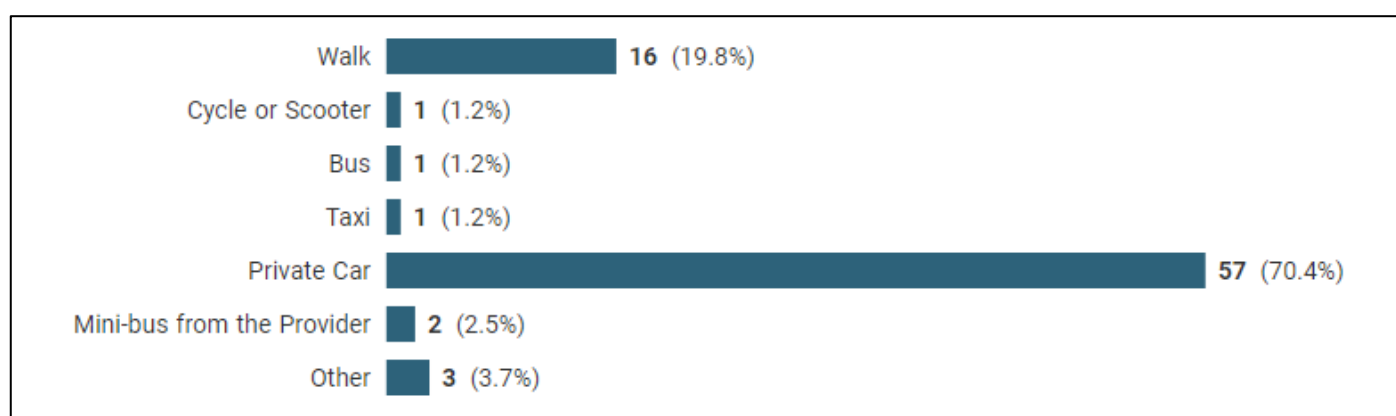


Figure 30. Answers given by Parents/Carers in response to the question "What was your main form of transport to the programme location?"

Parents/Carers were also asked how far they had travelled to reach the Holidays Camps (see [figure 31](#)) and how far they would be willing to travel in the future (see [figure 32](#)). These figures show that Parents/Carers are willing to travel even further in order to reach each Holiday Club therefore, showing their enthusiasm for the HAF Programme. 7.4% of Parents/Carers reported they would prefer to travel less than 1 mile, 18.5% of Parents/Carers reported that they would be willing to travel 1-2 miles, 22.2% would be willing to travel 2-5 miles, 39.5% would travel 5-10 miles and 12.3% would travel more than 10 miles. This provides an indication that the potential catchment area for Holiday Clubs in future provision can cover a wider area and enable wider access to the programme.

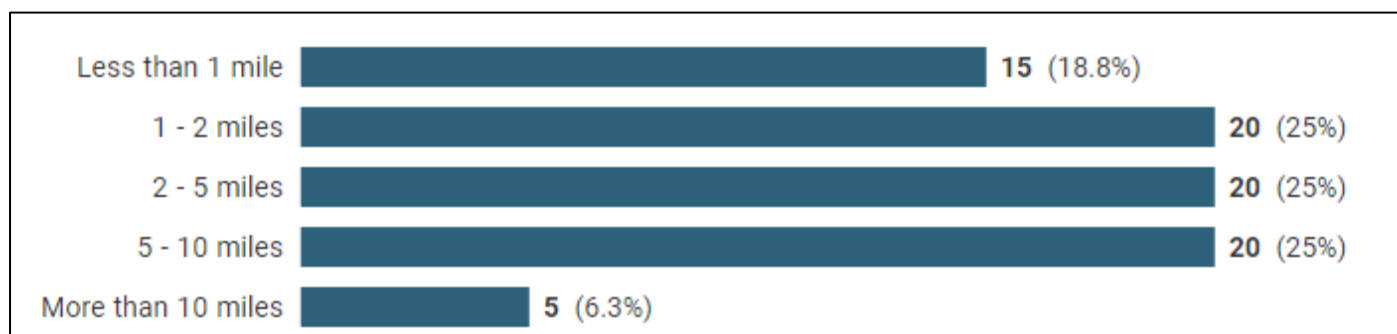


Figure 31. Answers given by Parents/Carers in response to the question “How far did you travel to attend the programme?”

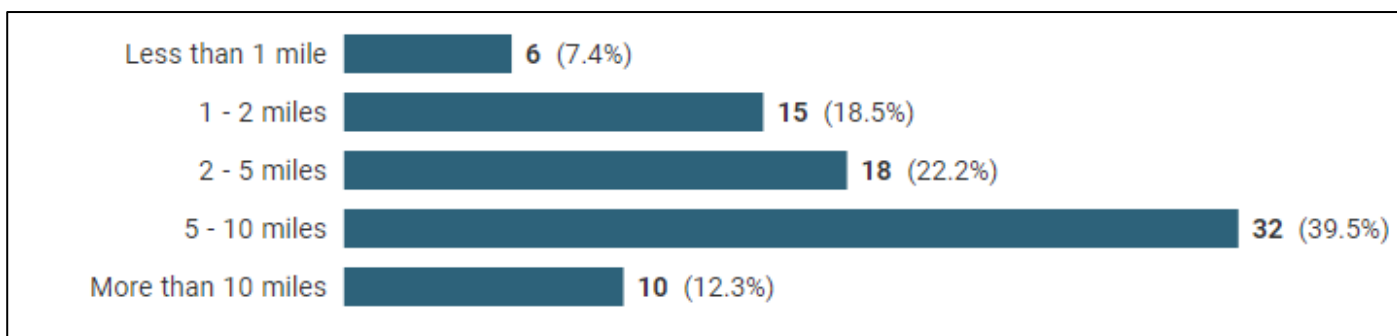


Figure 32. Answers given by Parents/Carers in response to the question “How far are you willing to travel for programmes in the future?”

12. Funding

Provider perspective

During the focus groups some of the Providers reflected on the importance of the HAF Programme funding in supporting families from deprived backgrounds, that they may not have been able to deliver to without the funding. One of the Providers expressed concerns about not receiving sustainable funding from the HAF Programme to support families who need the programme [F13]:

“The more activities that are available for young people, the better. We wouldn't have been able to afford that without this funding...I think the concept of feeding young people over summer is spot on, like it needs to be done.... The last minute and still the uncertainty. Now that whether the funding is going to get pulled or not because have we evidenced enough that the young people who got the dinners were the young people that deserved it. Now WE know they are [in need] but we've gotta prove that haven't, the funders said that... I'm not going to lie, [that] stresses me out.” – Site 13, group 2.

Parent/Carer perspectives

During the focus groups some of the Parents/Carers reflected on the importance of Holiday Clubs having sufficient resources to enable them to plan and deliver their Programme provision. For example, clubs need the right facilities to engage children in food-related activities, although the extent to which the clubs involve children in these types of activities could be adapted depending on what facilities and resources the clubs have available:

“I'm not aware of any type of cooking or anything. I think it would be good if they did, I think the children would enjoy it. But I've only seen this bit, this room, so I don't know if they've got the facilities...But even if they were to bring some already made cakes, they could decorate them, or some biscuits, they could decorate them.” - Site 11.

One of the Parents/Carers also reflected on the need for the importance of the HAF Programme continuing to enable Holiday Clubs to deliver fun activities for children [F13]:

"I just think it's quite important, I think it's quite hard when you're doing something like this, especially the funding to keep it going. Some of these things, so for example, you know the paint that comes in, the marker pens, they are quite pricey things. But you can't exactly take a paint can out...you have to do it in a child friendly way. You need the funding to come in and keep everything balanced. It should be good." - Site 10.

How the HAF Programme is funded in the future will determine the sustainability of Holiday Club delivery. Uncertainties about funding may mean that Co-ordinators and Providers need to consider alternative funding sources over the next few years.

13. The need for the programme

Co-ordinator perspectives

During the focus group, one of the Co-ordinators mentioned visiting an MMA facility and seeing how several children with additional needs really benefitted from the Holiday Club:

"...one of the one of the sessions that I attended was at Martial Arts Centre and there were a lot of children, that had gone there. Some of them were, umm uh... had ADHD and um those sorts of conditions and they were really benefiting from being in that in that setting."

However, the Co-ordinators mainly focussed on how there is need for the Programme in the future and how to make the whole HAF Programme more sustainable so that it can continue. Several possibilities were discussed on how to make the programme more maintainable, for example working with other partners, donations, utilising volunteers [C8]:

"Where are you gonna find 1.8 million from? In this day and age, to well...To create a sustainable [inaudible], I don't think HAF is sustainable. It's how do we work with system partners to eradicate food poverty in the long run, that's where it's a multi-agency side for sustainable Food Network working with the food banks too...How do we boost a more physical active country? So it yeah HAF isn't sustainable."

"...if there are ways and means kind of thing, to contribute at least something towards it, whether it's monetary or some sort of in kind contribution kind of thing that would reduce the massive chunk of money needed, then that'll help you play the part in that of just raising awareness both along for families and young people, which is most important for them to take part amongst providers to provide quality opportunities and for-but then they say if there is the need for money or contributions of some kind that that might have helped with that."

"... there's that volunteer army of HAF deliverers."

Provider perspectives

During the focus groups many of the Providers reflected on the need for the HAF Programme and some Providers said the Programme is important for enabling children to participate in meaningful activities and have reliable access to food during the school holidays.

"So the idea is good; gets the kids out of the house to do something, because some of holidays can belong and the children could very well end up spending all their time on their screens or Facebook or laptop or things like that. So it's a good idea, and then the government trying to make sure that they have...ultimately that is good as well because coming from my background as an [child practitioner role removed], we do know that some of these children at times come to school, they are eating crisps for breakfast and then you know...at lunch, they have another 2 packets of crisps and chocolate. Normally they are not really eating healthy options, so making sure that the children gets at least one [meal] every day is a very good idea." – Site 10, group 2.

Some of the Providers highlighted that the demand for the Programme was very high, evidencing a clear need for the Programme in the area:

Participant 1: *It was very, very popular and as they said right there, they could have been like, their parents were ringing up and we literally, you know, trying to jump out our arm if they could get a space. And that was throughout the summer as well. You know when they... 'cause they were parents talking to parents who didn't know anything about it as well and so I think there's still room to navigate, not even just from a from a business sense of the companies that are running it, but from the actual program.*

Participant 2: *Now it needs to get out to parents to know that this is available and accessible in these different areas.* – Site 4 and 7 group 1.

Additionally, one of the Providers reiterated that the last-minute nature of the Programme contract resulted in some families in need of the provision not getting access to it [F3]:

"It comes back to being lastminute.com. It could have been a lot better and a lot more people could have benefited from it, and the right people you know." – Site 1, group 3.

A key challenge identified by the Providers was that they received demand from families who were from disadvantaged backgrounds but did not qualify for free school meal provision, and consequently were not eligible for the HAF Programme, despite having a clear need for the provision. Some Providers said that they received mixed messages about whether or not they could sign families up who had a clear need for the provision but did not have eligibility to attend, creating uncertainty about whether or not the holiday club was officially able to support these families. Moreover, one Provider therefore highlighted that the eligibility criteria would benefit from being reviewed because it does not reflect the actual volume of families who need support from the HAF Programme [F15]:

Participant 1: *"Look, we know we know what young people deserve a free dinner. Whether they get school dinners at school or not, if they're living on a Council estate, I feel that that makes them vulnerable. Anyway, now that sounds really awful, but it's true, isn't it? The areas we're working, we get funding because they're vulnerable. They are [in] deprivation, you know? They suffered with deprivation, so really, do they need a code?"*

Participant 2: *"Yeah, and then a lot of children are on free school meals for different things. Some are like SEN (Special Education Needs) for instance, so that qualifies as regards to the programme. Some are like...Uh... social difficulties some are emotional difficulties, so it is for different reason."* - Site 10 and 13, group 2.

Parent/Carer perspectives

Within the Parents/Carers surveys parents were asked an open-ended question to "provide any comments that demonstrate the benefits that the Holiday Activities and Food Programme has provided to you and your child(ren), which has not been asked in the previous questions". The responses highlighted that the HAF Programme gave the child(ren) opportunities that they would not have been able to have before and the knowledge that their child(ren) was safe, cared for, receiving food and having fun, eased pressures on themselves/family. For example:

"My children loved it. The routines for them were very good. It was a good opportunity for them and I couldn't have afforded it otherwise."

"I think this programme is brilliant for me and my children. I am a single parent of 4 children and my twins are the most active and challenging at times. Attending the programme has enabled them to direct their energy in physical activities rather than being stuck at home. The food helped to as during the summer holidays the cost of my food shop goes up which I struggle with".

"It was lovely to know that despite my mental health condition which I feel negatively affects my children ability to socialise or take part in activities that they were able to enjoy several activities over the holidays and that I did not have to worry about the cost of these activities. Being on a very low income I simply couldn't have afforded these and without them the children would have rarely got out the house."

"It has given me and her father much needed respite care knowing she is safe and fulfilled and mentally and physically stimulated. My daughter is up early every day and we cannot cope doing 14 hour days without help. Clubs are invaluable."

"Allowed me to still be able to do work/college related stuff knowing that child is being looked after without having to constantly worry on how I was going to keep him entertained. Helped mine and his mental health as it meant not under each others feet for the whole of the holiday period. Allowed my child to learn and experience new things which he was then able to talk to me about afterwards. Allowed him to be outside in fresh air instead of in-front of a TV/Computer screen getting bored."

During the focus groups some of the Parents/Carers also reflected on the need for the HAF Programme, highlighting that it is a positive and meaningful environment for children to be in, it gives children something to do each day during the school holidays:

"I mean, the main aim is to keep the children in a positive environment in the summer months. And I think, really, what they've done is really good." - Site 10.

Some Parents/Carers highlighted their gratitude for the Programme, and they would like the Programme to be available to families in future school holidays:

"The next big holiday is going to be around Christmas, if they did something around that time...I wish they would just organise themselves a bit and we can just get the kids into the activities around Christmas, that would be nice for them as well." - Site 5, group 1.

It is evident that the HAF Programme is valued by families and that there is a need to deliver this holiday provision in the future. Consideration needs to be given to planning the sustainability and legacy of the Programme.

14. Achieving the programme aims

Co-ordinator perspective

During the focus groups the Co-ordinators reflected that on a whole *"the positives far outweighed the negatives"*. However, the Co-ordinators referred to the fact that the food aims were not met in several instances, in particular the type of food that was provided for the children and young people attending the clubs and the education of parents in relation to healthy nutrition and food budgeting:

"I think some more some better information to the delivers around what is a nutritional meal would be useful because some of the ones I went to technically they probably did meet the food standard. But an egg Mayo sarnie from Greggs... Isn't the most healthy sandwich. But they'll be saying, well, it meets the criteria. Yeah, does it? The choc- the chocolate yoghurt. Yeah might have small bit of dairy. Is it the most nutritional?"

"...one of the aims is to get families more aware of healthy eating...unless the parents are taught how to how... to do it themselves. That's crucial".

The Co-ordinators felt that this was due to the short time given to prepare for the Programme and more adequate time would have allowed for more healthy food provision because the food would have more sufficient planning time and more training could be given to the providers. The Co-ordinators reflected as a whole that more time and learning from this HAF Programme will enable better delivery and achievement of the programme aims in future HAF Programmes:

"...Moving forward. Now we've got a bit more of an understanding of where we can deliver and what's worked and what hasn't."

"...they're sort of things that you hope can be ironed out and can be learned from and dealt with, hopefully more efficiently moving forward 'cause ultimately we just we just want as many people to access it as possible."

Some of the Co-ordinators also highlighted that they had to rely upon previously existing relationships with Providers to be able to deliver the Programme and meet the Government standards due to the limited time to organise the Programme:

“Embedded our relationship with- or stuff we've done over the last year to be able to ring our partners at the last minute and beg, borrow, steal another hours worth of activity from them. So a lot of providers who we managed to talk around into HAF had put out activity for 3 hour's hadn't involved the food... But 'cause we've got that relationship with them, we were able to say, can we get another hour in? Can we? Where can we get the food from to make it happen? Can you get the physical activity element in?... But it was crucial to be able to- be able to pick up the phone last minute...”

Provider perspectives

Many of the Providers during the focus groups reflected on how effectively they delivered their Programme provision and achieved a number of broader outcomes for the children. The Providers highlighted a number of challenging impacts the last-minute timings of the HAF Programme had on their ability to plan and deliver the Programme. Under these conditions, one of the Providers felt that this negatively impacted on their Programme provision and the attainment of intended outcomes, and would have liked more time to improve their planning and delivery:

“I think the thing was that we just couldn't do it the best we could. That's the thing. We had an opportunity to reach out to a lot of kids and families. Ours were very much based on family play and involvement and, you know, we couldn't do that to the best of our ability because it was all a bit late and we didn't have the knowledge or the resources. So we, you know, we have a messy play area that, if we have the resources and the guidance, we could have done the nutritional activities and all sorts. But we just wouldn't be confident enough in what we were doing to provide that.” - Site 1, group 3.

Another Provider felt that, despite the last-minute conditions they were operating within, they delivered their provision effectively however, more planning time would have enabled them to achieve even more:

“The major success...I'd say the engage the engagement levels was a major success, like the amount of people that engaged and like the depth of the engagement was really good. And that's under quite difficult conditions. That's under like you know, all the conditions that we described. So I just think, imagine what we could do if it was, we had that lead in time and all the rest of it. I mean, I was on site every week bar one. Um... It was a brilliant like popping down, seeing them doing their things, it felt really worthwhile and great. And so I'd say, yeah, the engagement was brilliant.” – Site 5, group 3.

Nevertheless, both examples highlight the importance of the HAF Programme contract being announced and distributed earlier in order for holiday Providers to have more time to effectively plan and implement their Programme provision [F3].

One of the Providers also reflected on how their Holiday Club provision spanned across multiple government aims and enabled a range of outcomes for children:

“A week's course included what we class as water break activities, circle games, time to break. Have a drink of water or snack and small games. We did lunchtime activities, the physical activity, we did creative challenges so we did arts, outside or outdoor learning, we brought a specialist provider in to teach an outdoors programme. We had wellbeing discussions every day, we had personal bests challenges, and PB not just physical one was speed bounce - one looked at the memory - one looked at speed type in the use of a computer. So showcased their children self-esteem, confidence and talents and stuff that they had and parents will, 'I didn't even know she or he could do that', or 'I've never got him to stand up and speak about anything'. So that was our winners. And then the last thing was we also did a story stars reading where our members of staff read to children as well. We've got children reading at different times, but actually them seeing a role model reading.” - Site 12, group 1.

Another Provider highlighted that they would like to continue to plan their provision so that their whole programme offer could come together and intertwine more effectively:

“I think in terms of the activities that we offered, I think there is something that we could do around, you know, structuring the food element as part of some of those [other] activities. So I just think, you know, we did a wilderness week for example, [and] making the connection between food and the natural environment or where their food comes from, they could have done an activity based on that. So we could, yeah, so we could feed it into the program a bit more. Or like filmmaking for fun, there could have been some element of food fun in there. There's definitely things that we could do to be more responsive...I mean, you know, it's in the contract explicit, but more emphasis as an outcome.” - Site 5, group 3.

Overall, the HAF Programme in Northamptonshire was able to achieve or partially achieve the Government aims and standards. Where aims or standards were not achieved, Co-ordinators and Providers were quick to acknowledge the issue and were already considering solutions to ensure the missed aims and standards were met in the next iteration of the HAF Programme.

Conclusion and recommendations

Evaluation aim and objectives

The aim of this evaluation was to explore the impact of the HAF Programme on the health and wellbeing outcomes for children and families from deprived backgrounds in Northamptonshire. This was carried out to explore how effectively the Government aims had been achieved by Holiday Clubs in Northamptonshire, and what factors influenced this programme delivery and attainment of programme outcomes. The evaluation was conducted using the following specific evaluation objectives:

Child focussed objectives

1. To examine opportunities for healthy eating (aligns with Government aim 1 and Government standards 1 to 3).
2. To examine opportunities to engage in for physical activity (aligns with Government aim 2 and Government standards 4 to 7).
3. To examine the development of health and wellbeing outcomes (such as resilience, character, wellbeing and educational attainment) (aligns with Government aim 3).
4. To examine opportunities to engage in enrichment activities (aligns with Government aim 3 and Government standards 4 to 7).
5. To examine social opportunities (aligns with Government aim 4).
6. To examine opportunities to improve knowledge of health and nutrition (aligns with Government aim 5 and Government standard 8).
7. To examine opportunities to be more engaged with school and other local services (aligns with Government aim 6 and Government standard 10).

Parent and Carer focussed objectives

8. To examine opportunities to improve understanding of nutrition and food budgeting (aligns with Government aim 7 and Government standard 9).
9. To examine signposting opportunities to other information and support (for example, health, employment and education) (aligns with Government aim 8 and Government standard 10).
10. To examine opportunities to improve health, wellbeing and home life.*

Process evaluation objective

11. To examine what factors facilitated or hindered the implementation of the programme and the attainment of outcomes (aligns with Government standards 11 -12)*.

*Evaluation objectives 10 and 11 are not linked to any government aims as they were created for the purposes of this evaluation to help provide greater insight into the HAF Programme provision.

Summary of findings

- There are some instances where data were not collected from one or two groups of participants in relation to a particular evaluation objective (e.g. no data were collected from Providers in relation to evaluation objective 9). This absence of data may reflect that the aim may not be a high priority aim and needs to be planned and implemented in future provision. Additionally, the lack of data may be a result of the limitations of this investigation as there are some factors that are challenging to examine in a short time frame (e.g. changes in children's confidence or knowledge would need a longitudinal evaluation to empirically identify).
- The data in this report highlights that HAF Programme Providers had incorporated a range of food, activity, social and enrichment opportunities and activities during the 2021 summer holidays in Northamptonshire.

- Some evidence of healthy eating opportunities but Providers recognised this was not as high a priority aim compared to other Government aims and therefore, needs to be planned and implemented in future provision.
- Although the Programme delivered a range of opportunities to children and families, there were some core strengths and challenges experienced, which influenced the quality of Programme's planning, delivery and attainment of outcomes. These factors were wide-ranging (e.g. resources, child-factors, etc.) but the overriding challenge which negatively impacted the planning and delivery was the timing in which the HAF Programme contract was announced; this impacted a range of activities (such as the marketing of the programme, the quality of relationships formed with stakeholders such as schools, catering organisations and venue holders, the sign-up and booking process, the quality of food provided, the content of activity prepared, the recruitment of staffing). Table 11. highlights several recommendations to help improve the quality of any future HAF Programme provision as a result of the information gained through this report.
- An additional limitation of this HAF Programme was that there was limited provision for older children and the education of parents, in relation to food nutrition and budgeting. Whilst there was some provision for older children it was limited in comparison to provision for younger children. Tables 13 - 15 highlight several recommendations to help improve the quality of any future HAF Programme provision as a result of the information gained through this report.

Table 12. Summary table identifying which if the Government Aims and Government standards were met by the Programme. Table key: ✓ means that the aim/standard was met, O means that the aim/standard was partially met, and X means that the aim/standard was not met.

Evaluation Objective	Aligning Government Aim	Aim Achieved?	Aligning Government Standard	Standard Achieved?
Child Focus				
1. To examine opportunities for healthy eating.	1. Eat more healthily over the school holidays.	O	1. Providers must provide at least one meal a day (breakfast, lunch or tea) and all food provided at the holiday club (including snacks) must meet school food standards.	✓
			2. Our expectation is that the majority of food served by providers will be hot. However, we acknowledge that there will be occasions when this is not possible and a cold alternative may be used.	O
			3. All food provided as part of the programme must comply with regulations on food preparation and take into account allergies, dietary requirements and any religious or cultural requirements for food.	O
2. To examine opportunities to engage in for physical activity.	2. Be more active during the school holidays.	✓	4. Holiday clubs must provide fun and enriching activities that provide children with opportunities to develop new skills/knowledge, consolidate existing skills/knowledge and try out new experiences.	✓
			5. This could include physical activities, creative activities or wider experiences (for example, a nature walk or visiting a city farm).	✓
			6. Local authorities should set out how they can support providers to deliver a rich and varied mix of fun and enriching activities that are age-appropriate.	O
			7. Holiday clubs must provide activities that meet the <u>physical activity guidelines</u> on a daily basis.	✓
3. To examine the development of health and wellbeing outcomes (such as resilience, character, wellbeing and educational attainment).	3. Take part in engaging and enriching activities which support the development of resilience, character and wellbeing along with their wider educational attainment.	✓		

Evaluation Objective	Aligning Government Aim	Aim Achieved?	Aligning Government Standard	Standard Achieved?
4. To examine opportunities to engage in enrichment activities.	3. Take part in engaging and enriching activities which support the development of resilience, character and wellbeing along with their wider educational attainment.	✓	4. Holiday clubs must provide fun and enriching activities that provide children with opportunities to develop new skills/knowledge, consolidate existing skills/knowledge and try out new experiences.	✓
			5. This could include physical activities, creative activities or wider experiences (for example, a nature walk or visiting a city farm).	✓
			6. Local authorities should set out how they can support providers to deliver a rich and varied mix of fun and enriching activities that are age-appropriate.	O
			7. Holiday clubs must provide activities that meet the <u>physical activity guidelines</u> on a daily basis.	✓
5. To examine social opportunities.	4. Be safe and not to be socially isolated.	✓		
6. To examine opportunities to improve knowledge of health and nutrition.	5. Have a greater knowledge of health and nutrition.	O	8. Providers must include an element of nutritional education each day aimed at improving the knowledge and awareness of healthy eating for children. For example, activities such as getting children involved in food preparation and cooking, growing fruit/vegetables and taste tests.	O
7. To examine opportunities to be more engaged with school and other local services.	6. Be more engaged with school and other local services.	X	10. Holiday clubs must be able to provide information, signposting or referrals to other services and support that would benefit the children who attend their provision and their families.	X
Parent/Carer Focus				
8. To examine opportunities to improve understanding of nutrition and food budgeting.	7. Develop their understanding of nutrition and food budgeting.	X	9. Providers must include at least weekly training and advice sessions for parents, carers or other family members. These should provide advice on how to source, prepare and cook nutritious and low-cost food.	X
9. To examine signposting opportunities to other information and support (for example, health, employment and education).	8. Be signposted towards other information and support, for example, health, employment and education.	X	10. Holiday clubs must be able to provide information, signposting or referrals to other services and support that would benefit the children who attend their provision and their families.	X

Recommendations

Following the investigation and analysis of the evaluation objectives there are several Government aims and Government standards that were not met during the HAF Programme as a result of several factors. Conversely, there are numerous instances where the Government aims and standards were met and children and their families greatly benefitted as a result. Tables 13 – 15 below suggest recommendations for consideration for future HAF Programmes that highlight both areas for improvement and examples of good practice. These tables are divided according to recommendations for Co-ordinators ([table 13.](#)), Providers ([table 14.](#)) and general HAF participants ([table 15.](#)) in relation to the evaluation objectives of this report.

Table 13. Recommendations for Co-ordinators.

Recommendations for Co-Ordinators		
Recommendation Reference	Recommendation	Highlighted From
Objective 6: To examine opportunities to improve knowledge of health and nutrition		
C1	There needs to be greater uptake in provider training in relation to improving children's (and parents) knowledge of health and nutrition, to enable them to plan and implement activities that support this aim in future provision.	Provider and co-ordinator data
Objective 7: To examine opportunities to be more engaged with school and other local services		
C2	More successful Holiday Clubs were those that already had a relationship with schools, community centres and facilities etc. prior to the HAF Programme beginning. Therefore, it is recommended that links should be made with facilities and communities prior to implementation, in order to build relationships with facility staff, parents and children/young people to aid the success of any provisions.	Co-ordinator and parent data
Objective 8: To examine opportunities to improve understanding of nutrition and food budgeting		
C3	There is a need for co-ordinators and providers to develop a range of activities that can engage the parents in the Programme to improve knowledge of nutrition and food budgeting.	Co-ordinator data
Objective 11: To examine what factors facilitated or hindered the implementation of the programme and the attainment of outcomes		
C4	It is recommended that there be an advertising template used for consistent marketing approaches across the different Providers to ensure all the provision of a Holiday Club is advertised with all the necessary information provided.	Co-ordinator data
C5	It is recommended that schools assign a core member to deliver the responsibilities assigned to schools as key gatekeepers of the HAF Programme in order to support Co-ordinator planning.	Provider data
C6	It is recommended to consider a non-digital booking alternative so that families without internet access are not missing out and can still benefit from the Programme.	Co-ordinator, provider and parent data.
C7	It is recommended that the Co-ordinators incorporate more timely communication about the expectations to use a centralised booking system, in order to avoid holiday Providers investing time in adopting alternative booking systems.	Providers
C8	It is recommended that Co-ordinators consider how to make the Programme more sustainable so that children and families can still benefit from the Programme in the future.	Co-ordinators
C9	It is recommended that Co-ordinators reach out to Bursar's within schools to assist Providers in making relationships.	Co-ordinator data

Table 14. Recommendations for Providers.

Recommendations for Providers		
Recommendation Reference	Recommendation	Highlighted From
Objective 1: To examine opportunities for healthy eating		
P1	It is recommended that Providers should work towards offering more variety within their food provision, while considering a variety of dietary needs.	Parents and provider data
P2	It is recommended that Holiday Clubs should further plan their food provision to enable them to work towards the provision of a healthy food offer rather than just the provision of food.	Provider data
P3	It is recommended that that Holiday Clubs should plan to structure their mealtimes so that all children sit and eat together.	Provider data
Objective 2: To examine opportunities to engage in for physical activity		
P4	It is recommended that Providers identify some opportunities to increase their physical activity provision.	Parent and provider data
Objective 4: To examine opportunities to engage in enrichment activities		
P5	It is recommended that Providers reflect on their food-related activities to identify what ideas they can further implement and improve on, while considering what resources they need, or what they can achieve with the existing resources they have.	Parent data
P6	It is recommended that Providers advertise staff qualifications (DBS) and safety procedures of the club/facilities to parents to increase assurances about the safety of their child(ren).	Parent data
Objective 9: To examine signposting opportunities to other information and support (for example, health, employment and education)		
P7	It is recommended that Providers consider how to overcome the barriers that prevent children attending/participating in clubs outside of the Programme after that initial contact and link has been made. For example, an adjusted financial scheme or using facilities that are less of a challenge to reach.	Co-ordinator data
Objective 11: To examine what factors facilitated or hindered the implementation of the programme and the attainment of outcomes		
P8	It is recommended that Providers communicate more with parents to provide more detailed information about the specific sessions/activities they could book their children onto.	Parent data
P9	It is recommended that Providers start to (or continue to) consider the remit of their provision and try to provide activities that are appropriate for children of a range of age categories.	Parent, provider and co-ordinator data
P10	It is recommended that Providers check the remit of their provision, and where possible, ensure children with additional or complex needs are provided with relevant activities or additional support from staff.	Parent and provider data
P11	It is recommended that Providers consider extending their provision to make transport arrangements (such as bus pick-ups) for families that would benefit from this service, if this is not already being offered.	Parent and provider data
P12	It is recommended that Providers consider catering their food provisions for all children in order to destigmatise the process of HAF Programme funded children receiving free food.	Provider data

Table 15. Wider recommendations for future HAF Programmes.

Recommendations for Future Programmes		
Recommendation Reference	Recommendation	Highlighted From
F1	It is recommended that links should be made with facilities and communities prior to implementation to build relationships with facility staff, parents and children and young people to aid the success of any provisions.	Provider and co-ordinator data
F2	It is recommended that Parents are informed in a timely manner about the Programme, to allow them sufficient time to plan and organise their family plans.	Parent data
F3	It is recommended that the awarding of the HAF Programme contract be announced sooner by central government in order for local authorities and Holiday Providers to have more time to effectively plan and implement their Programme provision (e.g. the programme marketing, signing up and booking, gathering the resources needed, building relationships with gatekeepers and food and activity partners, etc.).	Provider and co-ordinator data
F4	It is recommended that consideration should be given to the idea that HAF Programme funding could be provided to Holiday Clubs that already have an existing Programme offer, and therefore, the HAF Programme can extend the offer while benefitting from the existing resources and provision that is already in place.	Provider data
F5	It is recommended that Co-ordinators and Providers reach out to Bursar's within schools to assist in making relationships and ensuring that information reaches relevant families (i.e. HAF codes and club information).	Co-ordinator data
F6	It is recommended that when marketing the HAF Programme, the Programme gatekeepers (particularly schools) need to provide sufficient information to parents to make it clear what the HAF Programme is and exactly what families can use the codes for.	Parent data
F7	It is recommended that the technological challenges (e.g. the system being slow and crashing), the functionality challenges (e.g. being unable to cancel bookings) and generally improving the overall usability (e.g. providing a waiting list function) of the booking system be improved.	Parent data
F8	It is recommended that schools should be provided with more information about the HAF Programme, what the role of the school will be and what to expect to happen as part of this role.	Provider data
F9	It is recommended HAF Programme and its booking system needs to be reviewed to ensure the processes are not exclusionary to the most vulnerable families that the Programme is trying to target (e.g. those experiencing digital poverty/exclusion).	Parent, provider and co-ordinator data
F10	It is recommended that the organisation responsible for developing and running the booking system should create a support system (e.g. email and telephone helplines) to enable technical and functionality booking system issues to be overcome.	Provider data
F11	It is recommended that the HAF Programme considers incorporating formalised incentive schemes as a way of encouraging families to attend the sessions they have booked their child onto, and in order to reduce the drop-off rates they regularly experience.	Provider data
F12	It is recommended that, to increase attendance rate, the future provision should incorporate aspects that are popular with children and young people at the moment in time for example, mixed martial arts are popular at the moment and that should be capitalised on.	Co-ordinator data

F13	It is recommended that funding for the HAF Programme to continue to be provided to enable Providers to keep on offering food and activities to families from disadvantaged backgrounds.	Parent and provider data
Recommendation Reference	Recommendation	Highlighted From
F14	It is recommended that a formal HAF Programme delivery package is developed, which provides training and information resources for Providers to empower them with the skills and confidence to deliver various aspects of the Programme (e.g. safeguarding training, ideas on activities to implement to achieve the HAF programme aims, sensitivity and wellbeing training).	Provider and co-ordinator data
F15	It is recommended that the HAF Programme eligibility criteria is reviewed, as free school meal eligibility is only one proxy for food insecurity. Some families are not eligible for free school meals but are still from food insecure backgrounds and are therefore, missing the opportunity to access this vital provision for families from disadvantaged backgrounds.	Parent and provider data

Strengths and limitation of the evaluation methodology and implementation

While the adoption of a mixed methods approach provides a strong methodology to evaluate the HAF Programme, there are some limitations to be acknowledged.

Semi-structured focus groups were utilised to allow opportunities for the researcher to ask questions to elicit greater clarification and elaboration thus allowing for greater depth of answers and discussion. However, a limitation to this approach is that the discussions became participant-driven and therefore may not cover all the specific questions the researcher had intended to explore in relation to this reports' aims.

A further limitation of the focus groups was that the researchers were working under limited time conditions to complete some of the focus groups. For example, some parents only had 15-20 minutes available to engage in a focus group, and this limited the amount of time the researchers had to ask questions. Similarly, some providers only had a short period of time to spare, which also limited the number of questions the researchers could explore. However, the more flexible approach to the focus groups in terms of timings and allowing participants to leave when they needed/wanted, allowed for greater engagement as this posed less of a barrier to initial participation. Additionally, the utilisation of both in person and online focus groups allowed for greater data collection as there were limitations to conducting in person focus groups in some instances (e.g. COVID-19 restrictions and distance between participants making venue hire difficult).

However, this report is restricted by what participants have said about the Programme. It is possible that the Programme provision offers additional/different provision than what has been outlined in this report however, it is possible that: 1. The participants (e.g. parents) knew about other programme provision but did not think to discuss that during the data collection (focus group or survey), or 2. Participants (e.g. parents) were unaware of some of the provision was offered within the holiday club. The researchers know this was the case in some aspects as some parents highlighted that they did not always know what their children were involved in while accessing the holiday clubs, and a recommendation from parents was to have more information about the club provision.

Despite the limitations during the collection of data, the wide variety of data collection methods utilised have enabled the researchers to collect a range of opinions and experiences and therefore give a more accurate representation of the HAF Programme from several perspectives (i.e. Co-ordinators, Providers, Parents and Children). This in turn has allowed for more useful and specific recommendations to be suggested that can aid future HAF Programme provision.

