

# Holiday Activity and Food Programme

Annual Report 2022-23



# West Sussex County Council

## Holiday Activity and Food Programme

### Annual Report for the financial period 2022-2023

## Executive Summary

This document provides a summary of activities and achievements delivered under the West Sussex County Council (WSCC) Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme, as conducted during the period covered by the financial year 2022-23.

Details are provided of the programme delivered, the providers engaged, the volumes of children and young people supported and budget expenditure. The food and nutrition aspects of the programme are presented. The key challenges and development activities for the 2023-24 programme are explored along with developments to improve service provision, data collation and reporting.

## HAF Overview

The Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme is fully funded by the Department for Education (DfE). The programme seeks to offer children who are entitled to benefits related free school meals the opportunity to attend participating holiday activity clubs, improve their understanding and education around nutrition and health and receive a free meal. The programme delivers activities for set periods within each of the principle school holiday periods – Christmas, Easter, and Summer.

Benefits-related free school meals (FSM) are available to pupils if their parents are in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits and have a claim verified by West Sussex County Council.

The HAF programme is operational for one week at Easter, four weeks during the Summer and one week at Christmas. Eligible children can attend their chosen HAF provision for a maximum of four days per week within each of these set periods.

As a result of this programme, we want children who attend this provision to:

- eat healthily over the school holidays
- be active during the school holidays
- take part in engaging and enriching activities which support the development of resilience, character, and wellbeing along with their wider educational attainment

- be safe and not to be socially isolated
- have a greater knowledge of health and nutrition
- be more engaged with school and other local services.

We also want to ensure that the families who participate in this programme are able to:

- develop their understanding of nutrition and food budgeting
- are signposted towards other information and support, for example, health, employment and education.

## HAF Programme 2022-23 Overview

During the financial period covering 2022-23, the WSCC HAF programme worked with 52 unique partners covering all districts and boroughs across the county. Of these, 50 providers delivered face to face activities, with an additional 2 food only providers delivering meals to those activity partners that were not able to provide this service directly. Table 1 below shows the number of providers who delivered face to face activities for each of the holiday periods in 2022. Figure 1 illustrates the breakdown of provision showing how many holiday periods providers delivered in through the year.

	Easter	Summer	Winter
Number of unique providers per period	36	41	41

Table 1: Unique providers delivering HAF related activities or food through the periods of the financial year 2022-23.

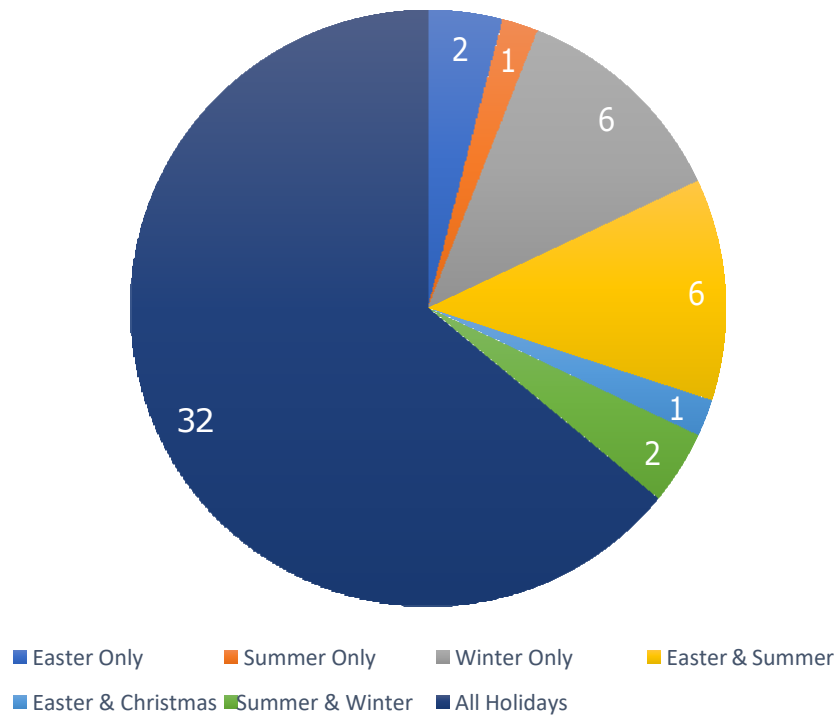


Figure 1: Breakdown of provider delivery based on number of periods engaged through the financial year 2022-23.

During the period across 2022-23, West Sussex saw the number of those children eligible for Free School meals rise from 16,465 to 18,598. This represents an increase of some 12% in year, with the highest increase of children being seen from October to Jan 2023. This level of growth at this point in the academic year will be due to the registrations of the new cohort of reception age children starting school in September. Throughout 2022-23, the increase in FSM children per district and borough grew steadily and uniformly across the county, with no single specific geographic area seeing a growth increase significantly disproportionate to others. The chart below in Figure 2, shows the breakdown of FSM children per district and borough.

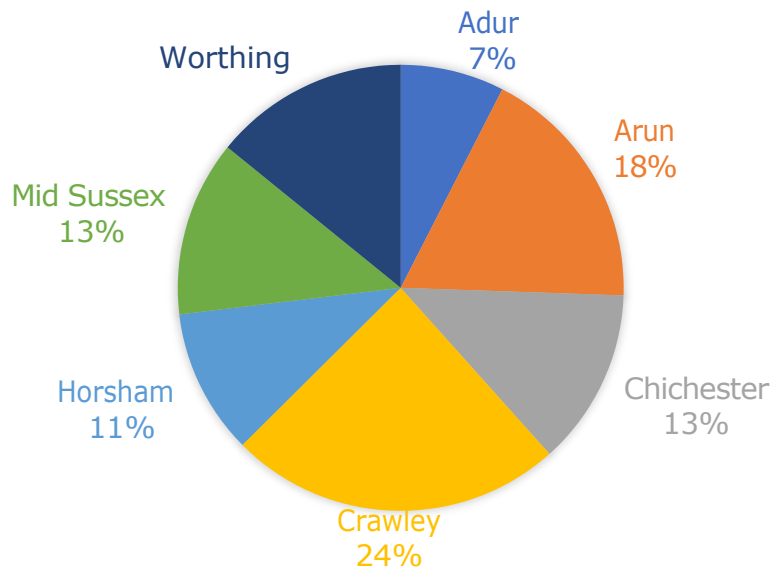


Figure 2: Figures for the percentage of FSM eligible children by District and Borough across West Sussex as at the end of the 2022-23 period.

## Funding Allocation and Usage

The West Sussex HAF programme was allocated a total grant value of £1,746,440 by the Department for Education for allocation within 2022-23. The West Sussex programme had a total expenditure of £1,673,834 with some £1,582,462 of funding distributed to providers via grant agreements to deliver the HAF programme. The below Table 2 shows the breakdown of funding used by holiday period.

	Easter	Summer	Winter
Funding Amount Allocated by value and percentage of budget	£304,857 (19%)	£1,016,306 (64%)	£261,299 (17%)

Table 2: Funding allocation breakdown by holiday period of the financial year 2022-23.

To deliver the HAF programme, WSCC used 5% of the allocated funding to cover essential management and administrative expenses. This included the salaries of a full time HAF Coordinator, a part time Partnership Officer and a part time Administrator. A proportion of this funding was additionally used to provide essential training for our HAF providers, including Safeguarding and SEND training.

Within West Sussex there have been distinct challenges in realising and accessing a sufficient number of appropriate providers with capacity and provision suitable within specific Districts and Boroughs. This has resulted in a capacity challenge in achieving the desired volume of HAF spaces for children within key geographic areas. The Borough of Crawley has the highest number of free school meal children in the county, however identifying suitable HAF providers within this locality has been difficult. During the year we have worked collaboratively in partnership with known providers to increase the levels of provision in this area, resulting in a notable increase in the number of places available.

When considering the allocation of funding for the HAF programme to deliver equitably across the county, we divided the budget available between our districts and boroughs in direct proportion to the number of FSM children on role in those areas. We then identified the providers delivering in those areas and assigned funding based on activity, capacity and duration. Any subsequent unallocated budget assigned to the area in question was then reallocated to alternative areas based on demand. The chart in Figure 3 below, shows the level of HAF spend in each of the Districts and Boroughs compared with the number of Free School Meal Children.

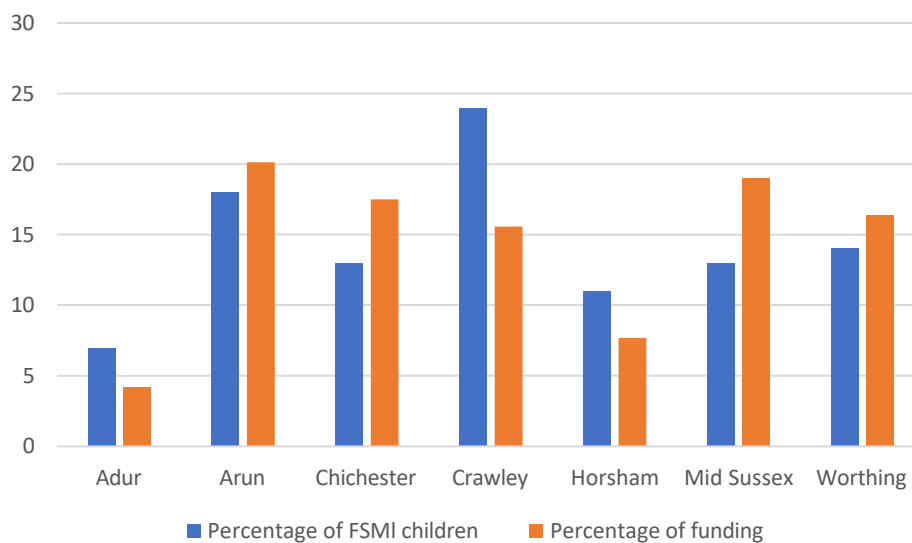


Figure 3: Allocation of HAF funding by District and Borough across West Sussex relative to volume of FSM children within the locality.

## Engagement and Usage

In 2022-23 the West Sussex HAF programme provided a total of 52,905 HAF spaces over the three HAF holiday periods.

A total of 44,617 sessions were attended by 3,686 unique children, equating to 19.8% of the of all eligible FSM children (number accurate as at January 2023).

On average Primary school children attended for 12 days out of the 24 available HAF days and Secondary school children attended for 13.8 days out of 24.

The chart in Figure 4 below shows the breakdown of the average number of days attended for each holiday by Primary and Secondary aged children.

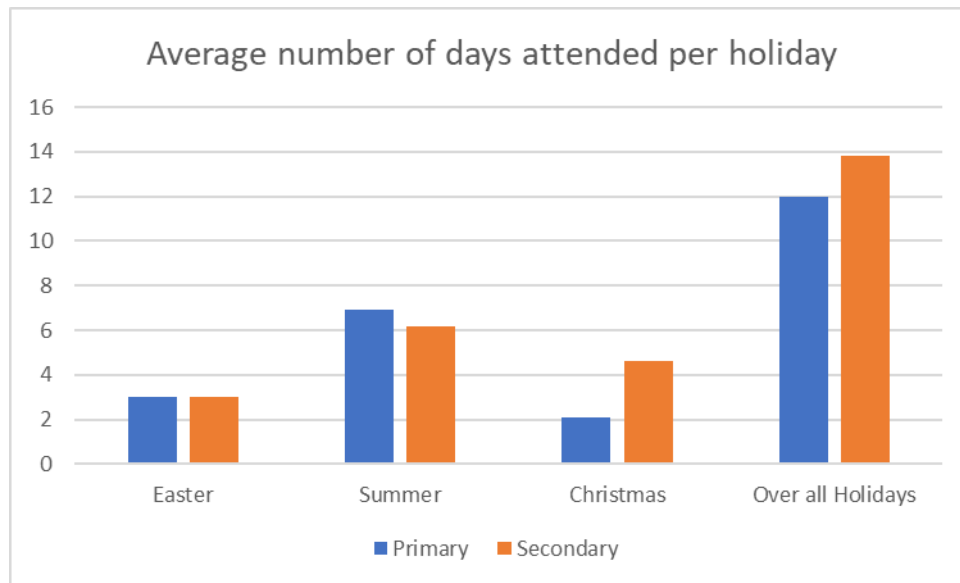


Figure 4: Attendance illustrating average number of days per child by Primary or Secondary phase at HAF related activities by holiday period

The most popular holiday period for Secondary school age children was Winter where they averaged 4.6 days of activities. In contrast, the Winter period had the lowest average attendance for primary school age children. The average Summer attendance was 6.2 days for secondary school children and 6.9 days for primary school children, suggesting that families are utilising the HAF programme for selected activities or dates during the summer holidays in conjunction with other events.

Within the West Sussex HAF programme, one of our principle areas of focus was to increase the number of HAF eligible children accessing the West Sussex programme through the year. To deliver on this our aim was to increase the promotion and hence awareness of the HAF programme to families to encourage wider engagement. We sought to achieve this by improving our links with schools utilising existing communication channels with key messages and instruction on how to access support. We also sought to improve the process for qualifying and simplifying access for eligible children into the HAF programme and to support providers in confidently assessing whether families were or were not eligible. To do this, we provided eligible families identified through WSCC FSM register with a unique HAF code which they could use to

book onto the HAF programme. Each school in West Sussex was issued a list of their eligible HAF children along with their accompanying FSM HAF code. Schools were also provided with a letter template and a promotional information flyer they could use to raise awareness of the HAF programme with their eligible families.

The improved communication and promotion of the West Sussex HAF programme saw an significant increase in the number of unique children accessing the programme. The Summer 2022 period saw an increase in children accessing of 51% from Summer 2021, and an even larger increase of 134% for the Winter HAF programme. Figures for the Easter period could not be compared to the prior year as we did not deliver any face-to-face activities under the HAF programme due to Covid restrictions.

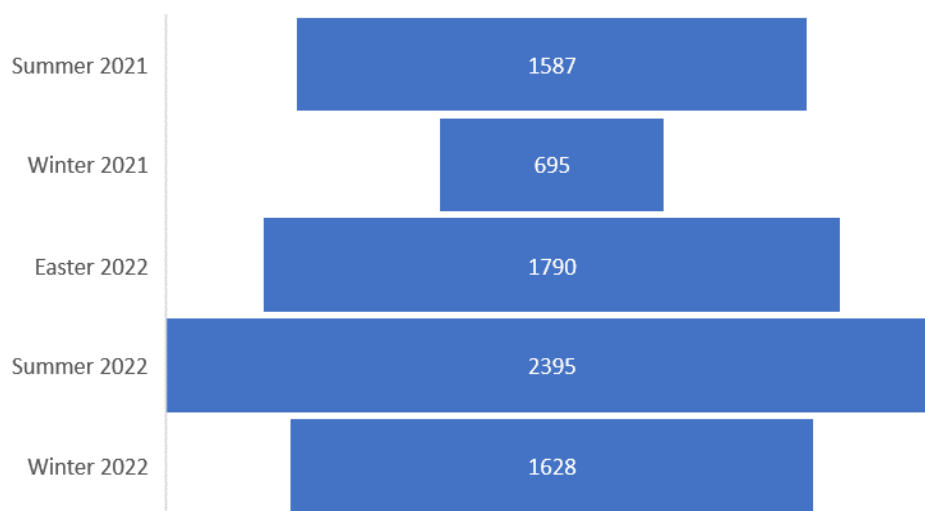


Figure 5: Comparison and progression of volumes of unique children of all ages engaging with the HAF programme.

The increased promotion in schools resulted in an increase in both eligible and non-eligible children accessing HAF. We understand this to be due to two reasons. Firstly, some families shared their HAF codes with other, non-eligible, children, meaning that we had multiple children accessing HAF under the same HAF code. Some families create their own HAF codes which they then gave to providers to register. We were unable to identify that these children were not eligible until the provider submitted their data returns with the associated data.

We also had an increase in the number of children that we were unable to correlate against our HAF FSM database. This was due to the quality of data that was submitted by providers. We found that the information submitted by providers did not always match that on the database, meaning that we could not confirm eligibility. In many cases, we found surnames were incorrect, or that children had been registered using a nickname which we could not match with. To address all of these registration and data



related issues, for 2023-24, we will be implementing a digital booking system. A direct impact will be to reduce the number of non-eligible families accessing the HAF programme. The booking system will also allow us to limit the number of sessions families are booking on and monitor the number of non-attendances to booked spaces.

Within West Sussex we had an average non-attendance rate of 22% across all 3 holiday periods. This resulted in over 11,500 places that were booked but not attended during 2022-23. One of the reasons for this is that families would book onto multiple sessions on a single day and then decide on the day which one session they would like to attend. To counter the rates of non-attendance, providers started to over book sessions to ensure that full volume of available places were filled. They would also contact families before sessions to remind them of their bookings and contact any family that did not attend their booking to understand why. The digital booking system will also seek to eliminate multiple concurrent bookings by families.

During the 2022-23 HAF programme, we were unable to identify any specialist SEND providers who wished to deliver within West Sussex. To offer SEND provision to eligible HAF children, we ringfenced a level of funding which providers access and use to fund additional staffing where necessary to support young people with an identified need. This system worked well and 22% of all children that accessed the HAF programme had a known SEND diagnosis. However, we estimate that up to an additional 10% of attendees may be in the process of working towards a SEND diagnosis.

## Partners and Providers

Through the duration of 2022-23 across all holiday periods, WSCC contracted with 50 unique providers to deliver activity-based provision. The activities were selected to provide a wide range of types of activity to ensure appeal to as wide an audience as possible. The chart in Figure 6 illustrates the number of clubs operated within each main category of type of provision.

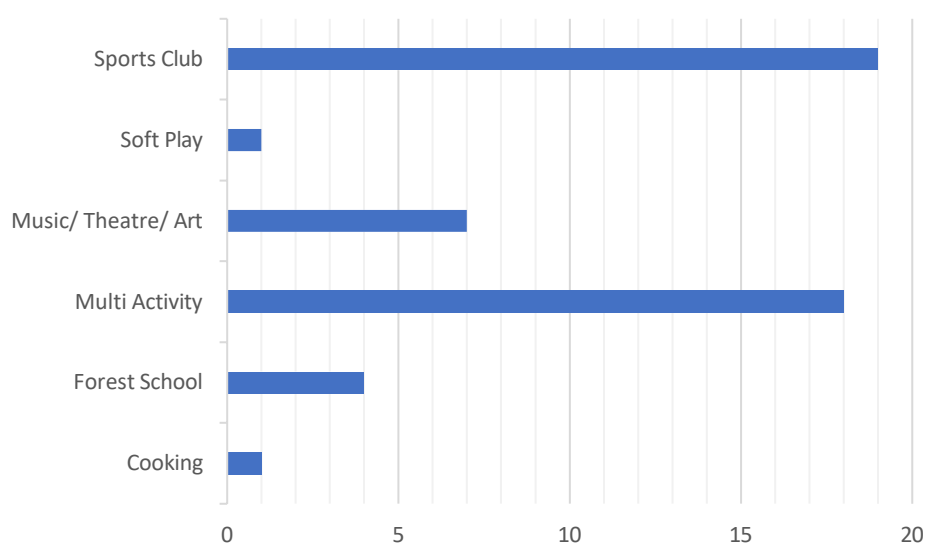


Figure 6: Categorisation of types of activity intervention and volume of clubs delivering.

The figures indicate that 38% of the providers we worked with were categorised as sports clubs. This included multi sports camps, football clubs, skateboarding and table tennis clubs. The clubs offered the children opportunities to try new sports or improve their skills in a specific area. Our sports clubs also integrated activities to educate the children to understand healthy eating and the nutrition needed to stay fit and active. Some 32% of providers delivered multi-activity camps. Typically delivered by nursery's or wrap around care providers, they offered children the opportunity to take part in a range of activities including crafts, cooking and sports. Our multi-activity camps focused on encouraging and engaging children to try lots of different activities each day and catered to those children who may not have been sports focused. These clubs offered children opportunities to engage in multiple different craft activities including painting, model making and making festive decorations.

We also worked with several Music, Theatre or Arts groups with 14% of providers delivering sessions with this as the prime focus. Of these clubs only one provider delivered HAF for all 3 holiday periods, with 3 providers joining for the Summer HAF programme and 3 joining for the Winter period. Providers offered children and young people the opportunity to help write and create an original theatre production, learn songs and dances from well-known musicals and write their own lyrics and music, which they were able to then record.

The below graph in Figure 7, shows the breakdown of places available for each of the HAF provider prime categories. Over 55% of the places available during 2022-23 were delivered by sports providers. These clubs were very popular as they offered children the opportunity to take part in multiple different sports each day. Activities on offer included traditional sports such as football, tennis, and cricket as well as more specialist opportunities including swimming, skateboarding, abseiling and zorbing.

We worked with four forest school providers during 2022-23, offering children the opportunity to spend time outdoors and learn about the environment. Children and young people had opportunities to learn about the natural world around them, plant and pick fruit and vegetables, and learn how to light and cook over an open fire. In the year we also worked with our first beach school. It offered children the opportunity to explore the local beach and better understand the natural world within the coastal environment. Children made natural art, went on scavenger hunts flew kites and got the chance to ride on the foot ferry.

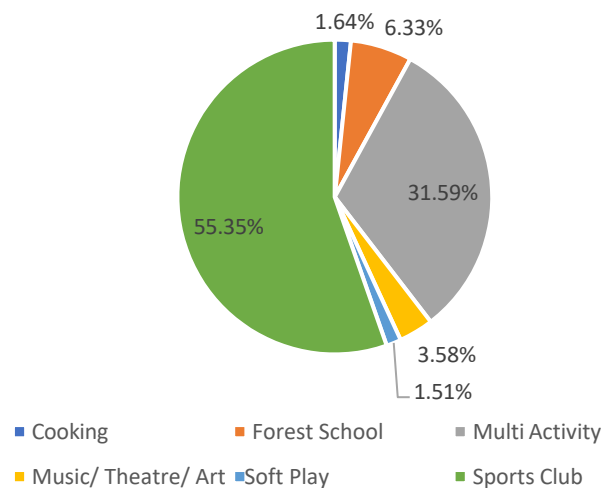


Figure 7: Volume of places offered by activity category.

## Food and Nutrition

Within West Sussex, HAF providers can source their own food provision or they can choose to be paired with one of the food providers the council has identified and qualified as appropriate. Of the 50 providers who delivered during 2022-23, ten providers were paired with a food provider by West Sussex County Council. The 40 remaining providers either delivered food in house or worked with a partner agency to deliver the food. Of the 40 providers who sourced their own food, 26 outsourced their catering to a 3rd party with 14 delivered in house catering.

Wherever possible, we encouraged providers to deliver hot food as part of the HAF programme. All providers were required to submit a sample menu when bidding for funding to ensure that all food provided aligns closely with the school food standards. The food element of the bids from each provider was reviewed by subject matter experts within WSCC, with experience of food standards required for school age children. Of the food that was provided as part of the HAF programme, 70% of

providers offered a Hot food option, 16% provided a cold food option and 14% offered a mix of Hot and cold food.

## Food Education and Information, Advice and Guidance

During 2022-23, HAF providers offered additional support and information to families that attended their sessions on the importance of healthy eating and nutrition for all. Providers offered both universal support to all families and tailored support where needed. All families accessing the HAF programme were provided with Change for Life Packs and signposted to the wide variety of activities and advice this service provided. Providers also shared information on low-cost recipes, details of local food banks and - during the winter HAF programme - information on where families could access local warm spaces. All families were also signposted to our local Family Information Service Site where they are able to find more information on childcare provision, the Household Support fund and information and support around budgeting.

Providers were also able to offer tailored support to families in need. This included referrals to Family Hubs and Early Help, the Citizens Advice Bureau, and local housing associations. Providers also proactively signposted families to access other providers or activities that were not involved in the HAF programme such as youth organisations, Parent and Carer Forums and the West Sussex Local Offer.

One of the areas that providers said they struggled with delivering in the preceding year covering 2021-22 within the programme was food education. To support them in improving their knowledge, understanding and confidence in delivering information and advice in this area, we collaborated with colleagues in public health to deliver several training sessions that providers could access. The purpose of these sessions was to help providers understand the nutritional requirements specifically for children, suggest activities that providers could deliver in their sessions, allow providers to share good practice and signpost them to resources. We also supported providers to access the 'Make Every Contact Count' training. This training is designed to support professionals working with families to have positive conversations around health-related topics including, healthy weight and nutrition, stopping smoking and alcohol.

## Governance and Steering Group

In June 2022, we launched our HAF steering group. The group is formed from a cross-organisational group of senior officers and partners across a number of specialist disciplines and considerations. A full list of representatives can be found in Appendix 1. The Steering Group is designed to guide the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme with the principle aims of the group defined as:

- Oversee the programme and championing the aims and outcomes within the representing organisation
- Align with other initiatives within West Sussex and add value where appropriate through collaboration and partnership
- Create links to providers and drive the market to ensure a wide range of options for children to engage with
- Consider issues or risk and advise on solutions or mitigations e.g. food, take-up

The HAF Steering Group meets three times a year between the school holidays. It assesses and reflects on the delivery of the programme for the previous holiday period to identify successes, best practice, challenges and areas of development. It will then look toward the next period, considering any actions necessary to improve programme accessibility, delivery and impact. The steering group will also advise on any issues and approve any proposals taken to the group by the HAF Coordinator.

## Looking Forward: HAF for 2023-24

The 2023-24 HAF Programme will take the evidence, experience and learning from the preceding year to hone its focus on increasing its reach and supporting more families to access the programme. To achieve this we will be implementing a new digital booking system that will allow us to manage bookings with greater accuracy, planning and reporting. The system will manage the number of places that families book onto reducing the number of bookings onto multiple sessions on the same day, as well as reducing the number of children attending more than the allocated sessions of 4 days at Easter and Christmas and 16 days during summer. The booking system will support the elimination of non HAF eligible families accessing the programme as all families will have to be pre-approved before they can access the booking system. The quality of data collected, analysed and submitted will also improve.

For summer 2023 we planning to innovate across our delivery model, seeking to develop a partnership with a provider to deliver two mass participation HAF family days. The aim of these days will be for families to come along and enjoy similar activities to those that are delivered as part of our traditional HAF delivery programme, talk to other professionals for advice and guidance on a range of services and receive a free meal. We hope that these events will help us increase our reach of families accessing the HAF programme, continuing to raise wide awareness and driving future engagement within the main delivery periods.

In 2023-24, we will be partnering with our local children and family centres to offer HAF family's access to free oral health products. HAF Providers will give the families that attend their session a voucher which they can then take into the local family Hub to exchange for free toothbrushes and tooth paste for the whole family. Each holiday a new voucher will be available to families to ensure a continuous focus on oral health through the programme.

## Family Feedback and Case Studies

In addition to the quantitative feedback gathered in relation to attendance and engagement, we also seek to collect qualitative feedback from participants, providers and families. This information provides contextual evidence of the impact of the programme on those it is designed to support. The following are quotes and case studies received through feedback extolling the positive reception and impact the WSCC HAF programme has had through 2022-23.

*"Everything that the Council and Absolute Sport have provided has been amazing. This is exactly what needs to continue to happen to help and allow the likes of myself (a single mother) to continue working and not need to worry about my son. He has loved every second of these camps and will definitely want to come to more in the future. So thank you to everyone who has been involved with making this happen but a huge thank you to \*\*\* and his wonderful coaches for putting on amazing camps."*

*"What a wonderful place to spend summer holidays. \*\*\*\* absolutely adored all you guys and you were so generous! Very grateful for the fun you provide her! She will have fond memories thanks to you!"*

*"Both \*\*\* and I have had such a lovely time this week and last week. It has been lovely to see \*\*\* grow and develop with the other families here and I've really enjoyed climbing trees with \*\*\*!" "Thank you all so much for these sessions!"*

### Case Study One

Year 1 aged child attended one of our HAF clubs. She was in the process of being diagnosed with ADHD and Autism, and also presented with long term health conditions which the staff needed to monitor throughout the day. The club worked with Mum to create a medical plan so staff could keep Mum updated every day. The child had struggled with challenging behaviour and the staff and Mum created a plan on how this could be managed, including only attending for half days and using ear defenders. As the child continued to attend the club, she displayed less emotional and physical behaviour and started to enjoy playing, drawing and participating in activities. She also became more social with other children at the club. Over the summer her confidence has grown, and she has become better at communicating her needs.

## Case Study Two

Forest school had an 8-year-old Child We Care For attend their camp during the Christmas holiday. They were keen to join in but worried that they didn't know anyone. The provider introduced them to children and ran activities that meant that the children had to mix and work in teams. The child shared that his teachers didn't trust him to take part in activities at forest school. The provider supported him to take part in all activities and, with appropriate adult supervision, they were able to use the woodcraft tools, which they had said they were not normally allowed to do. Having the support and encouragement from the staff really helped this child feel more confident and allowed them to enjoy their time at the club.

Written as quoted by the child: "I love Forest School here as I have done lots of things and I used a saw to chop down trees and took my stick home with me. I love Otto and he has made me happy at Forest School with the other children as they are my friends too. I wish I could come to Forest School every day. I will miss Otto (therapy dog) the most though. I want to come back again."

## APPENDIX

### HAF Steering Group Representation

Head of Service, Commissioning & Contracts, Children's and Young People

HAF Project Co-ordinator

HAF Administrator

Service Manager Early Help

Senior Advisor Childcare Sufficiency

Head of Service- Integrated Front Door

Public Health Lead - Start Of Life

Senior Press Officer Children & Education

Research Assistant, Data Analysis

Area Education Adviser Disadvantaged children

Education Adviser - Learning outside the Classroom

Voice and Participation Team Manager

SEND Commissioning and Contracts Manager

Active Sussex, External Provider stakeholder

Team Manager (SEND IAS)

Head of Catering Services

Senior Catering Officer

Head of Prevention Fire Service

Project Manager Partnerships & Communities Team

Senior Adviser - Information and Customer Access

Short Breaks Commissioning Manager

Police



## APPENDIX 2:

### List of HAF Providers engaged in 2022-23

Provider Name	Activity Type	Age Group	Holidays provided
Absolute Sport	Sports Club	Primary	All
Activ8 For Kids Ltd	Sports Club	Primary	All
Active Stars	Sports Club	Primary	All
Albion in the Community	Football Camp	Primary	All
Audio Active	Music Workshops	Secondary	All
Bersted Green	Multi Activity	Primary	All
Bigfoot Arts	Theatre Camp	Both	Christmas
Busy Lizzie's Nursery	Multi Activity	Primary	Easter/ Summer
Cherrytree Child Care	Multi Activity	Primary	Summer/ Christmas
Chichester College	Sports Club	Both	All
Chichester Forest School	Forest School	Both	All
Code Kids Surrey	Teck Camp	Primary	Easter/ Summer
Crimsham Farm	Forest School	Both	Easter/ Summer
East Wittering and Bracklesham Council	Multi Activity	Primary	All
Esteem	Multi Activity	Secondary	Christmas
Fit For Sport	Sports Club	Primary	Summer
Freedom Leisure (Day Camp)	Sports Club	Primary	All
Healthy Happy Kidz	Sports Club	Both	All
Helen o Grady	Theatre Camp	Both	All
Horsham Sports Service	Sports Club	Both	All
JC Sports	Sports Club	Primary	Easter/ Christmas
Jungle mania	Soft Play	Primary	Christmas
Little Lambs	Multi Activity	Primary	All
Little Learners Preschool	Multi Activity	Primary	Easter
Next Thing Education	Teck Camp	Primary	All
Pioneer Childcare	Multi Activity	Primary	All
Places Leisure	Sports Club	Primary	All
Poponin	Craft	Both	All
Premier Education	Sports Club	Primary	Easter
SB Sports Coaching Ltd_Prem	Sports Club	Primary	All
Shalome	Multi Activity	Primary	All
South Coast Skate Club	Sports Club	Both	All
South Coast Sports	Sports Club	Primary	All
Southeast kids camps	Multi Activity	Primary	All
Sports Plus	Sports Club	Primary	Easter/ Summer

Stagecoach	Theatre Camp	Both	All
Summer Adventure Camp	Sports Club	Both	Easter/ Summer
Sussex Forest Activities	Forest School	Primary	Easter/ Summer
Sussex Tuition Centre	Multi Activity	Primary	All
the Childcare club	Multi Activity	Primary	Christmas
The Sid Youth	Multi Activity	Secondary	All
UK Childcare group	Multi Activity	Primary	All
UK Harvest	Cooking	Both	All
West Sussex Fire and Rescue	Multi Activity	Secondary	Summer/ Christmas
West Sussex Music Service	Music Workshops	Secondary	Christmas
West Sussex West School Sports Partnership	Sports Club	Both	All
Wittering Pre-school	Multi Activity	Primary	All
Woodland Wonder Forest School	Forest Workshops	Primary	All
Worthing Table Tennis Club	Sports Club	Both	All
Worthing Theatre	Theatre Camp	Primary	Christmas