

Holiday Activities and Food Programme Annual Report 2023-24

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council



Department
for Education

DUDLEY
HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES



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Introduction

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

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

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

“Thank you for providing great activities during the school holidays!”



The Aim of HAF

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

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

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

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

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

"My children always look forward to HAF days – it's very exciting to book such a range of activities to suit their needs."



Dudley's Approach

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council initially appointed Dudley CVS as the service provider to manage and run the HAF programme for the county. This highly successful partnership ran from 2021 until summer 2023. For the winter 2023 delivery, DMBC commissioned Sutton Croft to continue programme management and delivery for the remaining HAF contract (FY24-25).

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

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

With a confirmed government grant of £1,288,420.00 for 2023, our joint partnership allowed for a dedicated team to continue to deliver the high standards of the HAF programme – meeting family needs, responding to parent/carer/CYP feedback positively and achieving key programme targets.

With the help of provision mapping, careful planning and considered attention to quality assurance monitoring, Dudley HAF offers a full programme of activities that caters to all interests whilst supporting healthy lifestyles through physical activity and nourishing meals.

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

2023 Highlights

£1,132,634.00

spent on face-to-face provision

46,227

places offered

"HAF is amazing. The activities are always enjoyable for my children and it gives me peace of mind."



Easter 2023

£242,947 

spent on face-to-face provision

62



holiday club
providers

2222

unique children
supported by HAF

484

children with SEND
supported by HAF

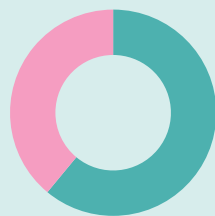
10,024

holiday club places
offered

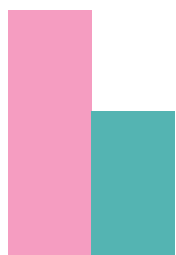


65% primary-aged

35% secondary-aged



61% of places
offered were attended



3828 places attended by primary-aged children

2242 places attended by secondary-aged children

2.7



average days
attended

**"HAF offers
experiences &
adventures that my
kids would otherwise
not have."**

Summer 2023

£717,506 

spent on face-to-face provision

82



holiday club
providers

3482

unique children
supported by HAF

794

children with SEND
supported by HAF

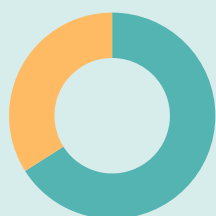
30,000

holiday club places
offered



67% primary-aged

33% secondary-aged



66% of places
offered were attended



13,515 places attended by primary-aged children

6335 places attended by secondary-aged children

5.7



average days
attended

“My shy, anxious son really shines at HAF camps – he’s picked up new skills and discovered new interests that excite him.”

Winter 2023

£172,181.00

spent on face-to-face provision



39



holiday club
providers

2470

unique children
supported by HAF

495

children with SEND
supported by HAF

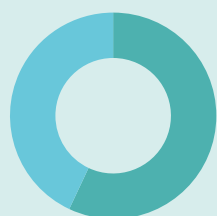
6203

holiday club places
offered



68% primary-aged

32% secondary-aged



57% of places
offered were attended



1840 places attended by primary-aged children

1401 places attended by secondary-aged children

1.4



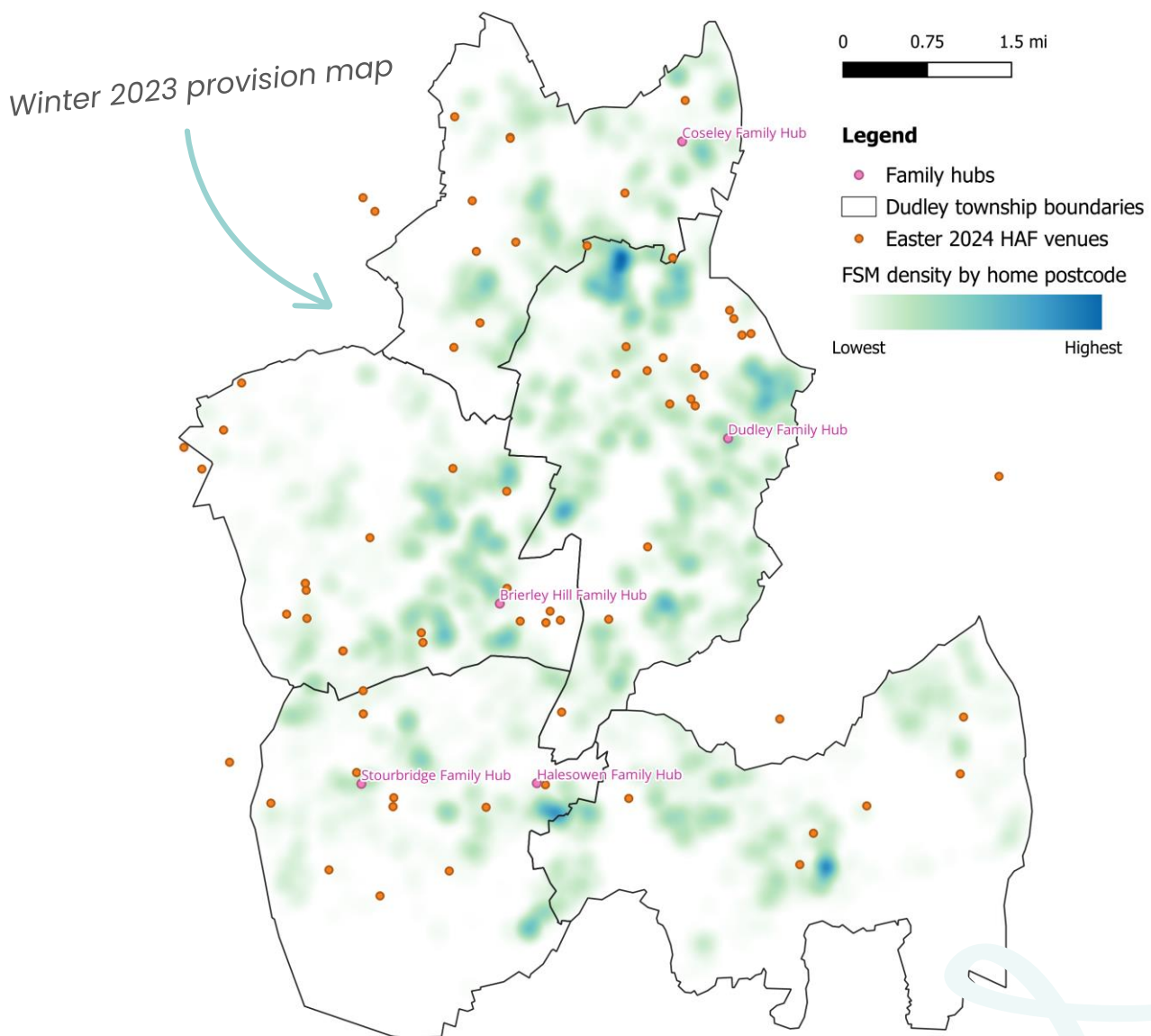
average days
attended

“Martial arts, circus skills,
multi sports, my girls get to
try it all and I feel fully
supported as a single parent,
who sometimes find life can
be overwhelming.”

How we Deliver HAF

Dudley's HAF programme is determined by two key factors – FSM data and parent/carer/CYP feedback.

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





HAF Legacy

We work closely with all of our community partners to support the HAF legacy – through the development of sustainable youth provision, improving reach across HAF families and those within vulnerable cohorts and by working with local agencies to ensure children and young people accessing HAF activities use their experience for positive futures – better school attendance, community involvement, personal skills development and encouragement in pursuing interests for onward growth, such as volunteering, young leader schemes and apprenticeships.

Our collective commitment to continuous improvement for our HAF programme ensures we're delivering the best activities for children and young people – that meets their needs and interests through dynamic programming, but also to facilitate support services, signposting and referrals to reduce the everyday challenges that many families face.

Our aims are to:

- Deliver exciting, engaging activities for CYP – creating meaningful memories and celebrating community
- Support families through signposting and information resources – to ease the burden and boost accessibility
- Offer safe, happy, welcoming provision which enables parents/carers to receive or seek the support they need and remove barriers that may otherwise impact mental health and wellbeing.
- Develop programmes to suit and support the growth of 11-16 year olds – a balance of engaging and appealing sessions that also promote life skills, personal development and confidence and opportunity for meaningful employment or interests into young adulthood.

Feedback Monitoring

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

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

You Said, We Did...

In response to parent/carer and CYP feedback, we continue to develop the HAF programme and, in consultation with the steering group and key stakeholders, we determine the objectives for each holiday period – expanded provision in rural areas to reduce isolation risk, family-friendly activity programmes to boost accessibility and signposting support where needed, increased provision with specialist SEND support to alleviate household pressures, 'on trend' provision for the older age range – engaging with targeted youth groups to understand interest and deliver a programme moulded to their needs, whilst maintaining the HAF values and bolstering commitment to the activities.

Quality Assurance

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

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

Food Offer



Rated 'Good'



Signposting & Referrals



Rated 'Good'

Accessibility & Inclusion



Rated 'Acceptable'

Physical Activity



Rated 'Good'

Enriching Activity



Rated 'Good'

Survey Snapshot

89%



of parent/carers rated the winter HAF programme as 'Excellent', 'Very Good', or 'Good'

86%

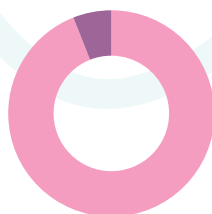


of parent/carers rated the food at winter HAF activities as 'Excellent', 'Very Good', or 'Good'

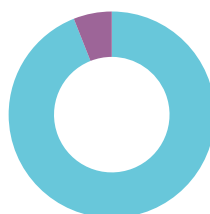
95%



of parent/carers rated the staff at winter HAF activities as 'Excellent', 'Very Good', or 'Good'



94% of parent/carers asked at winter would use HAF again in the future



94% of parent/carers asked at winter would recommend HAF to other eligible families

"HAF activities are a lifeline for our family. Our children have fun and try out new activities with new friends. We know they're safe, cared for, eat well and enjoy their summer holidays."



Case Study: Tom*

Tom* comes from a background where he faces some social anxiety and is typically reserved in group settings. His parents enrolled him in the HAF program with the hope that it would provide a supportive environment for him to build social skills and enjoy.

When Tom first arrived at the HAF program, he was visibly nervous. The unfamiliar environment, new faces, and the anticipation of group activities triggered anxiety. The program coordinators and staff quickly identified Tom's unease and took a proactive approach to ease his transition.

Through carefully curated group activities, Tom began to interact with his peers more comfortably. The staff encouraged team-building exercises and collaborative projects, which helped Tom form connections with other children. Over time, he became an integral part of the group, actively participating in group activities and even initiating conversations with his peers.

Tom's journey at the HAF program showcases the program's success in creating an inclusive and supportive environment for children. Through the expertise of the staff, engaging facilities, and a personalized approach, Tom not only overcame his initial nervousness but flourished socially and artistically. His story underscores the significance of holiday programs in fostering personal growth and providing a platform for children to discover and develop their unique talents.

Case study from Sports Zone Coaching

"HAF is so helpful and supports our family – please keep going."



Case Study: Katie*

Katie* is a single parent of two children aged 9 and 11 years. Both children have additional needs. Katie has had a difficult few years, losing her mum suddenly, who was a consistent source of support to her and her children. Katie struggles with her mental health, particularly depression and anxiety and, along with the worry of expense, this can make the school holidays, a really challenging time. Katie is unable to work currently due to her mental health and is currently struggling with the cost of living, often being dependent on grants, accessing Foodbank etc.

Katie has been engaging with Dudley HAF for the past year and feels it has made a positive difference to her and the children. HAF helps Katie by ensuring her children have a fun filled holiday which consists of several enriching activities, some they do as a family and some which provide Katie with a small amount of much needed respite. Katie would be unable to afford to pay for activities her children experience for free through HAF. The fact that each activity consists of a meal or packed lunch also helps to relieve the financial burden of food through the holiday period.

"We really enjoy being a part of HAF. It's given my children so many opportunities to take part in things, I otherwise couldn't offer them ... If I'm having a bad day, it can be difficult to find the motivation to get out and about with the children but knowing that the activities have already been booked and that the children are excited about them, is a real push for me. The HAF team are great and work so hard. We have never had any issues but when we have needed to contact somebody, they have always been quick to respond and help us."

Katie

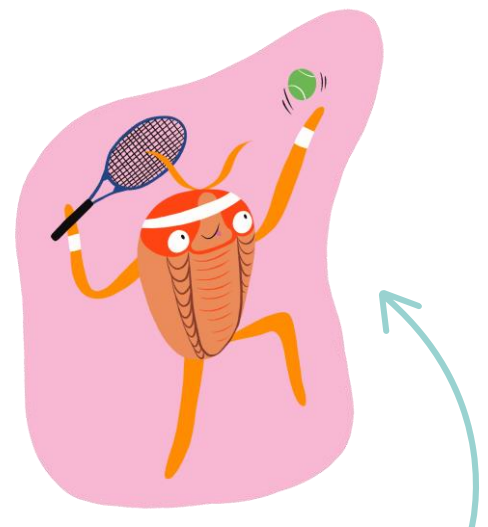


Marketing & Comms

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

Schools can be disengaged through confusion and misunderstanding of the HAF programme. We aimed to combat this through email bulletins, offering a responsive communication channel and providing HAF information in easily digestible formats. Ensuring their understanding of HAF is key to accessing more families in need. We also provided schools with marketing packs for sharing with their families.

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



We also launched our new branding this winter.

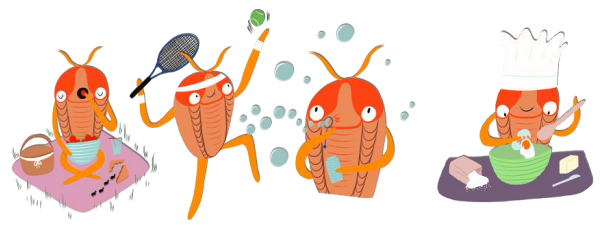
This included our mascot Terry the Trilobite. The trilobite, also known as the Dudley Bug, is a longstanding symbol of the borough.

Expenditure

For 2023 HAF, Dudley MBC received a grant of £1,288,420.00 from the Department of Education. This was primarily disseminated directly to holiday activity providers for face-to-face provision.

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

Expenditure	Amount	
Face-to-face holiday club provision (including provider costs, holiday club staff, venue costs, activity costs, food/meal costs and other costs directly associated with the provision of free holiday club places directly funded through the HAF programme)	£	1,132,634.00
Remote holiday club provision	£	N/A
Publicising the scheme to eligible families and other communications	£	3,645.00
Capital expenditure (e.g., catering or sports equipment for clubs)	£	25,500.00
Management and administration of the programme by the LA	£	126,641.00
Other costs (e.g., translations, transport, provider staff training, booking systems etc)	£	N/A
Total expenditure	£	1,288,420.00



Partners

With the greatest of thanks to all of our providers who deliver the HAF programme – thank you for your continued support, understanding and dedication to delivering the best provision possible for our families across Dudley.

4 Community Trust
Active Future Dudley
All Stars Youth Griup
Amblecote Community Church
Apni Zaroorat Community Network
BCLM
Believe 2 Achieve
BigSkyBasketball
Black Country Coaches
Black Country Wellbeing Centre
Bramford Priory
Breathing Space Therapeutic Services CIC
Brierley Hill Methodist Centre
Brierley Hill Musical Theatre
Brockwood Animal Sanctuary
Brook Primary School
Geek Retreat
Challenge Academy CIC
Courtyard Escapes
Creheart Community
Destined to Reign Church & Genesis Tutoring & Education Consultancy CIC
Dudley ACL
Dudley Canal & Caverns
Dudley CIC
Dudley College of Technology

Partners

Dudley Museum at the Archives
Dudley Students Union
Dudley Young Carers
Dudley Youth Service
Dudley Zoo
Eco Maniax Ltd
Ekho Collective
Enlight Projects
Fairhaven Primary School
Fenspool Community Centre
Friends & Residents of Buffery Park
Gornal Athletics
Halesowen Bid
Inpower Academy
Inspire Communities
Jesson's CE Primary School
Just Straight Talk
KIDS
Laser Quest Stourbridge Ltd
Life Central Church
Lighthouse Cafe (Dudley Counselling Centre)
Little Big Arts



Partners

Little Sprouts Forest School

MeandU

Netherton CE Primary School

Nuts About Nutrition and Fitness

Phase Trust

Pilot IMS

Priory Community Centre

RB Sports Activities Ltd

Ren Shin Kan

Sassy Sensory Surprises

Saz's Ceramics & Crafts

Sedgley Kids Club

Sporting Your Futures CIC

sports zone coaching and activities

Sportscool Wolverhampton Ltd

Stourbridge Rugby Community Department

Strike Sports

Students for Trees Eco Project

Sycamore Adventure Playground

Partners

Team Pumpkin ABC

Teamworks Karting

The Beauty Room

The Beehive

The Craffthouse

The Lighthouse Centre (Dudley Counselling Centre)

The Saleem Foundation

The Storehouse

This is Me

Time Step Dance

Top Church Training – The Connect Project

WeLoveCarers Charity

Wheels Vocational and Life Skills Centre

Wild Earth Movement

Young Futures Academy