



Department  
for Education



**WOKINGHAM**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

## HAF Programme 2024

### Wokingham Annual Report

In Wokingham our overall spend on funding for the HAF Programme in 2024 was **£310,890**

The proportion of funding we spent on administration was **£50,000**. The breakdown for expenses were:

- Management costs
- Reporting, data, monitoring and evaluations
- Managing bookings, communication and marketing
- Forecasting/finance, procurement and commissioning
- Provider contracts/quality assurance
- Managing due diligence, policies, procedures and training
- Strategic steering and development for the HAF Programme

The HAF Programme in Wokingham provided **1731** unique children and young people with the opportunity to access free activities and a healthy meal. A breakdown of the children and young people accessing provisions for each holiday period are:

- Easter - **550**
- Summer - **713**
- Christmas - **468**

The proportion of primary and secondary aged children and young people who participated in the HAF Programme in Wokingham were:

- Primary - **84%**
- Secondary - **16%**

The number of children and young people with SEND or additional needs who participated in the HAF Programme in Wokingham were:

- SEND Mainstream provisions - **375**
- SEND specialist provisions - **178**
- SEND stay and play/SEND friendly Events - **116**

We established a SEND Specialist provision, creating opportunities for children and young people with complex medical needs or disabilities to participate in the HAF programme with their peers, where universal providers may not be able to meet their needs

We contributed financial support to the CAMHS Phoenix School, which educates patients aged 11-18 admitted to the CAMHS Phoenix Unit at Wokingham Hospital. The funding facilitated access to enriching activities at the unit during school holidays

### **Information on the families and carers that have engaged with us.**

We offered signposting and referrals to families who accessed the Community HAF Events and via email communication to all families who are registered.

Shinfield Parish Council contributed funding to the Shinfield North event, to provide additional activities and an opportunity to increase engagement and opportunities to families living in Shinfield North.

- Community Events – **417** children attended our events in 2024
- Adult Learning Courses – signposted to **8065** parent/carers
- Share Wokingham – **8065** signposted to parent/carers
- School uniform and school stationary starter kits – **103** referrals
- Support with clothing, footwear and bedding – signposted to parent/carers **of 120** children



**The Manager represented the HAF Programme on various steering groups, to ensure the HAF Programme is delivered to meet the key priorities and grant guidelines.**

### **Steering groups include:**

- Inequalities steering group
- Short breaks steering group
- Hardship Alliance Steering group
- VCS Working Group on Asylum Seekers and Refugees
- Physically Active Communities Action Group
- Domestic Abuse Ambassador working group
- Children's Services Participation Development Steering Group
- No/ Low-Cost Activities Project Group
- Wrap Around Care Steering Group

The HAF Manager reports to key members of the Leadership Team before and after each Programme to gain feedback, guidance and approval.

## ***We worked with the following organisations:***

- Storyy Group
- Funtastic Kids
- Get Active
- Core Kids Club
- u-Sport
- Junior Adventures Group
- Goals
- Everyman Cinema
- Just Play Sports
- In2sports
- Places Leisure
- Sport in Mind
- Freely Fruity
- Wokingham Borough Council - SEND provisions
- Short Breaks Team
- Wokingham Children's Centre
- Shinfield Parish Council
- Emmanuel Church, Woodley
- Adult Learning Team
- Community Engagement Team
- My Journey
- Wokingham Libraries
- Public Health
- Share Wokingham
- First Day's Children Charity
- CAB
- Building for the Future
- Camp Mohawk
- The Cowshed
- Wokingham Waterside Centre
- Wokingham Family Golf
- Wokingham Superbowl
- Finchampstead Baptist Church
- Sir Whippy
- Chameleon Face Painting
- Top Banana Bouncy Castles
- All Saint's Primary School
- Chaplin's Entertainment
- Lagoona Park
- Game Warriors Gaming Bus
- Yvonne (Catering volunteer)
- Reading University
- Zoelologic Dance Theatre
- Basil and Crew
- Reading University

## ***Feedback from participants, their families or carers***

### **Parent:**

"HAF is essential, it gives lower income families opportunities which they may see their friends doing, but not having the chance until HAF started. It's enriching children's lives giving them experiences and showing them possibilities. They feel less isolated from society and this balance is a useful stepping stone enabling them to feel part of society and to be able to positively contribute to it as they become older. It's success goes beyond statistics. Inclusion is such a powerful tool in society"

### **Parent:**

"These activities and clubs have been an absolute god send, it's provided routine, helped them burn off energy, given me as a single parent a break, and helped them make new friends"

### **Parent:**

"These sessions have been invaluable to us, enabling me to still work and earn during the holiday's whilst keeping a routine and contact with friends for my child"

### **Parent:**

"I just want to say a big thanks to Sophie and your staff for taking care of J so well over the last 2 days, I'm really grateful and your all amazing for doing what you do, I could tell J felt really happy in your care so that means a lot as always anxious leaving her somewhere new"

### **Parent:**

I would like to say big THANK YOU for everyone from the stay and play sessions. It was lovely!

### **Parent:**

"The support from HAF has enabled AT's carer to keep going with her caring role. Without this support, it is likely that AT and his carer would have gone into crisis during school holidays as this is the most difficult time for them without the school routine in place".

### **Staff at specialist unit supervising a young person as a result of attending HAF funded activities:**

"This day was the first time that (she) had spent any time doing an activity directed by staff. She spent the whole day in class. Previously she only managed 30 minutes maximum. She then went on to attend the whole of the Jelly art session on Thursday. She has continued to attend school since returning from school- this is hugely significant. A real breakthrough"

### **Young person:**

"I've been coming to the HAF programme activities since it started in Wokingham. It gave me something to look forward to, through the school holidays, especially the summer holidays. I've met so many new friends"

### **Other comments from young people included:**

"Got to make some cool stuff", "calming/relaxing", "really fun", "good distraction"

### **Parent – SEND HAF provision**

Sophie and the team have made LM feel very welcome with their patience and understanding. From a boy who on his first week, couldn't even get into the door, to the boy 4 weeks later stayed an entire session. I will be forever thankful at the care and understanding you have showed to LM, where most places have written him off. It's wonderful to see him looking forward to something each week.

### **Social Worker:**

The support from HAF has enabled a young person's carer to keep going with her caring role. Without this support, it is likely that this young person and his carer would have gone into crisis during school holidays as this is the most difficult time for them without the school routine in place. It is possible that this young person would have needed edge of care support if the HAF programme were not in place. This carer has indicated that without the right support in place, she will not be able to continue with her caring role.

## Survey

In November 2024 a survey was sent out to all HAF families requesting feedback on the programme and to identify the outcomes the programme is having for their children and young people and their families as a whole. Some of the responses are shared below:

- 34.55% of respondents said that the HAF Programme in Wokingham has helped them with the cost of living
- 27.27% of respondents said that the HAF Programme in Wokingham has given them an opportunity to share experiences with their child/ren.
- 33.33% of respondents said that the HAF Programme in Wokingham has helped their child to experience activities with their friends
- 38.18% of respondents said that the HAF Programme in Wokingham has given their child opportunities to experience new activities
- 31.52% of respondents said that the HAF Programme in Wokingham has given their child the opportunity to learn new skills
- 43.03% of respondents said that without the HAF Programme in Wokingham their child would miss out on taking part in activities in the school holidays

**The HAF Team will continue to provide opportunities for children, young people, and their parent carers to ensure their voices are heard and to shape the HAF programme in line with their needs and interests.**

## *Key Achievements and Impact*

In 2024, the HAF programme delivered an average of **166,176** hours of enriching and engaging activities to children and young people. These sessions spanned a wide range of interests, including sports, arts, STEM, and outdoor learning, ensuring inclusive and stimulating experiences for all participants.

Over **41,544** nutritious meals were served, supporting the health and wellbeing of children and young people during school holidays. These meals not only addressed food insecurity but also promoted healthy eating habits and routines.

- **New Specialist SEND Venue Secured**

We successfully secured a dedicated venue for our specialist SEND provisions, enhancing accessibility and tailored support for children with additional needs. This space allows for a more inclusive environment with appropriate resources and trained staff.

- **Expanding Capacity with New Providers**

By partnering with new providers, we increased our capacity in targeted areas, ensuring more families could access the programme. This strategic growth helped address local demand and reduce waiting lists.

- **Collaboration with Shinfield Parish Council**

Our collaboration with Shinfield Parish Council strengthened community ties and enabled the delivery of more locally rooted activities, increasing engagement and visibility within the area.

- **Youth Volunteering and Skill Development**

We provided young people with opportunities to volunteer and develop valuable life skills, fostering a sense of responsibility, confidence, and community involvement.

- **Celebration and Recognition Event**

An evening celebration event was held to recognise the contributions of our young volunteers. AQA certificates were awarded to those who gained new skills and supported initiatives at Share Wokingham, Suffolk Lodge, and other community venues over the summer.

- **Extensive Range of Activities Offered**



The programme featured a diverse and extensive range of activities, ensuring there was something for everyone. This variety helped maintain engagement and encouraged children to try new experiences.

- **Positive Feedback Received**

We received overwhelmingly positive feedback from children, parents, and providers, highlighting the programme's impact on wellbeing, learning, and social development.

- **Family Signposting and Support**

Families were signposted to additional services and support, helping them access wider community resources and assistance beyond the HAF programme.

- **Family Engagement and Trust Building**

Ongoing engagement with families helped build trust and strengthen relationships, creating a supportive network around each child.

- **Enriching Opportunities for Children**

The programme continued to enrich children's lives by offering new experiences, fostering creativity, and encouraging exploration.

- **Confidence Building**

Many children showed increased confidence through participation, particularly those who were initially shy or hesitant.

- **Promoting Positive Development**

Activities were designed to promote personal development, teamwork, and knowledge gaining in a fun and supportive environment.

- **Maintaining Learning Levels**

Through educational play and structured sessions, the programme helped maintain learning levels during school breaks, reducing the risk of learning loss.

- **Establishing Routines**

Regular attendance helped children establish healthy routines, supporting their transition back to school and daily structure.

- **Parental Respite**

The programme provided valuable respite for parents and carers, offering peace of mind and time to manage other responsibilities.

- **Local Economic Investment**

By working with local providers and venues, the programme contributed to the local economy, supporting jobs and community businesses.

- **Support for New Arrivals**

We secured DfE funding to provide tailored activities for children and young people settling in Wokingham from Ukraine, Afghanistan, and Hong Kong, helping them integrate and feel welcomed through inclusive programming.

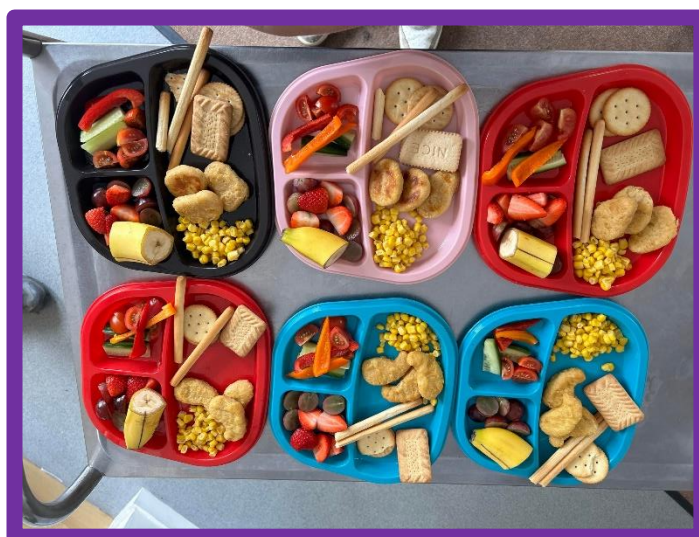


## Food

We've received a range of feedback regarding the food provided through the HAF programme. Some children have found the lunches less appealing, with comments noting that meals are perceived as "too healthy," or that children are simply picky eaters or prefer food prepared at home.

We recognise that children with additional needs may face greater challenges when it comes to food preferences and dietary requirements. In response, our SEND Club Hub team has worked carefully to develop a menu that is nutritional, inclusive and appealing. This effort has been well received, with positive feedback from families and a majority of attendees choosing to eat from the provided menu.

To ensure that food is never a barrier to participation, we have introduced the option for children and young people to bring their own packed lunch if that is their preferred choice. This added flexibility supports individual needs and encourages continued engagement with the programme.



However, sourcing high-quality hot food suppliers remains an ongoing challenge for the Wokingham HAF team. We continue to explore new partnerships and solutions to improve the variety and quality of meals offered.

## ***Enriching and Physical Activities***

We offered a wide range of sporting activities for all age ranges and needs. Each year we send out surveys asking children and young people what activities they enjoyed the most and what activities they would like to see us offering for the future. Activities offered in 2024 included:

- Football
- Cricket
- Archery
- Rounders
- Dodgeball
- Tennis and table tennis
- Boxercise
- Foot Golf
- Playground Games
- Swimming
- Paddle boarding and kayaking
- Aqua Park
- Raft Building
- Indoor Climbing Centre
- Circuits and sensory sports
- Team outdoor games
- Bowling
- Laser quest
- Orienteering
- Forestry
- And lots more!

Based on extensive feedback from providers, professionals, and parent carers, as well as the activities delivered, the HAF programme has successfully achieved the following outcomes:

- Broadened access to enriching experiences and extracurricular activities
- Built trust and meaningful relationships between families and service providers
- Delivered holistic, wraparound support tailored to individual needs
- Enhanced social inclusion by reducing barriers and increasing peer interaction
- Fostered the development of new interests and life skills
- Improved engagement with families who are traditionally harder to reach
- Prevented escalation of crisis situations through early intervention
- Promoted positive health behaviours and improved nutritional awareness
- Reduced reliance on statutory services by offering proactive support
- Reduced the risk of childhood hunger and emotional isolation
- Strengthened links to additional support services through effective signposting
- Strengthened self-esteem and confidence among children and young people
- Supported improved attendance, behaviour, and attitudes toward education

## **Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND)**

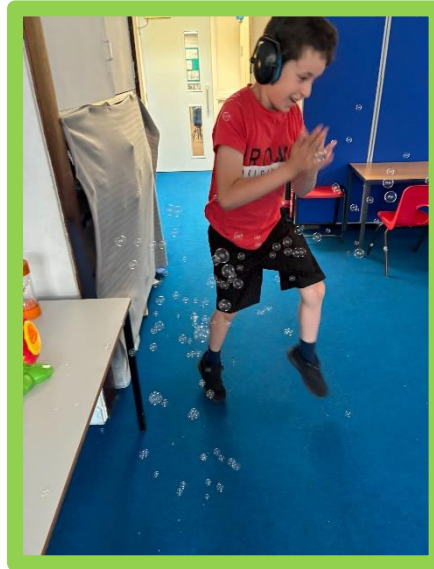
We offered specialist holiday provisions for SEND children and young people. There was:

- A Holiday Club offering a full range of activities, including therapeutic sensory play, sports, exploring outdoors and much more. Across four days, four hours per day.
- Stay and play sessions offering two four sessions per week.
- A Forestry session for one day for four hours.



- SEND friendly day trips, across the three programmes.
- SEND friendly events, across the three programmes.
- SEND friendly Panto at Christmas.

We have worked with providers to offer places at our mainstream provisions for SEND children and young people who didn't need additional support to access activities or who didn't need specialist provisions.



## Challenges

- **Sourcing Quality Hot Food Suppliers**

We continue to face difficulties in identifying reliable hot food suppliers who can deliver consistently across the borough.

- **Limited Funding**

The available funding does not stretch far enough to offer activities to every eligible child or young person in Wokingham.

- **Rising Costs**

There has been a noticeable increase in costs for providers, activity delivery, resources, and food provisions, placing additional pressure on the programme budget.

- **Non-Attendance Costs**

A significant challenge has been the cost implications of children and young people booking activities but not attending, which results in wasted resources and missed opportunities for others.

### How We've Addressed These Challenges:

- **Securing a Dedicated SEND Venue**

We successfully secured a venue specifically for delivering HAF SEND holiday activities, ensuring a consistent and accessible space for children with additional needs.

- **Manual Booking Management**

By manually managing bookings and restricting places, we've been able to offer more children and young people the chance to participate, while reducing the number of unused spaces.

- **Expanding in Targeted Areas**

Private: Information that contains a small amount of sensitive data which is essential to communicate with an individual but doesn't require to be sent via secure methods.

We increased the number of activities in key local areas, reducing the need for transport and helping to lower associated costs.

- **Improved Communication**

We've strengthened communication with schools, parents, and providers to raise awareness about the financial impact of non-attendance, encouraging more responsible booking.

- **Collaboration with Providers**

We've worked closely with our providers to reduce the number of non-attended places and minimise the costs linked to unused bookings.

## ***Marketing and Communication***

The success of the HAF Programme relies heavily on effective communication and outreach to ensure families are informed, engaged, and able to access the support available. Our marketing approach is multi-faceted and strategically timed to maximise reach and impact:

- **Direct School Engagement**

Prior to each programme launch, we email all schools across the borough with detailed information about the upcoming HAF offer. This ensures that schools are well-informed and can support the sharing of information to eligible families.

- **Integration with the HolidayActivities E-Voucher System**

Schools are supported to link up with the HolidayActivities e-voucher platform, enabling them to distribute digital vouchers directly to eligible children and young people. This seamless integration ensures that families can easily book activities and access the support they are entitled to.

- **Targeted Family Communications**

We email families who have previously accessed the HAF programme, providing clear and comprehensive information about:

- Programme launch dates
- Available activities and venues
- Booking instructions
- Support options and contact details
- This personalised approach helps maintain engagement and encourages repeat participation.
- Social Media Outreach

**Our Holiday, Activities and Food Programme Facebook page is regularly updated with:**

- Programme announcements
- Activity highlights
- Booking reminders
- Testimonials and photos
- This platform helps us reach a wider audience and engage with families in a more informal, interactive way.
- Collaboration with the Communications Team

We work closely with our Communications Team to develop and distribute promotional materials, press releases, and digital content. This ensures consistent messaging and professional presentation across all channels.

## Presence at Networking Events

Attending local networking events allows us to promote the HAF programme directly to community partners, providers, and stakeholders. These events also help us build relationships and identify new opportunities for collaboration.

## Website Updates

Our dedicated HAF webpage is kept up to date with the latest programme information, including:

- Booking links
- FAQs
- Eligibility criteria
- Contact information
- This ensures families and professionals can easily find accurate and timely information.
- Use of Video Content

We create and share short videos to showcase the programme's impact, highlight available activities, and explain how to get involved. These videos are shared via social media, our website, and email campaigns to make the programme more accessible and engaging.

[Holiday, activities, and food programme \(wokingham.gov.uk\)](http://wokingham.gov.uk)

[Holiday activity and food programme - primary school-aged](#)

[Holiday activity and food - children with SEND](#)

[Holiday activity and food programme - secondary school-aged](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/HAFprogrammeWoky/>

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100010701937193>

## Additional Resources, Partnerships and Aligning with Other Priorities

We work with local suppliers, charities and groups to

- Obtain additional funding to support families resettling in Wokingham.
- Obtain funding from the Hardship Alliance to support SEND with the afterschool provisions. This has allowed us to build relationships and trust to access the SEND HAF Programme provisions. Where children have not or could not attend previously.
- Sourced discounts from local supermarkets including, Tesco, Morrisons, Aldi, Sainsbury's and Costco.
- Secured discounts from suppliers.
- Received support from Share Wokingham, by offering young people the opportunity to understand more about food waste, volunteering and offering a healthy hot lunch.

Thank you to everyone who worked in partnership and supported us in 2024:

