

HAF Annual Report

2024-25

Introduction

In 2024-25, Staffordshire County Council received £2,417,623 of funding from the Department for Education for the delivery of the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme. We commissioned external providers to facilitate our HAF provision during the Easter, Summer, and Winter school holidays. Across these three delivery periods, 9,431 children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) participated in activities, including 7,230 primary-aged children and 2,201 secondary-aged children.

Our Highlights

- Over £2.2 million in DfE funding was distributed to providers, with enriching and inclusive sessions delivered countywide.
- 9,431 children engaged across three delivery periods.
- All children received a daily nutritious meal and interactive food education.
- 726 enrichment sessions and wide-ranging physical activities.
- 1,625 children with SEND supported through targeted provision.
- Working to support 'Little Heroes Campaign' to raise school attendance.

Funding

Funding was spent as follows:

Grants to Providers: £2,221,441

Marketing & Promotion: £9,211

HAF Team & Administration: £186,971

We commissioned 52 providers from the VCSE sector, schools, and private organisations, to deliver holiday activities. Our steering group included representation from education, health, VCSE, police, DWP, and commissioning.



Attendee Data

9,341 children engaged with the HAF programme during 2024-25.

Easter 2024: 2,931 (2,473 primary / 458 secondary)

Summer 2024: 4,375 (3,207 primary / 1,168 secondary)

Winter 2024: 2,125 (1,550 primary / 575 secondary)

A total of 1,625 children with SEND accessed provision during 2024-25.

Easter 2024: 457 (346 primary / 111 secondary) 16% of total attendees

Summer 2024: 787 (557 primary / 230 secondary) 18% of total attendees


Winter 2024: 381 (262 primary / 119 secondary) 18% of total attendees

HAF through the seasons

Easter

- Piloted SEND advisory support to strengthen inclusive practice.
- Introduced booking system EEQU for real-time internal tracking.
- Some providers used tasting passports to support healthy food exploration.
- Launched updated provider onboarding guidance.

Summer

- Expanded provision in low-uptake zones based on mapping analysis.
 - Delivered safeguarding and inclusivity training to providers.
 - Supported families to access 'Savvy Schools' numeracy support.
 - Worked with Adult Community Colleagues to promote 'Savy Schooling' to support parents with children's homework
 - Worked with Education colleagues to promote 'Little Heroes Campaign' to promote school attendance.
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Winter

- Some providers worked with warm hubs and community food sites to promote engagement and support families over winter.
- Piloted a live MS feedback form for family and provider insights.
- We funded Children to attend Christmas pantomimes with their families.

Key themes for 2024-25 included

- Expanding rural access.
- Increasing SEND provision.
- Launching a new booking system.
- Improved use of digital processes.

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND)

A total of 1,625 children with SEND accessed provision:

Easter 2024: 457 (346 primary / 111 secondary) 16% of total attendees

Summer 2024: 787 (557 primary / 230 secondary) 18% of total attendees

Winter 2024: 381 (262 primary / 119 secondary) 18% of total attendee

We commissioned 23 SEND-specific clubs and embedded SEND places within universal provision. 956 children attended SEND specific clubs this year. Providers received inclusion guidance and access to a SEND commissioning lead.

Providers were supported by Staffordshire HAF to adapt their provision to accommodate children's additional needs, one provider reported, *"The team were able to adapt most games to ensure that child X could join in as much as possible, build in extra rest time and breaks. Outdoor activities were easier to make the adaptations and safe for the child to join in to their fullest capacity"*

SEND Family Feedback:

"Having two children with disabilities, HAF activities have been an absolute godsend. My daughter asks to go all the time."



"HAF at Liberty in Burntwood were amazing! Ten days of activities and food for my SEN son was an absolute godsend and very much appreciated."

"This is the first time my child has come home smiling after a group activity."

"This club is amazing. My 8-year-old child loves attending. The activities provided are varied and fun. It provides opportunities to develop confidence and make friends."

Examples by Season

Easter: Specialist clubs in Tamworth and Stafford focused on sensory play, music therapy, and visual supports. Providers received targeted inclusion coaching.

Summer: Enhanced one-to-one support and added SEND-friendly activity packs. Clubs reported improved engagement using social stories and quiet spaces.

Winter: Several clubs extended session times for children who struggled with transitions. In Burton, sensory tents were introduced to create calming environments.

Children and families' feedback

Feedback from children and families has been overwhelmingly positive. Parents appreciated the accessible online booking system and the new postcode lookup feature. Children commented on the fun activities, friendly staff, and opportunities to make new friends. Providers reported increased parental engagement during mealtime and nutrition sessions.

Examples by Season

Easter: Parents praised the structured routines and SEND-friendly environments. One parent from Stafford said, "This is the only activity my son with autism feels safe to attend."

Summer: Strong engagement through play schemes and community events such as the 'Little Heroes,' 'Path to Paris' and 'Savvy Schools' campaigns. In Tamworth, a child commented, "This was the best summer I ever had. I loved learning new games."

Winter: Families valued the warm welcome, meals, and sensory activities. A provider in Burton reported that children looked forward to attending and expressed sadness when the programme ended.



General Feedback:

"We were thrilled to participate in the HERO campaign this summer at our HAF clubs"

"I liked making pizzas and playing football. I made two new friends."

"It helped us with food and gave my son confidence."

"The staff were kind, and I liked doing crafts and playing football."

"My children had a great time, and the meals really helped during the school holidays."

"This club has made a massive difference to us. It's helped with food and given my son confidence."

Key Challenges

No-shows and late cancellations

This impacted attendance and food planning. To address this, enhanced reminder systems and confirmation prompts were introduced. We now have 100% eligibility checks in place, and automated reminders are sent to all families to confirm upcoming bookings, helping to reduce no-shows. Providers contribute to programme improvements through regular feedback at provider events, which also offer opportunities for peer support.

Delays in Notification from DfE

While changes in national government and delays in budget decisions are understandable, these setbacks significantly hinder the ability to complete the full commissioning cycle and negatively affect staff on contracts. Short timescales create intense pressure on local authority teams to implement delivery, while providers must quickly apply for funding, secure venues, and recruit staff. These delays have also led to internal and provider staff undergoing redundancy processes that were only cancelled late in January, impacting their emotional wellbeing. This uncertainty risks losing experienced staff if they seek alternative employment.