

HAF Worcestershire Easter 2024 Delivery Report

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 expanded across the whole of England to every Local Authority in 2021/22.

Sutton Croft Ltd was commissioned by Worcestershire Children First (WCF), in partnership with Ready Steady Worcestershire (RSW) to manage the grant funding allocation and delivery of the programme 'HAF Worcestershire' between 2021 – 2024.

HAF Worcestershire 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 limited flexibility in the programme guidelines to offer places to other vulnerable cohorts including families considered to be 'just about managing'.

HAF Worcestershire has significantly grown since the start of the programme and works directly with holiday club providers, schools, charities, community groups and other organisations to offer an inclusive, varied and flexible programme for eligible children.

The Aim of HAF

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 likely to experience social isolation

The aim of the programme is to reduce the pressure for families during school holidays by offering free access to activity clubs providing physical activity, enriching activities, healthy food and support for families.

Eligibility Process

This Easter, HAF Worcestershire launched the new booking portal. This was developed in collaboration with Bookinglab, and hosts the booking process for both HAF and GASB. Children and young people (CYP) must be approved as eligible for HAF to book activities.

This process is as follows:

1. Families and parents sign up via the HAF booking portal to register for access to the HAF programme.
2. Once signed up, accounts are pending until they are checked against the FSM database and verified.
3. When individual child profiles are verified as either FSM eligible or referred status, parents and families can book on to activities.

Non-FSM eligibility

Providers have the flexibility to offer up to 15% of their total places to participants who are not eligible for benefits related free school meals but are considered to be vulnerable. These groups include but are not limited to:

- Children assessed by the local authority as being in need, at risk or vulnerable
- Young carers
- Children of refugee families
- Looked after children who are in Kinship Care
- Children living in areas of high deprivation or from low-income households who are not in receipt of free school meals
- Children in transition phases between nursery and primary school or primary and secondary school

Easter 2024 Overview

54 providers across 65 venues were commissioned to deliver HAF during the Easter holidays, including SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) clubs and activities. Across the county CYP were able to attend a wide offering, including water sports, outdoor adventure, forest school, arts & crafts, drama and performing arts, musical workshops, yoga and wellbeing, animal care and equine therapy through to multisport clubs.

HAF supported 2113 individual CYP, 1854 (88%) of which were FSM eligible, 16% secondary aged and 17% SEND.

Key points from the Easter programme:

- Severn Arts ran multiple workshops across the holidays, which included a diverse, cultural range of activities from music and the ever-popular drums workshops to sculpting, crafting, photography and dance.
- New HAF & GASB booking portal launched, with approx. 2000 children signed up and approved over Easter.
- Improved communications with families – a result from the above booking portal issuing confirmation emails, reminders and simple account management process to manage cancellations, request further information or raise questions with providers, streamlining and reducing the admin management and supporting attendance at HAF activities.
- Booking started slowly, due in part to the new booking site (for which we completed a full push out to families new and existing to remind of the need to register on the site alongside providers, schools and community centres) but also due to:
 - A late confirmation of programme providers, the net result of delayed budget allocations from DfE
 - Concerns over weather and families opting to 'book last minute'
 - A potential increase in families opting for family day trips/holiday/making use of family childcare support to suit working commitments.
- Bookings did pick up for the second week and where providers were fully booked, they proactively signposted families to alternative local provision.

- The most significant impact on Easter was the redirection of non-FSM SEND families to GASB, as opposed to HAF 15% allocation, which created anxieties, upset and disappointment over the loss of access to familiar, flexible and mainstream provision. On further review this has been reset for summer 2024, meaning non-FSM SEND families will have access to HAF provision, where the providers can support safely and can offer space.

Attendance

Despite the Easter school holidays occurring earlier than usual and bookings opening later than hoped due to external DfE delays and implementation of the new booking site, 84% of places offered were booked and 81% of places were booked and attended. Overall, 4607 places were offered, 3883 places were booked, and 3718 places were attended.

Places attended breakdown:

- 11% of places attended were specifically for CYP with SEND
- 21% of places were attended by secondary-aged children

The following table breaks down places attended by the type of places and age group of places:

	Primary-aged	Secondary-aged
Mainstream places attended	2706	635
SEND specific places attended	236	141
Total places attended	2942	776

Individual Children and Young People

Overview of Easter CYP

Key stats:

- 88% of CYP were eligible for FSM
- 84% of CYP were primary-aged
- 16% of CYP were secondary-aged
- 17% of CYP had SEND
- 43 CYP were from refugee families

This Easter, there was a decrease in individual CYP attending from Easter 2023. Possible causes for this include:

- The new booking site is still building up numbers of approved children, with currently less than the old site
- Easter 2023 opened bookings three weeks earlier than other periods, allowing more time to spread awareness to more families
- Changes to SEND eligibility

The following table shows the breakdown of individual CYP at Easter 2024 by FSM and SEND:

	Primary-aged	Secondary-aged
FSM & Non-SEND	1324	209
FSM & SEND in universal settings	241	60
FSM & SEND in SEND specialist provision	18	2
Non-FSM & Non-SEND	167	56
Non-FSM & SEND in universal settings	27	9
Non-FSM & SEND in SEND specialist provision	0	0
Total attendees	1777	336

The following table shows the breakdown of participants by holiday period, from Easter 2022 to Easter 2024:

	Easter 2022	Summer 2022	Winter 2022	Easter 2023	Summer 2023	Winter 2023	Easter 2024
Primary-aged FSM & Non-SEND	1511	6039	1725	2667	4257	1266	1324
Primary-aged FSM & SEND	347	982	334	467	816	308	259
Primary-aged Non-FSM & Non-SEND	102	1405	378	476	174	205	167
Primary-aged Non-FSM & SEND	38	167	85	175	310	217	27
Total primary-aged attendees	1998	8593	2522	3785	5557	1996	1777
Secondary-aged FSM & Non-SEND	536	1367	628	402	747	125	209
Secondary-aged FSM & SEND	185	525	79	121	311	82	62
Secondary-aged Non-FSM & Non-SEND	302	717	74	145	67	29	56
Secondary-aged Non-FSM & SEND	23	206	34	62	42	68	9
Total secondary-aged attendees	1046	2815	815	730	1167	304	336
Total attendees	3044	11408	3337	4515	6724	2300	2113
Of the total, from refugee families		191	38	95	158	69	43

SEND & HAF

Since programme inception, a key priority for Worcestershire HAF has been to deliver activities suitable for and specialised to SEND children and young people. This Easter, SEND CYP were supported through means such as specialist SEND clubs, trained staff, 1-1 support.

HAF is primarily for children and young people in receipt of benefits-related Free School Meals. This population has a higher prevalence of SEND than the general pupil population. Throughout the Worcestershire HAF lifecycle, the rate of SEND in Worcestershire FSM CYP has been 30%. Comparatively, the rate of SEND in all Worcestershire pupils is 18%.

Additionally, there is a discretionary amount of 15% of places, which non-FSM children and young people from vulnerable cohorts may use if it is believed the programme would benefit them. This has consistently been a key allowance to support non-FSM children with SEND.

Throughout the programme's lifespan, the demand for HAF places from non-FSM SEND children and their support workers has significantly increased. The demand for SEND HAF provision has generally increased from Winter 2022 across age groups, and both FSM and non-FSM. In the case of non-FSM children, the SEND rate peaked at 60% in summer 2023.

Due to the significant demand, this Easter upon the joining of HAF and Short Breaks, Groups and Activities (GASB) in to one contract, Non-FSM SEND children were no longer eligible for HAF and instead signposted to GASB.

Easter 2024 in the Big Picture

HAF supported an average of 1150 children per week.

We continue to see improvement in the following areas:

- Returning families and CYP to the programme.
- SEND inclusion in mainstream provision, with providers recruiting additional support staff where resources are available, and in some cases, taking further training to enhance staffing support.
- Continuous commitment from providers in understanding key objectives for HAF delivery and working collaboratively with peers and HAF team to ensure best practice.
- Commitment to reviewing venues/locations and exploring opportunities to fill gaps in provision.
- Continuously improving offer, engaging activities and a quality programme in line with current trends/interests to attract older aged CYP.
- New providers expressing interest in applying for HAF funding within areas of higher FSM CYP.
- Support from external agencies in offering workshops or educational presentations within lead provider settings.
- Continued support of families who may otherwise struggle to access HAF (limited internet access/learning difficulties/illiteracy, etc).

Providers

Key stats:

- 54 total providers this Easter
- 65 HAF venues
- 135 community partners
- 65 young leaders or in roles of responsibility
- 47 volunteers
- 277 paid staff

There was a considerable decrease in private organisations delivering HAF provision this Easter. Schools as lead providers increased, with voluntary or community-based organisations comprising half of all providers.

The table below breaks down providers by type of organisation, from Easter 2022 to Easter 2024:

	Easter 2022	Summer 2022	Winter 2022	Easter 2023	Summer 2023	Winter 2023	Easter 2024
Voluntary or community based	61%	47%	50%	45%	42%	47%	50%
Private organisation	26%	40%	42%	45%	39%	45%	37%
School	9%	10%	5%	5%	16%	6%	11%
Local authority	4%	3%	5%	5%	3%	2%	2%

Funding Allocation

Funding allocation reflects the percentage of FSM eligibility. We work with providers to identify and fill gaps in provision across the county.

The following table breaks down grant funding allocation by district, from Easter 2022 to Easter 2024:

District	Easter 2022	Summer 2022	Winter 2022	Easter 2023	Summer 2023	Winter 2023	Easter 2024
Malvern Hills	£44,843.83 (16%)	£76,731.80 (8%)	£46,231.54 (17%)	£26,295.02 (11%)	£106,752.80 (11%)	£22,709.00 (9%)	£40,060.00 (18%)
Redditch & Bromsgrove	£76,936.95 (28%)	£301,498.60 (33%)	£57,109.55 (21%)	£58,519.31 (24%)	£291,144 (30%)	£71,512.00 (29%)	£57,524.00 (25%)
Worcester City	£44,843.83 (16%)	£244,123.90 (26%)	£46,231.54 (17%)	£45,415.70 (18%)	£252,324.80 (26%)	£85,312.94 (34%)	£56,320.00 (25%)
Wychavon	£55,492.00 (20%)	£182,664.00 (20%)	£84,304.57 (31%)	£75,618.96 (31%)	£155,276.80 (16%)	£48,466.00 (19%)	£48,110.00 (21%)
Wyre Forest	£52,117.83 (19%)	£119,376.00 (13%)	£38,073.03 (14%)	£38,284.00 (16%)	£164,981.60 (17%)	£22,830.00 (9%)	£25,535.00 (11%)

Schools

For Easter 2024 delivery, a total of 23 schools supported the HAF programme, either as lead providers or as venues. Additionally, 44% of delivery venues were schools.

Schools operating either as lead providers or supporting providers by hosting suits the programme offers the following benefits:

- Reducing workload of holiday provision coordination for school, allowing a combined group of paid/HAF activities.
- Offering on-site consistency for pupils between school holidays.
- Offering paid opportunities for TAs during school holidays.
- Improves communication between provider and school to offer better support for CYP.
- Offers site familiarity for CYP and accessibility within local communities.
- Schools are recognised as safe, secure venues for parents with good facilities and often, sufficient catering areas to allow for hot food provision.

The following table shows the percentage of Worcestershire primary schools operating as lead providers of HAF venues:

	Easter 2023	Summer 2023	Winter 2023	Easter 2024
Primary schools	9%	9%	10%	7%

The following table shows the percentage of Worcestershire secondary schools operating as lead providers of HAF venues:

	Easter 2023	Summer 2023	Winter 2023	Easter 2024
Secondary schools	16%	25%	9%	14%

The following table shows the percentage of Worcestershire special schools operating as lead providers of HAF venues:

	Easter 2023	Summer 2023	Winter 2023	Easter 2024
Special schools	11%	22%	11%	11%

The following table shows the percentage of total Worcestershire schools operating as lead providers of HAF venues:

	Easter 2023	Summer 2023	Winter 2023	Easter 2024
Total schools	10%	12%	9%	9%

HAF Activities & Clubs

Easter 2024 contracted places across districts:

- Worcester City had 1474 places, 26% of the county total
- Malvern Hills had 735 places, 13% of the county total

- Wychavon had 840 places, 15% of the county total
- Wyre Forest had 740 places, 13% of the county total
- Redditch and Bromsgrove had 1784 places, 32% of the county total

Easter 2024 activities included:

- Drama
- Cricket
- Arts & crafts
- Dance
- Forest school
- Kayaking
- Football
- Mindfulness
- Swimming
- Life skills
- Horse riding
- Team building

Quality Assessment

As part of our commitment to offering a quality provision for summer HAF, we monitored quality assurance in a number of ways. The table to right shows the average scores from provider self-assessment.

The following table breaks down our quality assurance methods:

Measure	Description
EOI Quality Response	Detailed EOI application form detailing provider experience, evidence and proposed plans.
Safeguarding and Policies	Health & Safety and Insurance checklists and organisations submit all documentation prior to delivery.
Provider support and training	Ongoing mobilisation and delivery support, access to training courses designed for HAF.
Delivery reporting	Final delivery report including registers, summary of delivery, photos and family feedback.
Self Assessment	Providers complete a self assessment of delivery
Site Visits	The HAF Programme Team performed site visits during activity sessions and completed an informal assessment sheet.
Provider feedback	Providers completed a feedback process to review the HAF Easter delivery programme.
School feedback	Schools that participated in HAF were asked to provide feedback.

At Easter 2024, each self-assessment criteria's average rating is as follows (criteria can be rated very poor, poor, acceptable, good, or excellent):

- Food offer was rated good
- Physical activity was rated excellent
- Enriching activities was rated excellent
- Nutritional education for CYP was rated good
- Nutritional education for parents or carers was rated acceptable
- Signposting and referrals for families was rated good
- Accessibility and inclusivity was rated good

Case Study: Overcoming Anxiety (written by YMCA Worcestershire)

This Easter, as part of our Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme, we had the pleasure of welcoming a new participant who we hadn't previously engaged with. Before the programme commenced, we had conversations with her PGs, who shared that their young person struggled with anxiety. They had said that typically their young person would refuse to partake in programmes and events like this due to their anxiety, but had agreed on this occasion to give it a go.

On their first day of attendance, they arrived early, providing our team with the opportunity to introduce them to the staff and familiarise them with the venue. The young person expressed anxiety about leaving their parents and the unfamiliarity of the environment. We assured them that our staff were available for support and that they could contact their parents if needed.

After a hesitant goodbye, they joined the main youth room and engaged in activities with the staff. Although they felt more at ease with the staff, they remained apprehensive about interacting with the other young people. However, they demonstrated their willingness to participate by supporting the team with various tasks for the day, such as setting up activities and managing the drinks station.

As the day progressed, we witnessed a gradual transformation in the young person. They began to grow more comfortable and confident in their surroundings. They even started initiating interactions with other young people without requiring any prompting or support from the staff, marking a significant shift from their initial demeanour.

Upon leaving that day, they were beaming with enjoyment, having made friends and embraced the activities. PGs were thrilled by the progress witnessed. Encouraged by this positive experience, the young person continued attending for the next two days, each time growing more confident and at ease with their surroundings.

By the conclusion of the programme, they had developed a newfound sense of belonging and confidence. They cherished the experiences and memories made during their time with us. Empowered by the supportive environment and connections formed with the staff, the young person expressed a desire to further engage with YMCA Worcestershire.

As a result, we directed them to our Monday Youth Club in Redditch, where they have since attended every session with enthusiasm. They have seamlessly integrated into the group, comfortably engaging with their peers and contributing positively to the community.

Parent Feedback

- “Son very much enjoyed the whole experience.”
- “Great range of activities just wish we had more time to use the credits.”
- “Friendly and professional.”
- “This is such a great thing to do it keeps the kids active and the parents that can't afford extra activities not left feeling guilty after the school holidays. Also this is the only time some kids get a hot dinner so it's great. The activities were excellent and they enjoyed everything they tried.”
- “I would give it 10/10 my children always come back with a big smile on their faces loving all the activities they have done.”