

# HAF Worcestershire Winter Delivery Report 2024

## 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 County Council (WCC) to manage the grant funding allocation and delivery of the programme 'HAF Worcestershire' between 2021 and 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

HAF Worcestershire uses a central booking portal developed in collaboration with Bookinglab. 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

## **Winter 2024 Overview**

33 providers across over 40 venues (including trips) were commissioned to deliver HAF during the winter holidays, including SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) clubs and activities. Across the county, CYP were able to attend a wide offering, including theatre & performing arts, sports camps, swimming sessions, pony riding/pony care, forest school, arts & crafts, yoga and mindfulness sessions, outdoor pursuits and an increased offer including ice skating, bowling, pantomime, farm visits and illuminated trails. SEND specialist provision was also commissioned, offering a range of activities to suit individual needs – including sensory, soft play and small group day trips to accessible venues, such as Attwell Farm.

This winter we reintroduced an increased offer to allow for care packages/hampers and take-home activity packs, in line with DfE guidance. Our parent/carer feedback surveys inform us regularly of the need to receive additional support during the cost- of-living crisis, and particularly during the more challenging winter months. Hampers and care packages included staple food cupboard items, cleaning products, personal hygiene products, small activities for the children (age appropriate) and items such as blankets, hats and gloves. These were offered either to each attending child on final day or provision or via registration, in which providers added the packages to the booking site for families to claim – with full HAF-eligibility verification completed. A proven success and much needed addition to the programme based on family and provider feedback.

HAF supported 1,639 individual CYP – 70% were primary-aged children and 30% secondary-aged young people. The average number of days attended was 3.

### **Key points from the winter programme:**

- In response to parent/carer and CYP feedback, we enhanced our HAF programme with day trips/family activities and events, in order to offer more tailored experiences that met needs and interests, whilst focussing on community and accessibility. Our day trips and family activities primarily supported local Worcestershire-based businesses.

- We partnered with Webbs Enchanted Garden to offer family passes for the illuminated light trail – a first for the HAF programme. This free to HAF-eligible family activity was accessed via ballot, upon signing up to the booking platform. We received over 400 entries within hours of the competition going live, which supports our data capture and communication reach to HAF families within the county.
- As above, in addition we partnered with the NEC’s Winter Funland activity, which again offered heavily discounted family passes in order for us to ballot via sign-ups. Again the response was immediate and far exceeded our allocated tickets.
- Severn Arts again ran multiple workshops with consistently positive feedback – and a particular note on the additional support and understanding demonstrated by some of the long-serving resident artists who work across our provision, including SEND.
- Approx. 4400 FSM CYP now signed up and approved on the new booking portal
- Bookings opened a month prior to delivery – which parent/carers feedback shows us is the prime time to launch the platform for live bookings.
- We partnered with Redditch Theatre to offer family panto passes to local HAF families – all of which were taken up by providers for management within the community. The offer extended to refugee families.
- The spirit of Christmas was supported by a wealth of activities, experiences and events hosted by our integral providers – including a visiting vintage fun fair to PYPLC, various Santa pop ups to host venues, discos and foam parties, Christmas movies, soft play visits and for the older CYP, fully managed trips to local leisure centres including bowling, ice skating and laser quest.
- We commissioned a new provider to deliver a niche coding programme. The Worcester-based franchisee delivered across two venues in Tenbury and Pershore. CYP learn about and hone their skills in computer coding and programming, with themed activities including animation and game creation. The offer was piloted over winter with a view to trialling alternative venues within the county, where suitable and, in particular, as a potential partner to the GASB programme.

## Attendance

80% of places offered were booked and 70% of places were booked and also attended. Overall (including face-to-face provision and remote provision), 6015 places were offered, 4792 places were booked, and 4200 places were attended.

Places attended breakdown:

- 4% of places attended were specifically for CYP with SEND
- 23% 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	3110	909
SEND specific places attended	135	46



Primary-aged FSM & Non-SEND	6039	1725	2667	4257	1266	1324	1402	800
Primary-aged FSM & SEND	982	334	467	816	308	259	355	211
Primary-aged Non-FSM & Non-SEND	1405	378	476	174	205	167	81	58
Primary-aged Non-FSM & SEND	167	85	175	310	217	27	71	84
<b>Total primary-aged attendees</b>	<b>8593</b>	<b>2522</b>	<b>3785</b>	<b>5557</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1777</b>	<b>1909</b>	<b>1153</b>
Secondary-aged FSM & Non-SEND	1367	628	402	747	125	209	234	336
Secondary-aged FSM & SEND	525	79	121	311	82	62	104	94
Secondary-aged Non-FSM & Non-SEND	717	74	145	67	29	56	66	35
Secondary-aged Non-FSM & SEND	206	34	62	42	68	9	36	21
<b>Total secondary-aged attendees</b>	<b>2815</b>	<b>815</b>	<b>730</b>	<b>1167</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>486</b>
<b>Total attendees</b>	<b>11408</b>	<b>3337</b>	<b>4515</b>	<b>6724</b>	<b>2300</b>	<b>2113</b>	<b>2349</b>	<b>1639</b>
Of the total, from refugee families	191	38	95	158	69	43	83	57

## Winter 2024 in the Big Picture

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.
- 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:

- 33 total providers this winter
- 40+ HAF venues (including trips)

- 48 young leaders or in roles of responsibility
- 29 volunteers
- 215 paid staff

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

	Summer 2022	Winter 2022	Easter 2023	Summer 2023	Winter 2023	Easter 2024	Summer 2024	Winter 2024
Voluntary or community based	47%	50%	45%	42%	47%	50%	53%	36%
Private organisation	40%	42%	45%	39%	45%	37%	33%	55%
School	10%	5%	5%	16%	6%	11%	11%	6%
Local authority	3%	5%	5%	3%	2%	2%	4%	3%

*Note: private organisations appear to have significantly increased in number however this may be because providers were asked which organisation type best describes them for the first time.*

## 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 summer 2022 to winter 2024:

District	Summer 2022	Winter 2022	Easter 2023	Summer 2023	Winter 2023	Easter 2024	Summer 2024	Winter 2024
Malvern Hills	£76,731.80 (8%)	£46,231.54 (17%)	£26,295.02 (11%)	£106,752.80 (11%)	£22,709.00 (9%)	£40,060.00 (18%)	£172,929.87 (19%)	£19,825.00 (9%)
Redditch & Bromsgrove	£301,498.60 (33%)	£57,109.55 (21%)	£58,519.31 (24%)	£291,144 (30%)	£71,512.00 (29%)	£57,524.00 (25%)	£204,715.00 (22%)	£84,497.00 (33%)
Worcester City	£244,123.90 (26%)	£46,231.54 (17%)	£45,415.70 (18%)	£252,324.80 (26%)	£85,312.94 (34%)	£56,320.00 (25%)	£244,581.58 (27%)	£59,790.00 (23%)
Wychavon	£182,664.00 (20%)	£84,304.57 (31%)	£75,618.96 (31%)	£155,276.80 (16%)	£48,466.00 (19%)	£48,110.00 (21%)	£183,530.55 (20%)	£75,732.00 (29%)
Wyre Forest	£119,376.00 (13%)	£38,073.03 (14%)	£38,284.00 (16%)	£164,981.60 (17%)	£22,830.00 (9%)	£25,535.00 (11%)	£106,784.00 (12%)	£8,226.00 (3%)

\*Standalone family passes for NEC & Webbs winter 2024 events totalled £7,404.00 (3%) of funding.

## Schools

For winter 2024 delivery, a total of 11 schools (primary, secondary, special, independent and alternative provision) supported the HAF programme, either as lead providers or as venues. 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.

A challenge posed by school provision can impact the engagement of the older age range of CYP (12-16) – some parents/carers and providers report that returning to school during the holidays for provision is not always suited to all potential HAF attendees and that young people prefer to move away from a formal education setting.

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

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

	<b>Summer 2023</b>	<b>Winter 2023</b>	<b>Easter 2024</b>	<b>Summer 2024</b>	<b>Winter 2024</b>
Secondary schools	25%	9%	14%	16%	11%

	<b>Summer 2023</b>	<b>Winter 2023</b>	<b>Easter 2024</b>	<b>Summer 2024</b>	<b>Winter 2024</b>
Primary schools	9%	10%	7%	10%	4%

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

	<b>Summer 2023</b>	<b>Winter 2023</b>	<b>Easter 2024</b>	<b>Summer 2024</b>	<b>Winter 2024</b>
Special schools	22%	11%	11%	11%	11%

The following table shows the percentage of total Worcestershire schools (secondary, primary and special) operating as lead providers of HAF venues:

	<b>Summer 2023</b>	<b>Winter 2023</b>	<b>Easter 2024</b>	<b>Summer 2024</b>	<b>Winter 2024</b>
Total schools	12%	9%	9%	11%	4%

## HAF Activities & Clubs

Winter 2024 contracted places across districts:

- Worcester City had 1535 places, 26% of the county total
- Malvern Hills had 520 places, 9% of the county total
- Wychavon had 1834 places, 30% of the county total
- Wyre Forest had 426 places, 7% of the county total
- Redditch and Bromsgrove had 1700 places, 28% of the county total

Winter 2024 activities included:

- Drama
- Music
- Coding & programming
- Glow cricket
- Arts & crafts
- Dance
- Forest school
- Multi sports
- Swimming
- Horse riding
- Team building
- Sensory

## Quality Assessment

As part of our commitment to offering a quality provision for winter 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.

For winter 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 good
- Enriching activities was rated excellent
- Nutritional education for CYP was rated good
- Nutritional education for parents or carers was rated good
- Signposting and referrals for families was rated acceptable
- Accessibility and inclusivity was rated good

### Parent Feedback

- 77% of parents/carers surveyed rated their HAF Winter experience as **excellent or very good** – a 12% increase from summer.
- 88% of respondents answered 'yes' to the question *did your child/ren enjoy winter HAF?* – a 15% increase from summer.
- Asked if parents/carers felt HAF winter had a positive impact on their child/ren, 83% answered 'yes' – up 20% from summer.

### A large number parents/carers credited the Winter HAF programme, stating their children's enjoyment of the activities on offer:

- "Without the generosity of the places and schemes, Christmas wouldn't have been half as enjoyable as it was"
- "I know my child is having the best time while I work and that makes me feel better"
- "My daughter is autistic and struggles to engage with group activities, Malvern Cube Youth Cafes have been fantastic in making sure she is able to join in and have fun."

### HAF provided parents/carers with childcare and in general, much needed support during the holidays:

- "I'd be lost without provision being a single working parent."
- "I think this is a backbone for parents and children in need who are suffering financial hardship. The activities with lunches included are a huge help and mentally lift both the parent and child, when times are already tough."
- "If it wasn't for the HAF (programme) I wouldn't be able to continue to work through the holidays."

- “So much stress has been alleviated by your program and I'm so grateful for it.”

**Parents/carers were grateful to get access to activities that they otherwise wouldn't, and with no judgement:**

- “It was lovely to do some stuff together at Redditch United Football Club without feeling judged.”
- “Theatre experience was excellent for my children! We have 5 at home and can't afford to go there with all the family.”
- “This winter the day trips and care packages were incredible. A few of us mums had tears in our eyes knowing that our children were going to be able to join in with activities that usually only other families get to do.”

**Parents and carers expressed gratitude that HAF supports their children to keep learning and remain engaged and interested over the holidays, whilst also maintaining some of the structure of schooling:**

- “She dreads school holidays and we find it hard to keep her positive when she is out of routine. She always looks forward to her time at All Sorts and it's something we can talk about looking forward to. She is an only child and the opportunity to spend time with peers in this way has been invaluable over the years”.
- “My children aren't new to HAF, we have used it at various times over the last few years and we will continue to. It provides so much opportunity and enrichment. They gain not only skills from whatever course or club they go to, but also confidence, the ability to be outgoing and make new friends as well as enhance their communication skills. It has made a big impact on all three of my children including my son who is on the autistic spectrum”.

**Parents/carers noted that home care packages and activity packs were extremely helpful:**

- The care package at the end of the holidays was a real boost to coping with January being a difficult month.

**Planning Ahead – HAF 2025**

Our parent/carer feedback surveys inform our planning and commissioning for HAF 2025 provision. Our latest reports highlight the following elements are key for families accessing HAF:

- Increased provision, particularly in Malvern, Evesham, Wyre Forest and Kidderminster.
- Increased provision for 11+ only sessions and more sessions for older young people.
- More family activities/days out
- Options for hampers/care packages and family activities such as cinema or bowling – particularly for families who live further out from provision, where possible.

- An increase in SEND provision within mainstream HAF delivery, where respite is provided rather than stay & play sessions for parents/carers, where there may be demand.

As part of our commitment to continued growth within the above areas, for Easter 2025 delivery we will introduce the following:

- A growth for 11+ provision, designed in partnership with our local communities and in response to CYP interests and needs, including sessions specifically targeting 11+ as stand alone provision.
- Further increases, where viable, for SEND places within mainstream provision, plus expansion of our SEND-specific activities.
- An allowance for family events/activities in addition to the prioritised face-to-face provision, where possible (subject to funding).
- An allowance for remote provision/care packs in addition to the prioritised face-to-face provision, where possible (subject to funding).