



HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL

Funded by



Department
for Education

Section 1 - LA details

Which local authority is this report about?

Hartlepool

Section 2 – Overview

For the calendar year of 2024, Hartlepool Borough Council received £582,755 to commission and deliver activities and food under the name Hartlepool Holiday Fun as part of the Holiday Activities and Food Programme funded by the Department for Education. Hartlepool Borough Council also added £3,231

Funding was spent as follows:

Administration costs including salaries = £57,359

Activities = £514,526

Other costs including printing, equipment, booking system and marketing = £14,101

To look at the programme in terms of children we have worked with please see the below breakdowns by holiday period:

Easter 2024 = 916 unique children (142 SEND) reached with 2,522 individual attendances

Summer 2024 = 1,616 unique children (201 SEND) reached with 8,985 individual attendances

Christmas 2024 = 603 unique children (102 SEND) reached with 1,098 individual attendances

To offer provision to the children and young people of Hartlepool, we worked with 30 organisations and offered a total of 21,180 spaces across 98 clubs. Organisations worked with for 2024 delivery are:

- Something Positive Solutions CIC
- The Thrive Hive CIC
- St John Vianney RC Primary School
- Rossmere Academy
- Hartlepool United Community Sports Foundation
- HBC Community Hubs
- Belle Vue Sports Community and Youth Centre
- NE Sports Coaching
- HBC Mill House Leisure Centre
- Harbour Support Services
- Lisa McGee Education

- Innterplay Limited
- Live it & Get Active CIC
- Springwell School
- Gamers@Hart
- Eden Academy Trust
- Lets Pretend and Play CIC
- The Sensory Spot CIC
- Aeronauts CIC
- School's Out, Sport's In
- Central Hartlepool Group Mission Team
- The Wharton Trust
- North East Cycling Academy
- St Francis 2000 FC
- Seaton Carew Community Sports Club
- The English Martyrs School and Sixth Form
- Postpartum Matters CIC
- Simon Carson Sports School
- HBC Youth Service
- R&G Coaching Academy

The 2023 Steering Group for Hartlepool Holiday Fun was comprised of the following organisations:

- The Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services as Chair (HBC)
- The HAF Programme Manager (HBC)
- The HAF Programme Coordinator (HBC)
- Two Head Teachers of Hartlepool schools (Golden Flatts Primary School and English Martyrs School and Sixth Form College)
- Representative from the HBC Communications Team (HBC)
- Representative from Public Health (HBC)
- Representative from the SEND community (Community Led Inclusion Partnership)
- Representative from the Hartlepool Food Council (Hartlepower)
- Representatives from the Cleveland Police and Cleveland Fire Authority
- There will also be elected provider representatives from the Local Authority (HBC), private sector (Lisa McGee Education Ltd and the voluntary and community sector (Belle Vue Sports Community and Youth Centre and The Sensory Spot CIC)

2024 saw the first full calendar year using the Holiday Activities booking solution after moving to this system for Christmas 2023. This decision was made due to concerns around over-use of government funding for children not eligible for the programme (i.e. not in receipt of benefits-related free school meals). This did mean that we saw a decline in overall numbers accessing the programme, however it did mean that we were on target for our use of funding to children not automatically eligible for the programme.

We also took the decision to supplement our Christmas 2024 delivery with activity packs and food vouchers. Christmas is nationally acknowledged as being a difficult time for the HAF Programme, and so the Department for Education allowed Local Authorities to supplement provision. As such, a significant amount of time and resources went into the creation of activity packs. These packs were designed by Hartlepool Holiday Fun providers (Eden Academy Trust, Gamers@Hart, Lisa McGee Education, Something Positive Solutions, The Sensory Spot CIC, The Wharton Trust). Packs were then ordered and collated with the help of some providers and some volunteer support. We would like to thank these providers and volunteers for their hard work. The activity packs were very well received across the authority, and this is something we will look to continue again in 2025.

Section 3 – Children and families’ feedback

Below is a video featuring HBC’s Chair of Children’s Services Committee Rachel Creevy visiting one of our providers in Eden Academy Trust during summer 2024:

https://fb.watch/A7Oc_oBsfK/

Below is a video showcasing some of the excellent work that took place over Summer 2024:

<https://fb.watch/A7O4l7KGq4/>

Below is a cross section of feedback from children and families who attended provision in 2024:

“A big thank you to everyone involved in making this a brilliant party for the children. So much for the children to do”

“I might go out on my own with them (children) now I have had practice.” “Normally I stay in.”

“The pantomime was so good. I am going to look on their social media and look at joining the dancing class.” “Mam can I go dancing again?”

“All this food? For us? That is amazing. Thank you so much.”

“This food will help a lot. “

“He loves pretending to be a chef.”

“What a good snack them pizza faces are.” “I will use them.”

“Got him off the Xbox, it is a miracle. It is funny seeing them want to join in.”

“Whoever pays for this is amazing.”

“I loved that I was able to get involved and enjoy the activities with my children this year. “

“I am surprised with how well my child has done and how well behaved he has been.”

Section 4 - Food

All children who attended the programme were provided with at least one healthy and nutritious meal per session they attended. Alongside these “main meals” providers also offered snacks including fruit as well as offering food and nutrition activities as part of the children’s day.

We know that children can often struggle with changing their diets and incorporating healthy food, and this was a challenge that all providers took on. Examples of this would be providers using Quorn mince in a Spaghetti Bolognese and having the discussion with children after the meal explaining what they had eaten. Fruit was a major part of the programme in 2024, with many providers offering food workshops to help children understand the benefits of a varied and healthy diet.

It can be an extremely lengthy process to have a child change their eating habits, but this work has been carried across the year with examples of children trying and liking new, healthy foods being reported across most provisions.

Section 5 – Enriching Activities

We offered an extremely wide range of enrichment activities to try and offer something for everyone. We had forest school activities, general sports courses, mindfulness and wellbeing, play schemes, STEM activities, imaginative play, cycling, art, youth clubs, Pokémon activities, role-playing games, swimming, boxing, music, sensory play, football, trampolining, parties and panto trips, visits from Santa and more. We also offered take home activity packs for Christmas 2024

We had numerous reports of children trying some of these activities during the HAF programme and continuing them into their life beyond the holidays by signing up to regular groups and sessions.

In 2024 we were very provider led in terms of the types of activities we had to offer. We were very lucky because it covered such an excellent array of activities without overlapping and overcrowding an area. As such, we did not need to interfere and request additional provisions or decline any for being too similar.

Section 6 – Physical Activities

All our activities included the minimum standard of 60 minutes of physical activity per session, with most clubs going well above this. The range of physical activity stretched from boxing to meditation, football to dancing and much, much more as detailed in section 5. In most settings, even when children were not engaged in a specific activity aimed at being a physical activity, they were engaging in free play which was doing the same job.

Section 7 – Nutritional Education and the promotion of healthy living/lifestyles

Again, nutritional education is something we require from all of our providers. This varies depending upon space, equipment and level of expertise. Some providers offer specific nutrition workshops where children have a hand in preparing their own meal. Others look at fun and engaging activities such as fruit kebab making or using a smoothie bike to blend their own fruit smoothie. We also have some who use arts and crafts to offer nutritional education with healthy plate activities on offer.

Our families have also been referred to local low and no cost food venues as well as being provided with links to the Hartlepool Food Network.

Section 8 – Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND)

All provisions are accessible to children with special educational needs and disabilities to varying degrees. We worked hard on our previous system as we felt that it did not meet our need in supporting and offering children with SEND needs to access certain provisions. The new system we have in place does not have the option for providers to state that they will not accept children with additional needs.

An area for improvement for 2025 has been identified by our steering group as supporting providers in being even more inclusive to children with additional needs and disabilities. As such we are looking at ways of upskilling our providers during 2025.

Section 9 – Key challenges

The main challenge in 2024 has been attendance. Due to the nature of a free provision, the HAF programme nationally has an issue with “no shows” which is discussed many times throughout the year by those running programmes within local authorities. Our main method for the reduction in impact of these “no shows” is to over book provision. An example of this would be a provider being funded to deliver 20 spaces. They then book spaces for 30 children. We ensure that all required staff to child ratios are adhered to even if all 30 children were to attend, but any “no shows” have less of an impact on the programme. This was done to reduce wasted funding. If, in this instance, the provider has more than 20 attendances, we will then pay them the cost per head of food for any additional children.

Section 10 – Marketing and Communication?

Throughout 2024 we communicated with our families’ using flyers, school apps, advertisements in local written press and Facebook.