



Isle of Wight
Holiday activities and
food programme
Annual report

April 2023 to March 2024



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Welcome

The school holidays can be a particularly difficult time for families due to increased costs, such as food and childcare, coupled with reduced incomes for some parents and carers. The holiday activity and food (HAF) programme offers free activities and nutritious meals to eligible children and young people – those in receipt of income-related free school meals in term time.



The scheme is funded by the Department for Education and, in 2023 was commissioned across the Isle of Wight by Hampshire County Council and Isle of Wight Council's children's services.

The number of eligible children has continued to rise on the Island. The HAF programme is delivered across the three main holiday periods of Easter, summer and Christmas and in locations across the Island.

This report highlights the success of the HAF programme over the past year. It was great to see a much more diverse offer in 2023, expanding the number of schemes and taking advantage of the unique and specialist opportunities available on the Island, including the Brading Roman Villa museum, day trips to local theme parks and making the most of the Island's beautiful beaches.

Summer delivery was a great example of progress where our HAF programme boasted 23 schemes across the Island, up from 13 the previous year. This attracted 2,277 unique children, compared with 1,114 in the Summer of 2022.

We want to enable children and young people to try new things and make new friends and we know it is a welcome support for many families during the school holidays. By taking part in a free holiday club where a nutritious meal is provided, children who might otherwise miss out get to enjoy the same enriching experiences as many of their friends and peers.

The partnership between Hampshire County Council and the Isle of Wight Council came to an end in January 2024, resulting in the HAF programme coming back to the council. This provides an exciting opportunity to build on the improvements and progress of recent years and a chance to work more directly with local HAF activity providers to ensure the Island's vulnerable families receive the very best support.

I would like to thank all our current providers for their hard work and dedication to the scheme.

Councillor Jonathan Bacon
Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Corporate Functions

Background

The holiday activity and food (HAF) programme on the Isle of Wight has gone from strength to strength.



The HAF team commissions providers from across the whole Island to deliver a range of funded, enriching activities during the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays for children and young people who receive benefits-related free school meals. This programme ensures these children and young people have holiday access to healthy food and purposeful activities, helping to reduce the pressure on local families. HAF aims for children and young people to get physically active, learn about healthy behaviours, avoid social isolation, build character, and helps our children and young people gain a better understanding of their community.

During 2023 to 2024, HAF delivered 9,252 spaces to eligible children and young people. A recent parental survey has helped highlight the benefits of children and young people attending HAF:

- **83 per cent** said children and young people made new friends.
- **82 per cent** reported their children and young people had less screen time as a result of attending HAF.
- **81 per cent** said that children and young people tried new activities.

Parents also had the following to say about attending HAF:

- “Just overall great fun and it really helped him stay active and occupied.”
- “Knew my child was at ease and as safe as possible with the staff and friends. If my child enjoyed himself, time after time, then I’m happy.”
- “Very well catered for, my daughter got a hot meal each day and enjoyed the food provided.”

The Isle of Wight Council is lucky to have a dedicated HAF team, who conduct robust monitoring on the quality of all provisions. This ensures all children and young people attending are provided with the very best experiences and only attend high-quality provisions. Our team has continued to develop since the partnership with Hampshire ended and has provided a seamless transition to council’s responsibility. We are lucky to have such a knowledgeable team who work closely with all providers to ensure the Isle of Wight has the right level of support with a range of activities to suit the needs of all children and young people. This is an exciting time for the programme as we are offering an even more bespoke range of activities from summer 2024, ensuring even more children and young people are supported with a range of activities that meet their needs.

I am very proud of all the work the team does for our Island’s children and young people. I look forward to watching the programme develop with 2024 to 2025 being our biggest year yet!

Naomi Carter
Service Director of Education, Inclusion and Access

Programme aims

HAF on the Isle of Wight aims to improve outcomes for children and young people aged five to 16 offering healthy food and, opportunities to participate in a range of enjoyable activities while making new friends during the school holidays.

The HAF programme has six key objectives for children:

- **To eat more healthily over the school holidays.**
- **To be more active during the school holidays.**
- **To take part in engaging and enriching activities which support the development of resilience, character and wellbeing along with wider educational attainment.**
- **To be safe and not to be socially isolated.**
- **To have greater knowledge of health nutrition.**
- **To be more engaged with schools and other local services.**

Research in the Department for Education's HAF Guidance 2024 shows that free holiday clubs have a positive impact on children and young people and work best when they:

- provide consistent and easily accessible enrichment activities;
- cover more than just breakfast or lunch;
- involve children and parents in food preparation;
- use local partnerships and connections, particularly with voluntary and community sector organisations.



Commissioning

Data on the number of children eligible for free school meals (FSM) across the island, is collated and mapped to consider where the children live and go to school. We look to ensure there is provision in areas where there is a high number of eligible children but also consider rural areas to ensure that activities are accessible.

Children eligible for free school meals

Easter 2023 **3,485**

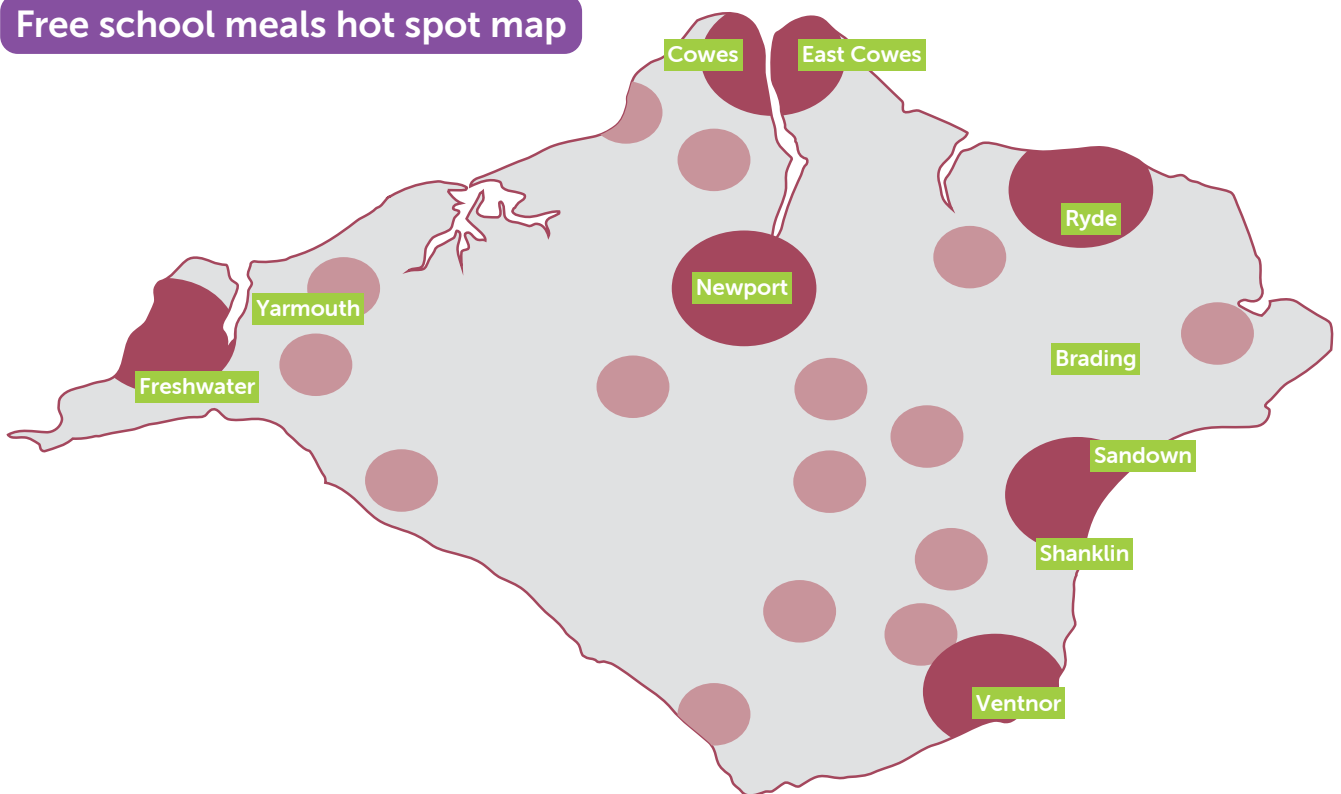
Summer 2023 **3,537**

Christmas 2023 **3,824**

10,844

spaces commissioned

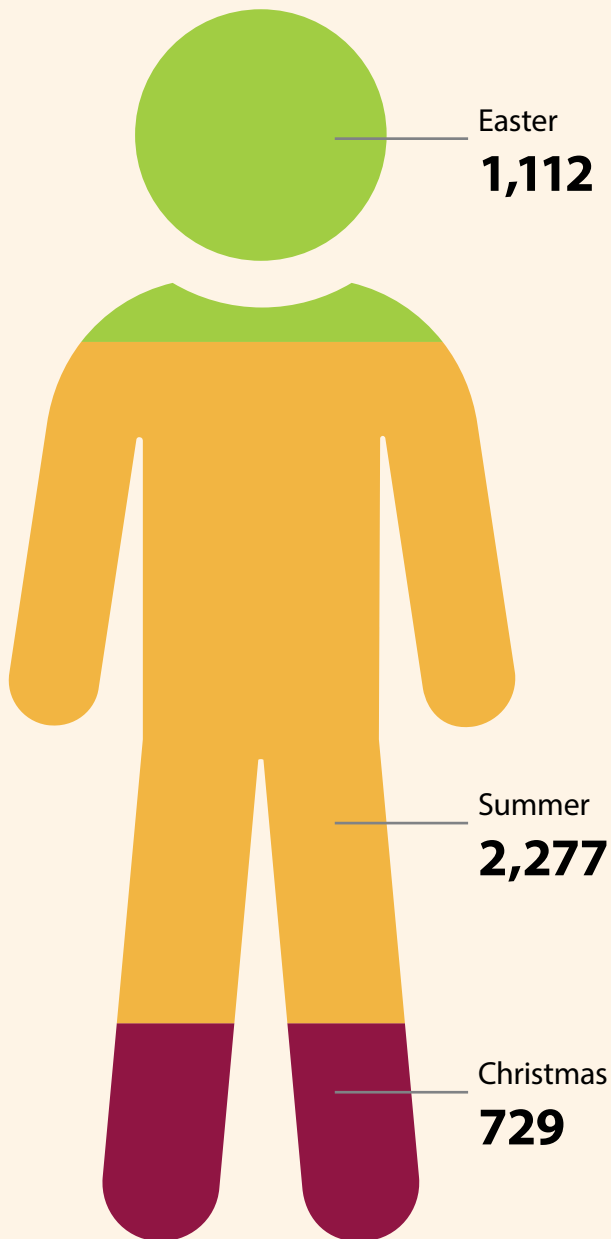
Free school meals hot spot map



Providers who were already part of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight framework were invited to apply to deliver HAF activities. The panel evaluated applications based on their location, price, target audience, and nature of activity. Following panel we filled highlighted gaps through spot purchasing, which allowed us to bring on board new Island-based providers adding to the diverse range of activities delivered for summer 2023.

Headline achievements

Eligible children attending

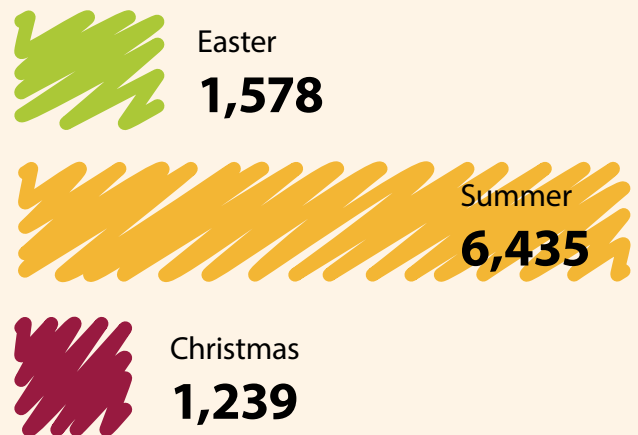


9,252

Hot meals provided annually



Holiday club places attended



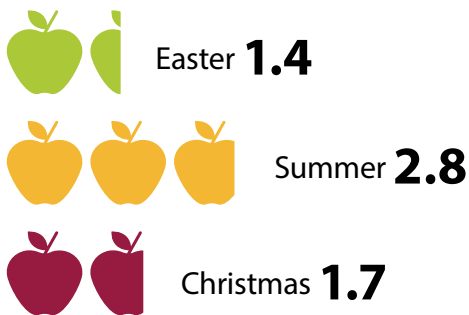
Attendance

85%

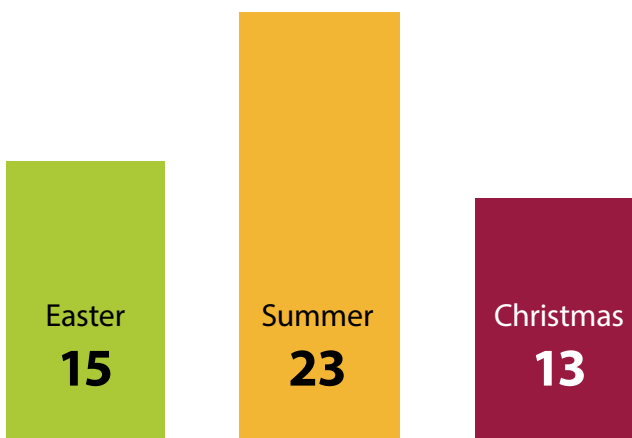
of commissioned spaces were attended

Delivery highlights

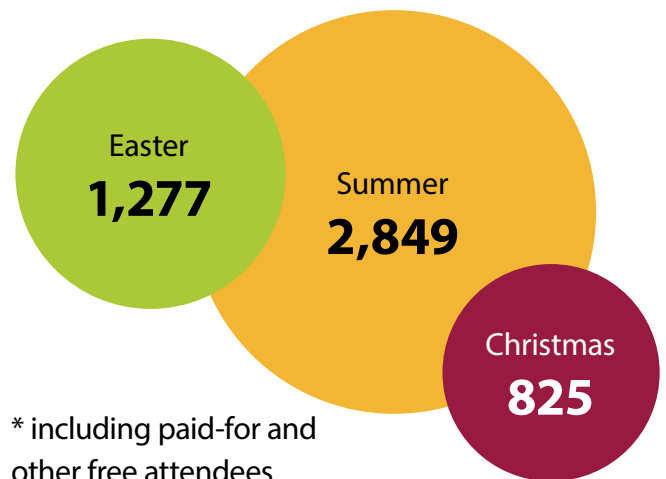
Average sessions attended



Holiday schemes

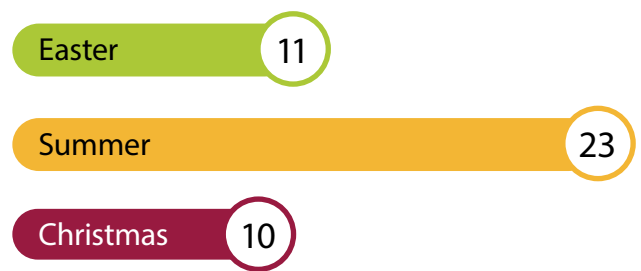


Total attendees*

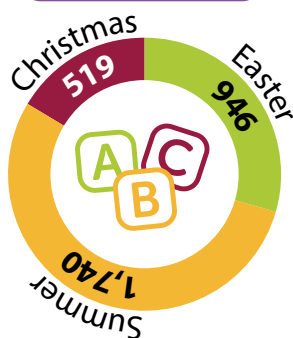


* including paid-for and other free attendees

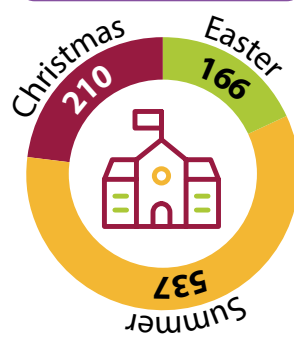
Activity providers



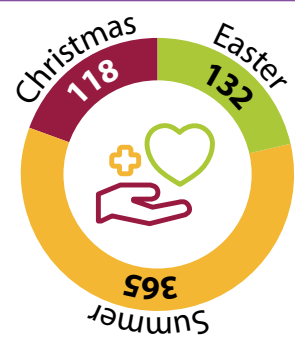
Primary age



Secondary age



Children with SEND



Quality of provision

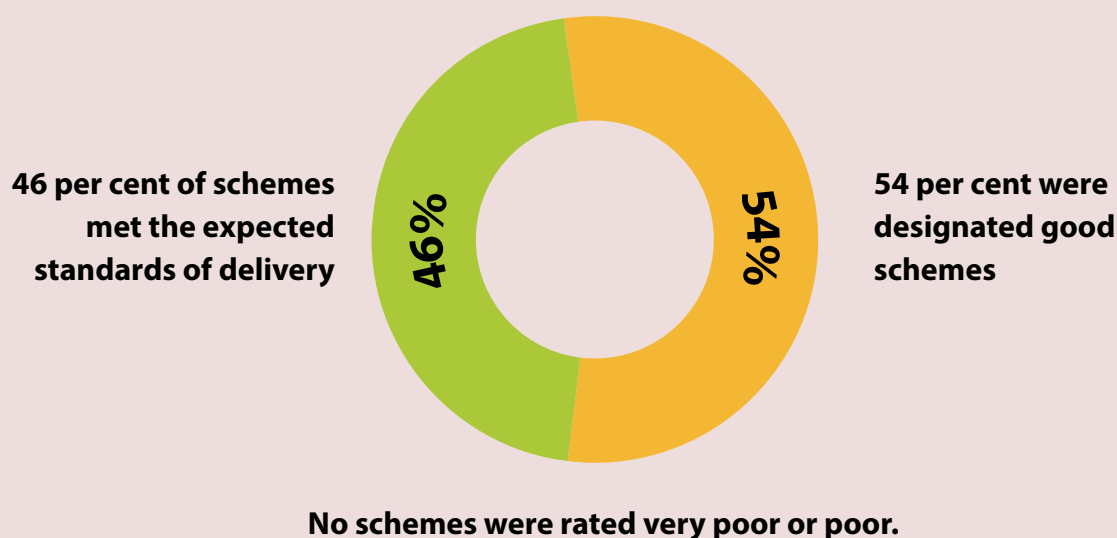
The DfE sets out HAF standards which we must ensure that providers are meeting, these standards cover eight areas:

- Food provision
- Enrichment activities
- Physical activities
- Increasing awareness of healthy eating and lifestyles
- Signposting and referrals
- Environment and sustainability
- Policies and procedures
- Safeguarding

Monitoring checks are completed before and during delivery periods. Providers are scored under each area in a five-point scale, ranging from very poor to very good.

Through monitoring the providers, we can ensure standards are met, determine strengths and areas for development across the standards.

As a combined rating across the standards, this is how Isle of Wight providers and their schemes rated:



Partnerships

HAF partnerships continue to develop and grow on the Isle of Wight with more Island-based providers coming on board and utilising their strong community ties. Mainland providers continue to travel across to the Island to deliver activities and are building local teams for their Island delivery. Providers are linking up with many local community schemes building upon existing and new partnerships.

New partnerships

The HAF team continued to co-ordinate added value activities and facilitated a number of new opportunities, including the Winchester Science Centre bringing their mobile planetarium to Newport, with the town council funding the cost of the ferry.

In addition, the HAF programme provided back to basics printed resources to every HAF scheme over summer to support with children's emotional wellbeing. These resources encouraged providers and parents to support children with the five ways of wellbeing. The resources gained a lot of positive feedback and were well received and used.





Supermarkets and food distributors

HAF providers benefited from partnerships with Tesco, Morrisons, John Lewis and Waitrose partnership, Sainsburys, Asda, Co-Op, Lidl and other local food companies. Supermarkets provided donations of fruit, fruit juice and veg to schemes as well as more holistic food parcels, while Morrisons donated a £100 food voucher to one local scheme, which was used to purchase food and household essentials for participating families.

Sports and leisure organisations

Some of the Island's HAF schemes linked up with local sports providers to deliver workshops and teach the children new skills. For example, a local tennis club donated free memberships to HAF participants as part of their tennis scheme so they can use the facilities after the scheme ends – at no cost. Other sports opportunities and partnerships included paddleboarding, sailing, skateboarding, tennis and boxing activities. Some providers took the children to sports centres to use the facilities there, including swimming and rock wall climbing.

Arts and cultural organisations

One provider linked up with a local museum who came in to deliver a talk about the history of the local area. Partnerships with freelance specialist staff were utilised to deliver bespoke workshops and activities. Local museums were also accessed for outings and trips.

Food and Nutrition

9,592 meals were provided to children and young people attending HAF this year. Participants are also provided with healthy snacks and in some cases breakfast upon arrival.

Meals are sourced in different ways depending on the individual provider, this has included partnering with local food providers to have meals delivered or prepared onsite or partnering with school chefs. Some providers have the resources available to be able to prepare the meals themselves and have included children in the process of making the food.

Providers have also offered cookery sessions as part of the activity programme which has supported children to develop new skills, one of our youth providers has used the chef from a local food provider to deliver a cookery session in a local community kitchen.

Recipes and where possible food parcels are shared with families so they can recreate the meals at home. Some providers have invited parents into the provision to share a meal or take part in an activity which promotes healthy eating.

“Brilliant, my son tries new foods that he wouldn’t at home.”



Signposting



As part of the HAF delivery, providers supported families by signposting or referring to other services and support that are available on the Island. Providers also invited organisations and agencies into their provision to offer support to families at drop off and collection times.

Some of the agencies and organisations signposted to included: Citizens Advice, Living Well Project, Early Help, Barnardo's family centres, local foodbanks, Youth Trust and Jobcentre Plus.

Providers have also linked up with town councils and their community development workers to identify local support available.

Case study

Scallywags Fun Club

Scallywags Fun Club operates every school holiday from a local community building. Following a move of venue last year, the holiday club has gone from strength to strength. The new location opened up new possibilities, such as walking to the local beach and additional spaces to create age specific areas.



As soon as you walk into Scallywags, you can feel the atmosphere; children of all ages are happily engaged in enriching activities, the enthusiastic team dedicate themselves to ensuring children have the best time possible. Children and young people attending are keen to tell you about their experience, in particular what they have been doing, the friendships they have made and how they can't wait to come back. The children and young people are supported to design the programme of activities on offer and explore their interests.

Parents are confident in the service Scallywags offer; in particular parents with children and young people with SEND choose Scallywags as their holiday provider. The large cohort of children with SEND has helped the team to develop their expertise in meeting children's individual needs by accessing additional training, creating individual resources, and adapting the environment daily to support those attending. The new venue has also allowed pop-up sensory areas to be created when needed to support children and young people.

The staff team are committed to a person-centred approach, doing everything they can to ensure an inclusive environment for all. Staff rotas encompass the support children need, for example freeing staff up to welcome children at the gate who may struggle to come in otherwise.

Parents and carers feel a sense of belonging and comfortably spend time talking to the team about their home life, this enables the team to identify possible areas of support. The manager has built a strong network with the family liaison officers from local schools, supporting them to identify children to attend during HAF delivery periods and taking on the support role during this time. They have a detailed understanding of local organisations who can offer support to families. They have built an effective partnership with the food pantry which runs from the same building and offers additional services such as cost of living support. Some parents have been apprehensive to engage with the service, so the Scallywags team have been on hand to walk parents through, introduce them and then spend time with the parents until they feel comfortable on their own.

Case study

JG Sports and Ryde Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club

The immaculately mown grass of a lawn tennis and croquet club might not be your first thought of an ideal venue for hosting a programme for vulnerable children and young people. Visiting this excellent HAF provision over Easter has made us think again.

JG Tennis is a Hampshire-based tennis coach who branched out to the Isle of Wight for Easter HAF. Their model is to partner with a local tennis club and run a collaborative scheme. The HAF scheme was led by a professional tennis coach provided by JG Tennis and a group of volunteers from the club.

The clubhouse provided a meeting place where indoor activities took place between tennis, croquet, games and fitness sessions. Most importantly the clubhouse has excellent catering facilities from where an army of volunteers created hot and wholesome meals. All the volunteers are drawn from the clubs committee members. They are mostly retired professional people who have time and considerable energy to make the most of their local connections.

It was the volunteers who approached the schools to ensure that the scheme was promoted. They also approached island-based businesses to donate or discount local produce for meals and healthy eating activities. Volunteers also met every parent and welcomed them into a space which many, despite living almost next-door, barely knew existed.

Those with awareness of the club, had never thought it would be a space where they would be made welcome. The chair of the committee was at pains to describe the club's efforts to shake off their elitist image. The club's membership is made up of ordinary islanders who are committed to widening the reach of their activities. JG Tennis and the club's volunteers regularly coach young people under the guidance and policies of the Lawn Tennis Association. All coaches be they paid or voluntary receive safeguarding training and are appropriately DBS checked.

The scheme attracted a diverse mix of children including a boy who had recently arrived from the Ukraine. His English was extremely limited but was enough to describe the trauma of his journey to safety. The common language was tennis of which he was excellent, and no doubt finally being able to smash a ball once again was a great release for him. The volunteers were also keen to highlight children who simply loved the food and the conversation. The intergenerational value of the programme was significant. Our experience of visiting HAF sites often involves staff shying away feeling like they were being inspected. In contrast at this site, the thirst for more knowledge from the volunteers was extraordinary. Everyone needed to know what they could do better, and many wanted to offload their eye open experiences from the past few days. One said, "I simply didn't know we had this number of children living with these challenges, it turns out we are surrounded by them."

Communications and marketing

Marketing activity in 2023 included advertising the HAF programme to parents and children for the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays. The local authority communications team sent out press releases to launch the HAF programme each delivery period; information is also sent to schools, town and parish councils and professionals working with families.

Digital adverts were placed on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and across various websites via Google display.

The advertising promoted the programme to the whole of the Isle of Wight, as well as promoting specific providers with spare places to their local areas.

The adverts directed families to the Isle of Wight Family Information Hub webpages where residents could easily search by area or provider and find booking details. In summer 2023, the HAF pages were the amongst the highest viewed pages on the Family Information Hub with 3,535 views in July and August.

Overall, across all the channels the adverts were shown over 350,000 times to the Isle of Wight audience, and generated over 3,600 clicks through to the website.

This year also saw one of our officers do an interview on a local radio station to promote the HAF programme.



Finance and governance

Budget and expenditure

The Isle of Wight Council received grant funding from the Department for Education (DfE) to deliver the holiday activities and food programme on the Island. This grant funding is calculated based on the numbers of children eligible for and in receipt of benefits related free school meals on the Isle of Wight. The funding is provided to cover:

- provision of free holiday places;
- coordination of the programme locally.

The DfE recognises that there are administrative costs associated with setting up and running the holiday activities and food programme. As such, local authorities are able to use up to 10 per cent of their total allocation to cover such costs. In addition, funding can also be used to purchase equipment for the programme. The amount available to spend on equipment is limited to a maximum of two per cent of the overall programme expenditure. The Isle of Wight was awarded a Department for Education grant of £432,230 for the 2023 to 2024 financial year.



Department for Education grant	£432,230
Face-to-face holiday club provision	£392,177
Publicising the scheme to eligible families and other communications	£540
Management and administration of the programme by the LA	£36,773
Other costs (e.g. translations, transport, provider staff training, booking systems etc.)	£2,740
End of Year position	£432,230

Governance and operations

During 2023 the programme was sited within Hampshire and Isle of Wight Children's Services and overseen by a structured governance arrangement that included the following groups:

- Isle of Wight Children's Trust board (steering group).
- HAF programme board (management group).
- HAF delivery board (operations group).

Programme steering group

Isle of Wight Children's Trust board is the strategic group that 'owns' the programme and has included the Hampshire County Council assistant director of children's services, as the senior responsible owner (SRO) of the HAF programme, and senior representatives of strategic partners.

Programme management

The programme board is the management group and includes the assistant director of children's services as the SRO, HAF programme manager and other senior managers. The role of this board is to provide strategic guidance and direction, champion the project at a senior level and act as the strategic decision-making body, providing direction and resolving issues escalated to it by the project board.

Programme preparations

The delivery board manages the day-to-day operations of the programme and is a cross-functional team responsible for the delivery of projects to time, cost and quality criteria. This board comprises workstream leads and the programme manager.

Moving forward

At the end of January 2024 the partnership between Hampshire County Council and the Isle of Wight Council came to an end, the HAF scheme now sits within Isle of Wight Council and a steering group of local representatives has been formed for the 2024 to 2025 delivery period.

Thank you

We'd like to say a big thank you to our activity providers for 2023 to 2024:

ActiveMe 360

Aspire Ryde

Brading Community Partnership

CM Sports UK Ltd

CM Foundation

Football Fun Factory

Globefit Ltd

Island Riding Centre

JG Tennis Coaching Ltd

John Cattle's Skate Club C.I.C

Network Ryde

**Personal Best Education
(Mountbatten School Services Ltd)**

Ryde Lawn, Tennis & Croquet Club

Sallywags Fun Club

Starlight Academy

Theatre Educational

West Wight Nursery

YMCA Shanklin Nursery and Day Camps



Appendix A

HAF quotes from Isle of Wight 2023 provision

“Amazing opportunity for my children, they love being around the horses and making friends with all the other children.”

“My son loves coming here and seeing all the horses, he doesn’t stop talking about it when he gets home!”

“My children have ADHD and Autism and this experience has been really good for their mental health, they come home really positive.”

“He absolutely loves the tennis camps!”

“Having a camp so close to home has helped us so much.”

“My son absolutely loved the provision and has asked how many more days he can come.”

“My child would have had nothing if it hadn’t been for this.”

“Her sister is so disabled we cannot get out as a family, ever.”

“Their siblings have severe special needs and take up all my time and energy as a single mum. Thank you so much for everything you have done for my son and daughter.”

“She is just such a different child now and bursting with confidence.”

“We’re so grateful to you. I cannot get about any more and could never give my kids any of this.”

“You’ve made such a different to our summer.”

“I’m disabled and my son is a young carer. Without this he would have had no summer for himself at all.”

“thank you so much for everything. My children have experienced loads of things they could never do without this and we’re really grateful.”

“This programme is amazing, my children love coming out mixing with people and also the ponies.”

“My child said it was really fun and got to meet new people.”

“The boys absolutely loved the holiday club. We weren’t sure how they would get on with it as they can be quite anxious, but both were really excited every time they came home.”

“Just want to say thank you F had such a good day and hasn’t stopped talking about he loved it all and can’t wait to come again. Such a good idea.”

“She loved it so much he was exited to go every day.”

“H has honestly had the best time. We can’t thank you all enough. You’ve done amazing.”

“K’s had an amazing time. it got him out of the house, he’s had fun and you guys have been amazing!”

“It was brilliant time for my child, thank you very much.”

“you don’t know how much you have helped me this summer caring for my children, i couldn’t have got through this without your wonderful team.”

“we love the amazing activities you have on offer my children have loved it and learnt so much, thank you.”

“This is the third time that my daughter has attended, and I am always impressed. Ted put so much effort into every part of the scheme, from programming to staff and food. My daughter loves it and replays at home everything that she has experienced. This year the most impressive moment was listening to her share her poem and teaching us ‘calm yoga’ at home. She was so confident that she decided to put in an extra spontaneous performance at the end, in the parents showcase. Well done, we need holiday education. Keep up the good work.”

‘Fantastic as always, staff a pleasure to deal with. My children always have a fantastic time. Thank you.’

‘Very good. P has always loved being here and has a great time learning to dance, and making new friends.’

‘We loved it. (Mum) S and H have had a great time, I have noticed a huge difference in their confidence this summer. So proud. Thank you to all the lovely staff and for the cooking, food demonstration.’

Parent from Aspire Ryde scheme – “without the Food and Fun provision they would have been unable to feed their children over the Christmas Holidays.”

Parent from Brading Community Partnership scheme, “Thank you for including my daughter. I’m so grateful that you didn’t refuse her because she is registered blind. She’s had an amazing time.”

Parent from Brading Community Partnership scheme, “Thank you for understanding. This has been a difficult time for us and I’m so grateful.”

For more information, visit:

www.iow.gov.uk/HolidayActivities

Get in touch

holidayactivities@iow.gov.uk

