

# HAF Worcestershire Summer Delivery Report 2025

## Introduction

The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme is funded by the Department for Education (DfE). It began as a trial in 2018 and, following its success, was rolled out nationally to every Local Authority in England in 2021/22.

Since 2021, Worcestershire County Council (WCC) has commissioned Sutton Croft Ltd to oversee the grant funding and delivery of the local programme, known as HAF Worcestershire.

The programme supports children and young people aged 5–16 who receive benefits-related Free School Meals (FSM). There is also some flexibility to include other vulnerable groups, such as families who are 'just about managing'.

HAF Worcestershire has grown significantly since its launch. It now works with holiday club providers, schools, charities, community groups, and other partners to deliver a diverse, inclusive, and flexible programme for eligible children.

## The Aim of HAF

- Tackle holiday hunger by providing access to nutritious meals.
- Promote health and wellbeing through physical activity and education around healthy lifestyles.
- Support social development by offering safe, fun, and inclusive opportunities to connect with others.
- Ease financial pressure on families who may struggle with the extra costs of school holidays.
- Strengthen community support by working with schools, clubs, charities, and local organisations.

The aim of the programme is to reduce pressure for low-income families during school holidays by offering free access to activity clubs that offer physical activity, enriching activities, healthy food, and support, to enable young people to stay connected and benefit from positive experiences during the school holidays.

## Eligibility Process

HAF Worcestershire uses a central booking portal developed in collaboration with BookingLab. Children and Young People (CYP) must be verified 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

### **Summer 2025 – Programme Overview**

During the summer holidays, 63 providers were commissioned to deliver HAF across more than 100 venues, including trips. The programme was designed to serve children and young people across the county, with places available in both SEND-specialist and SEND-mainstream settings.

The core offer followed the DfE's 4x4x4 model: four days of activities, four hours per day (10:00–14:00), over a minimum of four weeks. Given that the school holidays last six weeks, many providers extended their programmes beyond four weeks where possible.

HAF offered a wide range of activities, clubs, workshops, and visits, including:

- Water-based activities: kayaking, stand-up paddleboarding, swimming, and water safety sessions
- Arts and performance: theatre, stage management, technical production, and performing arts workshops
- Sports and outdoor pursuits: activity camps, forest school, pony riding, yoga, mindfulness, coding and programming
- Trips and experiences: theme parks, animal parks, cinemas, ice skating, bowling, Ninja Warrior courses, farm visits, and educational/museum trips
- Family-inclusive activities: some sessions allowed parents, carers, or siblings to join.

SEND provision included specialist sessions such as sensory and soft play, adapted bike riding, and small-group trips to accessible venues. Mainstream SEND places were also offered to ensure inclusivity while providing four-hour childcare.

New or alternative activities were piloted to engage new audiences, explore different interests, and specifically target young people aged 12–16. Long-standing HAF partners delivered smaller youth groups alongside their regular provision to reach more families, including those new to the programme, and to better understand the needs of older attendees.

Provision mapping continued to identify gaps, guiding focus on underserved areas. Longer-term strategies include partnering with new venues, schools, or community groups, expanding existing providers, and fostering collaboration to grow the programme.

SEND provision remains a high-priority objective, ensuring accessible places within mainstream activities and, where needed, specialist sessions. The programme works closely with the Groups, Activities & Short Breaks offer, using feedback from parents and carers to guide commissioning decisions.

Overall, HAF Worcestershire maintains a consistent, high-quality programme, delivering a wide variety of enriching experiences, supported by trusted community partners. Feedback continues to reflect strong satisfaction with both the breadth and quality of activities offered.

## **Accessing HAF**

HAF supported 2526 individual CYP during summer delivery – 75% were primary-aged children and 25% secondary-aged young people. The average number of days attended was 6.

6815 children and young people (6302 of which receive FSM) are now registered and verified on the HAF booking site, ensuring instant access to places when bookings are live. At Easter 2025, approximately 5891 children and young people were registered and approved – this summer therefore had an increase of 16% of verified eligible children.

Registrations are encouraged year-round, via parent & carer newsletters, school bulletins and targeted communications, and via the HAF social channel. The number of registrations for new families accessing HAF continues to increase, including via providers direct – this often includes families who may need additional support in accessing the programme or are unable to book via the HAF site.

## **Attendance**

A total of 24006 places were made available for HAF activities across Worcestershire.

86% of places offered were booked.

70% of places were booked and attended.

Overall (including face-to-face provision and day trips), 24006 places were offered, 20765 places were booked, and 16815 places were attended.

Places attended breakdown:

- 28% of places were attended by children with SEND

- 21% of places were attended by secondary-aged children
- 79% of places were attended by primary-aged children

## Places Attended by Age & SEND Characteristics

The following table breaks down places attended by the age and SEND characteristics of the child that attended each place:

	Primary-aged	Secondary-aged
Non-SEND	9989	2124
SEND	3362	1340
Total places attended	13351	3464

## Individual Children and Young People

### Overview of Summer CYP

Key stats:

- 89% of CYP were eligible for FSM
- 75% of CYP were primary-aged
- 25% of CYP were secondary-aged
- 30% of CYP had SEND
- 123 CYP were from refugee families

The following table shows the breakdown of individual CYP accessing summer 2025 by FSM and SEND:

	Primary-aged	Secondary-aged
FSM & Non-SEND	1298	336
FSM & SEND in universal settings	359	142
FSM & SEND in SEND specialist provision	60	47
Non-FSM & Non-SEND	85	42
Non-FSM & SEND in universal settings	89	31
Non-FSM & SEND in SEND specialist provision	16	21
Total attendees	1907	619

## **Programme Strengths – Feedback & Continuous Improvement**

HAF Worcestershire continues to receive positive feedback for the variety of activities, the quality of provision, and the consistency of trusted providers who create a safe and welcoming environment.

Feedback from parents, carers, and children/young people informs commissioning decisions for each delivery period. Regular engagement through social media, newsletters, and community partners ensures the programme meets local needs, identifies gaps, and responds to emerging trends to expand reach.

In collaboration with providers, the programme maintains a commitment to:

- Delivering high-quality provision and following best practice
- Being responsive to family feedback and evolving programme objectives
- Supporting youth provision and the development of a 'HAF Legacy'
- Encouraging returning families and CYP to participate
- Refreshing communications with schools to increase engagement through signposting, content sharing, booking support, or delivering HAF activities directly or via external providers
- Improving SEND inclusion in mainstream provision, including additional support staff and enhanced training
- Continuing to develop SEND specialist groups and provision
- Reviewing and mapping HAF locations to identify and address gaps
- Collaborating with external workshops or educational providers to enrich the HAF offer
- Supporting families facing barriers, such as limited internet access, learning difficulties, or literacy challenges

## **Budget and Resource Management**

Expenditure is carefully monitored to ensure value for money while maintaining high-quality provision. Budgets are regularly reviewed to identify potential savings without compromising service. Unused places are minimised through dynamic place management, with funds reallocated to meet proven demand.

## **Strategic Planning and Future Focus**

HAF Worcestershire maintains a commitment to strategic, long-term planning, ensuring activities offer a diverse and forward-thinking range that meets emerging interests and supports family needs. This approach helps the programme continue to grow, adapt, and deliver meaningful experiences for children, young people, and their families.

## Providers

### Key stats:

- A total of 63 providers delivered this summer (some running multiple venues or expanded programmes, such as a SEND-specific provision in addition to mainstream)
- Over 100 HAF venues (including trips)
- Providers include;
  - Voluntary or community- based organisations
  - Private organisations
  - Schools
  - Local Authority

## Funding Allocation

Funding allocation reflects the percentage of FSM eligibility.

The following table breaks down grant funding allocation by district, from Easter 2024 to summer 2025:

District	Easter 2024	Summer 2024	Winter 2024	Easter 2025	Summer 2025
Malvern Hills	£40,060.00 (18%)	£172,929.87 (19%)	£19,825.00 (9%)	£32,856.00 (14%)	£144,650.00 (15%)
Redditch & Bromsgrove	£57,524.00 (25%)	£204,715.00 (22%)	£84,497.00 (33%)	£58,694.00 (25%)	£265,413.00 (27%)
Worcester City	£56,320.00 (25%)	£244,581.58 (27%)	£59,790.00 (23%)	£65,820.00 (28%)	£202,697.00 (21%)
Wychavon	£48,110.00 (21%)	£183,530.55 (20%)	£75,732.00 (29%)	£51,495.00 (22%)	£185,751.00 (19%)
Wyre Forest	£25,535.00 (11%)	£106,784.00 (12%)	£8,226.00 (3%)	£20,040.00 (9%)	£135,229.00 (14%)

*\*2% funding allocated to Severn Arts for workshop deliveries across the county for summer.*

## HAF in Schools

A total of 30 schools (primary, secondary, special, independent, and alternative provision) supported the HAF programme, either as lead providers or as venues.

Lead providers manage the full HAF delivery in-house, while schools acting as venues host external providers who deliver activities on-site. School involvement provides a range of benefits:

- Reduces the school's workload for holiday provision coordination, allowing a combined group of paid and HAF activities.
- Offers on-site consistency for pupils between school terms and holidays.

- Provides paid opportunities for teaching assistants during school holidays.
- Improves communication between providers and schools, enhancing support for children and young people (CYP).
- Ensures site familiarity and accessibility within local communities.
- Schools are trusted, safe, and secure venues, with staff who understand local children and their specific needs or challenges.
- Provides access to high-quality resources, facilities, and catering areas, supporting hot meal provision.
- Supports the attainment and development of pupils, particularly those who may struggle in formal education, by offering a safe, familiar setting with teacher support.

A noted challenge of school-based provision is engagement with older CYP (12–16 years). Some parents, carers, and providers report that returning to a school environment during holidays may not suit all attendees, as older young people often prefer settings outside of formal education.

## **District Breakdown**

Contracted places across districts:

- Worcester City had 4951 places, 21% of the county total
- Malvern Hills had 3190 places, 13% of the county total
- Wychavon had 4607 places, 19% of the county total
- Wyre Forest had 3127 places, 13% of the county total
- Redditch and Bromsgrove had 8131 places, 34% of the county total

## **Activities included:**

- Drama/theatre/performing arts (including play writing, set & prop design, stage management & technical set up)
- Music workshops
- Coding & programming/STEM
- Arts & crafts
- Dance
- Forest school
- Multi sports
- Football camps
- Swimming
- Water sports
- Outdoor pursuits (including climbing, orienteering, archery, bush craft/skills)
- Water safety sessions
- Horse riding
- Team building
- Sensory & soft play
- Educational visits – museums/exhibitions/farms
- Youth cafes & clubs
- Personal development, including new skills, leadership, project management & teamwork

- Community projects
- Day trips – local leisure venues, themed events, theme parks, animal parks

## Quality Assessment

Continued commitment to high-quality provision is measured and monitored against the following:

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.

## Family Feedback

After each delivery period, parent and carer surveys are sent to all registered families. The feedback gathered provides a comprehensive view of the programme, helping to highlight successes and identify areas for improvement from both the family and child/young person perspective.

The headline stats:

### *Quality*

- 83% of respondents rated the summer programme overall as Excellent or Very Good, a 2% improvement from summer 2024. 83% of parents also stated their child either “absolutely loved it” or “really enjoyed it.”
- 96% of respondents rated the staff delivering HAF activities as Excellent or Very Good, up 15% from summer 2024.

- 65% of respondents rated the quality of food provided as Excellent or Very Good, whilst 17% rated as satisfactory or poor.

### *Social Impact & Wellbeing*

- 86% of parents said that the summer programme had a positive impact on their child’s wellbeing. When parents were asked about ways in which HAF had positively impacted their children, they reported:
  - o 68% said their child engaged in regular physical activity during activities
  - o 64% said their child increased in confidence, both socially and academically
  - o 62% said their child made new friends and enjoyed greater interaction with peers
  - o 61% said their child benefitted from routine of attending HAF sessions
  - o 49% said their child had discovered new interests and hobbies
  - o 42% said they noticed improved moods
  - o 45% said their child seemed more emotionally regulated
  - o A third of parents noted their child seemed more ready to return to school in September
- 81% said their own wellbeing had improved, with less financial pressure, less stress and more time to work, rest or support other children/family members as needed.

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Summer 2024</b>	<b>Summer 2025</b>
<i>Rating summer HAF overall as excellent or very good</i>	81%*	83%
<i>Rating staff as excellent or very good</i>	81%*	96%
<i>Rating food as excellent or very good</i>	65%*	65%
<i>Summer HAF positively impacted child’s wellbeing</i>	77%*	86%
<i>Parents received the right amount of comms</i>	65%	74%
<i>Would use HAF in the future</i>	86%	94%

## **How is HAF Used?**

While HAF continues to benefit many families who return year-on-year, expanding reach and raising awareness among families not currently accessing the programme remains a key priority.

To better understand how families engage with HAF, the survey asked whether respondents were new to the programme, regular users, or booked activities on an ad hoc basis, and whether specific activities of interest were offered

- 98% of respondents have either used HAF since its inception or have wanted to
- 84% had used HAF prior to summer 2025
- 85% reported they had at least one child attending HAF activities this summer
- Two-thirds of families (65%) used other types of holiday provision over the summer in addition to HAF e.g., family holiday, paid childcare, and day trips. This may indicate that for a third of Worcestershire FSM families, HAF is the only organised holiday provision their children accessed this summer.
- Most respondents said they need childcare or holiday clubs for most of the summer holidays. Over half of parents need provision for the full six weeks. Many others need 2-4 days per week spread through the holidays, while others needed childcare cover for 4-5 weeks. A few reported variable needs depending on work, holidays or shared care, and a small number also talked about provision in other school holidays.
- 94% of all respondents reported they would use Worcestershire's HAF programme in the future and 90% said they would recommend to friends or parents.

## The HAF Impact

Below are some of the examples received of parent/carer and child feedback following the Summer HAF delivery:

- *"The activities vary throughout the holidays, my child is safe and happy, and he's always excited to come back the next day!"— Parent*
- *"We always look for activities with this provider first. I feel safe knowing my daughter is well cared for, enjoying a range of outdoor activities—including water sports—spending time with friends, eating well, and getting plenty of fresh air. She's kept far busier than I could manage at home, which allows me to go to work and removes the financial strain, as I couldn't otherwise afford paid holiday places or have alternative childcare."— Parent*
- *"My son is very high-energy and sometimes struggles at school—he can be easily distracted or more interested in doing his own thing, which often puts him in the 'low-level disruptive' bracket and affects his confidence and engagement in the classroom. At HAF clubs, he responds really well to the informal setting and engages fully with activities ranging from sports and technology to music workshops. He comes home excited about his day, eager to show me what he's made or built, or to celebrate achievements like certificates from sports tournaments."— Parent*

- *"As a single parent, I worry about finances and keeping my children entertained and fed over the long summer holidays. We can't afford holidays or trips to the zoo or theme parks, and I can only manage part-time work to support them. HAF gives my children the chance to have fun while easing my financial stress, knowing they've eaten well, had a good day, and I don't have to keep saying 'no' to trips or new toys."*- Parent
- *"Amazing opportunities for kids that wouldn't necessarily have an option to do these activities otherwise. Takes a lot of stress off for the holidays." - Parent*
- *"Such a great selection of activities to fit all." – Parent*
- *"Fantastic forest school. Both my children attend and have done for many years now, all because of HAF. They are now part of the furniture. It's been a lifeline; they visited 10 times during summer." - Parent*
- *"We live on the border of glos /worcs | Children in worcs school with ehcp. The provision is far superior to glos -much more appropriate/ knowledgable places & staff. They have never felt able to attend previously but loved it this summer." – Parent*
- *"It has been extremely refreshing to have a provider with the skills and expertise to provide daily activities for my son, who is on the higher level of autism." – Parent*
- *"HAF saved the six-week holiday for my son – and took away the mum guilt." – Parent*
- *"Overall, my daughter was happier, had more confidence, and met new friends."- Parent*
- *"Thank you for providing this service, it means more to families than you think :)" - Parent*
- *"Amazing service, fantastic range of venues and activities. Thank you!!" - Parent*
- *"Really appreciate the things you do for my daughter she loves them. Also gives her some time to try new things and be round other children during the holidays." – Parent*

## Programme Development

In response to feedback from families, schools, and community partners, the following objectives provide clear guidance for the ongoing delivery of HAF:

- Expand provision, particularly in Malvern and Wyre Forest.
- Increase 11+ only sessions and offer more activities for the upper age range.
- Provide more family activities and seasonal days out.
- Offer hampers or care packages, especially for families living in rural areas (seasonal).
- Deliver age-appropriate activities for 11+, such as cinema trips, bowling, or other leisure opportunities.
- Increase SEND provision within mainstream HAF delivery, focusing on respite support rather than stay-and-play sessions for parents/carers.
- Extend hours to better support working parents.
- Continue to monitor cost per place and value for money.
- Review catering options, with a view to improving offer within budget constraints and with consideration toward dietaries/allergies, preference, etc.

As part of our commitment to continued growth within the above areas, summer delivered:

- Expanded 11+ provision, developed in partnership with local communities and in response to children and young people's interests and needs, including stand-alone sessions trialled across Wychavon, Redditch, and Bromsgrove.
- Increased capacity for existing youth provision across Worcestershire.
- Increased length of provision where possible, with some settings upwards of five hours or delivering during prime working hours.
- Further expanded SEND places within mainstream provision, alongside growth of SEND-specific activities where feasible.
- Provided family events and activities in addition to core face-to-face provision, where demand is demonstrated.
- A wider range of activities, experiences, and off-site opportunities that may otherwise have been inaccessible.
- Continued improvement to place management, reminding parents to manage bookings, notify of cancellations, and re-offer returned places via the site or waiting lists.
- Robust management of funded places, confirming attendance before releasing additional places or budget to meet demand.
- A refresh of the programme to minimise oversaturation of specific areas or activities.
- Increased monitoring of uptake and demand for niche activities - increasing provision where interest is shown.

- Strengthened engagement with schools and local communities, promoting HAF activities via WCC communication channels, social media, newsletters, and targeted marketing.

## **Winter 2025 Planning**

The core winter offer will again follow the Department for Education's 4x4 guidance (four hours per day, four days per week). Where feasible, extended hours will be included to better support working parents, and providers will be encouraged—within budget—to further extend their offers, either through increased provision where demand is clear, or via take-home hampers and activity packs to sustain families during the holidays and beyond.

Parent and carer surveys highlight that the winter months can be particularly challenging, with rising costs and limited opportunities to keep children and young people entertained and safe, especially during shorter daylight hours and inclement weather.

Hampers, activity packs, and family events remain a high priority for winter delivery, providing practical support while adding seasonal cheer alongside face-to-face delivery. Family events will be offered across Worcestershire, with a focus on pantomimes, theatre performances, seasonal events, and themed trails.

While the programme continues to welcome new providers to enrich Worcestershire's diverse, inclusive, and accessible HAF offer, it also maintains a strong commitment to long-standing partners who deliver consistent, ongoing support. This includes wraparound care and signposting that extend beyond a single day's activities. Strengthening training, awareness, qualifications, and support for SEND families remains a key priority, ensuring robust measures are in place to uphold the programme's safety, wellbeing, and accessibility goals.

Planning for winter is already underway, with the full programme launching four weeks before the school holidays. Families can look forward to a festive range of activities designed to engage, entertain, and create lasting memories, raising a sense of community throughout the season.