**Rotherham Healthy Holiday Report**

**Introduction (Message from AD)**

Our Healthy Holidays programme provides welcome opportunity for children, young people and families to experience fun activities across the borough, whilst having a focus on being ‘healthy, active and happy’. 2023/24 has been another successful year of delivery which has seen children engage in a wide range of fun activities. This has included sporting activities such as football, rugby, boxing, dancing, swimming, BMX and parkour alongside other opportunities such as arts and crafts, singing, acting and new for this year, the Wentworth Woodhouse Film Club. This year Rotherham Healthy Holidays commissioned a total of 136 activities that were available across the Borough, with over 6,500 children attending!

I am delighted to have had the opportunity to visit some of the activities this year and see first-hand the positive impact such activities have on our children. I was also able to attend a showcase event, where all providers came together to recognise and celebrate the impact of the wide and varied offer for children in Rotherham. It was overwhelming to hear children’s experiences and the real difference the opportunities are making for our children. This is reflected on later in the report in the case studies. For parents/carers, the provisions offer peace of mind that their children are having fun, meeting new friends and being provided with a meal, at a time when a lot of families are continuing to feel financial pressures.

Finally, and most importantly, there are a large number of people to thank. Thank you to all the children and their families who have put their all into participating in a range of activities; Early Help colleagues who have coordinated the service provision; colleagues from across Council departments who have supported the programme; our schools; voluntary and community sectors partners, and an extra special thank you to providers and volunteers who made it all possible and afforded children fun filled memories.

Kelly White

Acting Assistant Director

Early Help and Business Support



**Rotherham Healthy Holidays**

The Rotherham Healthy Holidays programme is funded by the Department for Education’s Holiday Activity and Food Programme.

The programme was developed as it was recognised that school holidays can create pressure points for some families due to increased costs, such as food and childcare, and reduced incomes. For some children that can lead to a holiday experience gap, where they are less likely to access out of school activities and more likely to experience ‘unhealthy holidays’ in terms of nutrition and physical health and are more likely to experience social isolation.

Rotherham Council received £1,247,220 for the 2023-2024 school holidays (Easter, Summer, Winter). The Council allocated this funding across the holiday periods through issuing small grants to various organisations who applied to run holiday activities. Organisations from the public, private, voluntary, community and faith sectors are all eligible to apply, as are schools.

The Department for Education allows for a small proportion of the funding to be allocated to other vulnerable groups of children and young people, as well as those eligible for benefit-related free school meals. For 2023 Rotherham’s eligibility cohorts were:

* Benefit Related Free School Meals
* Children in Care
* Electively Home Educated Children
* Asylum Seekers
* Any child receiving support from the Early Help Service
* Any child receiving support from Children’s Social Care
* Children accessing a Pupil Referral Unit or Alternative Provision
* Ukrainian Refugees accessing the Home for Ukraine Scheme

The programme has been supported by various departments across the council and community partners, who have come together to develop and steer an effective programme.

These have included:

* Early Help Service
* School Meals Service
* Procurement
* Education
* Social Supermarkets
* Business Support
* Elective Home Education Service
* Voluntary Action Rotherham
* Voluntary Sector Providers
* Public Health
* Leisure Services
* Schools

Aims

# The aim of the programme is to make free places available to children eligible for benefits-related free school meals, and other identified vulnerable groups, from Foundation Stage 2 to Year 11. The places are available for at least four hours a day, four days a week and for six weeks a year. This would cover four weeks in the summer and a week’s worth of provision in each of the Easter and Christmas/Winter holidays.

We want to help 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 their wider education attainment.
* To be safe and not to be socially isolated.
* To have greater knowledge and understanding of food, nutrition, and other health-related issues.
* To be more engaged with school and other local services.

Programme Standards

The clubs meet the following programme standards:

* Healthy meals: holiday clubs must provide at least one healthy meal a day and must meet the School Food Standards throughout the day.
* Enriching activities: holiday clubs must provide fun and enriching activities that provide children with opportunities to develop or consolidate skills or knowledge.
* Physical Activity: clubs must also provide at least 1 hour of physical activities which meet the Physical Activity Guidelines on a daily basis.
* Increasing awareness of healthy eating, healthy lifestyles, and positive behaviours: holiday clubs must incorporate helping children understand more about the benefits of healthy lifestyle and behaviours in a stigma-free environment.
* Signposting and referrals: clubs must be able to provide information, signposting or referrals to other services and support that would benefit the children who attend their provision and their families.

Policies and procedures: clubs must be able to demonstrate and explain their safeguarding arrangements and have relevant and appropriate policies and procedures in place. Where appropriate, clubs must also be compliant with the Ofsted requirements for working with children.

Marketing

Rotherham Healthy Holidays is promoted in various of ways ranging from physical flyer to digital materials e.g., newsletters, council social media and webpage.

Programme information and eligible unique reference numbers are distributed to schools to share with eligible families.

The programme is regularly communicated with internal and external partnerships who are supporting eligible families.

For 2023 we worked closely with our digital team to improve the website and make it more user friendly and appealing, you can visit the new website via <https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/healthy-holidays>

**2023 – 2024 Delivery**

This year Rotherham Healthy Holidays commissioned a total of 136 activities that were available across the Borough, with over 6,500 children attending.

We supported providers to enhance their provision for 2023-2024, whether this be in house or working in partnership with other organisations. This led to activities such as circus skills, plumbing workshops, first aid and music to be part of the varied offer. These activities supported children to learn new skills ranging from developing their own music track to plumbing a sink. The Winter holiday differed as we commissioned pantomimes, festive family days and food hampers in addition to standard programme.

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Schools Involved  
*\*Partnered or delivered.*

27,388

Total Meals Served

35,022

Total Sessions Commissioned

**2023-2024 Providers**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Active Education (Aspire/Elements) | High Greave Infants |
| Active Sports Group | Hope Church |
| Artful Make It Happen | Jessica Steele's Superstars |
| Aston Hall | Kimberworth Park Community Partnership |
| Aston Lodge | Live and Learn Sports |
| Blackburn Primary School | Monkwood Primary |
| Brampton Youth Group | NEXUS |
| Brinsworth Academy | Nova City |
| Brinsworth Manor Infants | POP’S Adventure |
| Brinsworth Manor Jr | Positive Impact Sport |
| Brinsworth Whitehill | Rawmarsh Ashwood |
| Broom Valley Community Primary | Rawmarsh Sandhill |
| Canklow Woods Primary | Rotherham Blackburn Club |
| Catcliffe Primary | Rotherham BMX |
| Clifton Learning Partnership | RUCT |
| Coleridge Primary School | Saif’s Boxing Gym |
| Computer Xplores | Shane Wright |
| Crowden | SJD Sports |
| Dinnington Community Primary | Sport Works |
| Direct Action | Swinton Fitzwilliam |
| East Dene Primary | Swinton Queen Primary |
| Eastwood Village | The Fun Hub |
| Endeavour | The Willows |
| Excel Martial Arts | Thrybergh Primary |
| First Kick Football | U DO IT DANCE |
| First Step-Sports | United Multicultural Centre |
| Flying Futures | Wales High School |
| Foljambe Primary | FUN 4 U 2 |
| Footballerz Community |

**Spend for 2023-2024**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Expenditure Type | (£) |
| Administrative Expenditure  (*this should include all of the costs you have incurred in carrying out the administrative functions of the HAF coordination in your LA*) | 124,772.00 |
| Capital Expenditure  (*this should include any equipment purchased to support the programme that meets the definition for capital expenditure, as set out in the HAF guidance on gov.uk)* | 0 |
| Programme Expenditure  (*this should include all of the costs of providing free HAF places, including payments to providers and third parties for services provided)* | 1,112,093.51 |
| Other Expenditure  (*this is any expenditure that does not fall into the above categories, and you should provide a brief description of what this expenditure is*)  This includes promotional materials such as flyer, videographer, and photographer etc. | 10,354.49 |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURE (for 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024) | 1,247,220.00 |

**What do people say about us?**

Listening to the views of children and families is an important part of the Rotherham Healthy Holidays Programme. We ask parents, carers, and children to complete a short feedback questionnaire on the programme they attend each holiday period. This provides information on what they would like to see next and how we can improve the programme moving forward.

We also ask providers and schools to share their feedback on the programme. In 2023-24, children, parents, carers, and providers told us:

*I like coming to camp as I would be stuck at home bored as we don’t go out much* – Child aged 13.

The coaches are nice, and I have made new friends – Child aged 6.

*Less isolation – improved mood, mixing with other local children of different ages not attending same school* - Carer of 8yr old.

*This is a fantastic idea and so beneficial for my children to keep active, be fed and achieve positive goals –* Parent of 12yr old.

*HAF is simply a lifeline to our school community.  We have been lucky enough to have benefitted from the funding for three years now.  Consistency of this fund has led to stability in setting up and sustaining those structures which have enabled us to secure food, positive social interactions, and high-quality physical activities for our children.   Vulnerable families appreciate the links they can access to support systems and health care by staying connected to the school across the Summer period.*– Primary School Headteacher

*We are so pleased that the HAF has been used to support the learners across out Trust. One part of our mission is to 'enrich lives' and the opportunities this provides does just that. Without this kind of support, the creative, healthy, and inspiring activities our children are experiencing wouldn't be possible. Thank you!* - CEO of a School Trust

96% children expressed they enjoyed the activities.

59% of children said they would have been bored at home.

17% of children said they would have been hungry.

26% of children said they would be alone.

87% of Parents/Carers said it was beneficial for their child/children to attend the programme

97% of Parents/Carers said they felt confident that their child/children were safe and looked after

99% of children felt safe and looked after during the programme

**Challenges and Learning**

Rotherham has a successful Healthy Holidays Programme; however, we continue to develop to meet the needs of children and families. Taking on board learnings from previous delivery, there have been three areas of particular focus in the 23-24 year.

* Increasing provision and attendance of secondary age children.
* Engaging new families with the programme.
* Increasing universal provision.

Increasing provision and attendance of secondary age children

Majority of children that access the programme are primary aged, to improve the secondary age uptake we worked with Rotherham Young Inspectors to develop a survey for young people to voice their opinions on out of school activities.

The young people of Rotherham informed us they preferred afternoon programmes to morning or evenings, with the length been no longer than two hours. We were also informed they prefer to attend activities with their friends, which can be challenging if friends are not eligible.

In response to this feedback we have adjusted some of our programmes to offer open access activities where young people can attend with friends and freely come and go during the sessions. We have also adjusted secondary programmes to deliver in the afternoon. This has proven popular amongst young people, and we hope to see an increase of attendance in 2024.

Engaging new families with the programme

From the feedback and monitoring data we know that children who attend the programme are returning each holiday period, which shows how the programme is valued by children and families.

In 2023-24 we worked to increase the engagement of new children with the programme.

What did we do?

* Worked with providers to link them with neighbouring schools, so they could attend parent evenings and assemblies to promote the programme and deliver taster sessions.
* Worked with community groups and schools to attend events to promote the programme.
* Commissioned festive events during the Winter holidays to offer taster sessions and increase family involvement for the Easter holidays.
* Worked closely with Early Help, Social Care, and other services to promote the programme by attending team meetings, offering drop-in sessions, and sharing promotional material.

We continue to work closely with Rotherham’s communities to identify new ways to reach more eligible children and increase access to this valuable opportunity.

Increasing universal provision

For families who do not meet the Healthy Holiday’s eligibility criteria, we have worked with providers to offer both HAF and lower cost paid places. In 2023-2024 we had a total of 15 providers offering low cost paid places between £5 to £12 a day. This has increased universal provision for children in Rotherham.

We continue to encourage providers to offer lower cost paid places. This has led to a closer working relationship with the Education Department within the Council and the new Wrap Around Childcare programme that has been introduced for 2024.

**Case Studies**

**Genius Tuition - A Journey Towards Healthy Eating**

Day1: Reluctance and Reservations

Allow us to introduce X, a lively 7-year-old who had quite the reputation among his peers for his aversion to healthy foods. His typical meals often revolved around chicken nuggets, macaroni and cheese, and sugary pop. X was notorious for his infamous remark, *"Veggies? No thanks! They taste like grass!"* Hearing about the holiday club, X parents decided to enrol him at Genius Tuition where they emphasised nutrition, exercise, and delectable recipes.

During the initial day, X encountered an assortment of vegetables and fruits. His initial response was far from enthusiastic. *"I don't want to eat this green stuff,"* he exclaimed, promptly pushing away a plate with carrots on it. He was reluctant to try anything new and clung to his usual preference for cheese sandwiches.

Day 2: Discovering New Flavours

As the second day progressed, the holiday club continued to introduce X to a world of healthier alternatives. The children participated in entertaining activities such as crafting art with fruit and engaging in vegetable-themed games. Slowly but surely, X curiosity began to override his initial resistance. When offered a strawberry, he hesitated but then took a bite, and his face lit up with astonishment. *"Wow! This tastes like sour patch , but it's fruit!"* he exclaimed, earning laughter from his newfound friends.

Day 3: Embracing Exercise

On the third day, the holiday club incorporated exercise routines into their daily schedule. X initial reaction was, *"I don't enjoy running or jumping!"* Nevertheless, the club's enthusiastic instructor transformed workouts into exciting adventures. *"It's as if we're superheroes!"* X proclaimed after an intense game of tag.

The increase in physical activity, combined with the introduction of enjoyable and healthy snacks like carrot sticks with hummus, started to alter X’s perspective. *"I need to eat these carrots to have superhero strength!"* he chuckled, munching on a crunchy carrot.

Day 4: A New Perspective

By the fourth and final day, X was a transformed young lad. His fondness for healthy foods had flourished, and he couldn't wait to experiment with new recipes and share them with his family. *"I want to make fruit salads like we did in the club!"* he told his mum, who was pleasantly surprised by his newfound enthusiasm.

X’s journey, from resisting vegetables to embracing them, was not merely about adopting healthier eating habits. It was a story of transformation, fuelled by exposure, enjoyable activities, and a childlike sense of curiosity. As the holiday club drew to a close, X expressed a heartfelt sentiment, *"I used to think healthy food was dull, but now I know it's delicious and makes me feel like a superhero!"* His journey underscored the profound impact of positive experiences and peer influence in shaping a child's dietary choices.

**Nexus – A Journey Of Confidence Building**

We provide a Holiday Activity Programme for children and young people with Special Educational Needs in Rotherham. The children and young people that attend our provision have very complex needs and require a high level of support and assistance at our clubs. The Summer break can be particularly long for the children we work with and for their families; these opportunities give families a much-valued break from caring for their child.

Our activities promote healthy lifestyles, building friendships and having fun.

This case study is about A who is 6 years old and has Autism. A is pre-verbal and very much thrives on routine, familiar places and people. Any change for A can be unsettling. A’s mum contacted us looking for some activities in Rotherham that she could send A to that would meet her needs.

A came for a short visit to our Holiday Clubs at Easter to see how she would get on; and with her mum there she oozed confidence and joined in with the Sports Day activities with ease.

We planned for A to come to our Summer Clubs. Day one arrived and mum left A with us for the first time on her own. A was initially upset and unsettled, but with lots of reassurance, patience, use of familiar words and ‘A things’ she settled into the day, and it was a really successful day for her!

A attended the following two clubs after this and with each club she grew in confidence, became familiar with the environment, and got to know the staff and the other children. Leaving mum at the door each time became a little bit more comfortable for A. Staff started to build a trusting relationship with her, getting to know what she likes, doesn’t like and how to communicate and interact with her.

She joined in lots of different activities including exploring the animals in the Travel Zoo, having lots of fun on the bouncy castle and in the ball pit, joining in with creating some healthy treats amongst many more!

The fourth allocated day for A was a day out of school. We worked with mum across the four weeks on how we could make this work, as this would be a very different and strange environment for A and as worried as family were, we decided to go ahead and give it a go! The whole group went out to an activity centre and much fun was had by all children and staff, and A had a ball! She thoroughly enjoyed herself and it was a huge success and milestone for A and her mum.

Following the Holiday Activities we received the message below from A’s mum:

“*Just a quick email to say thank you so much for the time A has spent at Nexus this holiday and hoped you could pass on my sincere gratitude to the staff who have supported her. Although she can’t tell me herself, she seems to have really benefitted and enjoyed it. All the staff I have come across also seemed so caring, helpful, and lovely. On top of this it has given me the opportunity to spend some time with her brother to do things that at the moment are difficult with A. I hope A can continue to access Nexus. I’m a super proud mum.”*

We are super proud of A too and we are hoping to welcome her to not only future holiday clubs but also to some weekly After School Clubs too!