

Holiday Activities and Food Programme Annual Report

London Borough of Lewisham

Annual Report 2025 – 2026



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Welcome

The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme is a national initiative that supports children and young people aged 4–16 who are eligible for benefit-related free school meals. Funding is allocated to local authorities by the Department for Education to facilitate the delivery of HAF provision during the Easter, summer, and winter school holiday periods. The overarching aim of the programme is to enhance outcomes for children and young people through access to nutritious food and structured, enriching activities outside of the school term.

The programme is delivered in line with three core daily requirements:

- The provision of a minimum of four hours of structured, high-quality holiday activities
- Access to a hot meal that complies with the School Food Standards
- Opportunities for at least one hour of physical activity

There is well established evidence that school holiday periods can present increased challenges for families facing financial hardship. Issues such as food insecurity, reduced access to enrichment opportunities, and social isolation can become more pronounced during these times. As a result, disparities in children's experiences and development may widen, particularly among more disadvantaged households.

Within the London Borough of Lewisham, approximately 10,300 children and young people are currently eligible for benefit-related free school meals. In 2025, Lewisham continues to receive funding from the Department for Education to support the delivery of the HAF programme and ensure provision is accessible to those most in need.

The Lewisham HAF programme delivers a diverse and inclusive offer of enrichment activities, including arts, crafts, music, dance, trips and sport. The sustained demand for provision has reinforced the importance of ensuring accessibility for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), as well as those with complex needs. Provision is therefore designed to be inclusive, adaptable, and delivered within safe environments that meet established quality standards and corporate safeguarding requirements.

Delivery is undertaken by a range of commissioned organisations, working in partnership with Lewisham Council. These providers offer high-quality, engaging programmes tailored to the needs and interests of local children and young people, with a strong emphasis on play, physical activity, and social interaction. In addition to activity delivery, all providers are required to offer clear and effective signposting to wider support services within the borough. This includes access to food banks, community organisations, specialist support services, and local physical activity and sports opportunities.



Programme Delivery Model 2025

The HAF programme is delivered across the three main school holiday periods: Easter, summer, and winter. Delivery schedules are designed with flexibility to respond to the needs of children, young people, and their families, ensuring accessibility and maximising participation. In 2025 Lewisham HAF programme **reached 5,969 children.**

A key aim of the programme is to achieve broad geographical coverage across the borough by delivering provision in as many wards as possible. This approach supports improved access to community-based provision and ensures that children and young people who may require additional support are effectively reached and engaged.

Commissioned providers are required to develop and deliver a structured programme of activities that offers both enrichment and variety. This includes organised trips and experiences such as visits to London Zoo, theatre performances, bowling, cinema outings, and swimming lessons. In addition, providers deliver a range of onsite activities, including team sports such as dodgeball, football, basketball, stay and play sessions. In line with programme requirements, all participants are offered a minimum of one hour of physical activity each day. These activities support the development of fundamental movement skills, including coordination, throwing, and catching, while also promoting teamwork, communication, and social interaction.

Providers are encouraged to adopt a co-production approach, actively involving children, young people, and their families in the planning and delivery of activities. This approach ensures that provision reflects the interests and needs of participants and has been particularly effective in increasing engagement among groups that are less accessible, including young people aged 12 and above, where participation rates have historically been lower.

In 2025/2026, the programme continued to utilise a wide network of partnerships across the borough. More than 60 providers were commissioned, including schools,

voluntary and community sector organisations, and private providers. These organisations brought extensive local knowledge and experience of working with children and young people from diverse backgrounds.

As part of the daily offer, all participants receive a nutritious, balanced meal that reflects the cultural diversity of the borough. In response to provider feedback highlighting increased levels of food need among participants, additional provision such as breakfast and fruit has also been made available where appropriate, ensuring that children and young people are adequately supported throughout their participation in the programme.

Finance

Projected Cost of HAF 2025	
Total amount of awarded funding	£1,058,860.00
Management and Administration	£105,886.05
Budget for Delivery	£952,974.00
Actual spend for Easter	£164,963.58
Actual spend for Summer	£640,244.05
Actual spend for Winter	£138,010.42
Spend on additional programmes for young people	£9,926.95

Engagement

ATTENDANCE BY SCHOOL AGE	EASTER 2025		SUMMER 2025		WINTER 2025	
	COUNT	%	Count	%	Count	%
PRIMARY	1253	80.01%	2431	77.59%	1018	78.61%
SECONDARY	313	19.99%	702	22.41%	277	21.39%

ATTENDANCE BY GENDER	EASTER 2025		SUMMER 2025		WINTER 2025	
	COUNT	%	Count	%	Count	%
MALE	820	52.40%	1601	51.12%	671	51.81%
FEMALE	740	47.28%	1519	48.50%	618	47.72%
I'D RATHER NOT SAY	5	0.32%	12	0.38%	6	0.46%

ATTENDANCE BY ADDITIONAL NEEDS	EASTER 2025		SUMMER 2025		WINTER 2025	
	COUNT	%	Count	%	Count	%
SEND	322	10.28%	693	22.12%	267	20.62%
NON-SEND	1244	79.44%	2440	77.88%	1028	79.38%

Overall, we had an **average of 3.5 places booked per person**, and successfully engaged:

- **26% under 8 years**
- **49% 8-11 years**
- **25% over 11 years**

We engaged:

- **52% Black, African, Caribbean or Black British**
- **16% White**
- **17% Mixed or multiple ethnic groups**
- **4% Asian or Asian British**
- **4% Other ethnic group**
- **7% I'd rather not say**



Food Provision

Local Partnerships and Youth Voice

We actively encouraged HAF providers to collaborate with local organisations, supporting the growth of the local economy and strengthening connections with community businesses. This approach not only enhanced the quality of provision but also ensured that investment contributed directly to local communities.

To further strengthen delivery standards, we supported providers to achieve **Level 3 Food Hygiene and Allergy qualifications**. This has improved knowledge, confidence, and compliance in food preparation, ensuring that meals are safe, inclusive, and of high quality.

Food provision across the programme was culturally diverse, reflecting the backgrounds and preferences of the young people attending. Importantly, young people were involved in planning menus, giving them a sense of ownership and ensuring that meals were both appealing and meaningful to them.

In partnership with the **Young Mayor's Team**, we carried out visits to HAF providers to gather direct feedback from participants. Young people played an active role in designing and delivering questionnaires, asking questions such as:

- *What did you enjoy about the meal and why?*
- *How could the food provision be improved?*

This peer-led approach proved highly effective, as young people were more comfortable sharing honest feedback with others they could relate to and look up to.

It strengthened engagement, encouraged open dialogue, and ensured that feedback was authentic and reflective of their experiences.

Impact

- Strengthened local economy through partnerships with community organisations and businesses
- Improved food safety and quality through Level 3 qualifications
- Delivered culturally relevant and youth-informed food provision
- Increased young people's involvement in decision-making and programme design
- Gained meaningful, peer-led feedback to inform continuous improvement

Provision of Nutritious and Culturally Diverse Meals

The HAF Programme ensured that every registered young person received a nutritious, balanced meal each day, in line with National Food Agency standards. Meals were:

- **culturally diverse**, reflecting the backgrounds and preferences of participants
- **served hot where possible**, to enhance quality and overall experience

In response to concerns regarding rising levels of food insecurity, which can impact engagement and concentration, the programme:



- introduced weekly fruit provision, offering approximately three portions of fruit per participant per day
- provided breakfast options and access to fresh fruit throughout the day, ensuring children and young people were well-nourished and able to participate fully in activities

This year our focus was to ensure all meals were culturally diverse, led by the young people with regards to meal planning. During our

quality assurance visits young people completed questionnaires regarding the following *'how nice was the food?', 'did you enjoy it?'* and *'was there anything missing?'*.

Enriching Activities

Youth-Led Activity Delivery and Impact

This year, we placed a strong emphasis on ensuring that activities were youth-led, with young people actively shaping and influencing the opportunities made available to them. By placing them at the heart of decision-making, we ensured that the programme reflected their interests, increased engagement, and fostered a greater sense of ownership and confidence.

As a result of this approach, participation levels remained strong, with young people more motivated to attend and contribute to sessions that they had helped design. This not only enhanced their overall experience but also supported the development of key skills such as leadership, communication, and decision-making.



A key area of impact was the delivery of educational sports programmes. We provided Level 1 coaching qualifications in both basketball and football, with 32 young people successfully completing and achieving accredited awards. These qualifications have equipped participants with valuable skills, improved their employability pathways, and

in some cases created opportunities for volunteering and coaching within their communities.

In addition, we delivered swimming crash courses to address both confidence and safety in water-based environments. Over 500 young people accessed these sessions, significantly increasing opportunities for those who may not otherwise have been able to participate. The programme contributed to improved swimming ability, greater water safety awareness, and increased confidence among participants.

Overall Impact

- Increased youth engagement through co-designed activities
- 32 accredited sports coaching qualifications achieved
- Over 500 young people supported through swimming provision
- Improved confidence, leadership skills, and employability pathways
- Enhanced access to inclusive and skill-building opportunities

Physical Activity and Inclusive Sport Provision

Introduction

This section outlines the requirements and delivery of physical activity and inclusive sport within the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme. It highlights expectations for providers, standards of delivery, and examples of successful initiatives.

Physical Activity Requirements

All HAF providers are required to deliver a minimum of **one hour of physical activity per day** for every child or young person attending the programme. This ensures that participants benefit from regular exercise, supporting both physical health and overall wellbeing.



Quality of Delivery

To maintain high standards across all activities, sessions must be delivered by suitably qualified coaches. All activity leaders are required to hold **Level 1 or Level 2 coaching qualifications**, in line with relevant National Governing Body standards. This ensures that activities are safe, structured, and delivered to a recognised level of quality.

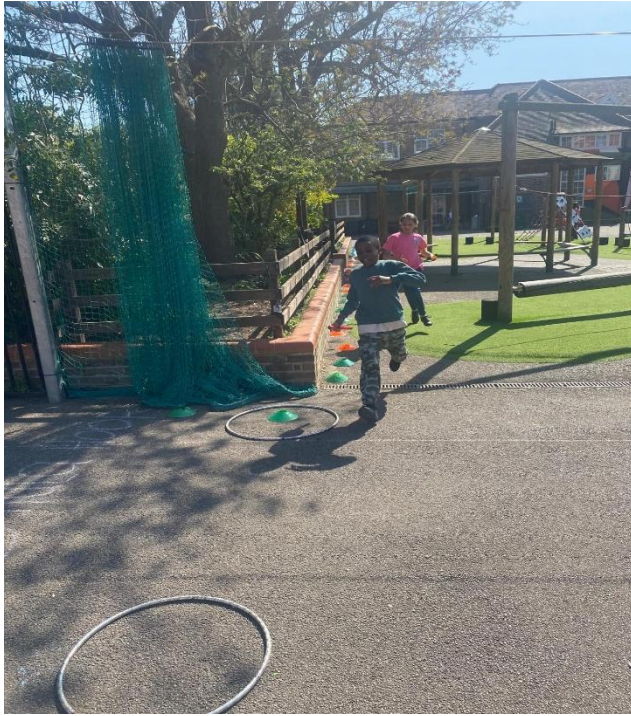
Inclusivity and Accessibility

Inclusivity is a core principle of the HAF programme. All activities are designed to be accessible to a wide range of participants, including children and young people with additional needs.

Specialist disability coaches are engaged where required, ensuring that sessions are inclusive and appropriately adapted. This approach enables all participants, regardless of ability, to take part in physical activities in a supportive and inclusive environment.

Programme Highlights

A key example of successful delivery is the **summer swimming initiative**, delivered in partnership with Better Leisure Centre. This initiative provided over **500 children** with access to an **intensive swimming crash course**, promoting water safety, confidence, and physical fitness. Other activities included boxing, dance, walking and outdoor fitness sessions.



Conclusion

Physical activity and inclusive sport provision within the HAF programme is delivered to a high standard, with clear requirements for daily activity, qualified coaching, and inclusive practice. These elements ensure that all participants have the opportunity to engage in meaningful, safe, and accessible physical activity, contributing positively to their overall wellbeing.

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities and Complex Needs Provision

In line with the programme's commitment to inclusive delivery, strong partnerships were established with organisations to ensure that all activities were accessible to children and young people with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND). In 2025 the HAF programme supported **1,493** children and young people with SEND.

Significant progress was made in expanding and enhancing provision for families with children with complex needs. This was achieved through close collaboration with teachers and education professionals, whose expertise enabled a deeper understanding of the children being supported and informed a more tailored and responsive approach to delivery.

Our longstanding provider, Kids Vogue Stars, delivered dedicated SEND provision for families, recognising that some require both activity-based engagement for children and periods of respite for parents and carers. This provision was delivered in partnership with New Woodlands School, creating a safe, supportive environment staffed by teachers and practitioners with extensive knowledge and experience of SEND. This collaborative approach ensured that children and young people were supported effectively, while families benefited from increased confidence in the suitability and quality of the provision.

We have improved our specialist provision and extended our reach to those with complex needs, now funding 3 specialist providers: Kids Vogue Stars, The Anchor SENDfriendly Independent Specialist School, and Down's Friendship and Creativity Group.

Communications and Engagement Strategy Report

Introduction

This section outlines the communication and engagement strategy implemented to promote the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme. It details the methods used to disseminate information to key audiences, including residents, staff, schools, providers, and stakeholders, ensuring widespread awareness and supporting programme participation.

Communication with Residents

A comprehensive, multi-channel approach is adopted to engage residents and maximise awareness of HAF activities: The programme is actively promoted across the Council's social media platforms, including Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and LinkedIn, ensuring consistent and wide-reaching digital engagement. In addition, information is shared through the Council's weekly e-newsletter, which reaches over 30,000 residents and provides a reliable channel for regular updates.

Printed materials also play an important role, with A5 promotional leaflets distributed through local schools to ensure information reaches families directly. Targeted digital communications, such as email bulletins to council tenants, are used to reach specific groups more effectively.

Furthermore, the HAF team conducts in-person engagement by attending schools before and after school hours, providing opportunities to speak directly with families and promote the programme face-to-face.



Communication with Staff

Effective internal communication ensures that staff remain informed and are able to support programme delivery and promotion.

Updates relating to HAF activities are regularly shared via the staff intranet, enabling easy access to key information. Additional visibility is achieved through inclusion in the Chief Executive's all-staff bulletin, ensuring organisational awareness at all levels.

Relevant departments, particularly those within youth and family services, receive direct communications and promotional materials, supporting a coordinated approach to engagement and referrals.

Communication with Schools

Schools are key partners in supporting awareness and participation in the HAF programme.

Regular updates are provided through established communication channels, including formal correspondence and direct contact. This ensures schools are kept informed of programme developments and opportunities.

Schools are also encouraged to share information with parents and carers, helping to extend the reach of communications and increase participation among eligible families.

Communication with Providers and Stakeholders

Engagement with providers and stakeholders is maintained through structured and consistent communication.

Programme information is disseminated through direct email communications to all providers and stakeholders. In addition, key updates and developments are presented

at strategic meetings and forums, including Headteachers' Forum, senior leadership briefings, and wider stakeholder engagement sessions.

This approach ensures alignment, strengthens partnerships, and supports collaborative delivery of the programme.

Conclusion



The HAF communication and engagement strategy is comprehensive and well-coordinated, utilising a combination of digital, print, and face-to-face methods. This multi-channel approach ensures broad reach across residents while maintaining strong internal communication and effective collaboration with schools, providers, and wider stakeholders.

Programme Integration and Partnerships

The HAF Programme is now embedded within the Youth Service team, strengthening delivery by improving coordination and access to resources. This integration has enabled providers and partners to make greater use of youth service facilities, significantly reducing financial barriers and increasing the sustainability of provision.



The Lewisham Youth Alliance brings together youth-focused VCFS partner organisations that support children and young people; partners within the Alliance are also key providers of the (HAF) programme and contribute to delivering the wider Lewisham Youth Offer.

As a result, more than 10 delivery partners were able to access facilities free of charge. This has directly increased the reach of the programme, enabling more young people from local neighbourhoods to participate in activities within familiar and trusted youth spaces. This localisation of delivery has been key in improving engagement, particularly among those who regularly access youth services.

The Youth Service and Youth Alliance have played a vital role in developing and strengthening partnerships. Through their collaborative approach, they have not only supported existing providers but have also successfully expanded the network by engaging new HAF delivery partners. This has broadened the overall offer, increased capacity, and ensured that a wider range of activities and opportunities are available to young people.

Key Impact

- Improved access to facilities by removing financial barriers for providers
- Over 10 partners supported with free facility use
- Increased participation from young people in local communities
- Stronger partnership working and expanded provider network
- Enhanced and diversified HAF delivery offer



Future Development: Young Commissioning Team

To ensure that young people remain integral to the development of the HAF Programme in Lewisham, we will introduce a **Young Commissioning team**. This initiative will place children and young people at the centre of decision-making, enabling them to actively shape and influence the range and quality of activities delivered through HAF.

The Young Commissioning Team will play a key role in supporting the HAF application process, helping to ensure that funded provision reflects the interests, needs, and aspirations of children and young people. Their input will help to create a diverse and meaningful offer that resonates with participants and drives sustained engagement.

This approach recognises the importance of embedding youth voice in programme design and continuous improvement. By involving young people directly, we will strengthen the relevance, inclusivity, and impact of the HAF programme.

Skills Development and Participation

As part of their role, Young Commissioners will develop a range of transferable skills, including:

- teamwork and collaboration
- communication and leadership
- decision-making and critical thinking

- data collection, analysis, and mapping

They will also gain practical experience in research and evaluation. Young Commissioners will visit HAF providers, plan and deliver questionnaires, and gather feedback from attendees. This process will enable them to contribute meaningfully to programme review and development.

Impact and Outcomes

The insights gathered by the Young Commissioning Team will be used to:

- improve the quality and relevance of HAF provision
- identify and share best practice across providers
- strengthen accountability and youth voice within commissioning processes
- inform future opportunities and pathways for young people beyond HAF

Overall, this initiative will not only enhance programme delivery but also empower young people with the skills, confidence, and experience needed to influence services and contribute to their communities.

Thank you to our providers for all their support and cooperation in delivering HAF over 2025

Amuru	ARC and You	Arisekidz
Ballers Sports Coaching LTD	BELEVE	Curly Riot
Deptford Lionesses	Down's Friendship & Creativity Group	Dynamic Coaching
Empowr CIC	Excel Beyond Barriers	FD Sports
Fit 4 Future Foundation	For Kids Co. Out of School Club	Free to Be Kids
Genius Tuition	Giggles Childcare Services Ltd	Junior Adventures Group
Kender Primary School	Kids Vogue Stars Ltd	Legends Learning Centre
London Thunder Basketball Club	London Youth Events cic	Millwall Community Trust
My 2nd Chance	Omega Sportz LTD	OurParks LTD
Pepys Community Forum	Pro Touch SA	Skipz Productions cic
Somerville Youth and Play Provision	Sports Fun 4 All	Sporting Way CIO
Superkids Club Ltd	The Anchor SENDfriendly School (TAS)	The Enrichment Hub
Treasured Kids Afterschool Club	UK Latin Community	Undeniable
Lewisham Youth Services		

The next HAF programme will take place in summer from 27 July 2026 to 31 August 2026.

If you have any questions, please contact the Lewisham HAF team via HAFProgramme@lewisham.gov.uk.

You can find more information about our HAF programme and keep up to date with the latest activities and events via our social media and website:



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[Lewisham Council - Holiday programme food and fun](#)

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