

NEWCASTLE'S

Holiday Activities and Food Programme

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Newcastle's
Best
Holiday
Ever



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Newcastle's Best Holiday Ever continued to deliver a wide-ranging holiday offer for children and young people across the city, engaging young people and children eligible for benefits-related free school meals and those living in underserved communities. In 2025, the programme supported 286 holiday clubs delivered by 93 providers across 122 locations, generating 57,933 attendances and meals. Delivery remained rooted in strong partnership working, youth voice, and a commitment to inclusive, high-quality provision across food, physical activity, enrichment, and SEND support.

Alongside strong mainstream delivery, the programme continued to expand its HAF Plus offer through initiatives such as Toon Teen Ticket, HAF University, and enhanced SEND provision. The report highlights positive feedback from children, young people, parents, and partners, as well as the added value created through match funding, in-kind support, and strategic partnerships across Newcastle. Looking ahead, the programme is well placed to build on these strong foundations by increasing reach, strengthening tailored provision, and continuing to respond to the needs and voices of children, young people, and families.

LOOKING BACK AT 2025

Newcastle's Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme, locally known as 'Newcastle's Best Holiday Ever', has continued to reach hundreds of children and young people across the city since being fully commissioned by Newcastle City Council to StreetGames in spring 2023. The delivery team has continued to strengthen relationships across Newcastle by working with organisations that already support 4–16-year-olds eligible for benefits-related free school meals, while also identifying gaps in provision, both geographically and in relation to social need. This has included welcoming new providers into the network and broadening the cultural offer available to children and young people across the city. The Steering Group continues to support and shape the HAF offer, ensuring it aligns with wider partnerships and initiatives and benefits from the expertise of Newcastle City Council colleagues.

Our HAF Plus offer continues to grow beyond the standard HAF model, supported by the Toon Teen Ticket offer, which creates more choice and opportunities for young people aged 12 and over to access positive activities and experiences across the city. Youth voice has been central to shaping this offer through focus groups and 'mystery shopper' activity, helping to ensure it is attractive, enjoyable, welcoming, and memorable for young people across Newcastle.

This year, we built on the success of our 2024 HAF Uni pilot programme in partnership with Newcastle University, with thanks to Liam Issac and Maddy Wood from the University Sports Services team. Across Easter and summer, 46 young people took part in a wide range of sports activities, alongside workshops in fitness, nutrition education, cookery, and STEM, delivered by university staff and supported by access to high-quality campus facilities and resources.



“StreetGames has continued to strengthen relationships across the city by working closely with organisations that support children and young people. The Newcastle HAF management team has used its capacity effectively to identify gaps in provision, both geographically and in relation to social need. They have built on strong foundations to broaden the offer in a strategic and impactful way.

StreetGames has built and sustained strong relationships with key partners, advocates for young people's needs and voices to be heard, understands the existing landscape of provision, and continues to develop the provider network. This includes understanding the needs of activity providers and identifying the most effective ways to support them in delivering a high-quality holiday offer.

This includes enhancing the training available to build capability across the system, expanding targeted provision such as the teenage offer, and piloting strong initiatives such as the partnership with the SEND Youth Voice team.”

Duncan O'Farrell
Public Health Practitioner and HAF Contract
Manager, Newcastle City Council





Newcastle University also supported our annual HAF Celebration at Cochrane Park, where more than **300** families and children had the opportunity to try a wide range of activities, including zorbing, boxing, archery, football, golf, and STEM. Families enjoyed the sunshine and picnics provided by Newcastle University. We are grateful to all the organisations that supported the day, particularly Northeast Action for Children, Parents and Inclusion, who supported the new SEND area and ensured children had access to a quieter space whenever needed.

We developed a strong partnership in which two apprentices and a staff member supported our quality assurance visits. They brought a valuable alternative perspective when reviewing both mainstream and SEND provision through a SEND lens. This support was invaluable, not only in ensuring that all partners received a visit this year, but also in capturing a young person's SEND perspective.

Key strategies and themes

- Build on the strong foundations already in place by further developing youth voice mechanisms to shape the HAF Plus offer.
- Provide training and support for HAF staff and volunteers to strengthen work on healthy relationships and help young people make positive life choices.
- Increase support for SEND-exclusive providers so they can offer wider opportunities and experiences for families.
- Implement strategic and operational plans to increase girls' participation in sport, while creating an inclusive offer that amplifies young girls' voices through the Champions Network.
- Use Sportfin to map provision against social and geographic need, identify gaps, and support collaboration while avoiding duplication.
- Identify opportunities and trends that align with key Newcastle City Council priorities, including the Marmot Principles, the Children and Young People's Plan, and Public Health priorities.

2025 SUMMARY

The following number of children and young people attended a holiday club

at no additional cost to their families

Spring

3,035

Summer

9,315

Winter

2,970

£1,398,542.00
MILLION

Invested into local holiday clubs

guaranteeing funding for organisations during the holidays

122

holiday club locations

giving wider access across the city

286

holiday clubs

provided a range of enriching activities across the county

93

organisations

took part in the programme

57,933

nutritious meals served

while providing fun, engaging nutritional education

FINANCE

In Newcastle upon Tyne, FSM data shows that **43.4%** of schoolchildren are eligible for benefits-related free school meals. This equates to more than **18,000** children and young people and is significantly higher than the England average of around **25.7%**. For the 2025 programme delivery period, the DfE awarded Newcastle City Council a grant of **£1,657,710.00** to support the programme's reach across the city.

Newcastle's Best Holiday Ever remains committed to reaching as many children and families in need as possible through a vision of upskilling communities, building competence and confidence, and extending provision in a sustainable way. Of the delivery grant, **81.4%** was invested directly in provision for children and young people in 2024.

To achieve the required levels of engagement, a cost model was developed to support grant-making and ensure value for money. The 2025 model was based on an average cost of **£25** per child per day, reflecting rising costs for utilities, food provision, and staffing. We also built in flexibility for SEND provision, where staffing costs may be higher due to specialist needs and staffing ratios.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2025

Administrative Expenditure	£165,770.00
Programme Expenditure	£1,398,542.00
Other Expenditure	£92,891.00
Total Expenditure	£1,657,302.00
Total Payment from DfE	£1,657,710.00
Underspend	£408.00





ADDED VALUE

The Newcastle's Best Holiday Ever programme team continues to strengthen alternative provision and wider support across the existing network to complement programme delivery. Throughout 2025, this equated to **£362,228.10**, including just over **£230,000** in additional match funding secured by holiday club providers and **£130,000** of in-kind support. Match funders included local Ward Committees, the National Lottery, the Community Foundation, and the Youth Investment Fund, among others.

HAF in Newcastle is aligned with the Evry initiative and is a key part of the City Council's Children and Young People's Strategy 2023–27. This has resulted in shared priorities, both geographically and in relation to social need, helping to ensure that every young person across the city has opportunities to thrive.

HAF also aligns with wider public health outcomes and community safety work, supporting children and young people in underserved communities. HAF is one part of Newcastle's city-wide family holiday offer and is complemented by wider partnerships through Evry and NE1. All provision, including HAF, is advertised across the city, alongside festivals, street events, and cultural provision, giving families a wide range of opportunities to spend valuable time together. The HAF programme is also a key part of StreetGames' ambition to create a year-round programme for children and young people in Newcastle through a Doorstep Sport city approach and youth leadership, ensuring fair access to sport and physical activity while tackling the barriers that prevent young people in underserved communities from taking part. In 2025, initial work began on our youth leadership programme, with the aim of supporting young people's personal development across the city and raising aspirations for their futures.

GOVERNANCE

The core governance structure in Newcastle is the Steering Group. Established in October 2023, the group has clear terms of reference and membership. It includes representatives from Newcastle City Council departments including Public Health, Children and Families Directorate, School Effectiveness, Youth Voice, Play and Strategy, and Family Hubs, alongside StreetGames, Newcastle United Foundation, Urban Green, and Action for Children.

Within the governance structure, we also operate a Safety Advisory Group made up of Newcastle City Council and StreetGames staff, which meets termly to manage safeguarding issues. The introduction of a Teen Advisory Group has strengthened the work already taking place around the teen offer, as well as supporting the piloting of new initiatives and activities. The programme continues to be well embedded across the city, with representation and commitment across a number of strategic plans. This includes Evry, a city-wide plan for young people in Newcastle. HAF is also part of the City Council's Children and Young People's Strategy 2023–27, helping to deliver its aim of making young people happier, healthier, safer, and ready for their futures, as well as contributing to the Council's Public Health Plan and new Physical Activity Strategy.

STAKEHOLDERS

We have continued to nurture strong working relationships with key stakeholders across the city to support programme delivery, evaluate its impact on children, young people, and families, and enable future sustainability.

Our key strategic stakeholders include:

- Newcastle City Council; Public Health, Children and Families Directorate
- StreetGames
- Newcastle University
- Family Hubs
- The Tyne and Wear Community Foundation
- Sport England
- Newcastle United Foundation
- Connected Voice
- Northumbria University
- Newcastle College
- Newcastle Youth Offending
- Northeast Child Poverty Commission
- Northeast Combined Authority

OUR NETWORK

In 2025, we supported 286 holiday club providers operating across 122 venues. Some providers work across multiple venues and some venues are used by different providers during the same holiday periods i.e. delivering programmes during different weeks of the holidays.

VENUE TYPE

46%	Community Venue/ Asset	6%	Youth/ Children's Centre
17%	Fitness Centre/ Leisure Centre/ Gym	5%	Open Space/ Outdoor Venue
16%	School/ College/ University	3%	Cultural
7%	Faith Venue		

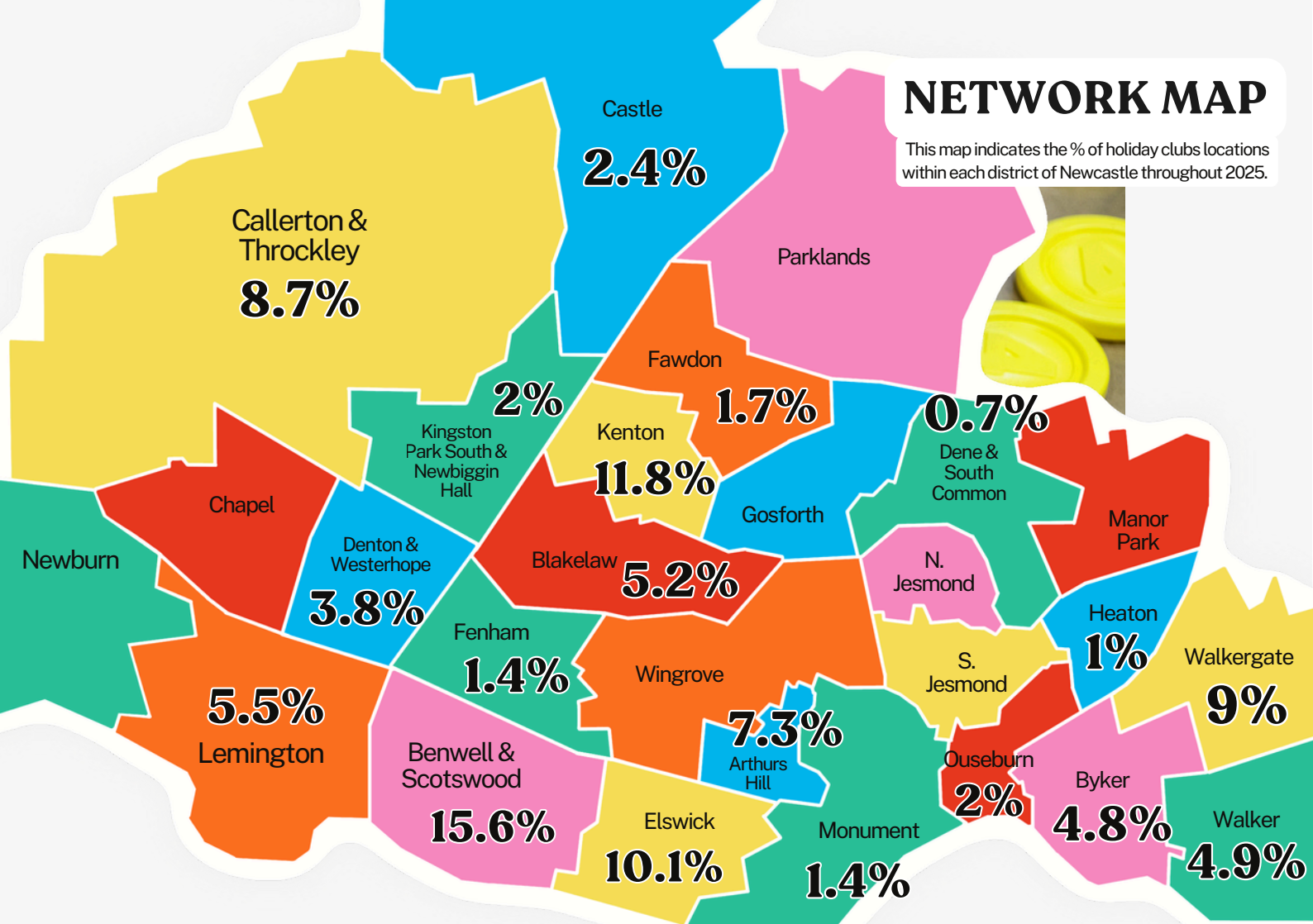
PROVIDER TYPE

45%	Charitable Trust	4%	Local Authority Services
32%	Community Interest Company	2%	Constituted Sports Club
12%	Company Ltd by Guarantee		
4%	School/ College/ University		



NETWORK MAP

This map indicates the % of holiday clubs locations within each district of Newcastle throughout 2025.



QUALITY ASSURANCE

Newcastle HAF delivery partners deliver their provision in line with the Holiday Activity and Food Programme framework standards. These are:

- Food provision
- Enrichment activities
- Physical activities
- Nutritional education
- Food education for families and carers
- Signposting and referrals to further support when required
- Robust policies and procedures
- Effective safeguarding

Not all partners may deliver every aspect of the programme directly. However, our clear expectation is that all eligible children and their families should benefit from every aspect of the programme, and some strong partnerships have been created to make this possible.



"We visited lots of HAF providers and looked at inclusivity, was the food healthy, was it easy to find and was it safe for the children attending. We enjoyed doing the visits, seeing what kinds of things were running. It was good to talk to the children and parents; it was interesting to hear what they loved about it. We enjoyed writing up our reviews and reporting our findings back to StreetGames. We're looking forward to doing it again this summer!"

Lucy and Daniel
SEND Voice Youth Trainees

HAF partners are assessed on their ability to deliver against the framework standards, their safeguarding effectiveness, and value for money through:

- **Grant application forms** – Each organisation is required to complete a detailed application form when applying for HAF funding. The form allows organisations to explain how they will meet the framework expectations, while also demonstrating their understanding of need in the area where they intend to deliver. Safeguarding questions highlight their knowledge and processes, showing how safeguarding is embedded within the organisation's culture and continuing professional development.
- **Quality assurance support visits** – One of the most valuable aspects of HAF is the opportunity to visit providers, see programmes in action, speak with staff and children, and hear directly about their experiences. During these visits, we discuss both challenges and successes, observe activities, explore the wider programme, and review the food offer to ensure standards are being met. Where issues are identified, these are addressed supportively, with follow-up support or training offered as needed.

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE FEEDBACK

271 Responses



We asked children and young people what they liked the most about their holiday club, here's what they said:

"Trips, spending time with friends and having music loud!"

"Playing with friends, painting and disco parties with music and snacks and dancing."

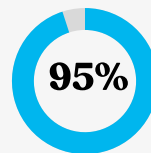
"Outdoor space and time to play out there."

"The planetarium, it gives us more knowledge about the planet."

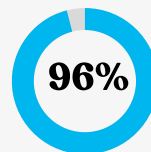
"Spending time with horses."

"The boats on the lake."

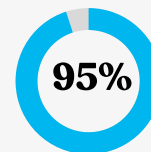
"The food is healthy and good and the activities are fun and I enjoy them."



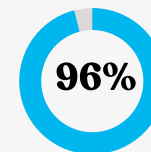
of children were 'Very Happy' or 'Happy' with **holiday club and activities**



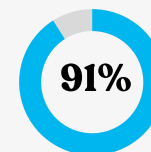
of children were 'Very Happy' or 'Happy' with their holiday club **location**



of children were 'Very Happy' or 'Happy' with their holiday club **time**



of children were 'Very Happy' or 'Happy' with **holiday club coaches and leaders**



of children were 'Very Happy' or 'Happy' with their holiday club **food**

PARENT & GUARDIAN FEEDBACK

76 Responses



“Love it! My Kids love it! My autistic son attends and he loves it.”

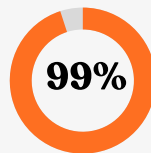
“This programme is amazing. It gives children a great opportunity to take part in activities that we could not afford as a family.”

“All I can say is that my son loves it. He and his friends who took part in the programme were raving about it. The food is good, the staff are friendly and helpful, and all questions were answered. It is a lovely, safe space for the children.”

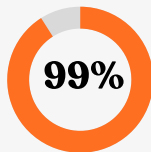
“I think it’s an absolute godsend. It’s amazing to have something like this over the summer, and my child absolutely loves it.”

“I don’t know where I would have been over the last few years without HAF. Without this support during the school holidays, I would be lost. I really appreciate it.”

“Excellent variety of activities. Incredible care and support with all the children.”



of parents/
guardians were
‘Very Satisfied’ or
‘Satisfied’ with
holiday club and
activities



of parents/
guardians were
‘Very Satisfied’ or
‘Satisfied’ with
the holiday club
food

FOOD & NUTRITION

HAF delivery partners work hard to ensure that their food offer meets the school food standards, often thinking creatively so that children and young people enjoy meals while also being introduced to new tastes. For organisations that would not usually work to school food standards, guidance is provided through the application process to support menu development and food provision. Our partnership with Healthworks also enables us to provide training, ensuring staff have the expected knowledge and qualifications for preparing food safely and that food quality meets the required standard. A number of specialist food organisations also support delivery partners to maintain high-quality provision and embed nutrition education, whether through cookery sessions or games. Some providers also deliver outdoor cookery using small fires, outdoor pizza ovens, and barbecues, with all health and safety measures in place. This creates valuable opportunities for children and young people to learn about food safety, hygiene, and nutrition in an engaging way.

Another great example was during the summer holidays where children aged 6-18 from ACANE African Community group worked in partnership with Newcastle University and the Life Science Centre over four days to explore health science and food nutrition. Over those days, the groups took part in a variety of experiments, including weighing salt to show how much is in certain foods, this went onto discussing nutrients and using scientific tests to test protein, fat and sugar content, with children predicting how nutritious they thought each food was. The children had large, laminated prints of each food and lined up in order of lowest to highest as to the amount of each nutrient they thought was in each food. This ignited a conversation for older children around protein powder, so this was incorporated into the session.

During the winter, we again rolled out our food hamper programme, with the aim of delivering food hampers to families in the most underserved communities in the city. Working in partnership with the Family Hubs, we were able to reach approximately 400 families with food parcels and recipes that families could cook and enjoy together. This was supported by Healthworks, who created videos to help families follow the recipes and adapt them to suit their own tastes. This meant that nutrition education was not only delivered to children and young people attending HAF, but also directly to parents through videos accompanying the food parcels and recipes over the winter holiday period.

Feedback from this work was very positive and reinforced the value and importance of this initiative. Nutrition education is embedded within the application process, ensuring healthy lifestyle promotion goes beyond simply providing a healthy lunch, and it is encouraging to see the innovative ways that HAF providers bring this to life. We continue to develop our training offer to support organisations and build confidence in embedding nutrition education within their provision.



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Our HAF delivery partners bring considerable expertise and experience in delivering physical activity. This was especially evident during the summer, where children and young people were able to access a wide range of sporting opportunities including rugby, football, horse riding, cycling, dance, golf, cricket, and more. This also included our Toon Teen Ticket offer, through which young people could access a local gym, swimming, and a trampoline park.

Where an organisation is not a specialist in sports delivery, it often works in partnership with another provider that is. Applications and visits continue to show a varied, safe, and engaging offer across the city. We ensure the programme remains diverse and find that, at primary age, the offer tends to be broadly multi-skilled, whereas at secondary age it is often more focused on specific sports activities.

To ensure high-quality and varied delivery, we provide both informal and accredited training across our network, including Level 2 Multi-Sports Activator and a range of sport-specific Activator workshops. This training not only improves the quality of HAF delivery but also strengthens skills and knowledge across the wider sector, where sports provision can be incorporated into year-round projects. We also connect partners so that sports-specialist organisations can support those who do not usually deliver this type of activity, whether by delivering the sports element on their behalf, loaning equipment, or sharing ideas and good practice. For 2026, we are exploring how we can further support the development of less sport-focused organisations through peer support and modelling from our more sports-focused partners.

The diversity of physical activity in HAF is further demonstrated by the way providers make use of good weather and Newcastle's green spaces and parks, whether for walks, rounders, or creative activities using natural materials. We hope the longer-term impact is that families will continue to access these spaces in their own time. In summary, Newcastle's Best Holiday Ever clubs all deliver activities that support physical activity guidelines during each session. Children and young people are engaged in moderate to vigorous physical activity for at least 60 minutes each day.

Providers deliver this in many ways, including structured sport, physical activity sessions, walks, exercise sessions, and free play. We encourage providers to engage young people in a variety of physical activities to develop movement skills, muscular fitness, and bone strength. Providers delivering varied sports programmes often consult children and young people to find out what they would most like to try, helping to keep them engaged and excited. As providers in Newcastle grow in confidence, we have seen an increase in both the quality and range of physical activities on offer.



ENRICHMENT

One of the most rewarding aspects of the programme is its enrichment offer, which gives children and young people access to new and memorable experiences. Examples include trips, days out, and shared family experiences that many families would not otherwise be able to afford. Visits included surfing, Beamish, and The Alnwick Garden, among others. These experiences allow children to share their exciting experiences when they return to school and help families create positive memories together. This was particularly valuable during the winter programme, where organisations worked with cultural partners to attend shows, workshops, and pantomimes.

The enrichment element allows HAF providers to be creative and innovative, opening new opportunities for families for whom cost is a major barrier. Enrichment is not only about trips and external visits; it can also include special visitors and on-site experiences such as petting zoos, arts and crafts, day camping, and trying musical instruments.

Northeast Action for Children, Parents and Inclusion (NAPI), one of our established SEND exclusive HAF providers implemented great enrichment practise into their HAF delivery including booking a full cinema for SEND children to enjoy a viewing without feeling conscious of behaviours or needs and exclusive swimming sessions so all safeguards could be put in place to ensure their SEND children had the best time!



SEND

Our SEND HAF offer includes a combination of mainstream provision with SEND inclusion and SEND-exclusive providers. During 2025, we reached more than 1,400 primary and secondary-aged children and young people with SEND across both SEND-exclusive and mainstream provision, and we hope this number will continue to grow. Providers have strong systems in place to assess children's needs and ensure they have the capacity and resources to support them fully throughout their HAF experience. For some families, finding the right holiday provision for children with SEND can be challenging.

The Support Directory, now the Children and Families website, managed by Newcastle City Council, helps families identify the right provision by setting out how providers can meet different needs and enabling direct conversations with providers to ensure children receive the right support and have a positive experience.



“The NAPI SEND Exclusive HAF Programme has become a vital lifeline for hundreds of families across our communities. What began as holiday provision has grown into something far more significant a trusted, inclusive space where children and young people with additional needs and disabilities can thrive, feel valued, and enjoy experiences that are often inaccessible elsewhere.

During 2025–2026 alone, we have supported more than 1,200 children and young people through HAF, and the programme continues to grow with every holiday period. This remarkable reach reflects both the increasing need for specialist SEND provision and the confidence families place in the safe, nurturing environments we provide.

For many parents and carers, school holidays can bring significant challenges, isolation, and anxiety. HAF changes that. It offers reassurance that their children are spending time with trusted staff who understand their needs, while providing families with invaluable respite, support, and connection.

The impact has been extraordinary. We have seen children grow in confidence, develop new friendships, discover new interests, and gain experiences that enhance their wellbeing and independence. We have seen families who once felt isolated become part of a welcoming and supportive community.

Through our continued work at Hadrian School, Sir Charles Parsons School, and our expanding community-based programmes, we are creating even more opportunities for children and young people to participate, belong, and succeed. By introducing new sports, activities, and inclusive experiences, we are opening doors to children who may never have had these opportunities before and extending our reach to new groups across the region.

As the programme continues to grow, so does its impact. HAF is more than a holiday programme it is a pathway to inclusion, confidence, wellbeing, and opportunity, ensuring that every child and young person has the chance to experience enriching activities in a safe environment with trusted people who believe in their potential!”

Leah Evans-Dodsworth, Chief Executive Officer, North East Action for Children, Parents and Inclusion (NAPI)



"Before HAF, the school holidays could be very difficult for our family. My son often struggled to access mainstream activities, but at Hadrian School they are fully included, supported, and understood. He came home excited and told his dad about his day, and you could see his confidence had grown so much. For us, it has been life-changing."

Parent of Child Aged 7 (Hadrian School)

"The team at Hadrian creates a special and safe place. My child has made friends, tried new activities, and developed skills I never imagined possible. The support we receive as a family is just as important as the activities themselves."

Parent of Child Aged 9 (Hadrian School)

"Finding suitable holiday provision for teenagers with additional needs is incredibly difficult. HAF at Sir Charles Parsons has given my son independence, confidence, and opportunities to take part in activities with other young people who understand him. He feels like he belongs."

Parent of Young Person Aged 13 (Sir Charles Parsons School)

"My daughter has been introduced to new sports, challenges, and experiences that have pushed her out of her comfort zone in the best possible way. She has found a new love in cooking."

Parent of Young Person Aged 14 (Sir Charles Parsons School)

"The community HAF activities have given our children opportunities that most families take for granted. From trips and outdoor adventures to trying new sports and making friends, every holiday brings something new. It has helped our children become more confident and given our family a real sense of belonging, we have been coming for 3 years now."

Community Parent Feedback

"I never thought my child would have the opportunity to visit a farm, feed animals, and experience a day out like Hall Hill Farm. As a family, many of these activities simply aren't accessible to us as we don't drive and my daughter is in a wheelchair. Seeing the smile on her face and hearing her talk about it for weeks afterwards was priceless. HAF has opened doors to experiences we never thought possible."

Community Parent Feedback

TOON TEEN TICKET OFFER

The Toon Teen Ticket programme was developed following successful consultation with 64 young people at ACANE and Walker Riverside / Walker Central High School. During these consultations, young people highlighted limited access to paid leisure activities because of cost, increased boredom and isolation during the school holidays, and the importance of food being included when attending activities. Many of the young people consulted were eligible for free school meals, and several also described additional pressures such as caring responsibilities and financial hardship at home. The project aimed to remove financial barriers and provide positive, safe, and inclusive holiday activities that young people could enjoy with their friends.

By developing a bespoke teen offer, we aimed to provide a range of accessible, appealing, and meaningful opportunities that young people themselves had asked for, combining fun, social connection, physical activity, and access to food.

The summer Toon Teen Ticket Offer gave young people free access to a wide range of activities across the North East. The aim was to reduce financial barriers, encourage participation, and create positive opportunities during the school holidays.

Organisations and partners involved included;

- Leisure United – Gym, five-a-side football, and a hot meal
- Newcastle United Foundation – VR/ E-Gaming, dodgeball and a hot meal
- Newburn Climbing Wall – Climbing wall session and a hot meal
- North Tyneside Cinema – Cinema screening and food voucher
- GLL (Better Leisure Centres) – Gym, swimming pool access, and a hot meal
- Active Future – 5 a side football and food provision
- InflateSpace – Bounce session and a hot meal
- EXIT/ Newcastle Escape Rooms – Escape room session and food voucher
- Mr Mulligan's Adventure Golf – Mini Golf session and food voucher



Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with young people valuing the opportunity to try new activities, spend time with friends, and access food as part of the offer. Recognising that travel costs can also be a barrier, we distributed travel tickets to help young people access opportunities further afield. HAF University Days – We also piloted a HAF University Day, delivered in partnership with Newcastle University and the RFL, where activities included:

- Rugby League Leaders Award
- Cooking clinic
- University tour
- Lecture/talk on future pathways and opportunities 17

Over the summer, we funded a wide range of trips, ensuring that young people most in need had access to memorable experiences. Working in partnership with local organisations helped us reach those who would benefit most. The inclusion of free hot meals and vouchers proved vital in reassuring families and boosting engagement throughout the programme.

What's working well:

- Strong partnerships with trusted local organisations
- Activities tailored to teenage interests
- Integration of food as a key part of the offer
- Reducing barriers through travel support

Areas for development:

- Expanding the number and variety of activities available
- Increasing capacity for travel support to reach more young people across the region
- Building stronger mechanisms to capture young people's voices and feedback
- Developing pathways for sustained engagement beyond school holidays

Participant feedback and outcomes

Following the activities, all participants completed a feedback form. 100% of young people said the programme should fund Mr Mulligan's, EXIT, and InflatSPACE again during the Easter holidays. 100% also said that food was extremely important when attending activities, and 92% said they would not be able to afford these activities without support.

When asked what they enjoyed most, young people highlighted being competitive with friends, getting out of the house, and the inclusion of food. When asked about future activities, bowling and go-karting, estimated at up to £20 per head, were the most common suggestions. Local providers and associated costs will now be explored.

This first summer of the Toon Teen Offer has shown clear evidence of demand and impact. Young people engaged positively, partners valued the flexible approach, and feedback demonstrated the importance of creating an offer specifically designed for teenagers.

Young people's and parents' voices

When asked what Toon Teen Ticket meant to them, young people shared powerful reflections, including that it gave them a break from young carer responsibilities, allowed them to take part in activities they would not normally be able to afford, and helped families with multiple children access experiences that would otherwise be financially impossible.

Learning and next steps

The success of Toon Teen Ticket highlights the importance of youth-led design, free access, and food-inclusive provision. Learning from this programme will inform future Toon Teen Ticket applications, wider HAF holiday delivery, and the expansion of activities such as bowling and go-karting. The project demonstrates how targeted investment can deliver meaningful, confidence-building experiences for young people most in need.

"Toon Teen Ticket has been one of the most rewarding initiatives within the programme, built entirely around the voices of young people, who made it clear they wanted greater choice, flexibility, and access to experiences that many simply could not afford.

The response was incredible. Activities filled quickly, demand exceeded expectations, and feedback from young people and families was overwhelmingly positive. What stood out most was hearing from young people who said the programme gave them opportunities they would otherwise have missed, allowed them to spend time with friends, and created lasting memories during the school holidays.

Toon Teen Ticket demonstrates the power of listening to young people and trusting them to shape the services designed for them. By removing financial barriers and investing in opportunities that young people genuinely wanted, we created a programme that was not only popular, but genuinely life-enhancing for many of the families involved."

Steve Beaty, HAF Programme Teen Lead

PROMOTING OUR PROGRAMME

Our marketing team plays an important role in supporting the programme by creating a marketing toolkit for HAF delivery partners to promote their provision clearly and consistently. All providers upload their programme information before each delivery period so that families can view the full offer and choose the provision that best meets their children's needs. The support directory also allows providers to explain exactly what their offer includes and how they can cater for children and young people with SEND, whether through specialist staff, a quiet space, or SEND resources.

Our communications strategy also aims to reach families who have not yet accessed HAF provision. This is delivered directly through Newcastle City Council, using information-sharing and text messaging with schools and families of children eligible for free school meals. The Council also shares information across departments, including Education, Youth Services, and Children's Services.

Sportfin, our data management system, allows us to map provision across the city so that we can identify both social and geographical gaps and ensure provision is targeted where it is needed most. We continue to explore new ways of reaching every eligible family across the city, with the support of the Council and our HAF partners.



KEY CHALLENGES

Evidence continues to show the clear need for HAF provision and holiday activities for those who need them most. In Newcastle, several wards continue to have high proportions of young people who are eligible for FSM, and this has remained consistent since our last report, with Byker at 67.2%, Walker at 63%, and Elswick at 54.4%. Mapping this data through Sportfin helps us maintain strong coverage across the city, particularly in communities with the highest levels of need.

Our strategy for HAF continues to evolve to meet increasing demand for support, and during 2026 we aim to increase not only the number of providers but also the diversity of provision. We are also identifying how HAF fits within a number of StreetGames initiatives, including Poverty Proofing and Doorstep Sport City, while aligning with Newcastle City Council's Marmot City approach and Children and Young People's plans.

One of the greatest challenges is the increasing need for support among families whose children are not eligible for HAF. Alternative family services provide valuable support in relation to food poverty, the rising cost of living, housing pressures, and other social issues. However, there are still families who do not meet the eligibility criteria whose children would greatly benefit from HAF provision, and this need often exceeds the 15% allowance.



2026 AND BEYOND

With confirmation that HAF will continue for a further three years, we are now able to plan with greater confidence for longer-term delivery and implement StreetGames' wider work to complement HAF, supporting organisations to build and continue a sustainable, year round offer. Alongside a renewed focus on workforce development and youth leadership, we look forward to building on and learning from the expertise and strengths already present within communities while also supporting partners to nurture future leaders.

With the extension of HAF, we have the opportunity to embed research and insight more fully and to understand the impact in our most deprived wards, including the difference HAF makes to families and any needs that are still not being met. This year, we will be working closely with the wraparound service (SAC) to explore how we can expand HAF by increasing the number of registered childcare providers able to reach more targeted families. Through this relationship, we can continue to increase our reach to families who may not currently access HAF, while researching, identifying, and addressing barriers to access and making better use of opportunities within their local community.

We will continue to develop our more tailored provision, including HAF University, residential opportunities for future leaders, embedding youth voice into teen provision, expanding the Toon Teen Ticket offer with more retailers and opportunities, and increasing independence and choice for young people. We also want to make our Newcastle HAF festival bigger and better than ever!

We will continue to strengthen stakeholder partnerships, including with Newcastle University, to support the HAF Plus offer and work with students to deliver more community-based sport. We also look forward to developing partnerships with relevant specialist organisations that can help us engage more girls in HAF, ensure their voices are heard, and better understand the barriers they face in accessing provision.