

Sunderland

HOLIDAY
ACTIVITY AND
FOOD (HAF)
ANNUAL
REPORT
2024



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Introduction

Together for Children delivered their first Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme in 2021. benefiting from a robust community partnership and a culturally diverse population, Sunderland has a vast network of voluntary sector and private organisations that significantly contribute to the success of the programme.

In 2024, Together for Children secured a grant of £1,282,787.94 to facilitate the implementation of HAF initiatives during school holidays. This funding was provided by the Department for Education for children eligible for means tested free school meals (FSM) offering a nutritious meal alongside a variety of physical and enriching activities.

During 2024 delivery we offered 2084 sessions across spring, summer and winter delivery with 49 providers supporting with delivery.

Thank you to all our providers and staff within the company who contributed to making HAF a success in 2024. As we look ahead to 2025, we remain committed to delivering the highest quality offer possible, ensuring the best outcomes for our children with a commitment to making a difference.



Key Challenges

The most persistent challenge in 2024 remained the high rate of no-shows at sessions. Despite significant efforts by providers to remind parents and carers of their bookings, many did not attend and failed to provide any feedback or explanation. This not only impacted session planning but also limited the ability to offer unfilled spots to individuals on the waiting list in time, resulting in unused spaces even with preventative measures in place.

A key priority for 2025 is to enhance communication with parents and carers to reinforce the value of booked sessions and encourage earlier cancellations when necessary. One planned improvement is the introduction of a centralised booking system, which will streamline communication, simplify the cancellation process, and make it easier to reallocate places in a timely manner.

Mapping Provision

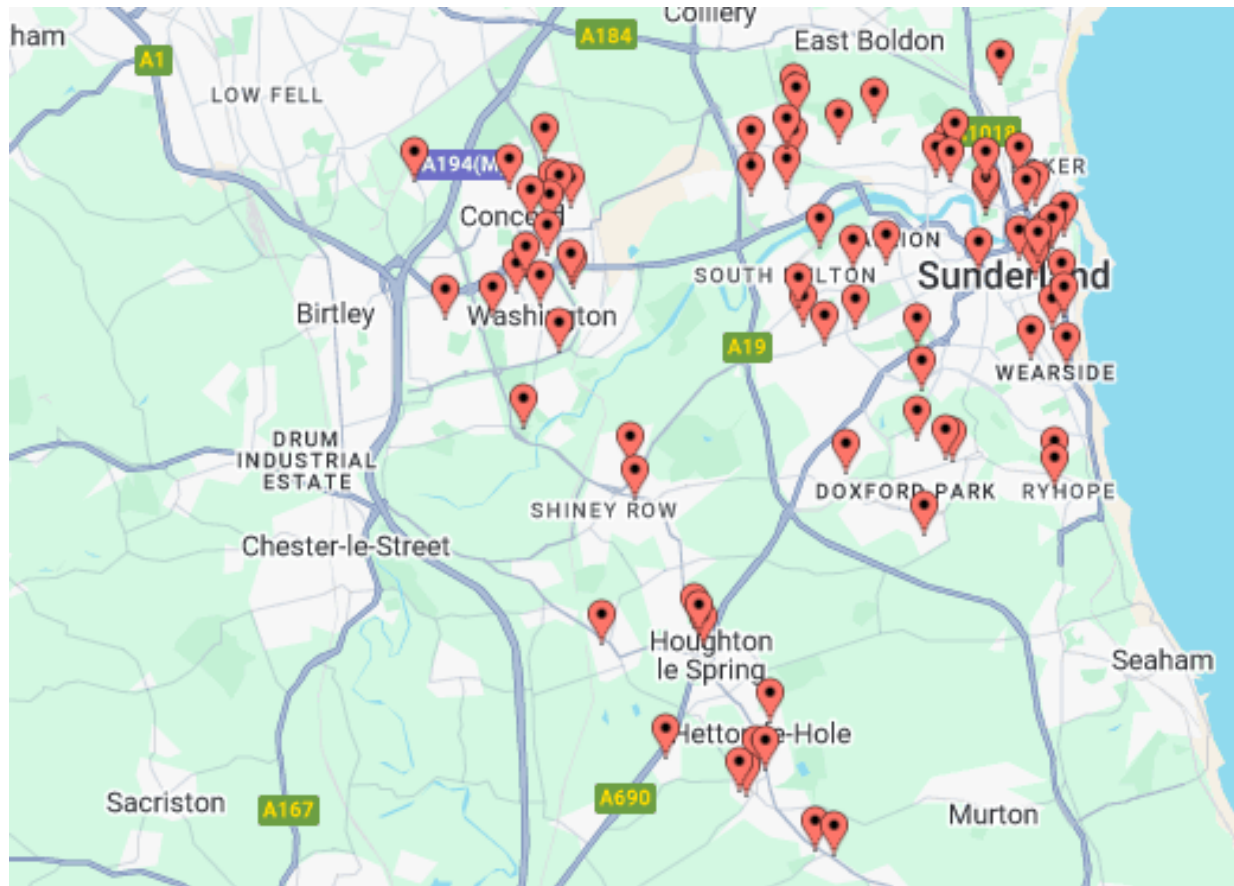


Figure1-All HAF provider locations

To inform commissioning, S³ will utilise mapping software, referencing the postcodes of providers to establish the geographical spread of provision. This process ensures that activities are provided in areas of greater need based on the highest number of eligible children, whilst continuing to deliver a full offer across the city.

Governance

The Wear here for Spring, Summer and Winter governance arrangements for HAF delivery are led and supported by a strategic multi-agency steering group. The group ensures effective oversight of the programme ensuring all DfE criteria for the programme are met.

Membership

Karen Davison

Jamie Scott

Wendy Coghlan

Hayley Ford

Ruth Neesham

Cllr Linda Williams/Cllr Michael Butler

Karen Lightfoot - Gencli

Sophie Maddison

Gilly Stanley

Keith Miles

Nicola Childs

Lucy Nicholson

Director of Early Help - Chair

HAF Strategic Lead

HAF Co-ordinator

Comms Business partner - SCC

Performance Manager

Children Portfolio Folder

Public Health

Commissioning

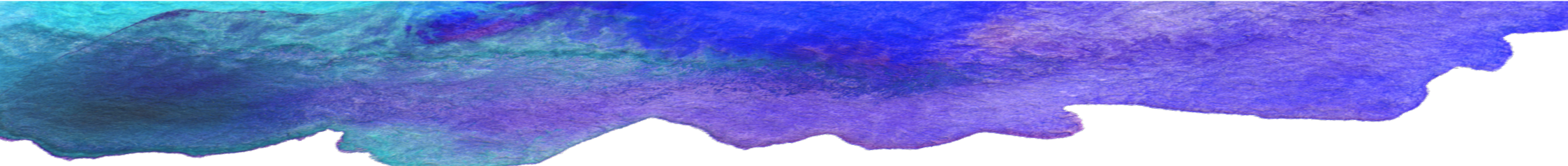
Sunderland City Council - Partnership and Resilience Manager

Sunderland City Council - Catering Services Manager

Integrated Commissioning Board - Head of Community and children and young people

Sunderland City Council Comms Business Partner





Finance

In Sunderland we work with a range of partners to deliver the Wear here for you programme, this has provided funding to the voluntary and community sector, private providers, leisure centres and our Family Hubs. There are approximately 12,500 children and young people who are in receipt of free school meals who are eligible for the programme in Sunderland.

The DfE recognises that there are administrative costs associated with implementation and delivery of the HAF programme, with a discretionary 10% of the total allocation to cover these costs. In addition, 2% of funding can also be used to purchase equipment for the programme.

For the financial year March 2024-April 2025 Together for Children was awarded £1,282,787.94 for programme delivery.

In 2024 Together for children adjusted our payment method from Winter delivery. Our primary focus is to ensure children and young people, particularly those eligible for benefits related free school meals (FSM), actively participate in HAF activities. The previous model, which paid providers based on registrations, often led to a focus on sign-ups rather than engagement. By linking payments to attendance, providers are now encouraged to support consistent participation, ensuring children benefit from enriching experiences and healthy meals they may otherwise miss. At first glance, our previous model registration-based payments may seem more beneficial to providers. However, this model limits our ability to better support those providers with strong attendance, especially where FSM-eligible participation is high. With reduced financial risk and improved attendance data, we expect to be able to enhance payments in future delivery.

Expenditure Type	Amount
Capital Expenditure	£6,500
Programme Delivery	£1,052,883
Administration Expenditure	£129,769
Other	£93,636
Total Expenditure	£1,282,788

Quality of Provision

Together for Children enhanced their Quality Assurance model in 2024. Unannounced visits are undertaken lasting the full length of the session, this allows us more time to ensure delivery is meeting the desired criteria but also allowing those undertaking the visits to get a real feel for the delivery, offer support and suggestions for improvement and discuss concerns in a timely manner. Providers have found these visits less intrusive as audit questions can be asked after delivery therefore not disrupting delivery. It also allows more time to gather feedback from children, young people, parents and carers.

Food and Nutrition

The quality of food provision during the HAF programme has consistently improved. Providers are encouraging young people to try new foods, create healthy snacks and learn more about the benefits of keeping hydrated and how food can fuel your body.

Free training opportunities have been offered to all HAF providers to enhance this area of delivery.



Physical Activities

In Sunderland, our focus is on making sure that physical activities are varied, so that every child can find something they love. Swimming has become a key part of the HAF programme in Sunderland, with 139 children receiving a lesson in Summer 2024.

Physical activities included traditional sports as well as martial arts, dance, Nerf games, gymnastics, boxing and cheerleading. Most of the staff involved in delivering the holiday clubs are professional sports coaches and teachers, experienced in delivering physical activity.



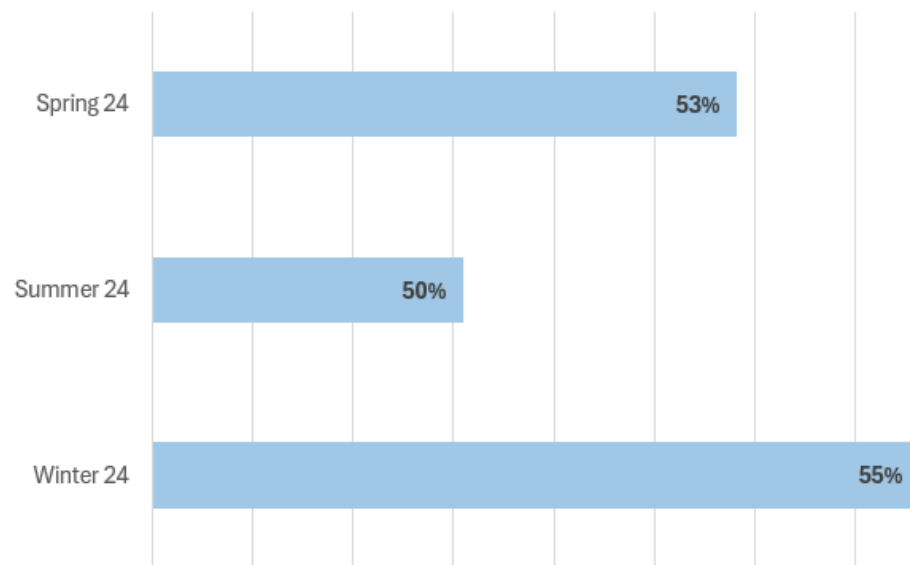
Enriching Activities

Children and young people had the opportunity to take part in a huge range of enriching activities. These activities were designed to engage children and young people with a broad range of interests and abilities. The activities provided opportunities for children and young people to learn new skills such as theatrical make up, water safety, animal interactions, science experiments, gardening and recycling workshops.



Headline achievements

The percentage of all eligible children attending at least one HAF activity session, across the year:

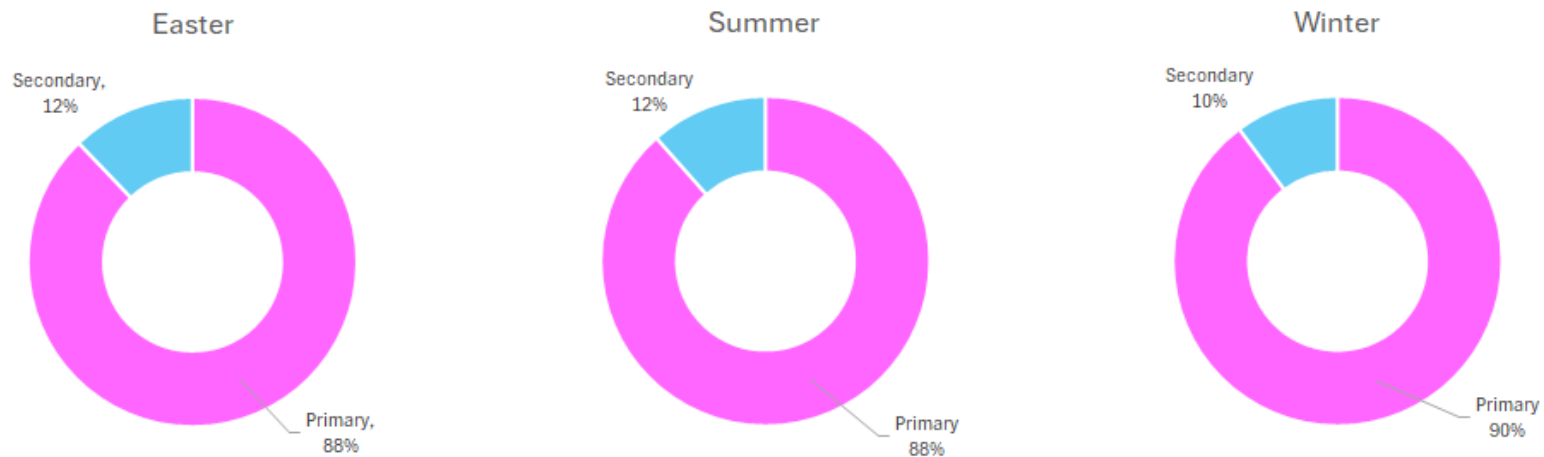


The total number of children and young people attending HAF activities steadily increased from Easter to Summer 2024. Figures subsequently fell in Winter due to the dates when the holidays landed, with families stating they had less need for alternative provision.



Headline achievements

Percentage of take-up of HAF activities by Primary and Secondary aged children:



In 2024 Wear here for Spring, Summer and Winter delivered 250 projects and engaged with 6518 individual children and young people across the city, with a large number attending during more than one HAF period.

Offering a wide range of physical, enriching and nutritional education activities as well as signposting for families.

Mobile HAF sessions are also offered across the city allowing families to join in a colour fun event to increase engagement with older young people parents and carers. Family Hubs delivered more targeted delivery for minority groups.



HAF Providers

The HAF Coordinator is based within the Together for Children's Early Help section. This presents ready opportunity for networking with colleagues and identifying families who will benefit from the programme and signposting them to the relevant opportunities.

The network of clubs and activities associated with HAF include voluntary and charity sector organisations, private organisations, schools and the faith sector which enables collaborative partnership arrangements.

Providers who delivered HAF funded activity during 2024

Active Families	Grace House	SNYP
Active Future	Groundworks	Sport Works
Active Kids	Hope 4 All	Sportscool Durham
Acumen Community Buildings	ICE Kids	Sportsking Coaching
All Stars Active	Keep Active NE	Sunderland Training & Education Farm
AP Coaching	Lambton Street	Swim City
Bella Marie Training Academy	Leisure United	Tailored Leisure
Blue Watch	Lingotot East Durham	TFC
Chance	MC Coaching	The Box
CNS Sport Stars	North East Dance CIC	The Creative Seed
Community Kids	Pennywell Community Centre	Washington AFC
Community Opportunities	SARA	Washington Athletics
Elite PE and Wellbeing	YAP	Washington Gymnastics Club
Everyone Active	SCAG	Weights & Cakes
Football Fun factory	Science Buddies	Wham Theatre School
Foundation of Light	Sensory Place	YAV
Genius Tuition		

Marketing & Communication

We created a communications toolkit that was shared with providers. We used communication and promotional materials to;

- Tell children, young people and families about the Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme activities that are happening across Sunderland and encourage them to find out more.
- Let families know if they're eligible to take part and tell them how they can get involved.

The toolkit also provides guidance on language and key messages, social media, logo usage, and photography and video. We ask providers to follow the guidance when promoting your HAF activities via their website, social media pages and on printed materials.

Communications Toolkit for Providers (HAF) (sharepoint.com)

We have a dedicated webpage available for families and providers. A number of short videos have been produced which showcase the range of activities that have been provided in 2024 for children and young people.





Mobile HAF

Mobile HAF was introduced to support areas where HAF provision is low and to engage more families signposting them to local provisions.

Following the success of the Colour Fun events in Summer 2023, we continued the theme into Summer 2024 by delivering family events across each area of the city. These events were supported by a range of professionals from across the city, creating a vibrant and collaborative environment for families to enjoy. Parents and carers received valuable support and information from the Family Hubs, the Family Information Service, and other Prevention Services, with a focus on promoting the health and wellbeing of their children and young people. Every child and young person who attended had the opportunity to make their own healthy pizza, engaging in a fun and educational food activity. Each family also received a signposting pack which included free vouchers for family swimming and soft play sessions—resources designed to encourage active family time over the summer holidays. We are also introducing water safety and swimming lessons to help educate our young people and keep them safe near the sea, rivers and lakes in and around the city. Public health has shared information regarding their concerns re poor dental hygiene amongst our young people therefore we have linked providers with My Dentist who will deliver workshops to encourage young people to maintain good oral hygiene as well as make them aware of what impact certain foods, drinks and vaping/smoking can have.

Our Mobile HAF delivery has become more popular this year with up to 200 children and young people attending plus parents and carers.





Case Study

J.D has been a member of LSY&CH for a few years, he originally started coming to the community's centre when he was a young boy, this young person then began to struggle with his mental health and stopped turning up to the centre, he began to lock himself away in his bedroom due to social anxiety. J.D recently started came back to the centre, receiving help and counselling often through our Good Vibes Project, he began to open up and allow the counsellor to help him through his hard times.

This young individual began coming to LSY&CH's music project ran every Tuesday and Thursday, since then, music has almost become his doorway to getting back to living a normal life, as he started to come to our Holiday Activity Fun sessions for the school holidays. J.D has begun to have a social life, going to parks and places with his friends, has stopped locking himself away in his room and gets involved with things happening around him. This young person has started to get involved in our sports sessions ran during the HAF, making new friends, coming out of his shell and even getting involved playing games like dodgeball and bulldog.

J.D has had a lot of improvement from where he first began, from the help he receives from the Good Vibes project and staff here at LSY&CH. Due to the HAF sessions J.D has begun to try new things here at the centre, from playing table tennis with new friends to playing pool, he is gaining more confidence in himself, although sometimes he's still nervous, he pushes it to the side. This individual went to one of his first ever sleepovers. Conquering his fears of being away from his home, his safe place, and spending time away from his parents with a friend.

He is excited to get back into the music project in September and has even talked about attending youth club.



Case Study - Summary

The HAF programme provides essential support to families in the city. With these programmes running it ensures young people and families can still access support as in schools, if they need to. It enables young people to access food that is healthy and nutritious, whilst being educated of the benefits. They are also there to support families with information through nutritional education and can offer support locally by signposting to foodbanks and other food outlets where the expense is lessened. Young people take part in activities for free where it would otherwise be expensive, young people learn the benefits of different types of exercise than that of PE taught in schools, these activities have no defined structure and young people get to choose what they would like to do and have and enjoyable fun experience.

Impact of HAF for Families

One of our HAF providers who is well established in the city, had a young person attend the provision who had recently moved into the area. The family is originally from Poland, the young person and his younger brother were born in the UK and speak both Polish and English. This young person is quite insecure and required a lot of attention, Lambton Street Youth & Community Hub have been trying to encourage him to be more independent. On their initial meeting with him he came across as very sad, almost like he had the weight of the world on his shoulders, when asked if he was ok he would say that he didn't like to wait for his turn to play on something or that other young people were annoying. The staff had to keep reminding him about sharing and taking turns, he struggles in social situations, but staff have been working hard to support him in befriending other young people and reminding him that he is in a safe environment to explore his social interests.

Since attending the Summer HAF programme his confidence has grown immensely and they have seen that he is now opting to participate in the DJ sessions, he is also enjoying speaking with other young people who attend. This is something which he would never have attempted to do when he first arrived. He is now confident and discusses what he believes is right and wrong. Cultural differences have played a huge role in holding him back, but luckily there is such a large diverse group that attend this provision that he has been able to have open discussions regarding this and hear other people's opinions. He may not always agree with them but will still listen to their point of view, this has also brought to light that he is not alone.

This years summer HAF has helped him grow friendship groups which will ease him into his new school in September, as a lot of the young people who attend the HAF sessions live and attend school in the local area. Directly through attending the HAF he has made friends which have encouraged him to try different activities within the centre and he now attends Karate. He is building his confidence and is overall a happier young person.

Importance of HAF continuing

Through the HAF programme they have been able to deal with social situations where young people have shown equality and diversity through play and discussions, this is particularly crucial for young people to realise this matters at a young age, to prevent racial and equality crimes. The importance of these programmes is paramount for the social development of young people, and their families, in enables parents to socialise and meet new people and it can also bring certain situations to light if they need support or help, by enabling them to be signposted to other organisations if they need it.



Parent Feedback

Dear Stacey and team,

I just want to thank you all for facilitating my stepsons at this year's camp. We were initially signposted to your service through my engagement with Sunderland Carers Centre, having recently moved to the area. Both boys have been dealing with ongoing challenges for most of their lives and are still under the care of Norfolk County Social Care Services. We were quite tentative about registering them for summer camps as this is an entirely new experience for them, given that they deal with considerable social and emotional barriers.

Reflecting on the past few weeks, we are so appreciative of the care, attention and fun you have provided at the KeepActive camp. The boys were very nervous and resistant on the first day, but those feelings soon disappeared when I collected them that first evening. This has been the first time they have been able to socialise with other children outside of school in Sunderland since we arrived 12 months ago. They have really enjoyed the activities and the chance to meet other children, and immediately wanted to sign up for a 2nd week.

I myself am also indebted to your facilitation, which has allowed for some much-needed respite given our family circumstances. Thank you so much for providing them with a safe, accessible, active and creative space that has been a foundational part of their social development given the challenges they bear. These activities have certainly opened a world of possibilities for them. We hope to see you again soon,

Warm regards,

Levina Reeves

Parent Feedback

To whom it may concern

HAF sessions at Kids Club for our 3 children

We have 3 children = Maisy 12 years old, Maia 7 years old and Spencer 5 years old. Spencer has additional needs as well as a stammer. Where do I start... honestly the HAF sessions at Kids Club are absolutely AMAZING! They have so much to offer, and the staff are extremely hands on with every activity and task. All 3 of our children have had first time experiences with some of their activities and they always come home with a story about their day and how much fun they've had.

We've used alternative HAF provisions for our 2 girls, not our little boy as we're very funny with leaving him due to his needs. We need to know he has good relationships with the staff to communicate his wants and needs and, we must feel comfortable with his personal and intimate needs being met. Kids Club are absolutely outstanding in all aspects of these areas, and they go above and beyond. Alternative provisions that we have used for HAF for the girls haven't suited their minimum needs, communication has been atrocious, and the girls have left unhappy and not wanting to return.

What we love about Kids Club is the number of hands-on activities that all children get the opportunity to do. Our 12-year-old can get involved as much as our 5-year-old if she wants to or sometimes, she will choose to help with an older set task. She absolutely loves attending Kids Club and is straight out of bed on a morning which is lovely to see.

The days that Maisy has been a helper with an activity she'll come home beaming and will tell us straight away. She's a very quiet child but little things like this really help with her confidence. It's also lovely for us as parents to know that she's wanting to be involved with activities - she always knows what theme is coming next and she's always thinking of how she can put her input into it. For example, when it about Castles she took a map from our very recent Alnwick Castle visit so that she could add her real like experiences into the activities of designing things. She also spoke about it within the group talking session - this was lovely to hear for us as it made her feel important and meant she could share her learnt knowledge and facts with others who were interested. For us as parents we love the fact Maisy isn't wanting to be at home engrossed in technology and she wants to be involved with hands on activities. (continued...)



Parent Feedback

HAF sessions are absolutely fantastic as parents to 3 children days out and activities are extremely expensive more so now with the cost of living crisis too. With HAF sessions it's the peace of mind that all 3 of our children are entertained and fed for free, it's such a huge weight lifted for us as parents. We also know that the food that is offered is of such a huge variety and the staff cater for each individual child's needs with their own choices. Our little boy is extremely fussy, and we're reassured that he will be allowed to make his own choices but will also be encouraged to try new things too - this has really helped us at home. Our oldest eats absolutely everything and HAF mealtimes are a huge, exciting time for her as she gets to have food that we don't buy at home as all of us don't eat it. We also get surprised by some of the foods our middle daughter tries - it has widened her choice at home. We definitely think it helps sitting socially as part of a group at such a positive time where every child is happy that they can pick what they want.

Coming to Kids Club HAF is so exciting for all 3 of our children and it's extremely positive for us as parents knowing that all 3 of them are cared for, have their needs met, they're engaging in so many fun activities and also, they are learning life skills.

Spencer can be difficult to understand with his speech and language troubles as well as his added stammer. His relationship with all of the staff members is absolutely fantastic, they have so much time and patience for him. He's also made fantastic friendships with particular children within the club, and he talks about them none stop at home - his confidence is growing daily.

Communication in regard to all 3 of our children is fantastic by all staff members, in particular we need regular communication in regard to Spencer - this is absolutely no issue and is provided in a written format in a personal journal. All members of staff are approachable and will help in any way that they can.

Some of the key points of positives regarding HAF for us as parents are:

- Seeing our children's confidence growing
- Knowing they are happy and safe
- Seeing them excited daily to attend the sessions
- Knowing that all their needs are being met including intimate
- Giving our children routine and structure in school holidays as this is a massive important thing for us a family.

HAF at Kids club is fantastic and is a huge benefit for us.

Kind Regards, Mrs S Gibson