



Department
for Education



Portsmouth
CITY COUNCIL



HAF annual report 2024

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Foreword



The HAF programme in Portsmouth is overseen by a cross-directorate governance structure led by the Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services Directorate in collaboration with Children, Families and Education. Strategic oversight is provided by senior officers, including the Director of Housing and the Director of Children's Services, ensuring alignment with wider council priorities. Operational delivery is managed by a dedicated HAF team, with regular reporting to an internal steering and quality assurance group. The group, and senior officers monitor programme performance, financial compliance, and inclusion outcomes, and are supported by finance, legal, and procurement colleagues who contribute to robust oversight. An update report is also presented to Cabinet each year. The governance framework ensures that the programme remains responsive, inclusive, and accountable to both local needs and DfE expectations.

The HAF Fun Pompey programme continues to evolve with each season, learning and adapting to better meet the needs of the children and families in Portsmouth. Our commitment to improvement ensures that every year, our offerings become more enriching and appropriate. We take pride in leveraging the unique attributes of our area to provide exciting and diverse opportunities for our young participants. This ongoing dedication from our staff and partners is what makes our programme a standout success and we can't wait to visit the summer programme and see firsthand the difference it makes.

James Hill, Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services & Sarah Daly, Director of Children, Families and Education.

HAF Fun Pompey is the perfect display of Portsmouth's networks working together to create incredible opportunities for our children, young people and families. In 2024, we saw the programme grow not only in scale, but also in depth, with new initiatives like Let's Play Portsmouth and World Play Week extending our reach beyond traditional holiday periods. I am immensely proud of our team for their unwavering dedication and innovative approach, which has allowed us to expand our offerings through the Household Support Fund to meet the diverse needs of families in Portsmouth.

Cllr Nicholas Dorrington, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education.





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Introduction

Funded by the Department for Education, the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme provides free enriching activities and nutritious meals to school-aged children from low-income families across England during the holidays.

Each local authority tailors the programme to their community's needs.

Within Portsmouth City Council, we recognise the impact of financial challenges, especially during the cost-of-living crisis. In 2024 we responded by expanding the HAF benefit using Household Support Fund (HSF) money to include other low-income children not eligible for free school meals. These children would not be able to access the HAF programme without the additional funding.

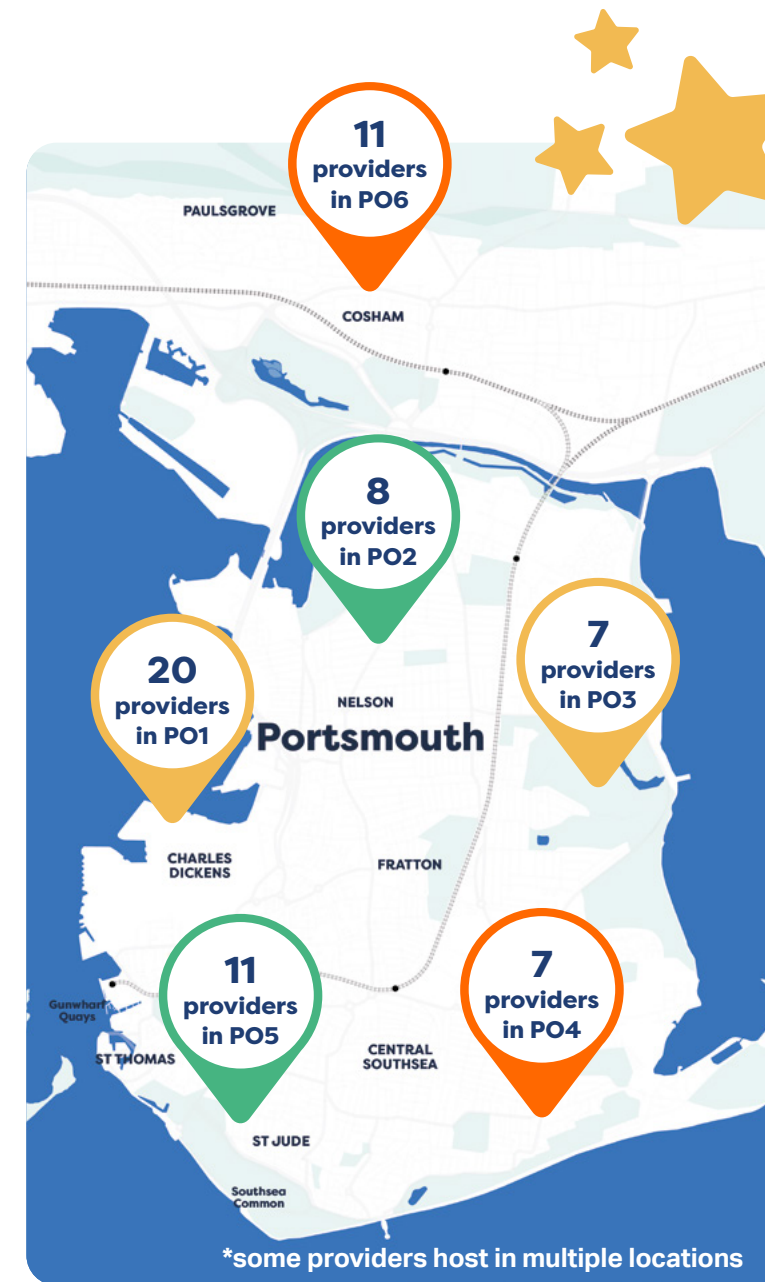
In Portsmouth, HAF Fun Pompey, commissioned by Portsmouth City Council, ensures accessibility for all children through various providers citywide.

Portsmouth's coastal location offers unique opportunities, yet some children have never tried water sports on the Solent or visited our museums.

In 2024, we collaborated with 51 local providers to offer diverse activities, including water sports, local museums, performing arts, sports, and specialised support for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Portsmouth has higher rates of under-14s with SEND compared to the national average. In response, over 50% of our providers in 2024 were qualified to support children with SEND.

Through the HAF Programme, strategic partnerships, and the Household Support Fund, we ensure all children, regardless of their background, can enjoy our city's rich offerings.



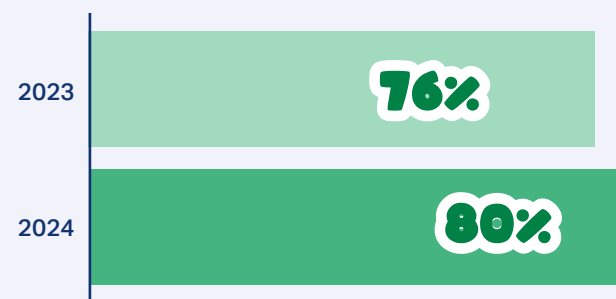
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2024 highlights

Unique learners reached

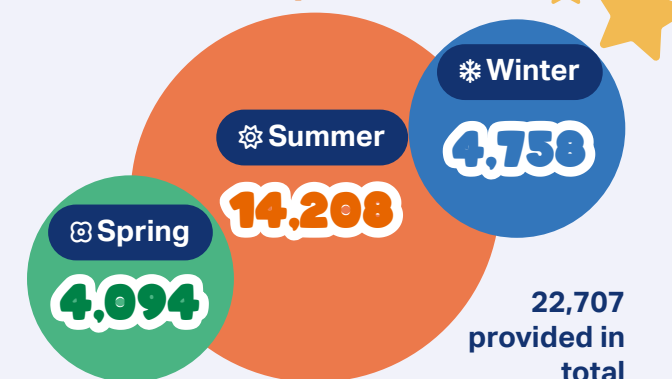
Season	Primary	Secondary	SEND	Change from 2023
📅 Spring	682	304	343	+5%
☀️ Summer	1,355	963	847	+64%
❄️ Winter	953	805	303	+45%

Attendance



Of all funded spaces

Total funded spaces



Extended offer of support

3000
goody bags distributed



The Library tuk-tuk dropped books and resources directly to children

Widening the HAF reach with HSF

1,165

591

and

Children

Families

participated in the Let's Play Portsmouth family days held in January & February.



Throughout 2024,

2,596

families have been reached through the HSF.

Portsmouth Library Service, Switch On Portsmouth, Bikeability, Home-Start Portsmouth, the Mental Health Support Team, and Special Care Dentistry all had pop-ups at 11 different HAF activities to engage with the community

Key achievements

Engaging families and carers in 2024

The HAF programme is well established in Portsmouth, as it continues to offer high-quality, enriching activities alongside nutritious meals in safe, welcoming environments. While attendance remains strong, we have prioritised outreach to families not currently accessing the programme.

In 2024, this included targeted efforts to engage secondary school-aged children through youth providers, following limited survey responses. Marketing materials were adapted to appeal to this age group, including the 'Festive Flex' campaign, shaped by feedback from the UNLOC Youth event.

We also commissioned the Young Creatives film group to capture youth perspectives and promote the programme through peer-led media. The Play and Youth Service enhanced its offer with combined activity and life skills sessions, such as water-based trips paired with workshops on knife crime and first aid.



HSF funded sessions

Throughout 2024, 2,596 families have been reached through the HSF funded HAF sessions. The extra funding allowed for children, young people and families who are not eligible for HAF but financially vulnerable, to access the HAF quality provision without the eligibility criteria.

These sessions were broken into two parts: Let's Play Portsmouth, family days in January and February and Sessions , for 11–16-year-olds throughout the year. For more information about Let's Play Portsmouth, see page 17 and for more information on Sessions, see page 18.



Monitoring bookings & engagement

This year, we continued building on increasing access to our booking platform called Eequ, which has played a vital role in streamlining the HAF Fun Pompey programme. By managing bookings consistently across all providers, Eequ has enabled us to accurately track attendance patterns, cancellations, and engagement in real time.

A particularly encouraging trend has been the increased use of the platform's cancellation function, which allows families to release spaces they can no longer use. This has proven more effective than relying solely on waiting lists, as it enables those on standby to book in quickly, reducing waste and increasing access.

Additionally, Eequ's ability to monitor cancellations within 72 hours has provided valuable insights. This data helps us assess whether providers have met their targets or faced challenges due to last-minute dropouts, allowing for fairer evaluations and more informed planning.

Eequ continues to add additional functionalities for ease of use by both HAF providers and the

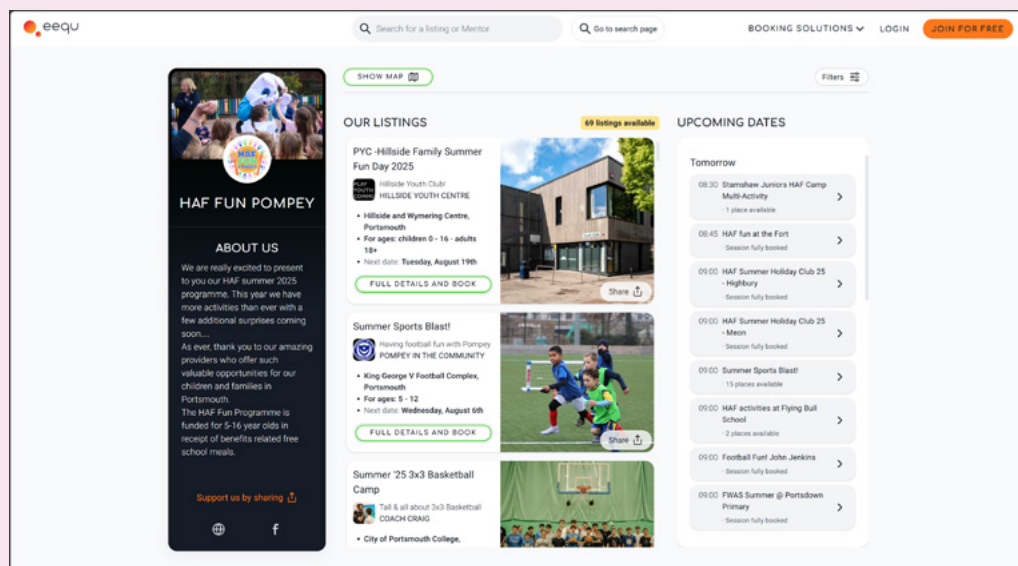
public, such as improved analytics, an additional layer of security and clear messaging for bookers, a new SEND accessibility checklist for bookers to be able to see SEND adjustments at a glance for each activity, and a whole host of other improvements for a better user experience.

Unique learners throughout the year

Summer saw the highest number of unique learners, which is consistent with its extended delivery period of approximately five weeks. In contrast, winter recorded the lowest participation,

despite having more providers than Easter. This suggests that external factors such as poor weather and competing family commitments throughout the Christmas period may have posed barriers to engagement.

Notably, the December 2024 holiday period was particularly fragmented, with Christmas and New Year splitting the break. This disrupted the consistency of session delivery, resulting in fewer full-week programmes



Tackling limited learners through a remote offer

In preparation for the disrupted winter programme, we provided 3000 goody bags as part of the winter remote offer.

We were pleased to offer goody bags to children who participated in the HAF activities during the winter holiday. Each colourful goody bag included:



A portion plate to promote healthy eating



A recipe card for family enjoyment



Reading book sourced from a local book shop (2,000 of the 3,000)



A pedometer to encourage physical activity

A HAF-branded water bottle to encourage hydration



Game cards to enhance skills and knowledge



These items were designed to support the various elements of our programme, including healthy eating, increased movement, and family engagement. Bags were distributed via providers and the foodbank network to support families accessing food banks, pantries, soup kitchens etc, extending the programme's reach. The branded bags also served as a promotional tool, raising awareness of HAF across the community.

Support for families

Signposting

Although HAF operates during school holidays, we ensure families are signposted to wider support. This includes information on healthy eating, affordable food options, and access to local services

Connecting families to local support

HAF Fun Pompey played a pivotal role in connecting local services with HAF providers by facilitating opportunities for these services to set up pop-up stands at family day events. This initiative was designed to foster greater community engagement by giving families the freedom to explore valuable information at their own pace and discretion. By creating a welcoming and informal environment, families were introduced to a range of essential services, including Portsmouth Library Service, Switched On Portsmouth, Bikeability, Home-Start Portsmouth, the Mental Health Support Team and Special Care Dentistry. These connections not only raised awareness of the support available but also empowered families to make informed

choices about the resources that could benefit their wellbeing and development.

Promoting healthier eating within households

In 2024, we launched a Cook-a-long programme in response to the growing need to promote healthier eating habits within households. The initiative featured a simple, easy-to-follow recipe card accompanied by a video demonstration, which was filmed with a commissioned community chef. To make the experience accessible and interactive, we included a QR code on the card that allowed families to watch the video and provide feedback. The concept was well-received in principle, with many expressing enthusiasm and praising the idea. However, despite this initial interest, we did not receive any formal feedback through the channels provided. As a result, we have decided not to proceed with publishing additional recipe cards or videos at this time.

health&care portsmouth Portsmouth CITY COUNCIL

ONE POT CHICKEN CURRY

Serves 4 *Plus some for tasty left overs!*

Easy to cook in one pan
This mild and creamy curry is perfect for the whole family!

Ingredients

- 600g chicken breast or boneless thighs
- 1 teaspoon of mild curry paste
- 600ml chicken stock
- 200ml coconut milk (half of a tin) can freeze the rest
- 75g frozen peas
- 150g frozen green beans
- Half a cauliflower or broccoli broken into small pieces

Optional extras

- 2 large onions
- 4 garlic cloves or 1 teaspoon of garlic puree
- Small piece of fresh ginger
- 1 teaspoon of turmeric
- 1 teaspoon of cinnamon
- 50g raisins or sultanas

TIP! Leave the chicken out or swap for a vegetarian protein like tofu, chickpeas or sweet potato and swap chicken stock for vegetable, and you'll have a vegetarian/vegan dish!

Scan the QR code to cook along!



Key achievements

Bringing the resources to children and families

Library tuktuk visits were provided throughout the summer to increase access to library services and encourage borrowing of resources.

The tuk-tuk plays a vital role in delivering books and educational resources to families in areas where access to a traditional library may be limited. It offers a fun and interactive way for children to discover the joy of reading, inspiring them to sign up for a library card and learn where their nearest library is – thanks to the enthusiastic support of the library team. This creative outreach also helps promote the ever-popular Summer Reading Challenge, which culminates in a festive celebration to recognise and reward all the young participants.



The HAF Impact in Portsmouth

Case studies

In 2024, the HAF programme in Portsmouth continued to grow in reach and impact, driven by strengthened partnerships and a commitment to inclusivity.

PCC Play & Youth Service

Collaboration with the Play & Youth Service enabled a more accessible and flexible delivery model, particularly through open-access family engagement events. These events brought together community assets such as our adventure playgrounds and youth clubs, successfully engaging families from a wide range of backgrounds.

Feedback from families highlights the programme's positive influence on children's confidence, wellbeing, and social development. One parent shared how staff helped ease their child's anxiety, creating a relaxed and supportive environment that encouraged participation and built self-esteem.

"My child thoroughly enjoyed their sessions with the team. They were always friendly and approachable when speaking with them, they were able to reassure my child when they were nervous about coming in and trying activities for the first time. Speaking with her, staff helped boost confidence by having an unserious approach, everything was fun and relaxed and that definitely put my child at ease. Thank you."



Easter

Heart of Portsmouth Boxing Academy

X, 11, struggles with his weight, asthma and consequently his self-esteem. Initially he was unsure of his ability and disliked the idea of running around the block. When he saw all other children doing it, he decided to give it a try. He took regular breaks on the run, but noticed himself that each day he tried it, he could run for longer periods of time. X loved boxing because it made him feel tough and strong. This provided him with motivation towards a positive goal - being a good boxer - rather than a negative goal - losing weight/ changing himself. X's mum was delighted to see how his mood was improved after the sessions, and they have signed up for regular weekly classes at the gym.

The programme also fostered peer support among participants. An increase in female boxers led to the formation of a supportive friendship group, with parents exchanging contact details to arrange meet-ups outside the sessions, demonstrating the wider social value of HAF.

Redwood Park Academy – special secondary school

Families expressed deep appreciation for the quality and consistency of care. One parent noted the peace of mind that came from knowing staff understood their child's needs, and praised the inclusive environment that encouraged participation and joy:

"Finding quality childcare for A, in a place she finds comfortable, and who knows her needs is so valuable to us as a family. It allows us to work knowing she is safe and happy. I am not worrying about the staff not understanding her. It was wonderful to hear how she tried all of the activities and had lots of fun. Please, please, please can this continue."

However, they also highlighted the need for more paid spaces and earlier notice to support working families with planning.



Summer

PCC Adolescent Service

X (aged 13) is a young person with a history of adverse childhood experiences, including exposure to domestic violence and parental substance misuse. Prior to summer 2024, there were escalating concerns around exploitation, with X recently arrested in connection with car theft. Despite these challenges, X attended all three HAF summer events, fully engaging in activities and demonstrating positive behaviour throughout. He resisted peer pressure to misbehave, communicated well with others, and took on a leadership role. Since attending, there have been no further police reports or safeguarding concerns, indicating the programme provided meaningful disruption and a positive outlet.

Additionally, Y, who has been out of education for two years and has limited social contact due to complex family circumstances, was offered a place at two HAF sessions. Initially hesitant, his family agreed to attend together under clear expectations. Following their first session at Lodge Hill, both Y and his mother described it as "the best day of their lives." Y returned for a second session and reported increased confidence in socialising. As a result, discussions are now underway to support his transition into local youth provision, including a youth club and police cadets.

Winter

Globe Fit Holiday Club

Two siblings, Child A and Child B, attended sessions in January. Child A, who has a strong need for physical activity to support self-regulation, thrived in football and playground-based activities. Child B gained confidence through dance and hula hooping. Both children felt safe and supported, with Child A opening up about a recent family bereavement demonstrating the emotional safety of the environment. It was clear they felt validated and always heard and learned to respect others' time to talk too. They also engaged in age-appropriate discussions around health and nutrition, including substance misuse. Child A formed a new friendship and frequently told staff "I love it here" while Child B, who had previously disliked holiday clubs, described the experience as "very fun".

The Young Creatives

In Paulsgrove, a representative from Special Care Dentistry attended a session, engaging with families and distributing oral health information and toothbrushes. The dental nurse reported positive interactions with nearly all attendees and felt she had successfully delivered key oral health messages. Information boards and leaflets were also made available, and staff promoted the Bathroom Bank, encouraging families to access additional support.

Additionally, a child who was initially extremely anxious about attending a Panto Workshop was gently supported to join the session with their mother. Due to a non-attendance, the team allowed the parent to stay. The child enjoyed the experience and expressed willingness to attend independently in the future. The parent was deeply appreciative of the flexible and compassionate approach taken by staff.

Survey Feedback

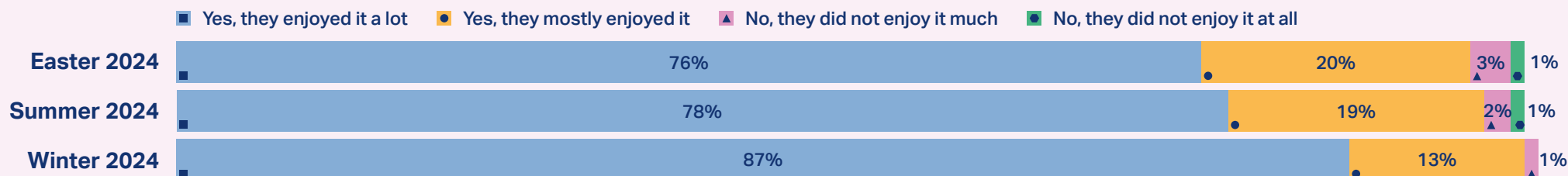
How many children aged 5–16 did you book onto a HAF activity?

We aimed to make HAF more appealing to entire families, and survey data shows steady progress. Across all three holidays, there was a consistent increase in families booking for two or more children, with the highest proportion seen in Winter (48%). The number of families with four or more children attending also rose in Summer. A small rise in families reporting zero children (2% in Winter) reflects our broader survey reach, which included eligible families who hadn't booked onto the programme helping us better understand barriers to participation.



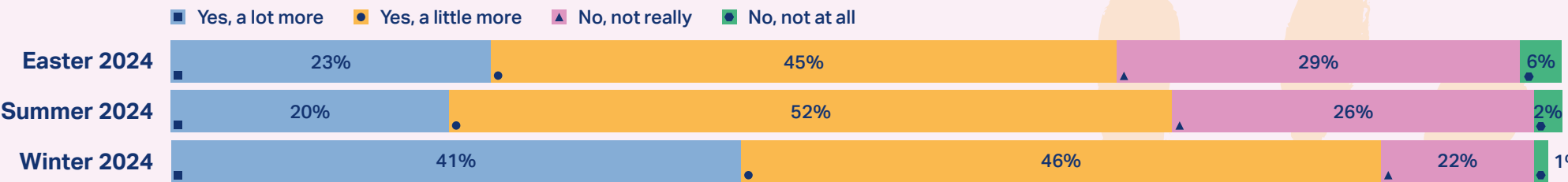
Did the child/children attending enjoy the activity/activities?

Winter: over 99% said their children enjoy the activity/activities. Just 1% of children did not enjoy the activities, and this was not due to the activity itself, but rather the parent describing the child as "fussy". Summer & Easter: 97% said their children enjoy the activity/activities.



Through attending HAF activities, does your child/children have greater knowledge of eating well and keeping active?

Survey responses show a positive trend in children’s understanding of healthy eating and physical activity through HAF. In Winter, 87% of parents said their child had gained greater knowledge, up from 72% in Summer and 68% in Easter. This suggests that our ongoing efforts to embed nutritional education and active lifestyles into the programme are having a growing impact.



Survey quotes:

Easter

"I loved it, it was so fun. I would love to come again. The sports and bunny making were my fav, 10/10 love it so much."

CM Foundation Family Child

"I came to all four HAF days during the Easter holidays. We had lots of outdoors fun at Forest school and Bootcamp. One of the best things from Forest school was when we had a real-life campfire, and everyone sat around the fire circle waiting to be called up to cook our marshmallows and make s'mores! Also, I love den building at home, and I had the freedom to do this at Forest school using sticks and tarp! It looked great! Then at Bootcamp, we used lots of different equipment – logs, tyres, battle ropes and lots more. We even got to flip a massive tractor tyre, and I loved the partner resistant running."

11 years old. Beacon View Academy

Summer 2024 quotes

Parental feedback through surveys:

"The days my children attended a HAF activity were both my children's highlight of the summer holidays."

"My daughter was very nervous to go since she really struggles to make friends despite the staff reassuring her. But after the first day she came out smiling and couldn't stop talking about how much fun she had and the new friends she had made and was then eager to return back to the sessions for the rest of the summer."

Winter 2024

Parental feedback through surveys:

"My girl loved every minute she came out so happy and met new friends and now would love to start gymnastics."

"My child's favourite moments were cooking Christmas cupcakes and proudly bringing them home for us all to enjoy. Pantomime experience – we wouldn't be able to afford this normally."



Assessing 2024 targets

Expand the inclusiveness of the family day offer through the HSF



1. Let's Play Portsmouth

This goal was achieved with the launch of Let's Play Portsmouth, a vibrant extension of the HAF programme exclusively for families, which was made available due to the Household Support Fund. The programme was delivered in January and February 2024 to address the gap in accessible activities outside of the main school holidays.

This initiative enabled providers to offer a wide range of inclusive, engaging sessions such as adventure play, youth clubs, forest school experiences, and family-based activities, ensuring that families from diverse backgrounds could access meaningful support and enrichment during term time. Special attention was given to removing barriers to participation, making the

programme more accessible to families who may not typically engage with holiday provision.

Not only did Let's Play Portsmouth meet the growing demand for year-round activities, but it also directly advanced our inclusivity goals. The programme reached 1,165 children and 591 families, with a total of 1,794 individuals participating demonstrating both the scale and success of this targeted approach.

2. World Play Week

The HSF was also used to support World Play Week, a colourful, fun celebration held from 5 to 10 August as part of the HAF summer programme.

Hosted across Portsmouth's adventure playgrounds in Paulsgrove, Buckland, Portsea, Landport, Stamshaw, and Somerstown, the playgrounds welcomed children aged 5 to 13 and their families to explore global cultures through free, engaging activities. Attendees enjoyed international cuisine and traditional games from around the world, with each site offering unique experiences that reflected the diversity of the city.

Crucially, World Play Week demonstrated that our commitment to inclusivity and cultural enrichment is not limited to a single initiative. Alongside Let's

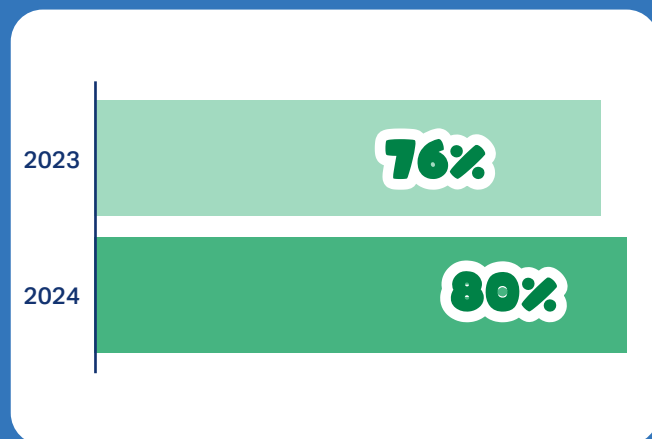
Play Portsmouth, it reinforced our year-round approach to delivering accessible, meaningful opportunities for families.



Improve attendance and reduce non-attendance

In 2024, we introduced a new Non-Attendance Statement of Intention to set clear expectations for families booking onto the programme. This proactive approach empowered providers to manage their sessions more effectively, allowing them to cancel future bookings after two missed sessions, provided they had made multiple attempts to contact the family. This not only encouraged responsible booking but also helped ensure that valuable spaces were not left unused.

Across the year, we improved attendance rate from 76% to 80%.



Increase secondary school aged engagement

HAF engagement

In 2024, we achieved a 64% increase in the number of HAF-eligible 11–16-year-olds participating in the programme compared to 2023. This significant growth was driven by targeted, in-person promotional efforts delivered by the PCC Engagement Team. The team visited secondary schools in the city, distributing promotional materials, encouraging schools to display posters, and ensuring information was shared through school bulletins and social media channels. These direct engagement strategies proved highly effective in raising awareness and increasing uptake among older children and young people.



Household Support Funded Sessions

The Household Support Fund was allocated to widen the HAF benefits and reach through a series of targeted initiatives. These included structured activities for young people aged 11 to 16, delivered

by the PCC Engagement Team. The programme provided access for both eligible participants and those who, while not meeting the HAF eligibility criteria, are identified as financially vulnerable.

To further reduce barriers to participation, particularly those related to transport and associated costs, the initiative included the provision of free bus passes. This support aimed to promote independent travel and ensure equitable access to all activities.

More information about the tailored sessions for specific groups on pages 21 and 22.





Play & Youth HAF legacy – what does post HAF funding look like?

The Play and Youth Service, funded through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the City Councils general fund, is uniquely positioned to sustain the legacy of the HAF programme. Located in some of the most deprived areas of Portsmouth, the service has a broad reach into communities where families are financially vulnerable and often in need of additional support.

By delivering HAF-funded activities, the service has provided significant benefits beyond the core offer - supporting families through signposting to other agencies, distributing food hampers, and working collaboratively to address issues such as antisocial behaviour, mental health challenges, and social isolation. The service has also played a key role in targeting children with low school attendance, building strong relationships with schools to support re-engagement, and fostering community cohesion among vulnerable young people at greater risk.

Partnerships and collaborations

Steering group

The HAF Steering Group plays a vital role in shaping the direction and delivery of the programme, ensuring it remains responsive, inclusive, and impactful. The group meets at least once a year as part of the governance structure and is chaired by the HAF lead. Programme delivery, survey results and case studies are reviewed by the steering group and used to shape future commissioning priorities.

The 2024 meeting brought together a diverse group of professionals from across Portsmouth City Council and key partner organisations. This broad representation ensures that decisions are informed by a wide range of expertise ultimately benefiting the children and families who rely on the service.

Attendees included:

- Representatives from Portsmouth City Council (PCC)
- Solent NHS Mental Health Support Team
- Head of Health & Strategy, Energise Me
- Head of Museums, PCC Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services
- Engagement Manager, PCC Economy, Planning and Transport
- Education Business Lead – School Catering
- Learning and Outreach Officer, PCC Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services
- Senior Corporate Communications Officer, PCC Corporate Services
- Corporate Performance Manager, PCC Corporate Services
- Tackling Poverty Coordinator, PCC Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services



Professional referrals

One area that the steering group has had significant influence in is the shaping of the professional referral process.

To better support vulnerable children not eligible for free school meals, we have streamlined our referral process to ensure resources are directed where they are most needed. Initially, the referral system successfully identified and supported a wide range of needs through the programme.

Over time, we observed that referrals were being submitted for a variety of reasons, and there was a growing expectation from both service providers and the public that all referrals would be approved. In consultation with the HAF steering group, the referral criteria were streamlined to focus on three key areas:

- Financial vulnerability
- Children on a Child Protection Plan
- Children experiencing trauma at home

This targeted approach has improved efficiency, ensured fairness, and maintained flexibility to consider exceptional cases when possible. As

a result, the programme continues to deliver meaningful support to the most at-risk children.

Collaborative projects and initiatives for at-risk children and families

The success of HAF Fun Pompey is rooted in strong partnerships. Key stakeholders included Portsmouth City Council, local schools, voluntary organisations, local businesses and various agencies/services. Collaborative projects focused on supporting at-risk children and families, with streamlined referral pathways through the PCC Early Help Team, The Roberts Centre, and PCC Adolescent Services to support children and families who are at high risk of exploitation, in temporary accommodation and those not fully engaging with school due to mental health issues.

Early Help: "Thank you to all the team who were involved in this summer's activities it was so well run and my kids loved it! It was so nice seeing the change in my daughter's mental health and wellbeing, she is feeling more prepared and determined for school as a result and has returned much better than I expected. Seeing her more engaged and seeing the benefit of her

having more improved routines has made such a difference she has been so much happier to mix and go out which I didn't expect this summer"

The Roberts Centre, which works with those experiencing homelessness or family breakdown, and the Early Help and Prevention Service, which supports families with challenges such as school attendance, employment, behaviour, and access to health and safeguarding services, played a vital role in extending the reach of the HAF programme.

These partnerships help us reach those most in need, offering tailored support and ensuring that all families have the chance to benefit from the HAF programme.





Household Support Fund

The Household Support Fund played a crucial role in enabling access for financially vulnerable families through our Sessions initiative. Tailored sessions were developed for specific groups, such as Young Carers, to ensure inclusivity and address diverse needs. The programme featured a range of day trips designed to enrich young people's experiences, encourage the development of new social connections, and sustain engagement with professional support services.

Play & Youth service

Integrating the Play and Youth Service into the HAF programme significantly amplified its reach and effectiveness. The service contributed deep expertise in play, youth voice, safeguarding, and on-site enrichment, while HAF added value through access to FSM-eligible families, new audiences, and expanded activity options.

This collaboration led to new partnerships (e.g., Seekers Create), the return of residential trips, and a broader range of life skills activities such as water safety and first aid. It also improved

food quality and education, introduced an online booking system for digitally excluded families, and upskilled staff across technical and administrative areas.

Overall, HAF not only amplified the reach and impact of the Play and Youth Service but also fostered a culture of innovation, inclusivity, and collaboration that continues to benefit children, families, and the wider community.



Quality of provision

Provider monitoring averages across 2024

Rating	No. of providers	percentage of providers
Excellent	3	8%
Very good	21	58%
Good	12	34%
Compliant	0	0%
Not compliant	0	0%

The 2024 provider monitoring results show a strong overall performance, with 63% of providers rated as excellent or very good. Whilst this may appear as a slight dip compared to the previous year, a key positive development is that no providers were rated as requiring improvement marking a significant step forward in overall quality assurance. This shift suggests a more consistent standard across the board, with all providers now delivering at least a good level of service. Continued investment in training, feedback, and support has helped raise the baseline of provision, ensuring that all children and families benefit from a high-quality HAF experience.

It's worth noting that 2024 saw the introduction of a sustainability criteria within the monitoring framework. While this reflects an important step toward environmentally responsible practice, some providers found it challenging – particularly those without kitchen facilities so were reliant on pre-packaged food from caterers, which often comes in single-use containers and cutlery. This aspect impacted scores for some, highlighting the need for ongoing support and practical solutions to help providers meet sustainability goals without compromising service quality.

In 2024, we collaborated closely with the Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Partnership (PSCP) to roll out a comprehensive safeguarding audit across our HAF providers. This initiative was designed not only to assess current safeguarding practices but also to support our strategic aim of upskilling provider teams. Through this collaborative effort, we were able to identify both areas of strong practice and gaps in provision, enabling us to tailor support and training more effectively. The audit process also served as a valuable engagement tool, strengthening our relationships with providers by fostering open dialogue and shared learning. As a result, providers were better equipped with the

knowledge and confidence to implement robust safeguarding measures, contributing to a safer and more supportive environment for children and young people.



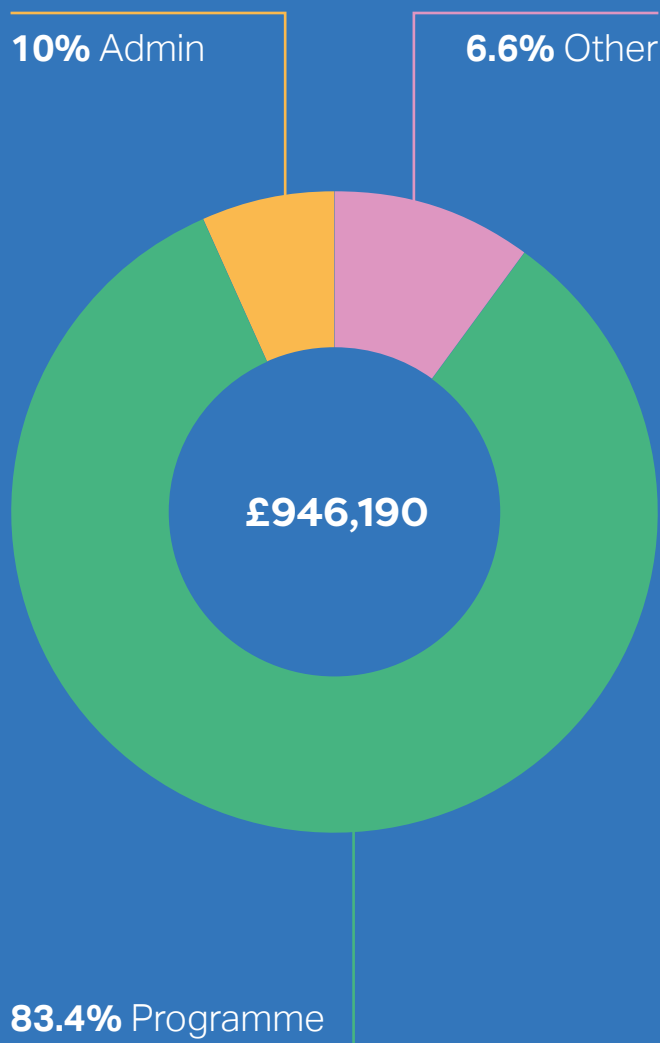
Financial overview

**2024 DfE HAF Grant Total =
£966,300**

Category	Spend
Administrative	£96,534.67
Program	£787,420.57
Other	£62,234.76
Total	£946,190.00

Other funding sources included Household Support Fund (HSF)

£168,132 – HSF spends for Jan/Feb family days, summer, Oct half term, and winter holidays



More information:

Staffing from administrative £96,534.67

- HAF Project Lead (Play, Youth & Community)
- Business Support Officer (Play, Youth & Community)
- Project & Partnership Lead (Play, Youth & Community)
- Senior Leadership (Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services)
- Finance and Education (final budget holder) support (Children, Families & Education)

Other: £62,234.76

In 2024, the HAF programme saw a significant increase in the 'other' spend from £1,500 in 2023 to £62,250. This increase reflects a strategic shift in response to the unique challenges posed by the winter delivery period. With the holiday dates split by Christmas and New Year, many providers faced limitations in offering consistent face-to-face sessions. Recognising this, we adapted the programme by investing in a broader remote offer.

Financial overview

This remote offer (goody bags pictured right) was designed to maintain the core HAF objectives of promoting healthy eating and physical activity, while also giving children meaningful activities to engage with from home. The revised approach ensured continued support for families during a disrupted period, maximising the impact of the funding despite reduced in-person delivery.

Another new charge this year was commissioning professional marketing videos produced by a local company to promote the various aspects of the programme, and how HAF benefits different families and their needs.

We had various videos in portrait and landscape versions with different target audiences in mind. This included:

1. 5–11s
2. 11–16s
3. Family days
4. Celebrating Portsmouth

View the videos on PYC.

This financial strategy ensured that all funding streams were maximised to support inclusive, high-quality provision throughout the year.



Challenges and lessons learned

Despite the many successes of the 2024 HAF programme, several challenges emerged throughout the year. Poor weather, staff and participant illness, venue limitations, and fluctuating attendance in some areas all impacted delivery. While some of these factors are beyond our control, we've seen that providers offering flexible, responsive programmes were better able to adapt and maintain engagement.

Key lessons learned included the value of early planning, adaptable delivery models, and continuous provider training. In response, we will now require all providers to submit contingency plans as part of the commissioning process, covering bad weather, venue changes, and staff cover, particularly for the winter period when disruption is more likely.

We also made notable improvements in communication strategies, including clearer messaging around non-attendance policies, enhanced programme promotion, and increased visibility through the PCC Engagement Team. Additionally, our digital booking system, Eequ, has continued to evolve, improving the user experience for families and providers alike.

Looking Ahead

As we plan for 2025, we are committed to building on this year's progress and preparing for future uncertainty, including potential changes to funding from March 2026. Our focus will be on making 2025 our most inclusive and impactful year yet.

► Start:

- Strengthening connections with underserved communities, including BAME groups, asylum seekers, and refugees.
- Supporting providers to embed sustainable and environmentally friendly practices.
- Introducing Mystery Shoppers to help evaluate provision and embedding youth voice in programme design.

👋 Stop:

- Discontinuing printed recipe cards and video cook-a-longs. In response, we've increased hands-on cookery sessions within the HAF Fun Pompey programme to better meet demand and support healthy eating.

✓ Continue:

- Leveraging the Household Support Fund and other funding streams (e.g., Feeding Britain) to enhance provision.
- Encouraging peer-to-peer support among providers to share best practice and build resilience.
- Grassroots engagement with schools and underserved communities, working with PCC's engagement team.

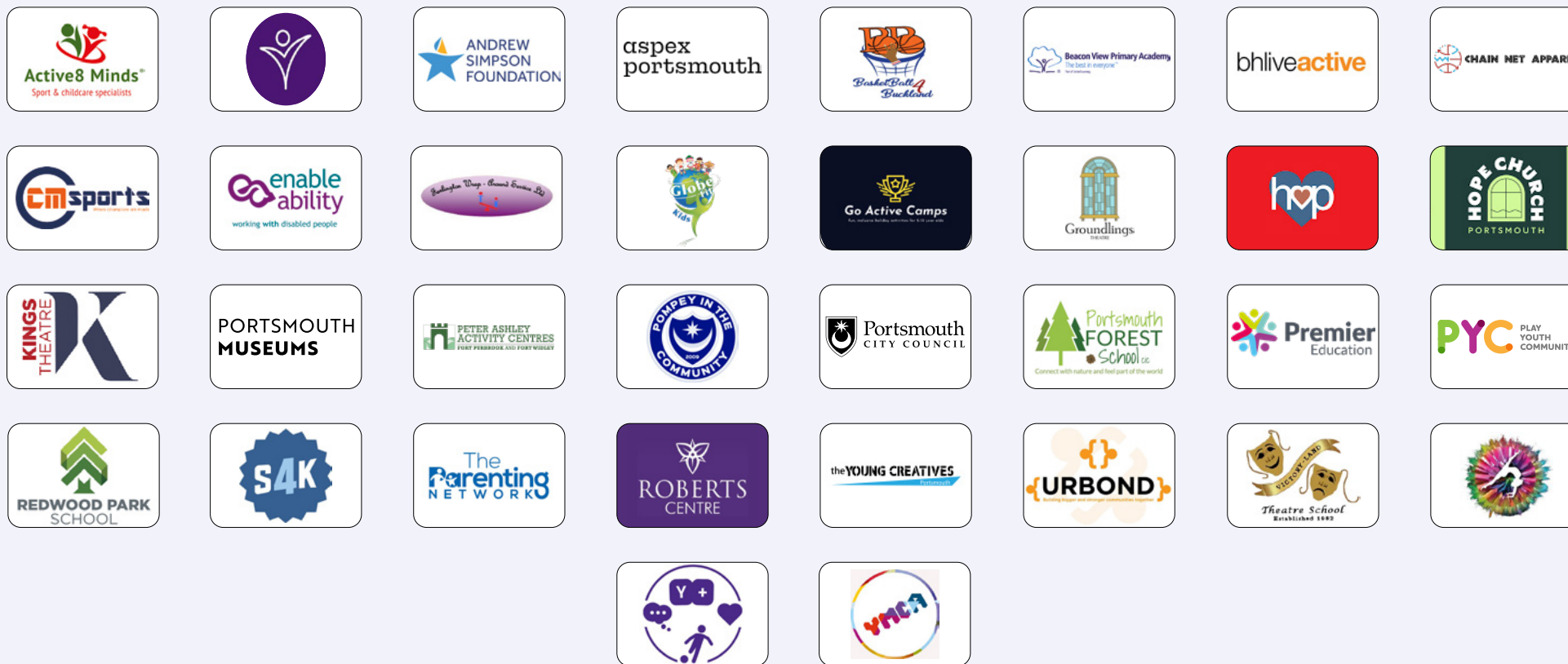
↗ Improve:

- Deepening engagement with schools that have high FSM rates but lower HAF uptake through assemblies, pop-ups, and parent evenings.
- Expanding the cultural and creative offer to reflect the diversity of Portsmouth's communities.

While we currently reach 18.2% of the FSM cohort, just short of the government's 20% target, we remain committed to increasing access. We will continue to invite schools, businesses, and community members to get involved, helping us build a stronger, more inclusive holiday offer and connect more families to local support networks.

Acknowledgements

A huge thank you to our wonderful providers who continue to offer incredible experiences to the children, young people and families in Portsmouth



With enormous recognition to the Department for Education for their continued funding that makes HAF Fun Pompey possible.

And another heartfelt thank you to all the support networks, steering group attendees, and multiagency team attendees who come together to share their expertise - your contributions are invaluable in helping us shape the best programme possible. We are also incredibly grateful to our stakeholders for providing thoughtful feedback, which enables us to continue developing the programme in line with the evolving needs of Portsmouth families.