



HERTS SUMMER PARKS

2024

by Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership

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1. Background

HAPpy's older sister returns for another year!

The Herts Summer Parks programme is an initiative aimed at plugging the gap in provision for 12 to 16-year-olds across Hertfordshire over the summer holiday period. The 2024 programme took place in five public parks throughout August, offering a range of sports wellbeing and arts and crafts activities as well as providing children and young people with a voucher to redeem a nutritious meal from a local food provider. The programme was commissioned by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) to be delivered by Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership (HSP). Funding was sought through multiple sources including contributions from the Local Authorities.

This report aims to summarise the strategies taken, highlight key successes, and identify the challenges that were faced during the 2023 delivery period and how they were overcome.

During the pilot phase in 2023, parks were first selected based on Free School Meal (FSM) data from the Partnerships Local Insight tool. The chosen areas showed the highest proportions of children in the target age group eligible for benefits-related FSM. This year's strategy involved a comprehensive site review of all five locations to determine whether relocation was necessary or if we should continue in the same areas. Working with our Active Local officers and Local Authority partners, we held discussions to gather insight on potential new locations for hosting the programme. As a direct result of this, two park locations were changed.



2. Lessons and changes from 2023

Parks

Staffing and Timings

Activities

Food Provision

Registration & Marketing

2. Lessons and changes from 2023

Parks

It is essential to ensure that the programme is hosted in a location that is used by young people.

Insights from last year showed that the visibility of the park played a significant role in attracting attendees, as many children and parents discovered the programme simply by walking past.

Although Meadow Park in Borehamwood successfully hosted the programme last year, insight led a decision to move more into the heart of Cowley Hill. Borehamwood Youth Football Club offered to host the Summer Parks programme at their facility which aligned with this aim.

Additionally, Services for Young People (SFYP) were delivering their HAPpy provision at the same venue, running from 12pm – 4pm, which overlapped with the Summer Parks programme by one hour.

This provided an excellent opportunity to collaborate with SFYP, as they offer services for the same age group. This partnership allowed cross promotion of programmes effectively and offered the young people attending the club the chance to participate in the Summer Parks activities once their session finished.

Cheshunt Park in Cheshunt hosted the programme last year but following recommendations from Broxbourne Borough Council it was suggested to:

“Explore Grundy Park as an alternative venue... anticipating a potential increase in attendees.”

Following a review of this site, Broxbourne Borough Council and our Active Local officer agreed to relocate. This park had recently undergone renovations and now features a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) and basketball courts, which have contributed to an increase in the number of teenagers visiting the park and the leisure centre on site.



Watford Borough Council and HSP conducted a review of several parks in Watford as potential venues for the programme. However, none of the sites could accommodate all the activities on offer, therefore a decision was made to continue the programme at King George V Playing Fields (KGV).

The sites in Stevenage and Welwyn Garden City did not change as Local Authorities were keen to keep the location the same due to their success last year.

2. Lessons and changes from 2023

Staffing and timings

Following the programme's success last year, endorsement from our Local Authority partners and positive feedback from participants, HSP decided to engage Sporting Inspirations CIC as the delivery partner once again. The team encompasses experienced Youth Workers equipped with the skills needed to engage with the target age group.

Listening to feedback from Sporting Inspirations staff last year, it was difficult to keep the same level of consistency due to Cheshunt Park falling under the responsibility of Broxbourne Borough Council.

Taking this into consideration and, after speaking with officers at the Council, it was agreed that Sporting Inspirations would oversee all five sites for this year's provision.

A review of the delivery days led to small adjustments to better fit the logistics of the programme. As a result, Cheshunt was rescheduled to a Tuesday, Stevenage moved to a Friday and Watford took place on Wednesday.

Last year, the programme ran from 4pm – 7pm but staff observed a significant drop-off in attendance after 6pm. This year a decision was made to adjust the schedule, moving the programme one hour earlier, from 3pm – 6pm.

By starting the programme one hour earlier, this change was intended to keep engagement throughout the entire session.

This change proved successful, as there were no noticeable declines in attendance, and children tended to remain engaged for the entire three-hour duration.

Last year, two members of staff were allocated two hours to set up the equipment and prepare the site for delivery. Following feedback, it became clear that staff felt the need for support and a break after set up in order to rest and brief the rest of the team arriving ahead of delivery. In response to this, funding was committed for two additional staff members from the earlier set up time, which allowed for the adjustment of the schedule to 1 hour 30 minutes for set up, followed by a 30-minute break.

Activities

Based on last year's report and feedback, the activities delivered by external providers were highly successful with the target audience, and so the decision was made to engage with these providers again.

It was vital that all children were given the same opportunity to access all activities on offer, so the original programme schedule was retained, recruiting the providers to deliver their activities for a full week across all five sites. Providers were engaged earlier in the planning process to ensure a better chance of securing each providers availability for an entire week rather than on ad hoc dates across August..

Given that this is the second time running this programme, higher attendance was anticipated, therefore it was essential that enough equipment was available on offer for the children to access alongside the external activities.

Extra equipment, such as volleyball nets, swing ball and speed stacking cups, were purchased, providing the children with a range of different sporting activities to help in maintaining the engagement of young people throughout the duration of the programme.

2. Lessons and changes from 2023

Food provision

To ensure that the programme was cost-effective and delivered on a commitment to reduce food waste, the food voucher system remained.

The design was similar to last year's, featuring a QR code on the back. This code directed users to our website page for the Herts Summer Parks Programme, providing details about the programme and the locations where the vouchers could be exchanged.

Maintaining the same model of onsite and offsite options within walking distance of the parks, HSP engaged with the same food providers due to the positive feedback received previously.

For the two new sites, Grundy Park and Borehamwood Youth FC, HSP engaged with new food providers.

Registration

Last year's registration process involved five separate forms, one designated for each park. On the delivery day, the team would download the form for the specific park and input the attendance data. However, feedback showed that having five identical forms caused confusion and minor human errors. Therefore, this year, a centralised registration form was created, allowing attendance data for all parks to be recorded and accessed on a single spreadsheet.

There were issues regarding gaining consent for photography, particularly since children of this age cannot provide consent without parental approval so it was agreed by both HSP and Sporting Inspirations that delivery staff would not take photos, and a photographer would capture this footage on selected days when photo consent forms were distributed.



Marketing

In response to last year's feedback, which highlighted the need for increased marketing efforts, the team allocated a larger budget for marketing materials this year.

HSP's marketing team were fully involved from the beginning of the process to look at what marketing materials could effectively engage our target audience. Rather than traditional flyers, the marketing team introduced credit card-sized flyers, specifically designed for easy distribution. These compact cards could fit behind phone cases or in pockets, providing a practical alternative to larger leaflets meaning children and young people would likely hold onto them for longer and would be reminded of the programme.

Feather, pop-up and vinyl banners were created using our brand colours and themes, so that the resources could be displayed in and around the parks to further promote the programme and increase the visibility to passers by.

The branding for Herts Summer Parks remained, with only a few minor adjustments. Our marketing team recommended keeping the existing logo, as it was recognised by parents and children from last year's programme therefore making any changes to it could result in it not being recognised.

The minor changes included updates to the artwork on the flyers and the incorporation of photos to enhance engagement. The graffiti-style font and colour scheme remained.

3. Summer Parks 24 In Action

Locations & Registration

Staff training & Activities

Key Partners

Marketing

3. In Action

Pre planning

The planning process involved working closely with Local Authority partners to gain land permissions for each site.

Event management plans, risk assessments and event notification forms were completed and sent to the relevant safety Advisory Group or Safety Advisory Teams for approval.

As per last year, the Partnership collaborated with Andrew Heath and Peter Andrews, the Health and Safety Advisory Team from Stevenage Borough Council, who assisted with the risk assessments, plus a thorough assessment of the two new sites, alongside a review of the existing three sites.

This evaluation ensured that all risk assessments were complete and that no critical safety considerations were overlooked.

Registration

This year, the pre-registration link was distributed in July, allowing parents and young people to register in advance of the event.

On the day of the programme, two registration tents were set up, one for individuals who had pre-registered, which served as a fast-track queue, and another for those who had not pre-registered.

This approach proved effective as it prevented a large queue of children attempting to sign up on the day of the event.

It is important to acknowledge that a significant positive change was the implementation of the registration form on all the marketing materials, replacing the previous year's 'expression of interest' form. This adjustment enabled young people to complete their registration fully beforehand, allowing them to sign in quickly and engage in activities without delay.



The confirmed locations and days were as follows:

- **Monday** – Borehamwood Youth FC – Hertsmere
- **Tuesday** – Grundy Park – Broxbourne
- **Wednesday** – King George V Playing Fields – Watford
- **Thursday** – King George V Playing Fields – Welwyn Hatfield
- **Friday** – King George V Playing Fields – Stevenage

3. In Action

Pre-delivery Staff training with Sporting Inspirations

Based on feedback from staff who worked on the 2023 programme, the Sporting Inspirations delivery team expressed an interest in having more comprehensive training in the lead up to the programme if it was to run again. HSP agreed this would provide more context and improve consistency across the team. As a result, they designed and hosted a varied programme of classroom and practical based training, delivered across two full days to the entire Sporting Inspirations 2024 delivery team, two weeks before the first event was due to take place..

This training was necessary to address any confusion regarding the programme's objectives and to clarify the specific aspects that must be followed by the whole team. The sessions focused on programme logistics, roles and responsibilities, discussions on safeguarding, first aid protocols and risk assessments, and finished with a practical delivery session.

As the registration process changed and there was an expectation for the team to manage and access attendee data, HSP provided the Sporting Inspirations staff with GDPR training, which was completed prior to the delivery of the programme.

This approach ensured that HSP and Sporting Inspirations staff were well informed about key changes and all aspects of the programme. The training also proved to be useful for the HSP team in gathering input during the final planning phases of the programme. Staff gained valuable insight to the programme and provided them with the opportunity to ask questions and request any additional resources to help ensure their day-to-day delivery ran smoothly and efficiently.

The aim was to attract more young people this year, therefore it was essential that each day was staffed with a minimum of 10 Sporting Inspirations staff members, consisting of three event leads working for seven hours and seven additional staff members working five hours to help finish setting up before delivery at 3pm and help set down.

The HSP staff were in constant communication with the Sporting Inspirations team via a WhatsApp group. This provided staff with the opportunity to give instant feedback on delivery, address any issues and for HSP to provide any key updates.



"Thank you so much for delivering the training, it was very worthwhile and I feel the team have benefited from this"

John Manitará, CEO Sporting Inspirations

3. In Action

Activities

Herts Summer Parks 2024 programme schedule:

It was decided to maintain a similar schedule to last year's programme, but ensure that a big showstopper activity featured weekly, thereby enriching the overall atmosphere and experience of the programme.

Week	Main Physical Activity	Enrichment / Well-being Activity	Third Activity	Fourth Activity
1	The Fun Firm Climbing Wall & bungee run	Origami Workshop by ArtByVanessa.	Connect four & giant Jenga, speed stacking cups.	Multisport offer (badminton, volleyball, football, spike ball, swing ball).
2	Apex360 - Inflatable assault course, bungee run, basketball shootout and smoothie bike	JamArts - Journaling and doodling workshop	Connect four & giant Jenga, speed stacking cups.	Multisport offer (badminton, volleyball, football, spike ball, swing ball).
3	Fasttraxx - pump track	Graffiti workshop by Demograffix	Connect four & giant Jenga, speed stacking cups.	Multisport offer (badminton, volleyball, football, spike ball, swing ball)

3. In Action

Activities

One of the primary objectives for this year was to engage and collaborate with local organisations to contribute to the programme in addition to the core activities scheduled. An open invitation was extended to community organisations in the relevant areas, inviting them to participate by promoting their organisation or delivering sessions for the young people. This approach aimed to encourage community connections and showcase the local opportunities available to the young people.

The organisations who delivered supporting activities/community engagement were:

- **Everyone Active** – Set up a stall to promote their table tennis programme, gym memberships, and dodgeball and pickleball clubs.
- **Stevenage Football Club Foundation** – Delivered a girls only pop-up Premier League Kicks from 3-4pm followed by a mixed pop-up Premier League Kicks session from 4-5pm
- **Stevenage Cycle Hub** – Provided cycling workshops, provided information, and promoted their Go-Ride club.
- **InspireAll** – Provided free swimming passes and wider offers to young people.
- **Watford Cycle hub** – Promoted their Go ride club.
- **Saracens Foundation** – Delivered sessions on cheerleading and dance.
- **Warriorz Performing Arts Academy** – Delivered street dance workshops.
- **Hertfordshire Police – Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs)** – Engaged with the children and participated in activities. This interaction allowed the officers to build relationships with the young people and breakdown the stigma around police-youth encounters.



3. In Action

Key Partners

The programme had a number of visits from several local PCSOs, Local Authority Sport Development Officers, Cabinet Members, Local Councillors and the High Sheriff of Hertfordshire.

Representatives from Hertfordshire County Council Children's Services visited both the Stevenage and Welwyn Garden City Summer Parks provision, taking the opportunity to observe the programme in action and engage with the delivery team and young people.

John Lewis / Cheeky Wipes collaboration

John Lewis generously donated £2,500 to this year's programme which aligned perfectly with their theme for the year which focused on food poverty, holiday activities and health.

This contribution enabled the Partnership to purchase resources that enhanced the programme's enrichment element, including badminton nets and garden games.

In addition to this, HSP, John Lewis and Cheeky Wipes collaborated to develop a health and beauty wellbeing package for young girls attending Summer Parks.


Recognising that many participants attending this programme may face the challenges of period poverty, our focus was to support young girls in this area and to educate and provide them with reusable products, empowering them with greater autonomy over their periods and a better understanding of their health.

Cheeky Wipes is an organisation that offer a variety of reusable products for individuals ranging from babies to teens and adults. They generously donated 100 reusable period pads along with informative leaflets.

In addition to the reusable period pads, John Lewis generously provided an assortment of beauty samples, including skin serum, sunscreen, and foundation, aimed at boosting the confidence of young girls.

These items were packed into 50 individual bags, which were distributed to young girls at the Stevenage and Welwyn sessions.





Printed and distributed 450 x A5 flyers, 90 x A4 flyers, and 85 x A3 posters for youth outreach

June

Secondary schools and Herts School Games Organisers were contacted to support promotion

June

Marketing timeline for Summer Parks

June

Attended youth board meetings to discuss optimal marketing engagement.

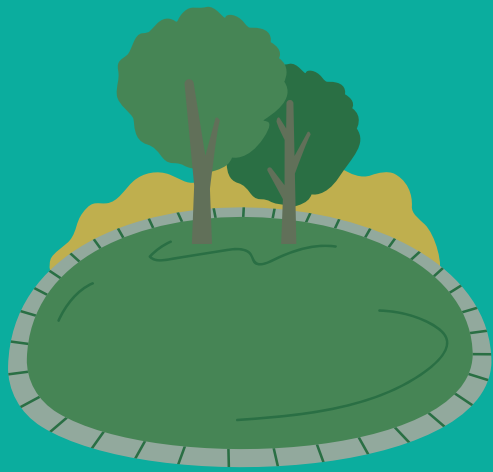
June

Developed credit card-sized flyers, designed for easy distribution to young people

June

Site-specific promotion, such as utilising digital advertising boards in Watford





Feather, pop-up, and vinyl banners were created to display in and around the parks



July

Marketing timeline for Summer Parks

July

A pre-registration link was sent in July to reduce queuing on the day

July

Created and distributed handouts for children under 12, featuring local venues offering similar experiences

July

Distributed flyers and posters to local authorities, Active Local officers, and Sporting Inspirations CIC

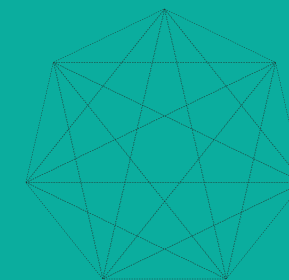


Planned and scheduled weekly content to go out on all socials

August

A videographer created a Herts Summer Parks video showcasing the activities and children's engagement

August



Marketing timeline for Summer Parks

August

Social media content, from packing the van, to the delivery of activities

August

Took photos and videos of staff from Sporting Inspirations CIC

August

Full time officers present during delivery to help engage with local residents to spread the word

3. In Action

Herts Summer Parks 24 Video



4. Monitoring & Evaluation

Attendance Data

Food provision

Infographic

Key data

**Engagement with residents from
Hertfordshire contingency hotels**

4. Monitoring & Evaluation

Attendance

Herts Summer Parks was successfully delivered on 15 out of the 15 planned delivery days between 5th August and 23rd August.

All analysed data excludes individuals from the local contingency hotel as only their names and medical details were collected on the day of the event.



Total number of unique individuals: 881

(+ 17 individuals from the hotel)
= **898**

Total number of attendances including returnees: 1,175
(+41 attendances from the hotel)
= **1,216**

Total unique attendances split by park:

- Borehamwood = 131
- Cheshunt = 299
- Watford = 166
- Welwyn Garden City = 372
- Stevenage = 248

As split by week (across all parks):

- Week 1 – 329
- Week 2 – 432
- Week 3 – 455



41 children attended more than 1 Herts Summer Parks event

4. Monitoring & Evaluation

Food provision



Each site had two local food providers, offering a selection of hot meals and drinks.

All boards were purchased in order to inform the participants of the food offer and menu options available at each venue

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council were hosting their Big Summer programme at King George V Playing Fields during the second week of the Summer Parks programme.

A pizza van was arranged to be on site to deliver food during their event and kindly offered to extend its presence for Summer Parks, providing children in Welwyn Garden City with an additional food option for that week.

Food Venue	Number of Vouchers Used
Borehamwood - Aberford Café	36
Borehamwood - The Arch	81
Cheshunt - Taste of Cyprus	177
Cheshunt - Laura Trott Café	83
Watford - The Vikings	99
Watford - Cycle Hub	60
Welwyn Garden City - L'artista Della Pizza (WK2 Only)	43
Welwyn Garden City - Tikka Masala	31
Welwyn Garden City - Simmons	287
Stevenage - Misya Meze Grill	132
Stevenage - The Fish & Chip Shop	120

65% of vouchers were used on the night of the programme, although some participants opted to redeem them on a different weekday or weekend. All food providers reported that the attendance on the evening was manageable and noted how thankful and polite the children were to receive a free meal.

All ten providers expressed their gratitude for the increased business the programme generated for them during the summer holiday period and all providers are willing to be a part of the programme if it is to run again.

Simmons "It's a brilliant programme we did this last year, but this year was even more successful. We stayed open an extra hour to accommodate the children and they were polite and respectful."

Infographic

Total
attendances

1,218

Local Food Provider
Investment

£10,246.50

Overall
Contribution from
Local Authorities

£5,000

Programme
investment

£125,000



15 Delivery
days
delivered

10 Delivery
Providers

Highest park attendance in a
single day.

Welwyn Garden City: 143

Attendees by gender

35.3% Female 63.7% boys
0.5% Other

40% of participants
were from an ethnically
diverse background



4. Monitoring & Evaluation

Key Data

The average age of attendees was 13.5 years

While there has been a slight decrease in the average age compared to last year, this year's focus was on preventing younger children from accessing the programme which was an issue during the 2023 programme.

Delivering training with Sporting Inspirations improved strategies to prevent the younger age groups attending, including flyers that effectively signposted to other initiatives for that age group.

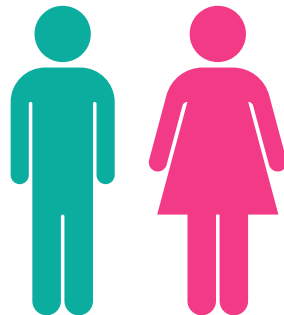
This approach successfully reduced an audience of younger participants.



The gender split was approximately 64% male, 35% female and 1% non-binary.

Comparing to last year's data, there has been a 5% increase in female participation in the programme with a 6% decrease in male attendance.

This rise in female attendance may be attributed to several factors, including the programme's earlier finish time or due to more attractive activities on offer such as the inflatables, dance and cheerleading.



2% of attendees declared themselves as transgender.

It is crucial to recognise the diversity present at the programme to ensure staff can be aware and all children have a positive and inclusive experience.

Whilst information around gender identity was captured last year, a question was not asked if they identified as transgender.

To best reflect the target demographic it was determined beneficial to ask this question directly.

Out of the 881 individuals, 17 young people disclosed they were not the same gender from that at birth.



27% of those who attended declared they were on Free School Meals.

There was a 2% increase in the number of children who have reported receiving free school meals compared to the previous year.

However, it is important to consider that 9% of the children who participated were uncertain about their eligibility for Free School Meals, while an additional 5% chose not to disclose this information.

These figures should be interpreted with caution, as they only reflect those who have declared and many children living in deprivation may be unaware of their eligibility.



4. Monitoring & Evaluation

Key Data

98% of the children who attended did not disclose any disabilities, whereas only 2% informed the staff of their disabilities.

This percentage may be underestimated, as some children might not have felt comfortable disclosing their disabilities to the staff.

Among those who did declare their disabilities, the majority were identified as having attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

Splitting it down into gender, of those participants who declared, 9% were males compared to 5% were females.



The main sources through which children and young people learned about the programme were friends and social media.

All genders predominately learned about the programme through friends with the second most common source being social media. However, there is a significant disparity, with females reporting a higher percentage on social media compared to males.

When comparing between genders, it was found that a higher percentage of males learned about the programme through Social or Youth Workers. This percentage was significantly higher in the Borehamwood area, indicating a potential influence from SfYP and the Friday Night Project which is a programme in Cowley Hill aimed to engage young people between the ages of 11-19.

Our strategy involved collaborating with Sporting Inspirations, to promote the programme at this initiative prior to delivery as it was the same target audience. This approach has proven to be effective.

Breaking the data down by age, a large percentage of 12-year-olds reported discovering the programme through social media compared to 15 and 16-year-olds. This could perhaps be linked to the popularity of the Snapchat app among younger audiences.

Additionally, it is important to note that the percentage of participants who learned about the programme through schools was generally low across all age groups, with 14-year-olds representing the highest proportion.

A significantly higher return rate reported at Welwyn Garden City

Among the five parks, Welwyn Garden City had the highest return rates compared to other parks. This may be due to the Big Summer Programme organised by the council, which was running at the same time.

This outcome shows the benefits of working in partnership with the local councils to effectively engage a larger number of children in the area.



4. Monitoring & Evaluation

Engagement with Hertfordshire contingency hotel

This hotel continues to house Refugees and Asylum Seekers of varying nationalities, and following their engagement in 2023, they were keen to attend the programme once again.

This year, 17 young individuals from the hotel participated in the Summer Parks programme and attended all 3 days at King George V Playing Fields in Stevenage.

The group really enjoyed their time at the 2023 event, so funding for this was generously provided by the hotel management company and the children were transported to and from the events on a minibus.

The hotel brought additional staff members to assist in managing the group, ensuring that all children were actively engaged in the activities offered.

Towards the end of the session, two staff members were designated to collect the meals from the local restaurant.

The hotel staff and the children enjoyed their meals together in the park before returning to the hotel via minibus.

The Partnership continues to engage with this hotel, providing opportunities for access to sports and physical activities.



"I wanted to extend a big thank you for organising the summer parks camp. Our residents had a fantastic time participating in the various activities, and they thoroughly enjoyed the meal provided. We truly appreciate all the effort you put into making the camp a success. We're already looking forward to the next event!"

Hotel Manager at contingency hotel

5. Key observations

Feedback – Young People, Parents & providers

Park Locations

Place Based Influence

Partnership Working

Activities & Marketing

5. Key observations

Feedback

A week after the programme finished, a debriefing session was held between the Sporting Inspirations delivery team and HSP. This session aimed to collect feedback and review the specific challenges encountered, along with any other significant insights and recommendations for future.

Feedback forms were distributed to parents and all external providers involved in the programme.

This information will be used in the analysis and to refine our planning process moving forward.

"It's a really valuable scheme to provide opportunities for those that may not otherwise have any, thank you I am very grateful, my kids looked forward to it each week"

"My daughter really loved it. It's very motivating for all the kids to stay healthy and explore nature while preserving environment"

"I liked that we got given food coupons as I could go and get myself a meal when I got hungry"

"The staff were absolutely amazing, carry on what you are doing, I hope this returns next summer!"

"Both of my children attend and they really enjoy all the activities and time spent. They looked forward to Mondays over the summer holidays"

5. Key observations

Feedback from food and delivery providers

"its been fun working with the Sports Partnership team and the other providers and seeing how much enjoyment the young people from the experience of painting their custom canvases"

"I think you are doing a great job. For us it's great to give young people the opportunity to ride BMX bikes which for many kids was their first time"

"Many children valued having a space to be creative in an outdoor environment. The relaxed setting allowed them to engage in the activities without pressure, giving them the freedom to participate for as long or as little as they wanted"

"Polite obedient kids were guided to posters provided marking clearly what they were allowed to redeem with food voucher very easy and simple process"

"Excellent service and communication from the team. We would love to be a part of the programme again"

"Watching the children express their ideas and build confidence in their drawing and designing skills was incredibly rewarding. Furthermore, being part of a programme that promotes community engagement and fosters creativity in children was a fulfilling experience for all involved"

5. Key observations

This programme required a huge amount of advanced planning, involving various aspects such as securing land permissions, creating risk assessments and event plans for each site, engaging with activity and food providers, purchasing equipment, and creating marketing materials.

It was a remarkable collective effort that could not have been achieved without the support of Hertfordshire County Council, all colleagues at HSP and our five host Local Authority partners.

As this was the second run of the programme, HSP have seen significant improvements in the outcomes delivered. The attendance figures exceeded last year's despite being reduced from a 4-week to a 3 week programme. Three of the parks delivery days were changed which was met with mixed success.

Overall this exceeded our expectations and resulted in a greater impact on the number of children reached across the county.

In the subsequent pages, the key observations from the 2024 programme will be explored further.



5. Key observations

Parks

The parks in Cheshunt, Welwyn Garden City and Stevenage are located close to the centre of the town and easily visible. However, Watford (KGV) and Borehamwood (Youth FC) are slightly more secluded, which likely impacted their attendance numbers. Although new locations were explored for Watford, none of the parks could accommodate all the activities.

King George Playing Fields in Watford did not achieve the level of engagement compared to last year. In the wake of protests across the country, including North Watford, concern around this could have prevented some people from attending the programme.

Borehamwood Youth FC did not achieve the attendance numbers recorded at Meadow Park last year. This was primarily due to the venue being private and secluded which limited opportunities for children to casually pass by and observe. Although the space was well-suited to the programme's needs, it failed to attract as many participants as anticipated, particularly given the club's established connections with numerous young people in the area and SfYP HAF programme.

As a result, the possibility of relocating to another district should be explored to enhance the outreach and impact of the programme.

Placed based influence

Four out of our five parks benefited from the presence of an Active Local officer which significantly contributed to the attendance figures at each park.

This place-based approach played a critical part in promoting the programme and engaging with the community. Their localised knowledge and connections were beneficial not only in the planning of the programme but for the delivery phase as well.

The team of Active Local officers distributed marketing materials, engaged with parents, young people and community groups both in person and online.

Despite the best efforts of the Active Local officer in Borehamwood, other factors such as location may have resulted in this approach being less successful than at the other sites.

Watford was the only park without an Active Local officer present and this could have been a factor given that this park recorded

Partnership working

The Herts Summer Parks programme focuses on meeting the specific needs of young people ensuring that participants not only have an enjoyable experience but also gain insights into their community and the various opportunities available to them beyond the programme.

This involved engaging with those local organisations in the area inviting them to deliver or promote their offer at the Summer Parks Programme.

By inviting community organisations down, they were able to build relationships with the young residents and gain valuable insights into the interests and needs of this age group.

This approach not only promotes local organisations but also highlights the resources they provide.

Looking ahead, HSP aspire to expand and enhance this approach next year, incorporating even more local services to further enrich the experience for the young people.



5. Key observations

Activities

HSP decided to recommission the same delivery providers from last year, with the addition of a new provider, Apex360. This decision was made based on participant feedback and recommendations from the prior report.

During our feedback sessions with the Sporting Inspirations team, it was noted that the inflatables provided by Apex360 and the climbing wall provided by The Fun Firm were the standout attractions among the children.

This year, our primary focus was to prevent younger age groups from attending the programme. To address this, signposting flyers were created to direct younger children and their parents toward alternative local activities. This helped clarify that the programme specifically targets this age group due to a lack of provision and opportunities over the summer holiday period.

While all providers effectively delivered their sessions, this year's opportunities offered did not fully engage the older age groups.



The "Chill Out Zone," featuring Connect Four, Jenga, and speed stacking cups, did draw some families. It remains evident that this area is not effectively appealing to the older age group and requires change.

The pump track activity was successful however, it did not receive the same level of engagement as in the previous year.

This may be due to it being exactly the same track. During discussions with the provider, they indicated that they are in the process of getting a new track that may better cater to the older age groups. This updated track will feature ramps at the end, allowing children to jump and perform tricks.

While there has been a 5% increase in female participation, the Sporting Inspirations team believes that additional girl-focused activities are necessary. Activities suggested were hair braiding, dance, henna art, and a slime science project.

"I really enjoyed Summer Parks and the interactive activities. My favourite was the climbing wall and bungee run"

Given the increased attendance this year, feedback forms highlighted a demand for more range of crafts and activities.

To better cater to teenagers, it has been suggested that alternative opportunities such as music themed activities, skittles target practice, boules, and gladiator jousting could be introduced.

Furthermore, the team proposed integrating elements of friendly competition into each activity session to enhance engagement throughout the session and encourage children to socialise with others.

Children typically enjoy playful rivalry, and winners could receive something for this, perhaps an extra food voucher.

The Sporting Inspirations team proposed introducing a new activity, such as pedal go-karts or archery, to keep the experience fresh and exciting.

5. Key Observations

Marketing

A few parents expressed that the marketing materials were somewhat confusing. The flyers advertised a full list of activities, which led some parents to assume that all activities would be available on a weekly basis. This misunderstanding resulted in confusion and some were left disappointed that they missed out on specific activities.

Clearer marketing that outlines the weekly schedule of available activities would be beneficial in future to ensure that both parents and children have a clear understanding of how the programme is structured.

Additionally, changing the marketing language to emphasise "tell a friend " could be beneficial as word-of-mouth from friends was identified as the most effective to finding out about the programme.



It was essential to ensure that this year's programme was equipped with a wider variety of marketing materials to engage a larger number of children.

Pop-up banners were strategically placed in parks to enhance programmes visibility and attract the attention of passers by.

While these banners proved effective, the feather flags did not work. Due to their height and with the weather conditions, they failed to stay up for very long and therefore could not be used as intended.

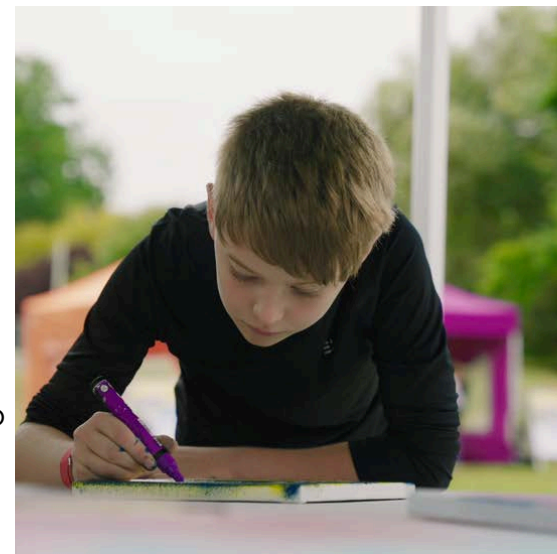
Based on the data collected, dedicating more effort to promoting the programme through social media platforms used by young children should be explored.

6. Future recommendations

Reflecting on this year's programme, along with the delivery data and feedback received, a number of recommendations that could enhance future programme delivery are outlined below:

- Using difference services such as support/health workshops at each park location.
- Using youth voice to influence decisions such as location, marketing, activities.
- Engage and promote at the local community projects happening in the area.
- Consider outreach work by commissioned staff to increase youth engagement however this would be subject to budget restrictions.
- Recommend introducing different activities to meet the interests of the older age groups and girls.
- Using Sporting Inspirations as the main delivery provider, as they have established and maintained trusted relationships with numerous young people through this programme.
- Use signposting flyers for under 12's to ensure younger children do not attend.
- Revisit delivery days for each site to ensure high engagement.
- Running the programme from 3pm - 6pm.
- Allocating training days with Sporting Inspirations ahead of delivery.
- Utilising social media platforms that cater more to the target market, such as Snapchat and TikTok.
- It is recommended that the food voucher scheme is continued, and more food providers and delivery providers are engaged to cater for increasing numbers.
- Ensure that marketing is clear and comprehensive, providing a weekly breakdown of activities.
- Giving enough time before delivery starts to heavily promote the programme. Continue to build relationships with local the local schools to ensure the message reaches the target audience.
- Ensure that the schedule is adjusted to provide an array of engaging activities that will attract the entire age range.

**HERTS
SUMMER
PARKS**



3. Thank you

Partnership Working

We would like to formally acknowledge and extend our thanks to our delivery partners who collaborated with us on this programme this year.

Without their support and co-operation, this programme would not have achieved even half of its successes.

Acknowledgments to our Local Authority partners

- Hertsmere: **Helen Hopkins**
- Broxbourne: **Steve Whitlam**
- Watford: **Caroline Roche**
- Welwyn Hatfield: **Milan Johnston**
- Stevenage: **Lorna Wormald & Ryan Ansell**

Thank you for their generous funding to the programme, which enabled the use of the pump track activity. Their contributions ensured that children had access to engaging activities, resulting in an enjoyable experience.

Their dedication and support throughout the programme were invaluable. They committed their time to meetings focused on the planning process, providing feedback and local insights, and actively promoting and marketing the programme within their respective areas.

Acknowledgments to Our Delivery Partner:

Thank you to **John Manitará** and his **team** for their exceptional work in delivering this year's programme.

The team were proactive, effectively communicated feedback, and were quick to adapt to changes in the day to day operations. Their commitment ensured that the programme ran smoothly and safely, providing the children with a summer experience they will never forget.

Acknowledgements to John Lewis and Cheeky Wipes

Thank you to both organisations donating funding and resources to the programme. Their generous offer enabled further opportunities for children taking part and young girls to receive a wellbeing package to take home.

Acknowledgments to Hertfordshire Community Foundation

Thank you to **Helen Doubal** and **Katie Purcell** for their efforts in ensuring all payments to delivery providers were made on time.

Acknowledgments to Our Active Local Officers:

- Borehamwood: **Charlotte Stringer**
- Cheshunt: **Matthew Ridley**
- Welwyn Hatfield: **Terri Harvey**
- Stevenage: **Jessica Baird**

Thank you to our dedicated team of place-based officers. Their commitment to informing residents about the programme and engaging with local food providers ensured that all necessary marketing materials were in place prior to delivery.

Their collective efforts not only successfully promoted the programme, but also significantly increased attendance numbers.

Acknowledgments to Hertfordshire County Council

A huge thank you to Hertfordshire County Council, particularly to **George Gearing** and his team, for their generous support as key funders of this programme. Without their funding, this initiative would not have been possible.

“I hope this returns next summer”

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Date of report: 31/10/2024

**Hertfordshire's
Holiday Activity Programme**

