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Hertfordshire's Holiday Activity Programme



**HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND FOOD PROGRAMME (HAF)
HERTFORDSHIRE ANNUAL REPORT 2025
HAPPY: HOLIDAY ACTIVITY PROGRAM**

LOUISE GALLAGHER-SMITH
HERTS SPORT & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PARTNERSHIP

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Overview

The Department for Education (DfE) funded Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) is delivered in Hertfordshire under the name *HAPpy: Holiday Activity Programme*.

In 2025, the HAPpy programme provided free holiday activities for children who met the following criteria:

- Were of school age (Reception to Year 11)
- Attended a school in Hertfordshire
- Were registered for benefits-related Free School Meals (FSM) with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC)
- Were referred into the programme by professionals working with vulnerable children and families where they were not eligible for FSM

The programme was coordinated on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council by the Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership (HSP), alongside the commissioned services of Hertfordshire Community Foundation (HCF), which managed the grants application process.

HSP works strategically and collaboratively to improve the lives of Hertfordshire residents by using sport and physical activity to tackle inequality and disadvantage.

Hertfordshire Community Foundation is an independent charity that promotes local philanthropy by encouraging the giving of time and resources to support local communities. Its expertise in grant-making is integral to the effective delivery of the programme.

The HAPpy delivery team (HSP and HCF) was recognised for its collaborative approach and was awarded ***Collaborative Team of the Year*** at the Annual Hertfordshire Families First Awards. This award acknowledges teams committed to partnership working across services to achieve positive outcomes and highlights the team's continued efforts to engage organisations that support families most in need.



HAF in Hertfordshire

Strategic Partnerships Commissioning

The Strategic Partnerships Commissioning Service within Hertfordshire County Council is responsible for commissioning the programme, managing the overall budget, and overseeing contract management. The service acts as a conduit between the Department for Education, other local authorities, Childcare Works, senior leadership within the local authority, elected members, and HSP.

The team ensures clear and consistent communication with local schools and Children's Services partners, including responding to queries and ensuring families are informed about booking code releases and the opening of the booking system.

Hertfordshire County Council works closely with commissioned partners to deliver a seamless experience for children and families. The Commissioning and Development Manager regularly provides updates to internal boards, reports to the steering group, and facilitates visits to HAPpy camps for senior officers, councillors, and Members of Parliament.

Targets for the 2025 HAPpy Programme

The 2025 programme planned to offer 74,550 activity places across three delivery phases: Spring (Easter), Summer, and Winter (Christmas). These places were to be delivered through two approaches:

Grant-funded provision, consisting of:

- **66,500 universal (mainstream) places**
- **3,800 places specifically for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**

Direct award provision, consisting of:

- **4,350 places delivered through Services for Young People (SYP) and the Short Breaks Local Offer (SBLO)**

	Spring Places	Summer Places	Winter Places	Total Places Proposed
UNIVERSAL* (based on £30 per head)	16,500	44,000	6,000	66,500
SEND SPECIFIC (based on £70 per head)	1,000	2,500	300	3,800
Funded Totals	17,500	46,500	6,300	70,100
Services For Young People (SYP)	(UNIVERSAL direct award)			3,600
Short Breaks Local Offer (SBLO)	(SEND SPECIFIC direct award)			750
Total Proposed				74,550

**Camps delivered in a Universal setting are inclusive and can also accommodate young people with less complex needs who do not need the higher levels of support offered at a dedicated SEND camp.*

As part of the contract agreement with HSP, the Local Authority stipulate the following Key Performance Indicators (KPI) through each delivery period, in addition to the national expectations which can be subject to annual review.

Agreed KPIs

- 90% delivery of above proposed funded places will be reached for each delivery period
- A minimum of 90% of agreed target figure for SEND places each delivery period places are made available to families at Camps across Hertfordshire.
- 85% booking of proposed funded places offered
- 70% attendance of the bookings of the proposed funded places
- At least 75% of eligible families can access holiday provision within 5 miles of their family home
- At least 85% of eligible families can access holiday provision within 10 miles of their family home

These indicators are monitored by the Commissioning and Development Manager from the Strategic Partnerships Commissioning Service and regular updates are presented in a report to the steering group at each meeting.

Finance

In 2025 the overall funding spent on the HAPpy programme in Hertfordshire: **£2,976,460**

The proportion of the funding that was spent on administration: **£111,673**

This amount continued to enable the commissioned services of HSP & HCF to deliver the programme on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council.

In Hertfordshire we allocate:

- Up to £30 per funded place for Universal camp spaces.
- Up to £70 for Special Educational Needs (SEND) camp spaces.

This is the same for the application based funding and direct award models to ensure consistency across the programme.

Specialist SEND provision is designed for children with higher levels of need, who may have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), receive significant additional support within school, or attend specialist educational settings. These programmes are funded at a higher rate to reflect the additional staffing, specialist expertise, resources and adaptations required to meet participants' needs safely and effectively.

The remaining budget is used to subsidise marketing, booking systems, contingency funds, and equipment. It should be noted that the local authority does not receive any financial remuneration for its work or involvement in the programme.

Due to the timing of the announcement of continued funding for 2025, there was limited time to make any further amendments to the financial formulas. As previous benchmarking had shown that Hertfordshire was paying one of the higher quote costs per head, the decision was made to leave the funding model as it was for 2025. This will be reviewed, should the opportunity arise in future.

Camp providers have been encouraged to consider sustainability of schemes throughout the last year. A small number of providers mentioned subsidised facility funding and use of paid for places to subsidise overall costs. Both have been encouraged where possible to help support sustainability of the programme and potentially enable some delivery to take place outside of HAF funded periods as well. There has been a continued growth in the number of providers noting that their own reserves and fundraising have been used to bolster the overall budget and/or make up a shortfall where it exists.

Governance

The overall governance of the programme is the responsibility of the HAPpy Steering group, chaired and facilitated through the Local Authority. The steering group continues to provide direction, guidance and support as part of the commissioning process.

In 2025, the steering group membership was as follows:

Name	Organisation	Role
Melany Knowles (Chair)	HCC	Head of Early Years
Tina Powell	HCC	Senior Commissioning Manager
George Gearing	HCC	Commissioning Manager
John O'Callaghan	HSP	Director
Matt Rayner	HSP	Strategic Lead – People, Places, Programmes
Therese Antoine	HCC	Development & Commissioning Officer
Cllr Fiona Thompson	HCC	Executive Member for Children and Young People
Louise Gallagher-Smith	HSP	Children and Young Peoples Team Lead
Orla Moore	HSP	Project Lead - MELI
Paul Robin	HCF	CEO
Helen Doubal	HCF	Head of Grants
Katie Purcell	HCF	HAPpy Grants Manager
Emma Catlin	HSP	Project Officer – HAF Training
Peter Hosier	HCC	Services for Young People
Julie Reddish	HCC	SBLO
Debbie Pettit	HCC	Finance

There continues to be three funding application phases per year, administered by HCF and governed by the decision made by the Grant panel of key stakeholders.

Grant Panel key stakeholders:

Name	Organisation	Role
Sally Burton	HCF	Trustee (Chair)
Paul Robin	HCF	CEO
Matt Rayner:	HSP	Strategic Lead
George Gearing	HCC	Commissioning Manager
Ros Cramp	Herts Disability Sport Foundation	SEND Advisor

Both the steering group and grant panel stakeholders are vital in the decision-making process, ensuring funding is allocated to the areas of greatest need.

HSP role was pivotal in ensuring that providers were supported from when their grant was awarded to delivery. The key elements to this include:

- Supporting providers with using Playwaze
- Induction
- Training opportunities – both mandatory and non
- Signposting to support services if required
- Facilitation and administration of the audit process.

Alongside this, the Team also

- Responded to parental queries
- booking support via phone and email
- Managed the referral process with support from HCC colleagues where required.

There was a significant change in the political landscape of Herts County Council following the May elections. This led to many new councillors in post – some of whom had limited knowledge and understanding of the HAF programme across the district. To aid this and increase awareness several visits from new councillors & portfolio holders were facilitated, mainly across the summer period. These included the including the Leader of Hertfordshire County Council, Cllr Jarvis and Lead Member for Children and Young People, Cllr Rowlands. All received positive feedback and noted how much more informed they were for attending.

Funding Process

A phase-by-phase grant funding application process was maintained throughout 2025. Systems and application parameters were reviewed after each phase to ensure continuous improvement. The Easter application process proceeded despite the absence of confirmed funding; applications opened prior to Christmas, with providers made aware that the process would be curtailed if funding was not secured. This approach ensured that key milestones were met within expected timeframes and enabled providers to plan and deliver activities effectively.

Expression of Interest

An Expression of Interest (EOI) process continued to be used to assess new providers before inviting full applications. Due to funding uncertainty, the EOI process was implemented only ahead of the **summer** phase.

EOIs were open from Monday 3 March to Monday 24 March. Clear guidance was provided on priority activities and geographic areas where additional provision was required. A total of 23 EOIs were received, of which 18 providers were invited to submit full applications. A proportion of these applicants were subsequently successful in securing **summer** delivery funding.

The EOI process supported the introduction of new providers while maintaining programme quality and performance standards, with a focus on enhancing provision in areas of need.

Priority was given to providers offering:

- ***Music***
- ***Arts and culture***
- ***Martial arts***
- ***Outdoor education and activities***
- ***Activities for young people aged 12–16***

Geographical priority areas included:

- ***East Hertfordshire (Buntingford, Hertford, Ware)***
- ***Broxbourne (Cheshunt, Hoddesdon)***
- ***Hertsmere (Borehamwood)***
- ***Stevenage***
- ***North Hertfordshire (with a focus on SEND provision)***

Opportunities were promoted through the HCF website, social media (including LinkedIn), and targeted outreach to relevant organisations and clubs.

Funding Parameters

Funding application parameters were regularly reviewed and adjusted for each delivery phase. These included limits on the number of places, delivery days, and venues for which providers could apply.

This approach helped manage expectations, align provision with local demand, and reduce oversubscription in certain districts.

New providers were capped at a maximum of 10 delivery days to ensure a managed integration into the programme. Existing providers were encouraged to review and adapt their delivery models, including age ranges and activity types, to ensure ongoing relevance and appeal to young people.

Insight and Mapping

Data collection and analysis remained central to programme delivery in 2025. Information was gathered from multiple sources, including the Playwaze booking system, parent feedback surveys, audit visits, and post-delivery monitoring reports.

The coordination team at HSP embedded a culture of continuous improvement, using both quantitative data (such as bookings and attendance) and qualitative insights from audits to inform funding decisions.

Mapping tools, including Local Insight, were used to overlay funded provision against Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility data. This ensured that activities were targeted in areas of greatest need and supported more strategic commissioning.

Booking System

The Playwaze booking system continued to be used throughout 2025. Improvements were made to address previous server load issues, including increased capacity and the introduction of a virtual waiting room, which resulted in a smoother booking experience at launch.

However, several system issues arose during the summer phase, impacting functionality. These included challenges with cancellation processes, where initial improvements allowed retrospective cancellations, including for attended sessions. This issue was subsequently resolved but raised concerns regarding attendance data accuracy.

Additional issues included compatibility problems with Apple devices, affecting booking steps and register exports. While workarounds were identified, these issues caused disruption for providers and required significant administrative response. Despite this, most issues were resolved promptly, although the frequency of incidents placed pressure on delivery teams.

Due Diligence

In October 2025, HCF introduced a new Salesforce platform. Winter applications were submitted via the legacy system, while post-panel processes and subsequent applications transitioned to the new system.

Providers were introduced to the new platform through Learn and Share events and Winter induction sessions. They were encouraged to register early to ensure access to monitoring forms and future applications.

During Winter delivery, an issue was identified where some providers were unable to access monitoring forms. This was traced to inconsistencies in organisation registration details, such as naming variations or differing email addresses. While the issue was being resolved, an interim solution using Microsoft Forms ensured that monitoring data continued to be collected without disruption.

Eligibility and Referral Process

The HAPpy programme continued to use a booking code system to confirm eligibility and enable access to funded places via Playwaze. Codes were generated centrally and distributed by HCC through schools to eligible families.

Professionals working with children and families could refer non-FSM eligible participants under the 15% allocation. While referrals for Easter were managed via email, a Microsoft Forms process was introduced from Summer onwards to standardise data collection and improve insight.

HSP engaged with partner organisations, including Families First, food banks, Herts Help, and Citizens Advice, to raise awareness of referral opportunities. A database of referring professionals was developed, enabling more proactive communication across delivery phases.

The new referral process improved the quality of information collected, particularly for children with SEND or complex needs. This allowed providers to assess suitability prior to acceptance and ensured appropriate support could be arranged.

Auditing

The audit process remained a two-stage approach, comprising a pre-audit questionnaire and a face-to-face audit during delivery.

The pre-audit required providers to submit responses to standard questions, along with supporting documentation such as menus and provisional timetables. Physical audits were prioritised for festival day provision, ensuring all providers received an audit visit where possible. Trips were subject to pre-audit self-assessment only.

An additional scenario-based question on fire safety procedures was introduced to strengthen provider awareness of emergency protocols.

Cost of Living Support

The programme continued to respond to the ongoing cost-of-living pressures affecting families. Providers were equipped with resources and guidance to support participants, including signposting to relevant local support services. This information was shared through the "Information for Providers" document ahead of each delivery phase.

In April 2025, Hertfordshire County Council launched the Herts Card, a digital card offering discounts on activities, events, and services for children and young people. The card aimed to extend support for FSM-eligible families beyond the HAPpy programme, including access to discounted provision outside holiday periods.

Mind Consultancy

Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership (HSP) collaborated with Mind to complete the Jigsaw Consultancy programme, designed to embed mental health practices across organisations.

The programme framework included nine themes, with HSP focusing on:

- Meaningful involvement of people
- Strengthened collaboration
- Improved knowledge and confidence

HSP achieved **gold** status, demonstrating full engagement and commitment to integrating mental health across all workstreams.

Within the Children and Young People team, key developments included:

- Embedding youth voice and mental health awareness within the HAPpy programme
- Providing mental health support resources to providers and integrating them into programme communications
- Expanding training opportunities, including mental health awareness and youth-focused training through partners such as StreetGames
- Mental health was also incorporated into Learn and Share events, including delivery of the “Spot, Support, Signpost” training session by Mind.

Safeguarding

To strengthen safeguarding processes, professionals from the Families First network were engaged to provide advice and guidance to providers. This approach enabled early intervention, supported information sharing, and reduced the need for formal referrals where appropriate.

During the programme, one safeguarding incident required escalation to relevant authorities and was referred to the police. The provider managed the situation appropriately, with no concerns identified regarding procedural compliance.

One serious incident occurred involving a child falling from height during a climbing activity. Investigation determined that the child had deliberately disengaged safety equipment. The venue provider assumed responsibility for managing the incident and liaising with the family.

2025 Programme

Summary of Performance

In 2025, the HAPpy: Holiday Activity Programme was delivered across the Spring (Easter), Summer, and Winter (Christmas) school holiday periods in Hertfordshire. Delivery was structured as follows:

- **Spring:** Monday 7 April – Thursday 17 April (9 delivery days)
- **Summer:** Monday 28 July – Friday 29 August (24 delivery days)
- **Winter:** (5 delivery days in total)
 - Monday 22 – Tuesday 23 December (Festival Days only)
 - Monday 29 – Wednesday 31 December (Camp delivery only)

Winter 2025: Festival Days and Trips

Festival Days were delivered again as enhanced, one-off experiences designed to complement the core HAPpy offer. These provided opportunities beyond the scope of standard camp provision, with many providers incorporating seasonal themes such as winter wonderlands, snowmaking, Santa’s grottos, themed crafts, and staff-led pantomimes.

Additionally, four providers delivered a programme of reward-based trips between 20 December and 4 January. These included visits to a pantomime, bowling venues, and a local basketball fixture. Access was managed via Playwaze using provider-specific booking codes, prioritising families with consistent programme engagement.

Trips achieved the highest levels of demand and engagement, with a **90% booking rate** and **83% attendance rate**. While camps and Festival Days recorded similarly strong booking rates (83–84%), trips demonstrated particularly high demand, highlighting the value of incorporating unique experiences within the wider programme.

Programme Delivery

In 2025, a total of **437 HAPpy camps** were delivered across Hertfordshire, spanning **3,034 delivery days**:

- Spring: 755 days
- Summer: 2,030 days
- Winter: 249 days

Delivery was undertaken by **76 providers**, supported by a range of delivery partners and organisations across the county (see Appendix 1).

A reduced winter offer for secondary-aged children was anticipated due to the absence of Local Authority Services for Young People provision. To mitigate this, some providers expanded age ranges. As a result, there was a **1% increase in secondary-aged participation (17%)** compared to Spring and Summer 2025.

Participation Overview

Type of Provision	Number of HAF Places Offered			2025 Totals
	Spring	Summer	Winter	
Universal Provision (Funded provision)	16278	44183	6114	66,575
SEND Specific Provision (Funded provision)	976	2486	384	3,846
Services For Young People (Universal) (Direct award provision)	800	2,800	0	3,600
Short Breaks Local Offer (SEND) (Direct award provision)	167		0	167
Total Places				74,188

Total unique children booked in 2025: 6,225

Children with SEND: 27%

Children without SEND: 73%

HAF 2025	Primary aged	Secondary Aged
% of Attendances by Age	69%	31%
% of Attendances with SEND	26%	30%
% of Attendances with no-SEND	74%	70%

Total bookings across 2025 were **67,900**, broken down as follows:

- Spring (Easter): 16,600
- Summer: 45,850
- Winter: 5,455

Key Programme Challenges

Several challenges were identified during programme delivery:

- Late confirmation of 2025 funding impacted forward planning, provider recruitment, programme development, and timely implementation.
- System changes within Playwaze caused temporary operational disruptions, including issues with attendance register downloads and activity reporting data. Although resolved quickly, these highlighted the need for improved communication regarding system updates.
- Rising delivery costs and broader inflationary pressures continued to affect provider sustainability, particularly within fixed per-head funding allocations.
- Reliance on a limited number of providers in certain districts created potential risks to programme resilience and limited flexibility.
- Late cancellations and non-attendance remained a significant issue. During Summer 2025, over 4,700 cancellations (31% of total cancellations) occurred within 48 hours of activity start time, representing a slight improvement from 35% in the previous year.
- Non-attendance among larger families had a disproportionate impact on overall attendance figures.
- Inconsistent engagement from some secondary schools reduced the effectiveness of communication and booking code distribution.
- Participation among secondary-aged young people remained below target, despite efforts to expand and diversify provision. Recruitment of providers capable of delivering suitable activities for this age group remains a key area for development.

Meeting the Core HAF Criteria

The HAF programme specifies that all funded provision must deliver a minimum of four hours per day, which should include:

- At least one hour of physical activity
- At least one hour of enrichment activities
- Opportunities to promote healthy eating and healthy lifestyles
- The provision of a hot meal

Participation in the HAPpy programme offers a range of benefits for children and young people, including:

Access to healthy and nutritious meals

- Opportunities to maintain physical activity levels
- Social interaction, enjoyment, and the development of friendships
- Increased understanding of food, nutrition, and health
- Engagement in activities that support personal development
- A safe and secure environment
- Access to appropriate support services
- Improved readiness to return to school

Across all three delivery phases in 2025, providers in Hertfordshire consistently met these requirements. Some providers enhanced their delivery by supplementing funding or offering paid provision alongside funded places, enabling an extended offer to eligible families. Provision of a hot meal was maintained wherever possible. Guidance on the *Standards for Holiday Provision* has been updated to provide greater clarity for activity providers, including examples of innovative and effective practice. Providers are expected to familiarise themselves with this guidance to ensure compliance.

Providers were encouraged to adopt overbooking practices to account for anticipated non-attendance and improve utilisation of funded places. Waiting lists were used consistently, supported by both automated notifications and proactive communication with families to fill vacated places in advance of delivery.

Food Provision

In 2025, all providers were expected to deliver a hot meal as part of their provision, unless delivering SEND-specific sessions or where exemptions were agreed with HSP under exceptional circumstances.

Food provision was identified as the lowest scoring theme across programme surveys, achieving approximately 68–75% positive feedback. Key issues raised included:

- Limited variety
- Concerns regarding quality
- Suitability for dietary needs

To address these challenges, specialist support was commissioned from Dr Lindsay Kass (University of Hertfordshire).

This work began with an informal evaluation of provider menus submitted during the Easter pre-audit process. Menus were reviewed and ranked, with tailored feedback, suggested improvements, and next steps provided to relevant providers. This feedback was shared alongside opportunities to attend drop-in sessions to support menu development for the **summer** phase.

Further support included:

- A dedicated session at the Learn and Share event
- Guidance to empower providers to improve menus directly or engage effectively with catering suppliers
- Development of resources to support improved menu planning

During the lead-up to and throughout the **summer** delivery period, Dr Kass worked directly with a number of providers to implement improvements. This support focused on ensuring compliance with school food standards, improving variety, ensuring appropriate portion sizes, and delivering value for money.

The next phase of this work included in-person audits during delivery to assess implementation, support further improvements, and help providers maximise food quality while minimising waste.

What the children said...

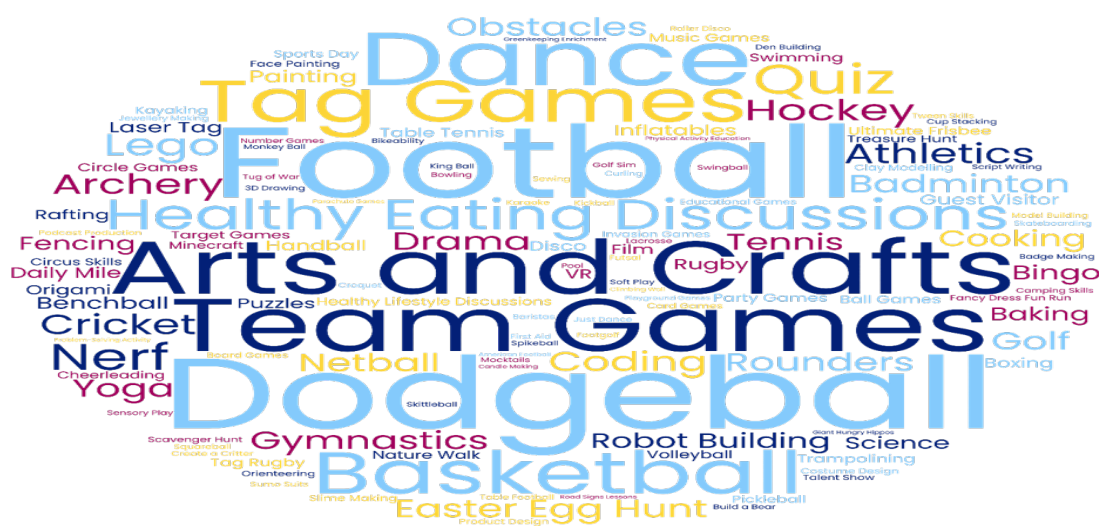
One of the camps they got to prepare meals and my older daughter was ecstatic, coming back and telling me about it. I cannot afford to buy extra for her to try at home, but she got to do this at camp

Physical Activity & Enrichment

Through the audit process it was possible to capture more information with regards to the Physical Activity and Enrichment provision offered. Analysis of this showed that the programme offered a **highly diverse activity menu**, with over **110 different activity types** delivered across camps, demonstrating a strong commitment to providing varied and engaging experiences for children and young people.

Physical activity remained at the heart of the programme, with the most frequently delivered sports and games including:

- **Healthy Eating Discussions (29)**
- **Dodgeball (26)**
- **Football (25)**
- **Team Games (25)**
- **Dance (22)**
- **Basketball and Tag Games (16 each)**
- **Hockey (14)**
- **Coding (13)**
- **Drama, Gymnastics and Obstacle Activities (12 each)**



The activity offer demonstrated a strong balance between **sport, creativity, education and enrichment**, with children able to participate in activities ranging from coding, robotics and science workshops to drama, music, arts, dance and outdoor adventure experiences.

A significant number of providers included **STEM-based learning opportunities**, with Coding (13 sessions), Robot Building (10 sessions), Science (6 sessions), VR experiences and Product Design activities providing opportunities to develop digital and problem-solving skills.

The programme maintained a strong focus on **inclusive and adaptable activities**, offering a wide range of non-competitive options such as yoga, sensory play, Lego, board games, painting, clay modelling and arts-based sessions that can engage children with differing interests and abilities.

A broad range of **traditional and emerging sports** were represented, including archery, fencing, pickleball, ultimate frisbee, lacrosse, kayaking, rafting, boxing, trampolining and skateboarding, helping to introduce participants to new activities they may not otherwise have experienced.

Providers continued to utilise themed and novelty activities such as inflatables, laser tag, giant hungry hippos, roller disco, circus skills and Easter egg hunts, enhancing enjoyment and helping maintain high levels of engagement.

The data demonstrates the breadth and diversity of the HAPpy activity offer, with providers successfully delivering a balanced programme that combined physical activity, creative arts, educational enrichment and healthy lifestyle learning. While traditional sports and active games remained a core component of delivery, the popularity of arts and crafts, coding, STEM activities and healthy eating sessions highlights the value of offering a varied programme that caters to different interests, abilities and age groups. This diverse approach supports the programme's wider objectives around physical wellbeing, social development, confidence building and skills development while helping to maximise engagement among a broad range of children and young people.

Promotion of Healthy Eating and Healthy Lifestyle

Providers successfully embedded the HAF objective of combining **physical activity with food education**, with Healthy Eating Discussions delivered 29 times and additional activities such as Cooking, Baking, Mocktail Making and Healthy Lifestyle Discussions incorporated throughout programmes. Healthy Eating discussions formed a higher percentage of the activities which were offered as part of the Easter phase.

There was an increased emphasis on providers collecting and collating youth voice as part of the process, to empower young people to be creative with the topics and activities they wanted to see added. This was key in the application for Summer – with additional questions added to ensure providers were embedding this as much as possible in their practise.

Through the continued promotion of alternative enrichment opportunities, providers were encouraged to engage with different resources and opportunities where possible. Through the in-person Learn and Share, providers were encouraged to use different resources – such as the Mind Wellbeing Library – and their own knowledge to find innovative ways to bring in subjects such as mindfulness and opportunities to support a healthy lifestyle through the activities they can offer.

Mind also supported some camps in delivering '5 Ways to Wellbeing' workshops to the attendees – supporting Children and Young People who could benefit from learning about self-care and Mental Health awareness.

Hertfordshire Constabulary also delivered workshops to selected providers linked to the 'Lives not knives' campaign. Using VR technology, young people were able to interact with the officers and respond more effectively to the messaging they were delivering to the young people. This helped with the overall aim to help recruit 'Anti Violence Champions' to support the legacy of the Knife Angel, which was proudly displayed in Welwyn Garden City throughout October.

Environmental Sustainability

HAPpy providers demonstrated a strong commitment to environmental sustainability across the programme, Environmental sustainability was embedded across HAPpy provision, with strong engagement from providers and consistent adoption of practical actions.

- **Widespread adoption:** The **vast majority of providers (estimated 85–90%)** referenced at least one form of sustainable practice, most commonly recycling, reuse of materials, and reduced single-use plastics.
- **Digital transformation:** A significant proportion of providers moved to **paperless or digital-first systems**, reducing administrative waste and supporting lower-carbon delivery models.
- **Waste reduction:** Many providers implemented measures to **minimise waste**, including reusable equipment, recycling systems, and redistribution of surplus food to families or local food banks.
- **Sustainable travel:** Providers frequently encouraged **car sharing, walking, and cycling**, helping to reduce travel-related emissions across delivery.
- **Child engagement:** Environmental awareness was actively promoted through enrichment activities such as **upcycling crafts, nature-based learning, and recycling education**, supporting positive behaviour change among children.

Overall, the programme shows a solid foundation of environmentally responsible practice, with clear opportunities to build on this by developing more consistent standards, strengthening environmental education, and introducing simple ways to measure and evidence impact.

There were also considerations for this within the Summer Parks programme. To improve the environmental sustainability of the programme, efforts were made to reduce the use of single-use plastic water bottles by making greater use of drinking water points at delivery sites. Reusable water bottles, kindly donated by Hertfordshire Sports Village, were also distributed to participants, with 192 provided during sessions.

HSP continues to work in partnership with **Goods for Good**, a not-for-profit organisation that supports underserved communities by redistributing donated goods and resources to those most in need. The partnership helps to reduce barriers to sport and physical activity across Hertfordshire by providing practical support and creating opportunities to engage a diverse range of children and young people. As part of the Herts Summer Parks Programme, participants were invited to complete an online survey to share their experiences and were entered into a prize draw for sports kit generously donated by Goods for Good. In addition, 24 pairs of brand-new Nike trainers were distributed across the five delivery areas, helping to encourage ongoing participation in sport and physical activity while supporting young people who may otherwise face financial barriers to engagement.

Direct Awards

Direct Award funding continued to be offered to Services for Young People and Short Breaks Local Offer in 2025

Services for Young People (SYP)

Hertfordshire County Council Services for Young People delivers youth work projects and programmes, careers education, information, advice and guidance, work-related learning, outdoor education and other services to young people in Hertfordshire.

The delivery offered in 2025 followed the same model used in 2024 - 20 places per day were offered at 10 sites, for a total of four days in the Spring period and 12 days in the summer period at each site.

Services for Young People (SYP) HAPpy 2025 Easter

Venue	Total Places	Total Booked	Total Attendances	Booking Percentage	Attendance to Booking Percentage
Bennetts End Young People's Centre	100	81	30	81%	37%
Borehamwood Youth FC	100	94	65	94%	69%
Bowes Lyon Young People's Centre	100	94	80	94%	85%
Breaks Manor Young People's Centre	109	109	86	100%	79%
Harpenden Young People's Centre	100	40	24	40%	60%
South Oxhey Young People's Centre	100	93	59	93%	63%
Waltham Cross Young People's Centre, Stanhope Road, Waltham Cross, UK	100	66	50	66%	76%
Ware Young Peoples Centre	100	37	20	37%	54%
Watford Young People's Centre	100	97	69	97%	71%
Westmill Community Centre	100	36	24	36%	67%

Services for Young People (SYP) HAPpy 2025 Summer

Venue	Total Places	Total Booked	Total Attendances	Booking Percentage	Attendance to Booking Percentage
Waltham Cross Young People's Centre	240	309	245	129%	79%
Bowes Lyon Young People's Centre	240	292	197	122%	67%
Trinity Hall	240	289	178	120%	62%
Borehamwood Youth FC	240	295	167	123%	57%
Watford Young People's Centre	240	216	123	90%	57%
Garden City Academy, Letchworth Garden City	240	147	110	61%	75%
Hemel Hempstead Young People's Centre	240	213	99	89%	46%
Links Academy Woollam Crescent	240	114	77	48%	68%
Ware Young Peoples Centre	240	91	66	38%	73%
South Oxhey Young People's Centre, Gosforth Lane, Watford	240	180	64	75%	36%

The Services for Young People (SYP) HAPpy programme continued to demonstrate strong demand across both the Easter and Summer 2025 delivery periods. Demand remained high, with four venues exceeding 120% booking capacity, indicating sustained interest in the programme and the effectiveness of the expanded offer over the summer period.

Whilst bookings increased considerably during the summer programme, attendance did not increase at the same rate. Attendance-to-booking conversion was generally lower than during Easter, suggesting that although more young people secured places, a greater proportion did not ultimately attend. This is likely to reflect the challenges associated with delivering over a longer holiday period, where competing activities may influence attendance.

Performance varied across venues, with Waltham Cross Young People's Centre demonstrating the strongest overall performance. The venue achieved 129% booking capacity and recorded the highest attendance figures, increasing from 50 attendances during Easter to 245 during Summer. Bowes Lyon Young People's Centre and Borehamwood Youth FC also maintained high levels of demand across both delivery periods, demonstrating consistent engagement from young people. In contrast, some venues, including Ware Young People's Centre and South Oxhey Young People's Centre, experienced lower booking levels or reduced attendance conversion, highlighting opportunities to review local promotion, accessibility and programme delivery to maximise participation.

The performance statistics were shared with Services for Young People and will be considered when allocating the direct award offer in future programmes.

Short Breaks Local Offer - SBLO

Short Breaks offer disabled children and young people the chance to spend time out with others socialising and doing fun activities, giving their families a break and providing them with the confidence their child is well supported by a trained worker. They include holiday and Saturday clubs, with activities ranging from Lego and computer skills to buddying sessions. Following a delay in the tender of the new SBLO contract overall, it hadn't been possible to engage any additional providers in the programme. Attempts were made to do this prior to Summer 2025; however, this wasn't possible for providers due to capacity and time.

During 2025, only one of the organisations delivered opportunities. **Space** are an award-winning Hertfordshire based charity supporting families of children and young people who are neurodivergent (Autism, ADHD, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia, Tourette's and other neurodiverse conditions.) They offer Hertfordshire wide delivery and provide an opportunity to engage in a breadth of different sessions across the county covering sport, physical activity, life skills, enrichment and more.

Having developed a strong system of collecting the monitoring data and issuing food vouchers to the eligible families, the process for Space delivering activities remained straightforward. Having integrated the FSM eligibility question into their registration process, it was much easier for SBLO colleagues to identify those young people who should be in receipt of the funding.

As there was only one provider, the number of places attended was much lower - 167 places attended by 39 individuals. However, this continued to be a vital service for families.

Junior Gym

While the Summer Parks programme and Services for Young people provision had offered different dimensions to the youth offer, there was still a lack of open access activity which would be attractive to the oldest qualifying young people. Having spoken with one of the local leisure providers, the idea of a Junior Gym pilot was discussed

A junior gym programme aimed to provide an attractive and age-appropriate opportunity for older children and teenagers eligible for the HAF programme, offering greater independence and a more mature activity than traditional holiday provision. It was designed to help build confidence, improve physical and mental wellbeing, and develop lifelong healthy habits, while creating a welcoming environment where young people feel motivated to engage with physical activity alongside their peers.

The pilot was undertaken with the support of Everyone Active – who currently hold 7 of the 10 Local authority leisure contracts. It was specifically aimed at areas where there was no Summer Parks Programme provision, to further support a rounded youth offer across the county.

Access was available for a 5-week Junior Fitness Memberships (gym & swim) at 7 different venues:

- Berkhamsted
- Grange Paddocks, Bishop's Stortford
- Hartham Common, Hertford
- Royston
- South Oxhey, Watford
- Westminster Lodge, St Albans

The membership was available for the 5 weeks of the summer programme, with several meals offered alongside this. The Young people were able to utilise the membership during any junior gym session within that time frame, with their attendance tracked and recorded throughout. Everyone Active were funded for 64 individual young people across the sites with a total of 286 gym session attendances (average of 5 sessions attended per individual) across the 5 weeks.

Summer Parks

During 2025, HSP once again delivered a 3-week Summer Parks programme in 5 local authority areas, utilising some HAF capacity funds, the aim to strengthen the HAPpy Holiday Activity Programme offer for teenagers across Hertfordshire, by creating opportunities for 12–16 year-olds to enjoy their local green spaces, take part in a variety of activities, and receive a free food voucher.

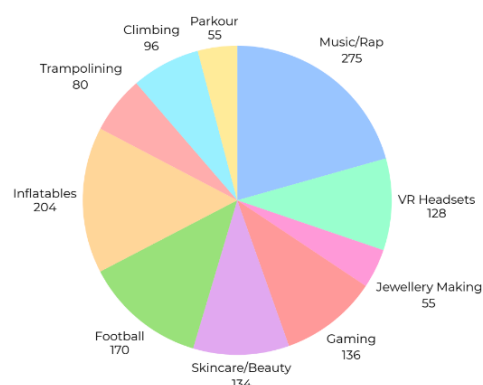
The 2025 programme put young people at the heart of the planning, with their ideas shaping the activities on offer. More external providers than ever before came on board to deliver activities, combined with several local support services to connect with young people.

Youth voice was a key priority throughout this year’s planning process, with young people playing a central role in shaping the activities and opportunities on offer. An online survey was distributed to secondary schools across the five delivery areas, asking pupils to select their top three sporting activities and top three arts and crafts activities from a realistic list of options. In addition, three face-to-face sessions were held with young people from Broxbourne Youth Council, Hertswood Academy in Borehamwood, and St Mary’s School in Cheshunt.

During these sessions, participants selected preferred activities from a displayed list, helping to guide discussions and gather feedback. Combined, the survey (which received 436 responses) and the face-to-face sessions provided a strong evidence base of young people’s interests. These findings directly shaped the programme design and informed the process of identifying and confirming external providers to deliver the chosen activities.

The programme continues to bridge the gap between primary and secondary provision and offers a different style of provision that older young people find more attractive and are interested to attend. During the summer, 1031 unique individuals registered with a total of 1,192 attendances across the programme. Of the individuals who attended the programme, 30% reported that they were eligible for free school meals (FSM), while 9% were unsure and 5% chose not to disclose. This represents a 3% increase in FSM participation compared to the previous year. There has been a 2% increase in participants who declared a Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND) upon registration.

The full 2025 report can be found [Herts Summer Parks Report 2025](#)



Workforce Development and Training

Workforce development has continued to be a key component of the Hertfordshire HAPpy programme, providing activity providers and delivery staff with access to a broad range of training and professional development opportunities designed to strengthen quality, safety, inclusion and participant outcomes.

iHASCO On-Demand Training

The iHASCO online training platform remained the most widely utilised workforce development resource during the reporting period. The 25-course Open Licence was renewed for a further year, alongside the purchase of an additional 30,000 training credits (equivalent to 3,000 course completions) to meet anticipated demand.

Ahead of Spring delivery, the training offer was reviewed and updated to ensure it reflected current programme priorities and workforce needs. Three courses were removed and seven new courses were introduced, focusing on inclusive delivery, health and safety, activity leadership and transferable skills. New additions included Anaphylaxis and Allergy Training, Asthma Training, Medication Awareness, Paediatric First Aid Refresher, Young People in the Workplace, Communication Skills and Problem Solving.

Engagement with the platform remained strong throughout 2025, with 2,354 courses completed by 1,003 individual learners across 74 HAPpy organisations. Demand was particularly high for flexible, on-demand learning opportunities, with providers valuing the ability to access training at a time and pace that suited their workforce. There has also been a continued emphasis on increasing access to first aid-related learning, while reducing reliance on safeguarding qualification courses where alternative training routes are available.

Additional SEND-focused content was incorporated into the platform, including Neurodiversity Awareness and Autism Awareness training, further supporting providers to deliver inclusive programmes and better meet the needs of children and young people with additional needs.

Following the discovery that one provider had inadvertently shared platform access beyond Hertfordshire HAPpy delivery staff, resulting in inappropriate course usage, additional moderation controls were introduced. All new user accounts now require manual approval before access is granted, and providers have been reminded that training access is restricted to staff directly involved in HAPpy delivery within Hertfordshire.

GDPR Training

Progress has continued in strengthening data protection awareness across the network. GDPR training for Playwaze Community Administrators is being encouraged as part of Spring grant conditions and will become mandatory before summer delivery. As of January 2025, there were 203 active Playwaze Community Administrators across the programme.

Engagement with the GDPR UK: Education Training course has increased significantly, with 88 individuals completing the training to date. Completion rates will continue to be monitored, with training records incorporated into summer delivery compliance requirements.

Specialist and Bespoke Training

Alongside on-demand learning, providers have accessed a range of specialist training opportunities. SEND-specific development included ADHD and Autism Awareness, Understanding and Managing Challenging Behaviour, practical workshops for activity coaches, and Deaf Awareness and British Sign Language training.

The programme also commissioned access to The Behaviour Bank, an innovative on-demand platform providing practical strategies to support behaviour management and inclusive delivery.

Cross-partnership workforce development has been strengthened through collaboration with wider Hertfordshire Sport Partnership workstreams. This included commissioning a specialist workshop on Healthy Relationships and Consensual Behaviours, delivered by The Change Project, targeting organisations with a youth work and outreach focus.

Additional bespoke training opportunities included workshops delivered through StreetGames on Alternative Income Generation, Demonstrating the Need and Activator Essentials, alongside planned summer workshops focusing on healthy eating, environmental awareness, SEND inclusion and practical nutrition education.

Learn & Share Events

Two Learn & Share events were delivered during the period, providing opportunities for providers to network, share learning, reflect on previous delivery and prepare for future programme phases.

The Autumn event focused on Disability and Inclusion, supporting providers to enhance SEND provision and align with the upcoming Hertfordshire Year of Disability Sport and Physical Activity. Up to 28 delegates attended sessions covering mental health and wellbeing, improving experiences for children with additional needs, programme updates and sector developments.

The Spring Learn & Share event was held during Mental Health Awareness Week and focused on three key themes: supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing, adapting physical activity for different ages and abilities, and improving the quality and consistency of food provision. The event combined presentations, practical workshops and facilitated discussions, helping providers to translate learning directly into summer programme planning.

Collectively, these workforce development opportunities have continued to strengthen provider confidence, knowledge and capability, supporting the delivery of safe, inclusive and high-quality experiences for children and young people across the HAPpy programme.

Summer Parks

In July, a two-day training programme was delivered in partnership with Sporting Inspirations to ensure all staff were fully prepared for programme delivery. Building on learning from 2024, the training content was refined to address identified gaps, with a particular focus on strengthening understanding of the registration process and the use of digital sign-in systems. The programme covered key operational areas including programme expectations, safeguarding, first aid, risk assessments and site overviews, alongside practical sessions using registration tablets. A new hands-on equipment

workshop was also introduced, enabling staff to practise the correct set-up and dismantling of equipment, increasing confidence and helping to ensure a smooth and consistent delivery across all sites.

Behaviour Bank

The decision was taken to renew the subscriptions to the Behaviour Bank for 2025 to support providers. After speaking with delivery providers, it was felt that the lack of engagement had been down to navigation of the system and providers not fully understanding how this would benefit them, so work was undertaken alongside the CEO, to help support some major developments, which improved the interface of the platform itself including access from the main SPD website and the user experience overall.

SEND

Supporting children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) remains a core priority of the Hertfordshire HAPpy Programme. The programme is committed to ensuring that children with additional needs can access safe, inclusive and high-quality holiday provision that meets their individual requirements while enabling them to participate alongside their peers wherever appropriate. Through a combination of specialist SEND provision, inclusive mainstream opportunities, workforce development and targeted support for providers, Hertfordshire continues to strengthen its SEND offer and increase opportunities for children and young people with a wide range of needs to engage in enriching activities, develop social connections, build confidence and enjoy positive holiday experiences.

Ensuring that children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) can access and benefit from HAPpy provision remains a key priority. The programme operates a graduated approach to inclusion, combining specialist SEND provision for children with more complex needs alongside a strong expectation that the majority of children with SEND will be able to access universal HAPpy activities.

At the same time, almost 90% of HAPpy participants with SEND attend mainstream schools, reinforcing the importance of inclusive universal provision. In line with Department for Education expectations, universal providers are expected to meet the needs of the majority of children with low to moderate SEND requirements through reasonable adjustments, inclusive practice and appropriately trained staff. To support this, HAPpy continues to offer free training, resources and professional development opportunities to increase providers' confidence, knowledge and capability in supporting children with additional needs.

In Easter 2024, 22% of Attendees had declared SEND. This has steadily risen over the course of the year, and increased again by 1% from the last phase, with 28% of unique attendees declaring SEND this Easter. By comparison, according to the School Census 2022, 12.8% of pupils in Hertfordshire receive SEN support. This compares to around 15.8% of children attending school in England identified with SEN (gov.uk 2021).

As a result of the increasing demand for SEND provision, there was a conscious decision within each mapping phase to increase the ratio of universal and SEND specific. Whilst not being able to meet this

need entirely, this action continues to even out the provision and making it more accessible for those with the greater needs.

There was a marked increase in providers reporting children who required personal care – which is not expected of providers due to the training and risk assessment required – which also meant that there were some children/young people whose needs were unable to be met within the provision.

Revision of booking form

Accurate and detailed declaration of SEND needs during the booking process is essential in helping providers plan and prepare effectively for the children attending their camps. The information provided by parents and carers enables providers to assess support requirements in advance, make reasonable adjustments, allocate appropriate staffing levels, prepare suitable activities and environments, and ensure any necessary equipment or resources are available. Comprehensive information also supports effective risk management and helps staff understand how best to engage and support individual children, contributing to a safer, more inclusive and more positive experience for all participants. Where SEND needs are not fully disclosed, providers may have limited opportunity to make the necessary preparations, which can impact both the child's experience and the provider's ability to meet their needs effectively.

Providers have noted that many of the children at their camps with SEND either had minimal or incomplete information with regards to their individual SEND needs. To increase the extensity of the data, the team managed a number of key interventions during 2025.

Info in school email – This was revised to emphasise the need for preparation.

To get ready, you can also start thinking about any particular needs your child may have, so you can let the camp providers know when booking - this can include behavioural challenges or SEND needs, whether formally diagnosed or not. On our simple booking form, you can tell us as much as you can about your child so the camp organisers can make sure they have a safe and enjoyable time at camp.

Reviewed the SEND specific questions – SEND specific form for SEND specific provision ensured that parents could not miss the questions, as there had to be a box ticked that the child had SEND needs before they could continue with the booking

The HSP team worked with Sam Dholakia (Behaviour Bank) to create a video on the importance of ensuring the information is complete and fit for purpose – particularly after a diagnosis or intervention. Using the mindset that 'parents were the expert in their children', parents were empowered to complete the questions as thoroughly as possible to help both providers and their child to have the most positive experience.

SEND contact more in-depth at booking from providers

During the Summer period there were some concerns reported from parents regarding camp provision. The majority of these were in relation to a child with SEND. In most cases, the concern would have been mitigated if the provider had undertaken the pre-camp register checks and spoken

directly with parents to determine the level of support required and whether needs could be met or whether extra support was required.

A key expectation of all providers is that they proactively engage with families when SEND needs are identified during the booking process. Direct conversations, either by telephone or in person, are encouraged to ensure providers gain a thorough understanding of a child's individual needs and can assess whether they can be safely and appropriately supported within the planned provision. These discussions help providers identify any necessary adaptations, develop support plans and ensure relevant information is shared with delivery staff.

Experience across the programme demonstrates that many children with SEND can participate successfully in universal activities with relatively minor adjustments and staff awareness. However, where discussions with families identify that more significant adaptations or additional support may be required, providers can seek access to a limited SEND support fund. Requests are considered on a case-by-case basis and must be supported by evidence of need, proposed adaptations and associated costs. This approach helps ensure that resources are targeted appropriately while maximising opportunities for children with SEND to participate in high-quality holiday activities alongside their peers.

Empowering providers to update booking forms

Given the same booking form is used across all activities booked on the programme, regardless of provider, it is even more essential that there was an opportunity to amend or add to incomplete information on a regular basis. Providers have been empowered to make these changes following conversations with parents, incidents where additional information could support another provider (such as triggers and de sensitisation opportunities). Parents have also been regularly encouraged to update this as well – especially if they are awaiting a diagnosis or once a diagnosis has taken place.

Standardised statement and coding of SEND specific activities on the booking system

To make it easier for parents all SEND specific activities have SEND in the title of the activity – making them easily identifiable in the initial search. Each have then added the following statement at the start of their activity listing;

The activity you are about to book is specially designed to cater for the needs of children and young people with disabilities or additional needs (SEND).

This session is targeted at children who require significant additional support to integrate & participate in holiday activities. For example, but not limited to, children who have an EHCP / 1:1 Teaching Assistance / small group lessons / reduced hours at school.

In the winter programme, there was an unavoidable lack of specialist SEND provision in some areas, due to some long standing, trusted SEND providers choosing not to apply for that phase. The HSP team worked to collate Free opportunities which were available for SEND children in the community and communicate these to the families. It was recognised that this may cause some difficulty in meeting the needs of all children and young people who would normally engage in the programme, however,

children with SEND were successfully accommodated in universal provision, without many requests for additional funding (staff or resources). 27% of attendees declared SEND when booking, this remained stable across the year and compared with 28% of attendees at Spring and Summer 2025.

Marketing and Communications

A targeted and data-led marketing approach has continued to support awareness and uptake of the HAPpy programme. Bitly tracking links have remained a key tool for monitoring engagement across marketing channels, enabling the team to identify peak engagement periods, understand which messages resonate most effectively with different audiences, and inform future campaign planning. To further increase visibility, promotional banners will be placed in local hotspot areas as well as locations where booking levels are currently lower, helping to raise awareness and encourage participation in underrepresented communities.

In partnership with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), a range of promotional content has been developed and shared across multiple communication channels. Social media content has been distributed through HCC platforms including Facebook, Instagram and X, with embedded tracking links used to monitor engagement. Additional promotion has been facilitated through HCC networks including Nextdoor, Update Me, Hertfordshire Grid, SEND groups, internal communications channels and Members' Bulletins, helping to extend the reach of programme messaging to a wide range of audiences.

Printed marketing materials have also been refreshed, with two redesigned poster formats produced and distributed through libraries, food banks and other community locations. Looking ahead to summer delivery, plans are in place to utilise professional photography and videography services to capture high-quality content, supporting future marketing campaigns and showcasing the impact of the programme.

To support providers in promoting their individual activities, updated marketing resources were shared through Canva, including Playwaze listing templates, SEND-specific promotional materials, social media assets and general marketing guidance. Providers were also supplied with direct booking links to their individual camps, making it easier for parents and carers to access relevant opportunities and reducing the need to navigate through the main booking platform.



Emails to Schools

To improve parental engagement and increase awareness of the HAPpy booking process, the school communications approach was refined during the Easter delivery phase. A simplified email timeline was introduced, beginning with a generic email, outlining key dates, expectations and the importance of sharing booking codes with eligible families, followed by a series of targeted reminder emails. This approach resulted in significantly higher engagement levels than previous campaigns and will be replicated for summer delivery. Communications were further strengthened through the development of distinct messaging for primary and secondary schools, alongside updated content for HCC's Grid communications platform. To better understand engagement, Bitly tracking links were embedded within all school emails, providing valuable insight into parent interactions with booking platforms and provider webpages. While click-throughs do not necessarily translate directly into bookings, they provide a strong indication of interest and have helped inform future communication planning.

Through tracking the school Emails Bitly Links engagement across Spring and Summer programmes, it was clear that the highest engagement came from the email which included the code, which was sent directly before the bookings opening period, followed by the email sent on the first week that codes were distributed. This helped ensure that messaging of key actions was clear at these two points, to gain the most impact with eligible families.

Programme Feedback and Impact

Demonstrating the impact of the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme on multiple levels is clearly evident within the feedback and information gathered after each programme. This is key in highlighting its broad and lasting value – particularly in the wider benefits for families, including reduced financial pressure and strengthened community connections. The opportunities the programme provides for activity providers, such as increased reach, collaboration, and professional development are equally key to ensuring that the right providers continue to offer HAPpy activities and that they are committed to supporting both in delivery but in their wider community as well.

HAPpy Programme – Parent Feedback Comparison (2025)

Across Easter, Summer and Winter 2025 surveys, parent feedback shows **consistently high satisfaction** with HAPpy holiday provision. The programme is delivering strong outcomes for children while providing critical support to families.

Over **90% of parents** report that their child enjoyed their overall experience with particular emphasis on both **physical and enrichment activities**- indicating **high-quality, engaging provision across all delivery periods**

Parents consistently reported that children:

- Made new friends
- Gained confidence
- Increased physical activity
- Tried new activities

Around **85–88% of families** say the programme helped them “a lot” – with the Free provision reducing pressure on:

- Childcare costs
- Food costs
- Holiday activity spending

Around **1 in 4 users reported difficulties with the booking system**. The common issues reported was the Navigation / usability, use of the Waiting list function and the Cancellation process

Areas for Improvement

1. Booking system usability
2. Food quality and variety
3. Increased SEND provision and local access (from qualitative feedback)

The HAPpy programme is **highly valued by families**, delivering strong outcomes for children and critical cost-of-living support. While operational improvements are needed in booking systems and food provision, overall performance is **consistently strong across Easter, Summer, and Winter delivery periods**.

Feedback

The staff there are very nice and always remember us. They ask after R and know which school she attends and that she's struggling there. I don't know how R gets on as she can't tell me and all I get from staff is "she had a good day" but that's good enough for me! And I can tell R likes it as she's always happy to go and comes out happy. As I'm currently unemployed but would struggle to have her every day of the holidays, this free club is GOLD dust. Thank you

My son absolutely loves this camp! This camp is the one where he spends most of his time. I put him there a lot as he asks all the time about it. He was so excited to go each day and even started counting down the sleeps until he could go back. Although he is non-verbal, he's incredibly sociable, and it means so much to me to see him so happy and engaged. I feel completely confident that Albie is not only safe but truly cared for and having the best time. The team are amazing, and I'm so grateful for the joy they bring. He'll definitely be back soon!

The camps have been absolutely invaluable for my child truly one of the best initiatives you've ever organised. She has made wonderful new friends; the kind she would never have had the chance to meet outside of camp. Every morning she's been so excited that she's out of bed and ready to go before I even ask. She's loved looking forward to the activities and even chatting about the food afterwards. Normally she is a very shy child, but through camp she's been happily talking about her friends, what they've been doing, and all the plans they've been making together.

I could write never ending paragraphs, so I will keep this short and simple. I'm grateful as well as my child is, as he has made new friends and stepped out of his actual comfort zone, which I rarely see, what he has taken from the summer camp is, the nature walks which I now make time for, and various sports/Arts and crafts. He also mentions that Leon is his big brother. 😊

I was so impressed and grateful for the camp. My child really enjoyed it. The lunches were fantastic. The staff were brilliant. My son said one of the main reasons he liked it so much was because the staff were really nice. He got taught really good tennis skills which he was really excited about. An extremely well run, organised, friendly and inclusive camp. So much better than him sitting at home bored during the holidays. He was booked on for 3 weeks, but we ended up going away and he was disappointed to have to cancel it! There are not many things that he as a 13-year-old shows much enthusiasm for anymore, so thank you so much!

Child quotes

"We would be at home bored if this wasn't happening"

"Best club I have ever been to, and it's the best day of my life"

"I prefer being here than at home sometimes, I get to do loads more stuff here which I like"

I like the goody bags, and I have never had Christmas dinner at home so was good to try it.

Key Actions for 2026

Following on from a review of the programmes delivered in 2025, the following actions were determined for development in 2026.

- Re-tender for the future contract to deliver on behalf of HCC.
- Continue to refine Online referral process and ensure that the right families are accessing the 15% discretionary places wherever possible.
- Procurement and integration of a new Booking system for Summer 2026
- Explore opportunities to refresh the on demand offer as part of the training programme.
- Develop links to deliverers who can support the roll out of Safeguarding training delivered to Education establishments.
- Deliver a face-to-face *Learn & Share* event in May 2026 and then a virtual *Learn & Share* in November 2026.
- Revisit the SEND offer across the programme - considering the current challenges with the SEND offer in Hertfordshire, gather insight from influential partners and deliverers on how the programme could continue to develop (subject to any DfE guidance changes) and begin to determine key actions to be undertaken ahead of the spring 2026 phase.
- Investigate options for a new online training platform which is fit for purpose for the upskilling of HAF providers.
- Creation of an innovative marketing and communications plan including an opportunity to revisit and refresh the content on the HSP website.

Having been successful in winning the tender, announced in October 2025 – the HSP team will be committed to continuing the hard work and delivering a quality programme from 2026 and beyond.

Appendix 1 – List of Providers 2025

[orange = new provider for 2025]

[x = delivered in this holiday period]

Grant Application Name	Spring	Summer	Winter	New Provider
4-4-2 sports		yes	yes	yes
Active Communities Enterprise CIC/Uplay Sports	yes	yes	yes	
Apex Multisports	yes	yes	yes	
Ascot Road Primary School	yes	yes	yes	
Brighter Days Kids Club	yes	yes		
Broxbourne Borough Council	yes	yes		
Camp 4 Champs	yes	yes		
CHEXS		yes		yes
Christina Marks School of Performing Arts	yes	yes		
Clean Herts Community CIC		yes		yes
CoachingMe Ltd.	yes	yes	yes	
Community Initiative	yes	yes	yes	
Diamond Gymnastics Club	yes	yes	yes	
Digischool Ltd t/a ComputerXplorers Hertfordshire	yes	yes	yes	
Dolphina Gymnastic Centre Ltd	yes	yes	yes	
Drama Academy	yes	yes		
Elevate Herts CIC		yes		yes
EM Skills Enterprise CIC		yes	yes	yes
Everybody Loves Music CIC		yes		yes
Everyone Active	yes	yes		
Feel Hot Yoga	yes	yes		
FIT Bootcamp Limited t/a FizzBug	yes	yes	yes	
FK Dance Academy	yes	yes		
Football Fun Factory		yes		
Forever Young People	yes	yes	yes	
Get Set 4 Tennis CIC	yes	yes	yes	
Get With The Kids Vibe	yes	yes	yes	
GETGOLFING CIO		yes		
Greenfields Primary school	yes	yes	yes	
Happy Hours Out of School Club C/O Birchwood Avenue Primary School/ Lisa Bailey Childminding	yes	yes	yes	
Hemel Hempstead Youth Rugby League Club	yes			
Hemel Warriors ABC	yes	yes	yes	
Hertford Gymnastics	yes	yes	yes	
HOLISTIC EDUCATION & SPORT SUPPORT SERVICES CIC · 13582732		yes	yes	yes

Imagination Dance CIC	yes			
Jam Coding Watford	yes	yes		
Kool Kidz Club Ltd	yes	yes	yes	
Lime Walk Primary School	yes	yes	yes	
London Holiday Camps Ltd	yes	yes	yes	
Mandeville Primary School	yes	yes		
MC Inspire LLP t/a Mighty Netball	yes			
Next Thing Education Camps LTD	yes	yes	yes	
Non Stop Sports Education Limited	yes	yes	yes	
North Hertfordshire & Bedfordshire Film Club		yes		yes
Out to Learn	yes	yes		
Pioneer Youth Club	yes	yes		
Premier Agents LTD ta Premier Education	yes	yes	yes	
Premier Education - (Premier Schools Ltd)	yes	yes	yes	
ProFormance Pathways CIC	yes	yes	yes	
Re:play Holiday Club	yes	yes		
Sapphire Gymnastics Sports Centre	yes	yes		
Saracens Sport Foundation	yes	yes		
SASA School of Performing Arts	yes	yes		
Science Atomic UK, CIC t/a Mad Science of Hertfordshire & Bedfordshire	yes	yes	yes	
Sills Performing Arts Academy Ltd. T/A CK Theatre School		yes		yes
SportsCool	yes	yes	yes	
Stevenage and North Herts Athletic Club	yes	yes		
Stevenage Cycling Hub CIC	yes	yes		
Stevenage FC Foundation	yes	yes	yes	
Stevenage Futsal		yes	yes	yes
Stortford Gymnastics Club	yes	yes		
Super Star Sport NWL LTD		yes	yes	
The Craft Room	yes	yes		
The Hive @ Jim McDonald Centre, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council	yes	yes	yes	
The Little Performers	yes	yes	yes	
The Swan Youth Project Limited (formerly Swan Youth Centre)	yes	yes		
Theatretrain Royston	yes	yes		
Three Rivers District Council	yes	yes		
Time for change kids	yes	yes	yes	
Topkidz Out of School Hours & Daycare Group Ltd	yes	yes		
Warriorz Performing Arts Academy	yes	yes	yes	

Watford Football Club Community Sport & Education Trust	yes	yes	yes	
West Herts Warriors Basketball Club	yes	yes	yes	
Work Works Training Solutions CIC		yes		yes
Zenith Trampoline Club	yes	yes	yes	
	61	73	39	12