

Brent Annual Holiday Activities and Food Programme Report 2023/24

Overview of 2023/24

In 2023/24, the Department for Education allocated Brent Council £984,360 to deliver the Brent Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme. The core aims of the programme are for children who attend the provision to:

- receive healthy and nutritious meals
- maintain a healthy level of physical activity
- be happy, have fun and meet new friends
- develop a greater understanding of food, nutrition and other health-related issues
- take part in fun and engaging activities that support their development
- feel safe and secure
- get access to the right support services
- return to school feeling engaged and ready to learn

Brent adopted an annual approach for the 2023/24 HAF programme, moving away from commissioning providers for each holiday period. 4,115 places were commissioned for the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays in 2023/24. Four days were available at Easter and Christmas and sixteen days over the summer holidays. The Council worked with 36 providers across 43 venues to deliver the programme in Easter, summer, and Christmas. The majority of providers were local to Brent and the types of organisations included charities, community interest companies, schools and limited companies. 4,182 places were accessed by eligible children and young people across the borough. There were a range of activities available including sports, skateboarding, African drumming, drama, podcast/ DJ workshops, horse riding and trips.

Key Highlights from the 2023-24 programme:

- 14 Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing workshops were delivered to 299 children and young people. The sessions included topics on healthy eating, mental health and confidence/ self-esteem.
- St John's Ambulance provided first aid, mental first aid and street violence first aid sessions at multiple HAF provisions.
- The number of special educational needs and disability (SEND) places accessed increased from 10.8% in 2022/23 to 13.63% in 2023/24.
- Regular HAF Provider Network meetings were introduced to share best practice, resources and activity ideas. One success from this was providers sharing minibuses allowing for more trips to occur throughout the year.

Easter

Easter Funding

Easter programme Spend

£156,311.93

Administration Spend

£32,812.00

Total Easter Spend

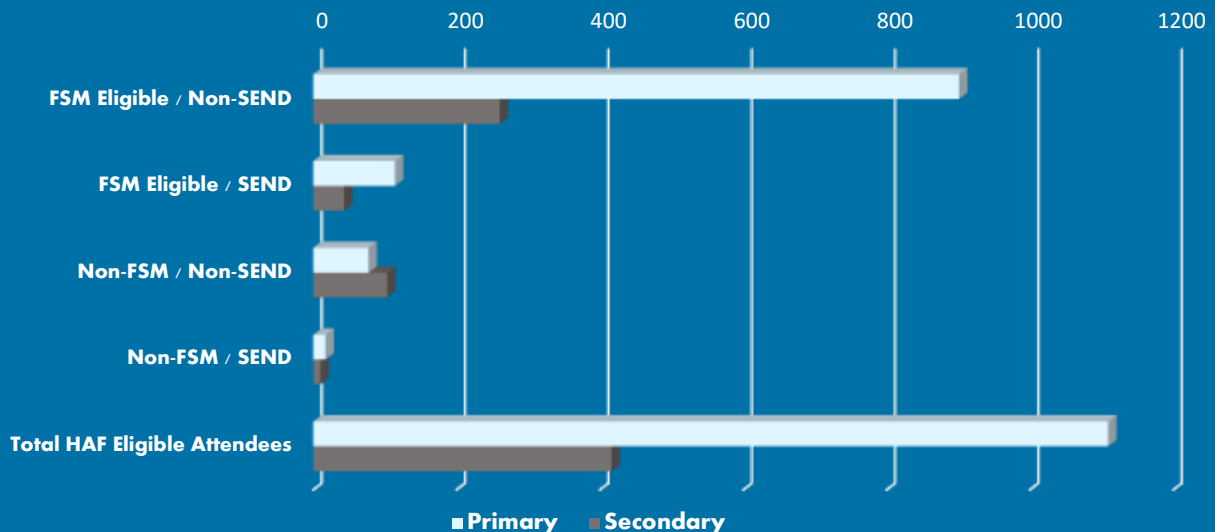
£189,123.93

During Easter 2023, 28 providers were commissioned to deliver a HAF provision across 4 days at 36 clubs. 1,525 children and young people accessed a HAF place.

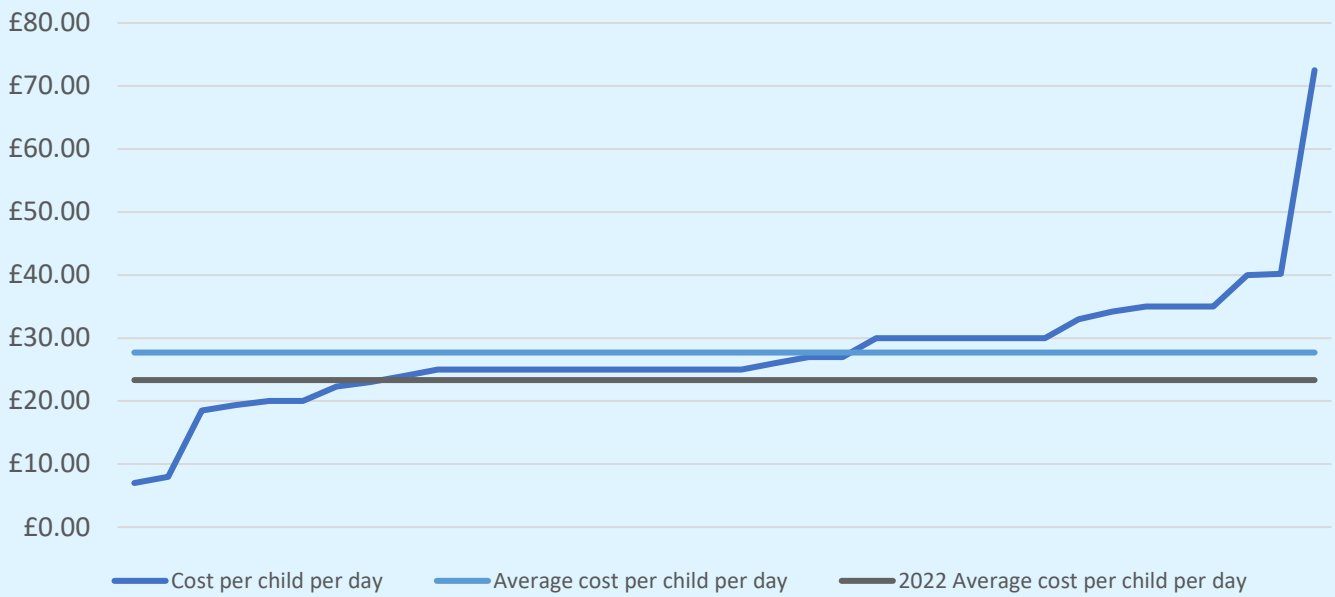
The average attendance for Brent HAF during the Easter programme was 4 days. Activities included sports, martial arts, drama, cooking, cricket, and more. Drama classes were particularly well-attended and allowed children to express themselves freely, regardless of personality type. Role-playing activities fostered confidence, leadership skills, and new friendships.

In 2023, Brent ringfenced funding for SEND places to enhance the places available. An additional 76 SEND places were accessed in Easter 2023 compared to Easter 2022. The Council worked with one SEND specialist provision and all other provisions are required to be SEND accessible. The proportion of secondary school children accessing a provision decreased compared to 2022. This is an area the Brent HAF Team have focused on in 2024/25 to ensure that this cohort is engaging with the programme. This was achieved through commissioning providers with existing connections with this cohort and engaging with young people to establish which activities they want to do.

REACH



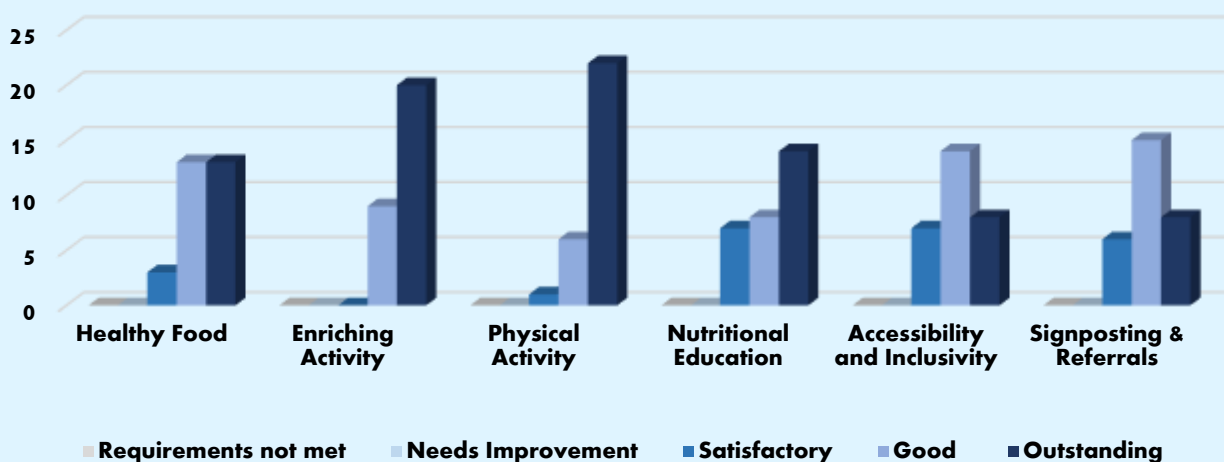
Cost per Child per Day



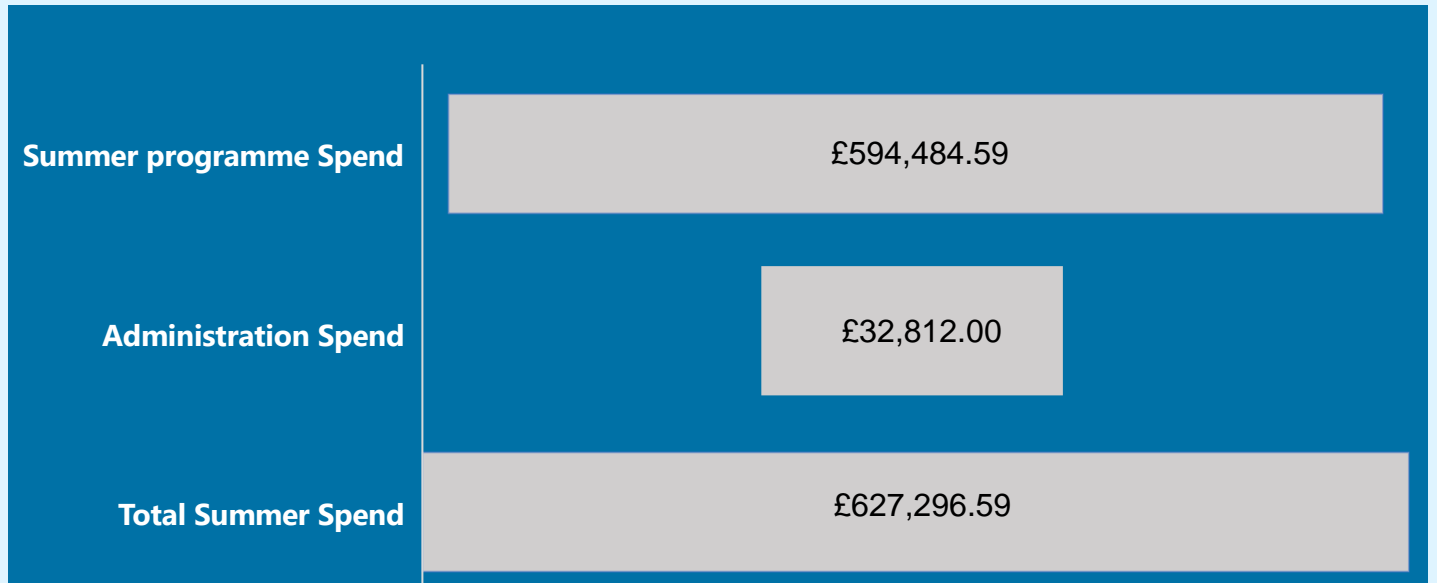
The average cost per child per day increased by 17.8% from Easter 2022 to Easter 2023. This is attributed to high inflation and demand for SEND places, which are typically higher in cost. The highest costing provider was a SEND specialist provision. This trend was seen across all holiday periods. The funding allocated by the Department for Education did not increase in line with the trend meaning that fewer places could be commissioned in comparison to 2022.

The Brent HAF team carried out quality assurance visits to providers across the Easter period. A Microsoft Form was used to assess each provider on key areas of the HAF programme. This was beneficial in identifying where improvements could be made in the programme. Desktop quality assurance checks for all providers were also carried out throughout the process to ensure they met the Local Authority's requirements and HAF guidance. A key strength of the Brent programme is the activities offered in the borough. No part of the programme was deemed below satisfactory, however there is room for improvement. These areas were discussed with providers in the network meeting following Easter to see how the local authority could support to enhance these aspects of the programme. One idea that was adopted was to divide signposting material available into different sections, e.g. housing, to make it more accessible for parents and cares. This was actioned for summer and providers feedback was positive about the change.

Quality Assurance of Programme Delivery



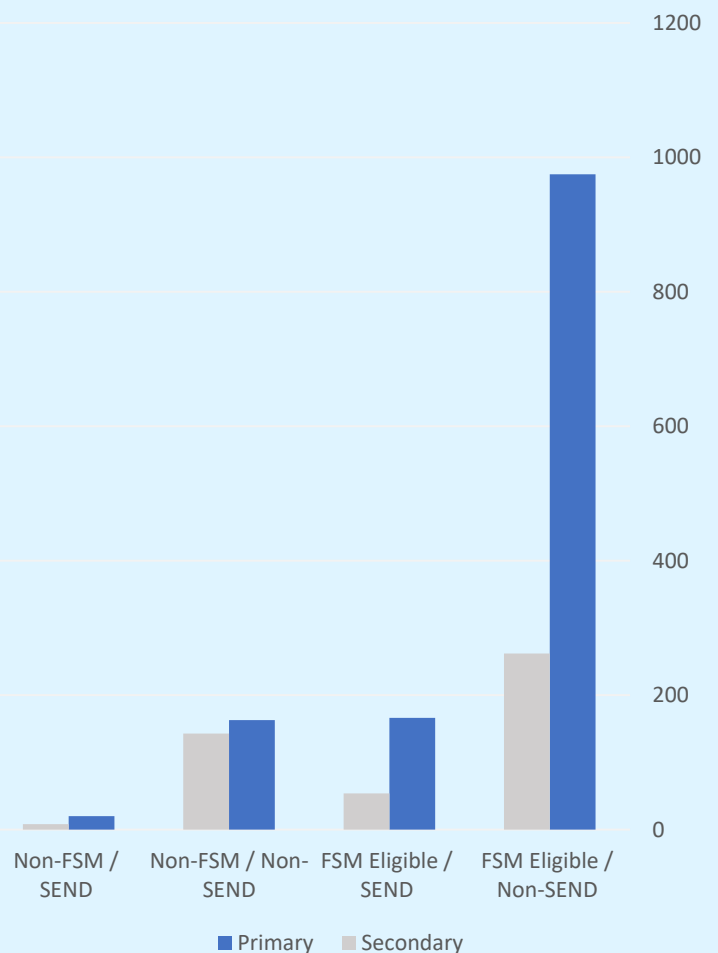
Summer

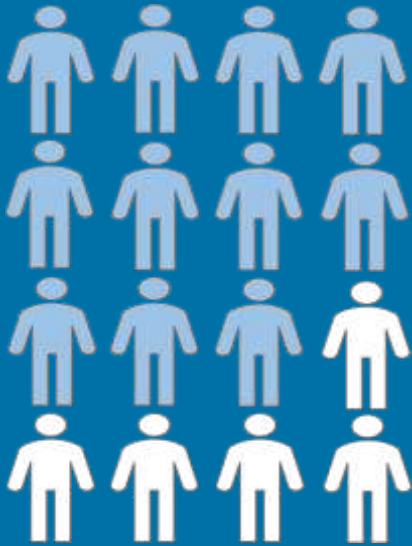


The Brent 2023 Summer Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme reached 1,791 children and young people. 36 providers were commissioned, including 29 returning and 7 new providers, who delivered activities at 43 venues across 19 of the 22 wards. The programme offered a diverse range of activities such as sports (including yoga, football, and lacrosse), clay modelling, horse riding, science experiments, skateboarding, African drumming, filmmaking, and vegetable planting trips. Of the attendees, 25.7% were secondary-aged children, and 14.1% were SEND places.

In summer there was an increased demand for SEND HAF places which was responded to in the funding arrangements made at the start of the year. There is an expectation that all Brent HAF provider are inclusive and accessible to all, and to increase the number of SEND places at summer, leftover funding from Easter was used to commission 45 SEND specific places across 14 HAF provisions. This is in addition to 50 places commissioned at a specialist provision.

SUMMER REACH





The average attendance over summer was 11 days. Next summer, the Brent HAF Team will look to how to promote and enhance the programme further so that children and young people access their entitlement of a minimum of 16 days of activities.

This summer, Brent providers worked with Tesco who donated a wide range of fruit. Lola's Cupcakes have collaborated with Brent providers to help support the food offer (including providing healthy food) and hoodies. This helped to enhance the healthy eating offer in Brent.

Greggs partnered with providers to have food available to families when dropping off children at a provision. The Felix Project was utilised by numerous providers to deliver food boxes and recipe cards to families.

Providers accessed exciting trips with discounts for HAF providers including high rope courses and trampoline parks.

Partnership working enhances the Brent HAF offer further and the Brent HAF Team will look to expand this in 2024/25 to ensure the best for our children and young people.

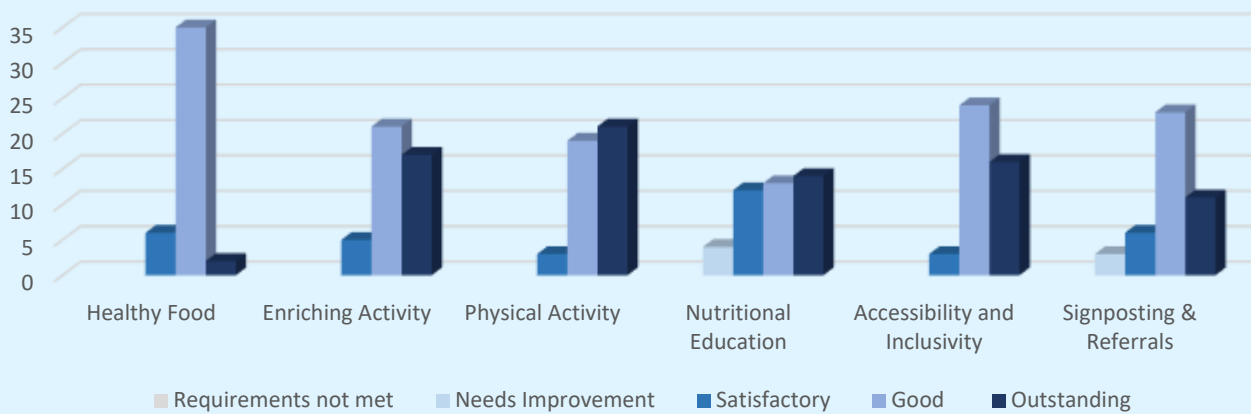
As part of the Council's recovery programme from the Covid-19 pandemic, funding was allocated to support community-based mental health and wellbeing initiatives. A portion of this funding was used to commission the organisation *Compass* to deliver one-off mental health and emotional wellbeing workshops to HAF attendees during the summer. The project aimed to deliver 15 sessions to 200 children and young people (CYP) in community settings. In total, 14 workshops were conducted, reaching 299 Brent CYP at 6 HAF provisions and one Family Wellbeing Centre.

The workshops covered various topics selected by Brent's children and young people through a survey distributed to HAF attendees at Easter. Additionally, two training courses were provided for the children and young people community workforce to support early identification of needs and intervention. Feedback from providers who hosted the sessions was positive, with no area scoring below a 3 out of 5. One provider shared that a family expressed gratitude for the workshop, as it facilitated conversations about mental health at home.

St John's Ambulance delivered mental health first aid, physical first aid, and street violence first aid sessions to HAF provisions over the summer holidays, funded by the People's Postcode Lottery Fund. This initiative was well received by providers, and further sessions were also delivered over the Christmas period.

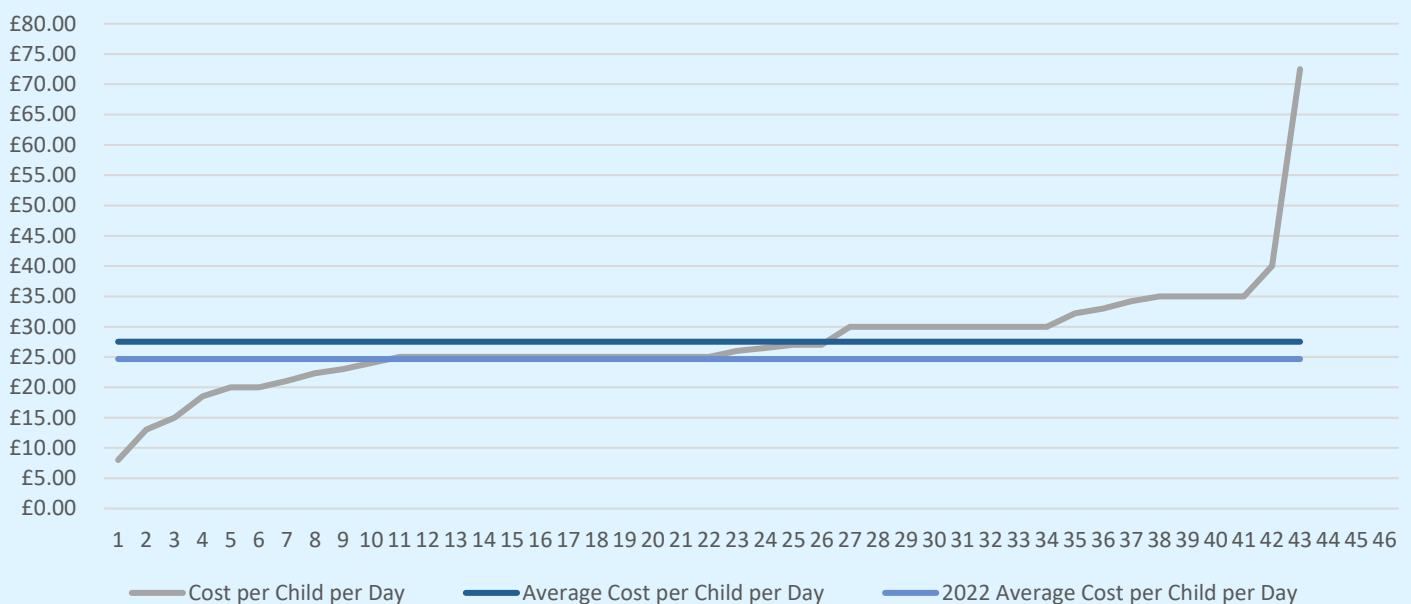
These opportunities were one-off due to the specific funding available. Future opportunities will be explored to incorporate similar initiatives into the 2024 HAF programme, based on positive feedback from HAF providers, children and young people, families, and carers.

Quality Assurance of Programme Delivery



35 providers were visited over the summer holidays and 1 provider was virtually quality assured. Nutritional education continued to be an area that requires improvement. There was an increase in the number of providers deemed 'outstanding' in nutritional education, however there were a couple who scored below 'satisfactory'. This remains a focus for 2024/25. For those providers who scored 'needs improvement' activity ideas, best practice from higher scoring providers and resources were emailed to them to support in enhancing their offer. This approach was also applied to those scoring below 'satisfactory' for signposting and referrals. The vast majority of clubs scored 'good' for healthy food which was a positive improvement from Easter. Enriching and physical activities continued to be a great strength of the Brent HAF programme.

Cost per Child per Day



The cost per child per day was higher in summer 2023 when compared to 2022. The average cost per child over 16 days increased by £45.76. In order to address this in 2024, the Brent HAF Steering Group agreed to introduce an upper limit of the cost of a place. The upper limit will be based on the average cost per child per day outlined in applications to ensure viability for providers in delivering the programme. The average will exclude SEND specific provisions.

The Brent HAF programme was visited by four representatives from the Department for Education over the summer. Brent was thanked for arranging the visit with one representative stating 'It was really inspiring to see all the hard work that you [the Council] and the providers do.' They visited two provisions in the borough. The first were running multiple activities including berry picking to later be turned into jam, T shirt decoration, football and free play. The second provision had an intense game of dodgeball and spoke about how their programme incorporates young volunteers to enable them to obtain qualifications in safeguarding, health and safety and coaching.

The Brent HAF Team received really positive feedback over the summer holidays from parents, carers, children and young people.

Children and Young People:

“Learning about healthy eating and nutrition was favourite. I got to learn about the body uses fuel to give us energy and I loved eating loads of fruit especially the melons.”

“Acting and drama – that was my favourite. I love acting on stage. Thank you for having me!”

“My favourite theme for the programme was Around the World – where we got to learn about different cultures and religions and make our Country flag. I really loved the food also as we had so much watermelon – that was my favourite.”

Parents and Carers:

“Just wanted to mention how positive it was to hear K talking about mental health awareness, she said someone came in to club last week to talk to the kids about mental health and explore their understanding. It was a good conversation starter at home and she was very interested in talking about it with me on a deeper level.”

“My son is both deaf and non-verbal and the management at provider S has been exceptional amazing in organising a 1-1 for him that he has worked with before and has developed a great relationship. Nowhere else offers this type of help and we are forever grateful for it. He enjoyed activities such as baking cookies, cupcakes, lots of arts and crafts. He also loved going on trips such as inflation, rock up as he enjoys these types of activities. He needs regulation with his routine and therefore attending the playscheme to structure his day in and outside of home has helped enormously with his attention and behaviour. If we didn't have this support available we would be truly at loss as its not possible to do these types of activities without the help and support of provider S. It has become a lifeline for us. We very much look forward to attending the next session.”

“Amazing opportunity for my children to come and have fun. The programme had really benefited me as I would not be able to afford paid playschemes and this really helped me to bring my children here and take part in really good activities and they had a great time. Thank you for having us.”

Christmas

Christmas Funding

Christmas programme Spend

£135,127.48

Administration Spend

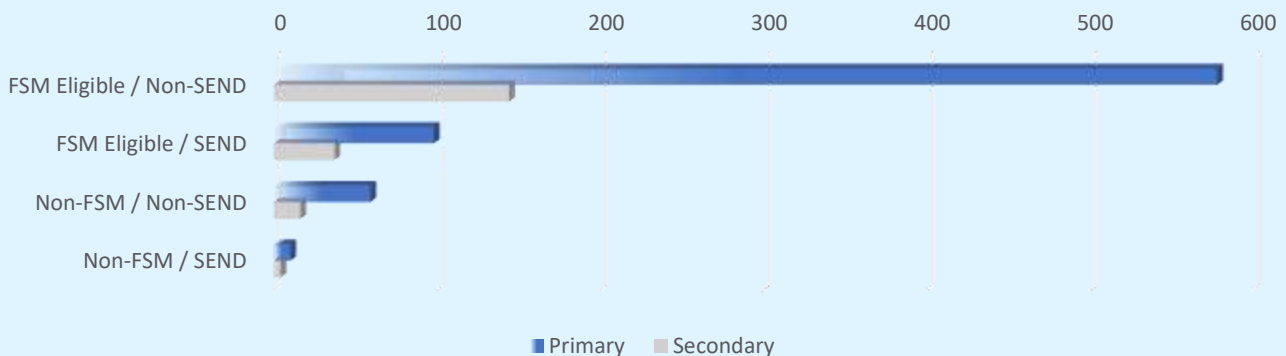
£32,812.00

Total Christmas Spend

£167,939.48

The Brent 2023 Christmas HAF programme reached 946 children and young people, with an average attendance of 3.4 days. Cancellations and non-attendance during the Christmas period were primarily attributed to children falling ill. Some providers have implemented non-attendance policies, overbooking, or waiting lists, but the absence of consequences for non-attendance due to the programme being free remains a challenge. Closer collaboration with schools to secure more affordable venues and providing greater support to providers regarding nutritional education are ongoing actions to tackle these challenges. 22 providers delivered activities at 26 clubs across 17 wards. The programme offered a variety of activities, including sports, skateboarding, indoor snowboarding, swimming, drama workshops, clay modelling, and music sessions. Among the attendees, 21.2% were secondary-aged, and 15.8% were SEND places. Gingerbread house making was a hit among the younger cohort, offering an opportunity for creative expression and teamwork. This activity also facilitated language development and improved communication skills as when decorating the ginger bread house, children can share their creative ideas and preferences. Explaining their vision for the decorations helps them articulate their thoughts and opinions clearly.

CHRISTMAS REACH

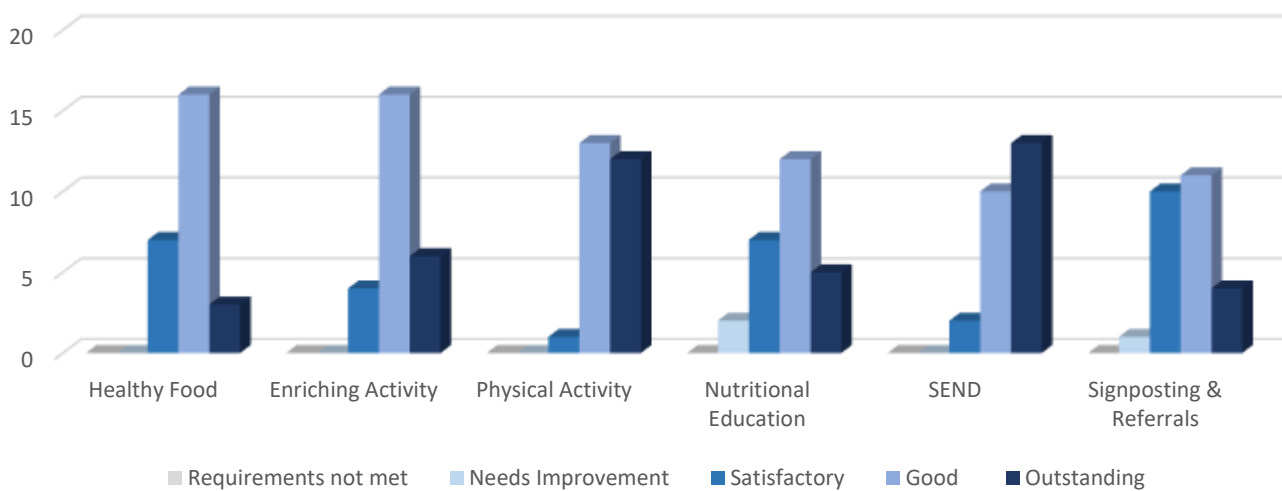


The Brent HAF team worked with colleagues in Early Help to enhance the signposting and referrals offer. This updated the materials circulated to providers regarding services that are available and ensured details were up to date and accurate.

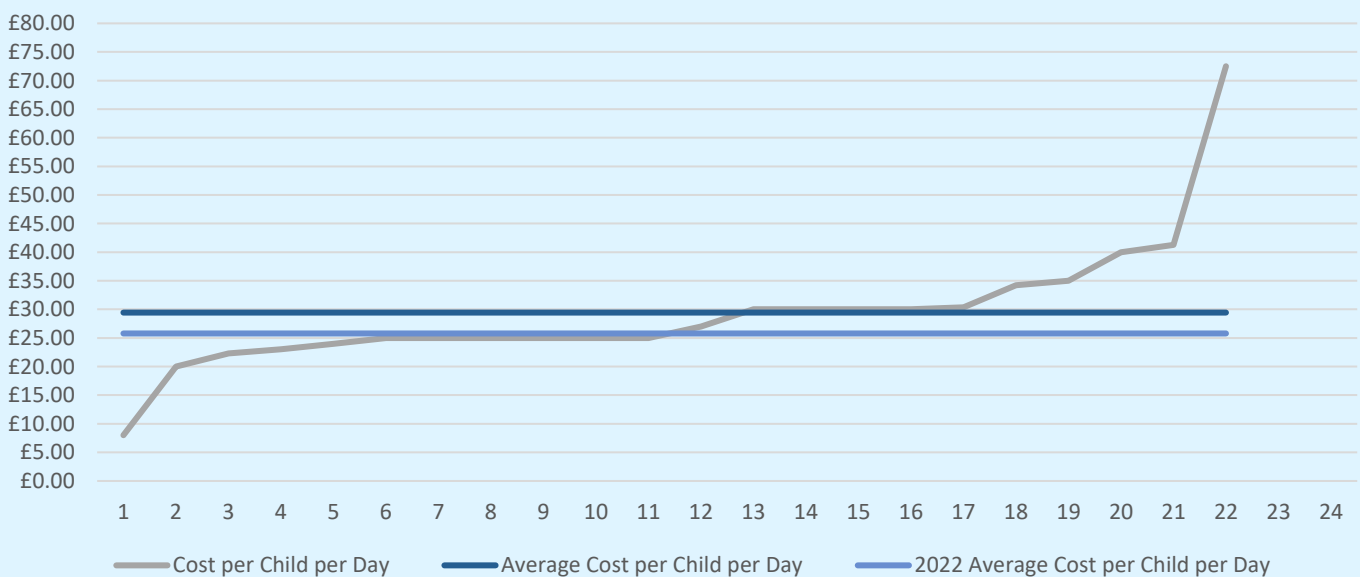
Leading up to the Christmas period, the Brent HAF Team collaborated with Public Health to develop an activity booklet with ideas of how to incorporate healthy eating education into clubs. The booklet was divided into age groups and offered a variety of ideas to engage children and young people. The Public Health Team also hosted a healthy eating workshop to educate providers and distributed useful resources. This included variations to the Eatwell Guide such as the South Asian Eatwell Guide. This is particularly important in Brent as one of the most diverse boroughs in the country.

There was an increase in the number of providers deemed 'outstanding' in nutritional education, however there were a couple who scored below 'satisfactory'. This will be a focus for 2024/25.

Quality Assurance Programme Delivery



Cost per Child per Day



The average cost per child per day increased by 14% at the Christmas period when comparing 2022 and 2023. This reinforced the steer to introduce an upper limit for the cost per child per day to ensure the full grant is utilised and to reach as many HAF eligible children and young people as possible.

Brent Council trialled a WhatsApp group for providers at Christmas to help manage capacity issues by signposting parents and carers to other available provisions. This initiative proved successful and engaged a high number of providers, and it will be implemented during all holiday periods in 2024.

The Brent HAF Team also pulled together additional external funding opportunities available to providers. One provider was able to apply for funding and received £3,000. This was used to fund trips for attendees. This will be continued into 2024 and providers will be signposted to Brent 4 Community which sends weekly emails to those registered with new funding opportunities that are available both internally and externally. Providers will be referred to CVS Brent, an organisation that can support organisations with funding applications, governance processes and partnership working. The Brent HAF Team receives a daily email notification about national funding opportunities and communicate these to HAF providers. This will allow for the HAF programme to develop further and offer more to our children and young people.

There was positive feedback at Christmas from parents, carers, children and young people:

"I loved drama and writing scripts and acting them out! I played Santa which was so much fun. I cannot wait to come back."

"My favourite activity is making food; the staff are really nice I loved them!"

"I was able to go with my child. The trip was fantastic, and we both had a great time making new friends and being outdoors- good for our mental health"

"The food was good because it was something new and also one of the days was cold, so we had soup which was nice. There was also lots of choice and different options for the children to choose. Also, we got Chicken Shawarma ready meals from Felix Project as well as Take & Make food boxes for the children to take home and make with their families."

Summary 2023/24 Brent HAF Programme

2023/24 Total Expenditure

Total Face to Face Activities Spend

£885,924.00

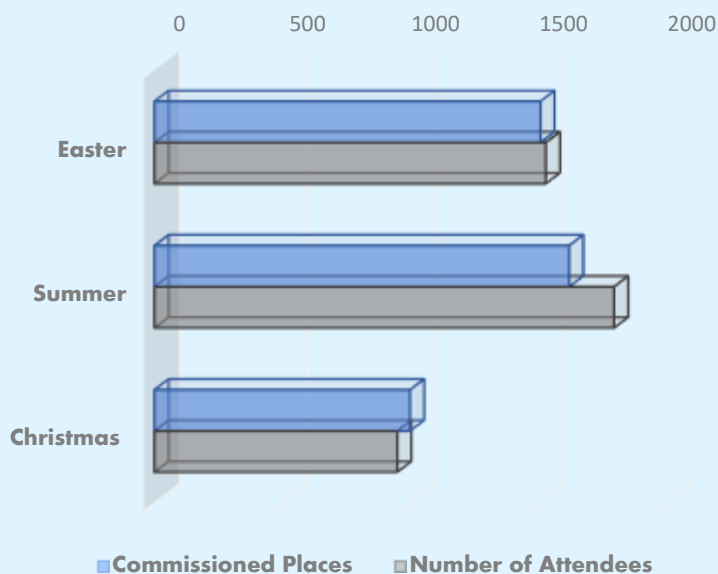
Total Administrative Spend

£98,436.00

Total 2023/24 Spend

£984,360.00

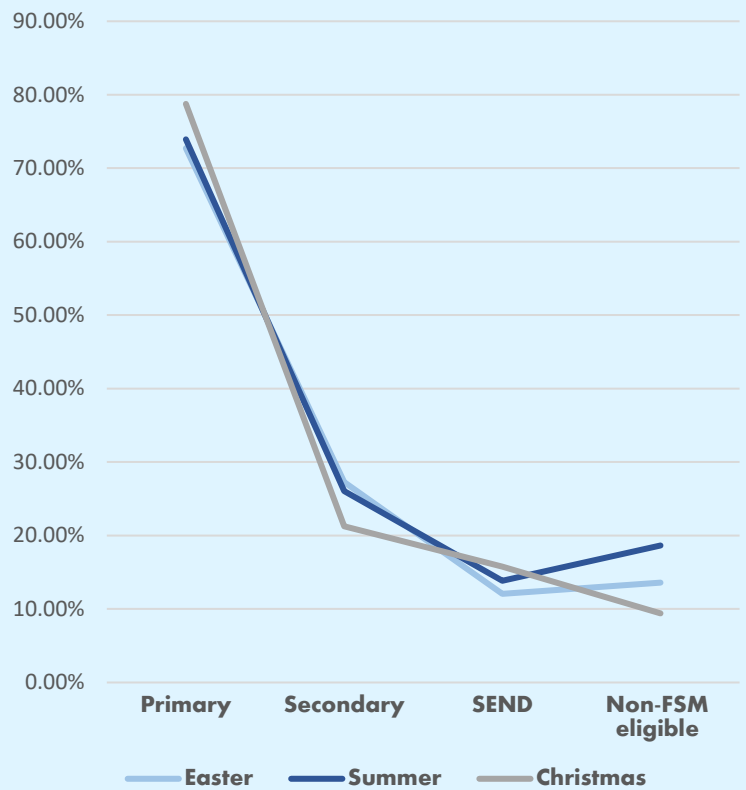
Commissioned Places vs Filled Places



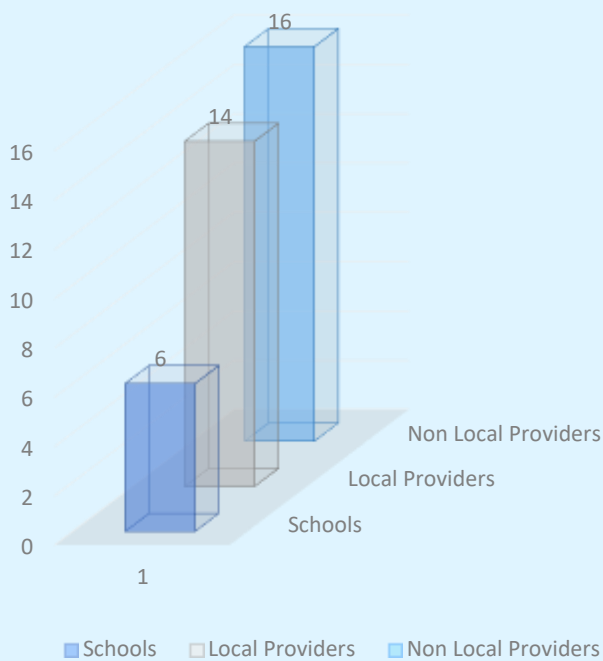
At both Easter and summer, the number of places accessed was higher than those commissioned. This is in part as not all children and young people access their full entitlement. The Brent HAF Team needs to explore whether this is due to attendees not wanting to return to a provision because of the activities provided or they don't want to attend a club for that many days in the holidays, or an alternative reason. Christmas attendance was lower with 50 places not being accessed. This is a national trend and not specific to Brent. In 2024/25 the Brent HAF Team will need to assess how to ensure a high take up of places over this holiday period.

For the period of 2023-2024, a HAF leaflet was collaboratively developed with the Communications Team, featuring a QR code for easy access to information for families. The Communication Team ensured widespread distribution of the HAF programme through various channels, including in the Brent magazine and social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook. Information about HAF was shared via the headteachers' bulletin to reach all schools in Brent. Additionally, information is circulated across Brent Council via its internal communication mechanisms so that those who work with eligible children and young people could signpost to the programme and staff who are eligible Brent residents are also aware of the programme if they were not already.

Across all three holiday periods primary aged children made up the majority of HAF attendees. In 2024/25, the secondary cohort will be targeted to ensure they can access a provision that they want to engage with. This will be done through working with local providers who already have established relationships with these groups. The percentage of SEND places accessed increased from 10.8% in 2022/23 to 13.6% in 2023/24. Brent will seek to continue to grow this going forward. Brent utilised 10% of funding for children and young people not eligible for the programme but identified as vulnerable. This included looked after children, young carers, refugees, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, and children with SEND.



Provider Categories



Brent worked with 36 providers across 2023/24, 29 of these have previously run a HAF programme showing the strong links that have been formed and 7 were new providers who have helped to fill gaps in the programme. 41% of Brent HAF providers are registered with Ofsted or on the voluntary register, this is an increase from 35% in 2022. The Brent HAF Team will continue to encourage HAF providers to register with Ofsted. 6 schools ran their own provision across the year, 14 providers were local to Brent (not including schools) and 16 were based outside of Brent. In 2024/25 there will be a focus on commissioning local providers through advertising the grant in collaboration with the Council's Community Grants Team who have built strong links within Brent and providing support sessions both in person and online for applicants.

The Brent HAF Team has been supported by the Brent HAF Steering Group with representatives from Children and Young People Commissioning, SEND Statutory Services, Early Help, Public Health, Communications within Brent Council, the Young Brent Foundation, and multiple Headteachers from Brent Schools.

Brent HAF 2024/25

The key challenges faced by the Brent HAF programme in 2023-2024:

1. A shortage of provisions catering to secondary-aged pupils, particularly the KS4 cohort.
2. Despite work to improve the health eating offer across providers, further work is required to ensure a consistently high quality of offer across providers.
3. Accessing affordable venues in the borough. While schools can profit from renting out facilities during holiday periods, HAF offers distinct advantages that the Council are actively promoting. Unfortunately, two providers dropped out over Easter due to venue costs, and additional funding was not feasible within our budget constraints.
4. Significant increase in the cost of provisions not in line with the increase in funding received.

The learnings from the 2023/24 have fed into an action plan to deliver the 2024/25 Brent HAF Programme. The aims of the 2024/25 Brent HAF Programme are to:

1. Continue to increase awareness of the Brent HAF programme across the Borough
2. Increase the reach to the KS4 cohort
3. Increase the accessibility and inclusivity of the programme, in particular the number of SEND places offered
4. Partner with more local organisations to increase the number of local HAF providers and increase partnership working with more local organisations to increase the number of local HAF providers and increase partnership working to broaden the HAF offer
5. Improve affordable healthy eating awareness for children and young people
6. Improve signposting to Brent services to families and carers
7. Ensure Brent children and young people have fun!

Following the success of commissioning providers through an annual approach, this has continued in 2024/25. This will enable providers to plan their provisions for the whole year and work with other HAF organisations to encourage best practice and enhance their offer. It also reduces the administrative time of the Brent HAF Team prior to each holiday period. This time can instead be used to develop the programme further to meet the needs of Brent children and young people, families and carers.

The Brent HAF Steering Group have agreed for 2024/25 an upper limit on the cost per child per day will be introduced and to restructure the approach to allocating the 15% of funding for children and young people not eligible for the programme but would benefit from attending. There will be a larger allocation granted to providers who have existing relationships with these groups, for instance refugees. The steering group have also discussed options going forward if the funding does not continue past 2024/25 to support eligible children and young people.