

Brent Annual Holiday Activities and Food Programme Report 2024/25

Overview of 2024/25

In 2024/25, the Department for Education allocated Brent Council £994,060 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 implemented these throughout the HAF programme for 2024/25. 4,384 places were commissioned in 2024/25, which was an increase from 4,115 places in 2023/24. The Council worked with 40 providers across 43 venues to deliver the programme in Easter, summer, and Christmas. The majority of providers were local to Brent including 8 schools. The Brent HAF Team worked with a range of providers including but not limited to charities, community interest companies, schools and limited companies. Brent children and young people participated in activities such as sports, dance, horse riding, arts and crafts, clay modelling, African drumming, science experiments, STEM based activities, preparation for higher education/workplace and trips.

Key highlights from the 2024-25 programme:

- Brent held an in-person network event prior to the Easter delivery period (March 2024) which allowed HAF providers to meet, share best practice and ideas.
- HAF providers worked with the wider council to support other initiatives with one provider allowing the use of their pitches for a weekly care leavers football match and their venue to hold healthy lifestyle workshops for residents.
- A second SEND specialist venue was opened in the south of the borough. This enabled 146 SEND specialist places to be accessed in 2024, which is 39 more than 2023.
- There was an increase of 208 secondary aged children accessing the programme in 2024 compared to 2023 and an increase of 152 children with SEND accessing a HAF place in 2024 compared to 2023.

Easter

Easter Funding

Easter programme Spend

£165,307.00

Administration Spend

£33,135.33

Total Easter Spend

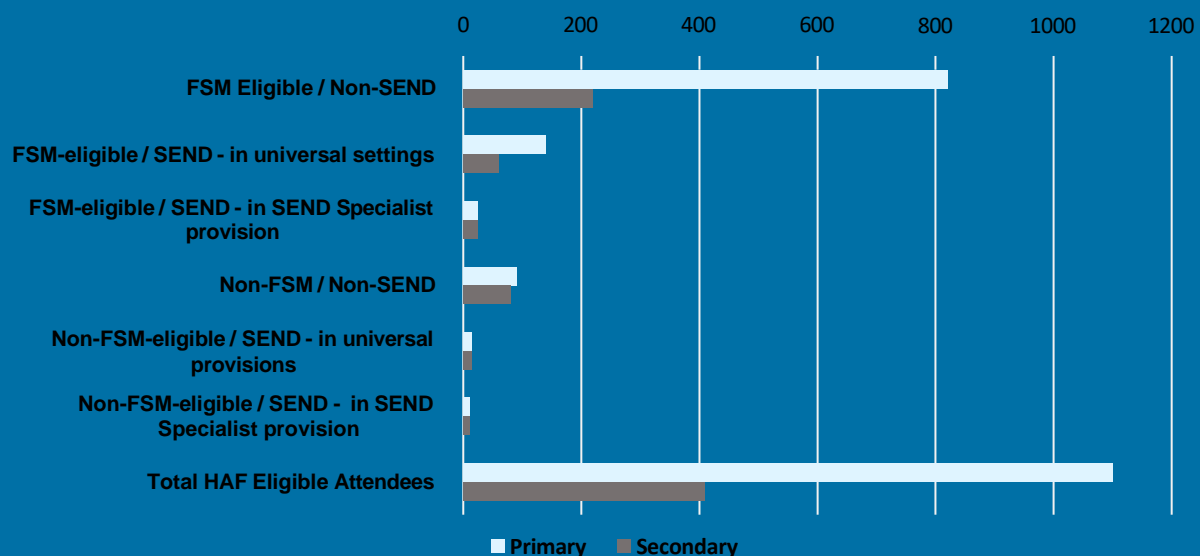
£198,442.33

During Easter 2024, Brent commissioned 38 provisions operating at 41 venues to deliver a HAF provision across 4 days. 1,615 children and young people accessed a HAF place during this period. This was an increase of 90 places compared to 2023.

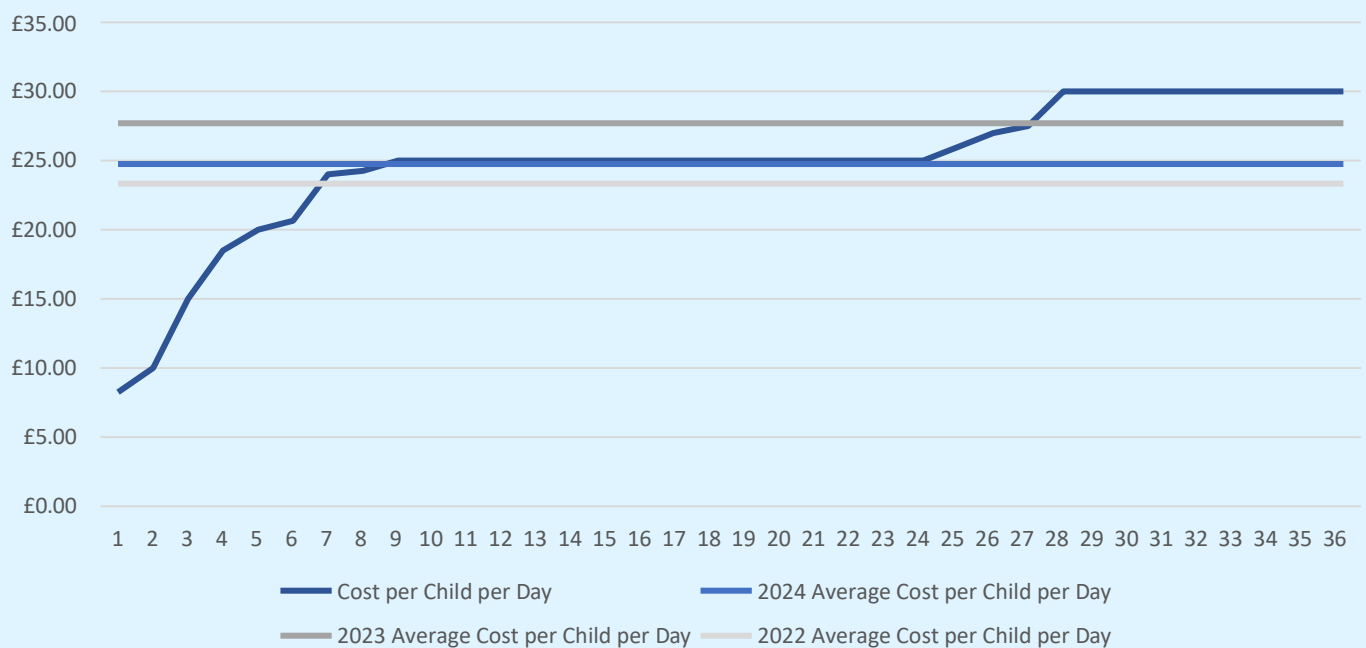
The average attendance for Brent HAF during the Easter programme was 3.7 days. Activities included various sports (including horse riding and skateboarding), arts and crafts, science experiments, DJ workshops and trips.

The proportion of secondary aged children accessing a HAF provision increased from 21.6% in Easter 2022, 27.3% in Easter 2023 to 32.5% in Easter 2024. This is partially attributed to engaging with local Brent providers who already had existing relationships with this cohort and Brent offering support sessions during the application process to encourage these providers to apply for the grant. The proportion of SEND places accessed also increased to 15.8% in Easter 2024 compared to 6.33% in Easter 2022 and 12.1% in Easter 2023. This translated to an additional 15 SEND specialist places being accessed. This was achieved through offering HAF SEND specialist provisions at two Brent specialist SEND schools compared to just one location in previous years.

FSM REACH



Easter Cost per Child per Day (exc. SEND Specialist Provision)



Easter 2024 was the first time the upper limit on the cost per child per day was introduced. As this was a new initiative, Brent Council capped Easter at a higher amount than summer and Christmas at £30 to allow providers to identify other sources of funding for summer and Christmas if required. To support this, the Brent HAF Team signposted providers to alternative funding sources and support for bid writing. The average cost per child per day of successful providers (inclusive of the £30 upper limit) was £24.89 (excluding our 2 SEND specialist provisions). The average at Easter 2023 was £27.70. This illustrates the benefit of the introduction of the cap in utilising the grant to reach as many young people as possible.

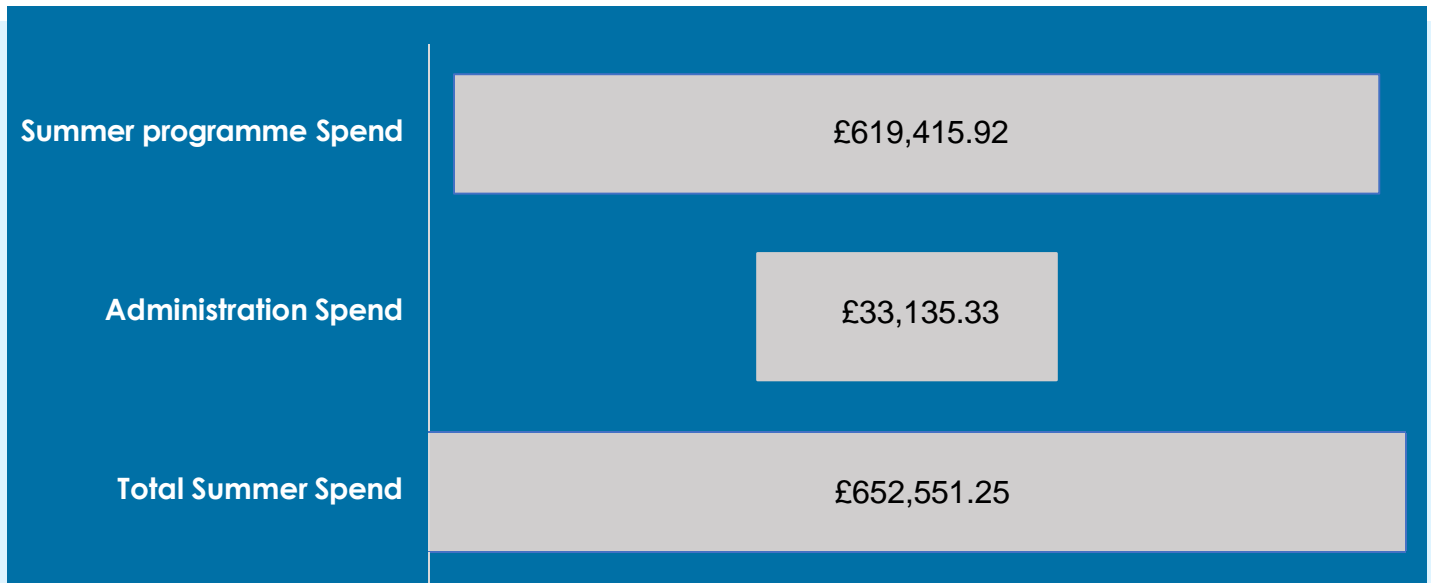
The Brent HAF team carried out quality assurance visits to providers across the Easter period. The providers were assessed against the key areas of the HAF programme in line with the Department for Education guidance as well as gaining feedback from children and young people attending the club.

There were 3 clubs that scored poor for both healthy eating awareness and healthy food provision and 2 clubs that scored poor for healthy eating awareness. 2 of these clubs were new providers. No provider scored very poor. Providers outlined that a barrier they often met was children and young people being willing to eat healthier options with many bringing in their own packed lunches. The Brent HAF Team relayed successful techniques to overcome this from providers scoring outstanding, such as encouraging organisations to have a salad bar so children could pick which food they wanted and getting them involved in the preparation, so they can see what is in the food.

To improve the healthy eating awareness section, the HAF Team circulated the resources the Council's Public Health Team created, which included a booklet with activity ideas that incorporate healthy eating awareness. This is divided into age-appropriate activities to ensure all children attending a HAF programme can benefit from the resource.

In the post Easter Network meeting, healthy eating was included as a topic so that providers could learn from each other and see what worked well in other areas. Some successful ideas included incorporating the sugar challenge, interactive quizzes, cooking and growing vegetables.

Summer

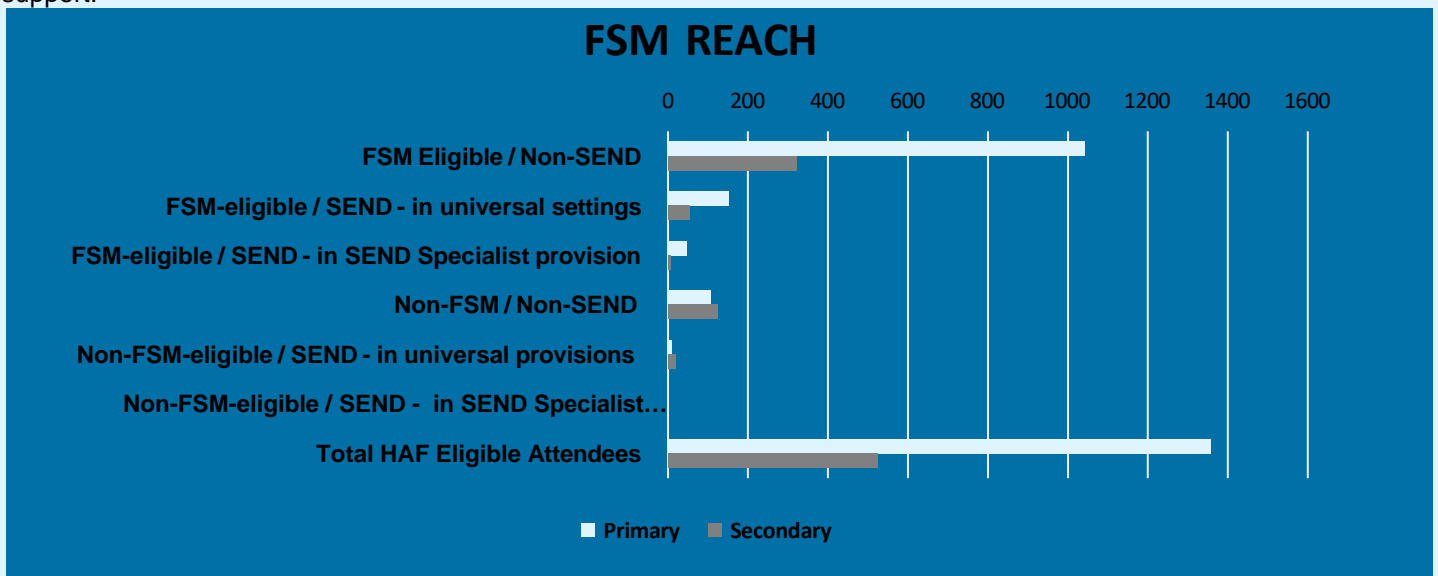


In summer 2024, 1,882 children and young people accessed a HAF provision, exceeding the 1,538 places commissioned, this is an increase from 1,791 in summer 2023. 39 providers delivered a provision across 43 venues in 18 wards, and the average attendance was 11.7 days. As the summer HAF programme ran for 16 days the high rate of days accessed is a positive not only in utilising funding, but as an indicator that young people are enjoying the provisions and are returning throughout the summer. A range of activities were available including various sports, boat trips, water sports, drama workshops, cooking classes and more.

As with Easter, Brent witnessed an increase in the proportion of secondary aged children accessing a HAF provision (28%) when compared with summer 2022 (27.4%) and 2023 (26.1%). However, it was lower than Easter 2024. One reason could have been the riots in the summer which may have led to older children and young adults not accessing HAF provisions and parents not allowing children and young people to attend, especially if they normally walk there alone. On multiple quality assurance visits providers outlined how parents were more tentative to send their children to a provision due to safety concerns.

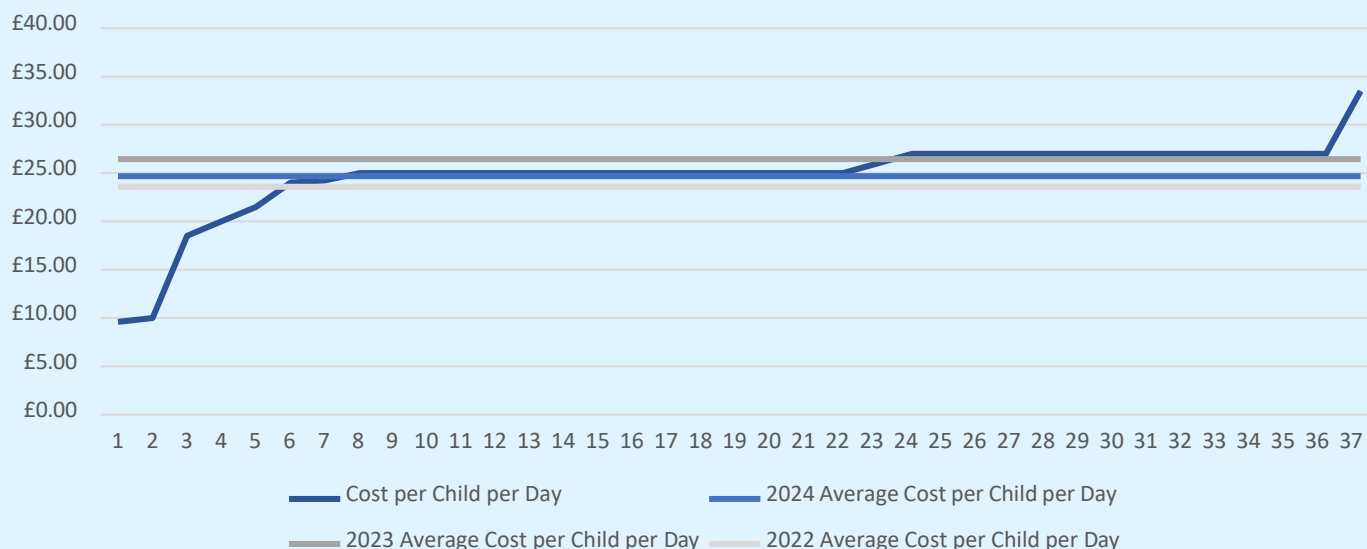
The percentage of SEND places accessed increased to 15.3% in summer 2024 from 13.9% in summer 2023 and 12% in summer 2022. The HAF Team received multiple queries regarding which provisions would be suitable for young people with SEND to attend. To make the programme easier to access, the HAF Team will work alongside the Inclusions Team to provide more information on the Brent HAF website, as to what level and type of needs individual providers can support.

FSM REACH



2024 was the first year that Brent collated gender and ethnicity data for HAF attendees. Across the summer period, there was a higher percentage of males (57%) attending a HAF provision when compared to females (43%) This gender split was more prevalent at the secondary age with only 8% of all attendees being female secondary aged young people. The ethnicity data for summer 2024 shows that, when compared with Brent's free school meal data, Black Caribbean/Caribbean, Black, Black African, and Arab ethnic groups were overrepresented whereas Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups, Asian, White Other, Somali, and Indian ethnic groups were underrepresented. The Council will continue to monitor demographic data to ensure those who are eligible for the programme are aware and can access a provision of interest to them.

Summer Cost per Child per Day (exc. SEND Specialist Provision)



The upper limit for summer was £27 based on the average cost per child per day outlined in providers expression of interest and benchmarking with other local authorities to ensure that it was feasible to deliver a provision without compromising on quality. This enabled the average cost per child per day in 2024 (£24.69) to be lower than summer 2023 (£26.45) meaning that more children could access a provision with the funding available. One provision did exceed the upper limit due to cultural requirements and a necessity for security. Many provisions tapped into additional funding including the Council's Love Where You Live grant which added value to their programmes through, for instance providing additional trips.

All clubs received a rating of 'good' or 'outstanding' for physical activities at quality assurance visits showing a real strength in this area. There was a significant increase in the number of providers scoring 'outstanding' for healthy eating awareness which has been an area requiring the most focus. There was an improvement from 22% at Easter to 47% at summer. Despite this, there were three clubs that scored poor for either healthy food or healthy lifestyles awareness. The Brent HAF Team will work with BeeZee Families who have been commissioned by the Council to support work in this area to go into HAF provisions and support providers with this element of the programme.

One club scored poor for signposting and referrals to services for families. The Brent HAF Team recirculated the signposting document that has been collated with information covering a range of services in Brent from childcare, housing, job support, food banks, the Brent Family Wellbeing Centres and Hubs and more. These categories are split onto different sheets so providers can easily distribute dependent on need. This has been incorporated following feedback in 2023 that one document was often difficult for families to navigate.

All providers in the other areas reviewed (enriching activities, inclusivity and accessibility and environmental and sustainability) scored acceptable, good or outstanding showing the level of quality provided throughout the borough.

Christmas

Christmas Funding

Christmas programme Spend

£109,931.09

Administration Spend

£33,135.33

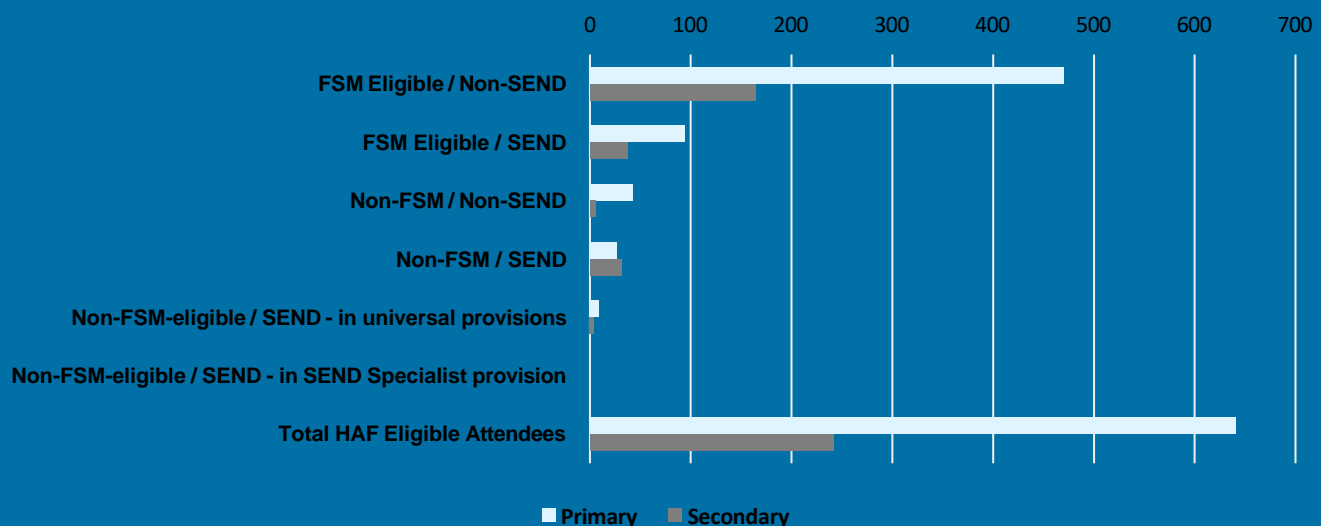
Total Christmas Spend

£143,066.42

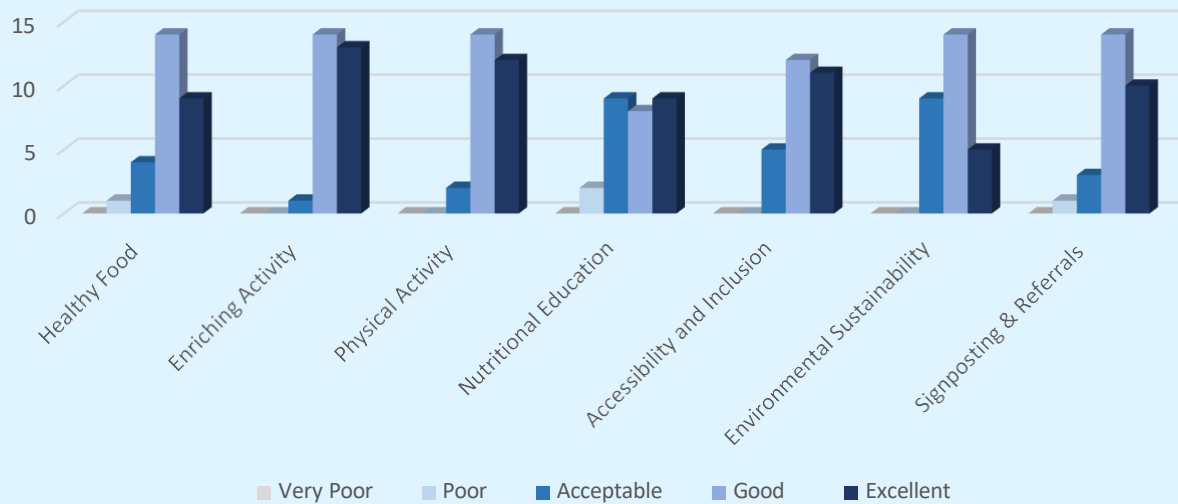
During Christmas 2024, the HAF programme funded organisations for 4 days, and there were 28 venues facilitating a HAF provision. The allocation for Christmas was reduced as it has consistently been the lowest attended holiday period since the HAF programme started. This is a national trend and not specific to Brent. As a result of how the bank holidays fell, it was not possible to arrange 4 continuous days of the HAF programme. Fewer providers tend to operate in this holiday period due to increased challenges of adequate staffing levels and the availability of venues. The remaining funding from the summer period was added to the Christmas period to increase the number of places available.

Despite this, 887 young people attended a Brent HAF provision. 3,372 places were commissioned over the holiday period and 3,143 places were accessed (93.2%). The average number of days attended was 3.4 days. Brent Council worked with 24 providers across 28 clubs to deliver a range of activities including basketball, gymnastics, cooking sessions, arts and crafts and trips. The number of secondary aged children accessing a provider increased to 241 (27.4% of attendees) in 2024 compared to 201 (21.3% of attendees) in 2023.

FSM REACH

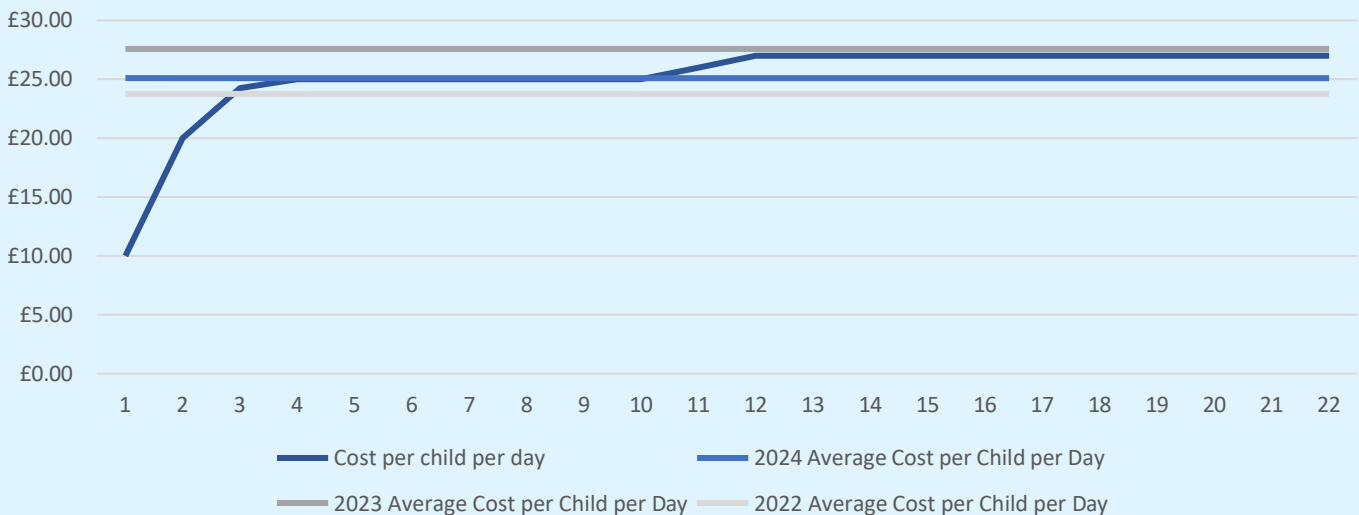


Programme Delivery



Providers were visited throughout the Christmas holiday period. No provider scored very poor in any area. 4 providers scored poor in either healthy food, nutritional education and signposting and referrals to services. These areas have consistently shown to score lower across all three holiday periods and therefore, need will be an area of focus for the 2025/26 HAF programme. There continues to be strength in the activities provided by clubs with the majority of HAF programmes scoring good or excellent for enriching activities and physical activities. This is a strength of the overall programme and there were a wide range of activities to appeal to a range of young people during every holiday period.

Christmas Cost per Child per Day (exc. SEND Specialist Provision)



The upper limit of £27 was also in place during the Christmas holiday period. The average Christmas provision in 2024 (excluding SEND specialist provision) was £25.10. As with the Easter and summer period, this was lower than previous years with the Christmas 2023 average being £27.58 and Christmas 2022 average being £23.76. This holiday period did have the highest average cost per child per day of the three, this is likely due to the lower number of providers when compared to Easter and summer.

Summary 2024/25 Brent HAF Programme

2024/25 Total Expenditure

Total Face to Face Activities Spend

£894,654.01

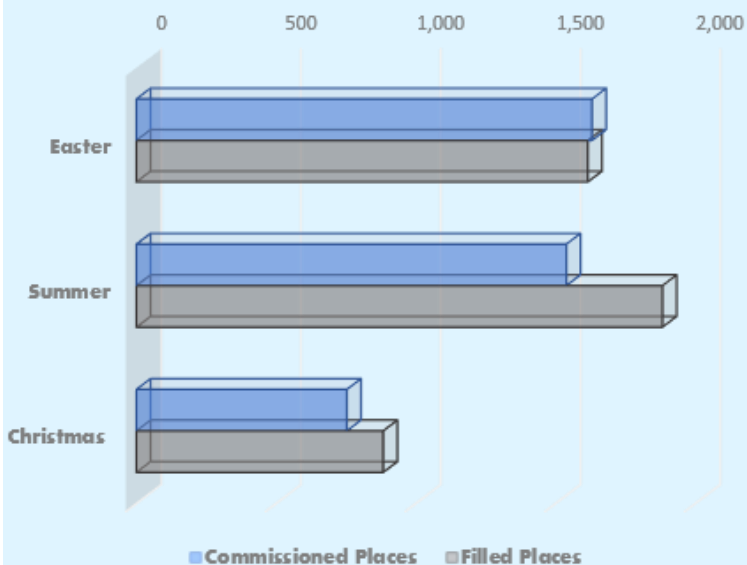
Total Administrative Spend

£99,405.99

Total Spend 2024/25

£994,060.00

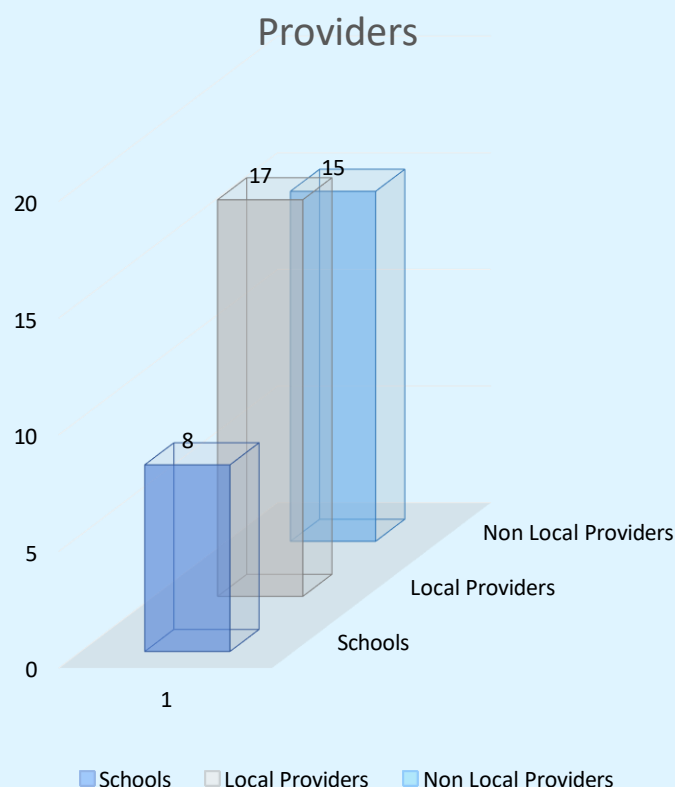
Commissioned Places vs Filled Places



During both the summer and Christmas holidays in 2024, the number of filled places was higher than the commissioned places. However, in the Easter holiday period, the number of filled places was 15 less than the commissioned places, a relatively small figure. In 2023, Easter and summer had exceeded their allocated places whereas the Christmas attendance was lower. It indicates that how the funding is allocated across each holiday period needs to be reviewed to meet demand. It does need to be noted that Ramadan coincided with the Easter holidays and this may have contributed to the lower turnout in this period. The Brent HAF Team will continue to monitor this trend and ensure that as many commissioned places are filled as possible.

Across all three holiday periods, primary aged children filled the majority of the HAF attendees, with most attending during the summer period in 2024. The Brent HAF Team has witnessed a gradual increase in SEND children attending a HAF provision. In 2022, there were only 108 SEND places accessed, 184 in 2023 and 255 in 2024. This figure has more than doubled in 2 years which highlights the progress made in making the programme more inclusive and accessible. The Brent HAF Team has seen a similar pattern in secondary places accessed over the last 2 years, with only 368 attending in 2022/3, 416 in 2023/4 and 525 in 2024/5. Brent will continue to encourage providers to promote SEND and secondary attendance. Brent utilised 10% of the funding for children and young people not eligible for the programme but were deemed vulnerable such as refugees, young carers, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and children with SEND.

Brent worked with 40 providers across 2024. 31 providers had previously operated in Brent with 9 being new providers. 20% of providers were schools and 42% were local to Brent. Over 50% of Brent HAF providers were Ofsted registered or on the voluntary register, which is an increase from 35% in 2022 and 41% in 2023. The Brent HAF Team will continue to work with the Early Help Quality Improvement Team to encourage providers to register and support them through the process. There will also be ongoing links with the Community Grants Team to encourage providers to access the Council's Community Grants, to promote and encourage local providers to apply for funding and how best to support Brent families.



Progress against the 2024 Brent HAF Programme Goals:

Goal	Progress
1. Continue to increase awareness of the Brent HAF programme across the Borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 198 more young people attended a HAF provision in 2024 compared to 2023 - There were 5 more local providers in 2024 than 2023
2. Increase the reach to the KS4 cohort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The number of providers who accommodated KS4 was higher at Easter (4 more) and summer (4 more) than 2023, Christmas had the same number as 2023 - 208 more secondary children accessed a HAF provision in 2024 compared to 2023
3. Increase the accessibility and inclusivity of the programme, in particular the number of SEND places offered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There were two SEND specialist provisions, compared to one in 2023 and 2022 - 152 more SEND places were accessed in 2024 compared to 2023 and 222 compared to 2022
4. Partner with more local organisations to increase the number of local HAF providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There were 5 more local providers in 2024 than 2023
5. Improve nutritional education for children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Both summer and Christmas had a higher proportion of providers scoring outstanding in nutritional education in 2024 compared to 2023.
6. Improve signposting to Brent services to families and carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Every holiday period in 2024 had a higher proportion of providers scoring outstanding in signposting compared to 2023.
7. Ensure Brent children and young people have fun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feedback from children and young people is provided on the next page

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 and external partners including the Young Brent Foundation, and Headteachers from Brent Schools.

Feedback

Children and Young People:

"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."

"Just wanted to thank you for an amazing Easter camp. My twin's confidence has really shot up and I can't thank you enough."

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

"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."

"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!"

"Dancing was my favourite activity as I got to move my feet and learn more dance moves as well as showing my own. The dance off was so much fun."

"The highlight of the programme was all the fun science experiments. My favourite activity was watching the volcanoes erupt."

"I loved everything about the club, mostly the grow your own vegetables."

Parent and Carers:

"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."

"Just wanted to mention how positive it was to hear [my child] 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 inflationation, 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."

"Knowing that my daughter was in a safe and caring environment meant the world to me. The camp provided her with a joyful and secure space to learn and play, which gave me great peace of mind as a parent living in temporary accommodation."

"I am so grateful for this programme as I can send my children to a safe place while I rest and I don't have to worry about them getting into trouble or getting hungry, thank you"

Brent HAF 2025/26

The key challenges faced by the Brent HAF programme in 2024-2025:

1. Providers often reported difficulty in accessing affordable venues with adequate spaces both inside and outside to accommodate the types of activities they are organising. This is more prevalent in the summer holidays, especially if schools have works being carried out on buildings. Sufficient venues is a barrier to ensuring there is a high level of provision in each ward.
2. The cost of transport is very high which makes it difficult to take children and young people on trips which is regularly reported as the highlight of the HAF programme.
3. Providers have reported that it is more difficult to work in partnership with wider organisations as the level of need grows, there is more competition for other pots of funding, resources etc. which leads to a bigger reliance on HAF funding.

The learnings from the 2024/25 programme have fed into an action plan to deliver the 2025/26 Brent HAF Programme. The aims of the 2025/26 Brent HAF Programme are to:

- Increase awareness of the Brent HAF programme to communities who have not previously engaged with the programme.
- Continue to increase the reach of activities to KS4 cohort to increase the number of secondary places both available and accessed.
- Continue to increase the accessibility and inclusivity of the programme, in particular the number of SEND places offered and accessed.
- Increase partnership working with local organisations to increase the number of local HAF providers and broaden the HAF offer.
- Enhance the healthy eating and nutritional awareness offer.
- Increase engagement with schools to signpost children who would benefit from the programme and also allow providers to operate at their premises.
- Further develop the feedback received from children, young people, parents and carers to continue to shape the programme to meet their needs.
- Ensure young people have fun!

Following the success of introducing an upper limit on the cost per child per day (excluding SEND specialist provisions), this will be continued in 2025/26 to ensure that as many children and young people can access a HAF provision as possible. The Brent HAF Team will also continue to collect demographic data to map where the programme needs to be promoted and ensure accessibility to all groups and communities.

The Brent HAF Team will continue to work closely with BeeZee Families to improve the nutritional education and healthy eating aspect of the programme. This will provide support to organisations who do not specialise in this area. The team will also work with NHS partners to deliver mental health and emotional wellbeing workshops as these were very successful. The sessions will be shaped around feedback from young people on what areas they would like to learn about.