



Committee report

Committee	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND SKILLS
Date	17 JUNE 2021
Title	HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND FOOD PROGRAMME – EASTER PERFORMANCE AND SUMMER PLAN

SUMMARY

1 The purpose of this report is to update the Policy and Scrutiny Committee on delivery of the Holiday Activities and Food Programme across the Isle of Wight over the Easter break, and on planned Summer delivery.

2 The Committee is asked to note the successful delivery of the Programme over Easter and to support or comment on plans for the Summer holiday period.

BACKGROUND

3 The Department for Education awarded funding of up to £407,660 for Isle of Wight Council to fund holiday activity schemes to include a meal for benefits-eligible FSM children and young people in the Easter, Summer and Christmas school holidays across the Island. Holiday Activity and Food schemes must run sessions of at least 4 hours in duration.

4 The Isle of Wight has c.3726 FSM eligible children and young people and the Council aims to commission 1,500 – 2,500 spaces per week over each holiday. One week at Easter has been delivered and the grant recommendations for the four weeks in the summer have been submitted to Cabinet/Leader. Following this there will be one further grant funding round for one week's provision at Christmas.

5 The DFE's HAF Programme aims are for children and young people:

- To eat more healthily over the school holidays
- To be more active during the school holidays
- To take part in engaging and enriching activities which support the development of resilience, character and well-being along with their wider education attainment
- To be safe and not to be socially isolated
- To have greater knowledge of health nutrition
- To be more engaged with school and other local services

EASTER PROVISION

- 6 Isle of Wight Council offered three types of grant:
- Grant Type A – Adding new places – for existing activity providers to offer free places to FSM children for their regular activity programmes
 - Grant Type B – Branching out – for existing activity scheme providers who want to take their delivery model to a new area.
 - Grant Type C – Creating and Connecting – for organisations who develop new innovative programmes that connect the community, create a local legacy and engage parents and professionals.

7 Initially, by the application deadline only three providers had applied for HAF funding for Easter delivery, which would have made 480 HAF funded places available for benefits-eligible FSM children and young people.

8 The deadline for applications was extended by 3 weeks and, in this time, 5 more providers were encouraged and supported to successfully apply for funding, particularly those who would deliver in areas with higher, concentrated numbers of eligible children, bringing the number of HAF funded places available across the Island to 1,388.

9 Take up of places was very successful. Five providers were fully booked before Easter delivery and used a waiting list system for cancellations, which highlighted the need for additional provision this Summer. Of the 1,388 HAF funded places available, 1,320 were booked and 1,173 places were attended. 352 eligible children and young people participated. Surplus places could be offered to non-FSM children for a fee and 52 children attended.

10 The eight providers, who delivered over Easter, offered a diverse range of styles and types of activity: horse riding, theatre skills, yoga and team sports are just a few of the sessions that were offered, and this diversity was part of the reason for such successful take up.

11 Feedback from parents and carers and the children who attended has all been positive, with many parent/carers and young people wishing to be placed on a waiting list for Summer HAF schemes.

12 While performance was very good at Easter there are some lessons that have been learned. Once Summer HAF providers have had confirmation of funding, the Council will support them to develop effective methods to reduce the number of HAF funded places that are booked and not used.

SUMMER DELIVERY

13 The Summer grant round opened on 25 March and closed on 23 May. The aim of the second grant funding round has been to build on the success of the Easter programme and extend the exciting and broad range of activities that had such appeal for children and young people, to run over this Summer, especially those activities which appeal more to the Secondary school age range, to ensure that all age groups are sufficiently catered for.

14 A slightly larger number of applications have been sought and past applicants have been encouraged to broaden their reach, to expand the number of places that can be offered across the Island and especially in the pockets where it is known that there was insufficient provision in the Easter round, namely Ventnor, East Cowes and the West Wight area.

15 Provision will look similar in character to the successful Easter provision, but with more places available in a greater number of areas and with more that appeals to older young people.

16 Providers have more to do to ensure programme expectations are met in relation to:

- Nutritional education - clubs must include an element of nutritional education each day aimed at improving the knowledge and awareness of healthy eating for children. These do not need to be formal learning activities and could include activities such as getting children involved in food preparation and cooking, growing fruit and vegetables, and taste tests.
- Food education for families and carers - clubs must include at least weekly training and advice sessions for parents, carers or other family members which provide advice on how to source, prepare and cook nutritious and low-cost food.
- Signposting and referrals – clubs must be able to provide information, signposting or referrals to other services and support that would benefit the children who attend their provision and their families. This could include sessions, information provided by Citizen's Advice, School Nurses, dentists or other healthcare practitioners, Family Support Services or Children's Services, Housing Support Officers, Jobcentre Plus, organisations providing financial education.

17 The Council's intention is to deliver training on each of the eight HAF standards, listed in para 5, as part of a revised Summer induction programme for providers in June and July. Each session will feature an expert-led session and additional workshop opportunities for providers to share their existing experience and expertise. In addition to the HAF standards, a wider training offer is being developed to ensure that all providers have the necessary skills embedded within their delivery teams. The effects of Covid have reduced access to training and in some areas, such as safeguarding and Paediatric First Aid, accessing courses has been difficult and potentially validation dates may have been exceeded. The Council intends to plug these gaps where it can.

18 The Hampshire team developed a HAF monitoring tool which was also used with Island providers. During the Easter delivery period all providers were monitored by calling everyone and rating them with a HAF profile. This tool is currently being reviewed in the light of Isle of Wight provider feedback and a revised version will be used for Summer.

FINANCE

19 The Council allocated £61,150 of the DfE funding for the Easter round. Provision to the value of £43,217 was funded. This was due to a very short bidding window as a result of the DfE HAF Guidance being published with little time to commission services. The balance has been added to the Summer round. There is a 10% scheme administration allowance that is allocated to marketing activity, signposting support, training as well as programme administration and management.

CONCLUSION

20 Despite a very short lead-in time and Covid, scheme providers were able to deliver face to face holiday activities accompanied by a meal to 404 children and young people across the Isle of Wight. In the challenging circumstances at the time this was a tremendous achievement.

APPENDICES ATTACHED

Appendix 1 – Easter Schemes

Appendix 2 – Case Studies and Feedback

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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