



North Somerset HAF Annual Report 2024-5

Welcome and introduction from Shelly Smith and Tracy Humphris – HAF Coordinators at North Somerset County Council

We are delighted to share with you our report for the year 2024-25. Since 2021, the HAF programme has provided support to children and young people aged 5 - 16 years who are in receipt of benefits-related free school meals.

The North Somerset HAF programme was developed to provide support for families during Easter, Summer and Winter (Christmas) holidays. Our providers are experienced in providing HAF activity days, incorporating sports, crafts, indoor and outdoor activities. We think the children also had a lot of fun!

What our report doesn't show is all the fun, laughter and enjoyment that all children who attended gained from their amazing experiences.

Should you have any queries at all then please do not hesitate to email us: HAF@n-somerset.gov.uk

HAF 2025



The Aims of the HAF Programme

There are many benefits for children who attend the HAF programme.

“All HAF providers are asked to ensure a high-quality experience that will result in children:

- receiving healthy and nutritious meals
- maintaining a healthy level of physical activity
- being happy, having fun and meeting new friends
- developing a greater understanding of food, nutrition and other health related issue*
- taking part in fun and engaging activities that support their development and well-being
- feeling safe and secure
- getting access to the right support services
- returning to school feeling engaged and ready to learn

Families can also benefit, when HAF providers include their needs in planning and delivering their programme. This could be through:

- providing opportunities to get involved in sessions, for example cookery classes
- ensuring they are signposted towards other sources of information and support, such as health services or employment and education opportunities

* extract from www.gov.uk

Our providers open their clubs to all children and not just children who are on benefits-related free school meals.



Funding

For the year 2024-25, North Somerset received £518,171 to be used exclusively for the provision of HAF activities.

This funding was used, as follows:

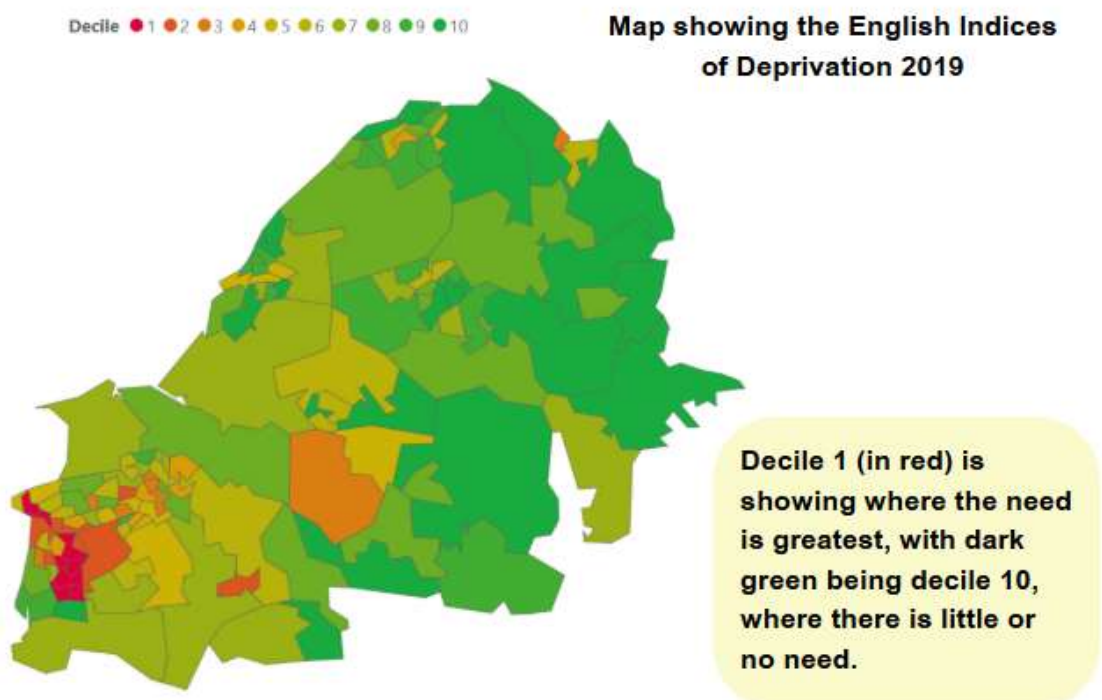
- Programme expenditure: £464,099.63
- Administration of the programme: £51,586.01
- Other expenditure: £2,485.10
- Underspend: £0

Reach of the programme

There are more than 5,500 children in North Somerset who are receiving benefits-related free school meals. After each delivery period, we summarised the number of unique children who had accessed a HAF provision. The numbers were as follows:

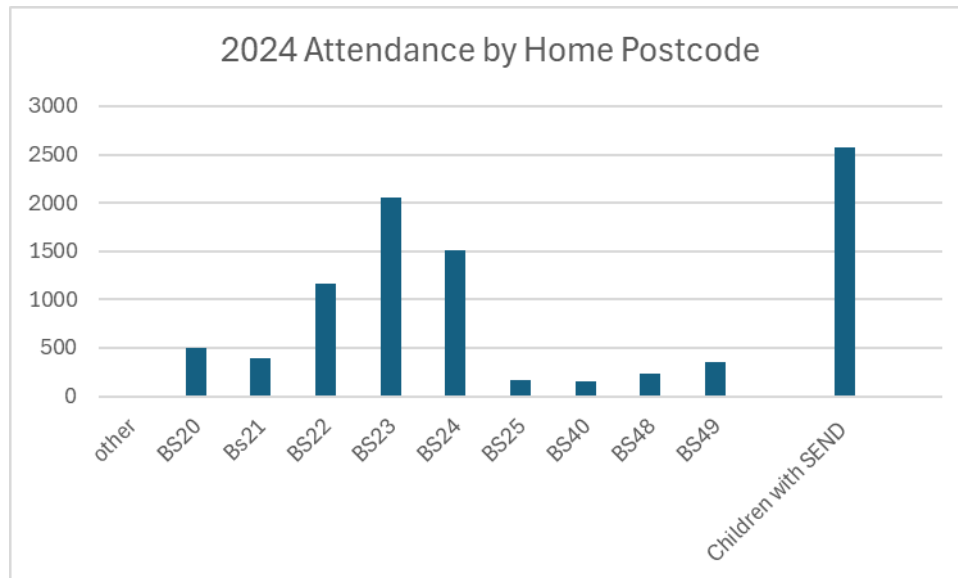
- Easter: 411 (349 primary aged children, 62 secondary aged young people)
- Summer: 663 (512 primary aged children, 151 secondary aged young people)
- Winter (Christmas): 667 (607 primary aged children, 60 secondary aged young people)

To ensure that the areas with the most need, (we call this mapping of service provision) North Somerset Council HAF referred to the English Indices of Deprivation 2019 (see below for map) which shows the areas of financial hardship in North Somerset where children are affected the most.

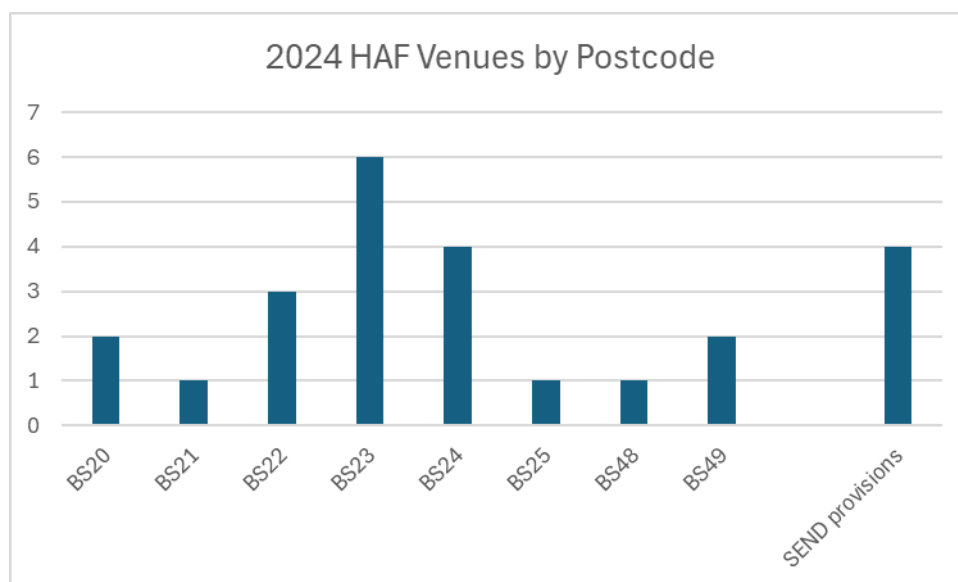


From the information provided by the map we were able ensure that the areas in the county of North Somerset which had the greatest need had a ‘within walking distance’ provision for children to attend.

2024/2025 Children’s attendance at HAF provision by home postcode



2024/2025 Number of HAF provisions near to home postcodes



Provision for children with SEND

The number of children who participated in the North Somerset HAF Programme who had SEND during 2024-25 was:

- Easter: 151 = 36.7% of bookings (118 primary aged children, 33 secondary aged young people)
- Summer: 252 = 38% of bookings (175 primary and 77 secondary)
- Winter: 153 = 22.9% of bookings (123 primary and 30 secondary)

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Our universal provisions aim to meet the needs of most children with SEND needs. However, we do have specialist providers who meet the needs of children and young people with more complex needs. They are:

- Baytree Special School
- Westhaven Special School
- Elmtree Learning Partnership
- RESET Weston-super-Mare

Food provision

- All children who attend a HAF provision are provided with a healthy meal and snacks throughout the day. Most receive a hot, cooked meal, although some are provided with a healthy lunchbox, especially if they are involved in a trip.
- The providers have consulted with children and young people and asked their preferences on their lunches. Some providers fed back that the children attending their provisions preferred a packed lunch – all food standards are applied, and lunches were quality assessed. The feedback that we received from those who received a packed lunchbox was that they were of high quality and enjoyable.
- All providers follow the government guide for healthy foods in schools: <https://www.gov.uk/school-meals-food-standards>
- Dietary requirements are met for children as our providers ask all parents to confirm their child's allergy, dietary needs and preferences in advance.



- We also circulated to the parents and carers an information leaflet, signposting all sorts of support services and avenues of help that they might like to explore, covering topics such as benefits, healthy eating and mental health (to name just a few).



The North Somerset Steering Group

Local authorities have discretion to use up to 15% of their funding to provide free or subsidised holiday club places for children who are not in receipt of benefits-related free school meals, but who the local authority believe could benefit from HAF.

At North Somerset, the priorities for this use are agreed by a steering group, which is made up of members of staff from North Somerset Council (Children's Services and Public Health) and Voluntary Action North Somerset.

Key priorities for 2024-25 included but are not limited to:

- Families living in financial hardship and poverty.
- Children who have SEND
- Children In Care.
- Children of veterans or serving personnel
- Children referred by Children's services or Education Services
- Children referred to HAF provision by the Youth Justice Service

Our providers and their venues for 2023-24 were:

Art in Action Southwest Ltd:

- Chestnut Park Primary School, Yatton,
- Yatton Primary School

Baytree School, Highlands Way, Weston-super-Mare.

Elmtree Learning Partnership, Weston-super-Mare

Future Stars Coaching

- Ashcombe Primary School
- Bournville Primary School
- Oldmixon Primary School
- Mary Elton Primary school, Clevedon
- The Campus, Weston-super-Mare
- Trinity Anglican Methodist Primary, Portishead

Hutton Moor Leisure Centre, Weston-super-Mare

Keeper's Gate Forest School, Weston-super-Mare

Mendip Activity Centre, Churchill

Priority Football, Nailsea School, Nailsea

Pro-coaching Activity Camp

- Hans Price Academy, Weston-super-Mare
- Hayward Airfield Leisure Enterprise
- Priory Community School Academy, Worle, Weston-super-Mare

RESET Weston-super-Mare

School Sports Teaching & Behaviour Management

- St Martin's Primary School, Worle, Weston-super-Mare

The Academy of Gymnastics, Portishead

The Hangar Workshop and Gym, Weston-super-Mare

Westhaven Special School, Weston-super-Mare



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Feedback from the children and young people who took part

- All the staff were amazing.
- The art club was amazing.
- Staff all very lovely!
- The coaches were friendly
- The sporty and fun activities that we did
- Each activity we had a lot of freedom and there were lots to do
- We absolutely love going
- We loved all the activities. Couldn't pick just one.
- We all attend this club and absolutely love it every single time! It's such a helpful club and the staff are so lovely.
- There was lots to do and really good fun



Feedback from the parents and carers

- My son thoroughly enjoyed the activities as building is what he is interested to do in the future.
- I think they have it nailed, so much fun was had, the variety of activities are amazing.
- For this particular club, I don't think they could change their offering. It is already fantastic!
- I just wanted to say thank you for the opportunity that my daughter was given to attend this activity.
- Amazing !!!! Kids love to go there! Welcomed always with smile :)
- It was an amazing holiday club. My child loved every bit about it. All the staff very friendly.
- My child had a great time! The activities were stimulating and fun. The staff were enthusiastic and friendly. They made my son feel really welcome and he made friends with another child who attended. I was really impressed and grateful.
- My daughter got excited every time she knew she had summer club always happy to tell me what she been doing at the end of the day she really enjoyed it.
- Art in action blows us away every time - the quality of care, attention and fun learning opportunities are wonderful. My daughter always comes away inspired and having learnt something new.
- My child was excited to attend each day, and wanted to attend all through the holidays.

Enriching activities

The North Somerset HAF providers plan enriching and fulfilling experiences for the children and young people.

During 2024/25 there were sports, arts and crafts, music, circus skills, discos, parties, skiing, watersports, caving, climbing, forest skills, animal encounters, days out to a variety of educational places, gymnastics, cooking, computing and much, much more!

At The Hangar, young people were given a chance to learn trade skills in a professional workshop. Skilled tradesmen were on hand to teach them how to use the tools to create a simple working kitchen. For some of the young people the experience was transformatory: one young man told me that “he understood why he went to school” and “he knew which option choice he was going to make now”.



Physical Activities

As part of our Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) sessions, children and young people are provided with regular opportunities to take part in a wide variety of physical activities. We understand that not all children enjoy traditional sport, and many have told us that activities such as football or netball can feel intimidating or unappealing. That's why we take a broader, more inclusive approach to physical activity.

We've found that children are often much more engaged when the activity feels playful, informal, and fun. Everyday movement, like climbing a climbing frame, running around a hall during a game of chase, dancing, or joining in with obstacle courses is just as valuable as structured sport. These kinds of activities not only keep children active but also help build confidence, develop social skills, and support emotional well-being.

Our sports provision is thoughtfully designed to incorporate both physical exercise and entertainment. While it includes more traditional elements, it also features a wide range of games and creative activities that encourage movement in a way that feels natural and enjoyable. In many cases, children don't even realise they're taking part in exercise they're simply having fun with their peers in a safe, supportive environment.

This inclusive, child-led approach ensures that every child, regardless of ability or interest in sport, benefits from being active. It reflects our commitment to promoting healthy lifestyles in a way that is accessible, engaging, and above all, enjoyable for all children and young people who attend our sessions



Nutritional information and promoting healthy lifestyles

As part of our HAF (Holiday Activities and Food) sessions, we support children and young people to live healthy, active lives, not just through fun physical activities, but also by helping them learn about food and nutrition in a way that's engaging and easy to understand.

Every child who attends receives a nutritious, balanced meal, helping ensure they're well-fed and ready to take part in the day's activities. But we also use food as a chance to learn. Through hands-on sessions like cooking, food tasting, and interactive games, children explore how food fuels their bodies, what different foods do (like giving us energy, helping us grow, or keeping us strong), and how to make choices that support their health.

We talk about food in a positive, practical way, making it fun and helping children and young people to feel confident trying new things.

By combining healthy food with movement, play, and learning, our HAF sessions give children and young people the tools they need to build healthy habits for life.

Parents and carers are also supported with resources and information on affordable, healthy meal ideas they can try at home, helping to extend the impact of the programme beyond the session. In 2024 we also provided hampers to families with step by step instructions about using one set of ingredients but how to use those ingredients in a variety of ways.

By combining enjoyable physical activities with high-quality food and accessible nutrition education, our HAF programme delivers a holistic approach to promoting healthy lifestyles to the children and young people who attend and their families.

[The NHS Eatwell Guide](#)

At Christmas, we provided food hampers to families attending a Christmas Fayre at a primary school which is located in an area of deprivation in Weston-super-Mare. Some of our providers also handed out hampers to the children who attended their provisions, courtesy of the HAF funding. Some gifts for the children were also included for the children from our local Asda store in Weston-super-Mare.



Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND)

In 2024, one of the key priorities for North Somerset's Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme was to ensure that all children and young people had access to inclusive, supportive, and enriching experiences, particularly those with additional needs. Recognising the importance of equitable access, North Somerset HAF placed a strong emphasis on both inclusive and specialist provisions.



As part of our commitment, both Baytree School and Westhaven Specialist School successfully delivered dedicated HAF sessions tailored for the children and young people who attend their schools, providing a safe, familiar environment where they would feel comfortable providing a safe and consistent environment. Baytree School also received funding through the North Somerset HAF programme to run specialist sessions designed to meet the unique needs of their pupils. In addition, Elmtree (formally known as Elementa) and Reset WSM came on board to provide HAF sessions for those children with additional needs, both offering meaningful and enriching activities for children and young people with additional support needs.

At the same time, all universal HAF provisions across the region in 2024 were designed to be fully inclusive, welcoming and supporting children of all abilities to take part in a wide range of engaging and enjoyable activities. This inclusive approach helped to ensure that every child could benefit from the opportunities provided, regardless of their individual needs or circumstances.

Looking ahead to 2025, North Somerset HAF remains committed to building on this strong foundation by continuing to support a mix of inclusive and specialist provisions ensuring that every child could feel included, valued, and inspired.

Key Challenges for the North Somerset HAF Team

1. Non-attendance Without Cancelling:

One of the recurring challenges in 2024 was the number of families who booked sessions but did not attend and failed to cancel in advance. This impacted planning, staffing, and resource allocation, and meant that other children who could have benefited from the provision missed out.

2. Youth Provision:

Feedback and observations highlighted the ongoing need for more targeted youth provision, especially for older children and teenagers. Ensuring activities are age-appropriate, engaging, and co-designed with young people could help improve attendance and outcomes in this age group.

3. Late Notification of HAF for 2025:

The late announcement of HAF funding and delivery timelines for 2025 has made planning more difficult for coordinators and providers. Earlier confirmation would enable better preparation, especially for the Easter 2025 provision.

4. Reduced Funding and Increasing Demand

The number of children receiving Benefits-Related Free School Meals in North Somerset is rising, in line with the national picture. However, the funding we receive has slightly reduced each year for the past three years. At the same time, costs have gone up due to inflation and higher National Insurance contributions, which has made it more expensive to run sessions. This means it's getting harder to reach all the children who need support. To mitigate this, we've introduced a grant offer for charities and community interest companies for 2025/26. We hope this will support more affordable provision and help us reach more families, despite the funding challenges.

Marketing and Communication

How we promoted the HAF provision in North Somerset:

- The HAF provision is promoted in the county by emailing all primary and secondary schools, asking them to notify their parents and carers whose children received benefits-related free school meals with details on how to book. Follow up emails are personalised to schools where there is provision based and to schools where child take up of places is lower than we would expect.
- A flyer is sent to all departments in North Somerset Council asking teams who work with families to let them know.
- We advertise the HAF provision on the North Somerset website and social media (Facebook) page

- We email the families who have previously booked HAF activities with the booking information and link to the booking platform
- Our providers let all parents know who had previously booked with them.
- All our providers also have their own presence on social media which they used to promote their provision locally.
- We have attended a school Christmas fayre which was located in an area of deprivation where we handed out food hampers and allowed children to experience some fun activities. At the event we also supported families to get booked on to HAF activity days on our booking platform.
- [Here is an example of how one of our providers advertised their provision at The Hangar](#)

Financial support that we have received from other organisations

We were delighted when the Asda store in Weston-super-Mare very generously supported us at Christmas providing gifts and products to form a hamper for some of our most vulnerable children and young people.

Results of our surveys

Following a holiday of provision, we survey the parents and carers to provide us with various feedback on their family's experiences. We also ask them to ask questions of their children so we can gain a full picture. The data below is a summary of the three provisions for 2024/5 (Easter, Summer and Winter).

- When asked whether they could book their choice of provision, 86.21% said that they could.
- When asked their opinion on the quality of the provision, 95.13% stated that they considered the provision to be excellent or very good, with a 98.67% satisfaction rating altogether.

We ask the parents, carers, children and young people for their opinions and ideas on how we can improve the HAF provision for the future and we use this information with future planning.

HAF

2025/2026

Shelly Smith (HAF Coordinator) stepped away from her role with HAF in May 2025 on a fixed-term basis to focus full time on her other position within North Somerset Council as the Engagement and Participation Officer and we welcomed Paige Gunstone to the HAF Team in June who will be with us until the end of March 2026.

The HAF Team are excited to bring you some new providers and some new locations for 2025/2026. The old favourites are still there, but we are exploring some new ideas and types of provision in North Somerset too. At the time of writing this report, we have over 30 listings available on our booking platform with a whole host of different experiences for children, young people and families to take part in and enjoy.

We have been advised by our contacts at the DfE we should hear whether HAF funding will continue into 2026 and beyond by the end of this calendar year. HAF is an amazing programme, and we have worked hard to make the provision in North Somerset so brilliant. We really hope that it can continue!

24.6.25