



Department  
for Education

# FUN & FOOD

Holiday activities with healthy food

Annual Report 2023 - 2024





# FUN & FOOD

Holiday activities with healthy food

## Overview 2023/24



## Introduction

Since 2021, the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme, branded as 'Fun and Food' in County Durham, has provided support to children and young people aged 5-16 years who are in receipt of benefits related free school meals. This report sets out information around how Fun and Food was delivered throughout 2023/24.



The Department for Education (DfE) provided all upper tier local authorities with funding to provide free holiday activities and healthy food for children that are in receipt of benefits related free school meals during Easter, Summer and Christmas holiday periods in 2023.

County Durham was allocated £2,338,210, to provide free 'holiday clubs' and committed to offering all eligible and other vulnerable children access to a range of enriching activities with healthy food, the opportunity to experience new things, make friends and have lots of fun!

Research has shown that the school holidays can be pressure points for some families. For some children that can lead to a holiday experience gap.

### Children from low-income households are:

- less likely to access organised out-of-school activities
- more likely to experience 'unhealthy holidays' in terms of nutrition and physical health
- more likely to experience social isolation.

Fun and Food is a response to this issue. Evidence shows that free holiday clubs can have a positive impact on children and young people.

### They work best when they:

- provide consistent and easily accessible enrichment activities
- cover more than just breakfast or lunch
- involve children and parents in food preparation
- use local partnerships and connections, particularly with the VCSO sector.



## Who the programme is for ?

The Fun and Food programme funding is primarily for school aged children from reception to year 11 (inclusive) who receive benefits-related free school meals (FSM).

Benefits-related FSMs are available to pupils if their parents are in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits and have a claim verified by their school or local authority.

## Outcomes and benefits for children and young people

- 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 issues.
- Taking part in fun and engaging activities that support their development.
- Feeling safe and secure
- Getting access to the right support services.
- Returning to school feeling engaged and ready to learn.

## Benefits for families

- Providing opportunities to develop an understanding of nutrition.
- Ensuring they are signposted to lots of support services including wellbeing services, employment and financial advice.



## Overview of spend during 2023 - 2024

In County Durham we work with a range of partners to deliver the Fun and Food programme, together with the 14 Area Action Partnerships, Fun and Food has provided funding to the voluntary and community sector, private providers, schools, leisure centres and our 0-19 Family Hubs.

There are approximately 23,000 children and young people who are eligible for the programme in County Durham. County Durham had an allocation of £2,338,210 from the Department for Education (DfE).

Expenditure Type	Cost (£)
Administrative Expenditure	232,769
Capital Expenditure	0
Programme Expenditure (direct delivery of Fun and Food activities)	2,105,441
Other Expenditure	0
Total Expenditure (for 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024)	2,338,210

### Steering group and governance

The Fun and Food programme is led and supported by the multi-agency Child Poverty Working Group. The following organisations are represented:

- Early Help
- Children's Social Care
- Transactional Services
- County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust
- Early Years and Education
- Culture, Sport and Tourism
- Cabinet Member
- Housing
- Public Health
- Neighbourhoods and Climate Change
- Progression and Learning
- Voluntary and Community Sector
- Faith Communities
- 0-19 Community Family Health
- Police
- Communications and Marketing
- Area Action Partnerships



# Taking part in Fun & Food

In 2023 Fun and Food delivered 467 projects and engaged with 31,706 children and young people across County Durham in the Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays.

## Children and young people engaged

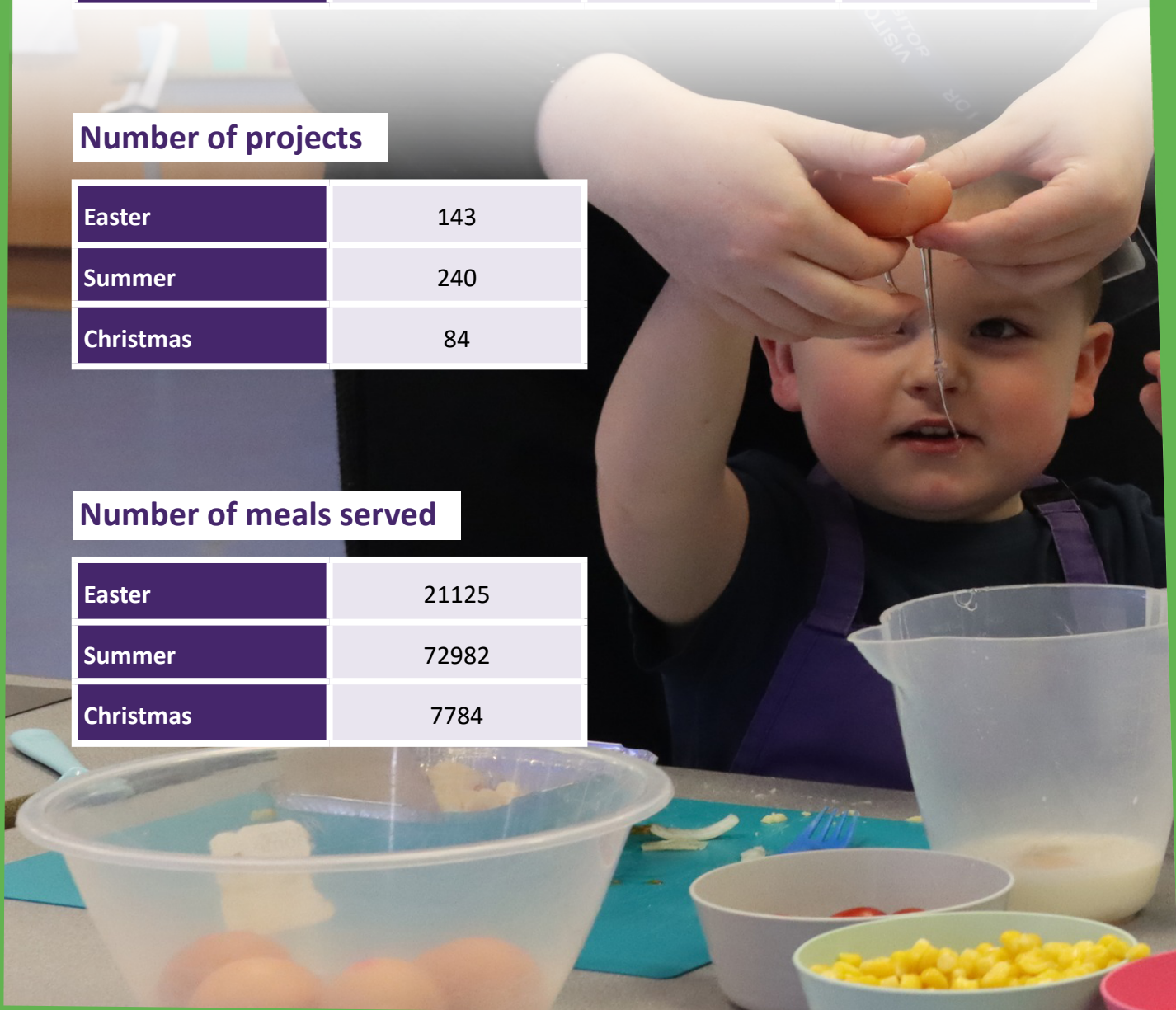
	Primary Aged	Secondary Aged	Children with SEND
Easter	6740	2231	2009
Summer	15532	4563	4587
Christmas	2161	459	719

## Number of projects

Easter	143
Summer	240
Christmas	84

## Number of meals served

Easter	21125
Summer	72982
Christmas	7784



## DfE Standards

### Food Provision

In 2023 Fun and Food provided 101,891 meals to children and young people. Each organisation arranges their own food provision. Our expectation is that most of the food served by providers should be hot, however, we acknowledge that there will be occasions when this is not possible and cold food should be used where it is appropriate.

All food provided as part of the programme must:

- comply with regulations on food preparation
- take into account allergies and dietary requirements inline with Natasha's Law
- take into account any religious or cultural requirements for food.

### Enrichment Activities

All provision is delivered face to face by a range of partners including the voluntary and community sector, private providers, leisure centres, schools and 0-19 Family Hubs.

Partners have successfully delivered a wonderfully creative programme offering a huge range of activities including forest school, dino digs, puppetry, performing arts, equine husbandry, african drumming, circus skills, song writing on a train, nature activities, learning languages, hair and beauty and horse riding.

### SEND Offer

Durham has always committed to having an inclusive Fun and Food offer, however, following feedback from parents carers

developed an offer that was specifically for children and young people with SEND. In Summer 2023 working together with Empowering Inclusive Communities (Short Breaks), Fun and Food engaged with more specialist partners who delivered a programme that was designed specifically for children with SEND.



## FUN & FOOD

Holiday activities with healthy food for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)



Durham  
County Council

## 11-16 year olds

The County Durham Fun and Food programme has been developed to include an offer for older young people aged 11-16 years. Participation with young people and providers took place ahead of its launch in summer 2023, this was led by a dedicated 11 –16-year old Physical Activities Officer to support with the engagement of young people. Through this role

we have consulted with groups of young people from across the county to gain their voice on holiday provision to help us shape Fun and Food moving forward.

## FUN & FOOD

Holiday activities with healthy food for young people aged 11-16



### Physical Activities

All of the Fun and Food sessions has at least one hour of physical activity included. This isn't always a structured physical activity, it can include physical activity in free play time, nature walks, beach games and litter picks.

### Increasing awareness of healthy eating, healthy lifestyles and positive behaviours

Fun and Food helps children to understand more about the benefits of healthy eating and nutrition. These do not need to be formal learning activities but could include:

- getting children involved in food preparation and cooking
- growing fruit and vegetables
- taste tests
- discussing food and healthy eating during mealtimes.

### Signposting and referrals

Fun and Food encourages all delivery partners to signpost families to a range of support services. In County Durham the Advice in County Durham portal allows us to signpost families to a range of advice services who can help with applying for benefits, managing your money, employment, wellbeing and housing advice.

Durham County Council have developed the '[Help with your Money](#)' web page. This has a wide range of information to support families to manage their money including access to hardship grants, debt advice, credit union, healthy start vouchers and how to apply for free school meals.





# Marketing

The programme has been branded as Fun and Food in County Durham. We have a [dedicated webpage](#) available for families and providers. A number of [short videos](#) have been produced which showcase the range of activities that have been provided in 2023 for children and young people.

A [Fun and Food Facebook group](#) was launched in February 2022 and now has over 5000 members.



## Fun and Food County Durham

Public group · 5.5K members

## Half Term Holidays

Within the terms of the DfE funding half terms holidays cannot be funded. Recognising the need and demand for holiday activities with healthy food during half term holidays an additional £425,000 was secured from Durham County Council to offer Fun and Food activities across the half term holidays February 2023 – February 2024.

Working together with 14 Area Action Partnerships Fun and Food funded a range of provision over the half term holidays.

### Children and young people engaged

	Primary Aged	Secondary Aged	Children with SEND
February 2023	3571	986	949
May 2023	2360	966	639
October 2023	2159	564	723
February 2024	1698	363	618

### Number of projects

February 2023	92
May 2023	65
October 2023	79
February 2024	72

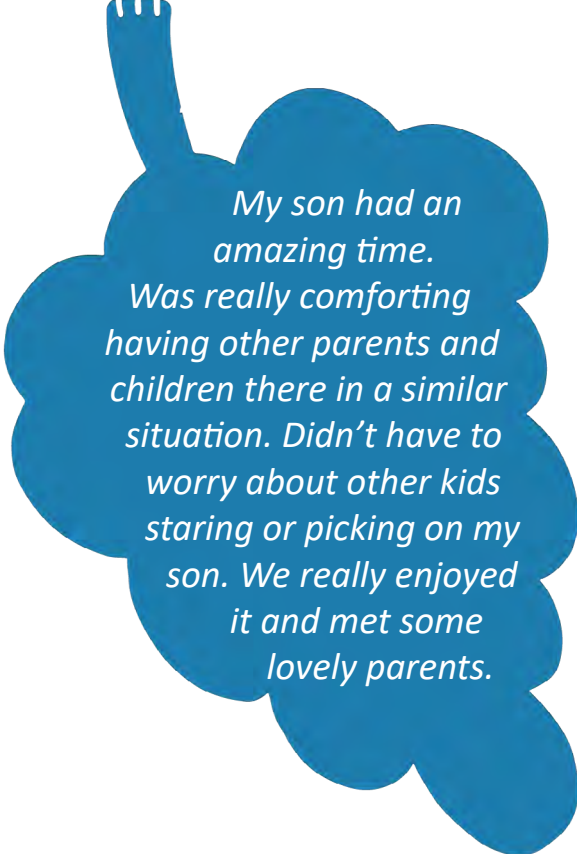
### Number of meals served

February 2023	7402
May 2023	2749
October 2023	7066
February 2024	5716



## Feedback and Case Studies

Quotes from families with children who have SEND.



*My son had an amazing time. Was really comforting having other parents and children there in a similar situation. Didn't have to worry about other kids staring or picking on my son. We really enjoyed it and met some lovely parents.*



*This was so easy to come along to, much more inclusive, my son struggled to join in initially but then had a lovely time. Everyone was much more accepting of different needs, was great!*



*It was nice to get them out to an activity that wasn't too crowded as they don't deal well with big groups. It helped a lot. Gave us a much quieter, understanding environment.*



*It was a really nice time and I felt I could let my son have some freedom without judgement from anyone in there with it being solely for SEND.*

## Feedback and Case Studies

More quotes.

*Its been an amazing workshop for my children to attend they have enjoyed the art therapy and creating some beautiful pictures. This has helped my son who has struggled with his anxiety because of his condition, also my son is home schooled so he has been isolated a lot from children his own age but this has helped him massively with his confidence.*

*My son loved the teen cook club, there isn't many sessions for older children during the holidays, It was such a great opportunity for him to meet friends outside of school and make new friends while cooking real food, he's taken so much away with him.*

*My best part of today was everything!*

*Very well organised team and activities, the kids looked very happy, they've been especially helpful for me as a single mother*

*The holiday clubs have been a life saver*

*Thank-you to all involved*

## Provider Case Study

### CREATIVE KITCHEN

“ *The flexibility of our programme has been welcomed by parents. Many children attended multiple sessions, some only one or two, but the option to pick and choose was commented on as a strength. Many new families joined us, some initially only booking one session, but following their first session they booked onto several more!*

*A big strength of our programme was that it brought so many children together, all different primary school ages from different schools and areas within our local area and allowed the children to make new friends. It felt like one big community. We had several more SEN children join us this year, which was great! and we have been overwhelmed with the positive feedback received from these families.*

*As the children all made their own meals, they were exposed to a variety of ingredients, many new to them, there was lots of taste testing and plenty of discussions around food and healthy eating. Even those children with allergies and special dietary requirements were able to participate and create their own meals. We provided families with recipes and lots of families had been in touch after the programme to say how they'd been cooking again together at home. The cooking activities and meal times definitely supported children to communicate and talk to each other, and great this is being continued at home.*

*We managed to pack in lots of movement, we used the outside field, park and basketball court to set up lots of movement challenges and activities, and where this wasn't possible due to the weather we played lots of indoor games too. I think the firm favourite was the Evil pea scavenger hunt! There was lots of running around hunting for them!*

*A big strength of our programme was that it brought so many children together, all of different primary school ages from different schools and areas within our local area and allowed the children to make new friends and this was commented on a lot by children.*



thank you

We would like to extend a special thank you to all our partners and stakeholders who have been involved in Fun and Food in County Durham in 2023/24.

