it's about me

Derbyshire's Holiday Activity and Food Programme

DERBYSHIRE HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND FOOD PROGRAMME

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

STREET GAMES | DERBYSHIRE County Council | Department for Education

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LOOKING BACK AT 2025

Derbyshire's Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme, delivered under the campaign name *It's About Me*, is one of the largest and most ambitious programmes of its kind in England, working to tackle holiday hunger, physical inactivity, social isolation and learning loss among some of the county's most vulnerable children and young people.

National sport for development charity StreetGames continues to work in partnership with Derbyshire County Council to design, develop, deliver and evaluate the programme, ensuring it achieves its intended outcomes while keeping the needs of children, young people and families from low-income communities at the centre of its approach.

It's About Me has embedded a set of core principles to maximise the opportunities created through holiday club delivery, with a strong focus on improving outcomes for children, young people and families.

The programme aims to ensure that participating children and young people:

- Have access to safe, inclusive and non-stigmatising local spaces where they can enjoy fun activities during the spring, summer and winter school holidays.
- Eat more healthily during the school holidays.
- Spend time with friends and have opportunities to be physically active during the holidays.
- Take part in a broad range of engaging and enriching activities that support their resilience, character, wellbeing and wider educational attainment.
- Feel ready to return to school or college or progress into employment.
- Develop greater awareness of healthy eating, healthy lifestyles and positive behaviours.
- Have parents and carers who are connected to relevant local family support services.

*"The It's About Me programme has delivered another successful year, supporting **17,380** children across Derbyshire at **257** holiday clubs with healthy food, enriching activities and consistent opportunities to thrive during school holidays.*

Throughout 2025–26, the It's About Me programme has continued to grow in both reach and impact, thanks to the involvement and continued commitment of our local providers and partners.

Together, we have ensured that children and young people who are most in need across Derbyshire can access safe, enjoyable and enriching holiday experiences that support their wellbeing and strengthen our communities."

Councillor Paul Maginnis
Cabinet Member for Children & Families

*"The continued development of the It's About Me programme means that holiday provision across Derbyshire is now more established, accessible and impactful than ever before. Over the past year, the programme has provided **more than 200,000** healthy meals while investing **over £2 million** into local organisations delivering activities across the county.*

Through a dedicated network of community providers, we are creating safe spaces where children and young people can stay active, try new experiences, build friendships and enjoy healthy meals during the school holidays. What is particularly encouraging is the strength of this provider network and the growing confidence of organisations delivering provision locally across all eight district and borough areas.

The programme continues to evolve each year, and the stories emerging from clubs across Derbyshire highlight the lasting impact these opportunities have on children's confidence, wellbeing and sense of belonging."

Jenny Carter
Programme Director, StreetGames

Derbyshire has high levels of children eligible for benefit-related free school meals, with approximately 33,500 children entitled to support.

As a large and geographically diverse county made up of eight local authority areas, Derbyshire includes a relatively small number of towns alongside a significant number of rural villages and hamlets. This creates additional challenges for programme design and delivery, including rural deprivation, a dispersed population of eligible children and young people, low levels of car ownership, and limited public transport connectivity.

Through a tailored and targeted communications campaign, It's About Me was promoted directly to families eligible for benefit-related free school meals, with provision specifically commissioned to reach:

- Families living in the most underserved communities.
- Asylum seeking children and young people.
- Children and young people in care.
- Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

2025 SUMMARY

257
holiday clubs
provided a range of enriching activities across the county

131
staff & volunteers accessed training
helping local organisations to upskill their team

17,380
children and young people attended a holiday club
at no additional cost to their families

78,764
nutritious meals served
while providing fun, engaging nutritional education

OVER £2 MILLION
Invested into local holiday clubs
guaranteeing funding for organisations during the holidays

82
organisations
took part in the It's About Me programme

3,624
children and young people to access remote activity
ensuring equal access for those unable to attend in-person holiday clubs

FINANCE

It's About Me Derbyshire continues to be one of England's largest rural HAF programmes. The DfE made a grant to the Derbyshire County Council of **£2,926,860** for the 2025 programme delivery period.

It's About Me Derbyshire is committed to supporting as many children and families in need as possible through a vision of upskilling communities and community leaders to develop their competence and confidence and extend the provision sustainably.

80% of the total delivery grant was invested into provision for children and young people across the three delivery periods in each of the eight districts and boroughs in the county.

To meet the programme's engagement levels, we developed a cost model to support grant-making and ensure value for money. The cost model implemented for 2025 was based on an average of £24 per child per day, with £29 offered for spaces to engage young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

It’s About Me continues to leverage additional investment in the programme through partnerships and stakeholders; HAF programme providers also supplement their income through cash and in-kind contributions. This support strengthens and complements our programme delivery; the value for 2025 exceeded **£85,000.**

FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2025	
Administrative Expenditure	£292,686.00
Capital Expenditure	£0
Programme Expenditure	£2,311,121.00
Other Expenditure	£211,106.00
Booking System Cost	£46,440.00
Total Expenditure	**£2,861,353.00**
Total Payment from DfE	£2,926,860.00
Underspend	£65,507.00

GOVERNANCE

The core governance structure in Derbyshire is the Steering Group. Established in 2021, the Group has defined terms of reference and membership. The Group comprises Derbyshire County Council departments, including Commissioning, Education, Public Health, Early Help, Adult Social Care and StreetGames.

STAKEHOLDERS

It's About Me has continued to build and strengthen partnerships with key stakeholders across the county to support effective programme delivery, evaluate the impact on children, young people and families and help ensure the long-term sustainability of the programme.

Our key strategic stakeholders include:

- Derbyshire County Council
- StreetGames
- Local Authorities (x8 districts and boroughs)
- Derbyshire County Schools
- Local Community and Voluntary Partnerships
- Derbyshire Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner
- Active Derbyshire

We also work closely with our neighbouring HAF schemes to ensure eligible young people who live or go to school in different local authority areas can still access high quality holiday programmes.

OUR NETWORK

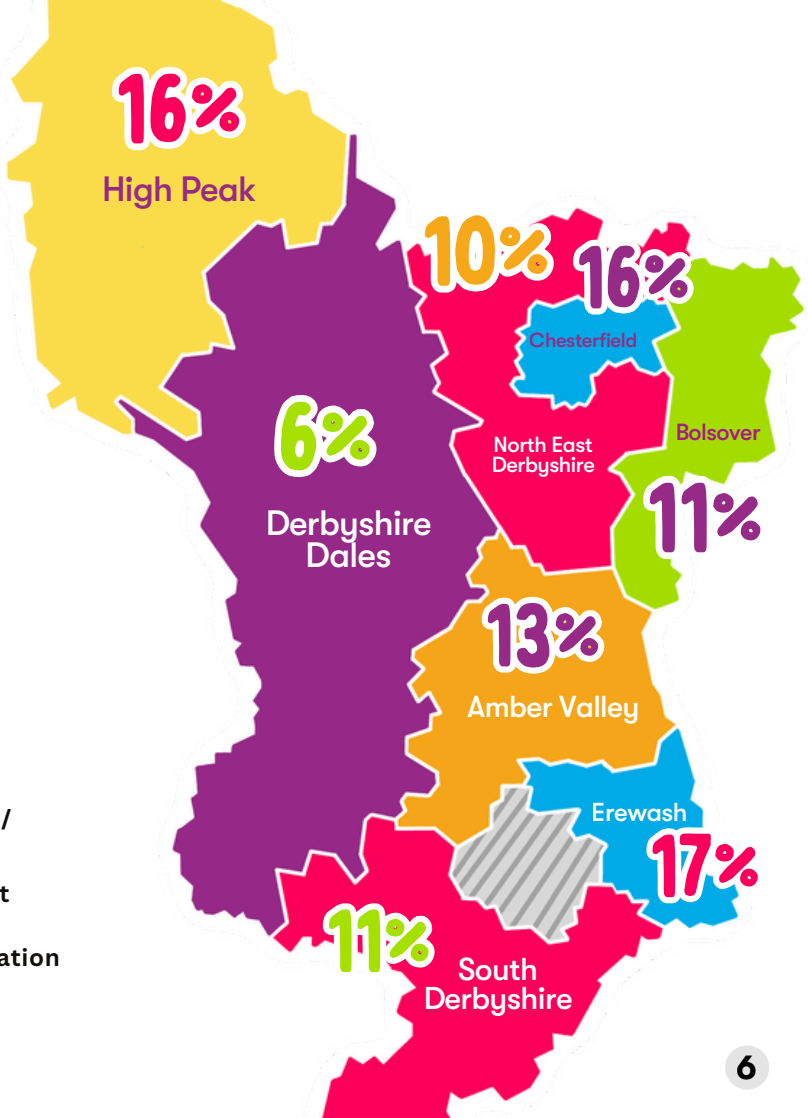
In 2025, we supported **82** holiday club providers operating across **168** venues. Some providers work across multiple venues, and some venues are used by different providers during the same holiday periods i.e. delivering programmes during different weeks of the holidays.

VENUE TYPE

- **42%** School/ College/ University
- **23%** Community Venue/ Asset
- **14%** Fitness Centre/ Gym
- **8%** Open Space/ Outdoor Venue
- **7%** Sports Club
- **3%** Other Venue
- **2%** Youth Centre
- **2%** Faith Venue

PROVIDER TYPE

- **37%** Community/ Voluntary Sector
- **33%** Commercial Operator
- **13%** Local Authority Services
- **10%** School/ College/ University
- **6%** Charitable Trust
- **1%** Housing Association



OUTCOMES

All It's About Me holiday club providers are encouraged to deliver the Department for Education Holiday Activity and Food Programme framework standards. In 2025, these standards were:

- Food provision that meetings school food standards
- Enrichment activities
- Physical activities
- Increasing awareness of healthy eating, healthy lifestyles, and positive behaviours
- Signposting and referrals
- Accessibility and inclusiveness
- Robust policies and procedures
- Effective safeguarding
- Environment and sustainability

An organisation's ability to deliver against the framework standards are assessed through:

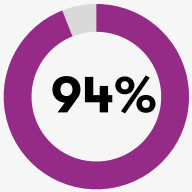
- **Grant application forms** – all organisations are required to complete a grant application form to apply for funding to run free holiday clubs. This form asks for information on their overall programme, where it is needed and why and asks in turn how the holiday programme will meet the requirements of each framework standard.

- **Quality Assurance (Support Visits)** – In 2025, **215** quality assurance visits were completed. During these visits to the holiday clubs, the It's About Me team observe the activities taking place and ask questions about the daily programme to ensure the framework standards are being met. It is important that these visits are viewed as a positive experience for the providers, and they feel supported to ensure their holiday programme reaches its full potential.

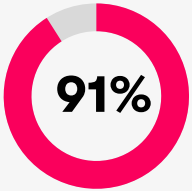
- The continued use of **self-assessment methodology** allowed providers to identify areas in which they required additional support. The quality assurance assessment forms were also modified to better measure delivery against HAF guidelines enabling focus on wider programme improvement in all areas and give actionable feedback to providers.

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE FEEDBACK

424 Responses



of children and young people **rated their holiday club as 'Very Good' or 'Good'** overall



of children and young people said their holiday club made them **feel more positive**

"It's very fun to make new friends and get to learn lots about the activities."

"It's really fun and inclusive and there are always nice things to do there."

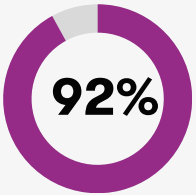
"I enjoyed every day, meeting new friends and trying many new things!"

"Got to try new activities - I loved the tobogganing but I wasn't very good at the skiing. Met lots of new people and had a great day."

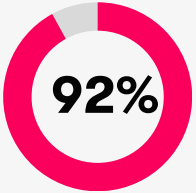
"I loved feeling confident enough to try out the climbing experience. The coaches were really fun."

PARENT & GUARDIAN FEEDBACK

264 Responses



of parents & guardians **rated their holiday club as 'Very Good' or 'Good' overall**



of parents & guardians would **recommend their local holiday club to other families**

"Local SEND clubs are so hard to find in the holidays so this has been so great for us as a family so I can work in the holidays and know she's safe and having fun."

"Supporting my child's mental health, preparation for secondary school with a much smaller number of pupils has been very beneficial."

"My son has high energy levels and I feel his needs are well supported in a safe environment. He is always happy to attend, looking forward to the fun activities that are provided. This club makes a huge difference in the holidays adding the structure of a club routine to his busy days."

PARENT & GUARDIAN FEEDBACK

934 Responses

"Being a neurodiverse parent to a neurodiverse child, I heavily rely on holiday clubs to enable me to reset my own mental health."

"These clubs give me time to work and my child the chance to socialise."

"It's been invaluable for continuity for my children."

"These holiday clubs have been an absolute godsend! He has loved going to the club and it has given us all a much needed break from each other for a few hours."

"I'm a single mum. These clubs help me so I can go to work."

"It makes me feel I've more of a village to help me raise my sons."

What are the biggest benefits the holiday club has for you as parent or guardian?

83% Keeping your children **entertained**

53% **Reducing general costs** during the holidays

49% Keeping your children **in a routine**

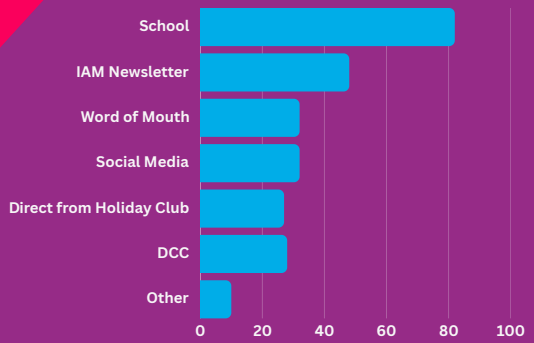
44% Providing **affordable childcare**

40% Supportin g your **mental health and wellbeing**

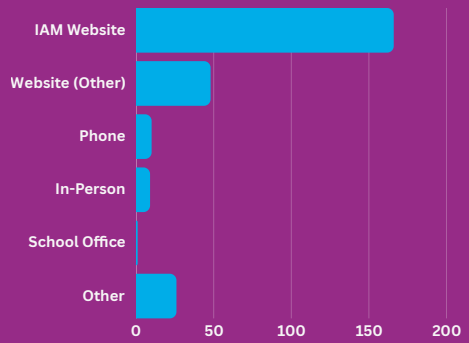
29% Providing **support for a child with SEND**

9% **Signposting to information and support,** such as health services, employment

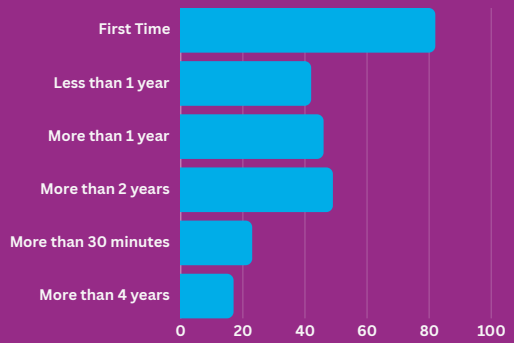
How did you hear about the It's About Me! programme?



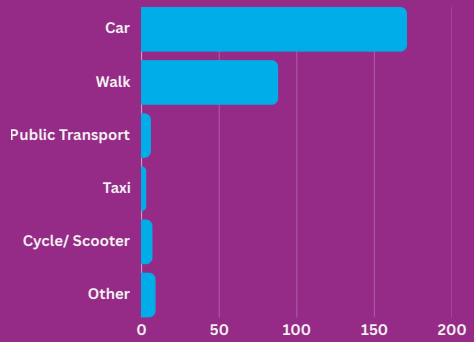
How did you book your holiday clubs?



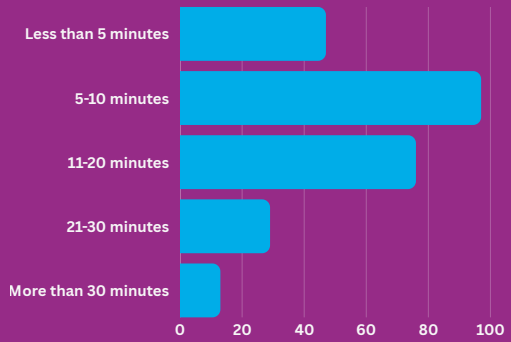
How long has your child been attending It's About Me holiday clubs?



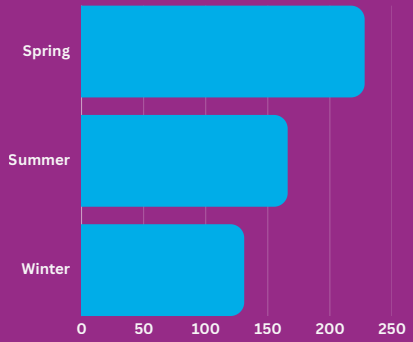
How do you travel to your holiday club?



How long does it take you to travel to your holiday club?



Which time of year does your child attend a It's About Me holiday club?



FOOD & NUTRITION

Every child attending an It's About Me holiday club receives a healthy, nutritious meal. We continue to encourage providers to work with Derbyshire-based organisations to source their holiday club food and meals.

Nearly **70%** of the community providers choose to prepare their own meals, based on their existing dietary knowledge of those who attend. These holiday club providers are also more likely to be operating in venues with access to functioning kitchens. Our larger operators often choose to work with an external food provider; especially on school sites where they hire space and do not have access to a kitchen.

Due diligence is undertaken to ensure that each holiday club provider meets the following requirements:

- The food provider is registered as a food business with one of the 8 Derbyshire District Councils.
- Have a minimum food hygiene rating of 4.
- Shared planned menus that meet school food standards.
- Have Public Liability Insurance that covers the provision of food.
- Staff have completed Level 2 Food Hygiene training.
- Staff have completed online Allergy Awareness training.

Our network of holiday club providers continues to improve their delivery of the healthy eating, healthy lifestyles, and positive behaviour outcome. Confidence in delivering food-based activities is increasing.

Throughout 2025, we replicated successful HAF interventions in Derbyshire; these included Let's Talk About Food training, delivery of Hakuna Fruitata and kitchen equipment grants linked to the Hakuna Fruitata project.

Hakuna Fruitata
Hakuna Fruitata is aimed at providing opportunities and experiences for young people to explore and enjoy food in a 'no worries' and 'no pressure' environment. The project also aims to empower Its About Me! providers to have confidence, knowledge, skills and understanding to stimulate healthy conversations and positive experiences around food, nutrition and positive behaviours.

Through 2025, Hakuna Fruitata has continued to be embedded into standard HAF provision to support the fulfilment of the Healthy Eating, Healthy Lifestyles and Positive Behaviours outcome.

39% of children and young people say they **increased their awareness of healthy eating, lifestyles & positive behaviours** at an It's About Me club.

33% of children and young people say they **cook or make food** at an It's About Me holiday club.

65% of children and young people say they **eat healthy, nutritious meals** at an It's About Me holiday club.

Let's Talk About Food

We have developed a comprehensive cascade training programme to support holiday club leaders and volunteers to integrate food and nutritional education into their everyday delivery. Training was offered directly to provider staff and their coaching team, with an invitation to wider organisations if accessible. This included theory-based information relating to recent studies and research, as well as an opportunity to share different approaches and practical ways of engaging children and young people in practical food workshops.

The session included a practical cooking opportunity for staff to understand how to deliver to children.

On completion of the training, providers were given a small grant to purchase basic cooking equipment and ingredients to deliver practical food-based activities during the Spring and Summer HAF programmes. In Winter, we trialled an offer of supplying produce from Fareshare and a bakery donation from Warburtons. Unfortunately, the logistics were too complex on this occasion, but an offer will be developed for 2026.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

All It's About Me clubs deliver activities that meet physical activity guidelines during each session. All children and young people are encouraged to engage in moderate to vigorous physical activity for at least 60 minutes per day. Our holiday club providers deliver this outcome in many formats; structured sport, physical activity, forest schools and outdoor adventures or exercise sessions with many also delivering free play sessions.

We encourage providers to engage young people in various physical activities to develop movement skills, muscular fitness and bone strength. Our most successful providers work with their young people to understand the sports and physical activities they want to do, giving them a say on the activities delivered during their holiday club. We pride ourselves on having a high volume of providers that offer different activities meaning our sport and physical activities are varied, giving children great choices and in many cases providing new sporting experiences to many children.

The range of activities included:
Athletics, badminton, basketball, boxing, climbing, cycling, dance, dodgeball, fitness, football, gymnastics, hockey, martial arts, netball, playground games, rounders, rugby, tennis, scootering, skateboarding, swimming, table tennis, tennis, walking and yoga.

83% of children and young people say they take part in **sport, fitness and physical activity** at **an It's About Me!** holiday club.

ENRICHMENT

Our central enrichment offer consists of several centrally funded services and activities commissioned to support the enhancement of the It's About Me programme. These offers are organised by the It's About Me team and then shared with approved providers, who then book the services directly at a time that best suits their delivery schedule.

This has been successful in supporting clubs to offer a varied and vibrant offer to the young people attending their holiday provision and is also helpful in supporting children to learn new skills, knowledge and new experiences, many of which are educational.

Wellbeing Workshops delivered by Infinite Wellbeing CIC
Infinite Wellbeing CIC delivered **eight** of their Marvellous Me sessions to other holiday clubs during 2025. These sessions focus on wellbeing and self-confidence with the objective being that young people recognise and celebrate their strengths and what makes them unique.

86% of children and young people say they **have fun and socialise** at an It's About Me holiday club.

Buzz Music and Arts
We continued our partnership with Buzz Music to offer singing, drumming, dance and junk orchestra sessions to our HAF providers. Across the year they delivered **20** sessions in HAF clubs. This offer is always very popular with our network because they offer activities that are a different and unique experience for young people.

Engaging Older Young People
During our winter programme, we targeted specific secondary schools with high levels of FSM-eligible young people and provided a range of different activities, including cinema, bowling and family fun festivals. Extreme Wheels offered an enrichment activity to providers working with older young people, giving them the opportunity to take part in skating activities and street art.

Extreme Wheels
Activities were delivered directly within community locations. Groups had the choice to participate in the following activities

- Drift Trikes
- KMX Karts
- Inflatable Laser Tag
- Body Zorbing
- BMX Side Hacks
- Mobile Skatepark Activities

These high-impact activities are designed to attract and retain participation, particularly among older children and young people.

73% of children and young people say they try out new experiences at an It's About Me holiday club.

Nerf Wars
Children are armed with nerf guns and placed in a purpose-built area with the aim of shooting opposing players to score points. They take part in individual and team challenges, developing their personal skills such as hand-eye co-ordination and their ability to work in teams e.g. communication to solve team problems. Nerf Wars is a fun activity that is delivered by Peak Education.

Nerf Wars at our HAF Camps and it proves to be a popular activity, Inspiring young people to be active, have fun, be disciplined and organised and work in a team.

Outdoor Activity Centres
Since the start of the HAF programme, we have worked with Pleasley Vale, Lea Green and White Hall Outdoor Activity Centres to offer enrichment opportunities for HAF providers. Young people get to take part in activities such as stream walking, climbing, high ropes, buggy riding, orienteering, treasure hunts and more. All venues provide healthy lunches for all young people.

Derbyshire is blessed with so much countryside, it is a great way for young people to experience the outdoors and see other parts of the county, something they may have never had the opportunity to do before.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Building sustainable provision remains central to Derbyshire's approach to the HAF programme. A comprehensive workforce development programme has been delivered to support holiday club providers in delivering high-quality provision and achieving the wider outcomes of the HAF programme.

In 2025, approximately **131** holiday club leaders, volunteers and older young people received training to support programme delivery and strengthen their confidence and competence, helping to build capacity for both HAF and wider year-round provision.

As many regular HAF providers have already completed core minimum standards training, such as first aid and safeguarding and hold valid three-year certifications, there has been a reduced need for repeat training in these areas. It has also been recognised that the core workforce programme alone does not fully capture the breadth of community capacity building and training taking place across the county.

Throughout the year, HAF staff, leaders and volunteers accessed a wide range of training and development opportunities, including:

- Keeping young people safe in community support
- Understanding Behaviour that may Challenge
- Leve 3 Emergency First Aid at Work
- Mental Health First Aid
- Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma Informed Practice
- Engaging Women and Girls
- SEND and Inclusion
- Meeting School Food Standards
- Level 2 Food Hygiene
- Food Allergy and Intolerance Training
- Full of Beans
- Let's Talk About Food
- Risk Assessment for HAF providers
- GDPR

Mentoring Young People in Community Settings
StreetGames delivered a course designed to equip youth-focused volunteers and staff with the skills, confidence, and practical tools needed to mentor young people effectively within their communities.

A total of **17** candidates participated in the course, representing **10** different community partners across the region. The course aimed to build a consistent mentoring approach while tailoring delivery to the diverse needs of each organisations and the young people they support.

"The trainers were very knowledgeable and shared the information in an easy to understand way. I enjoyed the amount of interaction used throughout the course."

"Thankyou, for a very informative session it was very well presented and learned a great deal!"

"Trainer & course content were fantastic."

"The tutors kept the course flowing brilliantly."

"The tutor was very knowledgeable and informed and gave practical advice and great strategies. I feel confident and more able to deliver first aid."

ENGAGING FAMILES

Winter Food Boxes
We worked again with Morrisons/Oaklands to provide **500** winter food hampers that were delivered directly to the homes of eligible families. These food boxes provide a family of 4 with 4 meals and include all the ingredients needed as well as recipe cards.

Family Food Experiences
Family Food Experiences: building on a successful model established in Birmingham, we delivered two family food experiences in Derbyshire during winter. The sessions were aimed at families but also delivered with the intention of upskilling staff from the host organisations so they can deliver them independently going forward.

The 2-hour event aims to provide interactive and practical food activities for parents and carers to take part with their children. Activities included 5 practical stations including making pizza rolls from scratch. For the final part of the session everyone is brought together for a quiz. This includes moving around the room to find the answers required.

This is a really engaging element and parents have commented how much they have learnt from this activity around cooking food and different meals at home. In addition, we linked with local services from the Live Life Better Derbyshire Team and Financial Inclusion team. Colleagues attended to offer additional advice and signposting for families, as well as provide financial advice and support. Every family was given a slow cooker to take away at the end of the session which to some felt like an early Christmas present.

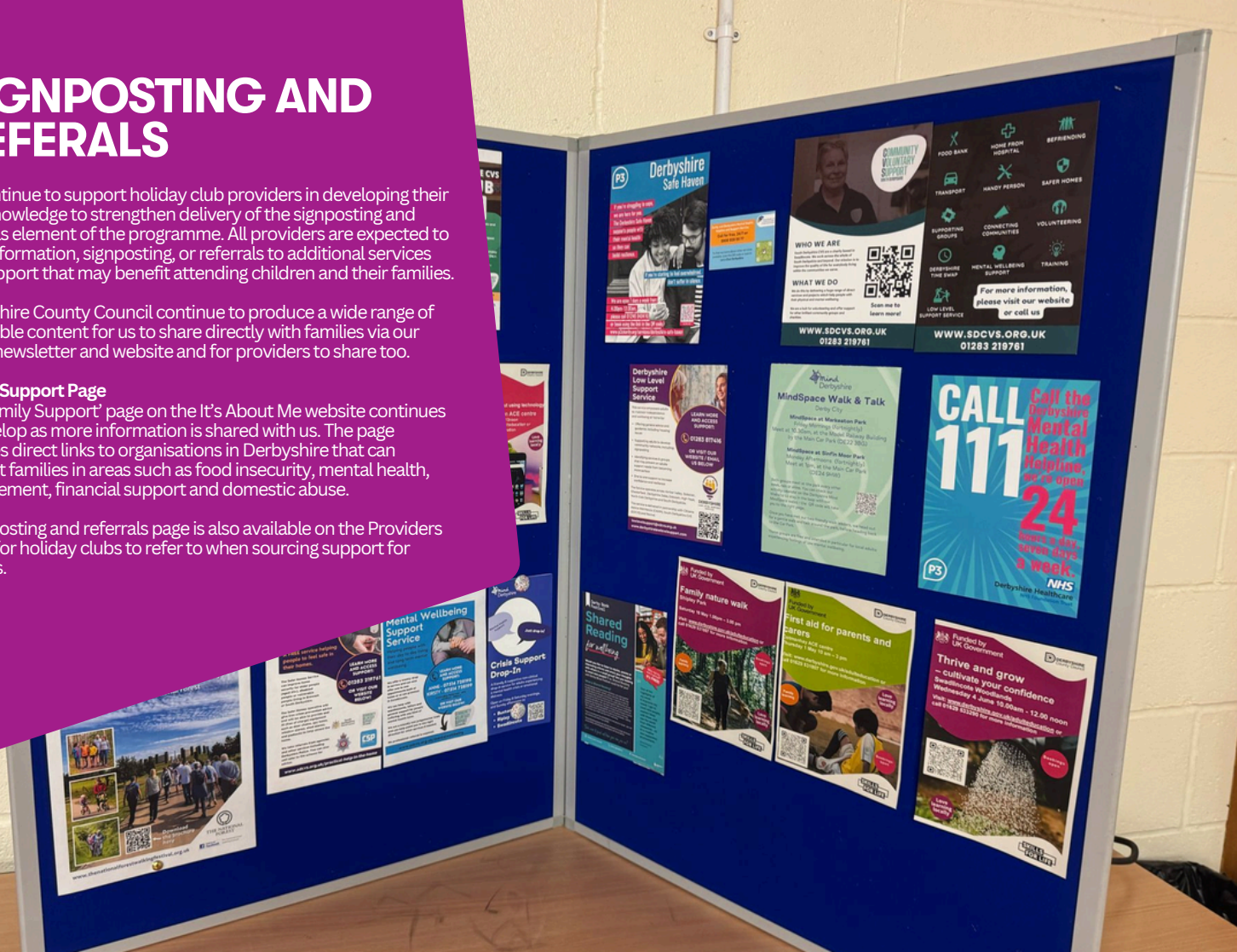
SIGNPOSTING AND REFERALS

We continue to support holiday club providers in developing their local knowledge to strengthen delivery of the signposting and referrals element of the programme. All providers are expected to offer information, signposting, or referrals to additional services and support that may benefit attending children and their families.

Derbyshire County Council continue to produce a wide range of accessible content for us to share directly with families via our digital newsletter and website and for providers to share too.

Family Support Page
Our 'Family Support' page on the It's About Me website continues to develop as more information is shared with us. The page includes direct links to organisations in Derbyshire that can support families in areas such as food insecurity, mental health, bereavement, financial support and domestic abuse.

A signposting and referrals page is also available on the Providers Portal for holiday clubs to refer to when sourcing support for families.



PROMOTING OUR PROGRAMME

Our communications strategy for 2025 focused on:

- Increase continued participation
- Highlighting the positive impact of the It's About Me programme.

The 2025/26 marketing and communications strategy aimed to build deeper relationships with our existing audiences with a secondary focus on targeting those who have not engaged with the programme previously.

Campaigns were tracked through Google Analytics, Campaign Monitor and Buffer. By monitoring the results from our campaigns, we are able to continually analyse throughout the year and adapt the campaigns to meet our objectives.

The website refresh was a significant development for 2025/26, enabling us to streamline many of our communications and improve the user experience for families and providers.

Moving forward, the 2026/27 marketing plan for It's About Me will support the continued growth of the HAF programme following the confirmation of funding until 2029. The plan will focus on increasing participation among underrepresented FSM pupils, improving understanding of HAF among community partners and supporting holiday providers to promote their provision effectively.

OVERVIEW

6% Digital audience growth

1,074 Social media followers

3,122 newsletter subscribers

9.2% Engagement Rate

152 Digital campaigns sent

23K Website views

13,471 Website users reached

58.3K Impressions

2026 AND BEYOND

Towards the end of 2025, we were delighted to hear that funding for the holiday activities and food programme has been extended by central government until 2028-29. This long-term commitment to the programme is testament to the difference it is making to low-income families across the country.

Over the last few years, we have gained valuable feedback from children, young people and parents and have developed several case studies demonstrating the impact of the programme. In 2026, our user feedback will help guide our delivery, maximising the impact and tackling any future challenges.

Throughout 2026 we will stive to:

- Commission provision that achieves geographical sufficiency and offers a varied and vibrant offer to children, young people and families.
- Continue with our targeted approach to engaging children and young people eligible for benefits-related free school meals and other, specific vulnerable cohorts.
- Continue to deliver effective quality assurance that includes checks before, during and after holiday club delivery.
- Continue to deliver a training and workforce development programme that not only focuses on skills and qualifications needed for HAF delivery but also readies providers for future delivery of community-based activity for young people in underserved communities.

- Ensure that youth voice is at the heart of decision-making and that the provision is reflective of need.
- Connect with specialist providers to ensure we commission sufficient provision for children with SEND during holiday periods.
- Seek opportunities to extend provision through leveraging additional investment, resources and capacity.

We are committed to tackling inequalities for low-income children, young people and families during holiday periods.

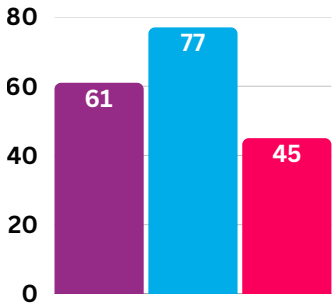
We will:

- Engage wider partners and stakeholders to influence future policy and practice in relation to holiday provision.
- Use the HAF programme outcomes to measure the wider impact on young people, families and holiday club providers.
- Continue to work with other Local Authorities to share learning and best practice.

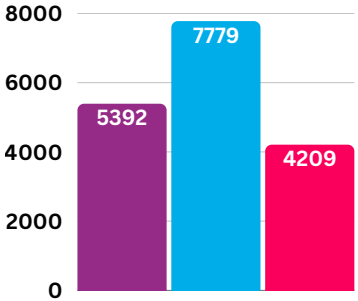
OVERVIEW

SPRING | SUMMER | WINTER 2025

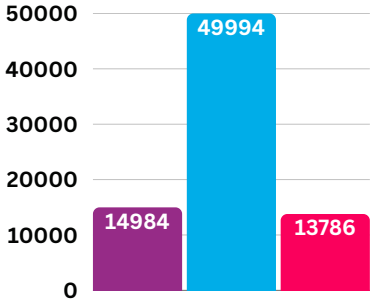
Holiday Club Providers

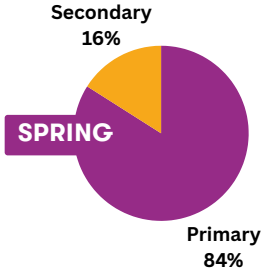


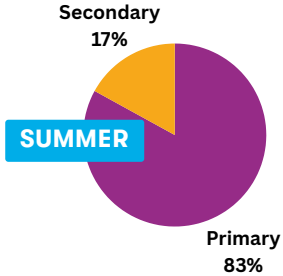
Young People Engaged

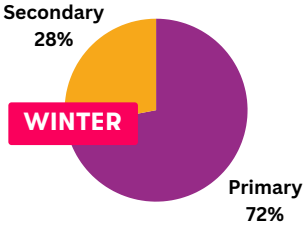


Attendances and Meals Provided

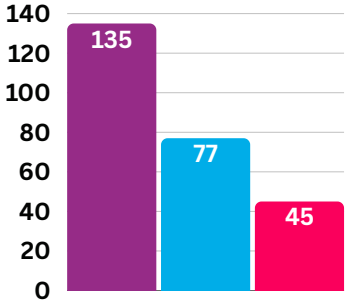




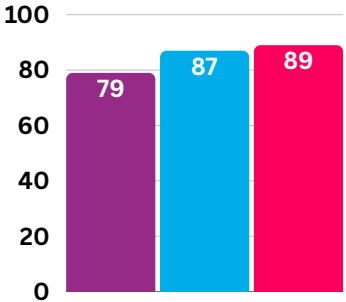




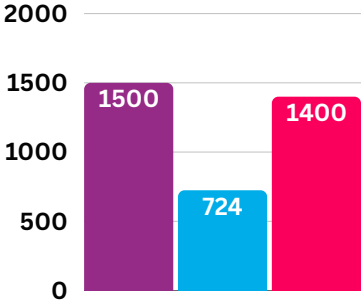
Holiday Clubs



Free School Meal Attendees (%)



Accessed Remote Activity



CASE STUDIES

FOOD WORKSHOPS WITH HAKUNA FRUITATA

FOOD PROVISION

During the Spring holidays, Peak Active Sport holiday clubs participated in the “Hakuna Fruitata” project, which aims to provide practical, interactive and engaging nutritional workshops for young people aged 5-16 so they can experience more food-based activities in a ‘no worries’, ‘no pressure’ environment.

“It’s been a huge relief having these activities available. My children loved every moment and came home excited to share what they had made and learned.” **Parent/ Guardian**

The sessions guided children and young people as they made fruit kebabs, fruit faces and even created a fruit Jenga – a fun twist on the classic game using fruit!

“I appreciate how the programme focuses on healthy eating. My kids are usually picky, but they’re trying new fruits now and that’s a big win!” **Parent/ Guardian**

The activities are designed to be engaging and educational, promoting creativity, teamwork and a love for healthy food.

“*The fruit kebabs were so cool, and I liked tasting all the different fruits. I want to make them at home!”* **Child/ Young Person**

“It’s been a huge relief having these activities The funding from the Holiday Activity and Food programme has enabled Peak Active Sport to provide essential resources, including arts and craft supplies, fresh fruit for healthy meals and equipment for interactive games.

“The funding has been invaluable in enabling our organisation to provide free, high-quality holiday activities to children and families in the community. It has allowed us to expand our reach, offering fun and educational programmes that would not have been possible otherwise.” **Mark Jennings, Director**

BUILDING CONFIDENCE, COMMUNITY AND CONNECTION

COMMUNTIY

In Summer 2025, Peak Education and Sport offered 7 days of holiday clubs which included a wide range of physical activity such as football, basketball, rounders, golf and rock climbing to Nerf battles, dodgeball, boccia, handball, orienteering and more!

The children and young people also learned about healthy eating, exploring the hidden sugars in everyday foods and also took part in baking sessions. To increase the range of activities, participants also got creative with positive art and celebrated each other's achievements along the way.

"The summer camps have been brilliant for my two daughters, aged 7 and 11. They have really enjoyed it and have looked forward to going each day, they made new friends and learnt new skills while having lots of fun." **Parent**

For Peak Education and Sport, taking part in the It's About Me programme has been 'transformational', enabling them to grow to a team of four and expand the activities they could offer as part of their holiday club.

Peak Education Sport collaborated with local café, S21 Café, to provide the food for their holiday club, turning the programme into a community team effort — something bigger than any one organisation.

"As a newly formed organisation within the community, we truly relished the chance to deliver a HAF Camp for our local community. It was a wonderful opportunity not only to provide fun, active days for young people but also to step into the local primary school beforehand and start building real connections with the children and families who would later join us." **Lee Coddington, Founder of Peak Education and Sport**

Peak Education Sport collaborated with local café, S21 Café, to provide the food for their holiday club, turning the programme into a community team effort — something bigger than any one organisation.

"The range of activities has been great. They have done something different every day, they loved playing rounders, dodgeball and baking. Lunch was even included." **Parent**

BUILDING CONFIDENCE, COMMUNITY AND CONNECTION

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Founded in 2022, Peak Power Sports was developed following Co-Founder Jack's experience with community sports activities throughout his teens. Combining his knowledge with local fitness professional and gym owner Alex, they decided to create a youth-based provision in the Peak District that not only provides accessible physical activity sessions, but also supports children's mental health and wellbeing.

"Physical activity is essential for children's mental health and wellbeing. Whether they're taking their first steps into athletics or refining their skills, we aim to create an inclusive environment for every child to thrive." **Jack Jordell, Co-Founder**

Peak Power Sports HAF provision provides a range of multi-sport activities tailored to engage and inspire children of all abilities, age ranges and genders. Nestled within the Peak District at Chapel en le Frith Leisure Centre, the holiday camp provides a peaceful and distraction-free atmosphere away from the everyday hustle and bustle, allowing children to focus, connect with nature and fully immerse themselves in the joy of movement and teamwork.

Peak Power Sport's HAF programme has also allowed families to focus on their own mental health well-being while their children engage in holiday activities.

Findings from the It's About Me Spring 2025 Report highlighted that **47%** of parents/ guardians feel one of the biggest benefits of the HAF programme is supporting their mental health and wellbeing.

"The HAF programme has been a lifeline for families facing challenges such as financial hardship, bereavement or ill health. By offering subsidised spaces through HAF funding, we've been able to provide much-needed relief to local families by giving them a safe space to send their children during the holidays." **Alex Barwell, Co-Founder**

REDUCING ISOLATION AND CREATING RESPITE FOR FAMILIES WITH SEND

SUPPORTING SEND FAMILIES

Initially launched in 2021 to tackle the increase in social isolation caused by the COVID-19 lockdown, Bailey Bears Sensory Den, Ashbourne, offers children's play sessions, family support and childcare for children, young people and parents with SEND.

"Many of the children and young people who attend Bailey Bears would be unable to attend a holiday club because of their care needs. We have bridged the social isolation gap that parents and carers feel with a child with complex needs. We have helped families maintain an income during the school holiday and reduced exhaustion in parents and carers by providing much-needed respite." **Bailey Bears**

Bailey Bears also support the siblings of children and young people with SEND through their holiday club, by taking part in wider enrichment opportunities available through the It's About Me programme, such as the activity days at external providers, giving them space to have fun and make connections with other children and young people who are in a similar position.

"The funding this year, particularly the Go Ape offer, has enabled our young carers (this is the siblings of a child that has severe needs or a child whose parents have complex needs) to have a well-deserved day out, fun and meet new friends with whom they can form support networks." **Bailey Bears**

SUPPORTING ASYLUM SEEKING CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) Team at Derbyshire County Council ran a holiday club session, with male unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in Buxton between 12-16 years of age. Through this session, the young people not only learnt a lot about healthy eating and the importance of a balanced diet, they were also given the opportunity to make friends and meet other young people in the UK claiming asylum.

"Our young people are very lonely and vulnerable, so establishing these links, friends and support networks is very important to improve their mental health and well-being." **Nichole Dickens, UASC Team**

To kick-start the session, the young people were asked to design their own holiday club. During the design process, they were also encouraged to think about the wider requirements of creating a programme, such as equipment, staffing, training, partnerships etc

The session then moved on to the topic of healthy eating and nutrition, first starting with a group quiz, 'identify the fruit or vegetable from a very magnified photo', which created fun, informal conversations about fruit and vegetables.

Information was then passed around on food groups; the Eat Well Plate; understanding food labels; which foods can positively impact our emotional and physical well-being; how nutrients help our bodies; and my active week ahead diary.

Food and refreshments were provided followed by an afternoon session with a drum instructor.

To end the day, the young people were all gifted a slow cooker to make the most of what they had learnt about healthy eating. Staff explained what they were and how they can be used, staff are going to use support sessions to further explain the usefulness of slow cookers.

WITH THANKS TO

STREET GAMES | DERBYSHIRE County Council | Department for Education

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