

HEALTHY HOLIDAYS PROGRAMME Evaluation Report 2021





Healthy Holidays Background

Kirklees Youth Alliance CIO (KYA) is a community youth work infrastructure organisation providing support to a network of 100+ youth organisations across Kirklees. These organisations provide youth services and/or positive activities for children and young people in local communities, contributing to their personal, social and educational development.

With a core team of 3 full time employees, KYA provides information and guidance to its network members on funding, policies and procedures etc. as well as arranging DBS checks for volunteers, facilitating training and networking opportunities. KYA is also currently developing a quality assurance framework for the sector.

Following a 2017 Government report highlighting how some children regress during long holiday breaks in terms of learning and behaviour, alongside suffering from hunger, the DfE announced its first tranche of funding for a Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme. This started as a relatively small pot of money in Summer 2018 rising to a £9M national programme in Summer 2019.

Although KYA submitted a bid to co-ordinate a programme in Kirklees, they were unfortunately not one of the 9 areas selected for the funding. Whilst not successful with the national funding, Kirklees Council funded KYA £225k to co-ordinate a local "Healthy Holidays" programme which resulted in 46 clubs being delivered across 60 different community venues. The programme's

family-facing name was "School's Out!", put forward by a young person in Chickenley at a consultation event.

In February 2020, following the success of Summer 2019, KYA signed a 3 year Healthy Holidays Programme Agreement with Kirklees Council.

Soon after the 3 year agreement was put in place, the UK was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in the School's Out! 2020 offer consisting of an online activity programme and over 4000 activity packs being delivered to children's doors.

During the pandemic the number of children eligible for free school meals (FSM) nationally rose significantly. Footballer, Marcus Rashford, highlighted the plight of children going hungry in school holidays and this led to a media campaign which resulted in the DfE increasing the 2021/22 national HAF Programme investment to £210M, including £1.7M for Kirklees.





"Prior to the holidays my child was hanging out with friends and getting into low level trouble - this has given her focus and enjoyment".



School's Out! Summer 2021

With such a massive amount of funding coming from the Department of Education (DfE), the reach of the School's Out! programme this summer has been far greater than the previous two years; the DfE's aspiration has been that every FSM child, aged up to 16, has access to the HAF Programme.

HAF funding was allocated to every local authority with the instruction to work with voluntary sector partners to co-ordinate and deliver provision. In Kirklees, the Council's Early Support Service within the Children's Directorate was tasked with the overall co-ordination of the programme, consisting of places in summer clubs for under 8s (delivered by OFSTED registered providers), open access family activities, clubs for 8-12 year olds and clubs for 12-16 year olds, assisted by KYA.

KYA provided infrastructure support around the registration and booking process (using the School's Out! web-app), the training programme, recruitment of volunteers, quality assurance as well as leading on the provision for older children aged 12+.

As with previous years, the focus of the programme was on sessions which incorporated a nutritious meal, physical exercise and "enrichment activities".

85
organisations
involved

over
2600
different
sessions

over
12,000
children
took part

over
28,000
meals
provided

clubs rated
4.6
stars out of 5
by parents

Clubs for 12-16s

In the run up to summer, the DfE (through its "bite-sized" information sessions) outlined that a more flexible approach would be allowed for older children. It was recognised that pre-booking might not work, that afternoons/evenings would be better times to hold sessions, that the type of activities would have to be different to those attracting younger children etc.

Consultation with students at Thornhill Community Academy echoed the need for a different offer. They wanted less structured activities with a "drop in" approach. They also wanted to be able to attend sessions with a friend, who may not be FSM eligible. They suggested activities like basketball, teen boot camp and sessions designed to grow enterprise skills.

This information was passed to potential providers as part of the grants' process and this led to bids coming in for late afternoon/evening sessions of the kind that the students had suggested.

588 sessions were delivered for 12-16s in total.

Eat Well for Life for 16+

KYA is passionate about developing programmes for all children. Unfortunately, the DfE's HAF funding only covers school-age children which leaves some students aged 16+ susceptible to similar poor outcomes as younger children.

Focus groups at Huddersfield New College and Kirklees College helped to co-design a Summer offer for SEND students aimed at reducing loneliness and ensuring they had access to healthy food and nutritional education.

The series of cooking and friendship sessions was named "Eat Well for Life";

students with SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) told us they wanted a safe place to go in the holidays where they could learn cooking skills and make friends.

Hive Community and Juniper Foodwise delivered a four week programme that incorporated the ideas from students; introduction to kitchen appliances and basic equipment, cooking healthy breakfasts as well as a "full English" and learning to replicate favourite takeaways in the "Fake-aways" session created a successful programme.



I can't cook and have never done it before. But now I have made scones, bread, buns, and curry!

YP, HIVE



What difference did KYA make?

While KYA undoubtedly contributed to the wider outcomes of the School's Out! Programme Summer 2021 i.e. less holiday hunger, increased levels of physical activity and children engaged in enriching activities, the unique difference the charity made was in its support role:

Centralised online booking system

2021 saw further development of the School's Out! web-app, created by KYA in 2019.

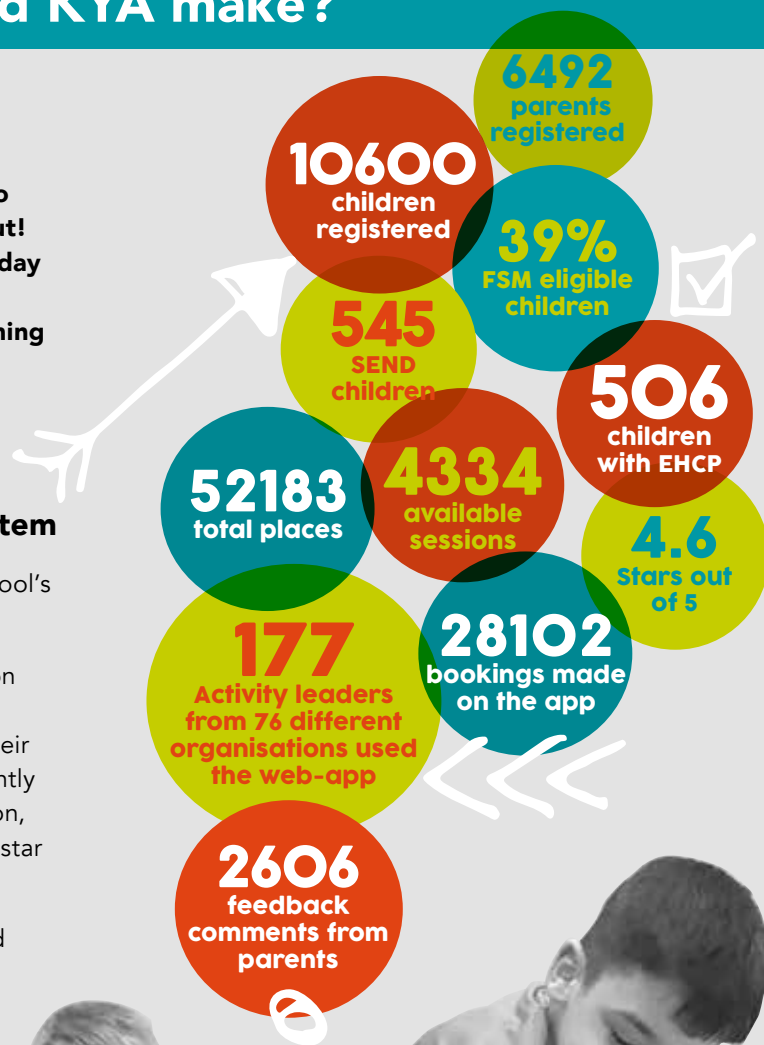
The web-app is an easy-to-use registration and booking system where parents are "invited" to set up an account, register their FSM eligible children and then subsequently book them onto sessions. After the session, parents can send feedback as well give a star rating out of 5.

Providers are able to see who has booked onto their sessions in advance, check for photography consent and any special needs e.g. dietary, medical and general support and then, on the day, complete attendance information.

All 2600 sessions were input by KYA staff following the Council awarding grants to providers.

The web-app provides an excellent centralised monitoring tool for the Council's HAF Team negating the need for them to collate information from scores of provider organisations.

Despite inevitable challenges, in the post-programme survey the web-app was rated over 7 out of 10 by parents and providers.



Volunteer Programme

Along with partners from TSL Kirklees and KC's Third Sector Team, KYA developed a School's Out! Volunteer Programme for Summer 2021.

A Volunteer Policy, handbook and different role descriptions were created as well as a guidance document for host organisations.

KYA interviewed potential volunteers, obtained DBS checks and ran induction training before matching successful applicants to organisations who had requested help.

At the end of the summer, a certificate was provided outlining the training and role undertaken along with a thank you message from the host organisations.



Training

KYA co-ordinated a free training programme, consisting of a mix of face to face training and signposting to online courses, including safeguarding, mental health first aid, food allergy awareness and basic first aid.

Following consultation with providers, KYA offered both Paediatric first aid and Emergency first aid at work. Whilst food hygiene Level 2 was also offered, no organisations booked it this year due to the Council organising the mass production of "grab bags".

KYA and Kirklees Council also ran information sessions for providers including some basic training on using the web-app.

9 individuals received recognized first aid qualifications

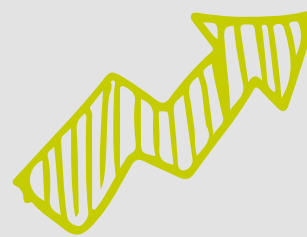
A yellow circle containing the number '9' and the text 'individuals received recognized first aid qualifications'.

Organisations: Dance for Everyone, Chol theatre, Netherton Community Centre, The Children's Art School and Deighton Table Tennis Club

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Quality Assurance

Compliance checks were completed by KYA alongside the Council's GAP team to ensure that all providers were planning safe provision. This work marked the start of the longer term development of a full quality assurance framework for Kirklees' community youth sector.



Don't take our word for it!

We had over 2600 feedback comments left by parents and carers on the School's Out! web-app. Here are some highlights...

Covid

"Good to get children out in the fresh air again after a difficult 18 months of restrictions."

"My son struggles with social interaction, it has been really good for him to play with friends during the school holidays especially after so many lockdowns."

"Given my child a platform to socialise with her friends- much needed after Covid. Also she has done sport regularly over the last few weeks. Boosted her mood and mental health."

"It has provided great outdoor activities for my son who otherwise would probably be stuck inside playing on his xbox. This has been particularly needed after having everything sporty cancelled during the lockdown period."

SEND

"My SEN child now has found a sport he's happy to go and do."

"A huge benefit to me with having 3 autistic sons."

Less parental stress

"Just want to give a massive shout out to Kirklees Schools Out activities. As a lone parent who works full time, these activities are an absolute god send and have reduced a lot of the stress and guilt that school holidays bring. Absolutely brilliant."

"Can't explain. As a disabled single parent with an only child, this has been fantastic."

"I have been able to attend 'getting ready for work' meetings, through the job centre, without worrying about childcare. It has also

provided fun days for my children as I don't have the disposable income to fill the holidays with lots of days out."

"This has been an absolute life saver for me to be able to continue to work affordably during the summer holidays. I cannot express how grateful I am for this!"

"This has been amazing support, I find myself stuck in the holidays as my husband is at work so I have to find things which are able to cater for my children's ages and abilities which is very difficult. Just having one child able to join in this session made it easier for me to entertain my oldest and youngest at home with not as many arguments!! My 9 year old also got time to have fun with his peers. It really made the holidays go that bit faster."

"A huge difference!!! Financial relief, stress relief and mental health relief for me and my partner but also social interaction for my son who is an only child."

"It has made a huge difference being able to have some time to do the food shop without my children, being a single mum without a lot of help from their dad has been so tough on my health the last few years so having these few hours has been a god send."

Positive outcomes for children

"Prior to the holidays my child was hanging out with friends and getting into low level trouble - this has given her focus and enjoyment."

"Children have been kept busy and active, keeping them free will only make them go in the wrong direction, very good initiative by keeping the children active."

"It has meant that my 10 year old only child who suffers from anxieties was able to socialise and be around other children his age."

"My daughter has had something to look forward to. She has made new friends, learned new skills, got exercise and most importantly her mental health has improved."

"My son has been out & about being active every day. He has made friends, learnt new things and had the best time. He has been motivated to return every day & even the weather didn't put him off one bit."

"Gave my child opportunity to learn new skills in a safe environment."

"My son has loved mixing with other children! He's 8 so at an age where if I'm there watching him he goes shy, this club has given

him the independence he needed and it's boosted his confidence by miles!"

"The children have attended a drama camp which they haven't tried before and they loved it. They've made new friends."

"Our Young Person is in care - this opportunity has allowed her to go out and try something new - she thoroughly enjoyed her day and was begging to go back."

"My son has access to diversionary activities this has been good for mental and physical well-being he needed this after missing two years of schooling."

"It's been great to be able to send both of my girls to a safe and enjoyable environment, they have met new people and met up with their friends and more importantly, they've WANTED to play outside! Brilliant!!"

"Stopped my son from being lonely and helped him burn off some energy and try new activities."

"It helped us greatly as a family to get active, see new places/premises, limit screen time. My children made lots of friends, it kept them busy and looking forward to the activity on the next day. We totally appreciate the whole experience."

"A huge difference !!!"



Our biggest challenges

The Covid-19 pandemic

For the second year running, the global pandemic had a significant impact on the School's Out! Programme.

As the most up-to-date FSM information is held by schools, we were reliant on them to contact the "right families". Initially this was fine however, when infections rose, schools were under increasing pressure to cover their priority work and struggled to deal with additional requests for HAF support. This led to less targeted communication and therefore less FSM children taking up places on the programme.

It was also a challenge to put together a programme that was mostly outdoors.

The first week of the school holidays also coincided with another local spike in infections and this led to many no-shows.

Timescales

Like previous years, timescales were tight. Primarily, the lack of time means less planning; it is difficult to form new partnerships and achieve wider potential strategic goals when time is short.

It makes effective communications difficult; schools rightly complain about not getting information in a timely manner and providers have to put in rushed applications and receive grant payments very close to delivery time.

Delivering training and recruiting volunteers all had to happen quickly which inevitably affects the quality of the offer.

Engaging older children aged 12+

The struggle to engage older children in the programme was not unique to Kirklees; many local authorities have indicated a difficulty in engaging with 12s plus





2022 and beyond

In October, we received the great news that the Government is committing to 3 years of HAF funding from April 2022.

The first year of this will overlap with KYA's final year of "Healthy Holidays" partnership funding from the Council.

KYA is looking forward to supporting the Council with the 2022/23 programme and contributing to the planning for 2023-25.

Communication

It is imperative that we start to communicate with key partners, stakeholders and families as soon as possible.

KYA has asked the Council about the feasibility of communicating directly with FSM families without having to go through schools.

Marketing of the programme, once agreed, must also happen at the earliest possible opportunity, especially with the 12+ offer.

School's out! web-app version 4

Following feedback from parents and consultation sessions with providers, a list of 17 proposed improvements have been passed to the app developers for quotation.

KYA will facilitate web-app registration days in community buildings in target areas to ensure next year's provision reaches a higher percentage of FSM eligible children.

There will also be mandatory training sessions for providers on the use of app for monitoring attendance.

Inclusiveness

KYA will be working with partners in the KC Children with Disabilities Team and PCAN to plan some changes to the programme which will increase access for SEND children.

12+ offer

KYA would love to contribute to plans to improve the reach of the School's Out! programme to older children.

Following some good examples this year, KYA want to build on this by co-producing local provision with key partners using key venues nearest to areas of deprivation.

We have already gathered some great intelligence around what type of food older children would enjoy more and what activities they would like to do. We need to ensure providers have access to this information so that they can develop an improved offer.





www.kirkleesyouthalliance.org
hello@kirkleesyouthalliance.org
Mobile 07776 588 696

Facebook: @KirkleesYouth
Twitter: Kirklees_Youth
Instagram: KirkleesYouthAlliance

Kirklees Youth Alliance CIO, Brian Jackson House,
2 New North Parade, Huddersfield, HD1 5JP
Registered Charity Number 1191927

What does KYA do?

Connects organisations

Helps with funding

Shares good practice
and youth work news

Builds capacity in the
community youth sector

Signposts to training
and other support

Promotes activities of
member organisations

Represents the sector on
local strategic boards