



Westmorland
& Furness
Council

westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

Holiday Activity Fund 2025-26 Local Authority Annual Report



Funded by
UK Government



Contents

Section 1 - LA details	3
Westmorland and Furness	3
Holiday Activity and Food Programme in Westmorland and Furness	3
Governance	4
HAF Steering Group	4
Commissioning & procurement	5
Due diligence	6
Working With Providers:	6
Section 2 – Financial Overview	7
Section 3 – Meeting The DfE Requirements	8
Feedback from families and providers	9
Demographics for HAF	11
Section 4 – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)	12
Section 5 – Key Challenges and Successes	13
Challenges	13
Successes	13
Section 6 – Marketing and Communication	14
Getting the message to families	14
Website	14
Newspaper articles / primary times adverts / radio interviews / press releases / social media	14
Appendix A	15
Appendix B	21



Section 1 - LA details

Westmorland and Furness

The council footprint of Westmorland and Furness was formed in April 2023. It is the 3rd largest local authority in England and Wales by land area with an average population density of 61 people per sq. km.

The 2025 Indices of Deprivation ranked the local authority's overall deprivation score as 105 out of 153 upper tier authorities (1 being most deprived).

All 9 of Westmorland and Furness's Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) in IMD25 Decile 1 were in the locality of Barrow-in-Furness. No LSOAs in the localities of Eden or South Lakeland were classified as IMD25 Decile 1.

32 (22.5%) of Westmorland and Furness's LSOAs fall within the 10% most deprived in England for the Barriers to Housing and Services deprivation domain (25th authority nationally, 16th percentile).



Holiday Activity and Food Programme in Westmorland and Furness

Research has shown that the school holidays can be pressure points for some families and this 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.

Westmorland and Furness Council has been delivering the Holiday Activity & Food Programme (HAF) since April 2025. Prior to this it was delivered through Cumbria and Cumberland councils respectively.

Governance

HAF Steering Group

There is a Steering Group which meets quarterly to understand past performance and drive forward improvements for future delivery.

Members of the group: Elected members, representatives of Primary Heads Association and Secondary Heads Association, Family Help Senior Managers, HAF Project Team, Post 16 Learning Advisor, Children's Public Health Lead, Community Development Team, Communications team, Police, Children's Services Partnership & Improvement leads, Finance, Senior Advisor to schools, SEND Partnership team, Global Resettlement Team, Children's Participation & Rights Team, SENIASS.

The steering group is accountable to the Family Help Partnership Board.

In addition, representatives of the Steering Group also attend a Grant Award panel to review, amend or approve grant applications from providers. This brings an added layer of scrutiny and accountability to the process of spending public funds in line with the terms and conditions of the programme. Members have also been encouraged to be part of the Quality Assurance visits.

Throughout the year the steering group received reports on data and performance relating to the programme and the attendees have been instrumental in helping to progress the delivery.

The Steering Group had previously decided to request 15% of the funding was extended to provide places for children and young people who are considered as vulnerable or 'in need'. This includes the following:

- Cared for and care experienced children or young adults
- Children or young adults on Resettlement Schemes
- Children or young adults seeking asylum
- A young adult who is not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)
- Children or young adults at risk of being involved in crime
- Children or young adults living in areas of deprivation
- A family in crisis
- Young Carers

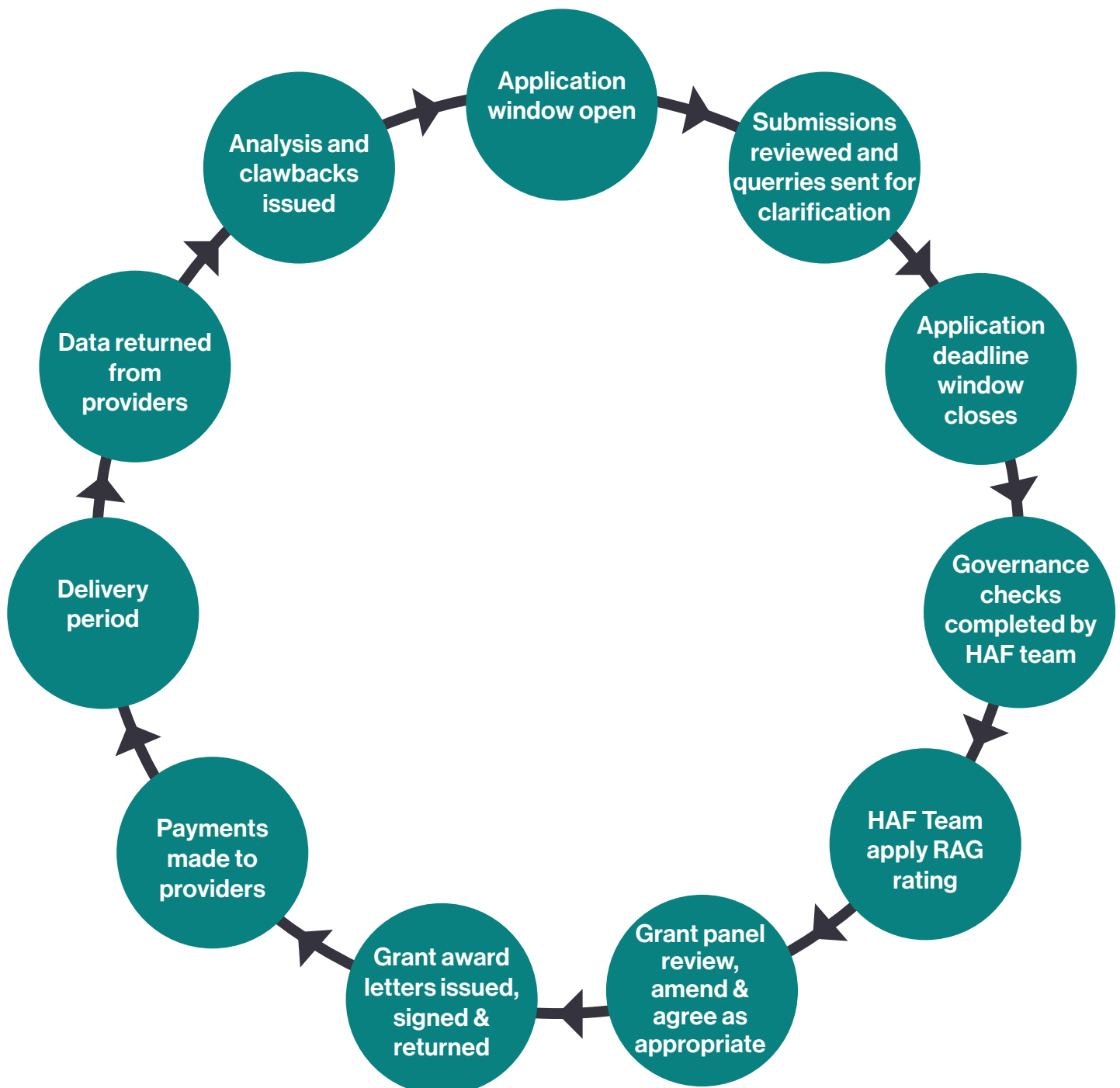


Commissioning & procurement

The HAF Project Team is responsible for the commissioning and procurement of HAF providers. In 2025-26 we commissioned three times per year (Easter, summer & winter). Providers were invited to submit applications, and the HAF team worked alongside the providers to ensure that the application was ready to submit to our local authority-based grant panel. Applications were assessed and scored on the following areas:

- Evidence that they are aware of and can deliver the key requirements of the HAF Programme
- Value for money
- Ability to reach target audience
- Delivery area
- Programme target group (primary, secondary, SEN)
- Previous performance

Below is an example of the activity for each holiday period:



Due diligence

As part of our due diligence, we conduct full governance checks on all HAF providers every 12 months. Below is a list of what we require for this:

- Evidence of current Public Liability and Employer's Liability insurance
- Health and Safety, Safeguarding Children, Data Protection and Equality Policies
- Confirmation that all staff and/or volunteers working on HAF sessions will be DBS checked, and a list of these DBS numbers
- Evidence that a member of staff has an up to date First Aid Certificate, if working with infant and primary children, we recommend that staff should be trained in Paediatric First Aid
- Confirmation whether staff and/or volunteers have qualifications and/or training in safeguarding children to level 2 (Cumbria Safeguarding Children's Partnership), and copies of relevant certificates
- Confirmation that any staff and/or volunteers preparing food hold a relevant certification in food hygiene, and copies of these certificates
- Constitution documents

Working With Providers:

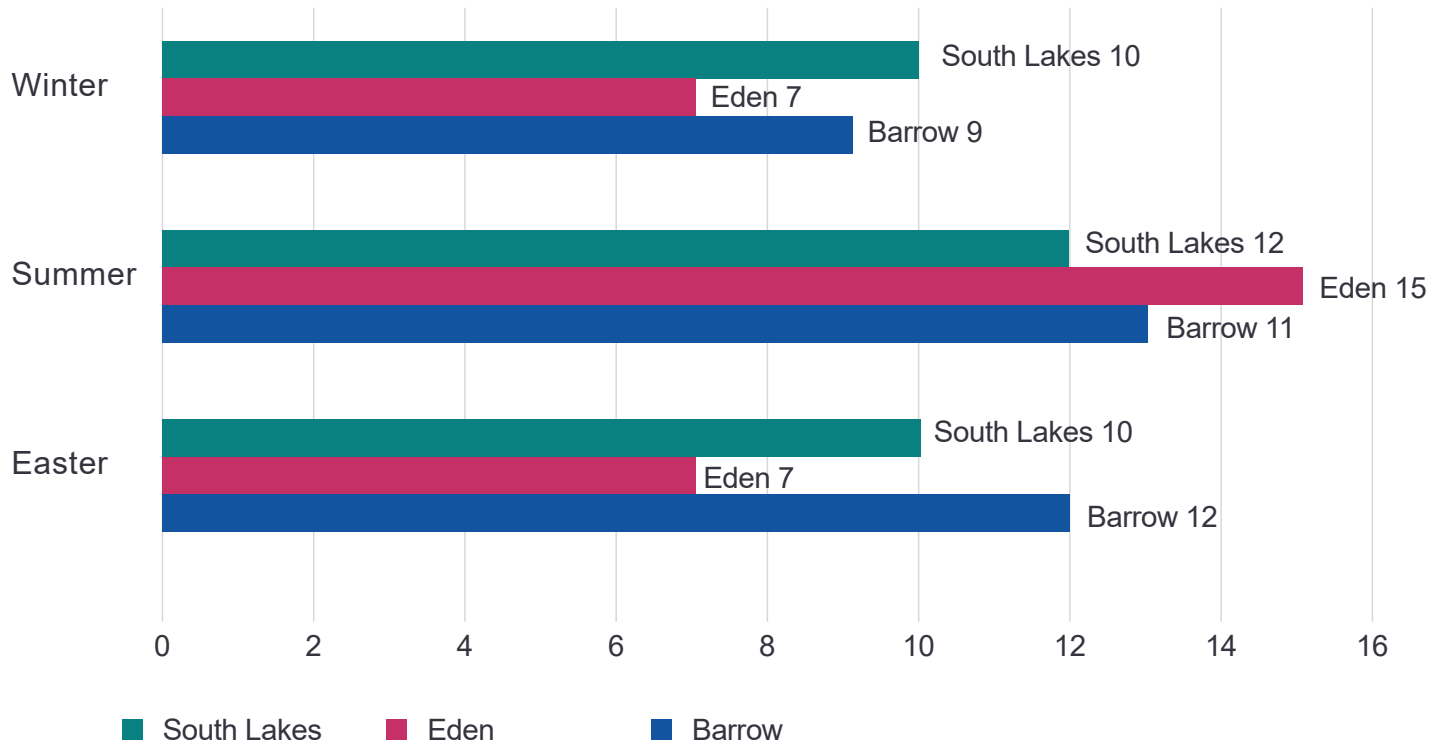
Before and after every holiday period the HAF team bring providers together to ensure they have all they need to run their programmes successfully and to celebrate their achievements. We also use these sessions to look at what has worked well, what hasn't worked so well and what we can do in the future.

Providers during 2025-26 delivery:

- 54 Degrees Sport
- Advantage Barrow Raiders
- Alpacaly Ever After
- Bram Longstaff
- Cando FM / Furness Broadcast
- Coach Gunn
- Community Sports Arena
- Family Hub - Barrow
- Family Hub - Eden
- Family Hub – South Lakeland
- Euphoric Circus
- Fairhill Recreation Centre
- Genius Tuition
- GLL Kendal Leisure Centre
- GLL Ulverston Leisure Centre
- Grange Over Sands Community Food Hub
- Horizon Studios
- Juno Sports
- Kendal Rugby Club
- Kendal Snowsports Club
- Love Barrow Families
- Matt Harris
- M&T Adventures
- Nab Cottage at Ambleside Parish Hall
- New Leaf Centre
- Oaklea Trust
- Parkside Academy (working with Lake Sports Development)
- Penrith Methodist Church
- Rag Tag Arts
- Shap Infant and Primary School
- Smart Body Sports
- Sport Works Ltd
- Springmount Church
- Stage 1 Cycles
- Stomping Ground CIC
- Wellness at Greenacres
- YMCA Lakeside



Providers



The chart above illustrates the number of WAF providers commissioned per area. We are increasingly finding providers simply close over the December period or find the lack of attendance makes it difficult to sustain delivery, therefore they are not applying in the same numbers as previous years.

Section 2 – Financial Overview

Breakdown of finance and spend on the programme:

Income

DfE Grant	£463,300
Household Support Fund	£45,743.09
Public Health	£13,664.88
Total	£522,707.97

Expenditure

Expenditure	£516,678.96
Administration costs	
Staffing	£39,714.36
Promotional costs	£939.40
Young Inspector costs	£82,00
Booking System (part year)	£5,212.17
Miscellaneous (interpreters, additional travel costs)	£6,029.01
Activities	£470,731.03
Total	£522,707.97

Section 3 – Meeting The DfE Requirements

The standards set by Department For Education (DfE) cover the following areas:

- At least one nutritious meal a day with the promotion of healthy eating and lifestyles included through the session
- Enrichment activities to provide opportunities for children and young people to develop and consolidate their skills and knowledge and try out new experiences
- At least 60 minutes of engaging and inclusive activity
- The ability to signpost or refer families for additional support

All providers confirm their ability to meet the standards of the DfE Holiday Activity Fund at each application period. They must outline how this will be achieved and any providers not demonstrating a strong offer will be rejected by the Grant Award Panel.

The panel try to ensure a mix of provider types such as sport clubs, theatre, art and craft clubs, animal experiences and outdoor adventure clubs. Due to the geographical nature of the council, we are fortunate in having several providers who can take children and young people into the heart of the Lake District and experience the wonders of the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Many providers are small, local charities or businesses and know their communities and the support available within well. We are pleased to be able to support them with their growth and ambition through the targeted use of HAF grants.

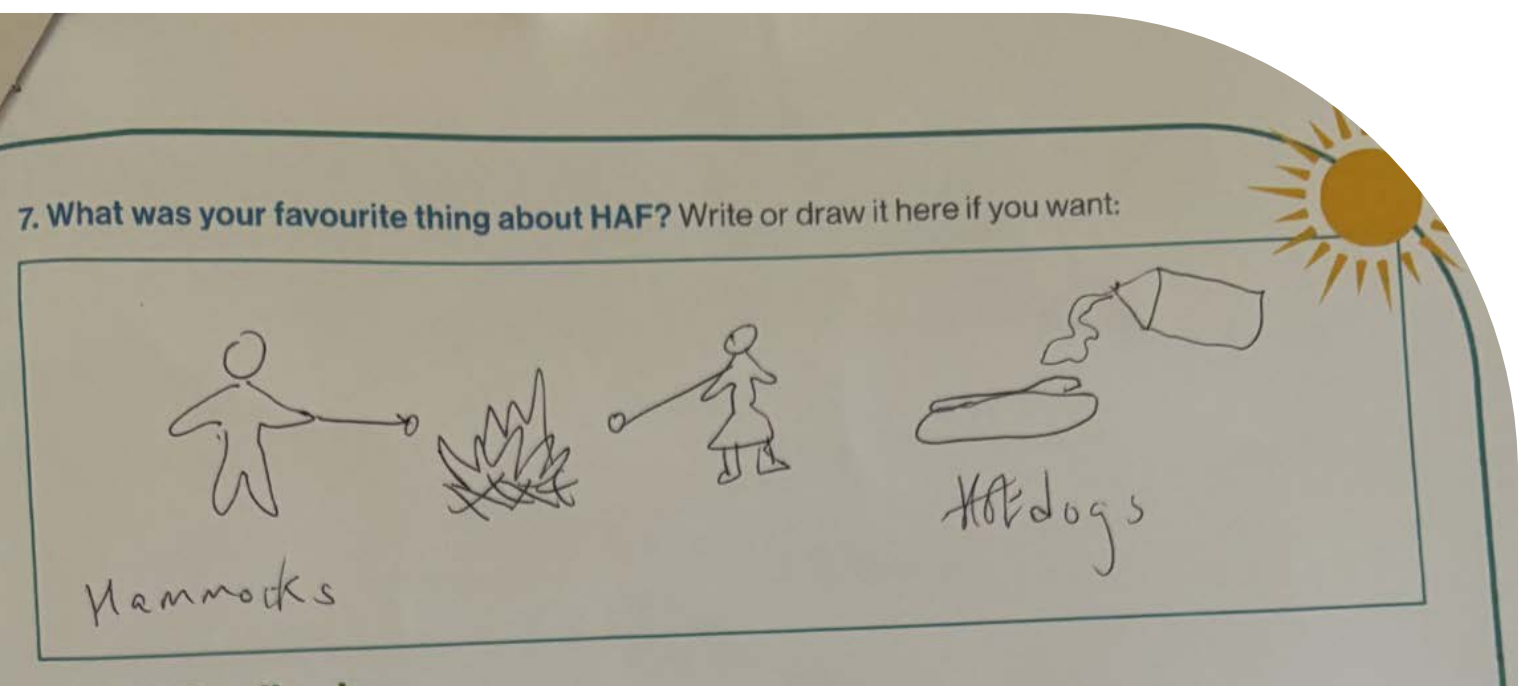
All providers undertake evaluation with their attendees and use this to inform future delivery. This may be further developing of their offer or, more simply, which food to try the next day.

Members of the Steering Group and a group of Young Inspectors undertake quality assurance visits. These help us to be confident in the quality of provision as well as allow opportunities to engage with the attendees to capture feedback directly.

The Young Inspectors helped to devise the monitoring form; Quality Assessment Visit Record

They completed reports on their visits with example attached at Appendix A.

We are well supported by elected members and two local MPs visited provision during Summer 2025.



Feedback from families and providers

A case study example is provided at Appendix B.

Provider feedback includes:

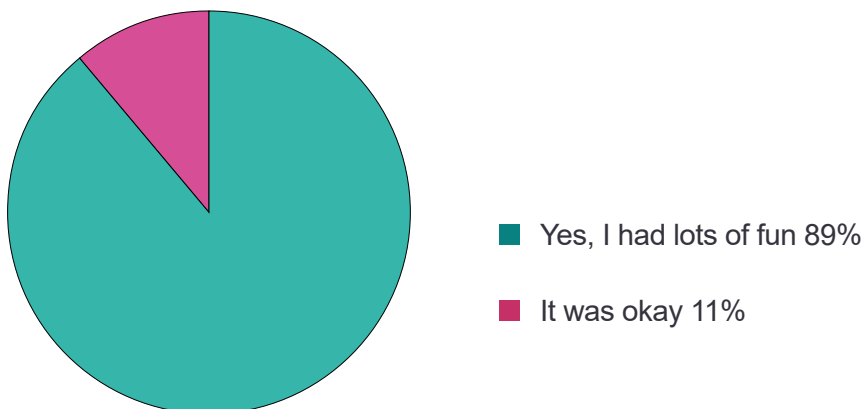
- A shorter application form with less complex questions about finance and less certificate proof for everything under the sun.
- The HAF team are helpful. We just asked Lucy and she helped us.
- The booking system was a help with the data.

Feedback from families confirms the wide range of activity types enables them to choose a provider that meets the needs of their children and young people. However, the rurality of the area presents challenges in accessing some sites. To address this, many providers are good at arranging transport and seeking reimbursement from the HAF team.

Quotes from adult carers/parents:

- The food choice was great, even for my fussy eater and drop off and pick up times excellent!
- The activity days at Castle Park were fabulous with my boys who are autistic, they both really enjoyed attending. The staff were amazing with them.
- Excellent activity, and wide range of activities available this time for Eden
- They live in Kirkby Stephen so great that there are activities really local to them
- Booking system easy to use and navigate

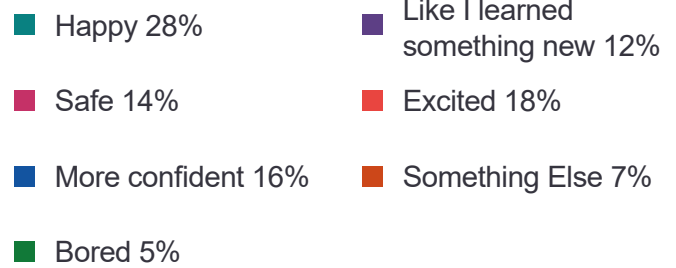
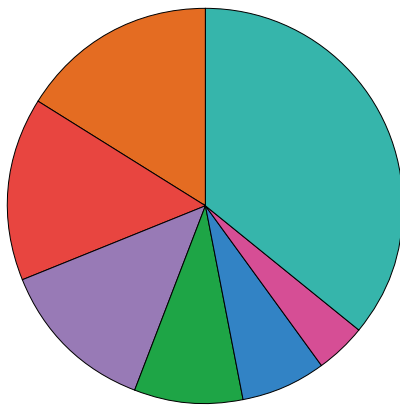
Did you enjoy HAF?



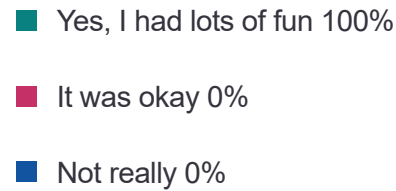
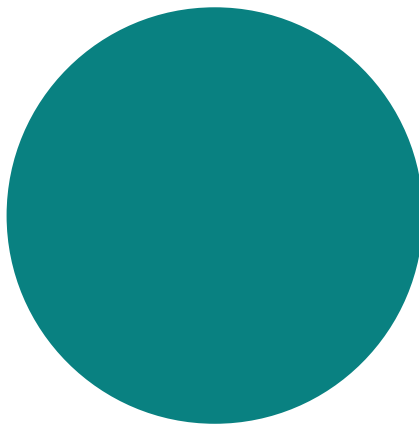
What did you enjoy the most?



How did HAF make you feel?



Would you like to come again?



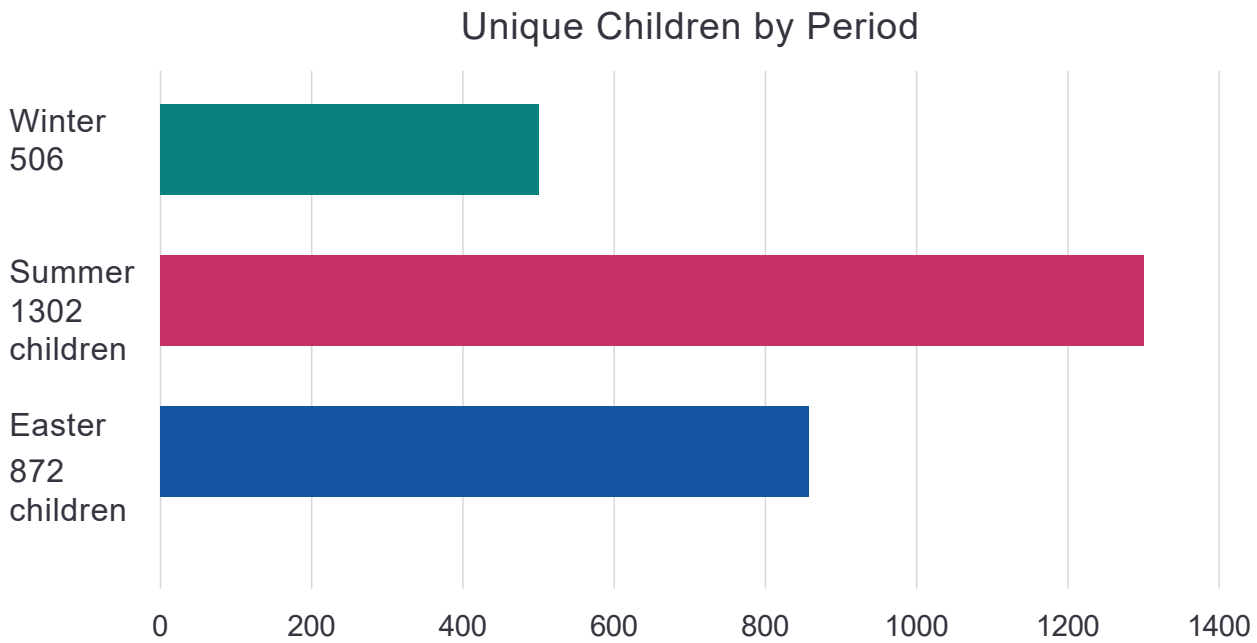
Families tell us they would like us to make improvements with the following:

- Mixed groups from 10-16 so children from one family can attend the same provision
- More variety, possibly horse riding, art and drama / stage clubs
- More days in general
- More days out that are away from main towns
- Better booking system (Summer quote, booking system came in for Winter)
- More provision for disabled children requiring 1-1 support

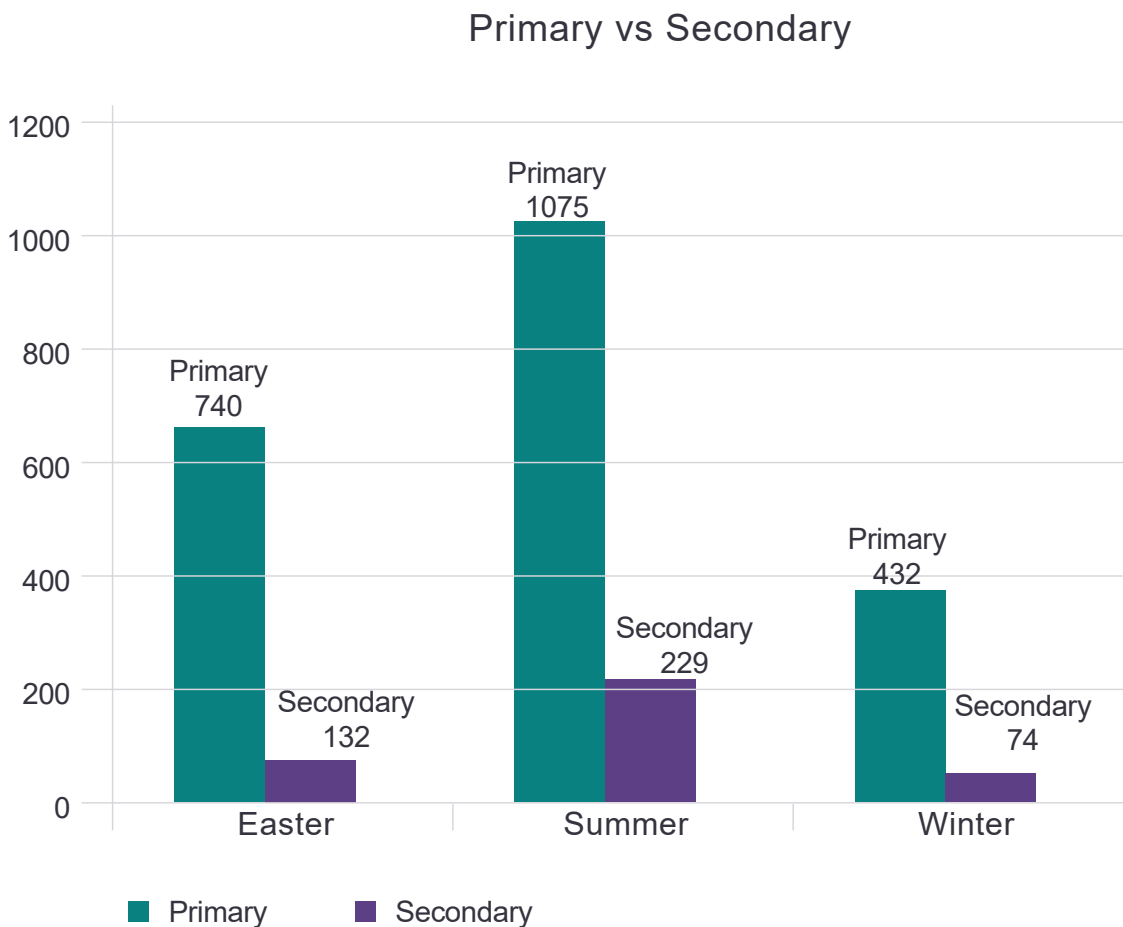
All respondents stated their children/ young people enjoyed the activities and they would like to attend again.

Demographics for HAF

Graph illustrating number of unique children by delivery period 2025-26:



Graph illustrating proportion of primary age and secondary age children who participated in the HAF programme during 2025-26:



Section 4 – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

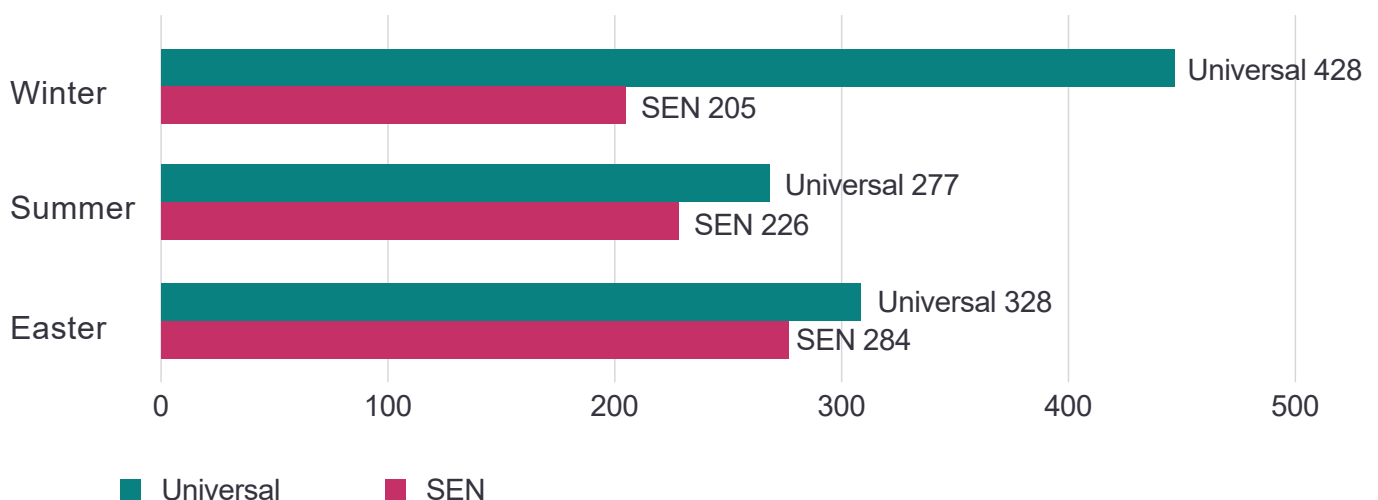
The Westmorland and Furness HAF approach is to encourage and enable SEND provision within an inclusive environment. Providers confirm their ability to offer SEND support at the point of application with clarity sought on any exclusionary criteria.

All providers have been able to accommodate some level of SEND provision with 3 providers specialising in a SEND only offer that is available across all 3 district areas. Two providers operate across two of our district footprints.

The challenge with SEND only provision is that many families do not receive free school meals, which makes it difficult to meet the 85% means tested free school meals criteria. This has resulted in some providers no longer offering HAF provision.

Graph showing number of children with SEND or additional needs who participated in the HAF programme during 2025-26:

SEN vs Universal



Section 5 – Key Challenges and Successes

Challenges

1. **SEND provision:** Further work is in progress to encourage links with Targeted Short Breaks and well-established local organisations who offer SEND support.
2. **Staffing:** Through 2025-26 a temporary staffing structure was in put in place to cover the short-term funding. At the end of 2025 the confirmation of funding was received, and this is enabling the development of a permanent team.
3. **Rurality:** The rural nature of Westmorland and Furness coupled with a sparse population inevitably means that we have a low budget and spend a disproportionate amount of our budget on transport costs. It also means it is a challenge to run groups in some small towns as the population of eligible children often makes delivery unviable.
4. **Getting the message out to the “right” families:** We have tried to send messages directly to families, but this did not significantly improve attendance or the number of new attendees.
5. **Supporting parents/ guardians of children with high level SEND** to accurately share the needs of children, which will enable the provider to ensure the delivery meets the needs of the child.

Successes

1. The implementation of a booking system has been a success. This has helped to reduce some of the burdens on both the providers and HAF team by streamlining the data collation.
2. Increased coverage across the council since 2024-25. This reflects the requirements from parents and carers.
3. Long standing regular providers & new providers expanding their offer
4. Ability to make improvements – open portal for providers to access information, streamlining application process



Section 6 – Marketing and Communication

Westmorland and Furness council actively promoted the HAF programme through various channels to ensure that eligible children and families are well-informed about the programme. Our efforts aimed to help families understand their eligibility and how to book. We collaborated closely with the Westmorland and Furness Communication Team to ensure that all HAF marketing materials adhere to local authority branding guidelines.

Getting the message to families

Several texts were sent to families in the lead up to the programme to tell them how to book and to give them the code they need to use to prove their eligibility. This used a text messaging system linked to the data in our free school meals database.

Like the text message service, we used a database of email addresses for free school meal families and sent several emails out to families in the lead up to the programme linking them to the website and outlining the code they need to use to book a place.

Providers are requested to promote HAF and this is often one of the most successful methods in raising the profile with families. They often have links into schools and will use their previous contacts to reach out directly to families.

Website

We have a dedicated HAF website which is included as part of the Westmorland and Furness website. The website includes detail of what the programme is, types of activities on offer, eligibility criteria, how to book and contact information:

[Holiday Activities and Food \(HAF\) - Westmorland & Furness](#)

Newspaper articles / primary times adverts / radio interviews / press releases / social media

Working with our marketing team we use several external services to promote the HAF Programme. Our marketing team produces multiple press releases highlighting the benefits of the programme, including quotes from local councillors who are passionate about the programme. In the lead up and throughout the delivery phase HAF has a social media presence on Facebook and Instagram. These posts are controlled by the communications team.

Appendix A



Alpacaly Ever After Base Camp Penrith

Summer HAF Inspection

Date 30th July 2025

Young Inspectors - Honey and Matilda

Alpacaly Ever After

HAF inspection

Young Inspectors - Honey and Matilda	Summer 2025 HAF period	Date and Time – 30 th July 2025 at 11am to 2.30pm	Provider Name – Alpacaly Ever After
Location – Base Camp, Penrith	Staff spoken to – Sam and Milly	Session Time – 11.00 to 2.30pm	How many HAF places funded – 10 places daily x 7 sessions
Number of HAF places booked – 10 children	Number of HAF children present – 9 children	Number of participants present – 9 children	

Alpacaly Ever After HAF inspection

Is there a Risk Assessment in place – yes

Has the provider requested photo consent - yes

Are there safe staffing ratios in place - yes

Confirm number of adults and children - 9 children and 3 staff members

Is there a staff/ visitor signing in process - yes

Is the site safe and secure - yes

Safeguarding – Do staff know what to do if there is a problem or concern – yes

Do participants and staff have access to accessible toilets and handwashing – yes

Alpacaly
Ever After
HAF
inspection
criteria

The criteria we will be using :

Healthy Food

Enriching Activities

Physical Activities

Accessibility and Inclusiveness

Signposting and Referrals

Healthy Food. Is a healthy meal being provided? **5 stars awarded**

- Food is prepared on site and served in the public café.
- The children pre-ordered their lunch choice with three options including soup and bread, filled buns with a choice of fillings served with salad or a sausage roll served with salad. There was water or juice to drink.
- During lunch which everyone eats together the opportunity is taken to talk about local food produce, healthy options etc. there is a proposal to start growing some products on site.
- Sometimes lunch is eaten in the forest garden.



Enriching activities.

Are enriching activities being offered today?

5 stars awarded

- Feeding and walking alpacas
- Forest walk and activities after lunch
- Den building
- Arts and crafts selection offered outdoors using natural materials
- Bug houses and willow working.





Physical activities.

Are physical activities being offered today?
5 stars awarded

Physical activities are offered at each session.

In addition to walking and feeding the alpacas the children have lots of open space to run around. The children can play hide and seek in the forest garden area. There is also lots of physical building of dens etc.



Accessibility and Inclusiveness 5 stars awarded

Sam speaks with all parents regarding their children's individual needs. Attending the alpacas has been a popular choice for some children who identify as neuro-diverse and they can be very calming for the children. The outdoor environment and open space also proves popular for those who struggle with indoor structured sessions. Although the ground was uneven in the lake, paddock area there was also an electric buggy which could be used for children whose mobility was limited or restricted to ensure they could take part. Forest paths were also wide enough to allow access.

Signposting and referrals.

Is the club providing information/signposting/referrals?

4 stars awarded



The group works closely with Penrith and Eden Refugee Network and children often attend from these groups.

Sam is able to feedback to the group and parents any concerns or opportunities for support on particular issues which may be affecting the families.

Additional information

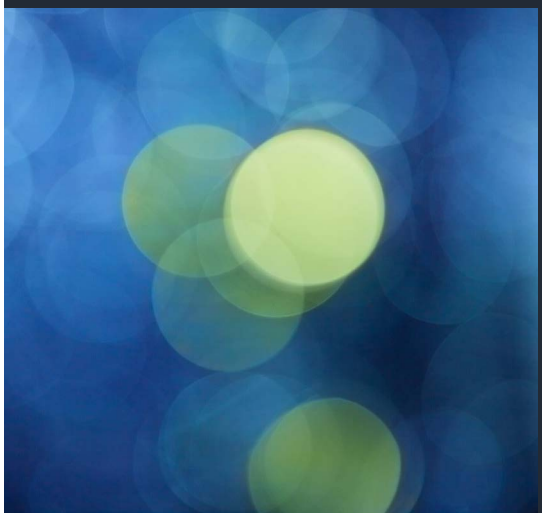
Does the provided engage with the wider family – yes

Does the provider provide paid places – yes

Are there any difference between the paid and HAF places – no

Were children encouraged to wash hands throughout the session, particularly before meals – yes, there are washing stations once you leave the alpaca enclosure where everyone can wash hands.

Comments from parents, participants and provider



Parents.

Repeat bookings from parents

Parents pleased with progress being made by their children in terms of gaining confidence .

Participants.

Absolutely love the alpacas and I have learnt a lot about them

Like playing hide and seek in the woods

I give it a 10/10 and would love to come again

Provider

We could do with some generic outdoor clothing for children to use while visiting here as we prefer to be outdoors for the session.

We could maybe do with have a gazebo type facility for wet weather.

Holiday Activities Food Programme Rating

The rating the Young
Inspectors would like to
award is

5

Excellent

Appendix B

Case study

Age group: 5-16yrs

Type of organisation: Community Centre

Theme of the case study: Signposting, health and wellbeing.

Summary

Attendance: 3 HAF sessions provided. 24 children and young people were booked onto a session. Altogether 5 refugee families attended and 1 looked after child. All children had an adult attend with them, all female. (mothers/grandparent).

Food: All families provided with a hot meal on 2 sessions and a balanced picnic lunch on the 3rd. They all had a fruit salad for dessert. It was difficult to cater to all dietary requirements and cultures. Though the food was provided to cater for these requirements a lot of the families did not eat the food because it "not what I eat at home."

Activities: Crafts were provided including, Lego and wellbeing crafts. Outdoor activities including rag tag items, ball games, parachute and team games.

Home packs: Each child given a home pack which included, activities physical and wellbeing. Information on groups and support available. each family given a sports activity set (badminton/ cricket set)

Describe any barriers or challenges faced during the delivery of this initiative: Attendance was low, this may have been due to families being booked onto more than one HAF at the same time. Also, our sessions stated they were for the whole family, meaning children needed to be accompanied by their care giver. The HAF activities offer in the area was high this meant sessions were delivered on the same days at the same time, this may have caused confusion as to which session they had booked.

Outdoor - due to the community centre being a public place there were older youth in the outdoor area which caused a few challenges when wanting and needing to use the area.

Summarise the outcomes and impact on the young people and their families: Families were able to spend quality time together. Families from different cultures were able to mix, make friends and support each other.

Signposting to other services who can support families: Although there was food waste this was given to the community fridge to enable the surrounding area with more food.

Outline the key activities involved in the initiative: Crafts - rock painting, bracelet making, paper aeroplane making, fidget toy making, worry dolls and colouring sheets, to name a few.

Outdoor activities - football, parachute, rag tag, team games, connect 4, Jenga. Making of fruit salad.

What insights or lessons have been gained that will inform future delivery?

A better booking on system.

Collaborate with other provider







Translation Services

If you require this document in another format (e.g. CD, Braille or large type) or in another language, please telephone: **0300 373 3300**.

للوصول إلى هذه المعلومات بلغتك، يرجى الاتصال **0300 373 3300**

আপনি যদি এই তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় পেতে চান তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে **0300 373 3300** নম্বরে টেলিফোন করুন।

如果您希望通过母语了解此信息，请致电 **0300 373 3300**

Jeigu norétumète gauti šią informaciją savo kalba, skambinkite telefonu **0300 373 3300**

W celu uzyskania informacji w Państwa języku proszę zatelefonować pod numer **0300 373 3300**

Se quiser aceder a esta informação na sua língua, telefone para o **0300 373 3300**

Bu bilgiyi kendi dilinizde görmek istiyorsanız lütfen **0300 373 3300** numaralı telefonu arayınız

