

# **Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council**

## **Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) Annual Report**

**2022 - 2023**

## Contents

<b>HAF Programme Overview .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>HAF Programme in Sefton .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>HAF Easter 2022.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>HAF Summer 2022 .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>HAF Winter 2022.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Additional Support.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Key Outcomes.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Feedback .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Case Studies .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Delivery Partners .....</b>	<b>13</b>

## HAF Programme Overview

Since 2018 the Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) has provided support to children in receipt of benefit related free school meals during the school holiday periods. In 2021, after successful pilots between 2018 and 2020, the Department for Education (DfE) rolled-out the HAF programme across England. The programme aimed to enable young people aged 4-16, eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) to take part in free activities run by local organisations across the borough.

The school holidays can be a particular pressure point for some families which may lead to some children having a holiday experience gap. Research has shown that children from low-income families 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

The HAF programme was devised a response to this issue, with evidence showing that free holiday clubs can have a positive impact on children and young people, working 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 voluntary and community organisation sector

As a result of this programme, we want children who attend this provision to:

- eat healthily over the school holidays
- be active during the school holidays
- take part in engaging and enriching activities which support the development of resilience, character and wellbeing along with their wider educational attainment
- be safe and not to be socially isolated
- have a greater knowledge of health and nutrition
- be more engaged with school and other local services

We also want to ensure that the families who participate in this programme:

- develop their understanding of nutrition and food budgeting
- are signposted towards other information and support, for example, health, employment, and education

## HAF Programme in Sefton

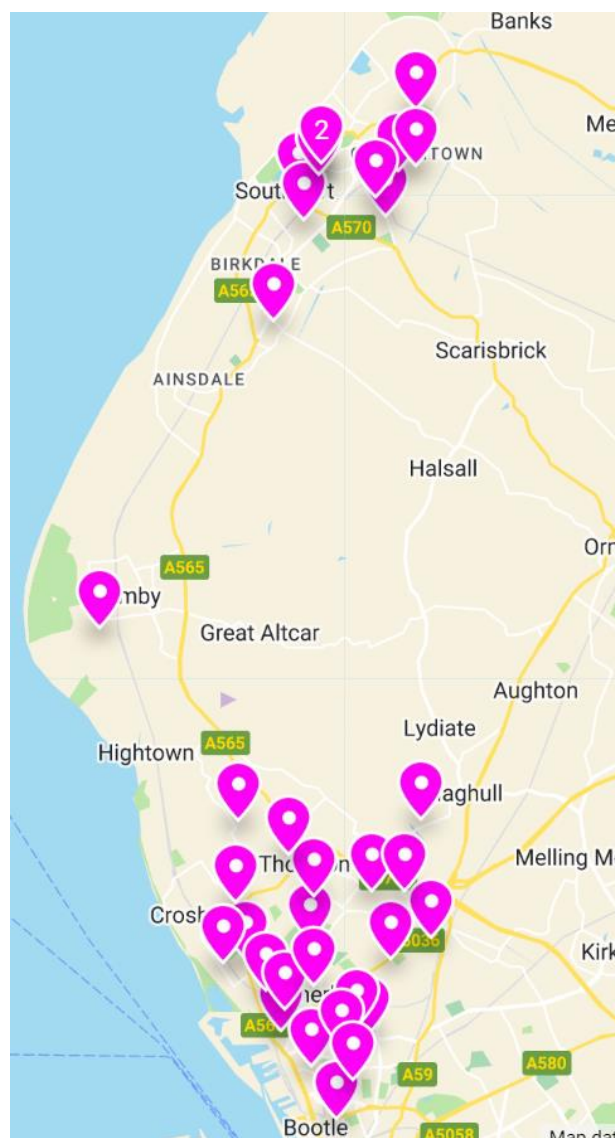
Sefton has over 9500 children who are in receipt of benefits related free school meals, with this number expected to rise due to the cost-of-living crisis. Just over 1 in 4 primary school age pupils, 1 in 5 secondary schools age pupils, and almost half of pupils attending special educational needs schools were eligible for free school meals in Sefton during 2021/22.

A total of £868,782 was spent on delivering HAF in Sefton in 2022/23. This includes £134,223, £534,168 & £126,277 awarded in direct grant funding to providers in Easter, Summer & Winter respectively. £46,024 was spent on staffing costs; £321 was spent on marketing; £7,700 on training and £19,969 was awarded in capital grant funding.

### Provision Mapping in Sefton

The number of children in receipt of benefits-related free school meals differs greatly throughout the borough. The percentage of eligible pupils attending schools ranges from 2.3% of pupils at the lowest end to 70.3% at the highest. The highest concentration of eligible pupils attend school in Bootle, Seaforth & Litherland and Southport.

We aim to provide appropriate levels of HAF provision in accordance with the number of eligible children in each area and continue to work with providers to ensure this is maintained.



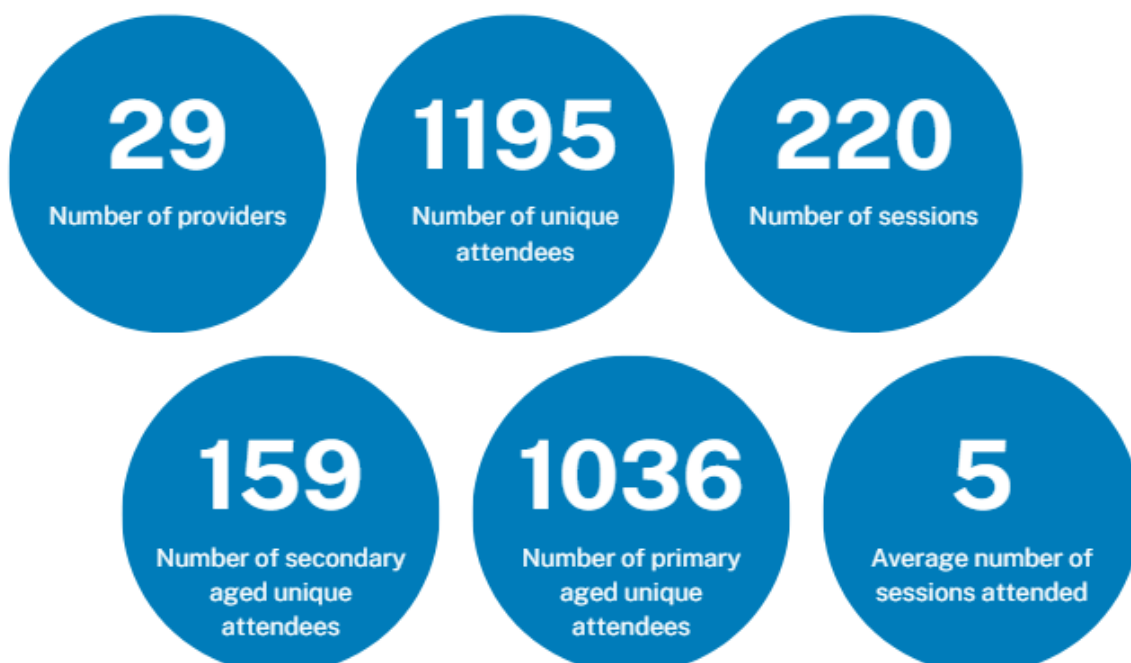
## HAF Easter 2022

In Easter 2022 young people were able to take part in a wide range of activities from multi sports, football, arts & crafts, boxing, cooking, yoga and more. Clubs brought in external facilitators to provide unique experiences like petting zoos, circus skills and science workshops. Children also took part in a variety of trips throughout the Easter holidays including to trampoline park Flip Out, Blackpool Zoo, the local cinema, parks and beaches and a premier league football stadium.

Our providers focused heavily on healthy eating with many encouraging children to become more involved with the planning of menus and preparation of meals. Families were invited to come into venues to eat alongside their children and many clubs created meal and recipe kits to take home. Young people were encouraged to sit down and eat, facilitating conversations around healthy lifestyles.



Our providers continued to work to make their provision accessible and reported increasing numbers of children attending with Education Health and Care Plans. Additional and 1:1 support was put in place with staff used strategies outlined in each individual child's EHCP such as visual timetables, now and next boards and social stories. Steps were taken to ensure children had equal experiences with the trip to Flip Out providing a reduced sensory environment for those with additional needs- reducing the lights and noise to create a comfortable environment for those attending. Spaces were also made available to young people under the care of Social Services with a quiet space provided at one club for a support worker to come in.

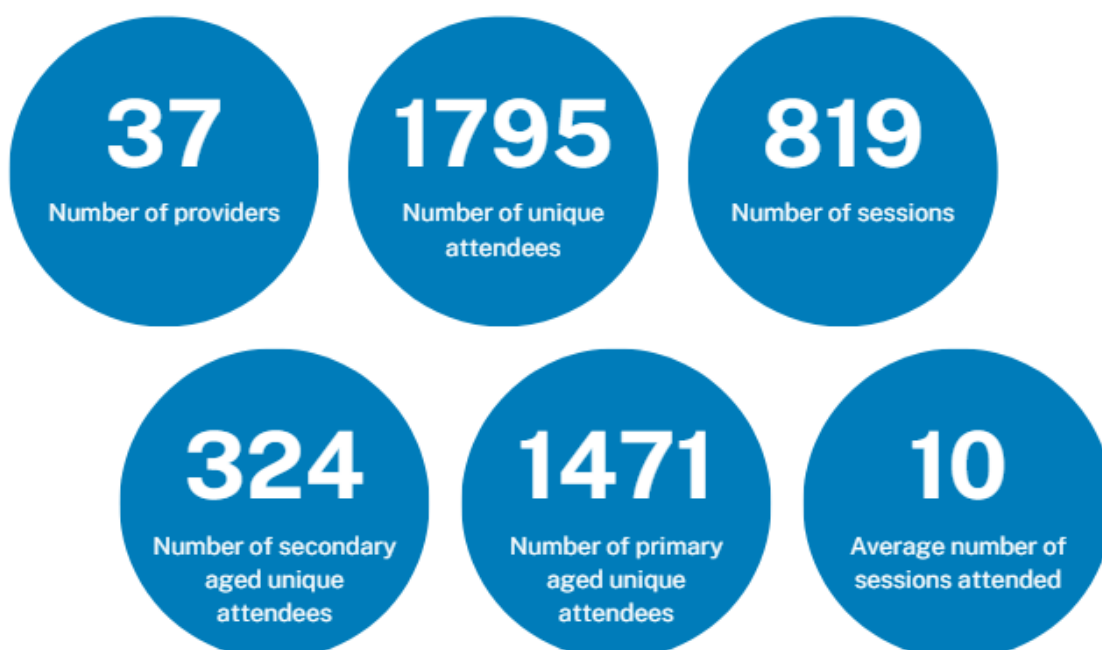


## HAF Summer 2022

Summer HAF was the highest attended programme to date with 600 more children attending compared to Easter and more than double the amount of secondary aged children taking part.

Our summer programme saw existing providers grow their offer after the success of the Easter with many offering more places for young people, a wider variety of activities, more signposting and a continued focus on healthy eating and exercise. We welcomed several new providers including MYA and Rampworx who provided access to excellent performing arts and skateboarding resources that many young people had not had the opportunity to engage with previously. See HYPE's summer video [here](#).

Clubs continued to enhance their offer by working closely with external facilitators to provide activities including petting zoos, science workshops, circus skills, guitar lessons, Shakespeare for kids, laser tag, cooking lessons, musical theatre, pottery workshops and more. Regular trips were organised including to Knowsley Safari Park, Clip and Climb and the Plaza Cinema.



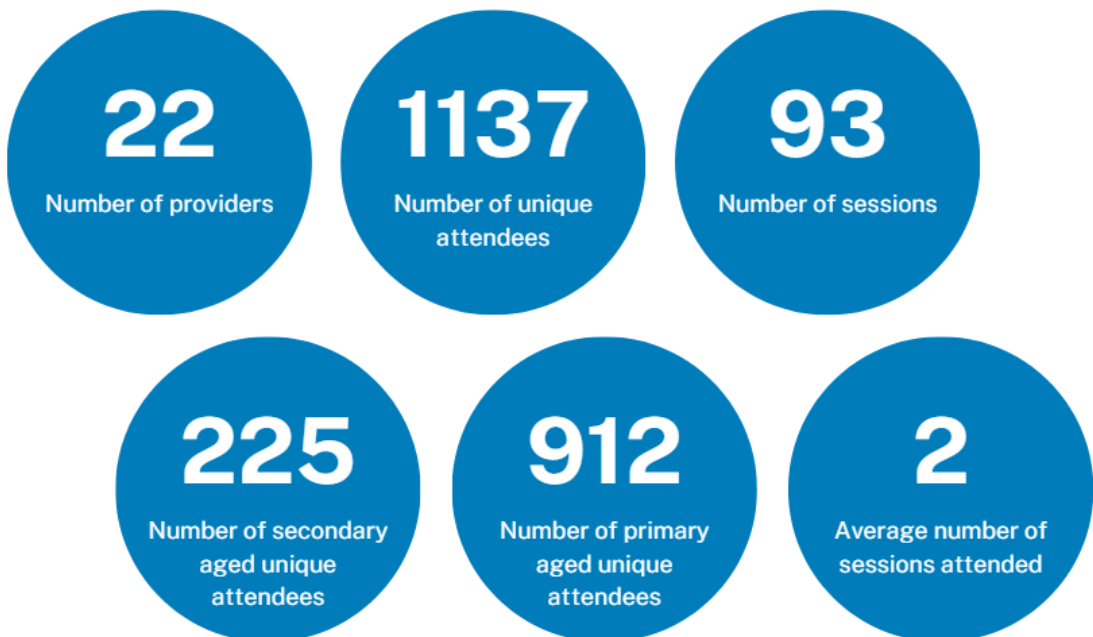
## HAF Winter 2022

Winter HAF saw many challenges for our providers who either have reduced operating hours over Christmas or do not operate at all. Many clubs also found that attendance was low, and occurrences of no shows was higher than in previous holidays due to illness, weather and families having last minute plans.

Despite this, over 1100 young people attended HAF provision across the Christmas period with the usual offer of engaging activities and food being supplemented by special Christmas themed experiences. For many this included a trip to the pantomime which for some acted as their very first visit to a theatre. Young people at the SPACE project at MYA even put on their own pantomime which was seen by over 300 people. See HYPE's Winter video [here](#).



Many of our clubs provided a Christmas dinner for young people and for their families. Providers again, spoke highly about the impact of having time to sit down and enjoy a meal together with young people referring to their time at a HAF club as "one big family". Due to the reduced operating hours many clubs also provided packs for young people to take home including leftover food, food parcel and recipe books for children to teach their families how to cook a healthy meal.



## Additional Support

### School Holiday Meal Vouchers

During the school holidays Sefton Council supported families by providing meal vouchers. Families eligible for free school meals can use the vouchers, worth £15 per child per week to buy food from local supermarkets, either in-store or online. The vouchers can be spent in supermarkets across Sefton and can only be spent on food and essentials and can't be used to purchase alcohol, tobacco, lottery tickets, phone top-ups or stamps.

### Training

Utilising HAF funding we were able to provide our providers, their staff, and volunteers with the opportunity to take part in online training courses to improve their provision for HAF and beyond. Courses on offer included:

Safeguarding Children

Food Safety and Hygiene @ Level 2

Equality and Diversity Awareness

Autism Awareness

Health and Safety

Mental Health at Work

### Capital Grant Funding

In December 2022 we opened applications for our HAF Capital Grant Fund. Existing HAF providers were invited to apply for £2500 - £5000 to spend on capital resources that would enhance their HAF provision and future provision. The five successful providers purchased a range of assets including fridge freezers, ovens, microwaves, kitchenware, portable induction hubs, sports equipment, video game consoles, sensory resources, camping equipment and archery equipment. The resources were much needed in most cases, replacing outdated or broken appliances, and have enabled providers to bring healthy cooking into the core of their year-round programme.

### MVRP Funding

In early 2023 we were awarded £20,000 by Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership to supplement our HAF programme in February half term. The fund was split between three providers to deliver bespoke provision to 11–16-year-olds who may be at risk of becoming involved with criminal or anti-social behaviour.



## Key Outcomes

### Healthy Eating

Throughout 2022 children have had the option to try and learn about healthy options and have been encouraged to try new foods. Providers noted that even if children tried a food that they did not like they were pleased to have given something new a go and were more open to trying new foods going forward. For many, this has gone hand in hand with physical activity with children discovering the links between a balanced diet and having energy to keep moving.

Clubs saw a clear improvement in young people's attitudes towards food, particularly in those that attended all three HAF programmes. At MYA staff said: "we could see how young people would make better food choices and decisions ... swapping juice for water, cakes for fruit and yogurts etc. Young people wanted to eat home-made burgers and make home-made pizza as they could see it was healthier and nicer to prepare together and cheaper – taking these skills home with them to share with the family. Younger members of the group helped make posters and display boards so, we feel that we had some that took onboard the nutritional information. Eventually they started to make changes towards the end of the project and fruit became a better option to crisps for most".

### New Experiences

In 2022 the HAF programme provided new experiences for those taking part from a first trip to the theatre or a football club to trying a new sport or food for the first time. Providers have continually sought to bring experienced practitioners into their settings to offer new and unique experiences to bridge the 'holiday gap' for those who otherwise would not have the opportunity to get involved. Many clubs highlighted that for some young people it was the first time they had visited many attractions local to them such as parks and beaches due to cost, transport, and time constraints.

### Impact on Learning

Feedback from schools regarding the HAF programme's impact on children's learning in term time has been hugely positive. Staff at Christ Church school in Bootle noted that previously the holiday periods risked setting some children's learning and behaviour back due to the loss of routine. With the introduction of the HAF programme this was noticeably improved with children finding settling back into school after the holidays, particularly the summer break, much easier. Many clubs also noted the more informal setting of a HAF funded club enabled children who often struggled in a formal learning setting to engage more easily with educational activities.

### Benefits for organisations, parents and staff

The HAF funding has enabled organisations to continue to provide holiday clubs at a time where take up of places had fallen due to the cost-of-living crisis and families working from home. By providing HAF funding clubs were able to continue to operate and provide paid for places along side funded ones.

The programme has enabled some of our providers to build strong relationships with schools across the borough leading to staff delivering sessions beyond the HAF programme including after school clubs and P.E lessons.

The HAF programme has also enabled organisations to take on more staff and provide more hours to

## HAF Annual Report 2022 – 2023

---

existing staff and volunteers including recruiting young volunteers and youth mentors. At one school who deliver HAF support staff were promoted to classroom assistants due to the experience gained through delivering the programme in the holidays and some were transferred from term time only to longer contracts.

While the focus of the programme is centred around providing enriching and engaging experiences for young people, we have found it has a secondary benefit for parents who otherwise would not be able to afford childcare. Positive feedback has come from parents who have been able to re-enter work or training due to the programme while others noted that they were able to get jobs done around the house or dedicate time to other family members.

The essential food element of the HAF was something completely new for many of our providers who have gone from having never offered meals or a very limited option to cooking healthy hot meals for large groups of young people. The standard of food on offer has hugely improved over the course of 2022 and some clubs have integrated this into their year-round offer. This has had a particular impact at the SPACE project who have not only seen the health benefits of incorporating food into their programme but have found the wellbeing of the young people they work with has improved. With a focus on sitting down around a table and spending time together young people have opened up to their peers and staff about wellbeing issues and concerns. The project now has a fully functioning kitchen and they are looking to open a Youth Café with the support of the young people and families they work with.

## Feedback

“We enjoyed it. Beth asked could we come again as soon as we came out!”

“Eva had so much fun today. She made cards, baked with Louisa, played outside, and got very messy!”

"I was so worried about this summer, but this has been a Godsend. I don't know what I would have done without it".

"Knowing that he is safe and fed and having fun, is such a relief."

“Couldn’t asked for more. Made our summer in work manageable and stress free”.

“Excellent, very professionally produced. Very inclusive children/young people involve all abilities. SPACE is a great resource in the area.”

“Absolutely brilliant, Staff go above and beyond to ensure all children get a chance and have fun.”

## Case Studies

Our project was a fantastic experience for all involved. Young people enjoyed participating with everything that was on offer within our project and especially liked the mealtimes: “we’re like one big, massive family”. Young people came up with suggestions for what food we should offer and showing a keen interest in supporting and helping one another. Older members of the group helping to prepare tables and setting spaces up for activities.

Our Christmas performance was seen by over 300 people, and we had some wonderful feedback from parents and careers. This really pushed our young people, building confidence and giving them a sense of positive community cohesion. We can see how the project has educated young people from our Summer HAF project. Young people are making better choices at mealtimes and becoming a bit more self-aware of being healthy, making conscious efforts within the dance and physical activities to move more.

Going to the Pantomime just put the hat on it for some of our young people who had never been to the theatre before or a pantomime. Some of our young people had never been to the Atkinson before or that part of Southport so there were lots of new experiences all round. Overall, the quote from young people was “thanks, it’s been boss!”.

SPACE MYA

---

I would just like to start by saying a huge thankyou to all the gang at Rampworx, my 2 boys aged 8 & 9 have just finished accessing the club over the Christmas period. My boys have a mixture of ASD, ADHD and sensory issues and we usually struggle to find any kind of kids club or holiday club suitable for them, usually ending up without anything. As a single parent it is especially difficult to find suitable entertainment for the kids that I can afford.

Both my boys loved this club tremendously and have really got into the spirit of stunt scootering. They’ve enjoyed watching the tricks the staff show them and trying and pushing themselves to get better and learn new tricks. They’ve had bumps and falls but they still get back up and keep going as they just love the environment there; it gives them a drive to learn and get disciplined in new skills. Other kids show them how to do tricks and help them, the staff are on hand for any support and like to have fun with the kids. My son has talked about many conversations he’s had with staff members, they show me that they’re not just supervising them but also engaging with them. They liked to make them laugh with little pranks, it just a very warm encouraging environment.

Parent feedback from Rampworx Christmas HAF

---

A parent contacted us to take her child in the summer the parent was worried that if they couldn’t find care they would lose their job, the child had additional needs and the parent has no support network, the parent was also struggling financially and we were able to establish that the child was entitled to FSM, so between ourselves, HAF and the school that the child attends we were able to help the parent throughout the summer enabling them to keep working.

J.E.T.S Centre

We had one young man who attended our service for the first time this summer. His mum told us that he has autism and doesn't attend any extracurricular activities due to issues around behaviour. Mum said that he usually only lasts a day or two at a club, so she was apprehensive about how he would settle. Thankfully he found our setting to be a safe place where he benefitted from the structure and boundaries we have in place. By the end of the summer, he had taken on the role of a peer mentor, supporting younger members to finish craft activities, and assisting staff in wiping down tables after lunch and preparing the next activity. Mum was very emotional at the end of the project and shared that his behaviour at home had improved because of attending SHINE.

Conquer Life – SHINE

---

I honestly don't know how to put into words how special Rampworx is. It's not the building, let's face it, it's a warehouse but what you don't see from just looking at it is the heart and soul of the place. The staff are more like a family and that is passed onto the children who go there with everyone looking out for each other. My son has autism and ADHD and since Covid has found leaving the house difficult- being around lots of people really impacts his anxiety. He decided to go to Rampworx as he'd not been since before Covid and the change in him has been significant. He's gained confidence and made friendships; he's become more confident talking to adults and this has improved his quality of life outside of Rampworx as well.

Parent feedback from Rampworx

---

Just wanted to drop a note to say thanks for this summer and the camps that you have done for the Kids. My son Tom has joined a few of them over the holidays and has loved every single one. He has come home filthy and knackered and full of stories about what they all got up to and how great it was. So thanks again for putting these sessions on over summer, a great help to me as a parent and great fun for the kids.

Parent feedback from Active Sports

---

Steven aged 13 has diagnoses of ASD and ADHD – attends a local school for young people with additional needs and was very reluctant to be left on the first day. Assured Mum that if any issues arose, we would contact her immediately. Steven has little interaction with peers at school. Steven presented as extremely withdrawn and quiet but with gentle persuasion, he tentatively tried some of the activities and proved to be extremely good at sporting and outdoor activities. Allowances were made for his specific food requirements, and he brought a packed-lunch for the first week – by week 2 he was abandoning his own lunch and helping to prepare the lunches and trying them for himself. Steven made some very good friendships and became more outgoing over the weeks – even indicating that after the summer he would like to attend the youth centre evening youth sessions! His mum has indicated that she never expected that he would settle into the programme as well as he did.

Meols Cop Youth Association

## Delivery Partners

