

REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES (INTERIM)

TO: EXECUTIVE

DATE: 12th MARCH 2024

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PENDLE HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND FOOD PROGRAMME 2023/24

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform the Executive of the 2023/24 Pendle Holiday Activities and Food Programme and outline plans for the 2024/25 programme.

To seek agreement to delegate authority to the Director of Resources, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to undertake decision making for 2024/25 Pendle Holiday Activities and Food Programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To note the 2023/24 update and the proposed delivery approach for 2024/25.
2. To delegate authority to the Director of Resources, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make final decisions regarding the development of the 2024/25 Pendle Holiday Activities and Food Programme.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To support vulnerable children/young people and their families over the three main school holidays.

Background

1. Since 2021, Lancashire County Council (LCC) has received government funding to roll out the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme to provide healthy food and enriching activities to disadvantaged children and young people throughout the main school holidays.
2. School holidays can be particular pressure points for some families because of increased costs (such as food and childcare) and reduced incomes. For some children that can lead to a holiday experience gap, with children from disadvantaged families:

- 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
3. Free holiday clubs are a response to this issue and evidence suggests that they can have a positive impact on children and young people and that they work best when they:
- provide consistent and easily accessible enrichment activities
 - cover more than just breakfast or lunch
 - involve children (and parents) in food preparation
4. The free HAF provision targets 4- 16 year olds who are eligible for and receiving benefits-related free school meals. 15% of the programme can also be used to provide places for children/ young people who are considered vulnerable or in need of provision. The scheme also accommodates SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) children and young people.

Pendle Holiday Activities & Food programme 2023/24

5. Pendle was allocated £405,746 for 2023/24 HAF programme.
6. Three programmes were delivered throughout 2023/24: one week over Easter, four weeks over Summer and one week over Christmas.
7. Over 2,000 children and young people benefitted from Pendle's 2023/24 HAF programme, attending more than 12,000 places between them. The majority of these places were attended by primary were primary school children (11,600).
8. Pendle's HAF model was similar to the previous year, utilising the Fun Vibes Active Lives branding and commissioning existing providers.
9. Over 2023, the Xchange Here! scheme was continued for the 12-16 year olds. This included issuing activity vouchers to enable young people to access independent activities. It also included outreach youth provision by the Targeted Youth Service.
10. 15 different providers delivered Pendle's 2023/24 HAF programme, operating from up to 20 different venues across Pendle. They offered a wide range of activities from multi-sports to arts and craft to performing arts. All, apart from one provider (Community Arts by ZK) delivered high quality, successful provision aligned to the HAF objectives and quality assurance standards.
11. Pendle continued use of the central booking system, provided by Spring North. This has proved invaluable in understanding demand across the various schemes, assessing school engagement and streamlining the monitoring process.
12. Recipe for Health, an LCC quality standard scheme for food business and caterers, was also utilised for Pendle's 2023 HAF. With Pendle a pilot for the roll out of the Recipe for Health scheme, HAF provided an incentive for business engagement in the Recipe for Health scheme as these businesses could potentially benefit from a food HAF contract. This was considered an example of good practice and LCC was keen to replicate this model across other districts.

13. Additional dedicated SEND provision was included in the 2023 programme, with SEND specific sessions delivered at 2 sites.

Programme management and governance

14. Pendle Council remains the accountable body for HAF with the Policy Team managing the programme. The Pendle HAF Steering Group meets quarterly to oversee progress and monitor each of the three schemes. This is a multi-agency Steering Group, consisting of representatives from Pendle schools, LCC Street Games, PLT, CVS, In-Situ, Positive Action in the Community (PAC) and Pendle food banks.

15. Pendle Leisure Trust (PLT) and Positive Action in the Community (PAC) were commissioned to provide additional support; PLT led on communications and publicity, hosted the webpage and provided much needed operational support; PAC led on booking system.

16. The following partners were also key in the delivery of Pendle's 2023 HAF programme:

- SpringNorth- commissioned to develop and manage the central booking portal.
- In-Situ- commissioned to coordinate a central creative resource offer

2023/24 Spend breakdown

17. The majority of spend was allocated to delivery costs, as highlighted in the table below:

Face-to-face holiday club provision	£357,112.54
Remote holiday club provision	
Publicising the scheme to eligible families and other communications	£1,938
Resources and equipment to support delivery	£1,000
Capital expenditure (e.g., catering or sports equipment for clubs) over £2,500	
Management and administration of the programme	£33,181
Other costs (e.g., translations, transport, provider staff training, booking systems etc.)	£12,514
TOTAL	£405,745

18. Provider costs varied from £18 per head to £29 per head. This was dependent on the type of provision on offer with the more bespoke activities such as performing arts, resulting in higher costs.

19. Some providers included a healthy meal in their offer. On average, per holiday, 10 providers sourced the food themselves and their per head costs included food. For the other providers unable to source food internally, several local caterers (with the Recipe for Health accreditation wherever possible) were commissioned to prepare and distribute hot, healthy meals.

2024/25 HAF programme- LCC developments

20. LCC is introducing a number of changes to the 2024/25 HAF programme:

- They are aiming to introduce a Lancashire HAF booking system from Summer. This will be aligned to the Free School Meals (FSM) voucher platform, issuing unique codes to FSM families via schools. This will replace Pendle's booking system currently provided by Spring North. It should reduce the PBC admin and monitoring functions as all HAF data will be collated and monitored centrally.
- LCC has top sliced 7% of all district allocations for the LCC Targeted Youth Service (TYS) to deliver the 12-16 element of HAF. This will impact on Pendle's teen provision- it's unlikely PBC will offer the activity vouchers going forward as YYS will be the main provider for 12-16 year old provision.

21. Pendle's 2024/25 HAF grant is £376,498 (after contribution to Targeted Youth Service provision) which will be used to develop and coordinate Pendle's 4-11 year old HAF provision, known as Fun Vibes, Active Lives. The teen provision (12-16) will be delivered by the LCC Targeted Youth Service.

22. District allocations are based on Free School Meal (FSM) levels. There are 3,800 recipients in Pendle, 9.3% of Lancashire's FSM total.

23. Given the success to date, the intention is to continue with the existing delivery model, whilst accommodating the new LCC booking system from Summer and the YYS provision for the teen offer. For the Easter programme, PBC will continue utilising Spring North's booking system

24. An Expression of Interest process was launched in January 2024 to determine the 2024/25 HAF providers. 15 providers have been identified for Easter and a draft schedule developed, which is made up of 26 holiday schemes.

25. Up to 10% of the grant can be utilised for admin and management costs. Last year, PAC and PLT were commissioned to provide operational, marketing and booking system support. Given the increased capacity in the Policy Team and the move to a Lancashire wide booking system, it is proposed that PBC co-ordinates and develops HAF in-house, but that PLT is commissioned to lead and deliver HAF marketing (PLT currently hosts the HAF webpage).

IMPLICATIONS

Policy: Delivery of Pendle HAF programme will contribute to improved health outcomes for our vulnerable children and young people.

Financial: Pendle 2023/24 HAF allocation of £405,746 supported delivery of free holiday provision over the three main school holidays for eligible children and young people. The 2024/25 HAF grant is £376,498. No Government announcement to date on the future of HAF funding. The sustainability of Pendle HAF programme beyond 2024/25 is dependent on continued receipt of HAF funding.

Legal: None arising from the report

Risk Management: None arising from the report

Health and Safety: None arising from the report

Sustainability: None arising from the report

Community Safety: None arising from the report

Equality and Diversity: Targeting priority wards will help address Pendle's health inequalities.

APPENDICES

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS