



healthy holidays

Healthy Holidays Barnsley
Annual Report 2025-26



Welcome

Barnsley's Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme, branded Healthy Holidays, continues to support children and families across the borough during the Easter, summer and winter school holidays. Funded by the Department for Education, the Healthy Holidays programme provides children and young people aged 5–16 who are in receipt of benefit-related free school meals with safe, welcoming places to be active, enjoy nutritious meals, try new experiences and build confidence.



Healthy Holidays continues to make a real difference for families by providing high-quality, inclusive holiday provision and creating opportunities for children to have fun, feel included and enjoy positive experiences in their local communities. As pressures on families continue, the programme remains an important source of support, made possible through the commitment of local providers and strong partnerships across Barnsley.

It's an exciting time for Healthy Holidays as the programme moves into the next three years of funding, creating new opportunities to build on its impact and work strategically with wider initiatives to further support children and families across the borough.

Food

Clubs must provide at least one hot meal a day (breakfast, lunch or dinner.) All food provided at the club (inclusive of snacks) must meet school food standards.

Nutritional education

Clubs must include an element of nutritional education each day aimed at improving the knowledge and awareness of healthy eating for children. These do not need to be formal learning activities and can be inclusive of children's involvement in food preparation and cooking, growing fruit and vegetables, and taste tests.

Physical activities

Clubs must provide activities which meet daily physical activity guidelines.

Enriching activities

Clubs must provide fun and enriching activities that open opportunities for children to develop new skills or knowledge, consolidate existing skills and knowledge, or try out new experiences.

Signposting and referrals

Organisations must be able to provide information, signposting and referrals to other services and support as required.

Strategic aims

Healthy Holidays supports our commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people by offering experiences that bring together food, physical activity and enrichment activities. The programme not only helps meet immediate needs during the school holidays, but also contributes to children's confidence, wellbeing and connection to their local communities. Healthy Holidays create opportunities for children and young people in Barnsley to:

- Access healthy, nutritious meals throughout the holidays
- Learn about different foods, nutrition, fuelling the body well and the link to healthy living
- Be more active
- Engage in enriching activities and try new things
- Be offered the opportunity to socialise in a safe and secure setting
- Forge memories with their families
- Engage with schools and local services.

Family days out



Engagement with Public Health teams



Clothing offer in partnership with Barnsley Hospice



Promoting access to affordable healthy nutritious food across the borough



Steering group

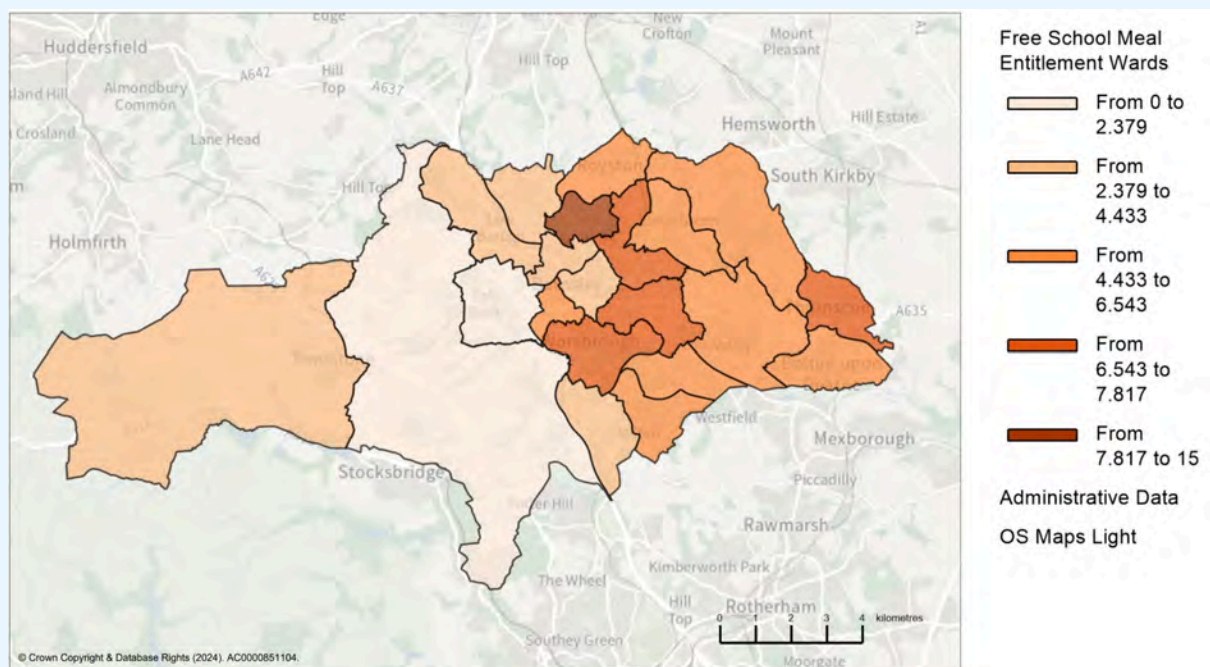
Barnsley's Healthy Holidays programme continues to be supported by an engaged steering group, with a focus on ensuring the best outcomes for the children and young people across the borough.

Membership consists as follows:

- Barnsley Council – Strategic lead for food insecurity
- Barnsley Council – Local Councillor
- Barnsley Council – Public Health representative
- Barnsley Council - Alexandra Rose Vouchers
- Barnsley Council – Area Council representative
- Barnsley Council – Food access lead
- Barnsley Council – Food and Poverty Action Barnsley
- FareShare Yorkshire – Service provider
- Work and Pensions – Area lead
- CAB Barnsley – Service provider
- Ad Astra - Service provider
- Community First Credit Union Barnsley – Service provider
- Company Shop – Head of Operations
- Community Shop – Service provider
- Barnsley Foodbank – Service provider
- Royston Friends Association – Volunteer
- Education, Learning Support Hub – Chief Executive Officer
- Berneslai Homes – Community Buildings Manager

Mapping demand and provision

In Barnsley, there are six areas that are split further into 21 wards. To ensure appropriate club coverage across the borough, the home postcodes of all eligible children are mapped for each holiday period. This data informs the effective commissioning of Barnsley's Healthy Holiday programme, ensuring clubs are funded in line with need. Mapping distinguishes between the different age ranges, abilities as well as types of provision, and helps to ensure that all needs are met.



Map showing free school meal eligibility in Barnsley

Marketing and communication

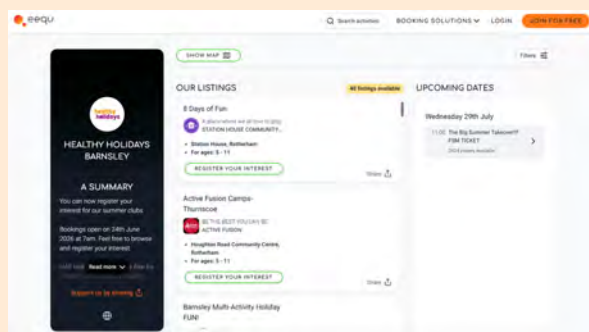
Ahead of each holiday programme, all eligible families receive a letter through the post to notify them of the programme and with details of how to book their places.

In Barnsley, around 10,500 children were in receipt of benefit-related free school meals during the 2025/26 programme, so clear and effective communication remains an important part of maximising awareness and uptake. The Healthy Holidays programme is promoted in a variety of ways ahead of each holiday period, including through providers, social media campaigns, local councillors, the Schools' Alliance and other supporting agencies. Our Healthy Holidays webpage brings together information about the opportunities available and directs families to the online booking portal.

An important development for the programme was the move to a new booking system, launched in winter 2025. The new system offers a more modern, user-friendly experience for parents and carers, making it easier to find opportunities and book places. As part of a wider platform used by other local authorities, it also benefits from stronger visibility and easier promotion, including through search engine optimisation. The system has improved communication with bookers and provides useful insight into how provision is being utilised, helping to shape future promotion and identify the most effective ways to engage new families and grow participation.



Social media



Barnsley Council and booking websites

Easter 2025 HAF data

Programme summary

Barnsley's Easter programme was delivered by 22 providers, across 39 venues which equated to 7,387 available places during our 9-day programme (Monday 7 April to Thursday 17 April 2025). The provision on offer was promoted to all children and families in receipt of benefit-related free school meals, with up to a 15% allowance offered to children who would benefit from attending the clubs for other reasons, determined by the providers in line with council priorities.

In addition to the clubs, the Healthy Holiday programme delivered a large Easter Celebration Event at a central location. Our flagship family events continue to be a huge success, so much so that we introduced an event to the Dearne Area of Barnsley funded from the Household Support Fund (HSF).

The Easter events saw a total of 450 eligible children, along with their accompanying adults, enjoy a fun-packed day out, as well as a healthy lunch.

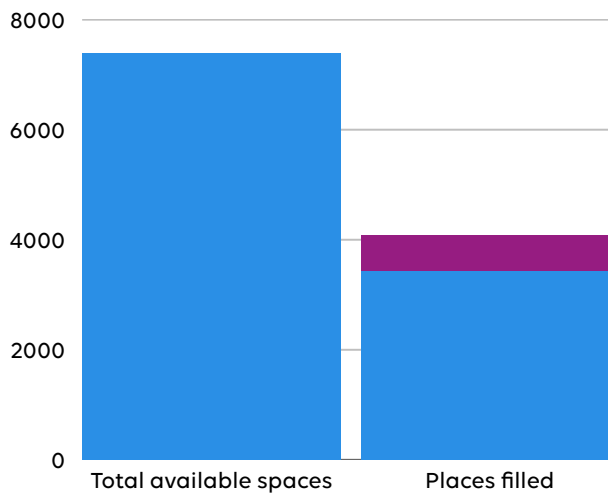
Activities on offer included themed arts and crafts, face painting, a ball pool, wheelchair basketball, inflatable slides and Zorbing. Families were further entertained by performers and character visits and were able to record the day with a photo in front of a themed backdrop. There was the offer of a free item of clothing, connecting families with wider support.

Our strong base of providers continues to innovate and deliver to a high standard fulfilling all requirements of the programme and more. We also worked with providers to include children with very specific SEND requirements to make the total offer as inclusive as possible.



The numbers

Utilisation



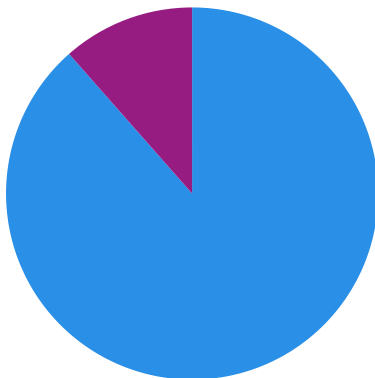
In total, 7,387 HAF places were available during our Easter 2025 programme, 4,088 of these were utilised. (650 of which were filled by children with SEND). This gave the programme a 55% utilisation figure.

Attendance

The total number of HAF funded attendees was 4,088. 3,534 attendees were eligible (86%), 554 attendees were allocated discretionary places (14%).

Age

● Primary ● Secondary



Out of the 4,088 funded attendees, 3,618 were primary school age and 470 were secondary school age

Reach

The total number of eligible young people in Barnsley at the time of our Easter 2025 programme was approximately 10,500. The HAF project reached 13% of those.

Summer 2025 HAF data

Programme summary

Barnsley's Healthy Holiday programme ran for 21 days (Friday 25 July to Friday 22 August) during the summer. It was delivered by 27 providers including providers delivering bespoke enriching activities within specific clubs. The programme provided 18,241 places across 47 venues.

In addition, there were 450 places over two family celebration events, one central and one in the Dearne area, and unlimited places over 8 Van in the Park sessions and 24 community cycle skills sessions across the borough.

Among the activities enjoyed were inflatables, riding bikes and scooters over ramps, African drumming and fair ground games. Families also received a free shop at Community Shop on the Go, a healthy meal and a free item of clothing. There was also a visit from a very lifelike orangutang!

The provision on offer was promoted to all children and families who were in receipt of benefit-related free school meals, with up to a 15% allowance offered to children who would benefit from attending the clubs for other reasons, determined by the providers in line with council priorities.

Barnsley's summer 2025 programme was attended by 18.1% of children eligible for benefit-related free school meals. Providers are continuously improving the management of bookings and communications with families to minimise the instances of non-attendance for reserved places.

Feedback from the celebration events:

“ Absolutely fantastic event. Kids had a brilliant time, exercised well, were constantly entertained, and I was exceedingly happy with all the unexpected freebies! ”

“ First time we have been! It was amazing! So much on offer! Thank you ”



The numbers

Utilisation



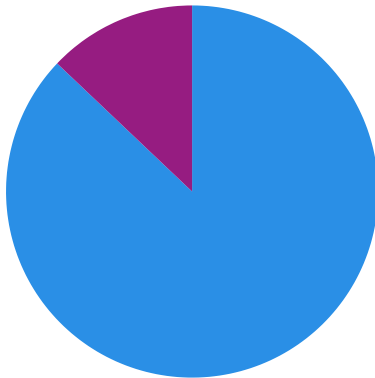
In total 18,691 HAF places were available during our Summer 2025 programme, 10,520 of these were utilised (378 of which were filled by children with SEND). This gave the programme a 56% utilisation figure.

Attendance

The total number of HAF funded attendees was 10,520. 8,942 attendees were eligible (85%), 1,578 attendees were allocated discretionary places (15%).

Age

● Primary ● Secondary



Out of the 10,520 funded attendees, 9,161 were primary school age and 1,359 were secondary school age.

Reach

The total number of eligible young people in Barnsley at the time of our Summer 2025 programme was approximately 10,500. The HAF project reached 18% of those.

Winter 2025 HAF data

Programme summary

Barnsley's Winter Healthy Holidays programme ran a targeted 4-day provision on 22, 23 and 24 December, and 2 January. The programme was delivered by 10 providers, with 840 places available across the borough.

Provision included Pantomimes, Christmas Parties and a large Elf themed family event providing a wide range of festive experiences for children to enjoy before and after Christmas. All children attending Christmas parties received a Christmas present of a board game.

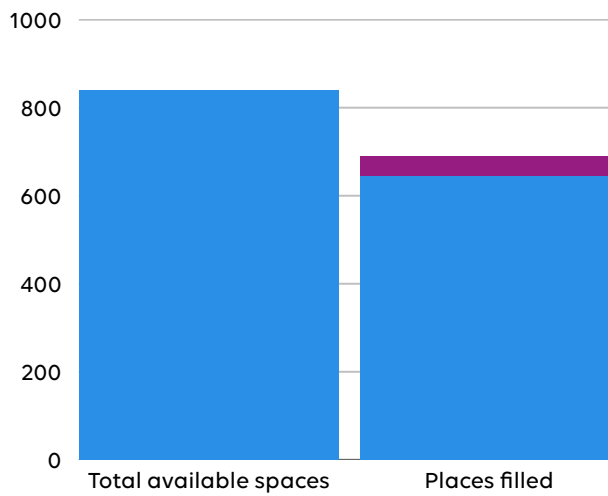
The programme reached 5.85% of Barnsley's benefit-related free school meal eligible children. The decision to implement a shorter, more targeted programme of high-level experiences was informed by data and insights from previous programmes for this period. This approach was again particularly impactful, as well as being cost effective, with 82% of places utilised, 89% of which were filled by free school meal eligible children. Any funding not committed to the winter programme had been budgeted in advance for the summer programme to support greater reach.

The provision on offer was promoted to all children and families who were in receipt of benefit-related free school meals, with up to a 15% allowance offered to children who would benefit from attending the clubs for other reasons, determined by the providers in line with council priorities.



The numbers

Utilisation



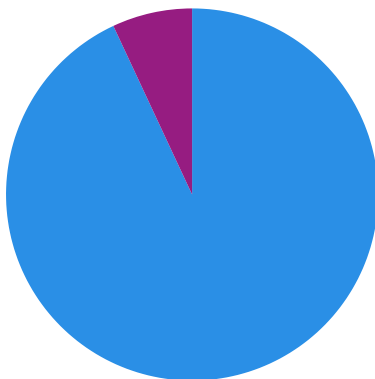
In total 840 HAF places were available during our Winter 2025 programme, 690 of these were utilised (44 of which were filled by children with SEND). This gave the programme an 82% utilisation figure.

Attendance

The total number of HAF funded attendees was 690. 614 attendees were eligible (89%), 76 attendees were allocated discretionary places (11%).

Age

● Primary ● Secondary



Out of the 690 funded attendees 642 were primary school age and 48 were secondary school age.

Reach

The total number of young people in Barnsley at the time of our Winter 2025 Programme was approximately 10,500. The HAF project reached 5.85% of those.

Feedback and comments

“ Another amazing event! Keep up the good work guys - you put so many smiles on so many faces (including the grown-ups) it's so lovely to see all the staff interact with the children and their families - it just shows how amazing you all are! ”

“ Thank you all for everything as my grandson had a lovely couple of weeks! ”

“ It was awesome as always thank you all for having us! ”

“ Amazing event!! Brilliant from start to finish, cannot thank you all enough. ”

“ Amazing event, well done to all involved. Great activities on offer, something for everyone. Even better it's on our doorstep. ”

“ I like the chance to be active all the time. I like the chance to learn and play different games as well as free time to make up games with my friends. ”

“ It was an amazing day! Thank you to all involved ”

“ Thank you for inviting us to take part, what a fantastic event and it was lovely to meet everyone! ”

Contextual overview

During 2025/26, a total of 26,918 places was offered over the Easter, summer and winter holidays. The total number of filled spaces was 15,289, giving an overall programme utilisation of 56%.

Over the three programmes the number of eligible children in Barnsley has remained stable with an average of 10,500 individual children in receipt of benefit-related free school meals.

In 2025/26, the total number of individual free school meal eligible children who attended our clubs was 3,860. This equates to 13%, 18% and 5.85% of Barnsley's free school meal eligible children enjoying activities at the Easter, summer and winter clubs respectively.

During 2025/26, funding into Barnsley's Healthy Holidays programme was £1,021,760. £919,584 went directly to the clubs over Easter, summer and winter 2025. With £102,176 (10%) going to the administration of the programme. In total, Healthy Holidays clubs were offered on 34 days over the year with the funding apportioned accordingly as shown in the table below:

Income	Detail	Spend	Balance
£1,021,670			
	Easter – 9 days (7 April To 17 April)	£241,118.80	£780,641.20
	Easter Admin	£27,046.59	£753,594.61
	Summer – 21 days (25 July to 22 August)	£625,053.95	£128,540.66
	Summer Admin	£56,504.27	£72,036.27
	Christmas – 4 days (22, 23, 24 December, 2 January)	£72,036.39	£0
	Christmas Admin	£0	£0
	Total	£1,021,760	

Against a backdrop of rising delivery costs, Barnsley has maintained a price cap of £33 per place. This remains a competitive rate within the current market while providing providers with sufficient flexibility to deliver safe, high-quality provision that meets the aims of the Healthy Holidays programme. In some cases, SEND places may cost more where additional support is needed to meet individual needs.

Thank you to the providers who supported an excellent Healthy Holidays Programme in Barnsley 2025/26.

Active Barnsley

Active Fusion

Activ Kids

Ad Astra

Barnsley Golf Sims

Barnsley Gymnastics

Barnsley Premier Leisure

Barnsley FC Community Trust

Childs Play/CampActive

Cool Kidz R Us

Cudworth Community Enterprises/Sidcop
Active

Direct Action Training

Forge Community Partnership

Grassroots Sports Academy

Great Houghton Youth Group

HOPE in the Community

Imagination Gaming

Mid Yorks Community Foundation

Momentous Football Academy

Playworks

Retro Fitness

Shining Stars Daycare

Sport Works

Station House

Sport and Physical Activity Team – Ramp
Up

Urban Beat Academy



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