



To: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)

Date: 22nd January 2026

Subject: Coventry Holiday Activities and Food programme

1 Purpose of the Note

1.1 This note provides an update on the Coventry Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme.

2 Recommendations

2.1 The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) are recommended to:

- 1) Consider the information provided on the Coventry Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme.
- 2) Identify any recommendations for the appropriate Cabinet Member.

3 Overview of the Holiday Activities and Food Programme

3.1 The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme is a national initiative, aimed at addressing holiday inequalities through a blend of free positive activities and experiences coupled with healthy food and support to families.

3.2 The national aims of the programme are to ensure a high-quality experience that will result in children:

- receiving healthy and nutritious meals
- maintaining a healthy level of physical activity
- being happy, having fun and meeting new friends
- developing a greater understanding of food, nutrition and other health related issues
- taking part in fun and engaging activities that support their development and well-being
- feeling safe and secure
- getting access to the right support services
- returning to school feeling engaged and ready to learn

3.3 Families should also be able to benefit from this support, and this could be through:

- providing opportunities to get involved in sessions, for example cookery classes

- ensuring they are signposted towards other sources of information and support, such as health services or employment and education opportunities

3.4 Coventry City Council is in receipt of an annual Department for Education grant of £1,604,150 for 2025/26 with a further investment of £50,000 from Coventry Building Society. Coventry City Council will receive indicative HAF funding of £1,667,120 2026/27 (including expected Local Authority capacity spend of £96,030). Coventry City Council leads a multi-agency partnership to deliver activities in the Easter, Summer and Christmas school holiday periods.

3.5 The core eligibility criteria is statutory school-age children (reception to year 11) who are entitled to benefits-related free school meals. Local Authority areas have discretion to broaden eligibility and Coventry have extended this to include children assessed through a Children and Families assessment, undertaken by Children's Services, as in need, on a child protection plan, in care, a young carer, assessed to be in financial hardship (through an early help assessment), part of the Ukrainian Family Scheme or the Home for Ukraine programme, receiving Free School Meals through having no recourse to public funds. Children and young people in years 12-13 are eligible if they are in receipt of benefits-related free school meals (FSM) and have an Education and Healthcare Plan (EHCP) or are receiving Special Educational Needs (SEN) support at their place of education. There is also discretion for professionals to refer appropriate children.

3.6 The national roll-out of HAF took place in 2021, with the first Coventry face-to-face delivery taking place in the 2021 summer holiday. In January 2025, the programme was extended for a further year for 2025. On 28 August 2025, the government announced a 3-year funding settlement of over £200 million each year for the national HAF programme (i.e. through to March 2029). This funding forms part of the Children, Youth and Families Grant within the local government finance settlement.

3.7 Further information on the national programme (2026/27) is available at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/holiday-activities-and-food-programme/holiday-activities-and-food-programme-2026-to-2027>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/holiday-activities-and-food-programme-grant-allocations/holiday-activities-and-food-and-local-authority-capacity-support-2026-financial-year-expected-allocations>

3.8 Further information on the Coventry HAF offer is available at
<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/haf>.

4 Summer 2025 delivery

4.1 The 2025 school summer holiday programme was the most successful HAF holiday programme that Coventry has delivered. Highlights included:

- 4,491 eligible children and young people benefitted (up from 4,141 for summer 2024);
- This included 1,637 eligible children with SEND plus other family members;
- Over 22,000 sessions were delivered and meals provided;
- Over 100 different activities/clubs were delivered;

- 43 providers were directly funded (see Appendix 1) with several other providers/partner organisations being sub-funded by these providers; and
- Families gave a 4.4/5-star feedback rating on the activities.

4.2 Other key highlights from our Summer 2025 programme included:

- Use of a wide range of venues and locations including 24 primary schools, 10 secondary schools, 4 special schools, 2 universities, 10 community centres, 4 family hubs, 10 leisure centres/sports facilities, 4 arts venues, 27 other locations/venues (see Appendix 2);
- Improved sensory arts initiatives (e.g. sessions focused on children with visual impairments, hearing impairments, neurodivergent and physical mobility);
- Continued developed of our STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) offer (e.g. future engineers, STEM for girls, coding, AI labs, summer enterprise challenge) as well as life and practical skills (plumbing and tiling);
- Greater diversity of activities (e.g. AI labs, Doze Under Dippy the dinosaur – a family sleep over event at the Herbert Art Gallery, making a musical in a week, Esports, HADO (Augmented reality combining physical activity and e-sport), an increased number of girls-only events; and
- Our improved booking system (eequ) is now fully embedded offering an enhanced parental/customer experience.
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4.3 Coventry HAF has a strong focus on inclusion and on children with SEND. Approximately 36% those who participate in the programme are children with SEND. This has been achieved by:

- Training and up-skilling of HAF providers;
- Communication with parents/carers and providers - ensuring the specific needs of individual children are shared through an “All about me” focus;
- Additional funding for providers for staffing to increase ratios;
- SEND family experiences; and
- SEND special school initiative – funded by Coventry Building Society for a third summer and working with Coventry Special Schools.

4.4 Providers are assessed according to a range of standards including their activities, provision of healthy food, nutritional education, safeguarding, health and safety, and information shared with families. This assessment is both prior to awarding grant funding and post-delivery (based on delivery performance, visits, feedback from parents/carers and children).

4.5 There was significant promotion of the summer programme through provider and programme marketing including: brochures and letters to eligible households, promotion through schools, social media, texts and promo-videos and a video capturing the HAF summer 2025 programme has been produced.

5 Winter 2026 programme

5.1 Our Winter HAF programme took place over the Christmas school holidays with a wide range of activities – including festive themed activities. This included a wide range of activities. Data on this is being finalised but we expect to exceed the Winter 2024 number of eligible children (2,114).

6 Areas of focus for Coventry HAF 2026/27

6.1 Coventry HAF is a well-developed programme with excellent feedback. The three-year funding settlement provides an opportunity for medium term development and planning. Areas of focus will include: continuing to increase the number of children benefitting from HAF, joining up the offer for Coventry children and families, a focus on secondary-age children, further development of our inclusion/SEND offer.

7 Health Inequalities Impact

7.1 Addressing inequalities is a key part of the HAF programme and the programme has a positive impact on health inequalities through provision of positive activities, healthy food, and food education. The Summer 2025 programme continued to focus on food quality.

Appendix 1: Summer Holidays Providers

Appendix 2: Locations and Venues

Appendix 3: Types of activities included in the summer programme

Name of Author: Adrian Coles

Job Title: Education Programme Manager

Organisation: Coventry City Council

Contact details: Adrian.Coles@coventry.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Summer holiday providers

The following delivery providers were directly funded:

Aptitude, Ascension Dance Company, Barr's Hill School, Canley Community Centre, Central Building an Welding Academy, Coventry Boys and Girls Club, Coventry Outdoors, Coventry Rugby Community Foundation, Coventry SDA, Coventry Trampolining and gymnastics academy, Creative Optimistic Visions, CV Life/Culture Coventry, Edgewick Primary School, Epic Academy/SCCU, Fit4Kids, Get Golfing, Go Go Makers, Guardian Ballers, Guiding Young Minds, Harvey Sports Group, Holbrooks Community Care Association, Holy Family Primary School (Larks and Owls club), Jam Coding, Kingsbury Academy, Ladybug Lodge, My Activities, Northwinds 5's Limited (GOALS), Onside Coaching, Pet-Xi, Pilot IMS, Plumb Learning, Project Number 5, Razzamataz Theatre Schools, Rising Stars, Riverbank Academy, SDH Academy, SportsCool, , Sky Blues in the Community, Staffordshire Winter Sports Club (Planet Ice), University of Warwick Holiday Scheme, Vanny Radio, WATCH/Hillz FM, and Woodfield School.

Appendix 2: Locations and venues

Activities took place in a wide range of locations and venues, including:

- **Primary schools:** Aldermans Green, Allesley Hall, Broad Heath, Charter, Courthouse Green, Edgewick, Frederick Bird, Gosford Park, Grangehurst, Henley Green, Holy Family, John Gulson, Keresley Grange, Leigh C of E, Longford Park, Manor Park, Moat House, Our Lady, Radford, Sacred Heart, Sidney Stringer Primary, Stoke Heath, Stretton C of E, Walsgrave C of E
- **Secondary schools:** Barrs Hill, Blue Coat, Cardinal Wiseman, Finham Park, Finham Park 2, Grace Academy, Meadow Park School, President Kennedy, Sidney Stringer, Westwood Academy
- **Special schools:** Kingsbury, Riverbank, Tiverton, Woodfield
- **Community Centres/facilities:** Broad Horizon Enterprise Centre, Canley Community Centre, Coventry Boys and Girls Club, Coventry Central SDA church, Hagard Community Centre, Holbrooks Community Centre, St Peters – Hillfields, Stoke Park Youth Centre, The Crez (Jubilee Crescent Community Centre), WATCH
- **Family Hubs:** Families for All, Harmony, Mosaic, Park Edge
- **Leisure Centres/sports Facilities:** Centre AT7, CBS Arena, Coventry Rugby (Butts Park Arena), Ansty Golf Centre, Moat House Neighbourhood and Leisure Centre, Planet Ice/ Skydome Arena, Xcel Leisure Centre, HADO Arena, The Wave, The Alan Higgs Centre,
- **Arts:** Coventry Transport Museum, FarGo Village, Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, Lunt Roman Fort
- **University:** Cardiff Met University, University of Warwick (Avon Building and Warwick Esports Centre)
- **Other locations:** All things wild, Aqualand – Cliff Lakes, Aztec Adventure – Upton Warren, Bayton Road Industrial Estate, Barry Island, Blackpool, Blackwell Adventure, Coombe Abbey Country Park, Electric Wharf (Plumb Learning), Drayton Manor Theme Park, Hatton Farm/Adventure World, Liverpool World Museum, , PET-Xi (West Oak House), Steeple House Business Centre, Tamworth Snowdome, Ten-pin bowling, The Cube Academy, Twycross Zoo, Western-Super-Mare
- **Other locations (SEND family experiences):** Ash End Farm, British Motor Museum, Kenilworth Castle, Little Jungle Soft Play and Party, Perkisound, Red Kangaroo Trampoline Park, Spencers Retreat, Twycross Zoo

Appendix 3: Types of activities included in the summer programme

Activities aim to appeal to eligible children and young people. The following are examples of the types of activities included in the programme:

AI labs, Animation, archery, art master classes (creative journaling, floral water-colours, illustration skills, oil painting, street art murals), BBQ, badminton, basketball, bouncy castles, breakfasts, broadcasting, bushcraft and survival, chef academy, cheerleading, choreography, coding, circus skills, climbing, combat archery, cooking, crafts (tie dye, quilling, origami, gemtastic jewellery and fabric), creative journaling, cricket, dancing, drama, doze-under-Dippy, drawing, DJ-ing, E-sports, films, fitness, football, engineering, forest school, fun days, giant board games, go-karting, gadgets, gaming, gardening, gymnastics, horse riding lessons, ice-skating lessons, inflatable air track, inflatable bungee, karaoke, inflatable assault course, lacrosse, laser tag, lego building, lava lamp making, MicLab (sustainable stations, stop motion animation, stitch in time, connections and innovations), movies, movie making, multi-activity clubs (crafts, sports, arts etc.), music workshops, netball, open theatre, ninja warrior, paintballing, performance (parkour, free running and contemporary dance), performing arts, photography, physical theatre, picnics, podcasting, plumbing lessons, pool, pool parties, pottery, radio, rap, robotics, roller skating, rounders, rugby, singing, science, SEND sensory corner, skateboarding lessons, stable management, stadium tour (CBS Arena), sports day, stop-motion animation, swimming lessons, team building, tennis, trampolining, tree-top adventure, tug-of-war, The Wave, trips (*Aztec adventure, Western Super Mare, Drayton Manor, Go-Ape, Hatton Farm/Adventure Park, Hoar Farm, Red Kangaroo, Tamworth Snowdome, Lunt Roman Fort*), ultimate frisbee, videography, water sports, water-colour/ink painting, zip wire and much more...