



## CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>HOLIDAY ACTIVITY FUND (HAF) UPDATE</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION</b>

### REPORT SUMMARY

In 2020 Wirral local authority made the decision for Edsential, a CIC jointly owned by Wirral and Chester and Cheshire West Councils, to deliver the Holiday Activity Fund (HAF) on behalf of Wirral local authority. HAF funding received by the LA from the DFE in the last academic year was £1.46 million, this funding has continued this financial year and will continue in 2024-2025.

The Edsential team that delivers HAF oversees management, administration marketing, training and finance in relation to the HAF programme, Edsential work closely with officers within Children's Services to deliver the programme. After each holiday programme Edsential have to complete a finance return to the DFE outlining how the funding has been utilised.

Over the past 3 years the Wirral HAF team has developed a clear programme engaging a wide variety of statutory and non-statutory partners. The aim of the programme is to support children on Wirral who are eligible to access healthy food and activities through the three extended holiday periods each academic year.

The HAF team on Wirral prioritises the quality of provision and experience for children and young people, whether that be in the exciting and diverse range of physical and enriching activities on offer, or in the good quality nutritious meals that are provided to our young people every day during the holiday period.

Moving forward for the summer period 2024 Edsential have agreed to work with Wirral local authority to develop further, the access to HAF programme to young people that are eligible and have not been able to access HAF previously.

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough and the actions taken link to the Wirral plan 2023-2027 – Early Help for Children and Families.

This is not a key decision.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is recommended to:

- 1) note the report; and
- 2) support further developments with Edsential CIC for provision in summer 2024.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1.1 The Holiday Activity Fund (HAF) has successfully supported thousands of children with healthy food and activities over the last three years.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 We could have delivered the HAF internally as a local authority, with oversight and staffing responsibility for delivering the programme. This would pressure on current staffing within the directorate and the programme has been effectively delivered by Edsential for the last three years.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Since 2018, the HAF programme has provided support to children in receipt of free school meals through holiday periods. This support was increased through the COVID-19 period and following this period the DFE agreed to a funding settlement of £200 million for each year, this commenced in the financial year 2022-2023.
- 3.2 The aim of the HAF programme is to support families and children who would normally struggle to access organised out-of-school activities; physical health opportunities and could struggle with social isolation.
- 3.3 The HAF programme funding is primarily for school aged children from reception to year 11 who receive benefits-related free school meals (FSM).
- 3.4 From a Wirral context perspective, using the January Census 2023, 13,823 children and young people are eligible for FSM. This data has been used to support the HAF team in prioritising where provision is place.
- 3.5 The HAF team work closely with the marketing and the communication team within Wirral LA. When the programme started in 2022, they supported in promoting the application stage of HAF. Potential providers could apply for the whole year or for individual HAF periods. The HAF team held information sessions where local providers who were interested in becoming a new HAF provider could attend. The HAF team attended School Heads meetings and annual conferences to promote engagement with schools as providers.
- 3.6 The HAF team have supported a provider forum since 2020. The aim of the forum is to enable providers to meet one another, to share good practice and hear from other providers who may be able to enhance their provisions. Each provider is sent an application form to become a member of the forum when they receive their Terms and Conditions. Once a member, they are then invited to regular meetings with other providers. These have been both virtual and face to face.
- 3.7 During 2022 the HAF team had a clear focus on food quality with an improvement seen. The HAF team have offered food and nutrition training to all providers developed with Food Active, the accredited nutritional organisation. The HAF team also included suggestions in the compulsory training on how to make food exciting to

young people. A clear approach to intensive monitoring of provision over all 3 holiday periods is in place, it has been recognised that training delivered is beginning to have an impact on food quality.

- 3.8 In relation to physical activity, the HAF team has focused on different offers. An indoor high ropes climbing centre funded locally become part of HAF. The offer was enhanced by new and existing martial arts clubs, Boxing clubs and a Mua Thai club. Work has continued to build relationships with local football clubs, Everton in the Community and Tranmere Rovers. In addition, Wheels Extreme have continued to work with our children and young people educating them about Skateboarding, inline skating, and BMXing. They teach how to be safe and how to maintain their equipment.
- 3.9 Many children and young people have found that having the opportunity to be calm and quiet was a refreshing opportunity, to have a digital detox. HAF has offered lots of new activities, dancing including 'Lets Dance Mat', drama and singing workshops, yoga, mindfulness, forest skills and also a hair and beauty salon for teens. Many of the providers use cooking as an enrichment activity and also as a way to relate messages around health and nutrition.
- 3.10 Wirral HAF has a structured Governance process engaging across all aspects of HAF. HAF Management and co-ordination is ultimately answerable to the Local Authority HAF Scrutiny committee who meet three times a year to hear about and to analyse all aspects of HAF. We also present three times a year to the Edsential Board. The steering group also mark the grants for each holiday period. A refresh of the steering group membership was completed at the end of 2022. The steering group has representation from schools, council officers and third sector organisations.
- 3.11 During Easter 2023, the HAF programme was attended by a total of 2527 primary age pupils and 524 secondary aged pupils. In relation to the total number of days attended, for primary school aged pupils was 8740 days and for secondary aged pupils was 2014 days. During the Easter period 64 different clubs delivered HAF provision.
- 3.12 During Summer 2023, the HAF programme was attended by a total of 3766 primary age pupils and 759 secondary aged pupils. In relation to the total number of days attended, for primary school aged pupils was 33044 days and for secondary aged pupils was 6079 days. During the summer period 72 different clubs delivered HAF provision. For the summer period of HAF this programme delivered 39,000 nutritious meals, and of the 4525 pupils that attended the HAF programme, 838 pupils were SEND.
- 3.13 At the time of writing this report for Christmas 2023, 40 applications had been received to delivered HAF. This led to a commissioning of 51 different clubs for this holiday period.
- 3.14 Moving forward into 2024, the HAF team have met with senior officers from the LA to look at further work to support more children with SEND being able to access the HAF programme. Further work will take place to support this in Spring 2024 ahead of the summer holiday period. In addition, the HAF team will be attending Equality

Training and HAF providers have been audited in relation to working with young people with SEND and how further support can be put in place.

- 3.15 The HAF team have also provided access to ADHD and autism awareness training and delivered experiential training at a local special school who delivers the HAF programme.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The HAF programme is delivered through DFE grant, in 2022 the DFE grant was total of £1.46 million pounds. The funding is confirmed for the remainder of this academic year and the next academic year. The spend of the grant is overseen by the LA HAF scrutiny committee.

#### **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The local authority had a responsibility to deliver the HAF programme based on the conditions set out by the DFE. The oversight of delivery sits with the LA HAF scrutiny committee. In addition, the HAF team submit a post-holiday report for each of the three holiday periods to the DFE to confirm compliance.

#### **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS**

- 6.1 The HAF programme is delivered by Edsential CIC and therefore the LA has no specific resource implications currently.

#### **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 7.1 The Corporate Risk Register will be refreshed in line with the new Wirral Plan 2023-2027 to ensure that any risks to delivery are understood and mitigating actions are put in place as appropriate.

#### **8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 The LA HAF scrutiny committee has representation from schools and the third sector. The HAF team provides workshops and training for new and on-going providers.
- 8.2 During Spring 2024 the HAF team and LA will work with partners to address any areas of provision that has a current gap. Consultation with parents/carers will be part of this process.

#### **9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision, or activity. An EIA will be completed in line with the refresh of the school improvement strategy.

## 10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no environmental or climate implications from this report.

## 11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 It is important that young people have access to quality food and physical activity during holiday periods, especially for young people where support maybe required. This will support in improving opportunities for young people, allowing them to be more successful and links to the Wirral Plan 2021-2026 – Bright futures for all young people.

**REPORT AUTHOR:** James Backhouse  
Assistant Director: Education  
Email: [jamesbackhouse@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:jamesbackhouse@wirral.gov.uk)  
Phone: 0151 6663909

## APPENDICES

None

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

Wirral Plan 2023-27  
January Census 2023

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Children, Young People and Education Committee in accordance with Section B of its Terms of Reference, the functions and powers conferred on or exercisable by the Council as Local Authority in relation to the provision of education.

## SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date