

TITLE OF REPORT: **Brighten The Day – Gateshead Holiday Activities & Food Programme**

REPORT OF: **Colin Huntington, Strategic Director, Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities**

Summary

This report will provide Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) with an update on the delivery of the Easter Holiday Activities & Food Programme and an overview of the plans for the summer.

Background

1. DfE funding allocation of £850,000 for 2021 in Gateshead to fund Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) over the Easter, Summer and Christmas school holidays for benefits-related Free School Meal (FSM) recipients and vulnerable children.
2. The holiday club places will be available for the equivalent of at least 4 hours a day, 4 days a week, 6 weeks a year and must include healthy meals (one healthy meal a day meeting the School Food Standards guidance), enriching activities (provide fun activities with opportunities to develop skills and knowledge), physical activities (which meet the Physical Activity Guidelines), nutritional education (awareness of healthy eating and how to source, prepare and cook nutritious and low-cost food, signposting and referrals: (to other services and support)
3. In total there are approximately 7,200 children who are eligible for free school meals entitlement in Gateshead, living in approximately 4,500 households but clearly the programme aims to help the more families who are struggling to make ends meet but do not access this benefit.
4. HAF Steering group is meeting regularly to plan and co-ordinate the 6-week summer programme. Representatives include University of Northumbria, Education, Public Health, Children's Social Care, Early Help, Libraries, Leisure, Catering Services and VCS organisations.

Delivery over Easter 2021

- The Easter programme was delivered mainly remotely due to Covid-19 restrictions in place.
- Cook n' Eat food boxes delivered to 1,750 FSM eligible families with fresh ingredients and recipes for 5 meals for a family of 4.

- 1,500 activity packs of crafts, books and sport equipment delivered to FSM families via primary schools with highest numbers of FSM and in deprived areas.
- Tyne and Wear TV on freeview channel, broadcast content aimed at 3 different age groups for local children and young people over the Easter holiday period.
- A limited number of schools, community, church and sports organisations delivered small scale face to face holiday clubs. These were closed to known FSM eligible families connected to the venues and providers. The Easter clubs reached 780 children attending 2,600 places, with 12,400 hours of activity delivery.
- This included for the first time a club at Cedars School for children with physical and learning disabilities.
- At May half term in person delivery took place at a small number of venues using outdoor facilities including Gateshead International Stadium with 560 places delivered to 250 children attending 2,600 hours of activities in bubbles. Half term delivery was not a requirement of the DfE grant.

Planned Summer Programme

- The current plan of confirmed summer clubs is delivery in 44 venues; 23 community organisations, 12 schools (including 3 secondaries and 2 special schools), 5 sports venues and 3 church organisations. This will deliver over 21,000 places across the 6 weeks to approximately 1,450 children per day.
- Activities will include Sports, Dance, Work Skills, Cooking, Cycling, Circus Skills, Bush Forestry, Open Spaces, Environmental and educational visits all feature, as well as Cook n Eat, online activities, exercises and games.
- The Council's Catering Service will be complimenting the food provision within community venues with hot food in 7 schools, healthy packed lunches to 11 venues without catering facilities and providing healthy snacks to the Active Kidz programme and our pop-up sports activities. All other providers and venues organising their own catering are aware of the School Food Standards that must be met for the HAF programme and will be liaising with the Council for quality assurance on their planned menus.
- The programme has been mapped to our latest FSM eligible households dataset to confirm locations of delivery venues are in close proximity to FSM communities. The Gateshead map shows 95% of FSM households are within reach of a summer programme location. This mapping tool will be shown to committee at the meeting.
- The expanded programme for 2021 including new venues – Cedars and Gibside special schools, new coaching providers – Gateshead Storm Rugby Club and new activities – Learn to Swim @ Gateshead Leisure Centre (for Y5 & Y6 children who have missed out on school swimming provision).

- A Communications plan will publicise the holiday provision to Gateshead families on www.gateshead.gov.uk/brightentheday webpage including online booking system to open activities and via social media.
- Majority of the programme is being targeted by the venues and providers to reach the FSM families and those in need and also adhere to current covid risk assessments, so most provision will be publicised in a targeted way.
- Referrals from Children's Social Care and Early Help teams will link families in need into provision at their local schools, community groups and ensure reserved spaces at open provision before bookings go live.
- As set out in the grant determination letter, a small amount of funding from the budget will be retained for provision over the Christmas holiday period.
- DfE Virtual Visit with the Permanent Secretary, Susan Acland-Hood arranged for 24 August 2021, the session will cover the departments priorities and policies and show live footage of holiday clubs taking place.

Recommendations

5. It is recommended that the Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities OSC:
 - (i) Consider the activities delivered and planned through the Holiday Activities and Food Programme
 - (ii) Advise officers of any areas that require additional updates or further scrutiny.