



Funded by



Department
for Education



ROCHDALE
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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2025 –2026 Annual Report

Introduction

The holiday activities and food (HAF) programme provides support to children from low-income families during school holiday periods. Research has shown that the school holidays can be pressure points for some families. For some children that can lead to a holiday experience gap. Children from low-income households are more likely to experience food insecurity and social isolation, miss out on physical activity and enriching experiences, and fall behind in development and wellbeing.

The HAF programme is a direct response to this, providing free nutritious meals, enriching activities and safe environments for eligible children, benefiting their health, wellbeing and learning.

Aims of the programme

The programme aims to help eligible children eat more healthily, be more active and develop resilience, character and wellbeing through enriching activities. It also aims to ensure that children are safe, not socially isolated during the holidays and return to school feeling more engaged and ready to learn.

There are many benefits for children who attend the HAF programme. HAF providers should 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 engaging activities that support their development and wellbeing
- feeling safe and secure
- getting access to the right support services
- returning to school feeling engaged and ready to learn

HAF also improves accessibility and affordability of childcare during school holidays opening up work opportunities for parents on low incomes to support their families. Some of our HAF providers adopt mixed models of payments or longer sessions to support families more broadly to work or manage other commitments.



2025-2026 Highlights

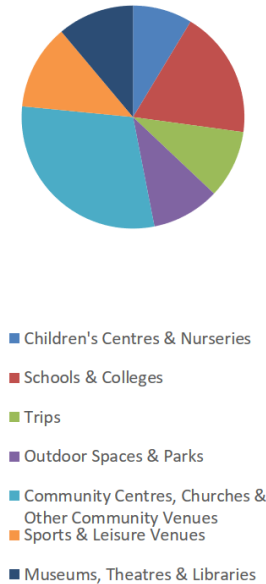
Through working in partnership with 84 locally trusted organisations, children and young people across Rochdale borough were able to access a variety of opportunities throughout the Easter, Summer and Winter 2025-2026 school holiday periods. The majority of Rochdale Borough HAF provision is delivered by our Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector who receive grant funding to deliver the programs in different localities of the borough. Because of the variety of the providers delivering on the program we have a vibrant and diverse offer that appeals to young people and families from different backgrounds within our communities.

Types of activities on offer in 2025-2026 include:

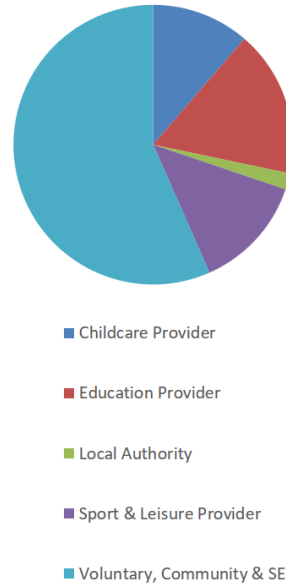
- Open swim sessions
- Swimming Lessons
- Drama, music and performance
- STEM sessions
- Forest Schools and Outdoor activities
- Poetry
- Specialist SEND provision
- Animal and nature activities
- Cookery sessions
- Christmas Parties
- Family Festivals
- Shows, Pantomimes and performances
- Arts and craft activities
- Multi sports camps
- Gymnastics Camps
- Cricket camps
- Rugby Camps
- Football Camps
- Trips

Holiday Activity & Food (HAF)

Number of Settings for HAF Activities



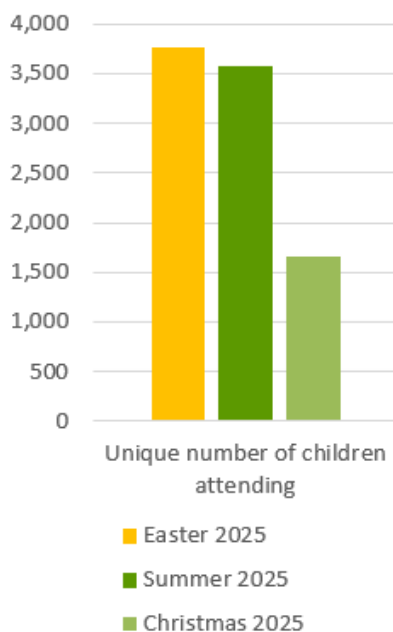
Type of Organisation delivering HAF Activities



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40,597 HAF sessions all inclusive of meals were booked throughout the 2025-2026 Rochdale Borough HAF programme across the borough. 70 % of places were from primary age children and 30% secondary age. 826 children with SEND or additional needs attended various programs.



Rochdale Boroughwide HAF Steering Group

- ⇒ HAF Boroughwide Lead
- ⇒ Head of Early Years and Early Help
- ⇒ Community Development Manager
- ⇒ Townships & Communities Manager
- ⇒ Strategic Lead Early Help & Relational Practice
- ⇒ HAF Community Coordinator
- ⇒ Head of Active Health and Wellbeing
- ⇒ Healthy Lifestyles and Nutrition Lead
- ⇒ Healthy Schools Teaching and Learning Adviser
- ⇒ Senior Youth officer
- ⇒ Early Years & Childcare Advisory Teacher
- ⇒ Inclusion Lead Officer
- ⇒ Library Officer: Digital & Young People
- ⇒ Action Together Community Development Worker
- ⇒ Senior Accountant
- ⇒ Senior Finance Officer

The steering group meets to review the HAF programme and plan for future delivery.

Expenditure	
Face to Face Delivery. Commissioned across partners	£1,023,335
Management and Coordination	£121,364
Training, marketing and other expenditure	£72,921
Total Expenditure	£1,217,620



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Welcome to the Rochdale Borough Council and Your Trust Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme. All activities are free and include food. Sessions are available across Rochdale, Heywood, Middleton and the Pennines. There are a variety of fun and enriching activities that primary and secondary school age children who are eligible for benefits related free school meals can take part in. Early Help and School professionals who have identified children in need of the provision can also make referrals onto the sessions.



Rochdale Township Providers



Al-Madinah Educational Trust



Andalusia learning centre

Army Of Kindness



Army of Kindness Youth Group



Aspire 2 Inspire CIC



BACP



Become United



Broodfield Community Primary School



Deeplish Community centre Association



Dream Big Sports - OL16 4TQ



Dream Big Sports - OL11 5BX



Edstart - OL12 7QL



Edstart - OL12 7RQ



Flip Out



Footlights



FrontFoot Sports



Funda



Harvest Touch Youth & Skills Community



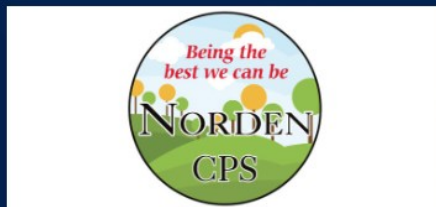
HQ Sports



Kashmir Youth Project



Maverick Lab cic



Norden Primary Academy



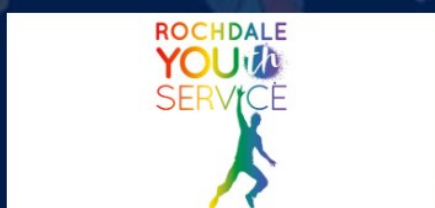
Rochdale AFC Community Trust - OL11QU



Rochdale AFC Community Trust - OL16 2EU



Rochdale Science Initiative C.I.C



Rochdale Youth Service



Seeros Daycare Nursery



St John the Baptist RC Primary School



Active 'n' Learn



Beech House School



Brimrod Community School



Caring and Sharing



Colourful Minds



Deeplish Community Centre Association



Little Stars Preschool



Moo Holiday Hub



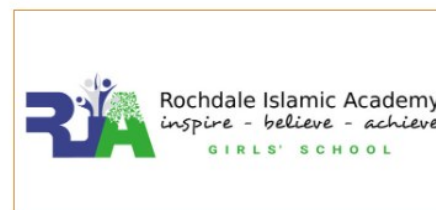
Muslim Education Association



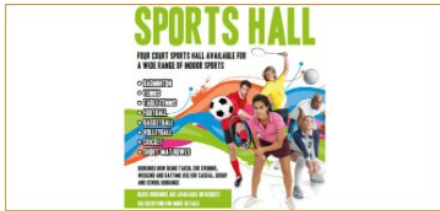
Nigeria Community Association



Rochdale Co-operative Trust



Rochdale Islamic Academy Girls School



Rochdale Leisure Centre



Rochdale Town Hall



Rochdale Young Carers



Redwood School



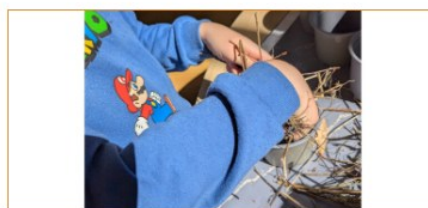
SED



Touchstones



The Nursery



Vintage Worx



Well Foundation



Holy Family School



St Mary's School

Heywood Township providers



3X3



Bright Stars Childcare @ Crimble Croft



Find Your Roots Hair Academy



Heywood SV. Swimming



Nigeria Community Organisation



Our Lady & St Pauls RC Primary School



Queens Park Café



Rochdale AFC Community Trust



Rochdale Young Carers



St Joseph's RC Primary School

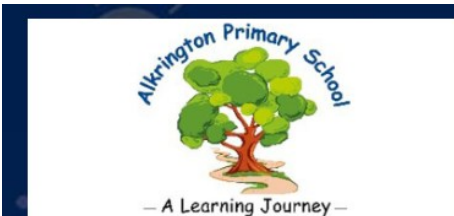


Will Ferry Soccer School



Woodland Community Primary School

Middleton Township Providers



Alkington Primary School



Bowlee Community Organisation



Brightstars@Cleworth Road



Brightstars@Middleton Activity Hub



Dream Big Sports Ltd



Ducklings Nursery



Junction Library



Krystal's Childcare



Middleton Arena



Next Level Sports Coaching



Next Level Sports Coaching - Football



Rochdale AFC Community Trust



Rochdale Youth Service



SESD



Sharons Childcare



Steered to Serve



Sunny Daycare Childminders



EBFT / Albany Products



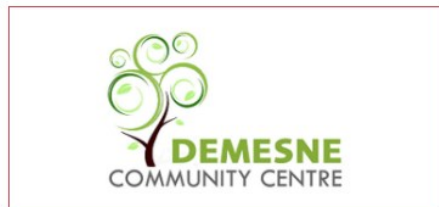
Little Acorns Adventures



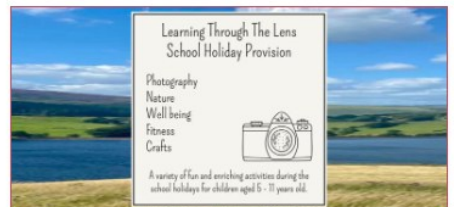
Hopwood Hall



Bowlee Park Community School



Demesne Community Association



Learning Through The Lens

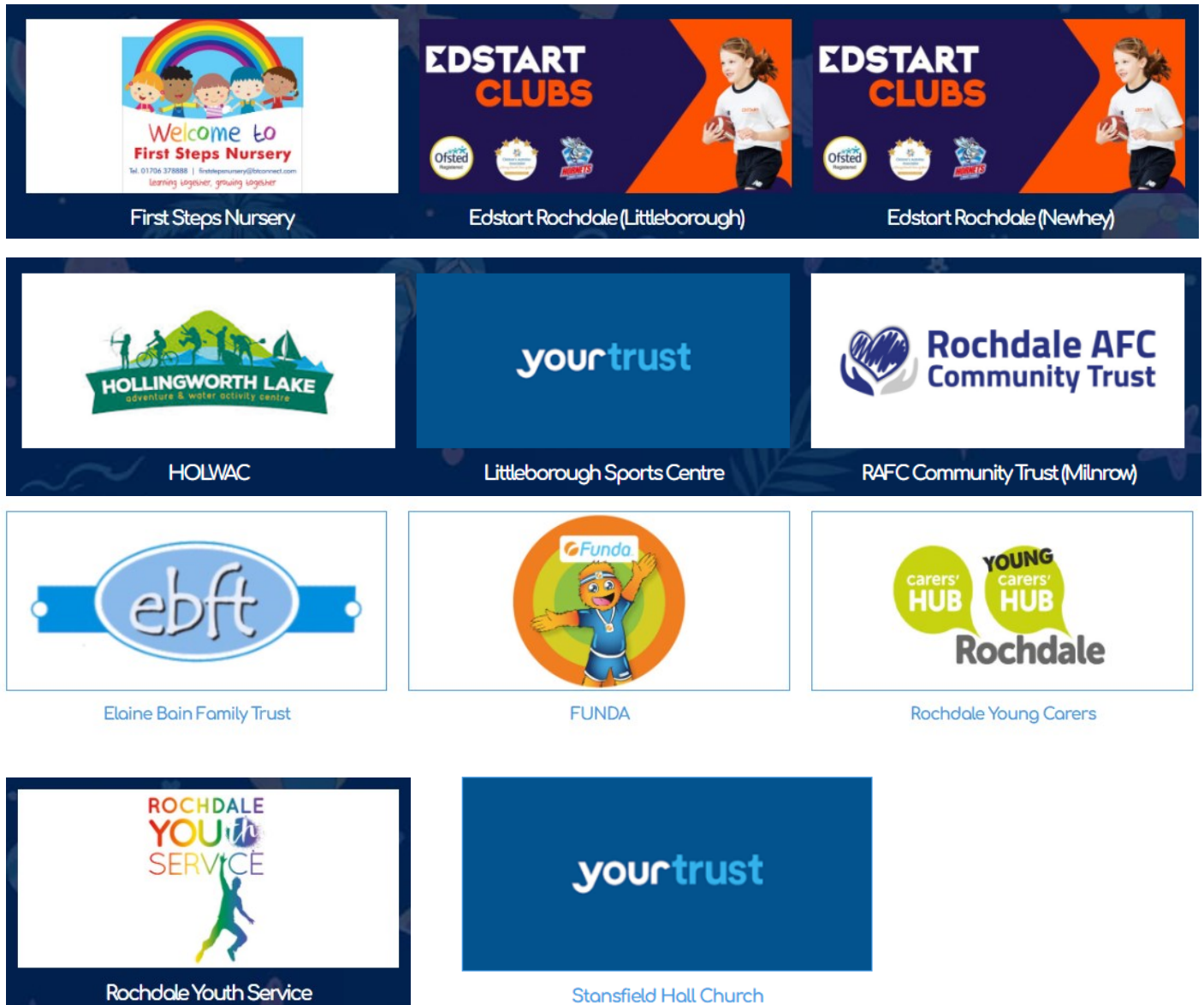


Middleton Popstars Academy



Rochdale Young Carers

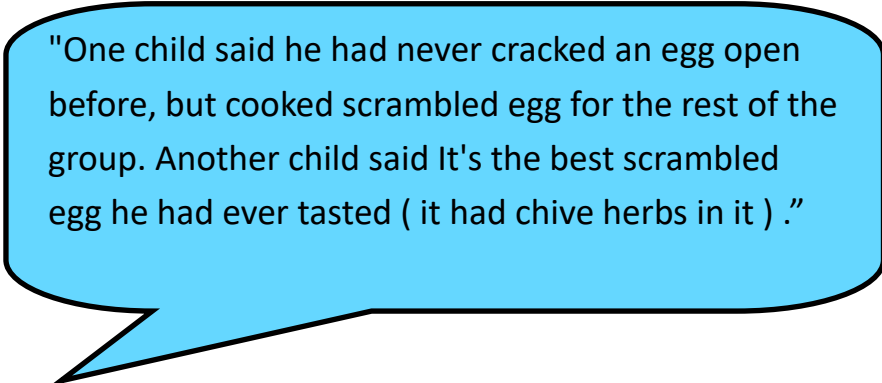
Pennine Township providers



SEND Specialist providers

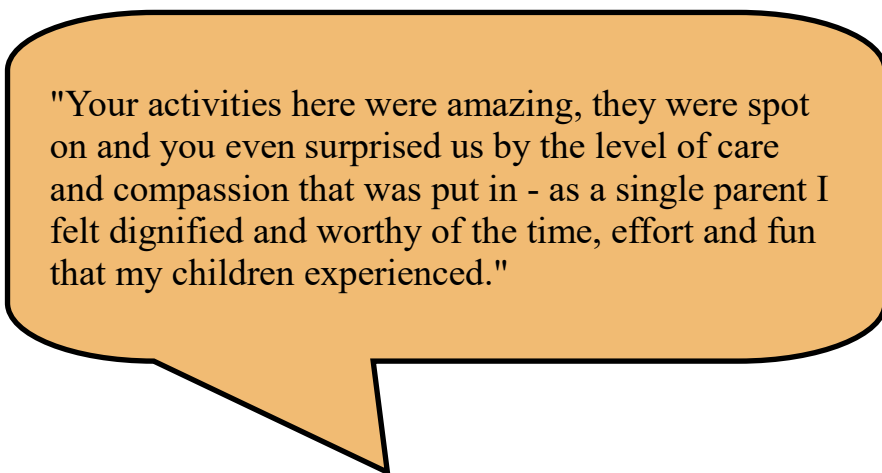


Children and families feedback



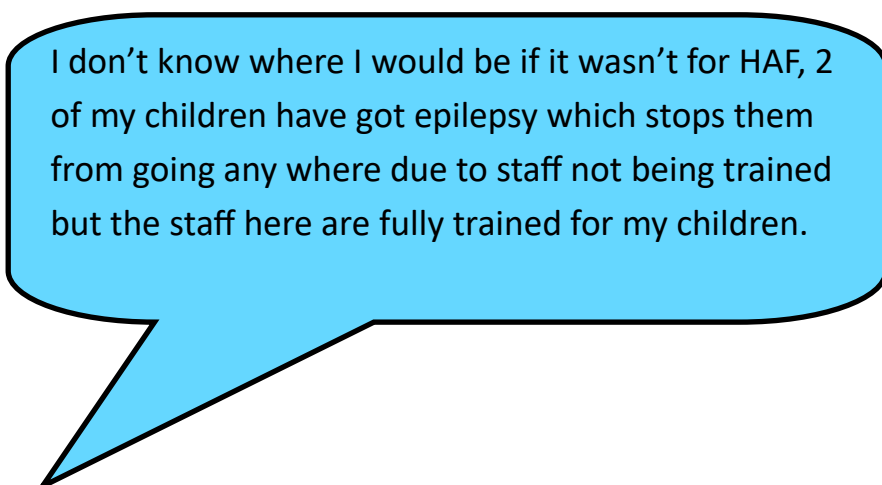
"One child said he had never cracked an egg open before, but cooked scrambled egg for the rest of the group. Another child said It's the best scrambled egg he had ever tasted (it had chive herbs in it) ."

Hayley -Director of Get Up and Grow



"Your activities here were amazing, they were spot on and you even surprised us by the level of care and compassion that was put in - as a single parent I felt dignified and worthy of the time, effort and fun that my children experienced."

Martha - Parent whose children attended the Pioneers HAF Summer programme



I don't know where I would be if it wasn't for HAF, 2 of my children have got epilepsy which stops them from going any where due to staff not being trained but the staff here are fully trained for my children.

Angela - Parent whose children attended the Easter HAF program



Food

All our Rochdale HAF provision provided children who attended with at least one nutritious meal per day. Overall food quality has improved and we are continuing to work with our providers to increase standards that are universal across our HAF clubs. Prioritising local food providers and suppliers is an important aspect of our HAF programme. We have delivered training to our HAF providers in cooking and serving nutritious food that meets the standards set by the Department for Education. The Your Trust Healthy Lifestyles lead has led practical workshops with our providers as well as distributing resource guides across the communities we serve.

Rochdale Borough council fresh Kitchen service delivered cooking classes to children and families attending HAF sessions. Utilising school kitchens, children learned how to prepare, cook and serve food before they ate it for lunch. Children loved this experience and uptake of the food eaten increased when it was them making it.

We planted vegetables with children with local organisation Get Up and Grow at the start of the holidays and gave families seeds and fresh produce to take home. Children learnt about bees and honey making.



Enriching Activities

Our 2025-2026 HAF programme had a vibrant and varied offer of activities for children and young people. Access to nature and outdoor activities were particularly impactful on children's happiness and wellbeing. We provided transport from urban areas of the borough to our Outdoor Water and Activity Centre at Hollingworth Lake. Children that parents and school had previously said were struggling to engage with positive activities were immersed in the activities that they hadn't had opportunities to experience before.

Rochdale Library service are part of the Rochdale Borough HAF steering group. Children across the borough were given the opportunity to sign up to the Summer Reading Challenge Plus programme in collaboration with HAF. This was either delivered in one of the libraries across our Township or through remote sites that we supplied with books and Summer Reading Resources.

We had poetry, science, lifesaving, recycling, nature activities and animal visits from different providers. It was the first time many of the children had ever experienced these activities.

Young vulnerable children that had been referred from professional services had opportunities to be playful and learn new skills. Responses from colleagues in Mental Health services and social services about the impact HAF has had on children's Mental Well Being has been extremely positive.



Physical Activities

14 Primary Schools across the Borough were booked onto the Summer School Holiday Swimming Lesson Programme. We reached out to Primary Schools throughout the Borough targeting the schools where Year 5 Pupils did not achieve N/C and those with the highest number of children receiving benefits related free school meals. The Programme provided 444 places across the borough. Children who were disadvantaged by a lack of suitable swimwear were provided with free costumes and swim aids. Children of the School with the highest consistent engagement throughout the holidays were presented with a swim bag containing a Woggle, Costume/Shorts, Goggles and Dive toy.

We delivered adapted sport sessions for mainstream HAF provision and our specialist SEND HAF programmes. England blind Footballer Azeem Amir (From Rochdale) delivered a programme of activities raising awareness and giving opportunities for all young people to be involved in sport.

Creative ways were used to get young people active that were not interested in traditional sports. We delivered parkour sessions in a range of settings which included a theatre and a museum. Dance, creative movement and music was another method used to get young people active at our sessions. Where access to facilities wasn't available providers used outdoors spaces such as parks and MUGGA's that were on the doorstep of our families.



Nutritional Education and the promotion of healthy living/lifestyles

The Rochdale Borough Nutrition and Healthy Lifestyle Lead conducted workshops with providers and families to educate them on cooking healthy meals on a budget. We provided brochures and online guides for providers and families to utilise as part of the HAF programme.

We taught children and families how to grow their own food through our Nutrition and Healthy Lifestyle lead and local organisation Get Up and Grow. There was a wide variety of activities that included planting tomatoes, cooking eggs, learning about Bees, Honey and seasonal vegetables.

The more people were exposed to fresh food on the programme the more we had success in challenging negative attitudes to trying different things and unhealthy eating behaviours. Working with different providers and adults as well as the children was an important part of this process as they were key role models that children copied.



Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND)

Redwood Special School is our largest provider of HAF places for children with additional needs. Redwood delivered during the Easter and Summer programmes at their venue which has specialist facilities that can cater for the range of needs children had on our programme.

Redwood Specialist staff also delivered a series of workshops open to all Rochdale Borough HAF providers in the build up to holiday periods. Topics included:

- Improving support for children with additional needs and disabilities
- Safeguarding for CYP with additional needs and disabilities
- Education, Health and care plans and Person-Centred Planning
- Parent/Carer Engagement
- Becoming Inclusive
- Support Signposting
- Autism Awareness
- Supporting Young People with High and complex needs

We also have more specialist provision in the SEND Nursery, Brightstars Childcare, Colourful Minds and Eliza Says added to our list of provision catering for children in different areas of the borough.



Key challenges

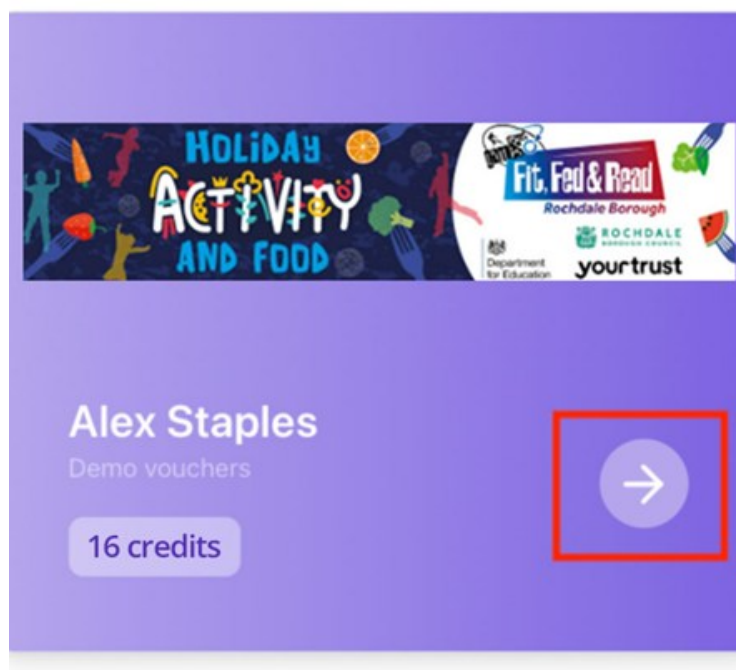
There is still variation in the number of places offered, booked and attended across our different HAF sites. Providers with the highest bookings and attendance had existing links into eligible families, they promoted directly and assisted families to book through the centralised booking system using the electronic vouchers they had been issued. They also reminded families about attending and held waiting lists so others could take their place.

Having access to safe and suitable facilities in all areas of the borough to cater for the large numbers of children is still a challenge. The cost of all aspects of the program continue to rise due to the 'cost of living' so it is a challenge to deliver a program for increased numbers that are eligible without additional funding.

Centralised Booking System

We use the E Vouchers centralised booking platform. 87 schools from across Rochdale Borough send circa 13,500 E-Voucher invitations to the Holiday Activities centralised booking website where all HAF provision is displayed. We also have a local authority account that issues vouchers direct to vulnerable children as part of the 15% allowance. Service leads from Early help and Schools distribute across their teams. Regular email communication is sent across the LA and schools.

Your activity vouchers



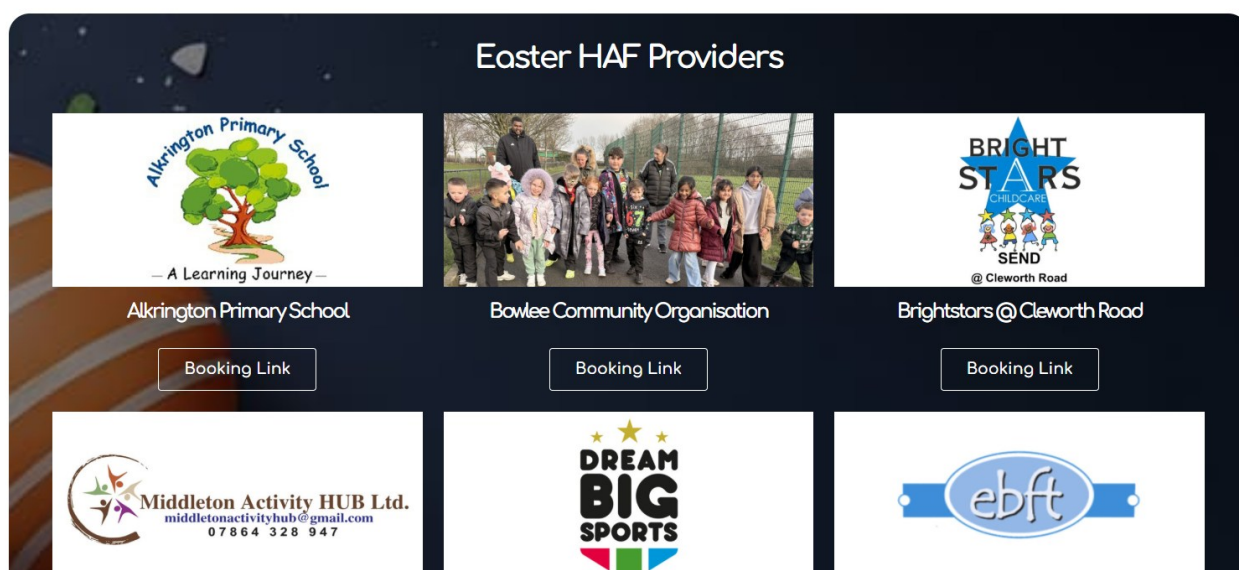
Rochdale HAF Website

The programme is also promoted through the HAF website. All providers displayed their information on the webpage, which can be searched by township. There is guidance for providers, schools and families on the webpage.

Middleton HAF 2026 Providers

AVAILABILITY SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

Eligible families can login through the [Holiday Activities booking platform](#) using the email address their HAF voucher was issued to for up to date information on available places



Additional resources, partnerships and aligning with other priorities

Middleton township committed £15,000 of funding from local councillors to add additional places for Middleton children not eligible for HAF as part of the Middleton Holiday at home programme. This was a mix of combined places with existing HAF providers and separately funding programmes that hadn't received HAF funding.

Funding from GM Violence Reduction Unit funded places for non HAF eligible children to attend Summer provision either alongside funded places on HAF activities or separate programs.

School Nursing Teams and Early Help services visited sessions to give advice and guidance to families. They shared information on cost of living support, physical and mental health support.