

CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Evaluation of Get into Summer 2021

Get into Summer was a package of support, backed by £20 million of funding by the Scottish Government, to support children and young people to socialise, play and reconnect over the summer break of 2021. This summary report presents key findings from the evaluation exercise. It includes information from an independent qualitative evaluation which included interviews with parents and analysis of local authorities and service providers, as well as quantitative estimates of reach collected through a national representative survey amongst parents.

Participation and reach

Overall, many families appear to have benefited from the Get into Summer programme, with a third (32%) of parents interviewed having at least one child who attended free or low cost activities during the summer 2021.

While efforts were made by partners to engage with children from low income families, evidence suggests that families across all income groups benefited from the programme.

Those most likely to participate in activities tended to be in families with three or more children, or in families with younger pre-school or primary school aged children.

Impacts for children

Many positive outcomes from children's participation in activities are evident. The main benefits identified by parents in the survey results were; greater opportunities to play with other children, an increase in physical activity, more time spent outdoors and an improvement in how their child was feeling generally. Food provision was also an important element, particularly for low income families.

These findings were echoed in the qualitative research which also provided more detail on why these benefits were felt, particularly in the context of Covid-19 and the associated isolation children and young people had experienced. Benefits around increased socialisation were particularly notable among those who had experienced greater isolation or challenges as a result of the pandemic. The research also highlighted particular benefits for children from low-income households in supporting school transitions and providing children from these households with positive experiences they could share with peers when they returned to school.

Impacts for parents and carers

Many benefits for parents and carers were also identified. For low income families, benefits related to: improvement of their own mental wellbeing, improved relationships with their children and saving money. For some parents and carers participation had also made them aware of other services that might be useful to them or their child and others reported increased opportunities to meet other parents in their area. Participation in the programme helped middle or higher income households to work or study.

Enablers to participation

The evaluation also provided information on key enablers that contributed to children taking part in activities. The main ways found to encourage participation included: a wide range of activities offered, the involvement of lots of organisations helping to deliver activities quickly and to more children, being able to offer activities free of charge including food and transport and combining social media with offline promotion to maximise engagement.

The importance of delivery partners identifying non-stigmatising routes for those in target groups, was also seen as important in increasing participation, as was activities being based on evidence of what children and families wanted.

Barriers to participation

Across the evaluation cross-cutting barriers to participation were identified. For low income families in particular these included a lack of awareness of suitable activities, and safety concerns around Covid-19. Transport barriers were also discussed, with it being felt that although Get into Summer had a significant impact on transport barriers it had not completely eliminated them.

For families with a disabled child or a child with ASN barriers were reported in making activities fully inclusive, particularly around a lack of availability of skilled staff to support children. Monitoring reports and interviews also indicated some concern among local authorities that they had not engaged as many minority ethnic families as they had hoped, although there was relatively little discussion of the barriers that might prevent minority ethnic families engaging with holiday activities.

Partners discussed a lack of lead in time for planning as being a key barrier, both in terms of organisation and their ability to consult with children and young people. Experiences of this did, however, vary across local authorities and organisations depending on their level of previous experience.

Increasing participation in the programme

Overall, the evaluation found many examples of successful efforts by partners to ensure that children and young people could take part in Get into Summer. Suggestions for improvement of future holiday provision include: providing enough lead-in time for planning, ensuring activities are advertised widely and consistently, ensuring appropriate staffing to enable all children with ASN or disabilities to participate fully, ensuring transport

barriers are considered across all provision, and improving the offer for secondary school children.

How to access background or source data

The data collected for this social research publication:

are available on the Scottish Government website. See:

[Qualitative evaluation of Summer of Play programme](#)

[Omnibus Survey report with data tables](#)



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The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

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