Key findings from the 2022 Summer Programme evaluation

What is the 2022 Summer Programme?

In 2022, the Scottish Government gave funding to local authorities across Scotland so that they could offer activities, childcare and food provision for families during the summer holidays.

What were the aims of this evaluation?

This evaluation aimed to see **what worked well** for those who delivered the Programme and the children and families who attended, and **what could work better.**

Research methods

Researchers from Ipsos Scotland carried out:

44 **Interviews with families** (in 8 case study areas)

44 **Interviews with local authorities and providers** (in 8 case study areas)

A workshop where staff from 20 local authorities shared their views

Analysis of reports from 28 local authorities

What was provided?

- **Sports**
- **Outdoor activities**
- **Arts and crafts**
- **Games and free play**
- **Activities for children with additional needs**
- **Community projects**
- **Free passes for facilities or attractions**
- **Activities for children starting a new school, or related to future study or careers**
- **Family support activities**
- **Transport**
- **Food**
- **Childcare – longer sessions**

Reaching target groups

Some activities were for everyone and some activities were just for particular families or young people. Providers thought about the best ways of including different groups in different areas.

Benefits of the 2022 Summer Programme

Families told us about the benefits they had experienced through taking part in Summer activities:

- Trying new activities
- Connection with others
- Time outside
- Improved wellbeing
- Physical activity
- Choice
- Access to food
- Opportunity to work
- Saving money

Key Benefits of the 2022 Summer Programme also included:

Choice - where CYP felt they had choice, this was viewed positively and could increase enjoyment and motivation to attend.

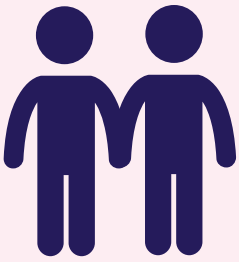
Outdoor play and physical activity - There was some evidence of CYP spending **more time outside** than usual as a result of attending activities.

Making new friends was important to the enjoyment of programmes. For some CYP this was the best part.

Wellbeing was often reported as a result of participation in activities. This included: feeling happy; increased confidence; having a routine; feeling calm and relaxed; improved mental health; and gaining independence.

Food - particularly in programmes with a greater focus on food there had been some wider impacts. These included: developing kitchen skills; trying foods they would not normally eat; and learning about healthy eating.

Having lots of organisations working together helped to increase the range and number of activities on offer, and making them available to more families.



Timing of activities

There was evidence to suggest that the Summer Programme was important in giving parents more time to work, work more flexibly or have time to themselves.

Food - particularly in programmes with a greater focus on food there had been some wider impacts. These included: developing kitchen skills; trying foods they would not normally eat; and learning about healthy eating.

Effective communication with families was important in encouraging lots of different families to attend.

Providing transport helped make the Programme more accessible and easier to attend.

Potential barriers

This evaluation found **many examples of successful efforts** by providers to ensure that all children and young people could take part. However, there are **some areas where further action may be needed** to make sure everyone can take part in holiday activities in future.

Timing of funding was the main challenge for providers. The short lead-in time made it difficult to plan the Programme and to target families.

Provision in rural areas

Some rural areas did not have as much on offer as more urban areas. This was due to budget and other practical reasons.

Activities not appealing

Sometimes activities did not appeal to young people or they tried them and didn't enjoy them.

Costs for attending

When there were costs related to activities, (e.g. transport or tuckshop money) this could make it difficult for families to attend.

Including refugee families

Local authorities noted difficulties reaching these families and ensuring they felt included at activities.

Staffing, particularly for children with ASN

Providers highlighted issues around staff needing to take their holidays in the summer, as well as a lack of staff with the appropriate training to support young people with additional needs.

Transport barriers

Activities that were far away or difficult to get to could be a barrier to attendance or could mean parents had less time to work and do other things with their time.

Family circumstances

Sometimes families who faced challenges in their personal lives found it difficult to attend activities.

Potential future funding

Overall, providers were happy with how the funding worked. They were happy that it included lots of different families in different situations, and that it included food.

However, they suggested that it would be good to have funding that covered all school holidays. They also felt that if they were given funding for a few years at one time, it would help them to plan activities better.