Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Summer Holiday Food, Activities and Childcare programme (Summer 2022)

CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS

social research

Contents

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All responsibility for this report lies with the authors.

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List of acronyms

ASN – Additional support needs

BBQ – Barbecue

CYP – Children and Young People

ESOL - English for speakers of other languages

FSM – Free School Meals

LGBT – Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender

SIMD – Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

STEM – Science, technology, engineering and mathematics

TCPDP – Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan

Executive summary

Background

The overall aim of the 2022 Summer Programme was to ensure that eligible families benefitted from a range of activities, food and childcare provision that met their needs during the school summer holidays. The Scottish Government provided local authorities with £10 million in additional funding to target provision at CYP (aged 5 to 14) from low-income families.

The Scottish Government commissioned Ipsos to evaluate the 2022 Programme. The overall aim of the evaluation was to assess whether the Programme met its intended outcomes and met the needs of the CYP and families it intended to support, as well as identifying what has worked well or what could be improved in terms of delivery. The findings of the evaluation will be used to inform and shape the year-round school age childcare commitment and the accompanying monitoring and evaluation approach. The evaluation included three main elements:

- in-depth interviews with parents and CYP in case study areas;
- in-depth interviews with case study local authority representatives and provider organisation representatives, including an online workshop;
- review of quantitative monitoring data on attendance and activity types submitted to the Scottish Government from local authorities.

When considering the findings (summarised below), it is important to keep in mind that all research is subject to challenges and limitations. In this case, the qualitative research design means that estimates of the prevalence of particular views or experiences are inappropriate. Furthermore, the opt-in nature of recruiting families, and the fact that families who did not access provision did not take part, may have affected the findings. It is possible that CYP recall became more limited as fieldwork progressed. Finally, the timeframe for this evaluation meant that it focused more on the short- and medium-term outcomes from the Summer Programme. Further research would be required to assess any potential longer-term impacts.

Overview of Summer Programme and planning the offer

A wide range of activities were delivered through the Summer Programme funding in line with the intended outputs of the logic model. The funding had enabled local authorities and their partner organisations to improve their summer provision for CYP by: enhancing their existing provision; increasing the reach of existing activities to the target groups; adding new activities to their summer provision.

The ways in which programmes were designed in order to reach the target groups ranged from universally available services with some funded places, to activities for specific target groups only, such as programmes for CYP with ASN, vulnerable families, and refugees. Healthy free food was provided at most activities. Free transport was typically only provided if a need was identified.

A number of challenges were identified in relation to programme planning:

- a lack of capacity among existing teams and difficulties recruiting suitably trained, seasonal staff;
- the timing of the confirmation of the funding and subsequent short lead-in times, resulting in difficulties reaching the target groups, the quality and design of provision, procuring services and value for money;
- food provision challenges such as minimising food waste, preparation time and the need for all day food provision;
- the expense of providing free transport to all CYP.

Participation and reach

Local authorities worked closely with partner organisations to both identify and reach the intended target groups, using a range of approaches. Approaches related to both the type of programme and its specific target audience. A mix of wider advertising and direct invitations was employed to communicate the Programme.

Providers considered how to engage families in a non-stigmatising way and this appeared to have been largely successful. Effective communication approaches included: positive existing relationships with families; place-based approaches; careful use of language; assuring parents of confidentiality.

Broadly speaking, providers were pleased with the level of attendance at activities. However, there was variation, from activities being full and operating waiting lists to those being withdrawn due to low attendance. Cross-cutting barriers to participation in Summer Programme activities included: activities being free meaning no consequences for families to sign up and then not attend; families living in challenging circumstances struggling to prioritise activities; associated costs for attending; transport barriers; appeal, choice and description of activities.

Cross-cutting enablers to participation included: providing free activities and including food; existing positive relationships with families; issuing reminders and operating waiting lists; making activities as easy as possible to get to. Provision for CYP with ASN was delivered by both adapting universal provision running targeted provision for CYP with ASN only. Additional challenges were faced delivering these programmes, in particular having suitably qualified staff.

Perceived impacts for children and young people

CYP were able to try various new activities. This made programmes exciting and enjoyable and CYP were typically keen to do them again. Where CYP felt they had choice, this was viewed positively and could increase enjoyment and motivation to attend. However, where there was not much choice, but CYP enjoyed what was on offer, they did not seem to mind having limited options.

There were mixed views from CYP and parents on whether food provided was healthy and met their needs. 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.

It was clear that CYP enjoyed outdoor elements of programmes. There was some evidence of CYP spending more time outside than usual as a result of attending activities. There was also evidence of CYP spending time outside their usual environment and of this being a very positive element of programmes. Indeed, for some CYP, visiting new places on trips was a highlight.

There were opportunities to take part in physical activity at a number of programmes. There was some evidence of the Summer Programme leading to an increase in physical activity during and after the summer.

It was clear that CYP enjoyed the activities they took part in and that there were a number of wellbeing benefits. These included: feeling happy; increased confidence; having a routine; feeling calm and relaxed; improved mental health and gaining independence. Spending time with friends or making new friends was important to the enjoyment of programmes. For some CYP this was the best part.

Perceived impacts for parents and carers

There was evidence to suggest that the Summer Programme helped working parents continue to work or made it easier to do so. However, this was dependent on the timing of activities, as well as other practical factors.

The Summer Programme provided parents with valuable respite time. Parents mentioned using the time they had while CYP were attending activities to do household chores; rest and relax; socialise; or spend time with other children.

Parents who were asked or invited to attend activities along with their children did not experience the benefits of being able to work or have respite time away from their child(ren). This was particularly true of parents of children with ASN. However, a key benefit for those who attended activities was reduced social isolation and having the opportunity to connect with other parents.

There was generally no cost to attending Summer Programme activities. However, there was sometimes a nominal fee or indirect costs. When families said the Summer Programme had saved them money, this was usually on activity fees or food. There were also parents who would have missed out on work opportunities without the funded provision.

Parents described various ways in which the Summer Programme had increased their own wellbeing, including peace of mind (that children were entertained and looked after); improved family relationships; having routine and structure; and mental health benefits from joining in with activities or trips themselves.

Perceived impacts for local authorities and delivery partners

Overall, there was a sense that cross-sector working had been a strength of summer programmes and is the result of relationship-building at the community

level over time. There was also a perception that the funding had helped to enhance partnerships in the longer-term between partners and local authorities that were involved. Having partnerships in place to offer summer provision in a targeted way that caters to a particular group was identified as a key benefit of partnership working.

Key benefits of the funding for those involved in the planning and delivery of programmes included: enhanced cross-sector working and the ability to deliver more ambitious or expanded programmes. The short lead-in time for planning was the main challenge for providers, affecting everything from staffing, recruitment, and development of partnerships to the planning, communication and delivery of activities. It also had an impact on staff workloads and wellbeing.

Providers described ongoing learning about understanding the needs of low-income families from running their programmes. Enhanced cross-sector working was considered to be particularly important for this, as it was widely acknowledged that those working closest with CYP and their families all year round have the best understanding of their needs.

Key learning from the 2022 Summer Programme

Key features of the Summer Programme that helped to maximise positive impacts for families included: the range and choice of activities offered; the timing of activities; the flexibility of targeting criteria; food provision; partnership working; effective communication with families; and providing transport, where possible.

While this evaluation found that the Summer Programme generally met the needs of target families, there were some challenges discussed where further action may be needed to further reduce barriers to achieving the desired outcomes for CYP and families. These challenges included: the short lead in time; staffing the offer (particularly in terms of supporting CYP with ASN); targeting the offer; transport barriers; rural provision; catering for refugee families; and managing expectations.

Other cross-cutting barriers to attendance for families were activities that were too short to provide meaningful childare; providers not having enough time to provide extra support to engage families in challenging circumstances; instances where activities incurred direct or indirect costs or, alternatively, a perceived lack of commitment among families when activities were free; and a lack of appeal of activities or anxiety among CYP about attending.

Overall, providers were broadly happy with model for the funding for the Summer Programme. However the following were mentioned as areas for improvement.

- There was a clear appetite for the funding to be awarded much earlier to support the planning process. An annual fund to cover all holiday periods, or a multi-year funding approach were suggested.
- A more user-friendly and supportive application to help to widen the pool of providers applying for funding.
- A simplified monitoring template with more guidance on how to complete it.

1. Introduction and methods

About the 2022 Summer Programme

The overall aim of the 2022 Summer Programme was to ensure that eligible children and young people (CYP), and their families benefitted from a range of activities, food and childcare provision that met their needs during the school summer holidays. The Scottish Government provided local authorities with £10 million in additional funding to target provision at CYP (aged 5 to 14) from low-income families. Eighty-five per cent of the funding was to be targeted at the groups identified in the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery plan (TCPDP), with the remaining 15% available to be spent on other groups depending on local priorities. The priority target groups were:

- Lone parent families;
- Ethnic minority families;
- Families with a disabled adult or child;
- Families with a young mother (under 25 years old)
- Families with a child under 1 year old;
- Larger families (3+ children).

The 2022 Summer Programme built on learning from Get into Summer 2021, which aimed to mitigate negative impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. The evaluation of the 2021 Programme showed that it had a positive impact on children and families in terms of providing opportunities to have fun, spend time outdoors and do physical activity and connect with peers, among other benefits. Range and choice of activities, food provision, co-creation, partnership working, and reducing barriers to participation were all key to its success.

Unlike the 2021 Programme, the 2022 Programme also had a focus on the provision of childcare. Its guiding principles were: partnership working, co-creation, and coordination and integration. It was intended that providers would deliver a range of activities, childcare and food options to give families choice and flexibility to meet their needs. This would be achieved through strong local partnerships to help reach families in an inclusive and non-stigmatising way, helping to overcome barriers to participation, including those identified in the 2021 evaluation. The programme was intended to include effective communication, appropriate food and transport provision, and referrals to wider support services. It was recognised that focusing on local delivery would help reach eligible families, particularly in the most deprived areas.

A logic model for the Programme, setting out the intended inputs, outputs and outcomes, was developed to help steer this evaluation by Ipsos in conjunction with the Scottish Government and wider programme stakeholders. This is included as Appendix A.

Evaluation aims and questions

The Scottish Government commissioned Ipsos to evaluate the 2022 Programme. The overall aim of the evaluation was to assess whether the Programme met its intended outcomes and met the needs of the CYP and families it intended to support, as well as identifying what has worked well or what could be improved in terms of delivery. The findings of the evaluation will be used to inform and shape the year-round school age childcare commitment and the accompanying monitoring and evaluation approach.

More specifically, the evaluation aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. **How has the 2022 Summer Programme supported CYP and families from low-income households?**

    - How was the funding used? What type of activities and childcare models were delivered? Did it provide opportunities to play, socialise, be active, be outdoors? Did it enable parents to work, train or study? What was the attendance at these activities/childcare sessions?

    - Was 85% of the funding used to support school age children (5-14-year-olds) from low-income households in the priority family groups? How was the remaining 15% used?

2. **What has been the experience of service providers and CYP and families?**

    - How do CYP and families and service providers describe their experience of the 2022 Summer Programme?

    - Was the local offer shaped around what CYP said they want and need? Did they feel they had choice/flexibility? Were there any barriers to attendance?

    - How were activities targeted and promoted to priority family groups? Were referral systems used or direct communications? Were any groups hard to reach?

    - Were there any steps taken to mitigate potential sources of stigma? What were these? Was stigma experienced by families?

    - How did the provision impact on the poverty and food insecurity experienced by CYP and families?

    - What were the opportunities and challenges in the joint working between local authorities and local delivery partners?

3. **What are the key lessons from delivery of the 2022 Summer Programme?**

    - What worked well? What could be improved in the delivery of future summer programmes?

    - What were the opportunities and challenges in engaging and delivering

activities to the priority groups? Any future opportunities for scaling up?

Methods

The evaluation was primarily qualitative in nature. Given the available time and resources, and the key aims of identifying what worked well and less well from the perspectives of children and families who attended Summer Programme activities and providers involved in their design and delivery, this was felt to be the most appropriate design. It included three main elements:

- **Stage 1**: in-depth interviews/paired interviews with parents and CYP in case study areas (conducted first to minimise loss of recall among CYP);
- **Stage 2:** in-depth interviews with case study local authority representatives and provider organisation representatives, including an online workshop with stakeholders outside the case study areas to ensure that the case study findings were broadly aligned with those of other local authorities;
- **Stage 3:** Review of quantitative monitoring data on attendance and activity types submitted to the Scottish Government from local authorities.

The study was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the international quality standard for Market Research, ISO 20252.

Sampling and recruitment

CYP and parents

Parents and CYP were recruited via providers in a sub-sample of eight local authority case study areas (two or three programmes were selected in each area). These local authorities, and the specific programmes focused on within each, were selected to try to ensure diversity in terms of activities offered, key target groups, geography, and level of deprivation (using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation).

Participants were recruited with the help of programme organisers, who were briefed over the phone and provided with written information (Appendix B) by Ipsos to share with attendees, inviting them to take part. Individual families then contacted the research team directly, who checked eligibility and arranged a suitable time for an interview.

Depending on the age and preferences of CYP who had participated in the programme and their parent or carer, the research team either spoke to the child(ren) or young person on their own (one interview, young person aged 14); the parent on their own (six individual interviews and two mini groups with three or four participants); or conducted a joint interview with both (31 interviews). In total there were 44 interviews/groups, covering the experiences of 71 CYP who had taken part in the Programme. Table 1.1 shows the profile of participating families, in terms of the age and gender of the CYP, and whether they were from one of a number of key target groups.

Table 1.1. Profile of children, young people and families covered by interviews[1]

Criteria		Number
Age of child or young person	4-9 years old	43
	10+	28
Gender of child or young person	Boy	30
	Girl	39
Low-income family[2]		30
Young parent[3]		14
Member of household with a long-term health condition, disability or child with ASN		9
Ethnic minority[4]		7
Lone parent family		23
Large family (three or more children)[5]		13
Families with a child under one years-old		1

Providers

The research team also interviewed 44 providers involved in the planning or delivery of the Programme in the case study areas**.** This included 26 local authority representatives and 18 partner organisation representatives. Participants were given the option to take part individually (20 interviews), in pairs (five interviews) or in group discussions with colleagues (four discussions of between three and five participants).

Local authority workshop

Once fieldwork within the case study areas was complete, a representative from every local authority was invited to share their experiences with the Summer Programme as part of a workshop. The main purpose of the workshop was to check whether the interim findings from case study areas were broadly aligned with

[1] Age and gender breakdowns relate to the children covered by interviews, including those who were interviewed themselves, and those who were discussed in parental interviews. Ages total 62 children and young people because the age of one child (who did not take part in an interview but whose Get into Summer experiences were discussed) was not known.

[2] This included anyone claiming Scottish Child Payment (SCP) or on Free School Meals (FSM) (checked at screening interview), or with an individual or combined income under the Child Poverty thresholds (under 60% of median household income after housing costs – checked at the end of the main interview for those not on SCP or FSMs) (estimates taken from CHILD POVERTY IN SCOTLAND: THE FACTS | CPAG, last accessed 16 November 2021).

[3] For the purpose of this research, given that most CYP invited to participate in this research were of school age, young mothers were defined as being under 25 at the time of their first child being born.

[4] After discussion with the Scottish Government, it was agreed that, rather than focusing on 'minority ethnic families', which is very broad, recruitment would focus on families who had English as a Second Language as they are likely to face specific barriers to accessing out of school/holiday provision.

[5] As defined in the Child Poverty Delivery Plan: https://www.gov.scot/publications/child-chance-tackling-child-poverty-delivery-plan-2018-22/

experiences of the funding in other local authorities and to ensure nothing significant was missing from the final evaluation. Participants were also asked about their views on the funding model and how this might work best for any future provision. The workshop took place on 13th December 2022 with 32 participants from 20 different local authorities (it should be noted that 5 of these were case study areas).

Review of monitoring reports

All local authorities were asked to submit quantitative monitoring data on attendance and activity types to the Scottish Government. Data from 28 out of 32 local authorities was submitted and suitable for analysis. The data was cleaned and combined into one dataset and then some summary statistics were produced (totals and ranges for key variables across all local authorities).

It should be noted that, due to some data quality issues (inconsistencies in counting, interpretation, and missing data) only key figures with data provided from most local authorities have been included in this report.

Data collection and analysis

Discussion guides were developed to ensure all relevant issues were covered in interviews (see Appendix C). In-depth interviews were conducted either by telephone or video call (depending on participants' preferences) between August and October 2022. Within the evaluation timescales and budget, it was possible to offer families in some local authority areas (that were easily accessible to the research team) the option to participate in-person. Nine families took part in face-to-face interviews/mini groups. Families were given £35 to thank them for their time. All interviews/mini groups were facilitated by members of the research team and were recorded for subsequent analysis.

Data from interviews were summarised into thematic matrices (using Excel, with each column representing a theme and each row an individual interview, so that the data could be sorted in different ways for further analysis). These were developed by the research team and drew on the research questions and logic model. These thematic matrices were then reviewed to identify the full range of views and experiences under each theme.

Scope and limitations

All research is subject to challenges and limitations. First, it is important to keep in mind that this evaluation took a largely qualitative approach. The aim in qualitative research is not to achieve a sample that is statistically representative of the wider population, but to identify as much diversity of experience as possible. Estimates of prevalence based on qualitative data are therefore inappropriate and this report avoids quantifying language, such as 'most' or 'a few' when discussing findings from qualitative interviews.

Similarly, the qualitative nature of this evaluation, and the fact it used a case study approach involving eight local authorities, means it is not possible to provide

evidence showing exactly how the funding was used across all local authorities. This includes the extent to which the funding was used on additional elements of summer programmes over and above what would have been provided without the Summer Programme funding, as well as the prevalence and extent to which funding was used on childcare compared to other activities.

Overall, the range of programmes covered, and recruitment quotas set, enabled the evaluation to hear from families with a wide range of characteristics and circumstances, including those on low incomes, with disabilities or ASN, from ethnic minority backgrounds, or with lone parents or young mothers. The research also includes the perspectives of people representing each of the Scottish Government's six TCPDP target groups. However, within the available timeframe, resources and recruitment approach, it was not possible to hear from each of these target groups in equal proportions, nor from participants in all of the numerous types of activity across Scotland that were funded through the 2022 Summer Programme. This limits the ability of this evaluation to comment in detail on which specific activities might work best for different groups – although it does identify enablers and barriers across activities.

The opt-in nature of the recruitment of families and providers was another limiting factor. The ability of the research team to hear from a range of participants across a range of activities was dependent first on local authorities and partner organisations sending invites on our behalf, and then on families getting in touch with us directly. This may have biased the sample towards those who wished to share experiences of summer activities that were particularly positive or negative. The provision of information sheets to accompany the invitation sent by partner organisations, outlining the purpose of the research and the appeal to hear from a wide range of people whatever their experience, was intended to mitigate this risk.

Another limitation is that although providers were asked about any groups that they felt were more difficult to reach, the research did not include interviews with CYP and families who did not take part in activities. While this does not negatively affect the quality of the data gathered, it should be kept in mind that there may be further barriers to participation that the evaluation could not identify. It is possible that data collected from providers may be skewed towards more positive aspects of delivery, although providers did consistently reflect on areas for improvement. It should also be noted that only perspectives of providers involved in the Summer Programme took part in this evaluation and not those who were unable to or chose not to.

The timing for interviewing was, as far as possible, intended to reduce any recall bias around elements of programme delivery by providers or the experiences of CYP who attended. However, it is possible that recall – particularly among the youngest children interviewed – became more limited as fieldwork progressed.

There were challenges reported by local authorities and delivery partners around collecting quantitative data to complete monitoring and evaluation templates, including issues identifying which target groups families were part of. Therefore, there was not a consistent approach to collating the quantitative data and the figures on attendance in the reach section may not be comprehensive.

Finally, the timeframe for this evaluation (interviews for which were completed by mid-October 2022) meant that it focused more on the short- and medium-term outcomes from the Summer Programme, as outlined in the logic model (Appendix A). While there is some consideration of the perceived likelihood of the programme having longer-term impacts, further research would be required to assess the extent to which this actually happens in practice.

Report structure and conventions

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

Chapter 2: **Overview of Summer Programme and planning the offer**. This chapter outlines the types of activities delivered using the funding and how providers approached planning the offer.

Chapter 3: **Participation and reach** assesses the level of engagement among eligible families with Summer Programme, including barriers and enablers to participation.

Chapter 4: **Perceived impacts for children and young people** considers to what extent the Summer Programme achieved the intended short-term outcomes for children and young people set out in the logic model.

Chapter 5: **Perceived impacts for parents and carers** examines evidence of short-term outcomes for parents and carers (from hereon in referred to as 'parents' for brevity), with a focus on those included within the logic model.

Chapter 6: **Perceived impacts for local authorities and delivery partners**. This chapter explores the perceived impacts of the Summer Programme funding on those involved in the planning and delivery of summer activities, with a focus on partnership working.

Chapter 7: **Key learning from the 2022 Summer Programme**. This chapter synthesises the key lessons learned from the previous chapters, as well as the views of local authorities on the funding model overall and suggested improvements.

Case studies are included throughout the report to illustrate important points and diverse experiences. These are based on real experiences, but pseudonyms have been used and some details have been changed in order to protect anonymity.

This research was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the international quality standard for Market Research, ISO 20252.

2. Overview of the Summer Programme and planning the offer

Key points

Benefits

- A wide range of activities were delivered through the Summer Programme funding in line with the intended outputs of the logic model.
- The funding had enabled local authorities and their partner organisations to **improve their summer provision** for CYP by:
- enhancing or expanding existing provision;
- increasing the reach of existing activities to the target groups; and
- adding new activities to their summer provision.
- The ways in which programmes were designed in order to reach the target groups ranged from **universally available services with some funded places,** to **activities for specific target groups only**, such as programmes for CYP with ASN, vulnerable families, and refugees.
- In general, **healthy free food was provided** at Summer Programme activities. Free transport was typically only provided if a need was identified.

Challenges

- A number of **challenges** were identified in relation to programme planning, including:
- a lack of capacity among existing teams and difficulties recruiting suitably trained, seasonal staff.
- the timing of the confirmation of the Summer Programme funding and subsequent **short lead-in times**, resulting in difficulties reaching the target groups, the quality and design of provision, and procuring services and value for money.
- **food provision** challenges such as minimising food waste, preparation time and the need for all day food provision.
- the expense of providing free transport to all CYP.

The overall aim of the Summer Programme 2022 was to ensure that eligible children and families benefited from a range of childcare, activities and food provision that met their needs during the summer holidays, while the intended outputs from the programme logic model highlight more specific aims including:

- provision of a range of childcare and activity sessions
- new/innovative holiday activities
- appropriate food provision
- accessible transport
- support for low-income families.

With these outputs in mind, this chapter describes the range and types of activities that Summer Programme funding supported, and the different ways in which they were delivered, before going on to look at how providers planned their programmes and the challenges they experienced in doing so.

Range and delivery of funded activities

Range of activities

Overall, the Summer Programme was successful in providing childcare and a wide range of activities for CYP and families who engaged in the Programme (Table 2.1). These included playschemes, activity clubs, sports camps, youth groups, outings and day trips, and regional hubs or 'roadshows', where activity sessions took place in a different rural community each week. There were also examples of local authorities purchasing or discounting places in registered childcare provision or providing vouchers to CYP to allow them to choose from a range of different activities in their local area.

> "We gave vouchers to kids to then access stuff in the holidays that they wouldn't have been able to, because their parents couldn't [afford it]. So then they got a £100 voucher and they could choose what they wanted to do."
>
> (Local authority representative, local authority 2)

Table 2.1: examples of activities delivered

Choice of a range of activities / opportunities to try new things	**Percentage of local authorities offering this** (data covers at least 27 LAs in each instance)
Sports/active: football; basketball; netball; dance; skateboarding; cricket; rugby; park games; horse riding; water sports; skiing; surfing; mountain biking; sports tournaments	96%
Outdoor activities: den building; orienteering; outdoor learning; geocaching; beach picnic; bug hunts; mud kitchens	89%
Arts/STEM: music; media; computing; photography; arts and crafts; drama; media; graffiti workshops	86%

Specific programme for children with an ASN	86%
Play: Lego; storytelling; free play; messy play; scavenger hunts	79%
Trips/holidays: farms; safari parks; laser tag; Edinburgh Dungeons, residentials, family holidays	74%
Transition activities: various activities specifically for those starting primary /secondary school	68%
Community projects and events: painting an underpass; litter picking; recycling; gardening; mural design; street play; gala days; pop up roadshows	64%
Passes for community facilities: leisure facilities; community attractions; travel passes	61%
Intensive family support: 3rd sector organisations working with families (e.g., Women's Aid, Children First), therapeutic programmes	50%
Access to support organisations: facilitated access to support agencies (e.g., welfare rights); introductions / reconnections with agencies / support workers through staff joining trips	43%
Vocational activities: work with local employers; local colleges, team building	41%

Providers took a range of different approaches to the design and delivery of their programmes, including the provision of food and transport, summarised below.

Across the 24 local authorities that provided relevant data, 26% of total spend was spent on food provision.

Across the 18 local authorities that provided relevant data, 10% of total spend was spent on ASN provision.

Enhancing existing activities and facilitating new offers

The delivery of the Summer Programme funding varied across different local authorities in terms of the extent to which they delivered activities in-house or funded external partner organisations to deliver them.

In general, the funding had enabled local authorities and partner organisations to improve their summer provision for CYP. In some cases, additional funding had been provided by local authorities to further expand provision. For example, one local authority made it free for all CYP to attend a programme after the Summer Programme funding had been used to fund places for target families.

"[Partner provider] were running [provision]. Once our local elected members found out that there was going to be free affordable childcare, they then put funding towards it so that the universal service was also free."

(Local authority representative, local authority 7)

Various ways in which local authorities had provided additionality to their summer provision included:

- **enhancing or expanding existing provision:** the funding had been used by providers to enhance or expand existing provision (for example, offering a wider range of activities and trips, that would otherwise have been unaffordable), or increasing the length or frequency of existing activities, by offering longer or more sessions.

  "[Without the funding] we would have only been able to do a reduced version of [the programme], we couldn't have taken them [on trips]."

  (Partner organisation representative, local authority 8)

- **increasing the reach of existing activities to the target groups:** the funding had also been used by providers to include more CYP from low-income families. For example, by offering free places to these CYP, or hiring more staff which allowed for increased capacity.

  "The funding allowed us to employ [more] staff which meant we didn't have to income generate to bring those staff in. That meant we could bring in extra kids […] For example, it allowed our sports camp to allow an extra ten places per day for free for the identified young people."

  (Local authority representative, local authority 8)

  "So, it wasn't like we set up bespoke services to deliver that, they were already [set up]…and so we provided some additionality or we said can we pay for ten kids to come to the football academy, for example."

  (Local authority representative, local authority 2)

- **adding new activities to their summer provision:** entirely new programmes had been delivered over the holidays, such as playschemes and sports camps targeting low-income families. This included existing providers who ran sessions during term-time being able to also offer sessions across the summer holidays.

  "There was our football camps [and] there was certainly more trips out to places, wildlife parks and things like that too. So, that was all new, [we] wouldn't have been able to fund that before."

  (Local authority representative, local authority 2)

Design of programmes

The design of programmes also varied. Some were designed with the main aim of providing childcare, enabling parents to work or train during the summer. These tended to provide longer running, daily sessions – for example, playschemes running all day, from Monday to Friday, for several weeks over the summer. However, there were also examples of providers that were only able to offer full-day sessions for two or three days a week. It is worth noting, however, that there was some uncertainty among local authorities as to what constituted 'childcare'.

> "Childcare was in the title but then it was still quite loose within the criteria which was great, because a lot of our stuff you could be like, 'Is that childcare?' But then they [Scottish Government] were very much like, ''No, no, it doesn't have to be regulated childcare, it can be, like a multisport camp counts as childcare or what not', so maybe just a bit of a tweak of the language in there would help us, because you did have a lot of people going like, 'We don't know how to provide childcare, like what does that mean?'"
>
> (Local authority representative, local authority 6)

Other programmes, often those delivered by partner organisations, focused more on other outcomes for CYP and parents and tended to offer shorter, weekly or twice weekly sessions. The length and frequency of these sessions varied – from one or two hours to a full day, and one-off sessions to those that ran across the holiday. Providers emphasised the benefits of the Summer Programme for CYP in the target groups.

> "One of things we have said, this is all about childcare for parents to get into employability, but there is also aspects from a poverty perspective, not just financial poverty, but poverty of experience. Children are getting to meet with their friends in a place that is safe, where they are learning other skills, where they are getting social connections that they would maybe not get had they been at home."
>
> (Local authority representative, local authority 8)

There was also variance in the scope of the activities that were delivered. While some sessions were run for CYP only, others offered wider family involvement and support, where parents were invited to attend some, or all, of the sessions. For example, there were providers who delivered support services for vulnerable families during term-time who ran family days and activities during the summer. Providers could also offer support or signpost parents to support services if needed.

> "We had [a] family games hub […] It was about the family choosing what activity they wanted to participate in and doing that with their children. So, it could have been like arts and crafts, games and some STEM activities."
>
> (Local authority representative, local authority 3)

Targeting

As described in Chapter 1, the Scottish Government provided guidance on the target audience for the funding. The ways in which programmes were designed in order to reach these groups ranged from universally available services with some funded places, to activities for specific target groups only. The qualitative nature of the evaluation does not allow for comparisons of the effectiveness of different approaches to be made.

Universal services were open to all CYP, but had funded places made available to low-income families (or other target groups, such as CYP with ASN), in addition to paid places for CYP from the non-target groups. Target families were typically referred to these providers through schools or social work services.

Place-based approaches, where services were based in areas of multiple deprivation, were another means of reaching the intended groups. Although anyone could attend, locations were chosen so that most families were likely to fall into the target groups. As discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, this was considered to be helpful in minimising stigma of attending and was felt to work best when services already operated in the area and had existing relationships with families.

> "We are based in a community that experiences multiple deprivation and a lot of social issues, and naturally a lot of the young people that engage with our provision, fit within a lot of the targeted groups."
>
> (Partner organisation representative, local authority 6)

However, there was also an example of a local authority who used the flexible element of the funding to target rural areas outwith areas of high deprivation where they knew there was a support need for low-income families.

> "We would prioritise [funding] applications that came in that were located within areas with higher levels of need based on the SIMD data. But ... as a local authority we have a lot of rural poverty […] For example, in [local area], we know there is huge need there, so we did support some activities there."
>
> (Local authority representative, local authority 1)

There were also examples of providers who delivered programmes and sessions aimed at particular groups of CYP – these included:

- activities for children and young people with **ASN**, for example specialised play and arts and craft activities, sports/physical activities, and day trips
- sessions aimed at children **transitioning** from primary to secondary school
- programmes for children and young people from **families with support needs** – including families with mental health issues, substance misuse problems, and victims of domestic abuse
- young carer groups

- **refugee families** – for example, activities for Ukrainian or Syrian families.

Food provision

The Summer Programme appeared largely successful in delivering its outcome of providing children with consistent access to nutritious food during the school holidays. Indeed, there was a recognised need for this among local authority and partner providers.

> "There [was] a definite wish for us to provide food. I think it makes a massive difference to families – food poverty in the school holidays is very real. [If] there was food left over, we always just gave that away to the families, and people would never refuse it."
>
> (Partner organisation representative, local authority 1)

Providers reported that food was generally offered at Summer Programme activities. When lunch was offered, it tended to be a packed lunch, or a hot meal if the venue's facilities allowed. Snacks included fruit, yoghurt and 'treats' like flapjacks or plain biscuits. In general, the Scottish Government's school meal nutritional guidelines were followed and used healthy ingredients as much as possible - typically this meant no fried food, no sugary snacks or drinks, no plain white bread, no chocolate and the use of low fat or low salt ingredients.

Where lunches were not provided, reasons given were: session length and timing; experience from 2021 of lack of demand and resulting high levels of food waste; and, in one case, a planning oversight.

Providers delivered food in different ways, either preparing it on-site or using third party suppliers, for example, the local authority's catering team or local caterers. There were also examples of CYP being involved in food preparation by helping to make their own lunches or by taking part in specific cooking and baking activities.

Transport provision

Provision of accessible transport was a further output of the Summer Programme.

The location of the venues of the different programmes ranged from provision hosted at centrally based locations in a local authority, to those based in targeted areas of high deprivation or in rural areas. However, while free transport was provided to all CYP for outings such as day trips and excursions, free transport provision to regular venues varied and was generally only provided if the need was identified – for example funded taxis for families with social anxiety issues (and not comfortable using public transport), or CYP with ASN from families without their own means of transport.

Further, free transport was also offered in some settings to allow CYP based in rural locations to attend sessions or events that they would have been unable to attend using public transport.

> “A lot of [the children] came from some of our rural communities […] So although [the venue] might have been a local place in [the city], children came from some of our rural communities and they were transported in, because we know this was quite a barrier.”
>
> (Local authority representative, local authority 1)

Programme planning

Overview

Programmes were typically planned using existing knowledge of what works, gained through relationships with local partners and families and experience of delivering similar provision, including the findings of evaluations of previous summer programmes. This experience had been used to make improvements to service delivery, such as streamlining administrative processes, communicating more effectively with families, and identifying staff training needs in advance (such as training to work with CYP with autism and other ASN).

> “We built on our learning from previous years and previous evaluations to make sure that we were constantly meeting the needs of the parents […] And we learned things around [CYP’s] social and emotional needs, and that those might be more than [our partner organisations] anticipated.”
>
> (Local authority representative, local authority 7)

Providing choice

Providing CYP with a choice of activities was an intended outcome of the programme and something providers described incorporating into the planning stages. However, they typically felt limited in the extent to which they could involve CYP in this due to the short lead-in time available and relied instead on their previous experience.

> “If there was a longer run-in, we’d just have so much more time to plans things and get out to more kids and offer new activities. We could have enhanced the levels of engagement and got kids involved in the planning.”
>
> (Local authority representative, local authority 8)

There were, however, some examples of activities being co-created with CYP – such as through consultation sessions, conversations with CYP and families in advance of the summer holidays, or planning sessions with CYP either towards the start of a programme or an ongoing basis to inform the provision of future activities.

> “A really important part of the project was to involve children in the planning. So, I designed the first session in terms of how do we go about helping children make decisions? [And] then the children decided what they would like to do for the second session.”

(Partner organisation representative, local authority 1)

Staffing

Summer programmes can, of course, only be delivered with sufficient and suitably trained staff to plan and deliver them.

Within local authorities, programme planning was generally carried out by core staff, given responsibility for the allocation of Summer Programme funding, along with input from other staff from various service areas (including childcare, family support, community learning and development, health and wellbeing, and leisure) who helped design provision. Within partner organisations, managers and team leaders tended to be those responsible for funding applications and planning. The delivery of programmes was largely carried out by a mix of permanent full-time or part-time staff, with seasonal staff and volunteers recruited if necessary.

A number of challenges were identified by providers in regard to staffing, all of which were felt to be exacerbated by the short lead-in time from confirmation of funding and delivery of programmes. Firstly, teams responsible for the planning and oversight of the delivery of the programmes did not always feel they had the capacity to do this. The impact of this on these staff is discussed in Chapter 6.

Secondly, those seeking seasonal staff described difficulties recruiting suitably qualified staff for the summer holidays, within the lead-in time available. In part, this was thought to be due to competition among childcare providers for seasonal staff during the run up to the school holidays, but it was also attributed to wider difficulties recruiting staff to the childcare sector (and care sector in general).

> “It’s a nightmare. I think this is not just a local problem, it is a national problem to try and recruit staff at the moment. Even for permanent posts, not just sessional posts […] It has definitely been harder this year, more options for people. [They] can go work in Asda and make more money and it is not as intense as this.”

(Partner organisation representative, local authority 1)

Local authority providers from regions that did not have afterschool club provision noted that, because of this, they had a smaller pool of existing staff to draw upon for summer and so were more reliant on the external recruitment of staff.

The short lead-in times also meant that providers did not have enough time to properly train and embed temporary staff – this was important for staff working with CYP in areas of high deprivation or with ASN, where staff need time to train and then develop trusting relationships with these groups.

> “When you work with children from areas like this it can take time for them to warm up to staff."

(Partner organisation representative, local authority 5)

In particular, both local authority and partner providers identified a growing need within childcare for training for seasonal staff to work with CYP with ASN.

> "A lot of the staff were only employed for four weeks. So, we are saying, 'How do we get experienced staff when we are only employing people for four weeks of the year?' […] I mean [they had] basic training, like child protection training, first aid training, and general awareness training. But there wasn't the kind of training that the staff would need to be able to manage the children [with autism]. That is something that we are looking at for future provision."
>
> (Local authority representative, local authority 7)

Challenges of planning activities within a short timeframe

In line with the findings from 2021, it was clear that the main challenge to planning summer provision was the timing of the confirmation and receipt of the Summer Programme funding. Local authority providers reported receiving confirmation of their funding allocation in April, while partner providers generally said they received confirmation of their funding from local authorities in June, weeks before the start of the summer holidays.

In some cases, partners did not receive confirmation until days before the start of their programme and, at the extreme end, were those who reported having been close to cancelling their programme altogether or who had to use their own (limited) funds to book and plan their summer programme.

> "The timescales were very short […] I had to start spending money [to book trips], so we had to dip into our reserves and we don't really have reserves. I ended up getting in touch [with the local authority] and said, 'If you don't give me the money by Friday, we will have to cancel the holiday programme.' They were really receptive to that and apologetic and we got the money very shortly after."
>
> (Partner organisation representative, local authority 8)

In addition to staffing challenges, the short lead-in time had a number of other perceived impacts on provision planning, including:

- **reaching the target groups**: providers noted that a longer planning period would have afforded them more time to work with schools and local services, to identify and refer more CYP from the target groups. In addition, for programmes that accepted self-referral applications from families, more time would have allowed for screening applicants to ensure that places were going to eligible families.
- **impacts on the quality and design of provision:** there was consensus that a longer planning period would have allowed providers to expand and enhance the quality of their provision, for example to start programmes earlier in the summer holidays, to provide a wider range of activities, to involve CYP in the co-creation of activities, or to book and secure trips or activities in advance.

> “We are really committed to trying to give these children and their families the best possible experience over the holidays but I don't think we were actually really enabled to do that because of the timescales."
>
> (Local authority representative, local authority 7)

- **funding applications**: local authority providers said that, with more time, they might have received submissions from a wider pool of applicants. It was thought that the short timescales meant only those with sufficient staffing and resources in place were able to apply. They would also have had more time to review applications and potentially outsource more provision to external providers, which in turn would have taken some of the burden off local authority services. Further, partner providers felt that if they had more time to plan and consider their applications they could have enhanced their provision or asked for additional funding if required.

> "Because of how quick the turnaround was we couldn't really ask for that much [funding], because there was a limit to what we could actually achieve at such short notice. For example, if we were wanting to book tickets to places there would be no guarantee that there would be spaces left."
>
> (Partner organisation representative, local authority 1)

- **procuring services and value for money:** there was also a sense that programmes could have been run more cost-effectively had there been more notice, giving more time to explore options, for example, venue hire, identifying and booking trips, and transport or food provision.

The ability to effectively deliver provision within the lead-in time was linked to the existing provision and partnerships already in place within a local authority. Those with little existing provision found it more challenging, having to spend more time developing new activities or reaching out to partner organisations.

The **change to the funding criteria** in 2022 had also had an impact on advance planning. Where providers had expectations that criteria would be in-line with 2021 funding, they had to alter their plans once they had the details for 2022 .

These challenges also meant that there were local authorities who reported an underspend.

Food and transport challenges

While providers felt that it was important to be able to offer free food to low-income families, they identified a number of challenges in planning and delivering this provision. These included:

- **minimising food waste:** providers talked about the challenges of balancing the food preferences of CYP with the need to follow Scottish Government school meal nutritional guidelines. Examples were given of CYP who they felt could be described as ‘fussy eaters’ bringing their own packed lunches and

of providers compromising on the guidelines in order to ensure CYP ate, or to encourage return attendance.

> "Young people are not going to say, 'We want [food at activities] to be the exact same as school meals.' … they want a bit of respite from that. They want to be able to have a can of juice on a hot, sunny day."
>
> (Partner organisation representative, local authority 6)

Variable attendance at programmes could also result in food waste where attendance was lower than expected on a given day.

- the **staff time required to source and prepare food**, particularly, when there were a variety of dietary needs to be catered for.
- among providers of all-day activity sessions **the need for free food provision throughout the day**: while this was identified as a need, providers noted they had not planned for nor received sufficient funding to allow this. Examples were given of CYP arriving hungry in the mornings, without having had breakfast. Some programmes said they were able to offer CYP fruit or yoghurt. However, in other cases, CYP would buy unhealthy snacks from a tuck shop if no other alternative food was available at that time.

> "We really need to look at how do we provide, not just the lunch, but … some kind of breakfast, and it needs to be provided in a way that children can take what they need when they need it, rather than having to pay for sweets at half past nine in the morning."
>
> (Local authority representative, local authority 7)

- as described above, free transport provision to regular venues was generally only provided if the need was identified. The **main challenge to providing free transport to all CYP was the expense.** While this had been provided in some local authorities in 2021, reduced funding allocations in 2022 meant this was not possible this year.

> "The funding was planned differently this year so some of the supplementary stuff that we managed to put in last year missed out. Plus, there was more money last year."
>
> (Partner organisation representative, local authority 8)

- **availability of some transport options** was a further challenge: one provider mentioned a lack of coaches in an area that had seen local companies go into liquidation during the Covid-19 pandemic. The timing of the funding announcement made finding available transport challenging and trips had to be planned around coach availability. Another highlighted logistical issues with having enough staff with a licence to drive a minibus.

3. Participation and reach

Key points

- Local authorities worked closely with partner organisations to identify and reach the intended target groups, using a range of approaches. These approaches related to both the type of programme and its specific target audience.
- A mix of wider advertising and direct invitations was employed to communicate the Programme.
- Providers had considered how to engage families in a non-stigmatising way and this appeared to have been largely successful.
- Facilitators to effective and non-stigmatising communication included: having positive, existing relationships with families; the use of place-based approaches; careful use of language; assuring parents of confidentiality.
- Broadly speaking, providers were pleased with the level of attendance at activities. However, there was variation, from activities being full and operating waiting lists to those being withdrawn due to low attendance.
- Cross-cutting barriers to participation in Summer Programme activities included: activities being free meaning no consequences for families to sign up and then not attend; families living in challenging circumstances struggling to prioritise activities; associated costs for attending; transport barriers; appeal, choice and description of activities.
- Cross-cutting enablers included: providing free activities and including food; existing positive relationships with families; issuing reminders and operating waiting lists; and making activities as easy as possible to get to.
- Provision for CYP with ASN was delivered by both adapting universal provision running targeted provision for CYP with ASN only. Additional challenges were faced delivering these programmes, in particular having suitably qualified staff.

This chapter assesses the reach of the 2022 Summer Programme. In particular, it relates to the participation/reach component of the logic model and considers whether, as intended, the funding reached CYP in all local authorities and was primarily spent on children aged 5-14 from low income families from groups identified in the TCPDP (see Chapter 1). It begins with discussion of the ways in which the Summer Programme was advertised and communicated to the target audience. This is followed by analysis of data from the local authority monitoring data on the level of participation in the Summer Programme, including the limitations of what can be concluded from this data, and providers' views on overall attendance. Finally, evidence from the qualitative research with families, as well as professionals involved in the design and delivery of activities, is used to consider barriers to participation and ways in which these might be overcome.

Advertising and communicating the programmes to the target audience

This section explores how local authorities and delivery partners identified target audiences and then communicated the activities to them in a non-stigmatising way.

Defining the target audience

The target audience for the Summer Programme Funding is detailed in Chapter 1, while ways in which programmes were designed in order to reach these target groups are covered in Chapter 2.

Local authorities described various methods of identifying the target families, which tended to be linked to the programme design and its specific target audience. For example, different approaches to reaching target families were used for programmes that were universally available (but offered some funded or discounted places); those only available to low income families; and those for more specific groups (e.g. children with ASN).

For low income families, the principal approach to identifying eligible families was to focus on income rather than on the basis of their TCPDP priority group characteristics. Ways of doing this included:

- the use of central management information systems detailing families eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) or school clothing grants;
- creating income thresholds whereby families whose self-certified income fell below the threshold were eligible.

Providers described difficulties identifying families in the six priority groups directly due to a lack of available data sources. However, there were exceptions to this, with families with children with ASN and some minority ethnic families (refugee families in particular) being reached via partners working with these groups. Notwithstanding whether or not the six priority groups were directly targeted, families reached were largely from these groups, as would be expected given 90% of children living in poverty in Scotland fall into one or more of these groups.

Place-based approaches were a further means of attempting to ensure provision reached those likely to be on low incomes. In these cases, programmes and services were situated in areas of multiple deprivation where families were more likely to be low income. Having an existing presence in the community and established relationships with target families was a further feature of place-based approaches. There were examples of this approach being used to reach communities considered to be isolated due to their rurality. Typically, programmes using place-based approaches offered places to all families in the community.

As described in Chapter 2, specific groups of CYP were also included under the 15% of funding which could be used more flexibly. These included: ASN, refugees, care experienced, transitions, mental health/wellbeing, child protection, ESOL, young

carers, substance misuse, and LGBT young people.

Providers also made use of existing knowledge of family circumstances to identify and reach those who may not formally meet the criteria but have a known need.

> "She might not have formally ticked all the boxes, but actually it made all the difference to her. So, [partners] had that freedom to allocate some of those places to their own families, if you like, that they knew, but we didn't necessarily, and we wouldn't necessarily know all of that detail."

(Local authority representative, local authority 2)

Advertising the Summer Programme

Methods used to communicate the offer varied in line with the programme design and the target audience i.e., whether it was open to all or for a specific audience only. Where appropriate, multiple approaches were used by individual programmes.

Direct invitations tended to be sent via email or text from organisations with existing databases of their target groups or from schools who used knowledge of their families to invite eligible families.

Wider advertising took the form of promotion via websites, social media, posters and brochures and tended to be employed where programmes were more universally available. While the advertising was typically aimed at parents rather than CYP, there was mention of deliberately placing posters in locations where they would be spotted by CYP, in order that they were not reliant on their parents seeing advertising. The impact of children having access to promotional materials was highlighted by a provider, describing a family who had only attended due to the child seeing promotional materials and requesting to attend.

> "[One parent] was very honest and said that it was only because [her son] had seen the list that they came along. But, if we had just gone to her phone, he wouldn't have seen that. […] I think this is a mum that really struggled to go out and finds it difficult mixing with people. But having that motivation of her son wanting to go [made a difference]."

(Partner organisation representative, local authority 1)

Parents also reported hearing about the programmes via word of mouth, for example from others who were attending.

Regardless of the way in which they had heard about or been invited to the programme, parents tended to be happy with the method. While there were some suggestions that programmes could be more widely advertised it may be that, in these cases, providers had decided to target invitations directly instead. Providers noted that advertising widely can result in spaces being taken up by parents who are not facing challenging circumstances and tend to be quicker to respond.

Communicating in a non-stigmatising way

Providers had clearly given a great deal of consideration to how best to engage target families in programmes and ensuring they did so in a way that minimised any stigma that might be associated with attending. With a small number of exceptions, parents did not report feeling stigmatised by being invited to attend (this was not discussed explicitly in the parent interviews unless raised by the parent), and appreciated being offered the provision, suggesting that the methods employed by providers had been largely successful.

> "It was quite nice when [football coach] told us about them, because […] he knows most of us, our situation at home as well, so like he knew we can't afford the family holidays like camps which he is organising when he is at work. So, he said to me, this is free, you don't have to pay for the camp so maybe [child] can come along and, yes, he was really nice."

(Parent of child aged 10, local authority 2)

One lone parent did feel a degree of stigma, having been offered the provision due to her circumstances. However, on balance, she was pleased to have received it.

> "There's always two sides to it [being invited directly], feeling a bit like 'why is this offered to me?' but, on the flip side, it's amazing. For the rest of the holidays, I was getting friends and family to watch her while I'm at work. They had holiday club but it was too expensive […] just being a single parent, it is great the help that you get but especially now everyone's aware that people like single parents get that help, it creates stigma that you need help more than anyone else."

(Parent of child aged 7, local authority 6)

Facilitators to effective and non-stigmatising communication included:

- **having positive, existing relationships with families:** families were felt to be more likely to respond in a positive manner to invitations when they came from professionals they were already engaged with. Cross-sector working, particularly with schools and third sector organisations, was key to this;
- **the use of place-based approaches** which are open to all within a community. Linked to the above point, these approaches were most effective when organisations had an existing presence in the communities;
- **careful use of language in communicating the offer**, ensuring they were not explicitly communicating the reasons families were being invited;
- **making sure efforts to minimise stigma also cover the delivery stage by and assuring parents of confidentiality**: where funded places were offered at universal programmes, efforts were made to ensure that neither delivery staff nor other attendees knew who had a funded place. One method was to provide families with vouchers to book onto activities of their choosing.

However, there were factors which made engaging with the right families, and

doing so in a non-stigmatising way, challenging. Firstly, and as described in Chapter 2, the short lead-in time limited opportunities to target families via existing relationships. The target criteria were also discussed by providers. Specifically, they noted the decisions they had to make around families who fall into one of the six priority groups but who they know are not low-income.

> "One of the criteria was if you had three or more children […] and I thought … 'that is just about every kid in my school'. Actually, it certainly would have been for me, I had more than three children, but I wouldn't have needed it. My view was they needed to hit the benefit criteria and be one of those, rather than one of those [TCPDP priority groups] in its isolation, so that was how I was trying to target it because otherwise we could have been offering it as I say to everybody."
>
> (Local authority representative, local authority 2)

Examples were also provided of instances in which processes had slipped up. In one case, a school had sent the invitation to all families rather than only target ones, resulting in places largely being taken up by families who were not the intended target group. In other cases, parents described not having been aware that they were being offered a funded or subsidised place at a childcare programme until they were at the booking stage. While these parents would have used the provision anyway, there may be other parents who would have signed up for programmes, had they known they were eligible for subsidised places.

Estimating participation in the 2022 Summer Programme

Data submitted from 29 local authorities shows that a minimum of 158,292 children and young people attended activities throughout the 2022 Summer Programme. However, it is important to note that this is a minimum estimate due to missing data from three local authorities and the provision of various 'drop in' activities where attendance data could not be accurately recorded. Although local authorities felt they had been able to reach the target audience sufficiently, it was not possible with the data collected to objectively measure the extent to which the funding was used to support children from low income families.

Providers' views on attendance

Broadly speaking, providers were pleased with the level of attendance at Summer Programme activities. As would be expected, however, there was variation, with some activities being full and operating waiting lists and others being withdrawn due to low attendance. In some cases, attendance was reported to be on a par with 2021 while, in others, it was lower. It was suggested that attendance in 2021 may have been particularly high due to the stage of the Covid-19 pandemic at that time – families were looking to start doing things again but may have been less likely to go on holiday than they would in a normal year.

Providers acknowledged that they did not always know the reasons for low attendance, particularly in cases where attendance on the day was substantially lower than registered numbers. The discussion on barriers that follows is therefore

speculative to a degree. Furthermore, it is important to note that only those families who took part in Summer Programme activities were included in the research.

Barriers and enablers to participation

The remainder of this chapter focuses on cross-cutting factors seen (by providers, CYP and parents) as limiting and enabling participation. This is followed by a discussion of the specific barriers and enablers for children with ASN and those with English as a second language, particularly refugee families.

Cross-cutting barriers to attendance

Rather than describing specific groups who were less likely to take part in Summer Programme activities, providers generally described various factors which they felt limited - or had the potential to limit - participation. These could apply across target groups and were often specific to an individual's/individual family's circumstances.

Cost-related barriers

While activities being free generally acted as an enabler, it could limit attendance, as families had nothing to lose by signing up but not attending. Providers reported a sense of frustration when attendance was lower than expected. This was not to say they felt there should be a charge (as that would create different barriers) but it did mean that spaces on fully-booked programmes were wasted. Efforts made to minimise the impact of this are discussed below under 'enablers'.

As noted in Chapter 4, parents described some costs associated with attending activities. In cases where families struggled to afford this, it could cause embarrassment for both parents and CYP themselves.

> "I felt embarrassed and [son] was embarrassed because one day I couldn't even give him money for the tuck shop so he didn't get anything and he was left out."
>
> (Parent of a child aged 6, local authority 7)

Family circumstances

Providers commented on difficult family situations (for example parental substance misuse) of target CYP which meant that parents were not always able to get them to activities. Parents themselves also described their own mental health as a barrier. When these parents had to take their child in to the building to register them this could be more challenging than school drop-off where they did not have to go in.

> "If the children are living a wee bit further away and their parents are substance users, which quite a lot of them are, the [parents] don't want to leave the house, so there's nobody to take the kids [to the club]."
>
> (Partner organisation representative, local authority 1)

Providers also noted that CYP could feel anxious about attending programmes, particularly where there were no existing relationships with providers, and that this could affect attendance. Ways in which providers supported such families are discussed below.

Transport and rural barriers

Accessing programmes could be challenging, particularly in rural areas. Parents who took part in the evaluation had often driven to activities but commented on how difficult it would have been to get to them otherwise. It is likely, therefore, that there were families who were not able to attend due to transport barriers. Indeed, one parent reported that her child was only able to attend when they could get a lift from another parent. Transport issues were particularly acute for CYP with ASN who may be unable to use public transport.

> "Well, if I didn't have the car then we wouldn't have been able to take part in the activities… the kids don't do public transport, so if they had put a bus on or a taxi on it would have been a lot easier for getting back and forward."

(Parent of young person aged 14, local authority 5)

Providers acknowledged some inequity of provision, paritulcarly in rural areas, which was the result of logistical issues and budgetary constraints.

> "There was certainly some areas that had very little […] There would have been lots of places in the outer reaches in the very rural areas that they would have had to travel. We did try […] but they might have had one or two days in the whole holidays […] there certainly wasn't equity or anything near equity."

(Local authority representative, local authority 2)

Planning and activity related barriers

The appeal and choice of activities could also act as barriers. While CYP were typically able to choose which activities to sign up for, there were reported instances of them being allocated activities by their school. These activities may not have appealed to CYP or worked logistically for families, and providers noted attendance appeared lower as a result. Providers also reported that activities which were a bit less intuitive (for example a 'youth café') were not always well attended and suggested that materials may need to provide more information. Similarly, while, on the whole, CYP reported having enjoyed the activities they attended, there were those who were put off returning having not enjoyed their experience.

> "I was meant to go for two days for the football one… and because I didn't like the guy [coach] I was just like, 'I would rather spend time with my grandma and grandad [who were visiting]' […] If it was the same people again, I wouldn't go back, because I just don't think they are very nice."

(Child aged 11, local authority 4)

As previously noted, the short lead-in time caused a number of planning challenges for providers. In terms of how this impacted on families' ability to attend, the short notice meant that they may have had other plans in place for the summer, particularly if they needed childcare in order to work. Furthermore, while families generally knew at the outset of the activity programme which days across the summer they had places, frustrations were noted by parents where a different approach was taken and they found out week to week, making it difficult to plan.

For working parents it was important that the timings of programmes fitted around working patterns. For parents working 9am-5pm, there was often a need for 8am-6pm provision, which wasn't always available.

Enablers to attendance

Several features of provision emerged as being effective in facilitating attendance.

It was clear that the fact activities were offered free of charge played a key role in families being able to afford to attend. As discussed above, even small associated costs could be barriers to attendance. The fact that food was provided further reduced costs during the holiday and was welcomed by both providers and families.

The existing relationships between families and providers was felt to have improved attendance in various ways. These included: more effective targeting of families in greatest need; being better able to communicate the provision in an effective and non-stigmatising way; and greater knowledge of support required to enable attendance (for example knowing which parents will find it difficult to get their children to activities). One provider described the contrasting experiences of attendance at their programmes compared to others. She felt that the fact that the staff were local to the area was a further facilitator to engagement.

> "Our clubs are largely run by local people […] and I think that that makes an enormous difference that these people are known and trusted and they share experience. In the other projects that young people are talking about, they don't know the adults, they parachute in, they deliver something to them and they go back home to their lovely, privileged place where they live. What is different about what our clubs do I think is that they are real people, that makes a massive difference in engagement, they're not 'being done to."

(Partner organisation representative, local authority 2)

Spending time following up with families, for example issuing reminders and operating waiting lists, was something providers felt worked well. Parents also reported being appreciative of receiving reminders. Providers acknowledged that families in difficult circumstances could require a high level of 'hand holding' to attend. While some providers were able to invest time in engaging these families, for example knocking on doors to take CYP themselves, others did not feel they had the time. There were logistical challenges for some providers who wanted to issue reminders but did not having access to contact details held by the schools.

> "I think the text [reminder] was quite good […] [for example] this week, we are going to do this, you need to wear these clothes, and we're going here and stuff, so making sure they had the right things on for the activities as well, that helped."
>
> (Parent of children aged 4 and 11, local authority 1)

Making activities as local and as easy as possible to get to, for example providing transport, was also seen as facilitating attendance. Families in rural and island areas were pleased to have provision available more locally than they had previously, particularly given the current high fuel costs.

> "Well, I think the fact that there was activities available was just superb, because it is expensive to go to the mainland for us. It is difficult to get there because of the transport, because of the increasing tourism, and then it is difficult to get ferries booked and to be able to return on them, so, yes, I think it was a really brilliant opportunity for kids on the island."
>
> (Parent of child aged 11, local authority 4)

The timing and variety of activities also boosted attendance. Parents appreciated the flexible nature of the offer that allowed them to fit programmes around their schedules and only sign up for the sessions required rather than full weeks. Families commented positively on the wide range of activities on offer, meaning that there was something that appealed to their child.

Case study 3.1: The value of using place-based approaches and building relationships with families

One local authority community learning and development team explained how they had drawn on their existing relationships with families they worked with throughout the year to deliver a successful summer programme.

A series of activities and trips were developed based on consultations with families prior to the summer. They used a place-based approach, whereby all families in the areas were eligible to participate, although activities were first communicated directly to the families they were already engaged with.

The whole family approach was chosen as the providers knew that many of the parents they worked with were not working and would also benefit from joining. The trips were free and included transport and lunch. Providing lunch for the whole family was seen as important in terms of minimising stigma.

Overcoming attendance barriers

The programme was very popular with families and trips operated waiting lists. The providers noted that, although the trips were always fully subscribed, there were families who did not turn up on the day. This was a source of frustration as they knew families on the waiting lists would benefit from the trips.

> "I have to say it was the minority, but the mindset of 'it is free, we have not paid for it, so we don't need to actually get up and go'. The easy thing is to put a nominal fee of £2 or £5 on the trip but, actually, if you've got three or four members of the family due to attend that trip, suddenly they don't sign up. But we did on trip days find drop out, and I think, just in speaking to them after, there was just the apathy of, 'oh well, we didn't lose anything from it'.

To address this, they issued reminders, created reserve lists, and, in cases where they knew families were in challenging circumstances, go as far as to knock on their doors and offer to take the young person to the activity.

> "Just even engaging with those young people from really, really, vulnerable poor families, it might not be the parent's priority to get up and make sure the kids get on that trip. We have got staff phoning going and chapping doors."

Despite being used to working with this group, they were surprised at the amount of 'hand holding' that was required and the amount of staff time this took up.

Wider support for families

The trips had indirectly incorporated family support by having employability officers attend and speak to parents in an informal way. The engagement between the provider and families during trips was a further benefit and was felt to be invaluable in planning their programme for the year ahead.

> "The Summer Programme kind of almost informs our work for the next year, it is a huge consultation exercise for us, we are able to invite families on to a trip and then talk to them about what else would really benefit them throughout the rest of the year. So, in terms of consultation it doesn't really get much better, you know, we fill out a form online, [but it's much better] talking to them on the bus."

Families who participated reported very positive experiences of the programmes and did not report feeling stigmatised for having attended.

> "Every family I've spoken to absolutely loved it. The workers go above and beyond […] it's something we would love to be involved in again."

Facilitating participation among families with ASN

Providers gave examples of the actions they had taken to try to ensure Summer Programme activities were accessible to those CYP with ASN. This included both the adaptation of universal activities to be more inclusive (e.g. additional staffing to support their needs) and running targeted, tailored activities specifically for children with ASN, often through provider organisations already working with families. Transport to activities was sometimes offered. Providers reported ASN programmes being well attended and parents said that they were pleased to have something available to them when this is not always the case.

As noted in Chapter 2, staffing pressures were felt more keenly in relation to supporting children with ASN. This was primarily due to the high level of support and training required to work with this group, making it difficult to recruit new staff at short notice. Therefore, staffing ASN provision relied on those working with this group during termtime (for example Pupil Support Assistants) being willing and able to work in the holidays, which was not always the case. In some cases, providers reported having to rely on parents staying at activities in order to run them, which meant they did not receive the benefit of respite.

A related challenge was the need for children with ASN to be supported by staff who know them and understand their needs. This was generally facilitated by staffing programmes with those who were involved in their care or by funding organisations already delivering programmes with this group. This was confirmed by families interviewed for this project, who had participated in activities offered through their schools or existing support groups and were very positive about this, noting that it had helped to put them at ease. When the programme was delivered in an environment CYP were already familiar with, this was an added benefit.

> “[For] somebody who does have anxiety, I think the fact that it was in the school grounds …was really helpful rather than going, I don't know, into a leisure centre or something that he didn't know.”
>
> (Parent of child aged 11, local authority 4)

Straightforward registration processes were also praised by parents. This may be a further benefit of programmes being delivered by providers who are already engaged with families, and who already have information on families’ needs.

> "It was really simple, which in the world of disability it is really refreshing […] because often you have to do lots of form filling and jump through hoops sometimes to get the support that you need for your child with the disability."
>
> (Parent of child aged 6 with ASN, local authority 1)

Facilitating participation among refugee families

Local authorities also described their experiences of including provision for refugee families, who were likely to face language barriers. They noted difficulties reaching these families as well as ensuring they felt included at activities. It was recognised that more could be done, such as having interpreters at programmes.

> “We kind of tried to integrate them into the trips and things that were already there. We did a couple of standalone activities…but they were offered the full programme. Some came along to different days or activities but, again, that very often came down to staffing and whether or not we could have interpreters there, whether or not there were particular staff available to support them.”
>
> (Local authority representative, local authority 3)

4. Perceived impacts for children and young people

Key points

- CYP were able to try various **new activities**. This made programmes exciting and enjoyable and CYP were typically keen to do them again.
- Where CYP felt they had **choice**, this was viewed positively and could increase enjoyment and motivation to attend. However, where there was not much choice, but CYP enjoyed what was on offer, they did not seem to mind having limited options.
- There were mixed views from CYP and parents on whether **food** provided was healthy and met their needs.
- 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.
- It was clear that CYP enjoyed outdoor elements of programmes. There was some evidence of CYP spending **more time outside** than usual as a result of attending activities.
- There was also evidence of CYP spending time **outside their usual environment** and of this being a very positive element of programmes. Indeed, for some CYP, visiting new places on trips was a highlight.
- There were opportunities to take part in **physical activity** at a number of programmes. There was some evidence of the Summer Programme leading to an increase in physical activity during and after the summer.
- It was clear that CYP enjoyed the activities they took part in and that there were a number of **wellbeing benefits**. These included: feeling happy; increased confidence; having a routine; feeling calm and relaxed; improved mental health; and gaining independence.
- Spending time with **friends or making new friends** was important to the enjoyment of programmes. For some CYP this was the best part.

This chapter explores perceived impacts of the Summer Programme for children and young people, focusing particularly on the evidence for the short-term impacts identified in the logic model. The chapter looks at priority outcomes, secondary outcomes and other outcomes mentioned by CYP and families. Secondary outcomes were not covered in detail in the interviews so discussion of these is more limited. Analysis draws mainly on CYP and family interviews but also on discussions with local authorities and providers where appropriate.

Priority outcomes

Opportunities to try new activities

CYP were able to try various new activities. These ranged from sports like paddle boarding and boxing, to activities like cooking and baking, to visits to the theatre and zoo. CYP had typically enjoyed trying these new activities and were keen to do them again.

> "It was good because, if I didn't go, I don't think I would have thought about those sports or activities, so going opened my mind up to other sports."

(Child aged 12, local authority 5)

Being able to try new activities made programmes exciting and enjoyable, with CYP looking forward to getting to try something different. However, where CYP had not been offered the opportunity to try something new, they reported still having enjoyed taking part in familiar activities and spending time with friends. There was an acknowledgement that there is a limit to the kinds of activities that can be offered when programmes take place in a school environment.

CYP had also gained a sense of achievement as a result of trying new activities, particularly if they had been nervous about taking part beforehand, as well as a sense of pride in what they had learned - for example, facts about different animals, sports skills, and kitchen skills (discussed again later in this chapter).

> "I was super happy to see a panda [for the first time], like it was one of the animals we had to learn in the school. The teacher asked us, 'how do pandas look?' I saw them and I was super happy telling the teacher about them."

(Child aged 9 from a refugee family, local authority 2)

Case study 4.1: Jenny

Jenny took part in various summer activities organised by the club she attends. As part of their summer offer, she got to try paddle boarding for this first time. It was her favourite part of summer offer because she got to try something new, whilst spending time with friends and meeting new people.

Jenny was initially nervous about taking part but soon had fun spending time in the water and making friends.

> "…I was a bit nervous at first but when I got on and had my first fall in, it was me and one of the boys on a paddle board and racing up and down and the instructor was watching us and he was laughing at us. I think it was really fun, it was a good way to kind of go out and try new things especially quite a fun activity. You could all laugh and make new friends and you could all push each other in the water, it was quite funny."

Jenny is a young carer so a wider benefit of the funded activities for her was meeting and sharing experiences with other young carers.

"I think it helped me realise that I'm not alone, that there is other people, maybe you don't see it as much because the way they handle it, but there is other people out there that you could know that could be a young carer."

Jenny's mum explained that, since taking part, Jenny has been keen to continue paddle boarding and how it was great for her to see Jenny enjoy herself.

"…she is desperate for a paddle board and stuff. So, I think by giving them these experiences it then shows them different things that they may be interested in and that they can maybe carry on and do, and I would say just gave them great joy, it was fantastic to see them coming back laughing and smiling and having a great time."

Choice of a range of activities

Where CYP felt they had choice, this was viewed positively and could increase enjoyment and motivation to attend. Yet, where there was not much choice, but CYP enjoyed what was on offer, they did not seem to mind having limited options.

The amount of choice available generally depended on the format of the programme. In some cases, families could book themselves on a range of programmes while, in others, families were invited to a specific activity. The amount of choice on a given day also varied, with some offering different activities for children to choose from during the day and others having pre-set activities for all children to participate in.

While there was less of a focus on co-creation of activities than in 2021, providers discussed being reactive to feedback and trying to adjust activities depending on what was popular.

Families in rural areas commented that there is generally a lack of choice of holiday activities for them and that it is too expensive to travel further afield. They were pleased that there was something of interest for their children to attend this year.

"I think it is just great when the kids get the opportunities to do these things, especially in rural areas…if you're in a city there is so much going on but they seem to forget about [anywhere further away]."

(Parent of children aged 9, 10 and 13, local authority 2)

Parents of CYP with ASN also commented that suitable summer provision was usually very limited and were pleased to have options this year.

Consistent access to nutritious food during school holidays

Food provision varied by programme, as discussed in Chapter 2. It was clear that organisers and staff made efforts to make sure CYP did not go without food. There were, however, mixed views from CYP and parents on whether food provided was

healthy and met their needs. Where there were positive comments, these related to: CYP liking the food available; there being a range of options to choose from; accommodation of dietary requirements; and being able to ask for food and drinks if hungry or thirsty.

> "…if you were getting a bit hungry or thirsty after doing the activity you knew that you could ask for some water or a snack and it was there as a just in case and there was always extras for people that needed it, so that was really good."

(Young person aged 14, local authority 5)

Where negative comments were made, this tended to be because families thought there was not enough choice or enough food or CYP did not like the options available.

> "It was primary [school] food when we went, so I didn't eat it because I knew from experience it wasn't nice."

(Child aged 11, local authority 4)

While providers reported challenges in catering for different cultural and dietary requirements, their efforts were recognised by parents. For example, the provision of vegetarian options or specific foods requested for CYP with ASN.

> "I went in the first day and I was surprised to see they'd pretty much got everything I'd listed for him. It had his name written on. I remember [he] saw it and it was like Christmas – he couldn't quite believe that they'd gone through all that effort just for him. It did feel special."

(Parent of child aged 8 with ASN, local authority 6)

Secondary outcomes

As interviews with CYP focused on priority outcomes, there was less discussion of secondary outcomes. While the following outcomes were not major themes, they were clearly important aspects of the Summer Programme for some families.

Improved relationships with food

As a secondary outcome, there was limited discussion of whether the Programme contributed to improved relationships with food. However, there was evidence to suggest that, particularly in programmes with a greater focus on food (e.g., cooking or baking), there had been some wider impacts, as illustrated in case study 4.1. These included: developing kitchen skills; being encouraged to try foods they would not normally eat; and learning about healthy eating. CYP reported having continued baking at home and their parents having cooked meals at home that they learnt at the programme.

There were also lasting benefits reported at programmes where food had been less

of a focus. For example, one parent commented that their family had been provided with fruit as part of their lunch and had then continued to eat more fruit at home.

> “They don’t always eat a lot of fruit but at these things they were eating fruit so that was good…[we’ve] definitely made healthier choices at home because if you can eat fruit at a club you can eat it at home.”

(Parent of children aged 11 and 5, local authority 3)

Increased participation in activities outdoors/outside of their usual environment

There was some evidence of CYP spending more time outside than usual as a result of attending activities. For one family, the outside areas at the playscheme were a safer environment to play in than their neighbourhood. In other cases, though, it had made little difference as CYP would have spent time outdoors regardless. Nonetheless, it was clear that CYP enjoyed the outdoor elements.

> "My favourite bit about it was going outside and playing with my friends and hanging on the football nets."

(Child aged 9, local authority 3)

Not all programmes, however, had involved outdoor activities and this was something that was suggested as an improvement in these cases. It was recognised that there may be some logistical challenges to doing so.

There was also evidence of CYP spending time outside their usual environment and this being a very positive element of programmes. Indeed, for some CYP, visiting new places on trips was a highlight of the summer. For refugee families, the daytrips provided the additional benefit of helping them get to know their local area.

> “[The organiser] made our summer beautiful, and the most I went out was this summer…I went to beautiful castle which was a lovely day. I've never lived like this day before...at the end of the day all that happiness was around us.”

(Young person aged 20, local authority 2)

Increased physical activity

There were opportunities to take part in physical activities at a number of programmes. Due to time limitations, discussions did not always cover whether or not attending programmes had resulted in increased physical activity for CYP. Parents of CYP with ASN, however, did volunteer that this had been an important impact of the programmes, due to the fact there are not normally such activities offered to them.

> "[She] was terrified of water…day one at the swimming she just sat on the side lines with me and wouldn't go in and by day four she was in with floaties down the deep end"
>
> (Parent of child aged 6 with ASN, local authority 8)

There was also some evidence of the Summer Programme leading to an increase in physical activity after the summer. For example, one child who took part in a football activity had since joined a team, having previously struggled with group settings.

> "…before I couldn't get him to go to football, he has gone and he has joined a football club, and now he is going every month to a football club...Now he is managing a full football match, 90 minutes on a pitch with crowds and he wouldn't have done that before."
>
> (Parent of child aged 11, local authority 1)

Access to peer learning/further support

While not a major theme in the interviews, there were some examples of CYP accessing peer learning or further support. In one case, a youth club ran sessions where invited speakers talked about mental health and issues facing the LGBT community. Another programme provided an opportunity for young carers to connect and they have continued to support each other since.

> "I made a lot of friends with the whole young carers thing…we have this big group chat we have now where we all talk, and just kind of check up on them, message them, make sure everything is okay if they need a day out or if they just need a break just go out with them"
>
> (Young person aged 14, local authority 5)

Enjoyment and improved wellbeing

It was clear that CYP enjoyed the activities they took part in and that there were a number of wellbeing benefits of the Summer Programme. These included: socialising with peers (discussed further below); feeling happy; increased confidence; having a routine (particularly for CYP with ASN); feeling calm and relaxed (particularly for CYP with ASN); improved sleep; having something to look forward to; improved mental health; having role models in staff; and gaining independence.

There were differing views on the involvement of parents in summer activities in terms of CYP wellbeing. There were parents who commented that their child is shy or anxious and would not have attended had they not been involved in the activities too. Family activities could have positive impacts for CYP by helping families to build positive relationships by spending time together having fun. Other parents felt it was important for the child to have some time to themselves away from family

(discussed further below).

Improved wellbeing was a particular benefit for CYP with ASN. One parent described their son feeling calm at the activities, and this having the knock-on benefits of developing his communication and confidence.

> "…he tends to only verbally communicate when he is feeling calm and regulated, so the fact that he was actually able to verbalise new words [at activity] was so encouraging. So, it actually helped bring on his communication development, his social development and his confidence".

(Parent of child aged 6 with ASN, local authority 1)

There was also an important element of respite for children with ASN and for their siblings, and for young carers. CYP could spend time away from home in a safe environment where they could focus on themselves and the activities.

> "It was good because she got to go away and do something herself, whereas a lot of the time we're doing it as a family. So, I think she enjoyed it doing her own thing and meeting new people."

(Parent of young carer aged 10, local authority 5)

Where CYP had not enjoyed activities this tended to be because their friends were not there. Further, some parents felt that staff were inexperienced and they could have been better at interacting with children with ASN.

> "[Staff] were all right, but they didn't have a lot of patience for wee anes, you could tell they were new…even knowing that there are some kids with learning difficulties, and some aren't, they wouldn't know anything about any of that"

(Parent of a child aged 6 with ASN, local authority 7)

Opportunities to socialise with peers

Spending time with friends or making new friends was important to the enjoyment of programmes. For some CYP this was the best part of the activities. Programmes reduced social isolation and provided the only opportunity for some CYP to see their friends or peers during the summer holidays, particularly those living in more rural areas. In addition to the enjoyment this provided, parents felt it had helped to develop their children's social skills.

Other impacts

Other impacts of the Summer Programme mentioned by parents were: supporting transitions to primary or secondary school (by meeting people who would be in their class/year); and providing CYP with something to do to stop them instead "causing havoc in the community". There were also CYP who have expressed an interest in becoming a volunteer with the organisation as they had enjoyed the activities so much.

5. Perceived impacts for parents and carers and the wider community

Key points

- There was evidence to suggest that the Summer Programme helped working parents continue to work or made it easier to do so. However, this was dependent on the timing of activities, as well as other practical factors.
- The Summer Programme provided parents with valuable respite time. Parents mentioned using the time they had while CYP were attending activities to do household chores; rest and relax; socialise with friends; or spend time with other children in the household.
- There was generally no cost to attending Summer Programme activities. However, there was sometimes a nominal fee or indirect costs.
- When families said the Summer Programme had saved them money, this was usually on activity fees or food. There were also parents who would have missed out on work opportunities without the funded provision.
- However, it is worth noting that when asked about alternative summer holiday plans, parents typically listed free activities.
- Parents described various ways in which the Summer Programme had increased their own wellbeing, including peace of mind (that children were entertained and looked after); improved family relationships; having routine and structure; and mental health benefits from joining in with activities or trips themselves.
- There were mixed views on parental involvement in activities. Parents who were asked or invited to attend activities along with their children did not experience the benefits of being able to work or have respite time away from their child(ren). This was particularly true of parents of children with ASN. However, key benefits for those who attended included reduced social isolation and having the opportunity to connect with other parents.

This chapter covers the perceived impacts of the Summer Programme for parents. Data is primarily from interviews with families who accessed funded provision, as well as local authority and partner interviews where relevant. As in the previous chapter, it focuses primarily on the short-term outcomes included in the logic model (Annex A); specifically, providing more opportunities for parents to rest, train, work, or spend more time with other children in the household and reducing household costs during school holidays.

Impact on ability to work, train or study

There was evidence that the Summer Programme was important in helping working parents continue to work during the summer holidays, or made it easier to do so.

Without access to the Summer Programme, parents described a variety of ways in which they would have been forced to adjust their work arrangements to provide childcare themselves. These included: using annual leave or taking unpaid leave; reducing working hours, switching shift patterns (for example doing night shifts in order to look after children during the day); and working from home (while looking after their children at the same time). Parents felt that adjustments, such as having to change their hours, may have put strain on their working relationships with colleagues, and, in extreme cases, where they would not have been able to have met their work commitments, may have risked them losing their job.

> "I would probably have just changed my shifts to night shift or something and been with them throughout the day. It would have just been a nightmare. […] my work would probably be okay with it, but people have been difficult with me before when I have had to try and change things round"

(Parent of child aged 9, local authority 3)

The Summer Programme typically filled a gap for working parents who found it difficult to afford childcare. Although in some cases, particularly for families living in rural areas, there was felt to be not enough childcare provision in general.

The importance of Summer Programme came through when parents described the extent to which they had relied on it, often as a last resort, for childcare.

> "I don't know what I would have done maybe…because I did use that as, this is my last resort, I'd exhausted every family member. Financially [typical childcare options] would have took every single bit of my wages."

(Parent of child aged 6, local authority 7)

Providers also emphasised the importance of having affordable childcare, with one describing the Programme as a 'life-saver' for parents from low-income families.

The effectiveness of the funding in enabling parents to work was closely linked to the timings of activities. Longer activities, particularly playschemes with similar (or longer) timings to a school day, meant parents had enough time to work, while shorter activities were more limiting in this regard.

> "The timings, 10-3 is better than 10-1, which is annoying – you drop them off and then you're stuck in limbo before you go get them. So, a bit longer is better."

(Parent of child aged 11, local authority 6)

Aside from the timing of provision, distance and travel arrangements were also factors in whether or not the Summer Programme provided effective childcare for working parents. For example, one parent had to drive for an hour to drop off her child at the nearest funded activities and worked remotely nearby (without internet access). This meant she worked a longer day to make up for time lost traveling. While this parent felt it was worth the inconvenience, having provision more locally would have made it a lot easier and more efficient for her to continue to work.

While there was less evidence of parents using the time that CYP were attending funded provision for training or to study, parents in one family who had recently moved to Scotland as refugees from Ukraine, were able to attend an English course while their children attended a funded summer camp.

Opportunities for respite

While shorter activities did not facilitate working or training, they could still provide valuable respite time. Parents used the time that CYP were at Summer Programme activities to: do household chores; rest and relax; socialise with friends; or spend time with other children in the household.

> "I could just like sit down and do nothing as well, that's really nice sometimes."
>
> (Parent of child aged 10, local authority 2)

> "[You] can do stuff you need to do, without pulling a tribe with you and a trolley and everything is going all ways."
>
> (Parent of four children, local authority 1)

Respite opportunities were especially important among parents of CYP with ASN, due to extra challenges they faced in meeting their child's needs each day (case study 5.1). Having the opportunity to spend more quality time with other children in the household was also highlighted as an impact among this group, due to the fact that their children with ASN tended to require a lot of their time and attention.

Again, timing of activities was an important factor in whether the Summer Programme provided quality respite time for parents. It was important that parents had enough time to be able to leave CYP at activities and do something meaningful with the time, and there were parents for whom having more time was always preferable. Alternatively, other families, particularly those where at least one child had ASN, preferred shorter more regular activities or at least having this as an option. This was primarily due to longer activities being potentially overwhelming and inaccessible to children with certain support needs, but also a view among parents in this situation that having a regular slot to be able to get things done was more useful to them as respite compared to one longer day.

Case study 5.1: Tanya and James

Tanya lives with her husband Mark, her son James (6) and her daughter Rosie (4). James has autism and attended a summer club organised for children with ASN.

Tanya initially found out about the club through the family's social worker. It was very easy to register interest and sign up for the summer activities via email. The club offered a range of different activities that suited James' needs, including

sensory play, arts and crafts and baking. There was a large team of well-trained staff, which gave Tanya peace of mind.

> "[James] requires one-to-one supervision […] and as parents we felt relaxed about leaving him [at the club] because we knew he was in safe hands, which is really important."

The summer club offered Tanya and Mark some respite from their demanding, daily care responsibilities, which had a positive impact on their overall wellbeing.

> "Mentally, it made a big difference to us as parents because we knew that we were going to get that break as well, you know, and our daughter would get that break, because [our son] can be quite physically aggressive when he gets overwhelmed, so we were getting a break from meltdowns and aggression."

It also meant she could spend more one-on-one time with Rosie, which could be difficult when James was at home, and gave her time to catch up with friends.

> "It is difficult to meet all [James'] needs all the time. So, [the club] really helped us as parents to not get burned out basically, and it really supported us as a family. […] I [was] able to spend those three hours at home with my daughter, relaxing if we needed to recharge a little bit […] I would be able to access activities for [her] that I wouldn't be able to take [him] to, so it really helped her development as well. And I was able to see friends. I've got friends with babies, and [James] really struggles to be around small children, so I was able to connect better with peers myself."

At the end of the summer holidays, the club ran a family day that Tanya, James and Rosie attended. For Tanya, this was a welcome social opportunity to meet and talk to parents of children with ASN and share experiences and advice.

Impact of parental involvement in activities

Parents who were asked or invited to attend activities along with their children did not experience the benefits of being able to work or have respite time away from their child(ren). This was particularly true of parents of children with ASN who were asked to stay if there were not enough trained staff to safely support their child to join in activities. Parents in this position felt this was unfair and were frustrated.

However, it is worth noting that not all parents were looking for childcare, and parental involvement could have significant benefits for parents and families (which are outlined in more detail later on in this section).

Furthermore, there was a view among parents who attended provision that this time could still function as respite for them to an extent. For example, they could socialise or do other things that were not directly related to caring for their child and not have to supervise their children as closely during the activities. There were also parents who believed that their children would not have attended without them, and

the alternative would, therefore, have been no respite at all. Furthermore, parents who had the opportunity to attend with their children felt this could help to build their child's confidence and increase the chance they could attend future provision independently.

Impact on household costs

There was generally no cost to attending Summer Programme activities. However, there was sometimes a nominal fee or indirect costs, for example having to or choosing to bring a packed lunch; paying for transport (including petrol costs); activities for siblings where activities were short and there was no time to go home in between; or one-off costs such as providing money to spend in a tuck shop.

When families said the Summer Programme had saved them money, this was usually on activity fees or food. One provider highlighted that food provision eased the financial burden during the holiday for families eligible for free school meals.

> "I didn't have to dip into my own pockets to give her a tenner to go out."
>
> (Parent of child aged 12, local authority 8)

> "When I have the children here all day during the summer holidays they're starving, hungry 24/7. When they're down there they're having great fun and are fed and watered for a £1 a day. It saved money in that sense."
>
> (Parent of children aged 8 and 12, local authority 5)

Parents who felt the Summer Programme had saved them money mentioned benefits such as reduced stress or not having to spend time budgeting for activities.

However, it is worth noting that when asked about alternative summer holiday plans, parents typically listed free activities such as going for a walk, going to the park or playing at home.

Among parents who had encountered costs attached to the Summer Programme, there were those who felt that the Summer Programme had been too expensive to attend, especially when indirect costs such as travel were taken into account.

> "It was £2.00 a day Monday to Friday extra, on top of the £5.00 all day ticket that you were getting each day to go up and down, it cost a fortune."
>
> (Parent of a child aged 6, local authority 7)

Increased parental wellbeing

Parents described various ways in which the Summer Programme had increased their own wellbeing, including peace of mind (that CYP were entertained and looked after); improved family relationships; having routine and structure; and mental health benefits from joining in with activities or trips themselves. Increased parental wellbeing was also widely mentioned by providers.

A strong theme among parents was that they felt happy to see their children happy as a result of attending the Summer Programme. Parents described having 'peace of mind' that their children's needs were being met and feeling less worried about keeping them entertained throughout the holiday.

> "It made me happy seeing my kids happy because, especially with my oldest, it took a whole load off, it took off pressure and stress."
>
> (Parent of children aged 4 and 11, local authority 1)

There was mention of reduced stress or guilt about spending enough time with CYP or organising varied activities throughout the summer. There was a sense among parents that the summer holidays can come with particular pressure compared to other times of year.

Another way in which the Summer Programme could lead to wider impacts for parents and families was by improving CYP's behaviour at home which, in turn, led to improved family relationships and made parenting easier. This was perceived to be because CYP had the opportunity to use up more energy at activities and were therefore less restless at home, or because taking part boosted their mood.

> "Before he started going to [funded activities], he would find the summer holidays incredibly difficult, and his aggression levels have went right down because of it."
>
> (Parent of child aged 6 with ASN, local authority 1)

> "When they're [all the children] stuck in the house they're just bickering. So it was a plus for everybody."
>
> (Parent of children aged 8 and 12, local authority 5)

When activities provided some routine and structure, this was seen as having mental health benefits for parents as well as for CYP, even when parents were not attending activities.

> "I don't think I would have actually survived the summer without them, having something like that to kind of revolve our week roundabout."
>
> (Parent of children aged 5 and 9, local authority 3)

There were mixed views on whether parents should be invited or involved in activities. While the impact of this on child outcomes is outlined in the previous chapter, advantages and disadvantages for parents were also discussed.

On the one hand, if the main benefit of the Summer Programme for parents was being able to work or have respite time, parental involvement was not desirable or practical. However, when parents did not need or want childcare, there were significant benefits reported from having activities which catered to the whole family. On the whole, both parents who had been involved and those who had not were happy with their experience, suggesting that providers had effectively

designed provision to meet the needs of their target families.

Parents mentioned personally enjoying activities and that taking part could boost their mood, especially when it provided the opportunity to socialise with other families which they would not typically have done otherwise.

Reduced social isolation was an important benefit, particularly among parents with anxiety around going out or socialising. There were also benefits for certain parents being able to spend time with other parents in similar situations to themselves, for example parents of CYP with ASN. The other parents and staff at funded activities could function as a 'support network', providing an environment where parents felt safe and free from judgement, and better able to connect with others. One parent who has social anxiety explained that attending their local funded programme had helped her build confidence to now take the children out herself.

> "It was the first time I'd been out since Covid, my anxiety had been so high. It was good that way, went out that way for the children, wouldn't have gone for myself. […] I enjoyed the parents being involved. […] it made me get out and I was interacting with other people and it wasn't as scary."
>
> (Parent of young person aged 14, local authority 5)

> "I think it is feeling part of community […] people feel like they are part of something, they have got that wider support network as well, and it is not just the work that our staff do, it is the work that they do with each other."
>
> (Local authority representative, local authority 3)

The Summer Programme could also give families the opportunity to spend quality time together away from worries or challenges they may be facing at home. Staff were also able to support parents to spend quality time with their children doing activities that they would not otherwise have been able to afford.

> "I think it is good because we get to engage with them in a different type of place than what we normally would."
>
> (Parent of children aged 4 and 11, local authority 1)

There were some examples of parents being able to access support, such as employment advice through the Programme, although no formal support or signposting was mentioned.

Aside from mental wellbeing benefits, there were some ways in which the Summer Programme had positively impacted on parents' physical health. For example, one parent was able to go swimming while their children attended funded provision, while another used the spare time catch up on her sleep.

> "I basically got to sleep and not feel guilty, and so when they would go I literally came back and went to bed and slept the time that they were away."

(Parent of young people aged 14 and 15, local authority 5)

However, one notable exception to the positive wellbeing impacts associated with the Summer Programme was a parent with health conditions, who pointed out that her son helps to care for her therefore having him away at activities was actually quite difficult and did not have any positive impacts on her own wellbeing.

6. Perceived impacts for local authorities and partner organisations

Key points

- Overall, there was a sense that cross-sector working had been a strength of the Summer Programme and is the result of relationship-building at the community level over time. There was also a perception that the funding had helped to enhance partnerships in the longer-term.
- Having partnerships in place to offer summer provision in a targeted way that caters to a particular group was identified as a key benefit of partnership working.
- Key benefits of the funding for those involved in the planning and delivery of programmes included: enhanced cross-sector working; the ability to deliver more ambitious or expanded programmes; or preventing some providers from operating at a financial loss or from having to reduce other services in order to run Summer Programme activities.
- Negative impacts for providers included increased workloads and stress due to the short lead-in time for planning activities, as well as challenges completing the monitoring and evaluation templates.
- Providers described ongoing learning about understanding the needs of low-income families from running their programmes. Enhanced cross-sector working was considered to be particularly important for this, as it was widely acknowledged that those working closest with CYP and their families all year round have the best understanding of their needs.

This chapter explores the perceived impacts of the Summer Programme funding on those involved in the planning and delivery, drawing primarily on interviews with local authority and partner organisations. Where aspects relating to planning, communication, targeting and reach have been covered elsewhere in the report, this chapter focuses on the delivery of the programmes and experiences of cross-sector working. It also considers the short-term outcomes of the Summer Programme funding for providers relating to the logic model, including:

- robust cross-sector working
- improved understanding of the needs of low-income families

The chapter begins with an overview of cross-sector working, what was felt to enhance this and what were the challenges. It then explores the perceived impact of the funding on partnerships and views on future cross-sector working. Finally, it considers the impact of the funding on the staff and organisations involved in planning and delivering the programme.

Cross-sector working - overview

Local authorities reported a wide range of partnerships involved in the delivery of the Summer Programmes, as summarised in Table 6.1. While delivery partner organisations sometimes described themselves as a partner of their local authority, they also mentioned a range of other organisations that they had worked with or services they had used to deliver summer provision.

Table 6.1: examples of cross-sector working

Partnerships mentioned by local authority representatives	Partnerships mentioned by delivery partner organisations
Third sector organisations Childcare businesses Colleges Sports organisations and clubs Children's centres Primary and secondary schools Social services Environmental groups After-school clubs Community interest groups Youth groups Churches	Colleges Sports organisations Caterers Schools and social services (for referrals) Businesses in the leisure industry

Both existing and new partnerships were identified by local authority representatives and partner organisation representatives as being part of their delivery of the Summer Programme. Delivery partner organisations described how existing partnerships had been built over several years, developing into close working relationships. The main reasons given for working with existing partners were the levels of trust to deliver services to a high standard, but also the limited lead-in time limiting their ability to explore new partnerships.

> "It is impossible with the timescales involved in this particular funding to develop [new] partnerships, you are reliant on existing partnerships that are in place that can be adapted around the extra resource. There would have been a lot more potentiality for partnership working with other organisations had we had the opportunity to plan around it with this funding in place."
>
> (Partner organisation representative, local authority 6)

Where new partnerships were forged, these developed during the planning stages and happened in numerous ways, such as: through tapping into voluntary networks to encourage organisations who hadn't been involved previously to apply for funding; through word of mouth; through researching cost-saving alternatives; or as a response to the pandemic and the need to adapt summer programmes (such as by introducing more community-based and outdoor activities).

Experiences of cross-sector working

Overall, there was a sense that cross-sector working had been a strength of the Summer Programme and is the result of relationship-building at the community level over time.

Those who developed new partnerships attributed the success of these to the flexibility and willingness of partners to offer provision according to the funding requirements, and at speed.

> "We were very grateful that they were so flexible in terms of just being able to say, 'yes, if they want to do sport, we will do whatever they want to do basically'."

(Partner organisation representative, local authority 1)

Having partnerships in place to offer summer provision in a targeted way that caters to a particular group (such as children with ASN or young carers) was identified as a key benefit of partnership working.

> "We worked really closely with [a partner] throughout the year to build relationships with care experienced young people that are engaged with them, but also, they were another target group that were prioritising our trips for young people, and also supporting their families too."

(Local authority representative, local authority 3)

Outlining clear roles, responsibilities and timelines, as well as open communication, were also highlighted as success factors for effective cross-sector working, whether with new or established partners.

In addition to the aforementioned challenge of forming new partnerships within the short timescales of the funding, teething issues with new partners, particularly where there was a lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities or poor communication, were also noted. Staffing pressures and budget constraints were also mentioned, which providers felt limited the options available to them.

> "A good programme is one that is varied. Some children are there 10 hours per day. But we work on a shoestring budget so it's very hard to get partners in to do activities."

(Local authority representative, local authority 3)

Impact of funding on cross-sector working

The intended positive impacts of the Summer Programme funding on cross-sector working were broadly recognised by providers. There was also a perception that the funding had helped to enhance longer-term partnerships.

> "It definitely impacted positively, it further built and strengthened relationships with a couple of organisations."
>
> (Local authority representative, local authority 8)

Among local authorities in particular, there was evidence that the funding enabled them to expand their cross-sector working, either by involving new partners in the planning process or by linking up with organisations who are embedded in the communities and who have a deeper understanding of the needs of CYP and families in their local areas, or who are already supporting target groups.

> "I think there are huge benefits to that. I think these partner organisations know so much more than we do because they are in the thick of it. [The funding] helps for longevity of partnership working, building those relationships is key because they know so much more than we do."
>
> (Local authority representative, local authority 6)

While acknowledging the positive impact of the funding on cross-sector working, providers also highlighted that effective partnerships are the result of relationship-building over several years and not just for the summer holiday period.

There was a clear appetite among providers to continue and expand partnership working in the future. Particularly where new or existing partnerships had been developed successfully, local authority representatives and partner organisations were enthusiastic about the benefits of cross-sector working to deliver future programmes.

However, as noted above, the short lead-in time, combined in some cases with staffing and budget constraints, had acted as a barrier to expanding partnerships. Unless the funding model changes (discussed in more detail in Chapter 7) to one which gives greater security of funding and planning time, providers felt there would be limited opportunities to expand partnerships further.

Case study 6.1: the value of partnership working

A working group, formed of youth organisations, volunteer networks, as well as local authority staff across policy areas including out of school care, sports and outdoor learning, and lifelong learning, supported the planning of this local authority's summer programme.

Forty programmes were funded, encompassing a wide range of groups and activities, including early years and families, out of school care, arts, culture and heritage, sport and physical activity, outdoor learning, ASN, and children in need of protection. Many of these were existing partnerships but the involvement of the volunteer network in the planning facilitated expansion of the local authority's reach with new partner organisations.

It was clear to this local authority that trusting partners to deliver the right kind of programme for the families in their communities was fundamental to effective cross-sector working. Related to this, the flexibility around the criteria enabled partners to identify those who would benefit most, despite not being in the target groups stipulated by the funding.

> "Having that degree of flexibility in there is also huge, because a lot of these organisations that are already working with the targeted groups know what might work, and it perhaps might not fit in with the criteria that is being given."

There is an appetite to further expand cross-sector working in the future, having seen the value of this approach this summer. The local authority would seek to develop new partnerships and offer support to those who could benefit from the funding but have not applied for it previously. The main challenge for the local authority was the lead-in time. This limited the extent of partnership working and is considered to be the main barrier for future expansion:

> "It probably could be expanded and upscaled […] if we knew something was coming and we can build it into a larger programme. This was very much, right, what can we do in the timeframe and with the money that we have got to get going."

Other impacts for providers

Benefits

In addition to enhanced cross-sector working, local authority and partner organisation representatives identified several other ways in which the funding had positively impacted on their experiences delivering summer programmes. These have been discussed in greater detail in chapters 2 and 3 but, in summary, included:

- empowering providers to offer **more ambitious programmes** and **expand their capacity and reach**, giving staff a sense of satisfaction and fulfilment;
- preventing some providers from operating at a **financial loss** or from having to **reduce other services** in order to run the Summer Programme.

> "People are just really, really, engaged and excited about summer, you can't wait to put on a programme that [is] aspirational […] in the past we put on holiday programmes and they are great, we do the best we can with what we have got, arts and crafts, cooking, baking, we go walking, but these are really, really, exciting trips and really, exciting experiences, and we can see the difference that has to people life. I think that has probably been the biggest impact, certainly for me and my team. People are really proud to be doing really, really, good work.
>
> (Local authority representative, local authority 3)

Difficulties experienced

The challenges of delivering the Summer Programme with a short lead-in time are described in Chapter 2. Providers described the negative impact this had on them personally. Words like “frantic” and “stressful” were used to describe the impact of the funding timescales on staff.

> “To find out so late it is not great for the team when they are trying to plan. It is not good for my stress levels because you really want to know that you've got that money and you can tell the team that they can go ahead and confirm things.”
>
> (Partner organisation representative, local authority 1)

Staff described feeling “drained” and “burnt out” as a result of the time and effort that went into planning and delivering programmes over the summer, particularly if they had been busy with other duties during the run up to the end of the school term. Examples were given of staff having to work additional hours to allow provision over the summer or having to cancel or delay holiday plans until after the summer holidays as a result of working during the summer. As highlighted by a local authority representative, this had the knock-on effect of limiting provision at other times after the summer:

> "We weren’t really in a position to do much over the October holidays, because we’d called upon so many of our own staff over the summer that they were then having to take their annual leave in October."
>
> (Local authority representative, local authority 1)

Local authority representatives cited the monitoring and evaluation requirements as a further challenge of the Summer Programme funding. It was felt that, although there had been some input from local authorities in its design, the format of the final monitoring spreadsheet was overly complex and not intuitive for those not used to working with this kind of template, which added to workload issues.

Overall, local authority representatives broadly agreed that teams and coordinators did not have the time they needed to effectively manage the Summer Programme funding, particularly if reliant on existing staff taking this on in addition to their core responsibilities. There was a view that to achieve sustainable coordination of the Summer Programme and other similar funding within local authorities, it needs to be a dedicated year-round role rather than a seasonal one.

Understanding the needs of low-income families

Providers identified a range of ways in which they gained an enhanced understanding about catering to the needs of low-income families through planning and delivering the Summer Programme. Much of this was considered to be part of continual learning that providers gain, not just in the summer, but from the ongoing relationship that they build with families in their communities over time. The specific learning is covered in detail in Chapter 7.

7. Key learning from the 2022 Summer Programme

This chapter summarises key learning from the 2022 Summer Programme. It highlights key themes that have emerged in previous chapters in relation to maximising the benefits of the Programme, as well as drawing on the views of local authorities across Scotland (as shared in the local authority workshop at the end of the fieldwork period) on the funding model and suggested improvements.

Maximising benefits for families

A wide range of activities were delivered through the Summer Programme funding in line with the intended outputs of the logic model. The funding had enabled local authorities and their partner organisations to improve their summer provision for CYP by: enhancing their existing provision; increasing the reach of existing activities to the target groups; adding new activities to their summer provision.

The families who shared their experiences of attending the 2022 Summer Programme as part of this evaluation highlighted various ways in which the Summer Programme was perceived to have benefited and supported them.

Apart from CYP enjoying funded activities and having something to look forward to, perceived benefits for CYP included: developing their knowledge, skills and confidence through trying new things or spending time outside of their usual environment; having the opportunity to socialise with peers and to connect with other adults; building social skills; and having consistent access to food throughout the holidays. These factors contributed to an overall sense that the Summer Programme had boosted CYP's mental and physical wellbeing.

When activities facilitated parents being able to work or have respite time to do other things, this was seen as a significant advantage of the Summer Programme. Parents who attended funded activities along with their children also reported various benefits in doing so, primarily increased mental wellbeing. Wider impacts for families included reduced pressure on household budgets, as well as enabling parents to spend more time with other children in the household while CYP attended the Programme (something that was particularly impactful for families where the child attending activities had ASN).

Key features of the Summer Programme that helped to maximise positive impacts for families included:

- **The range and choice of activities offered**. The wide range of activities on offer and giving CYP a choice in what activities they went to was seen to enhance their experience and increase the appeal of the Summer Programme. When CYP had the opportunity to try activities they had not done before, this helped to achieve positive outcomes including building confidence and new skills.

- **The timing of activities** was critical in determining how useful the Programme was at enabling parents to work or have respite. Longer activities, particularly playschemes with similar (or longer) timings to a school day, tended to be better for working parents.
- **The flexibility of targeting criteria** was viewed positively among providers, particularly in relation to maximising the reach of the funding. While there was an appreciation of having clear criteria, providers stressed the importance of being able to apply their local knowledge and there was an appreciation of being able to use 15% of funding outside the TCPDP groups where they identified a need.
- **Food provision**. While families who took part in this evaluation tended to see the food provision as secondary to the activities, partners described situations where food provision had been key to supporting participation among lower income families. A further learning was that, when food was incorporated into activities, for example including CYP in preparing their food or having cooking sessions, this could lead to additional benefits.
- **Partnership working** was viewed as a key strength of the Summer Programme. Perceived advantages included boosting the range and number of activities on offer, and enhanced targeting and reach in cases where partners had developed close relationships with CYP and their families and a deeper understanding of their needs.
- **Effective communication with families** was important in maximising attendance and reducing stigma. Effective approaches included: communicating via partners with existing relationships with families; issuing reminders; and investing more time in approaching families in difficult circumstances, for example visiting them at home (although time to do this was limited). Providers identified various ways in which they had reduced stigma such as careful use of language on communications; using place-based approaches (rather than targeting individuals); and assuring parents of confidentiality if they received a funded place at a universal programme.
- **Providing transport,** where possible, had helped make the Summer Programme more accessible and easier to attend.

Potential barriers

While this evaluation found that the Summer Programme generally met the needs of target families, there were some challenges discussed across both planning and delivery of the Programme, where further action may be needed to further reduce barriers to achieving the desired outcomes for CYP and families. These challenges included:

- **The timing of funding.** This was the main challenge discussed by providers, causing various issues. The short lead-in time made it more difficult for providers to plan the programme, to recruit staff, and to engage in partnership working. This had consequences for delivery, primarily in terms of the capacity and reach of the Programme.

- **Staffing the offer**. Providers highlighted structural issues around staff with the appropriate skillset typically needing to take their annual leave during the summer, as well as a lack of sessional staff with the appropriate training to support CYP with ASN. While more lead-in time could help to ease these pressures, there was a view that a general lack of staff remains a challenge.
- **Targeting the offer.** Practical issues when targeting families were discussed by providers, including difficulties identifying families in the TCPDP groups. Short timescales limited the time available for targeting and could also lead to problems liaising with schools once they had closed for the holidays. For some authorities, there was uncertainty around the targeting criteria, specifically around inviting families that were not on a low-income (but fell into a TCPDP group); what is meant by offering 'childcare'; and the guidance on providing for CYP with ASN.
- **Transport barriers**. Activities that were far away or difficult to get to could be a barrier to CYP attending activities at all, or negatively affect parents' ability to work effectively either by requiring travel time or a shift in working arrangements to fit around the provision. The main challenge to providing free transport to all CYP was the expense.
- **Other cross-cutting barriers to attendance for families** included activities that were **too short** for parents to leave their children for a meaningful amount of time; providers not having enough time to provide extra support to engage **families in challenging circumstances**; instances where activities incurred direct or indirect **costs** or, alternatively, a perceived lack of commitment among families **when activities were free**; and a **lack of appeal** of activities or **anxiety** among CYP about attending.
- **Provision in rural areas.** There was an acknowledgement among providers in rural areas of some inequity of provision due to logistical issues and budgetary constraints.
- **Ensuring appropriate staffing to support CYP with ASN to take part.** While there were various examples of actions taken by providers to make activities accessible to those with ASN, there were particular staffing pressures due to the extra training required to work with this group. A further challenge was the need for children and young people with ASN to be supported by staff who know them and understand their needs.
- **Catering for refugee families.** Local authorities who had experiences of planning provision for refugee families noted difficulties reaching these families and ensuring they felt included at activities. It was recognised that more could be done, for example having interpreters at programmes.
- **Concerns about managing expectations.** There were concerns raised among providers that families will expect to receive a similar level of support in future summer holidays as has been available in the 2022 programme and the 2021 Get into Summer Programme. This was linked to uncertainty about future funding and related timescales, discussed in more detail below.

Future funding: what works and what could be improved

Overall, providers were broadly happy with the model for funding for the Summer Programme. There was support for the funding going through local authorities, for the flexible approach to the criteria, and for the inclusion of food provision as part of the offer. The focus on partnerships and opportunities to connect with other local authorities to share best practice was also highlighted as a strength of the funding this year.

When it came to what could be improved, the timescale of the funding was a strong theme. There was a clear appetite for the funding to be awarded much earlier, ideally at least a year in advance, to support the planning process. However, there was general agreement among providers that a different funding model is needed to make any future Summer Programme effective. An annual fund to cover all holiday periods, or a multi-year funding approach were identified as ways to better support delivery organisations with their planning.

While the application process was considered to be straightforward for some, not all delivery partners found it easy to complete. There was a perception that the process can be onerous and is not consistent across different local authorities, which may be off-putting for some organisations. It was suggested that a more user-friendly and supportive application process would help to widen the pool of providers applying for funding.

There was also a suggestion that the monitoring and reporting process could be improved. The time required to complete the monitoring templates was perceived to be significant and not accounted for as part of the funding. It was therefore suggested that a simplified template with guidance on how to complete it would help to save time and clarify to delivery partners what is needed. Furthermore, there were providers who felt uncomfortable collecting the information required to determine whether or not families fell into the TCPDP groups, leading to gaps in monitoring reports as well as affecting their ability to target provision.

Appendix A – Logic Model

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short term outcomes/impacts	Medium to long term outcomes/impacts

Funding
 	
Staff
 	
Scottish Government administered guidance on eligibility and activity provision
 	
Facilities
 	
Transport
 	
Food supply
 	
Local knowledge
 	
Local Partnerships
	Programme staffing:
	• Recruitment
	• Training
	• Cross-sector partnership working
	
	Programme design:
	• Identifying additional funding sources
	• Designing childcare/activity sessions
	• Identifying new options for childcare/activity sessions
	• Activities co-created with CYP and families
	• Identifying and mitigating access barriers
	• Non-stigmatising approaches to participation
	• Menu design
	
	Programme promotion and communication:
	• Identifying families in target groups
	• Targeted communication
	• General communication
		Programme staffing:
		• Trained staff
		• New/improved cross-sector partnerships
		
		Programme provision:
		• Range of childcare sessions
		• Range of activity sessions
		• New/innovative holiday activities
		• Accessible transport
		• Appropriate food provision
		• Support for low-income families
		• Engaged communities
		
		Participation/Reach:
		• Children, young people and families in every LA
		• Place based approach targeting areas of multiple deprivation
		
		• 85% funding targeted at:
		  ○ Families of children/young people aged 5-14
		  ○ Family groups identified in the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan.
		
		• 15% of funding for provision for those who need it most (including, but not limited to):
		  ○ Children from other low-income families
		  ○ Care experienced children and young people
		  ○ Young carers
		  ○ Children in need of protection
		  ○ Children supported by a child's plan
		  ○ Children with ASN
		  ○ Children who have undergone significant transitions, for example, starting in ELC, primary or secondary school
			Outcomes for families:
			Increased equity of access to holiday childcare and activities for children from low-income families
			
			Reduced household costs during school holidays
			
			More opportunities for parents/carers to rest, train, work, or spend more time with other children in household
			
			Priority outcomes for children / young people:
			Opportunities to try new activities
			
			Choice of a range of activities
			
			Consistent access to nutritious food during school holidays
			
			Secondary outcomes for children / young people:
			Increased participation in activities outside/out of their usual environment
			
			Increased physical activity
			
			Access to peer learning/further support
			
			Enjoyment and improved wellbeing
			
			Opportunities to socialise with peers
			
			Improved relationships with food
			
			For service providers:
			Improved understanding of needs of low-income families
			
			Robust cross-sector working
				Creation of flexible, affordable childcare solutions which meet needs of families
				
				Creation of new types of holiday childcare provision
				
				Creation of sustainable, scalable childcare solutions
				
				Parents/carers enabled to pursue new opportunities for training and employment
				
				Contribute to improved standard of living
				
				Contribute to reductions in health inequalities
				
				Sustainable cross-sector working relationships

Appendix B – Family information sheet

Research to help understand the impact of the 2022 Summer Programme

Information sheet

Ipsos Scotland (an independent research organisation) is carrying out an evaluation of the 2022 Summer Programme, a Scottish Government-funded programme of activities for children and young people across Scotland. If you have been passed this letter, it is because you have taken part in activities funded through the Programme.

The evaluation will look at what worked well about the 2022 Summer Programme, and what could be improved. It is being undertaken by Ipsos for the Scottish Government.

How can you help?

Ipsos would really like to hear from families with **children and young people who took part in a summer activity funded through the Programme.**

It would involve a short (around 30-40 minutes) one-to-one interview with a researcher from Ipsos. The interview would be carried out by telephone or video call, depending on what suits you. We would like to hear from parents/carers and children /young people (if they feel able to).

We are speaking to families together for the first half of the discussion, while the second half will be questions just for parents/carers. Young people aged 12 and above can take part independently (without a parent/carer) if they would prefer this and there is parental consent. In this instance, we would to do a 15-20 minute call with the young person and a 20-30 minute call with the parent/carer.

The interview would be at a time to suit you and would be informal and relaxed – you don't need to prepare or to know anything to take part. We want to hear about your experiences and there are no right or wrong answers. We are hoping to speak to people in August.

The researcher will ask about the Summer Programme activities you/your child attended – what you think about it, and your ideas for improving it.

Your family will receive £35 (this can be cash via bank transfer or vouchers for Amazon or Love2Shop) as a thank you for your time.

How will you use the information I provide you?

Ipsos will use information from the interviews to write a report for the Scottish Government that will be published **but we will not include anything that could identify you/your child.** Everything you say will be confidential and your data (e.g. your contact details and notes on your interview) will be stored securely and deleted at the end of the project.

With your permission, the discussions will be audio recorded. Only the research team will have access to the recording and all data will be securely destroyed after completion of the research.

Taking part in the research is completely voluntary. If you agree to take part, you are free to change your mind at any time without giving us a reason.

We have a privacy policy with more information about how we handle your data which you can see here:
https://assets-uk.ipsos.com/scotland/summerprogramme/privacy.pdf

Getting in touch

If you have any questions or would like to take part, please email SummerEvaluation@ipsos.com or text or ring xxxx on xxxx. When you get in touch, it would be helpful if you could let us know which part of Scotland you live in.

We will give you a quick call to explain more details about the research and answer any questions. We'll also ask you a few questions about yourself to check that you're eligible to take part. We will also need to get permission from a parent or carer to speak to any young people under 16 to take part.

Appendix C – Discussion Guides

Family discussion guide

INTRODUCTION (3 MINS)

Aim: to make sure we gain informed consent to taking part, including consent for recording. Note that if a child is being interviewed (aged <16), we will already have obtained written (email) consent to participate prior to this interview.

- Remind participant of the aims of the research:

  The Scottish Government has asked Ipsos (an independent research organisation) to get feedback from children/young people and their families about this year's summer holiday activities that they have funded. The aim of the research is to find out what went well and what could be done better if they do it again. We'll also be talking to some of the people organising the activities. Once we've spoken to everyone, we'll write a report summarising what everyone has said and that will be published by the Scottish Government.

- Provide reassurances of anonymity and confidentiality:

  It will not be possible for the Scottish Government or anyone else to know who took part in the research. We will include quotes in the report, but these would be anonymous. No identifying information about individuals or families (e.g. names or contact details) will be passed on to anyone outside the research team (me and my colleagues at Ipsos).

- Remind participant that the interview will last around 45 minutes. (If joint interview, explain that the child will only need to stay for the first part – around 15/20 minutes) and that they will receive a thank you voucher/payment which you will sort out at the end of the discussion.
- Remind participant that there are no right or wrong answers. It's really useful to hear what could have been done better as well as what went well.
- Emphasise that taking part is completely voluntary - they don't have to answer any questions they don't want to answer and can decide to stop the interview at any point.
- Remind that they are free to change their mind and decide not to take part at any time before or during the interview, or after the interview until the findings have been written up.
- Check if participant has any questions.

- NOTE: Collecting CYP consent is important here as we will so far have only communicated with the parent/carer. Spend time making sure CYP understands what the interview is about and what we/the Scottish Government will do with the information. Offer to go through information sheet if necessary.
- Request permission to record interview. Explain that this is for transcription and analysis purposes and that recordings will not be shared outside the research team at Ipsos.

BACKGROUND/BUILDING RAPPORT (3 MINS)

Aim: to being to build rapport and to gain an understanding of participant's life.

That's started recording us now. Could I quickly ask you to confirm for the recording that you are happy to take part in the research based on the information we just discussed?

To start with, could you tell me a bit about yourself/yourselves?
PROMPTS:

- (IF VIDEO/PHONE INTERVIEW) where do you live?
- Who you live with?
- What do you do on a typical/normal day?
- (FOR CYP) What kinds of things you like doing?

BACKGROUND ON THE PROGRAMME THEY ATTENDED (4 MINS)

Aim: to understand which programme(s) they took part in and how it worked

It would be great to hear a bit more now about the summer activities you/your child attended. We are interested in the activities funded by the Scottish Government [so in your case, you attended XXXX, is that right?].

Can you tell me a little bit about what that involved?
(IF NECESSARY LET THEM KNOW THAT WE'LL ASK about WAS GOOD/COULD BE BETTER LATER ON)

- What activities?
- Where? (local?)
- With who? (other CYP? siblings? which adults?)
- When and how often/how long? (roughly is fine)
- Did they have a choice of different activities?
  PROBE: in terms of different activities to go to and choice within activities
- Did they do anything new as part of the activity that they hadn't done before?
  IF NEW: was it something they had the opportunity to try before?
- Was there food provided as part of [the activity]? What kind?

OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN (10 MINS)

Aim: explore perceived short-term outcomes for children from attending activities.

NOTE TO INTERVIEWERS:
IF A CYP IS TAKING PART, THIS SECTION SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO THEM.

IF CYP IS NOT TAKING PART AND YOU ARE DOING A PARENT-ONLY INTERVIEW, PLEASE BRIEFLY ASK PARENT GENERAL THOUGHTS, WHAT THEY THINK CYP THOUGHT ABOUT THE LEVEL OF CHOICE, AND THE IMPACT ON CYP OF TRYING NEW ACTIVITIES [OR NOT]. DO NOT ASK ABOUT FOOD AS THIS IS COVERED IN THE PARENTS OUTCOMES SECTION.

PROBE ON THINGS THEY RAISE SPONTANEOUSLY, THEN USE REMAINING PROBES IN THIS SECTION TO FOLLOW-UP ON SPECIFIC SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES AS APPROPRIATE.

STIMULUS (FOR FACE-TO-FACE OR VIDEO INTERVIEWS)
Where appropriate, we have suggested asking CYP to answer questions using a visual 5-point scale from ☹ to 😊 with a moveable counter. This is intended to be used flexibly and as a tool to help get elicit a bit more information from CYP who may just say things were "good".

General thoughts
Overall, how did you/your child find the activities?

- Did CYP enjoy it?
- FOR CYP: Favourite parts?
- FOR CYP: Least favourite parts?
- FOR OLDER CHILDREN/PARENTS (IF NO CYP): How, if at all, do you think you/your children (children you look after) benefited from the activity?

What did CYP think about the length of the sessions?

- Would they prefer it to be any shorter/longer?
- Did the length of the sessions impact how likely CYP wanted to attend?

GREEN HIGHLIGHTS ARE PRIORITY OUTCOMES = COVER THESE FIRST. THE REST OF THE OUTCOMES ARE SECONDARY = ONLY COVER IF TIME ALLOWS.

[IF FOOD PROVIDED]
Access to food:
You mentioned there was food provided. Could you tell me a bit more about the food?

- Did CYP enjoy / eat it?
- Was there much choice?

- Were healthy food options available?
- Did CYP know there was food before they went?
- What difference did it make to CYP having food provided at the activity?
- Was the food on offer similar to what they usually have at home?
- What, if anything, did CYP learn about food during the activity?
- Has attending the activity has any impact on the food they eat at home/how they have meals at home?

ONLY ASK OF CYP: **Overall, how happy were you with the food?** RATE USING SCALE

Level of choice

You mentioned that there was [a lot of/fair amount of/not much] choice of activities. What did you/your child think about this?

- Was there enough choice? What was the impact of this?
- Is having enough choice important to CYP?
- IF HAD CHOICE – how did they decide what to do? Were they able to attend the activities/sessions they wanted to?

ONLY ASK OF CYP: **Overall, how happy were you with the amount of choice of activities?**
RATE USING GOOD/BAD SCALE

Impact of trying new activities

IF TRIED SOMETHNG NEW:

You mentioned that you/your child got to try [activity mentioned] for the first time.

- Did the CYP enjoy trying something new? Did they learn anything?
- Do they think they'd want to do it again in the future? Do they think they will be able to do it again?
- What was the impact of getting to try new things for the CYP? How did it make them feel?

ONLY ASK OF CYP: **Overall, what did you think about trying new things? Was this a good or a bad part of the activity?**
RATE USING GOOD/BAD SCALE

IF DID NOT TRY SOMETHNG NEW:

You mentioned that you/your child had done these activities before.

- What did CYP think about this?
- Would CYP have liked to have had the opportunity to do something new?

THE REST OF THE OUTCOMES ARE SECONDARY, COVER IF TIME, OTHERISE MOVE ONTO SUMMARY AND THOUGHTS ON IMPROVEMENT.

Being outdoors or in a different environment:
What did CYP think of the location of the activities?

Did the CYP spend time in a different environment to normal going to the activities?
IF YES:

- What was this like? How did it make them feel? What effect did it have on them? Positives / negatives?

Did the CYP spend more time outside through going to this activity than they would have otherwise?

- What kind of outdoors environment did they spend time in?
- What was this like? How did it make them feel? What effect did it have on them? Positives / negatives?

ONLY ASK OF CYP: **Overall, how good was the location of the activities?** RATE USING SCALE

Support
Did CYP receive any information about support they could access outside of the summer programme?

- What did they think about this?
- Have they used the support? Do they think they will?

Impact on mental wellbeing:
How did taking part in the activities affect how the CYP felt in general? (e.g. did the activities impact how the CYP felt outside of/after the activities?)
PROBE AROUND IMPACTS ON:

- confidence or self-esteem
- happiness
- feelings about trying new things

ONLY ASK OF CYP: **Overall, how did the activity impact how you felt day to day?** RATE USING SCALE

IF INVOLVED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:
Increased physical activity:
Did the CYP do more physical activity than they would normally?

- What did CYP think about this? How did this make them feel?
- What effect did it have on them? Positives / negatives?

ONLY ASK OF CYP: **Overall, did you enjoy doing physical activities?** RATE USING SCALE

Increased social interaction (with peers):

Did the CYP spend more time with other CYP over the summer as a result of attending [activities]?

- Did they meet new people?
- How often would they have spent time with other CYP if they hadn't attended?
- How did this make them feel? Did they enjoy this/feel nervous about this?
    - What effect did it have on them? PROBE on positive/negative aspects e.g. impact on mental wellbeing, enjoyment, confidence

ONLY ASK OF CYP: **Overall, how did getting to spend time with friends at the activity make you feel?** RATE USING GOOD/BAD SCALE

CYP SUMMARY AND THOUGHTS ON IMPROVEMENT (3 MINS)

Aim: To check what CYP thought overall before letting concluding their part of the interview.

Is there anything you think could have been improved about the activity?

- Is there anything they particularly liked that they have liked to see more of? Or less of?
- How could people running activities like this encourage more CYP/families like you to come along?

If this type of activity/service was available as an after-school activity, would you want to go along?
Any final thoughts/feedback they think it would be useful for us to know?
THANK CHILD FOR TAKING PART AND EXPLAIN THE NEXT SECTION IS FOR PARENTS ONLY.

ACCESS AND BARRIERS – ASK PARENTS ONLY (10 MINS)

Aim: to explore how easy it was to find out about and to access the summer programme, and how it compares to any alternatives.

When and how did you first hear about the summer programme / the activities?

- Were they invited directly or was it something that anybody could sign up to?
    - How did they/CYP feel about being chosen to take part in the summer programme?
    - Did they like being invited in this way? (If note, how would they like to be invited?)
- What were their first thoughts when they first heard about the activities?
- Did they think the activities were the sorts of things their children would feel able to take part in? Why/why not? (Why) did it appeal to them?
- What would you have done otherwise if the funded activities were not on?

- Are there alternative activities CYP could have gone to? How did this compare?

IF PARTICIPANT MENTIONS THEY WERE INVITED DUE TO BEING LOW INCOME E.G. ON FREE SCHOOL MEALS: **Some people have suggested that there may be some stigma around attending these kinds of funded summer activities. Is that something you've experienced?**

How easy or difficult was it for you / your family to attend the activities?

PROBE ON:

Signing up:

- How did they sign up to the activities? How easy was it to do this?
- Were parents able to book on to all the services/activities they wanted to?

Timings:

- Were the timings convenient? (did they fit with other family activities / commitments?)
- Did the timings impact whether your family could attend?

Transport to activities:

- How easy was it to get to the location of activities?
- How did you get there – walk/public transport/car?
    - How long did it take to get there?
    - Was any transport provided?
    - Was the cost of transportation covered?
    - Travel alone or accompanied by adult/sibling?
- Did how easy or difficult it was to get there impact whether your family could attend?

Cost:

- Did it cost them anything to attend?
- What, if any, impact did this have for them?

General barriers:

- Is there anything else that normally makes it difficult to take part in holiday activities?
    - E.g. special needs/requirements for disability etc., not speaking English as first language, timings/location etc.
    - How was this managed at the summer programme?
- Was there anything else that made it difficult to attend?
- Was there anything that they thought was going to make it difficult to attend but turned out not to be an issue?
- Is there anything that could have made it easier for them / their family to attend?

OUTCOMES FOR PARENTS/CARERS – ASK PARENTS ONLY (12 MINS)

Aim: explore perceived outcomes for parents/carers and the wider family from the child attending activities. Focus on short-term outcomes.

Overall, what effect, if any, did the CYP taking part in the summer programme have for you and the rest of the family?

- Probe on what they think are main impacts on CYP?
- Did CYP get a chance to take part in any new activities that they would not normally be able to due to cost or any other reason?
- What, if any, impact did the summer programme having on your own wellbeing?
  PROBE FULLY ON WHAT AND WHY/HOW HAD THIS EFFECT?

Opportunities to access childcare:

Was there anything parents were able to do while children were at the activities that they would not have been able to do otherwise?
PROBE ON:

- more opportunities for rest/recreation?
- Did it support parents/careers to study/train/work?
- More opportunities for spending more time with other children in the household?

IF YES: **What would normally stop them doing these things?**

IF YES: **Was this facilitated/prohibited by the length of the session?**

Overall, did the summer programme help to support you family's childcare arrangements for the summer?
PROBE on: timings, fitting in with attendance with other childcare arrangements

Do you know if they offer these types of activities outside of the summertime? Would that be something you would want to use at other times of the year?

Reduced household costs:

Did the summer programme save your family money at all?
IF YES: On what?

- What impact did this have?
  - Did it have an impact on how you felt about money over the summer?
- Did the removal of childcare/activity costs ease pressures on the overall family budget?
- Would CYP have been able to attend other summer activities if the funded activities hadn't been on? What would they have done instead?

Opportunities to access services that offered food

We've spoken a bit already about the food at the activity. Was it important to you that there was a food offered at the activity? Why?

- Did the food offer make a difference to whether they chose to have CYP attend?
- What did you think of the food offer?
- Has attending the activity has any impact on what food/how you have meals at home?
- Do think you learnt anything about food as a result of attending? (e.g. nutrition, cooking skills, appreciating eating together)

THE REST OF THE OUTCOMES ARE SECONDARY, COVER IF TIME, OTHERISE MOVE ONTO SUMMARY AND THOUGHTS ON IMPROVEMENT.

Opportunities to access support:

Were you offered any support or put in touch with any services as a result of your child attending the activities?

- IF YES, PROBE FOR DETAILS AND IMPACTS OF THIS
- E.g. support with childcare such as financial support for those receiving UC, grants/tax credits etc
- Any support to access study/training/work?

Parental involvement in the programme:

IF PREVIOUSLY NOT COVERED: **How involved were you in the summer programme activities?**

PROBE IF INVOLVED AT ALL:

- how much of it they attended and for what purpose?
- What did they think about this?

IF DID NOT ATTEND: **Were there requests for parental involvement?**

- IF YES: Would you have liked to attend if you were able to?
- Did you think this request was this reasonable?

Do you think having parents attend activities is generally a benefit or a hindrance?

SUMMARY & THOUGHTS ON IMPROVEMENT (3 mins)

How could the activities have been improved?

- Is there anything they particularly liked that they have liked to see more of? Or less of?
- How could people running activities like this encourage more CYP/families like you to come along?

What are your thoughts on how the offer was advertised and communicated to you? What would have improved this?
Overall, how would you summarise your / your family's experience of the activities?

Any final thoughts/feedback they think it would be useful for us to know?

<u>CONCLUSION & WRAP UP</u>

That's everything I wanted to ask you today, thank you very much for taking the time to talk to me today, I really appreciate it. I'll stop the recording now. [STOP RECORDING]

Before I let you go, I just need to sort out how to get your thank you payment over to you.

CHECK WHETHER PREFER BACS TRANSFER (NOTE THAT THIS TAKES MINIMUM 2 WEEKS) OR VOUCHER (AMAZON OR LOVE2SHOP?).

RECORD DETAILS (INCLUDING DETAILS FOR PAYING BACS) IN SECURE SPREADSHEET.

Just to remind you, we'll be writing a report to summarise everything you and others have told us about the Summer programme. It will be published on the Scottish Government website, so you'll be able to search for it and read it if you're interested. It will probably be published in early 2023.

If you would like, we can send you a link to the report when it's published. If so we'll keep your name and email address for this purpose and wait to securely delete it until after we've sent you the link to the report. MAKE A NOTE OF THIS IN THE RECRUITMENT SPREADSHEET.

That's everything from me. Do you have any questions before we finish?

THANK AND CLOSE.

Provider discussion guide

INTRODUCTION AND CONSENT (5 mins)

Aim: to make sure we gain informed consent to taking part including consent for recording.

- Introduce yourself and Ipsos Scotland.
- Remind participant/s that the interview will last about 1 hour – check this still works.
- Remind participant/s of the aims of the research:

> The Scottish Government has asked Ipsos to get feedback from staff in local authorities and partners who've been involved in organising and delivering summer programmes funded by the Scottish Government as part of the 2022 Summer Programme. We've also been speaking to children, young people and their parents about their experiences of the programme. The aim of the research is to find out what went well and what could be improved in the future. Once we've spoken to everyone, we'll write a report which will be published by the Scottish Government in early 2023.

- Remind participant/s that we are not evaluating individual programmes, but rather how the funding has worked across Scotland as a whole. We will not be naming local authority areas or organisations that take part in the evaluation in the report.
- Provide reassurances of anonymity and confidentiality. Explain that no identifying information about individuals or the local authority/ partner organisations will be passed on to anyone outwith the Ipsos research team. Quotes we use will be anonymous.
- However, acknowledge difficulties of anonymising professional participants e.g. if there are a small number of people in relevant roles. If participant is concerned that anything discussed in the interview will be identifiable, let us know – we will always respect requests to omit anything they'd rather wasn't shared.
- Remind participant/s that there are no right or wrong answers, they don't have to answer any questions they don't want to answer and can decide to stop the interview at any point.
- Remind that they are free to change their mind and decide not to take part at any time up to the point when the findings have been written up.
- Check if participant/s has any questions.
- Request permission to record interview. Explain that this is for transcription and analysis purposes and that recordings will not be shared outside the research team at Ipsos/the transcriber.

BACKGROUND TO ORGANISATION AND FINDING OUT ABOUT THE SUMMER PROGRAMME (3 mins)

Aim: to build rapport and gain understanding of the participant's organisation and their role.

That's recording us now. Could I quickly ask you to confirm for the recording that you are happy to take part based on the information I just went through?

[IF YES, CONTINUE]

IF NOT A LOCAL AUTHORITY: **Can I check what type of organisation you work for?**

- 3rd sector
- Private
- Other – please specify

To start with, could you tell me a bit about where you work, your role, and your involvement with the summer programme?

When and how did you first hear about the summer programme funding for this year?

What funding was your [area/organisation] allocated through the summer programme?

1. *FOCUS OF SERVICES AND PLANNING (20 MINS)*

Aim: to get detailed picture of what they offered, type of services, target groups, balance between new and building on existing provision, and any perceived limitations to what they were able to offer.
To understand LA/partner organisation experiences of planning the summer programme services

I want to first ask a bit about the services you offered as part of the funded summer programme and then I will pick up on the planning stages.

FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES:
How many programmes were funded or partially funded by the Scottish Government summer programme funding?

- What was the balance between fully funded vs partially funded?

NOTE THAT THERE IS A QUESTION LATER ON ABOUT ADDITIONAL FUNDING SOURCES WHICH GOES INTO MORE DETAIL.
And what was the balance between services delivered by the LA and to those led by external delivery partners?

- IF DELIVERED SERVICES WITHIN LA: Were partner organisations involved in these services at all?

FOR ALL:

Can you tell me a bit more about the range of Scottish Government funded or partially funded programmes your area/organisation ran?

PROBE ON RATIONALE BEHIND DECISIONS FOR EACH PROMPT BELOW

- What kinds of services?
  IF NOT MENTIONED PROBE ON WHETHER ANY SERVICES HAD A FOCUS ON
  - childcare (what was the balance of childcare vs family services?)
  - learning new things
  - getting outdoors
  - physical service
  - food provision
  - family support / linking families with support
  - connecting children with their peers
  - play and fun
- How long did the services run for and how often?
- Who were they aimed at? Any specific target groups?
- What were the costs involved in attending, if any?
- Were any activities offered in different languages? (were any in Gaelic?)
- Was any transport provided?
  IF NOT: Do you know what transport families used to access services?
- Was food provided?

IF NO FOOD – Was there a particular reason that food was not provided?

IF FOOD WAS PROVIDED: **I'd like to ask a bit more about the food offer in particular.**

- Was there an expressed demand for food – or an expectation of it
- How much food was offered? (meals or snacks? Drinks?)
- What kind? (hot or cold?)
- How much choice of food was there?
- Were there healthy options?
- Did you organise this or was a food partner involved?
- What facilities were used to prepare the food?
- Were there any challenges with the food provision?

And why were [CYP TARGETED] chosen as a focus for the targeted funding?

- How well served are these groups in your area generally?
- Were you aware of any gaps in the provision you were able to fill? (how did they know about this?)

IF NOT MENTIONED PROBE ON WHETHER THE FOLLOWING WERE TARGETED:

- lone parent families
- ethnic minority families
- families with a disabled adult or child
- families with a young mother (under 25)

- families with a child under 1 year old
- larger families (3+ children)

As you are probably aware, 15% of the funding could be used flexibly to target CYP and families outside of the key target groups. Were there any groups outside of the guidance that you included as part of this?

- How were these decided?
- How well served are these groups in your area generally?
- Were there any gaps in the provision you were able to fill?

Who was involved in planning and deciding how to use the funding?

- How were they involved?
- How, if at all, were CYP and their families involved in deciding which services to offer?

How did the timing of the Scottish Government funding fit with your existing plans for summer provision?

- PROBE ON: childcare / food provision / transport
- Did it change these plans? How?
- How did you manage the timescales for spending the funding?

FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES:

Did you spend all of the funding you got from the Scottish Government?

- Reasons for this/any challenges?

Did you identify additional funding sources?

- What was the most common way of securing other type of funding – e.g. match funding from third parties, Councils' own funding, etc.?
- What impact did this have?
- Have you identified any potential funding sources for future summer holidays?

FOR ALL:

Was there anything you hoped to run but weren't able to?

- Was there anything where you weren't able to run at first but were able to adjust so that it could go ahead?
- Any barriers?

To what extent were the services completely new vs. building on/expanding existing provision?

- Why/how was this decided?
- For new services - how did the summer programme funding facilitate that?
- For existing programmes - how was provision developed/expanded?
- Was there was any continuation of provision from their Get into Summer provision last year (in 2021)?
    - IF YES: Why did they choose to continue those services?

- Did they change services at all in line with feedback from CYP/families?

How much choice of services did individual CYP/families have in terms of what they could attend?

- Did the Scottish Government funding have an impact on the level of choice offered to CYP/families?

Was there anything you learned from running summer programmes in previous years that informed the summer programme offer?

- E.g. what's popular, location, barriers, advertising

Did anything else help inform planning?

- Probe on staffing (e.g. recruitment and training)

2. *REACH & EQUALITY OF ACCESS (10 mins)*

Aim: Understand reach of the programme and any perceived barriers to participation, especially for key target groups of CYP/families.

How was the summer programme advertised to CYP/families in your area?

- Targeted vs general comms?
- FOR TARGETED COMMS: How were target groups identified? Was targeting 'place based' – targeting communities in more deprived areas?
- How well did this work?
- Any specific groups more/less likely to hear about it?
- What more could be done to reach groups that are harder to reach?
- Do you think there are issues of stigma for CYP or families attending funded services like these?
- Was there anything specific that you were able to do to communicate the offer in a non-stigmatising way?

How well attended were your funded programmes?

- How did this compare with any targets / expectations you had?
- How did it vary by programme – any more or less well attended? Why? Facilitators/barriers?

Were there any groups of CYP / families that were less likely to attend than others?

- Why/what were the barriers/challenges?
- PROBE ON PRIORITY GROUPS IF NOT MENTIONED
  - lone parent families
  - ethnic minority families
  - families with a disabled adult or child
  - families with a young mother (under 25)
  - families with a child under 1 year old
  - larger families (3+ children)

Were there any other general barriers to attendance / challenges to engaging children and families?

- Were they able to mitigate these barriers?

IF NOT MENTIONED, PROBE ON:

- Transport
- Food provision
- Referral to wider services
- Language
- Competing demands on time / other holiday provision options (see following questions)

To what extent did you observe that parents were choosing between the funded summer programmes and other summer childcare provision in the area?

- Bearing in mind the short time for planning – did you coordinate or take into consideration other childcare offers in the area when planning your funded services?

Do you think that having other, more convenient holiday provision options was a reason for families not taking up the funded offer?

- What were the main reasons for this? (more flexible, accessible, consistent throughout the summer, offering full-time or closer to it etc.)
- Did this seem different for targeted priority families compared to others?

Was there any specific supports in place to help low-income families take part in services?

PARTNERSHIP WORKING AND IMPACTS ON PROVIDERS AND PARTNERS (15 MINS)

Aim: Explore perceived impacts of summer programme for providers including partnership working

The next few questions are about partnership working.

Who were your key delivery partners for the summer programme?
FOR PARTNERS: (IF NOT ALREADY ESTABLISHED):
Who were the key partners referring CYP to your funded services?
FOR ALL:
Were these partners you had worked with before or new partners?

- How was it working with them?
- IF PREVIOUSLY WORKED WITH THEM: how did the funding impact on your working relationship with these partners?
- IF NEW: How did you identify these partners? Did the funding have an impact on this?

Did you have a partnership planning target/strategy in place?
(IF UNSURE: how did they go about approaching partnership working?)
PROBE AROUND THIS AND THE IMPACT OF THIS
IF NOT COVERED EARLIER IN INTERVIEW: **Did any partnerships involve offering any new services or different approaches to summer holiday provision compared to previous years?**
IF TRIED NEW APPROACH/SERVICES:

- Who was involved? (co-designed?)
- What was the impact of this new approach on the services offered (positive or negative)?
- Anything that worked particularly well?
- Anything that you would change/do differently?

IF DID NOT TRY NEW APPROACH/SERVICES:
Was there anything that made it difficult to try new services or approaches through partner providers?

FOR ALL:
Were there any lessons learned from these partnerships?

- IF YES: How do you think this learning will affect your future holiday provision / how you work with CYP and families generally?

Are these partnerships you feel will be sustained beyond the funding?

- IF YES: In what ways?

Do you expect to expand partnership working in the future?

- Has the summer funding impacted your approach to partnership working?

Thinking now about staff within your local authority/organisation that worked on the summer programmes – what was the balance in terms of permanent staff, temporary/seasonal, or volunteers?

- IF PERMANENT: Did they have to change their work hours to accommodate the holiday provision?
- IF TEMPORARY/VOLUNTEERS: Were you able to offer them further employment or opportunities for teaching qualifications?

More generally, what impact, if any, has the Scottish Government funding had on your LA/organisation? PROMPT IF NECCESSARY

- Any impacts on staff in your organisation? (e.g. staff engagement, wellbeing).
- Any impacts on wider services? E.g. education, health, etc.
- Any unintended consequences (good or bad).

Having delivered the Summer 2022 programme, would you say the work from this year could be used as basis for expanded capacity/future upscaling of provision?

IF APPLICABLE: **What would need to be in place for your organisation to increase or offer holiday childcare provision?** (e.g. sufficient planning time, local coordinator, flexibility over procurement)

Have you learnt anything from running the 2022 summer programme about catering to the needs of low-income families specifically?

3. *PERCEIVED IMPACT OF THE SUMMER PROGRAMME FUNDING FOR CYP, PARENTS/CARERS (5 mins)*

Aim: Explore main perceived impacts of the summer offer for communities, CYP, and parents/carers

Overall, how well do you feel the programme worked?

- What, if any, were the key successes / aspects that worked well?
- What, if any, were the key challenges / aspects that worked less well?
- What role, if any, did partnership working play in this?

IF TIME ONLY: **What impacts do you feel the programme had for the children that attended?** PROBE ON FOOD PROVISION / TRYING NEW THINGS / HAVING CHOICE

- Were any of these impacts different from what you would expect to see from your standard summer offer (if they have one)?
- Any unintended/unforeseen impacts (positive or negative)?

IF TIME ONLY: **And for parents/ carers – what impact did the summer programme have for them?**
PROBE ON IMPACT OF CHILDCARE AND FOOD PROVISION

- How, if at all, were these impacts different from what you would expect to see from your standard summer offer (if they have one)?
- Any unintended/unforeseen impacts (positive or negative)?

IF TIME ONLY: **Did you collect any feedback from children? And from parents?**

- What were the key messages?

4. *OVERVIEW AND SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT (5 mins)*

What, if anything, are the main features of the summer programme that you would like the Scottish Government to replicate in future programmes? And what, if anything, could have been improved/changed?

- Are there any ways in which you think a different funding model might work better?

Looking to the future, what are your plans for delivering locally funded holiday provision in the summer and at other times of the year?

- How will this fit in in with the Scottish Government funding?

Anything else you'd like to add?

THANK AND CLOSE

social research

The views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and do not necessarily represent those of the Scottish Government or Scottish Ministers.

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