



HOLIDAY ACTIVITY AND FOOD PROGRAMME THURROCK HAF 2023 REPORT

Thurrock ActivAte is the name for the Holiday Activity and Food programme run by Active Essex, on behalf of Thurrock Council.

There are **5236** children on income related free school meals (data for 2023) in Thurrock.

During 2023 the Essex ActivAte team used the 'WONDE' central booking system to check the eligibility of the children using the schools MIS system. This successfully worked with **100%** of schools across the district to release codes to families via a unique booking reference by summer 2023.

Funded by



THURROCK ACTIVATE EASTER HAF 2023

We delivered...



activity clubs over an average of 8 days delivering a range of physical activity, enrichment sessions and food education to eligible children and young people in Thurrock



primary clubs



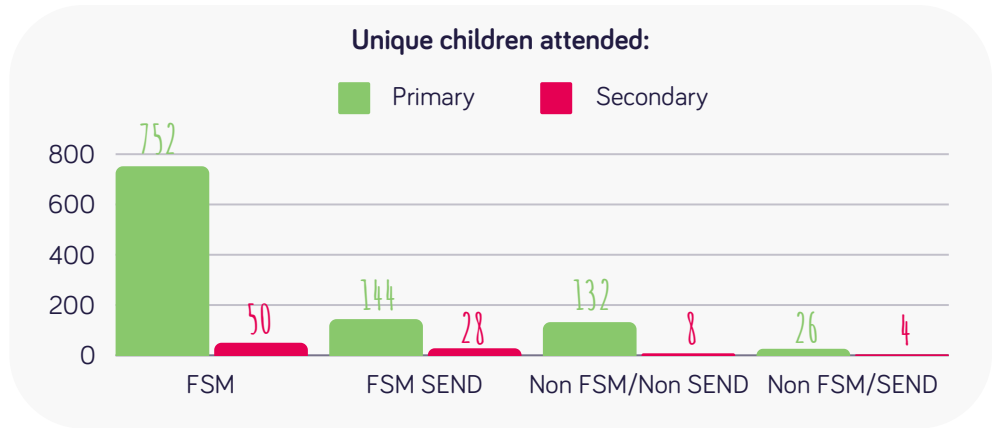
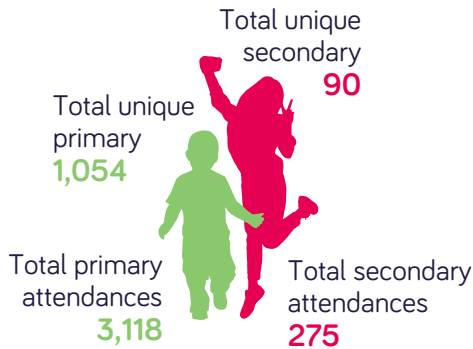
secondary clubs



specialist SEND hubs



specialist mental wellbeing hubs



As a result...



spaces filled across Easter



eligible for benefit based free school meals



individual children and young people engaged in an Easter HAF club



HIGHLIGHTS

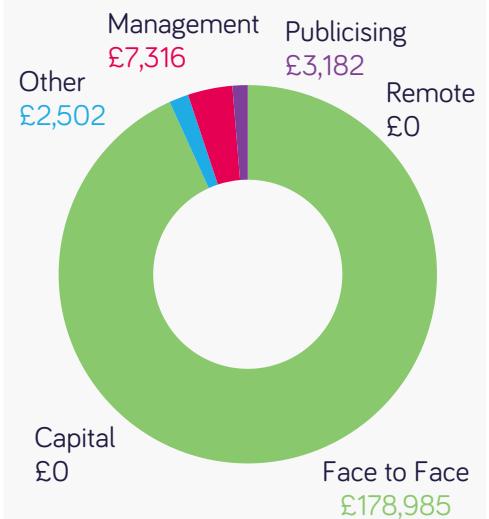
Easter saw an increase in provision across Thurrock, with more spaces on offer. Social media campaigns, and an increased presence on the Essex ActivAte website, meant we saw more engagement with families in the district.



1,000

oral health packs containing a teeth cleaning kit and chart were given to support families during the cost of living crisis and educate young people about the importance of oral hygiene.

Funding allocation and how it was used across Easter



Easter total = £191,985

CHALLENGES AND LEARNINGS

For Easter, Essex ActivAte trialed a new central booking system with WONDE. The team along with WONDE successfully onboarded all providers and supported them through the setting up of the system.

- Increase engagement - Club providers started to increase their reach and engage new young people at their club
- Time consuming - New process to learn with training, drop in sessions and QA's with the ActivAte team
- ActivAte team reporting - Partners hadn't marked their registers and some number discrepancies
- Reporting unique attendees - More accurate reporting due to new booking system providing data instead of partners

Previously, the team reported unique children from each club, therefore a child could attend 3/4 clubs and count as a unique child at each. With the new system, those unique children were given an ID and only counted once, therefore this number will be lower than previously reported.



THURROCK ACTIVATE SUMMER HAF 2023



We delivered...



activity clubs run by 20 club providers over an average of 20 days, delivering a range of physical activity, enrichment sessions and food education to eligible children and young people in Thurrock

As a result...



957

unique children and young people engaged in a summer HAF club

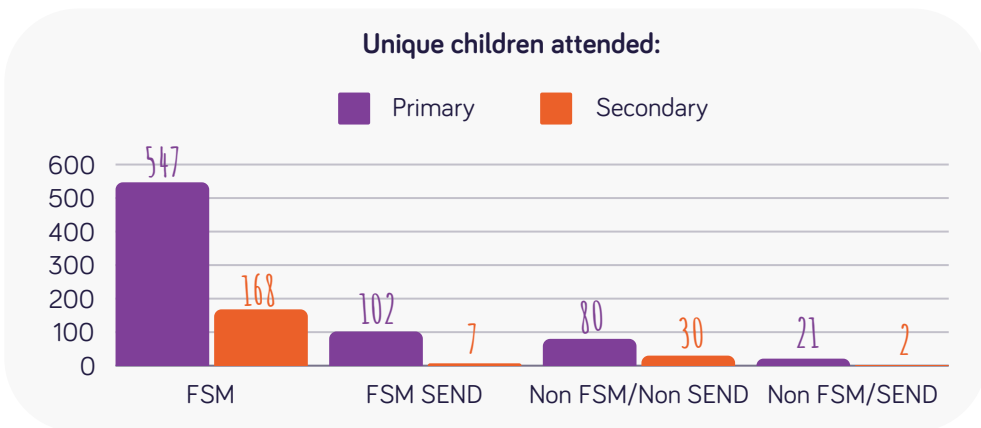
Total unique secondary 207

Total unique primary 750

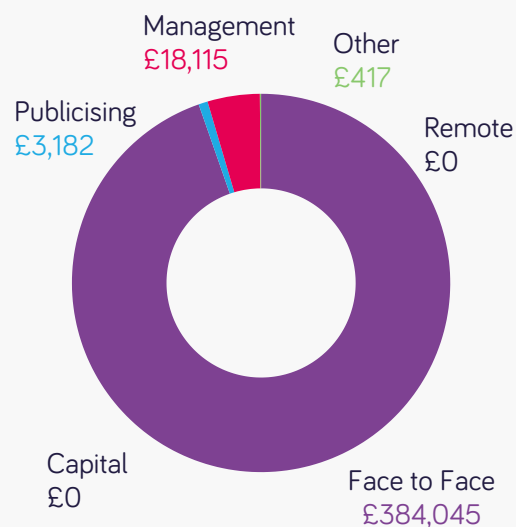


Total primary attendances 7,724

Total secondary attendances 887



Funding allocation and how it was used across summer



Summer total = £405,759

HIGHLIGHTS

The summer programme extended its support offer to local families and children, helping them to learn new skills and enhance their knowledge outside of HAF clubs.



12

parents gained maths skills, budgeting and homework support through Essex County Council's Multiply sessions provided by Thurrock organisations at summer HAF clubs.

[READ MORE >>](#)

“

All the different activities, meeting new friends and experiencing new things and mostly trying to overcome his anxiety was a highlight for my son! It was a great club to join where everyone is treated the same.

— PARENT FROM THURROCK



CHALLENGES AND LEARNINGS



Although ActivAte funded more spaces than filled in summer, the team worked closely with delivery partners to track and monitor spaces.

As a result, any underspend was carried over from spaces that were not filled, to the winter HAF programme, ensuring the summer programme was the best value for funding allocation and wasted funding was limited.



For the winter programme, the team were able to limit spaces initially, but as club spaces quickly filled, more spaces were allocated, leaving less spaces wasted.



THURROCK ACTIVATE WINTER HAF 2023



We delivered...

26

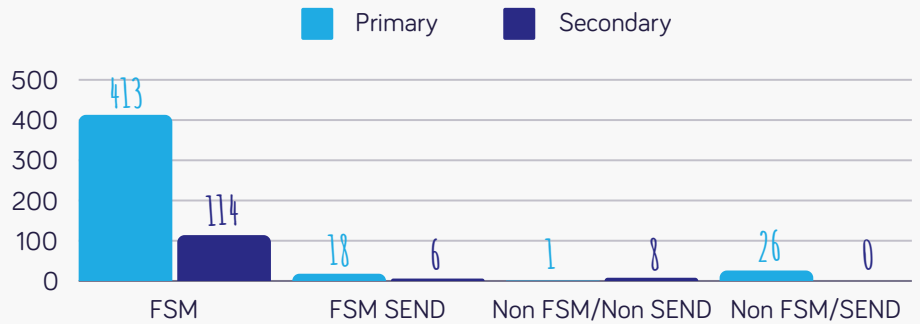
activity clubs over an average of 4 days, delivering a range of physical activity, enrichment sessions and food education to eligible children and young people in Thurrock

As a result...

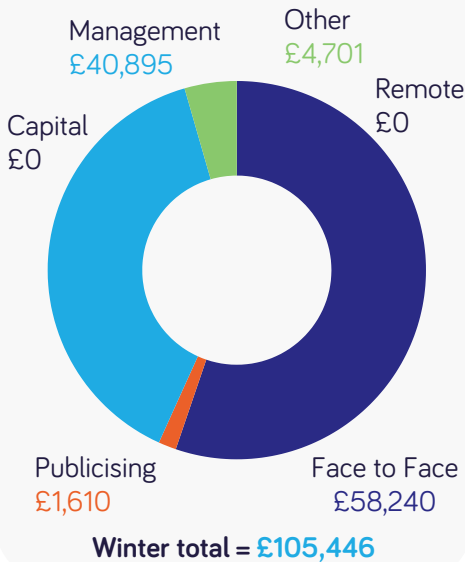


586 unique children and young people engaged in a Winter HAF club

Unique children attended:



Funding allocation and how it was used across winter



100% of Thurrock schools positively engaged with the programme to release HolidayActivities codes to eligible families

46% of eligible families redeemed their HolidayActivities voucher code and booked onto a local Winter HAF club

Total unique primary 458
Total unique secondary 128

Total primary attendances 883
Total secondary attendances 249

“ I think offering funded spaces like this are important, especially the food element and supporting local families. Places like this are valuable for the Thurrock community!

— Cllr CICI MANWA

CHALLENGES AND LEARNINGS

The winter programme proved to be a challenging time for engagement with just 2 delivery days before Christmas.

As a result some clubs use the option of giving out hampers to those children who had attended the 2 days face to face. These proved very popular and the delivery partners managed to pack them with quality foods and family activities.

However, the days in between Christmas and New Year saw a dip in numbers, but then picked up again in January just before the children went back to school.

HIGHLIGHTS



120+

food hampers including different essentials, gifts and treats to help struggling families around the cost of living crisis were provided to families in Thurrock

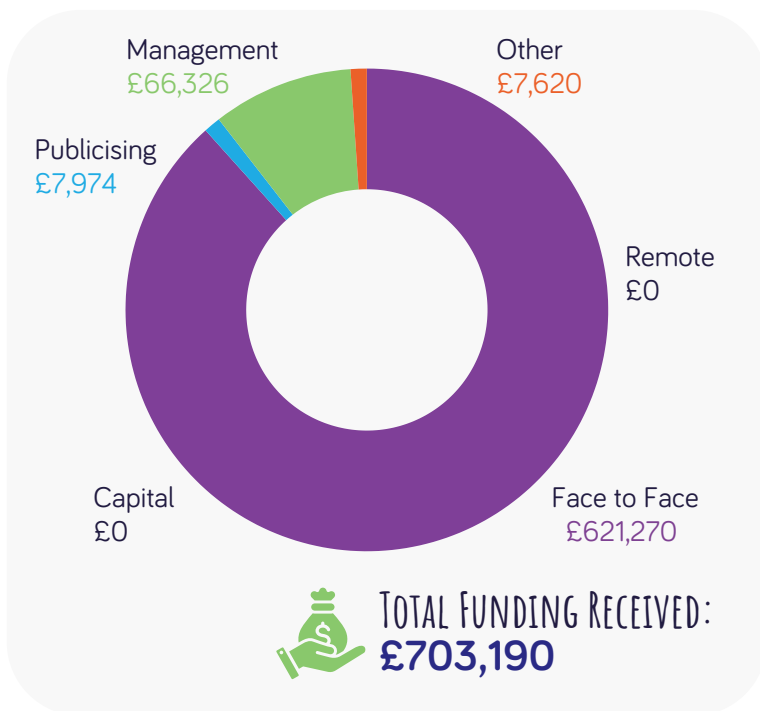
For next year, we would like to try and deliver a more diverse off across HAF clubs in Thurrock, in regard to club type (eg family days out and trips), and successfully promote our services across a number of different family hubs and libraries.

“ The club were so friendly and caring towards the children, I just wish they would run the club for more days across the Christmas holidays, my children loved it!

— PARENT FROM THURROCK



FINANCIAL REVIEW



ADDITIONAL FUNDING LEVERAGED

- £1,000** Funded by London Marathon Foundation to deliver a skate jam session at a HAF club which engaged 100 children and provided free food
- £1,000** To train a small selection of delivery partners in the run up to the summer 2023 programme in the Jamie Oliver Ministry of Food training. They were able to then pass this food education onto the children and families at HAF clubs.
- £650** Funded the Essex Activate programme to deliver the Multiply programme to 12 parents whose children were attending summer HAF clubs
- 120+** food hampers given to local families across the winter HAF programme, as well as local Thurrock businesses donating other food, games and confectionary



Holiday Club Face to Face Provision £621,270

Working with 20 locally trusted organisations to deliver an average of 33 clubs across Thurrock during each holiday period. The face to face provision included SEND, mental wellbeing and sport and youth crime specialist hubs across each ward of Thurrock. The range of activities were diverse including sporting and enrichments activities such as theatre music dance and acting, outdoor activities with bush craft, den building and fire pit cooking, animal encounters with farms and pony therapy, crafts, slime and graffiti, also sports, playground games, themed days and much more.



Marketing and Communications £7,974

- 3,000 childrens activity booklets and family support packs
- Promotional banners for each delivery partner to display at local club venues
- Essex ActivAte brand development including website, social media, posters/flyers
- Sun boards, sun lotion and oral health packs offered at HAF clubs to educate young people and support families during the cost of living crisis
- Radio and DAX ads, bus ads, filming and photography, locality reports and infographics, networking events and awards ceremonies. Read the case study [here](#).



Management and Administration £66,326

Thurrock ActivAte is managed by a team of 1 full-time and 4 part time staff members, including a lead, marketing lead and business support.

- The ActivAte lead works with the team in pulling together a consistent programme delivery across Thurrock, working on the Department for Education reporting and evaluation, partnership development and liaising with local authority system leads.
- The Thurrock ActivAte locality lead works closely with HAF delivery partners across Thurrock, building relationships and supporting organisational development to ensure sustainability in a place based approach.
- The marketing lead promotes ActivAte across all digital and print platforms, as well as signposting key messages to support local families.
- Business support - Administration and ActivAte partner support. Working with procurement and Thurrock Council finance team, ensuring the quality checks and compliance of all partners receiving DfE funding to deliver the programme.



Additional Costs £7,620

Covering the cost of the the WONDE/HolidayActivities central booking system, which sends a unique booking code to all eligible families of children on income related free school meals, using the schools MIS system. All delivery partners were successfully onboarded to the system and received ongoing support with drop in sessions running up to and during the school holiday delivery period.

SUMMARY OF 2023

With a move to the WONDE central booking system ahead of the 2023 HAF programme, the delivery of Thurrock ActivAte clubs across the year came with challenges, although positive steps forwards. Having a booking system that released unique codes directly to eligible parents meant that ActivAte could confidently check the eligibility of all children that were booking onto local HAF clubs, and spaces were being filled by young people who needed support the most.

Although a positive step in using the funding as directed, it meant there was a decrease in reported individual children attending across the year. Feedback from our clubs suggested that having a booking system may have been a barrier for families who do not have access to the internet at home or have language or learning difficulties. As a result, they could not read or understand English. Many of our HAF club providers worked hard to support these families by providing drop-in sessions to help book their club spaces.

The reported data highlighted that Thurrock's reach for individual children on income related free school meals was around 24% per across the year, however, the booking system meant that we could sort the individual children reached over the whole year delivery, with a total reach of 29%, exceeding the expected target for the funding allocated.



Looking to plan ahead, ActivAte created a robust, marketing and communications engagement plan to target and reach as many eligible families and children as possible, increasing brand awareness of the programme and highlighting the parent journey of how to claim and book using a HolidayActivities voucher code. HAF locality leads also dived into their local communities to relay this message, also through school communications and by attending school events, community family days and sharing information with the community hubs and child and family services.

Thurrock made a strong start on improving this journey, with 100% of Thurrock schools releasing HolidayActivities voucher codes ahead of each summer and winter HAF holiday, which was an increase of 20% from Easter. Our providers social media engagement continues to get stronger each holiday and parents are starting to cultivate a community between by communicating with each other when HAF club bookings go live.

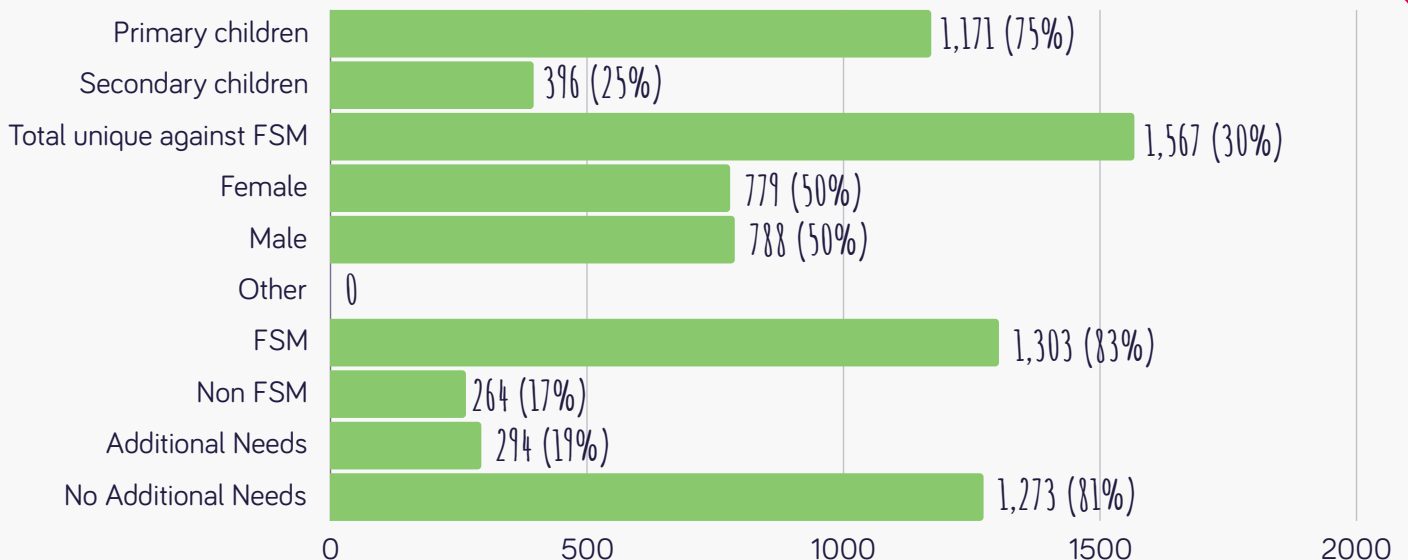


total days booked

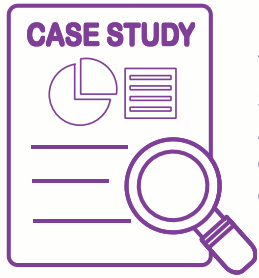


total days attended (83%)

EASTER, SUMMER AND WINTER TOTAL DATA



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR



Take a read below of the case studies from different Thurrock Activate partners and the impact delivery partners have had on local communities and families in 2023.

Active Essex Foundation (AEF) and Youth Partnership



unique children and young people attended an AEF holiday club with ActivAte




of children who attended an AEF holiday club with ActivAte were eligible for free school meals

The Active Essex Foundation (AEF) works closely with ActivAte each holiday to offer primary and secondary, tertiary youth provision for young people who are involved in criminality or are victims of exploitation, as well as children who are vulnerable due to further risk factors. AEF works in partnership with locally trusted organisations to offer a bespoke secondary and tertiary intervention holiday programme. This is to engage vulnerable young people who are less likely to attend mainstream Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programmes due to complex issues and challenges. The provision combines sport and physical activities with mentoring, life skills and opportunities to volunteer and gain qualifications. It aims to divert vulnerable children and young people away from becoming victims of exploitation or from engaging in criminal behaviours themselves by offering more positive activities. Several partners who deliver AEF holiday provisions also deliver AEF's Sport and Life Skills programme, ensuring continuity for the young people on these programmes outside of term time.




Click [here](#) to read the AEF HAF report 2023.



Read more about Arts Outburst summer offer and their impact on the Thurrock community.

[READ MORE >>](#)



Read the JTD Arts HAF provision impact report and the support they offer local Thurrock families.

[READ MORE >>](#)




Read more about Malearn summer HAF clubs and the different activities they provide children.

[READ MORE >>](#)




Read more on Monarch HAF in Grays and the impact they have on local families and children.

[READ MORE >>](#)



Take a read of the Grangewaters impact report and the outdoor activities they offer SEND and secondary children.

[READ MORE >>](#)



Read more on Camp Epic HAF provision and the impact their winter clubs and food hampers had on local families.

[READ MORE >>](#)

CHALLENGES OF THE YEAR



Families with children needing additional needs

ActivAte were able to deliver SEND specialist hubs through experienced locally trusted organisations around Thurrock. There were 2 SEND specialist hubs delivering during each holidays, offering a range of support and activities for children with additional needs and disabilities.

One of the ongoing challenges around each holiday period is being able to accommodate all of the children require a space at specialist SEND clubs, both for children on income related free school meals and for those families who apply for a 15% discretionary space.

Unfortunately during 2023, many families who requested a discretionary place outside of the free school meals criteria for a child with SEND, were unable to have a space due to limitations.

Schools engagement

At the start of 2023, school engagement was challenging as the team tried to find individual representatives in Thurrock schools to champion the ActivAte programme and highlight communications to eligible families. Most Thurrock schools knew about the programme, but a wide range of eligible families were not making use of the HAF offer. The team strived to work with schools by sharing key information and resources, so that in return, families would then engage with the HAF programme and book onto holiday clubs. The steps the team took were:

- Embedded ActivAte in the weekly schools newsletter
- Targeted the top 5-10 schools with numbers of high free school meal children, meeting with the schools team, offering parent sign up support, engaging in assemblies and school events
- Attended the County wide EPHA (Essex Primary Head Alliance) meetings to talk about Essex ActivAte and how they can get involved

School relationships are now going from strength to strength which has now resulted in stronger relationships and endorsement of the HAF programme in 2024.



Click [here](#) to watch the school engagement video.



Parent communications

Since introducing the WONDE booking system at Easter, it has been a challenge to communicate to eligible families how to claim and use their HolidayActivities voucher code, to book onto local holiday clubs. Parents have struggled to use the booking system or have been unsure on where to locate their voucher code, therefore from feedback provided, we have focused on making the parent journey smoother by working closely with WONDE to create visuals and guides on how to use their voucher. Digital and print assets such as flyers, leaflets and videos have been created to help make the booking process smoother and more accessible for families, and in return, the voucher code redemption rate has increased, as well as the overall reach and engagement.

STAKEHOLDERS

In 2023, Thurrock ActivAte formed a strong working relationship with Thurrock CVS. In return, increased opportunities to further programme support and relationship building in the Thurrock community, from organisations including: Thurrock Mind, Thurrock Foodbank, Street Tag, Early Years Oral Health, Thurrock Community Health Champions and many more. This also Thurrock ActivAte could support 250+ additional children from low-income families by supporting the Thurrock Big Lunch events that took place in the summer.



COMMUNICATIONS AND PROMOTIONS

Marketing has played a vital role within ActivAte over the past year, helping to reach new and existing target audiences across Thurrock communities through different marketing methods. By using different marketing methods, eligible young people and families have understood how the programme can support them, which as a result, has increased engagement within local communities.

Marketing techniques ActivAte piloted in 2023 include:

DIGITAL MARKETING



PRINT MARKETING



ACTIVITY AND SUPPORT BOOKLETS



Identifying the need to continue to support, engage and educate children and families at home, activity and family support booklets were designed and created.

Children's activity booklets included inspiration around physical activity, crafts and games, baking recipes, library reading focuses and themed education such as sun and water safety. Family booklets offered community support and local offerings, resources, guidance, tips and useful contacts, helping parents around the cost-of-living crisis.

SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT

With social media being recognised as a pivotal platform for posting about club bookings, community offerings, blog stories and the benefits of the programme, paid social media on Facebook was implemented ahead of the summer and winter holiday programmes, aiming to increase voucher redemption and club bookings. Following on this success, an Instagram was then created in 2023.



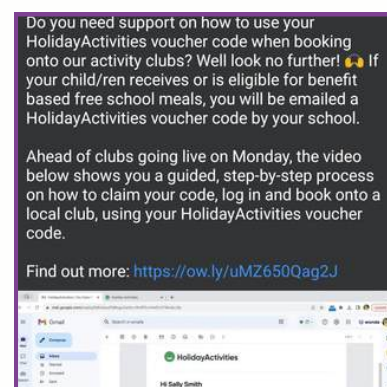
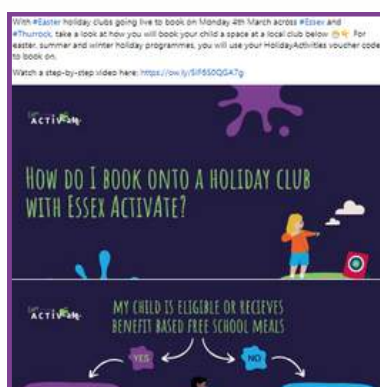
increase of Facebook profile visits compared to 2022



increase in Facebook engagement compared to 2022



increase of Facebook followers in 2023



Using a mix of images and videos across social media platforms showing how families' can claim and book using their HolidayActivities voucher code has increased code redemption and bookings each holiday period. As a result, ActivAte have continued to engage new families on social media through repetition of messaging about the programme and how to book onto local clubs.

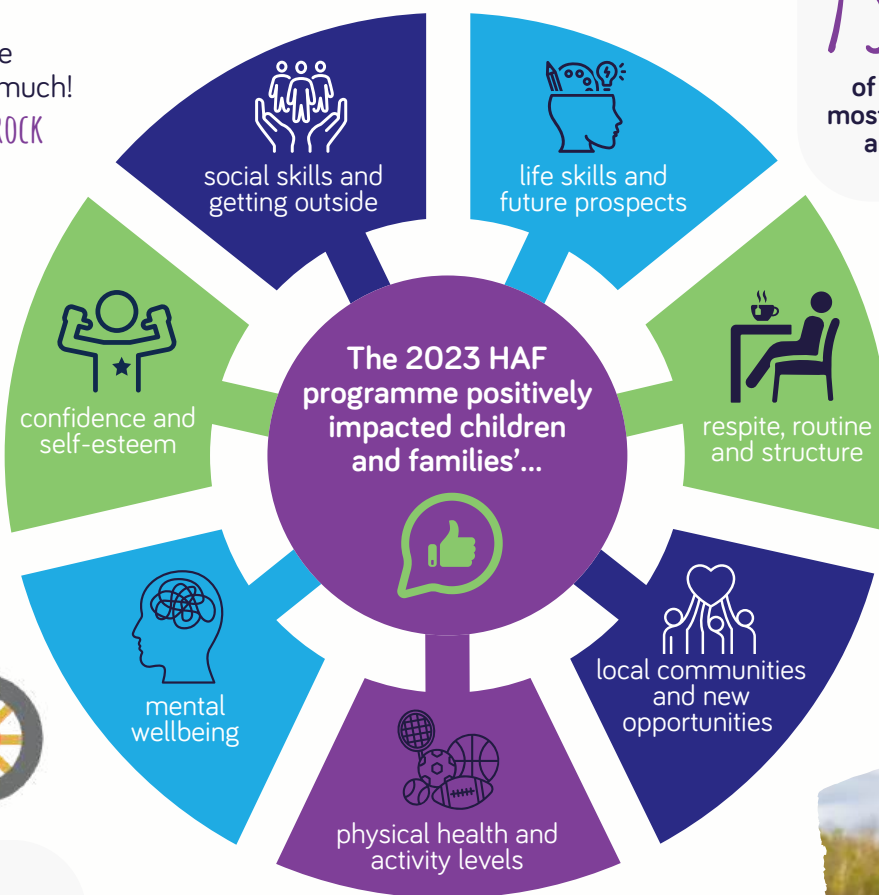
Read the Essex ActivAte marketing and communications impact report here.



THE IMPACT OF THURROCK HAF 2023

“ —
 These clubs are an absolute lifesaver; we appreciate them so much!
 — PARENT FROM THURROCK


73% 
 of young people felt they mostly developed their social and teamworking skills at a HAF club





61% 
 of young people developed their creativity skills at a HAF holiday club, as they were able to explore new interests and hobbies

“ —
 The ladies who run the activity days were so amazing, welcoming and so considerate of the children. Extremely understanding and were able to understand all the individual children in such a short space of time. Cannot thank them enough for all their hard work.
 — PARENT FROM THURROCK



94% 
 of children benefitted the most from an easier transition back to school which helped with routine and structure during the holidays, as a result of attending a HAF club

55% 
 of children were inspired to try new activities due to having positive role models in the coaches

63% 
 of children said they felt more understood and confident as their communication skills had developed since attending a HAF club

“ —
 JTD gives my daughter a chance to have fun & socialise in a safe environment where the staff know my daughter and her needs. They change up the activities each session to give the children different experiences. My daughter loves attending JTD and the holidays would be a big struggle without them.
 — PARENT FROM THURROCK

“ —
 The holiday club is a fantastic opportunity for children from all backgrounds to come together and it helps them to socialise with other children too - the staff are amazing!
 — PARENT FROM THURROCK

 Watch the Essex ActivAtE 2023 celebratory video [here](#).