



CHANGING SPORT STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES TRANSFORMING LIVES

Preface: REM How Holiday Activity Programmes can help to Tackle Inequalities

StreetGames is one of the UK's leading 'sport for development' charities – changing lives and transforming communities through the power of sport.

Since 2007, StreetGames has been working with community organisations across the UK to transform young people's lives through sport.

Access to sport and physical activity is not equal. This inequality of opportunity is clearly reflected in stubbornly lower levels of participation by children and young people living in low-income, underserved communities. There is no lack of demand for sport and physical activity among children and young people in these communities – the right sporting offer is too often absent. Children and young people living in low-income, underserved neighbourhoods suffer from and are surrounded by multiple social inequalities. These are the children and young people with most to gain from the benefits of sport and physical activity.

StreetGames exists to help bridge the sporting inequality gap for young people from low-income, underserved communities.

The Holiday Gap

Research has shown that the school holidays can be pressure points for some families and for some children that can lead to a holiday experience gap. Information from the Department for Education (DfE) states that children from low-income households are:

- More likely to experience 'unhealthy holidays' in terms of nutrition and physical health.
- Less likely to access organised out-of-school activities.
- More likely to experience social isolation.

For too many young people, school holidays can be a time of hardship, hunger and isolation, as families in underserved communities struggle to fund the added food and childcare costs and activities that the holidays bring. StreetGames is committed to addressing the 'holiday gap' by advocating for children and young people across the UK to have access to free activities and nutritious meals during the school holidays.

StreetGames set out to better understand the impact of holiday provision where they have direct programme management and co-ordination responsibility; and the contribution it makes to tackling the inequalities that exist during holiday periods for young people from low-income neighbourhoods.

This evaluation specifically relates to the DfE funded Holiday Activities and Food programme (HAF) where we have played a direct role in the management and co-ordination (Birmingham, Newcastle, Derbyshire, Lancashire, Stockport and Trafford) and StreetGames' 'Fit and Fed' campaign that seeks to address those triple inequalities faced by young people across the UK. Fit and Fed provides free holiday activities with the addition of nutritious food, for children and young people that need it the most.



CHANGING SPORT
STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES
TRANSFORMING LIVES

Mapping the Impact of Holiday Programmes in Tackling Inequalities

Insight Report (September 2024)

Dr. Hayley Trowbridge

Report produced by:



EVOLVING
WORKS



Executive Summary

About the evaluation

‘Holiday Gap’ is an umbrella term used to describe the inequalities that children and young people from low-income families face during school holiday periods. StreetGames wanted to better understand the impact of holiday programmes including the Department for Education (DfE) Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme and StreetGames Fit and Fed campaign. To do this, they commissioned a small-scale evaluation of this work that used Ripple Effect Mapping. Ripple Effect Mapping is a participatory impact evaluation technique, originating from community development work; the method supports “participants and other community stakeholders to reflect upon and visually map intended and unintended changes” occurring in a project or intervention (Hansen, 2017: 2). The approach captures ‘ripples’ of impact that are hard to measure by traditional methods. It “is concerned with the study of contribution; how may an intervention, action or policy contribute towards changing an outcome or a system?” (Nobles et al: 2022: 2).

Key Insights

Holiday provision is enabling **the development of skills and knowledge in individuals and organisations**. This includes the development of children and young people’s skills to lead healthy lives and their wider employability skills. It also includes building the capacity of local organisations to deliver quality and trusted provision for children and young people. It has also supported the **development of local networks and relationships**. This has created

connections across different sectors, enabled the sharing of resources and skills and has created collaborative working cultures. There is some evidence that this is developing a local infrastructure that can support wider holiday (and other) community provision for children and young people. Furthermore, this groundswell of awareness and action on addressing holiday inequalities is influencing local and national strategy. Finally, holiday provision has had an impact on **how families on low income are supported during holidays and beyond**. This has included providing individuals with access to activities and food, as well as signposting low-income families to wider provision that can support them and lowering thresholds to support. An unintended consequence of this work, is that provision has become focused on children and young people in receipt of free school meals – this has created a gap in provision for low-income families who are just outside of this economic measure.

Policy Recommendations

1. Have **flexibility on economic measures** of inclusion for funded provision
2. Be aware of how **poverty stigma** can negatively affect policy implementation
3. Use funding to create **collaborative, experimental and learning cultures**

Holiday Provision Recommendations

1. Develop **progression pathways** from holiday provision
2. Use holiday provision to **signpost families** to other support services
3. Connect-up holiday activity providers to **build local infrastructure & capacity**



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Image 1: Photographs from StreetGames' activities



Introduction

‘Holiday Gap’ is an umbrella term used to describe the inequalities that children and young people from low-income families face during school holiday periods. StreetGames is a sport for development charity whose key objective is to change lives and transform communities through the power of sport. A key strand of this work is providing provision to address the ‘holiday gap’.

StreetGames wanted to better understand the impact of holiday provision and how it was tackling inequalities for children and young people during holiday periods. They commissioned a small-scale evaluation of this work that used Ripple Effect Mapping (a participatory impact evaluation technique) as its sole method. The core questions the evaluation wanted to answer was:

- **What are the intended and unintended outcomes of holiday provision?**
- **How are these intended and unintended outcomes being generated from holiday provision?**
- **In what ways is holiday provision impacting on the wider eco-system and narrative around inequalities faced by children and young people from low-income families during school holidays?**

This report presents the findings from this small-scale impact evaluation. The

report is structured via the following sections:

- **Method:** An overview of how the data was gathered and analysed, and details about the holiday provision examined in this report.
- **Insights:** A synthesis of the key learning from the data presented in accordance to key thematic change areas.
- **Impact:** An examination of the levels of impact that are being generated and common patterns in how these impacts are created.
- **The Future:** The key findings from this study framed to support future practice and policy development.
- **Appendix:** References and supporting materials from the report.

The Ripple Effect Mapping sessions run as part of this evaluation, the analysis of data gathered, and the writing of this report was conducted by Dr Hayley Trowbridge as part of her Evolving Works enterprise. Hayley’s specializes in participatory research methods, and outside of her consultancy work she is the CEO of People’s Voice Media (a charity specialising in social change via lived experience expertise) and Research Fellow at SPARK, Cardiff University.

The selection and recruitment of participants, and arrangements of venues and the sessions was conducted by StreetGames.

Method

How the data was gathered and analysed



The Approach

Holiday Inequalities

Addressing holiday inequalities is a key priority for StreetGames and funding secured for holiday provision enables them to provide physical activity sessions and healthy meals to children and young people from low-income backgrounds, in under-served communities across the England and Wales. The core aim of this work is to tackle inequalities faced by children and young people, during the school holidays, through the delivery of funded holiday activity and food programmes, including HAF and Fit and Fed. Through this work, they aim to support locally trusted organisations to:

- Provide experiences for young people during the holiday periods
- Recruit, develop, and retain a workforce, including volunteers and leaders
- Develop and sustain safe spaces for young people, supported by trusted adults
- Deeply understand local need and opportunities to tackle inequality

In this report, we are examining the impact of this work across two funded programmes – Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) and Fit and Fed in specific local authority areas in the UK, where StreetGames has management and co-ordination responsibility for the delivery of the funded programmes.

Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Since 2018, the Holiday Activities and Food programme has provided support to children in receipt of free school meals through holiday periods. Following successful pilots between 2018 and 2020, the

programme was rolled out to all upper tier local authorities in 2021. Research has shown that the school holidays can be pressure points for some families. For some children this can lead to a holiday experience gap, with children from low-income households being:

- less likely to access organised out-of-school activities
- more likely to experience ‘unhealthy holidays’ in terms of nutrition and physical health
- more likely to experience social isolation

The HAF programme is the Department for Education’s (DfE) response in England to this issue, with evidence showing that free holiday clubs can have a positive impact on children and young people. They work best when they:

- provide consistent and easily accessible enrichment activities
- cover more than just breakfast or lunch
- involve children (and parents) in food preparation
- use local partnerships and connections, particularly with the voluntary and community organisation sector

Fit and Fed Fit is a StreetGames campaign that aims to tackle three distinct challenges: holiday hunger, isolation, and inactivity during holiday periods using a delivery model of doorstep sport, a hyper-local multi-sport and food offer delivered by community organisations in low-income neighborhoods. It provides opportunities to deliver wider social outcomes such as improving mental health, reducing social isolation, nutritious eating, and educational support. It aims to



provide children and young people the opportunity to take part in fun physical activity and enjoy nutritious, healthy meals during the school holidays.

Ripple Effect Mapping

Ripple Effect Mapping was used to understand the impact of holiday provision that StreetGames is involved in. Ripple Effect Mapping is a participatory impact evaluation technique, originating from community development work; the method supports “participants and other community stakeholders to reflect upon and visually map intended and unintended changes” occurring in a project or intervention (Hansen, 2017: 2). The approach captures ‘ripples’ of impact that are hard to measure by traditional methods. It “is concerned with the study of contribution; how may an intervention, action or policy contribute towards changing an outcome or a system?” (Nobles et al: 2022: 2).

This innovative approach to impact evaluation is underpinned by:

- Appreciative inquiry
- Participatory activities
- Collective sense-making (i.e. interactive group interviewing and reflection)
- Adopting mind-mapping to visualise impact (Chazdon and Langden, 2017: 5).

It can be applied iteratively or conclusively in studies, and is versatile. Nobles et al (2022) have utilised the approach in public health settings, Sadeghzadeh et al (2022) adopted the approach to assess the impact of a community garden project and Bloom (2021) applied it to a study on volunteering.

What We Did

In July and August 2024, two Ripple Effect Mapping workshops were run with people who are connected to the delivery of holiday provision that StreetGames is involved in, and wider eco-system stakeholders. Participants mapped the changes that they saw the activities making in their geographic area or at a national level, and presented these maps. The presentations were recorded as audio. In workshop 2, participants identified the types of changes that were present in the maps.

Transcripts of the presentations were produced and analysed using types of changes identified in workshop 2 as a coding system. The parent code categories (i.e. broad types of changes identified) were (1) Relationships and Networks, (2) Skills and Knowledge Development and (3) Inclusion and Exclusion. Sub-codes were used within these to draw out the nuances within these board areas.

These changes were then attributed an impact level (Hansen, 2017):

- Transactional impact – isolated changes/changes at an individual level
- Transitional impact – change across a programme/specific context
- Transformative impact – wider eco-system/societal changes

The results of this analysis are synthesized in this insight report. Illustrative quotes from the ripple effect maps and transcripts are used as specific examples to demonstrate the insights and impacts identified in the report.

A limitation of this evaluation is that no direct beneficiaries of the holiday provision were involved in the mapping (i.e. children, young people and their families). Other StreetGames evaluation activities do capture these perspectives and it is recommended that this study is used in collaboration with those insights to ascertain a full picture of how holiday provision is addressing inequalities for children and young people in holiday periods.

Furthermore, the different geographical areas taking part in the evaluation were not equal in size or representative of perspective. For example, some areas such as Newcastle and the North West had only one participant each involved in the mapping, whereas Birmingham was chosen as a ‘deep dive’ area and involved a group of StreetGames employees involved in the delivery of the HAF programme, local partners and stakeholders from the wider system. Therefore, this report does not present the results as an area-by-area breakdown but instead as a synthesis of commonalities across areas in terms of insights, impact and future considerations.

In total 8 maps were produced, with 30 participants taking part across the two sessions. 5 specific geographical locations were covered during the sessions:

- Birmingham (3 maps)
- Newcastle
- North West (Lancashire, Stockport, Trafford)
- Derbyshire
- Wales

A further map was produced which focused on national level changes that the holiday provision is connected to. Further details of these workshops and the participants are included in the Appendix.

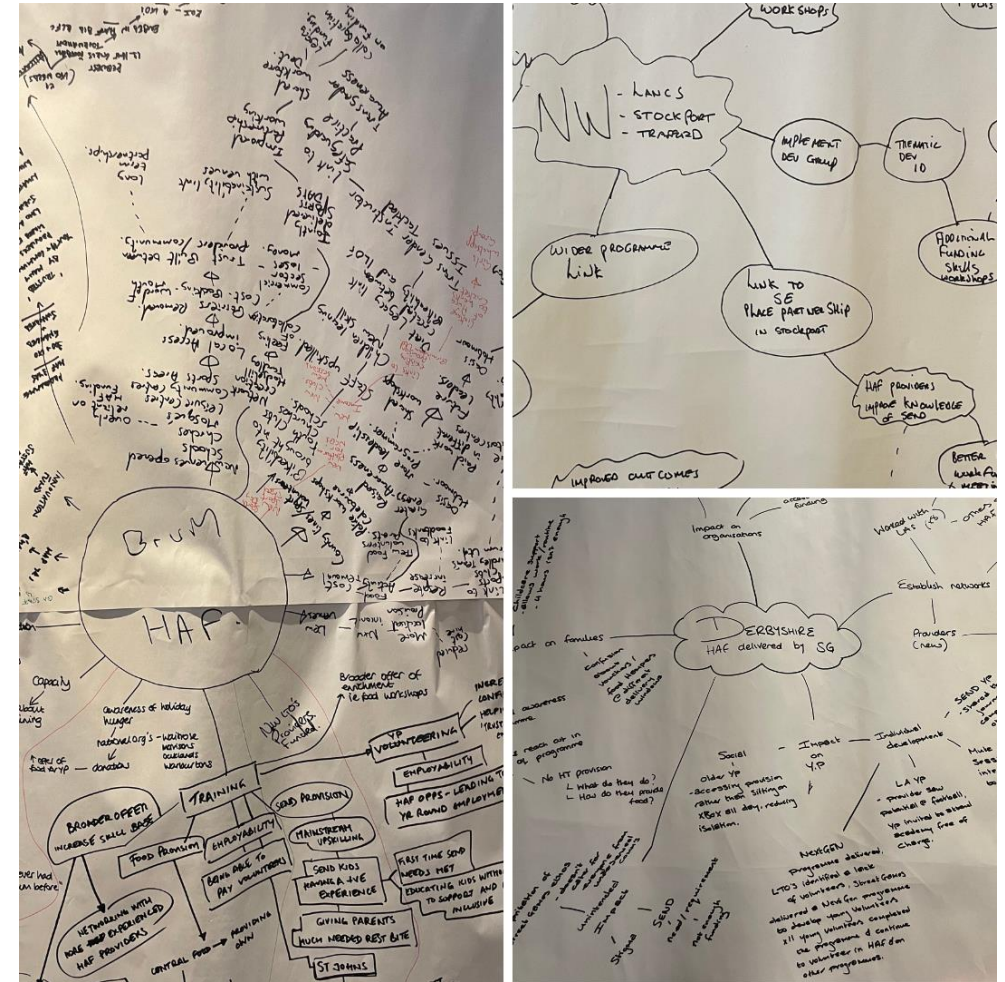


Image 2: Examples of some of the maps produced in the workshops

Insights

What was learned

Skills and Knowledge Development

Wellbeing of Children and Young People

Given the aims of the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) and Fit and Fed programmes revolving around access to food and (physical) activities for children and young people during holiday periods, it is not surprising to see skills development and awareness raising in these areas. For example, in Birmingham, they've worked at increasing children and young people's knowledge and awareness of the green and blue spaces, which has involved *"getting kids to walk to activities"*. Furthermore, via a 2-year partnership with British Canoeing, Canal and Rivers Trust, 7 community organisations have been supported to add paddle sports to their HAF offer via access to equipment and training. This skills building of the organisations in turn enabled new learning and sports opportunities to be offered to children and young people they work with.

Another training activity that developed both the capacity of local organisations and children and young people is Hakuna Fruitata. Based in Birmingham this project brought together *"equipment, training, ideas, resources, and developed capacity so that they were able to deliver food workshops for young people"*. This project enabled *"young people to do more things with food in those settings, in those organisations"* and has expanded from basics to more advanced food activities such as *"of cooking and baking and creating menus"*. Furthermore, the team noticed that *"older young people that had come through the projects that were then working as staff... had conflict around some of their perceptions around food and their own food choices"*. This resulted in specific training being

offered to them to support them to be role models around food and to understand *"the social responsibility side of things from their choices and their influences on younger people, which has been really powerful"*.

Employability of Young People

Looking beyond the food and exercise areas, supporting young people to develop employability skills is also part of the holiday provision being provided. The purpose of such work is to *"increase their confidence, give them opportunities to gain qualifications, access our free training, and then hopefully lead to employment"* (Birmingham). For example, a young person with special education needs and disability (SEND) *"pulled together a business plan with a group of kids to work out some kind of social enterprise that could be useful for their community... he came in, actually stood up and presented at the end in front of a whole load of other people? Wasn't that remarkable?"* (Birmingham).

Volunteering opportunities for young people also play a part in enhancing young people's employability. Such opportunities have been embedded into the delivery of the holiday provision. For example, in the North West they *"realised the potential to offer volunteer opportunities delivering to the primary age was a good opportunity [for teens]"*. To enable organisations to do this effectively, workshops and a resource bank on volunteer recruitment was developed.

In Derbyshire, the provision *"worked with 11 young people over five months and*



put them through lots of different training to help them become volunteers... or deliver a social action programme". From this work, young people have gone on to deliver a weekly football programme and work in a community café. Such work gives young people "the confidence and competence to be able to do things outside of holiday activities programme" (Illustrative example from Derbyshire). Birmingham also offers training in other life skills rooted in citizenship and street first aid as part of their provision.

Capacity Building Organisations

As has already been identified in this section, training and development opportunities for partners involved in holiday provision are regularly offered – *"There's been a huge amount of workforce development as part of this programme and capacity building and support for voluntary sector organisations"* (Illustrative example from Wales). In Stockport, a partnership with Sport England is helping organisations be better equipped to deliver sports activities to young people via mentoring and training.

This capacity building goes beyond the physical activity and food. For example, this can be supporting organisations to develop provision outside of their regular activities – *"it is is a sporty organisation it sort of takes them broader to the arts and enrichment side and vice versa"* (Birmingham). Furthermore, the programme has resulted in *"strengthening safeguarding processes"* and in upskilling organisations in delivering SEND provision. In Birmingham partnerships with MENCAP and the Children's Quarter have enabled the SEND capacity building activities and in Newcastle it has been achieved as part of a *"peer support scheme"* in which SEND exclusive organisations are supporting mainstream providers to *"include SEND children within their provision*

and having the skills and capacity to do that". Infrastructure such as group emailing channels and cluster groups have been set-up to facilitate ongoing expertise sharing, For example, in Newcastle "they've started talking between themselves over mail. Has anyone got a safeguarding policy I can borrow? Has anybody, you know, worked with send children?... That's just been so invaluable".

Accessing the funding has also supported organisational development. For example, in Birmingham, the *"business acumen"* of organisations funded to deliver holiday provision has enhanced and this has *"put them in a stronger position to actually deliver other services, especially holiday provision, and the out of school provision - that's expanding as we speak. In some areas, this has been built upon by more formal training opportunities – "We've delivered a series of funding skills workshops to help them identify and upskill themselves to look at how they can pull down funding"* (Illustrative example from North West). This capacity building can support local organisations to be more sustainable.

Key Points

More than sport and food: Holiday provision is providing skills development opportunities for children, young people and local organisations beyond the areas of physical activities and healthy eating.

Creating pathways: Pathways exist in the provision to enable young people to access volunteering and employment opportunities.

The value of wider capacity building: The capacity building aspect of the programmes are creating the conditions for enhancing the sustainability of local organisations in a range of ways including developing their 'commission-ready' status and business acumen, upskilling the workforce in new provision, peer support mechanisms, and enhancing ability to deliver SEND provision.

Relationships and Networks

Enhancing Local Eco-Systems

The 'Skills and Knowledge Development' section highlighted some of how holiday provision has been created new partnerships that are of value to the local eco-systems they are a part of, such as:

- The British Canoeing, Canal and Rivers Trust partnerships enhancing paddle sports provision in the area
- Sport England building the capacity of sports providers in Stockport to work with young people
- MENCAP and Children's Quarter developing SEND provision in Birmingham

Furthermore, holiday activity providers are also linking in with local provision that has interconnected aims. For example, in Birmingham, links between providers and food banks are being established – *“So, if the issue with some of those families is a lack of food, through our signposting provision, which we've done a lot of work on, the food banks and the providers of that food are getting much better access to the children and the families who really need it”*. These links and connections have the potential to go beyond the holiday provision and strengthen local eco-systems that support children and young people and address the inequalities they are facing.

The types of organisations that are brought together to deliver holiday provision is quite diverse. In Birmingham, for example, *“everything from commercial entities like coaching companies, um, childcare providers, school and education providers, leisure centers, CICs, CIOs, medium sized charities etc.”* are involved.

This diversity is enabling 'silos' between local partners to be broken down. For example in the North West, *“there's been quite a few organisations that previously may have not worked together that are collaborating a lot more”*. This sentiment is echoed in Derbyshire in which the provision has *“increased networks and widen networks”* that has led to organisations *“looking outside the box and working with people that's outside of the bubble that they would normally work with”*. Mechanisms such as cluster groups, networking opportunities, training events, email systems and such are supporting these organisations to connect and continue their relationships and *“improve networking”* (Illustrative example from Newcastle).

Sustainability

Such work is helping to create the conditions needed to sustain work and focus on tackling holiday inequalities. In Newcastle, there has been the creation of a steering group and they now *“drive the agenda”* rather than StreetGames. This has led to local organisations *“delivering their own expert provision”* as identified in the previous sections on skills and knowledge development. This indicates that the holiday provision is being effective in establish local leadership on tackling holiday inequalities. In Birmingham, the HAF programme due to both the network it has established and the capacity-building of the organisations in that network (particularly in terms of safeguarding), they now have an up-to-date directory of play provision in Birmingham and trusted, *“commission-ready”* set of organisations who they can work with in future programmes.



A route to achieving such infrastructure has been educating local organisations on how holiday inequalities manifest and what quality provision in this area looks like. In Derbyshire, for example, a young person attended an evening session and asked when they would be getting the food as it would be the only thing they'd have to eat that day. For the partner's staff, it was key learning point on the centrality of the food offer to their provision and that it should be provided at the start of the sessions. Such vital learning is key to developing sustainable local infrastructures to tackle the holiday inequalities experienced by children and young people in low-income neighbourhoods.

Another key condition for sustaining this work has been developing the knowledge and relationships with key partners and stakeholders who can support, advocate for and/or deliver the activities. In Wales, mapping activities enabled them to *"identify those assets within those communities, stakeholders, partners... and then engage partners that were in a more trusted position"*. In Birmingham, there has been work undertaken to integrate the HAF programme and agenda into wider strategic directions. For example, there has been formal sports delivery connected to National Governing Bodies of Sport and strategic connectivity to the Birmingham Physical Activity Strategy, where tackling inequalities during holiday periods is a regular agenda item at the Health and Wellbeing Board sub-group. Such influence has been brought about by bringing together people from different directorates in the Council and beyond to work on the HAF programme - *"I know the people in the other different areas where we can influence policy and come together and make a difference. I didn't know that before. I didn't know those people. And so that, you know, take away the program funding, that still remains. So, we've got an opportunity for dialogue and impacting and influencing policy in a way that we've not had"*. This indicates that developing provision to address the holiday inequalities is only part of the work, just as important is developing the relationships and partnerships across

sectors and silos that enables collaborations and a groundswell of influence.

National Influence

The ripple effect maps and the partnerships identified on them, show that awareness about holiday inequalities and provision that addresses this has increased. StreetGames are engaged in activities to achieve this at a national level. They are part of the HAF Alliance in England that *"brings together not-for-profit charities, voluntary sector organisations etc.... to do some of that advocacy work"*. The profile raising of the work and StreetGames as a leader in this field is indicated by their inclusion to a Department for Education roundtable on the topic. *"Really significant local authority contracts"* that StreetGames has for HAF management and coordination have been key to positioning them and their work in this way. In Wales, for example, Fit and Fed has created national recognition of holiday inequalities through pushing its agenda at a ministerial level. In response to this, the Welsh Government launched the School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP). Whilst Fit and Fed cannot be said to have directly initiated SHEP – it is felt that insight and evidence from Fit and Fed may have influenced the *"thought process"* behind it.

Key Learning Points

Breaking down silos: Holiday provision programmes are developing connections between organisations who do not usually work with one another. The value of this is: (1) it opens access to different ideas, ways of thinking and expertise and (2) it enables joined-up thinking on addressing holiday inequalities.

Creating a movement for change: The combination of the local holiday provision eco-systems established and national agenda setting activities, are raising awareness of and generating concrete actions to address holiday inequalities.

Inclusion and Exclusion

Addressing inequalities faced by children and young people

The ripple effect maps identified specific examples of how holiday provision has addressed inequalities faced by children and young people beyond the core objectives of providing food and an activity to the attendees. For example, in Birmingham an 8-year-old who had spent most of the pandemic in flat within a high-rise tower block, said that the best thing about the activities was *“the food”*. The child left the provision with five food bags as they had *“five brothers and sisters who haven't got enough food”*. More so, in Birmingham, holiday activities have been framed as a present - *“I couldn't afford a Christmas present, so this became a Christmas present for my child”*. Another example from Derbyshire, is a partnership with a football academy that led to a child accessing their support being recognized for their *“natural football ability”* and them being provided *“a [funded] place at their academy”*. The Derbyshire team have also got providers to think differently about the provision they offer such as *“water parks and vouchers and things, or access to the gyms and swimming”* to encourage older young people to engage. It is also acknowledged that engagement with holiday provision enables young people to *“come back to school in September...ready to learn”* (Illustrative example from Birmingham). This shows that the holiday provision is impactful beyond the activities.

The funding invested into holiday provision has also enabled providers to try new things. For example, in Newcastle it has given *“providers the opportunity to pilot something... They've never actually been able to spread their wings and try*

something new and HAF has allowed them to do that”. Like the paddle sports activities in Birmingham, funding has expanded the opportunities that are available to children and young people in low-income families. Furthermore, in the North West, holiday provision funding and programmes have contributed to schools to securing the resource needed to deliver *“term-time activities”*.

Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The ripple effect maps also identify how children and young people in the SEND category are being better supported through the holiday provision. In Birmingham, a self-selected mute young person *“by the end of the week was talking with other kids”*. In Derbyshire, a non-verbal child engaged in mainstream provision as part of HAF and by the end of the week had chosen a buddy and was *“interacting with that buddy... that person knew what they meant and was interacting with them. So, they were allowed to access, knew which activity they wanted to take part in, knew when they needed to go to the toilet and all those different things”*. Examples such as this, and the SEND training and mentoring identified in areas such as Newcastle, demonstrate how holiday provision is supporting SEND children and young people to access ‘mainstream’ physical, social and wellbeing activities.

Lowering thresholds to wider provision

The maps indicate that engaging low-income families in holiday provision has



improved access to other related services through information sharing and capitalising on gaining access to them via the holiday provision. As a provider in Birmingham stated: *“A lot of the citizens of Birmingham would never ever access our [leisure centre]... So, straight away, that's a benefit in itself that we've got kind of new users coming into the facility... Once they're inside our buildings, we can then start to educate encourage and signpost them into physical activity... When the parents will drop the children off, we can ask – did you know that you're a Birmingham resident you could actually come and exercise for free?”*

This signposting extends beyond physical activity provision into other services such as how to access benefit advice, food banks and housing support. This *“holistic, wrap-around support”* is providing connections into services (Illustrative example from Wales). In Birmingham specifically there is a sense that some families *“might not trust these services or be let down by services in the past”* and services and the Council, but the HAF programme is providing opportunities *“to potentially develop better trust with these statutory services in the City”*. Through providing pathways into additional provision to address social and economic issues faced by the families, the HAF provision has an opportunity to widen its impact beyond holiday inequalities.

Unintended consequences in holiday activities provision

The HAF programme is specifically aimed a children and young people on free school meals. Whilst this funding has created *“an acceptance that there is inequalities”* as demonstrated by the locally-connected and national advocacy work outlined in the previous section, it has also meant that holiday provision in England has been polarised between the free activities funded by HAF and expensive provision. This has left a gap, that StreetGames is conscious about, for

“families that are just above the threshold to be eligible for free school meals who can't afford paid for provision... It's only really the fancy stuff that exists now... even our leisure centres that we work with don't do paid for provision anymore”. This is particularly true in rural areas. In Derbyshire they are trying to address this by multistranded funding for the same provision – *“We call it a blended approach... so providing paid for and HAF places alongside each other... we've worked with them to access external funding... so they can provide reduced or free for places for those people”*. Despite this, the team do admit that the funding criteria did mean that they lost some providers *“along the way”*. More so the criteria, has resulted in ‘poverty stigma’ being attached to certain holiday provision and occasionally, parents removing children from activities.

Key Learning Points

Connections to wider support eco-system: Holiday provision is creating routes into wider provision for low income families. The ability (and concerted effort) to signpost families to relevant support is building trust and connections with families who may be at a distance from services. This lowers the threshold to them accessing relevant support.

Poverty stigma: Funding criteria that limits provision to children and young people accessing free school meals has unintentionally created ‘poverty stigma’ around the funded holiday provision aimed at this demographic.

Polarisation of provision offer: The void between high-cost holiday activity provision and no-cost holiday activity provision has widened. Provision for families of the brink of poverty has been vastly reduced, resulting in a group of children and young people being excluded from holiday provision.

Impact

Levels of change and how change is occurring

Levels of Change

Across the maps, 12 common types of impact connected to the holiday provision were identified. These have been mapped on the Venn diagram in Figure 1 via the 'level' of change they represent. These 'levels' have been based on Hansen (2017) descriptors of impact:

- **Transactional impact** – These are categorised as isolated changes (i.e., one-off change) or changes that have occurred at an individual level (i.e. impact on a child or young person).
- **Transitional impact** – This impact level is across a whole programme or throughout a specific context. This could include changes across an organisation or a set of connected transactional impacts.
- **Transformative impact** – This type of change is where the wider eco-system has been affected and can include policy and societal changes, and well as the joining-up of transitional impacts across locations.

They have been represented as a Venn Diagram due to overlap between levels of change. Full descriptions of these changes are provided on the following pages in this report.

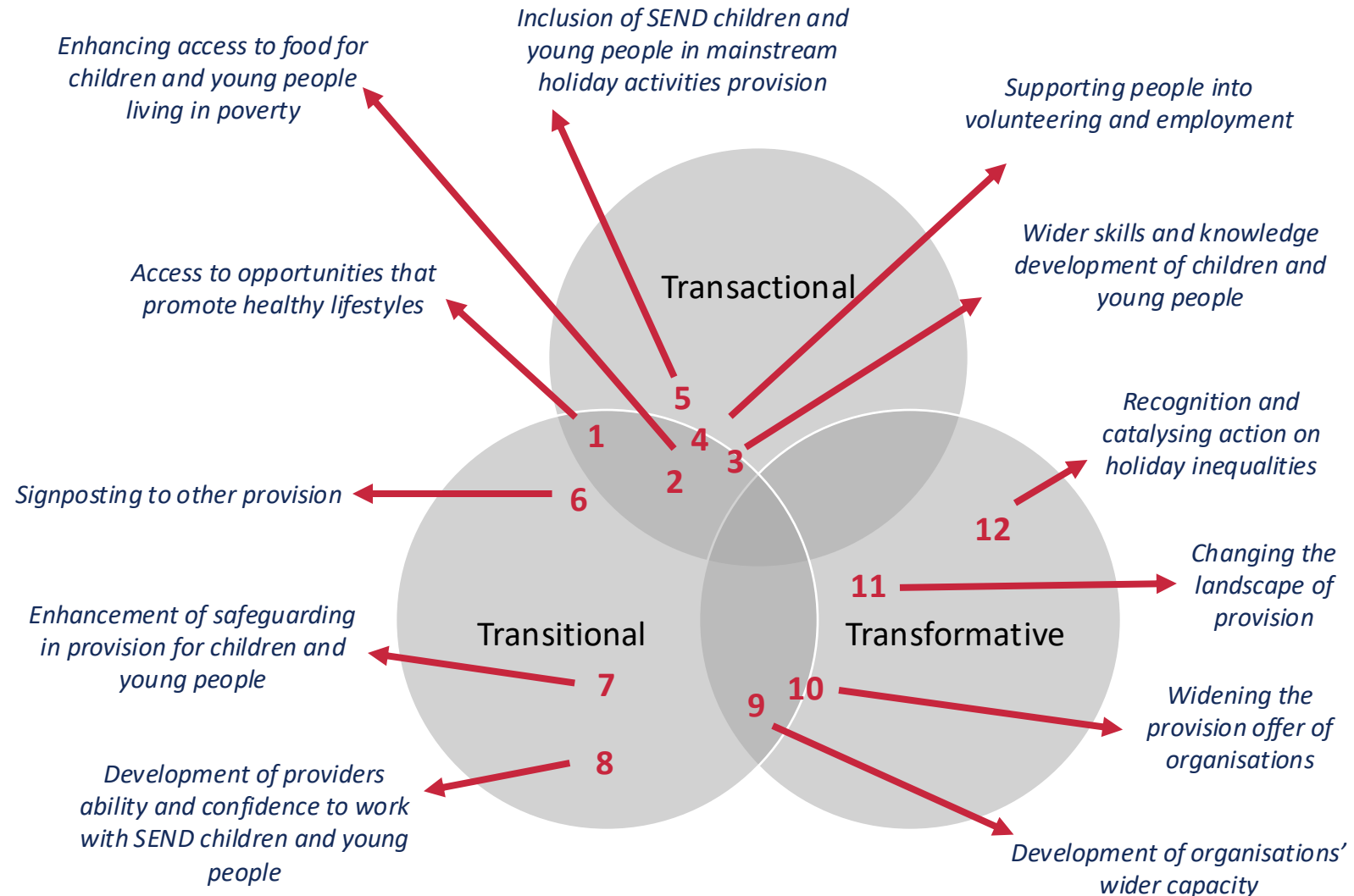


Figure 1: Types of impact being created



Impacts

- 1. Access to opportunities that promote healthy lifestyles:** Both HAF and Fit & Fed provide physical and food-based activities for children and young people from low-income families that support them to lead healthy lifestyles.
- 2. Enhancing access to food for children and young people living in low-income neighbourhoods:** Providing food to children and young people accessing holiday activities is a core part of the provision – with some providers widening the food offer to siblings and/or connecting families into food poverty services such as food banks. The maps also suggest that StreetGames is active in working with providers and national partners to ensure that this remains central to provision.
- 3. Wider skills and knowledge development of children and young people:** Beyond physical and food-based activities, the maps demonstrate that the holiday provision supports children and young people to develop wider skills such as business, communication, first aid and citizenship competences.
- 4. Supporting young people into volunteering and employment:** Progression pathways into volunteering roles and employment opportunities are embedded into the holiday provision. This includes supporting local providers to recruit and work with young people as volunteers on their programmes, delivering activities that specifically provide volunteering or social action opportunities, providing training to develop young people's confidence and capacity to be role models for younger children, and supporting young people who had once accessed the provision to progress into paid roles.
- 5. Inclusion of children and young people with SEND in mainstream holiday activities provision:** The maps demonstrate a concerted effort in the provision to be accessible for children and young people with SEND. In the maps, there are examples of children and young people with SEND flourishing in mainstream holiday provision, demonstrated by then making friendships, overcoming selective muteness and presenting their work to their peers.
- 6. Signposting to other provision:** The holiday provision is actively signposting and referring families on low-income into other relevant poverty alleviation support services. This has included food banks, benefits advice and housing support. There are indicators that this is lowering the threshold to them accessing support and building trust with services.



- 7. Enhancement of safeguarding in provision for children and young people:** Providers of the holiday provision need to be able to demonstrate robust safeguarding standards. To support organisations to be able to achieve and retain such standards, training and support has been specifically offered in this area. There are some signals that this is improving wider provision for children and young people, and in some areas creating a network of ‘commission-ready’ providers of activities for children and young people.
- 8. Development of providers ability to work with children and young people with SEND:** Similar to the safeguarding training and support, the confidence and skills to work with children and young people with SEND has been another area that has been focused upon. These organisational development opportunities have been delivered through the holiday provision in more formal training sessions, as well as peer support and learning opportunities from specialist providers in the local networks.
- 9. Development of organisations’ wider capacity:** Beyond safeguarding and SEND, the capacity of the organisations involved in the delivery of the holiday provision has been enhanced. Such skills include how to work with children and young people, volunteer recruitment, accessing funding and business acumen. A focus on sustainability was at the centre of these workforce and organisational development activities.
- 10. Widening the provision offer of organisations:** It was identified that the range of provision of offer – i.e., what activities that children and young people from low-income families – has diversified, creating both more and different types opportunities than what was previously on offer. The funding and partnerships developed has enabled organisations to try new things, learn new skills and be experimental.
- 11. Changing the landscape of provision:** This is both a positive and negative impact identified in the maps. From a positive perspective, the maps give a sense that provision quality has improved as the provision has been professionalized and the workforce development that has taken place. A negative impact of this is that the provision landscape has polarised between the free activities provided by programmes such as HAF that is directed specifically at children and young people on free school meals, and the high-end, high-cost provision of specialist providers. The result of this is that families on low-incomes who do not meet the free school meal threshold are not able to access affordable provision – particularly in rural areas. There are signs that blended approaches – i.e., singular provision funded via different avenues, aimed at a range families – is a possible solution to this unintended outcome.
- 12. Recognition and catalysing action on holiday inequalities:** Through the geographic range of holiday provision provided, partnerships and local authority contracts established, network-building and Government connections, StreetGames is contributing to a wider movement of tackling holiday inequalities. There are signs that such work – via its groundswell – is impacting on strategy and programmes at both local and national levels.

Routes to Impact

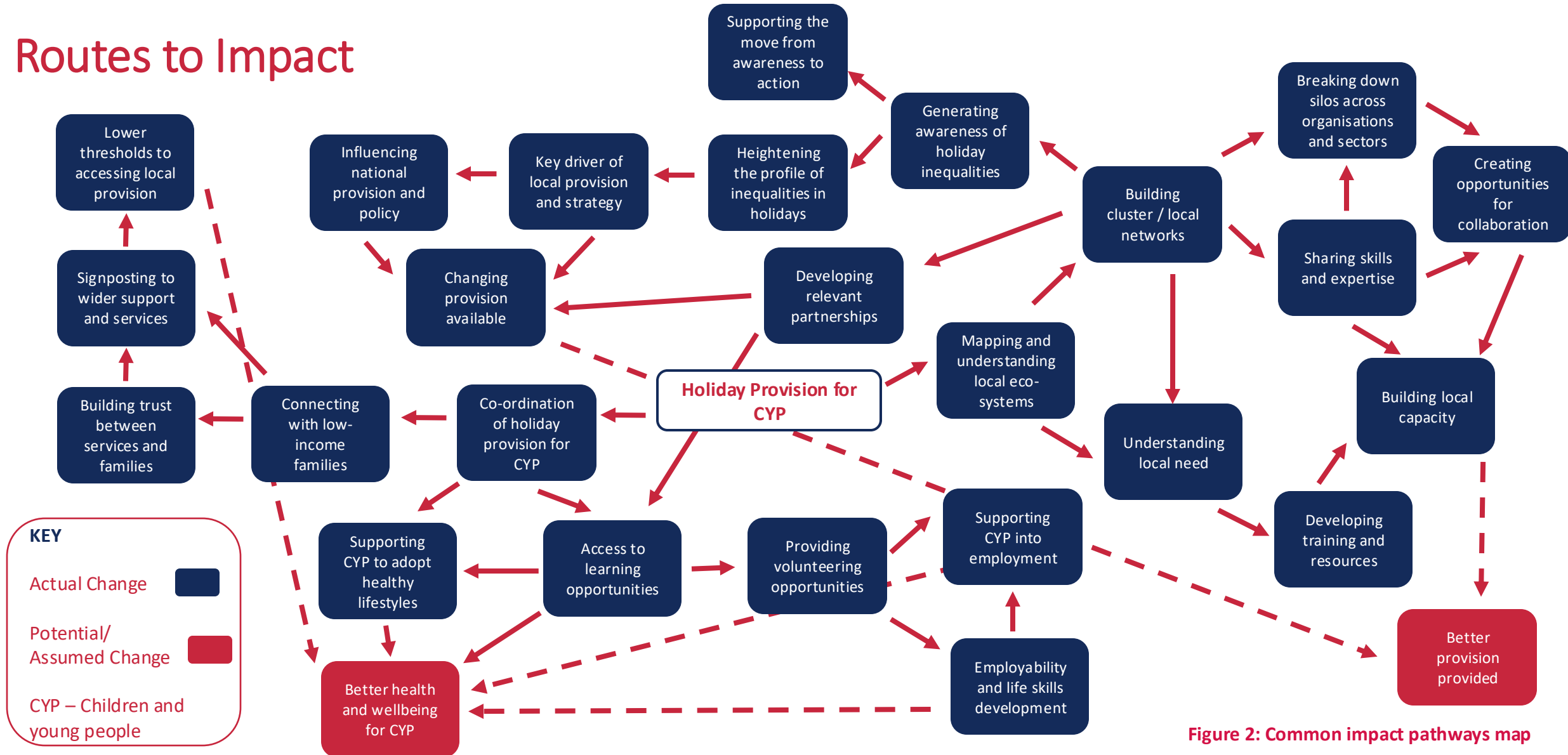


Figure 2: Common impact pathways map

The Future

Considerations for future policy and practice



Moving Forward

Policy Recommendations

Have flexibility on economic measures of inclusion for funded provision: The criteria of children accessing free school meals for inclusion in the HAF provision is excluding some families on low-income from accessing the activities. A broader criteria that is based on local context of low-income/poverty would be more appropriate.

Be aware of how poverty stigma can negatively affect policy implementation: In creating programmes for people in poverty it creates divides between children and young people based on economic criteria and thus poverty stigma is cultivated. Providing across economic criteria lines would reduce this.

Use funding to create collaborative, experimental and learning cultures: HAF in particular has provided the resource needed for organisations to try out new things and develop their skills and offer to children and young people. Such investment moves, particularly the third and public sectors out of a scarcity and competitive mindset and instead creates a culture of collaboration around a shared social aim.

Holiday Provision Recommendations

Develop progression pathways from holiday provision: It is important that provision has opportunities for children and young people to take forward the

learning and opportunities provided beyond the holiday periods. This could be by leveraging holiday provision funding to secure term-time funding, providing volunteering or employment opportunities, delivery of life skills and progression pathways through partnerships with organisations in sports and wellbeing.

Use holiday provision to signpost families to other support services: Identify relevant local services for families and use the social capital that holiday providers have built with families to reassure them to access wider services.

Connect-up holiday activity providers to build local infrastructure and capacity: Ensure that provision is viewed as an eco-system rather than siloed activities through providing networking and relationship opportunities. This should focus on fostering collaboration and peer support beyond the holiday provision.

Future Considerations for Participatory Impact Evaluation

Involve children, young people and their families in the Ripple Effect Mapping activities: This would provide an understanding of the wider impacts on the direct beneficiaries of the holiday provision.

Conduct purposeful sampling: Ensure that representation across the different holiday provision areas is more equal. This would enable a more comparable assessment of the impact being created in different geographies to be achieved.

Share the learning: Create opportunities and outputs from evaluation activities that enable different holiday provision areas to learn from one another.

Appendix

References and supporting information



References

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Workshop Details

Workshop One	
Date	July 2024
Location	Manchester
Participants	12 participants (all StreetGames employees) Holiday Provision: Newcastle HAF (1), North West HAF (1), Fit & Fed Wales (1), Derbyshire HAF (2), Birmingham HAF (3), StreetGames central/national team (4).
Maps	6
Holiday Provision	Birmingham HAF Newcastle HAF North West HAF (Lancashire, Stockport, Trafford) Derbyshire HAF Fit & Fed Wales StreetGames central team with a national perspective on holiday provision

Workshop Two	
Date	August 2024
Location	Birmingham
Participants	18 participants Organisations: Sport Birmingham (1), Sport England (1), CORE & Co Foundation (1), Birmingham Community Leisure Trust (1) StreetGames (3), Birmingham City Council (11)
Maps	2
Holiday Provision	Birmingham HAF



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