

Playschemes Report

November 2022



**Community
Foundation**
Tyne & Wear and Northumberland



Overview of the Summer Playschemes Programme

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our donors for their support of this year's Summer Playschemes Programme. Whilst funding playschemes across the region would still have been possible without these contributions, the extent to which we have been able to provide support was significantly improved, whilst allowing us to take a much more targeted approach to grant-making.

The Community Foundation has encouraged donors to support holiday playschemes since highlighting their benefit in our 2019 Vital Signs report on food poverty. But 2022 is the first year in which we have trialled a pooled fund, set up in response to community organisations reporting that new criteria for Government support excluded children and young people from poorer

households who failed to qualify for support.

As we explained when writing to a selection of our donors in May of this year, the need to address food poverty becomes even more critical during school holidays when children may not have a meal every day, as we sought their support to help cover shortfalls in provision by funding summer holiday activity schemes that included a nutritious meal.

Holiday hunger can make school holidays a very stressful time for families, as they also struggle to find affordable activities for their children. Furthermore, upon returning to school, many of these children find that they are lacking in their physical and educational development when compared to their less-



Photo: True Colours Theatre

disadvantaged peers once the holidays are over.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, the Summer Playschemes Programme was able to support the strongest 17 of the 33 applications that we received, with the recipient organisations each receiving a grant of up to £10,000.

As we approach what will be a challenging winter for so many, we can take a moment to reflect on the outcomes of these schemes. This report explores what was achieved with the support of our donors, focusing on the three main ways in which the funded projects assisted young people: preventing holiday hunger; ensuring that children and young people had opportunities for learning and self-development; and the provision of healthy physical activities.

However, whilst we are pleased with

the many positives results achieved, we recognise this is not a one-off, one-time problem. Moreover, as the region continues to recover from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis is already beginning to bite, and this will only serve to make life more difficult for families living in poverty, which is brought further into focus when schools are closed.

We have therefore resolved to run the Programme again in 2023, with a view to supporting children and young people during not just the summer holidays, but hopefully during Easter, Christmas, and half-terms too. We will therefore once again be looking to our donors to respond to this challenge as they so frequently do already.

Ross Wilson
Senior Philanthropy Advisor

November 2022



Photo: The Linskill and North Tyneside Community Development Trust

Preventing holiday hunger

As the cost-of-living crisis deepens, school holidays are a time when many families on low incomes will struggle to meet the additional costs of keeping children and young people fed. We know that this both undermines their health and well-being and puts considerable strain on family relationships. The provision of food as part of playscheme provision helps improve the chances that families can enjoy their time together over the school holidays.

All of our funded playschemes provided food as part of their provision, with thousands of meals provided ranging from breakfasts to packed lunches and sit-down meals. Peace of Mind, for example, provide a total of 490 breakfasts and 588 hot lunches to children and young people from refugee and asylum-seeker families in Gateshead, Newcastle, and South Shields. In Sunderland, the Foundation of Light project provided around 100 children and young people a week with breakfasts or hot lunches during the month it ran.



Photo: North Tyneside Disability Forum

A number of organisations stressed the importance of food provision in supporting families in hardship. Some highlighted the fact that the additional funding our funds provided enabled more children of those in low-paid and zero-hour contract employment to take part in their schemes. Grace House in Sunderland reported that their grant:

“... has enabled us to reach a larger group of people than usual over the summer as we weren't limited to a restricted criteria. It has meant we have been able to help families who are on the edge of “just managing” during the financial crisis.”

Some parents also commented on the value of the schemes in helping with feeding their children. But more often they remarked on the benefits of new eating

experiences. As the parent of a child attending Linskill and North Tyneside Community Development Trust's scheme commented:

“I can't believe how much fruit and veg she ate by attending the [cookery] club. She is now getting involved in making meals at home and is eating more healthily than before.”

Of course, the children and young people themselves had a unique perspective on all this! Mostly they expressed the simple joy of having something enjoyable or novel to eat whilst on their holidays

“I liked fruit kebabs because they tasted good!”

Opportunities for learning and self-development

For children experiencing disadvantage the school holidays can be a time when they fall behind in terms of learning, lose touch with other children, and have few opportunities for personal growth. Holiday playschemes can help ensure that they remain engaged with learning, are able to socialise with other children, and have opportunities to increase their confidence.

Our playschemes offered a range of activities that contributed to these goals. There were opportunities to learn life skills like healthy eating and cookery; to take part in arts, crafts, musical and science activities; to play with Lego and board games; to learn about animal care, gardening and nature; to be informally educated on issues like internet safety and substance misuse; and to try exciting new activities ranging from treasure hunts to beach trips and Go-Karting. These provided opportunities to keep contact with existing friends and make new ones whilst experiencing new places as well as new activities, with group activities and trips a feature of many schemes. Children were often involved in working together on activities.

Hadston House ran a scheme in South East Northumberland, providing at least three activities a week to over 300 children and young people. It reported that its programme:

“gave young people lasting memories of experiences they would not have had if we hadn’t been available to them... due to cost and transport...young people themselves said they learnt more social skills, some said they learnt to like people more, made new friends and many talked about the fun they had with our staff on the activities. Some were amazed that they could ice skate having never been before, others met and experienced animals they had never seen or heard of...”

Northumbria Youth Action ran a very different scheme for 26 individuals aged 15-18, with a focus on disadvantaged people at risk of becoming disengaged from progression into work, education, or training. Here many of the activities were more vocational in nature, and included areas like cycle and vehicle maintenance, hairdressing, and hospitality, alongside educational and fun activities. Participants were encouraged both to become more aware of their own potential and to develop practical skills in areas like timekeeping or independent travel. The scheme evaluation suggested an improvement in motivation, peer relationships, and skills among the participants.

Children, young people, and their carers remarked on the positive aspects of scheme activities in terms of learning,

peer relationships, and self-confidence. Often this best captures the quality of their experience:

“I have never been to the beach in 15 years of my life because as a girl I was not allowed to go to the beach in my home country. Both my brothers were allowed and used to share beautiful stories with me. I always wanted to visit the beach and feel the water - you gave me this opportunity.” Participant in the Peace of Mind scheme for Gateshead, Newcastle, and South Shields

“For us, our usual experience of the holidays is consumed with anxiety emotional outbursts and a reluctance to leave the safety of her home. We have simply had the best summer with A - she has enjoyed every activity even trying things out of her comfort zone, she has developed friendships and attempted social situations she would usually never cope with, and her meltdowns have been greatly minimised.” Carer of a disabled child attending the True Colours scheme in North Tyneside

“Staff were so kind and helpful always someone to listen to me and the way I have struggled. Liked the [activities where] I could work in a team it helped me to make friends.” Participant in the Cramlington Voluntary Youth Project scheme, Northumberland

A final and unexpected benefit of the activities was that they provided some scheme staff with a chance to really get to know children, young people, and families

and identify those in need of additional support, as revealed in the report from Linskill and North Tyneside Community Development Trust:

“The trip to the farm was excellent and saw children and their parents have an exciting day. Staff facilitating the event observed some significant needs in the families who attended around parenting behaviours. Many of the children showed anxious type behaviour, with parents seemingly unable to manage these appropriately...It was an opportunity to signpost and give information and advice.”



Photo: Grace House North East

Healthy physical activities

Children with limited access to safe public spaces, and those whose families struggle with the cost of accessing organised activities, are often at risk of becoming physically inactive during the school holidays. A major focus of all our schemes were opportunities to get out-and-about and take part in physical activity and play. There were an enormous range of opportunities on offer including walking, games, football, volleyball, badminton, cycling, swimming, surfing, ice skating, skateboarding, archery, and dance.

YMCA North Tyneside provided the 105 children attending their 6-week scheme with a minimum of one hour's exercise per day, including multi-sports, dance, and walking trips to local parks. The sessions were so successful that children taking part have gone on to become involved with a local athletics club and dance sessions at the YMCA. A key feature of this, and some of our other schemes, was the involvement of young people in delivery:

"During the holiday club we had some young volunteers attending who are young health ambassadors for our Healthy Habits programme. The holiday club gave them opportunities to develop their leadership skills and they also acted as positive role models for the children."



Cramlington Voluntary Youth Project's six-week programme included a residential at Kielder, which seems to have offered participants a particularly challenging experience, and one which was as much focused on building self-confidence as physical health:

"Within the residential we incorporated additional activities which would challenge them and push them right out their comfort zones. It was all about giving things a go to help to build their confidence up. Having young support workers has helped to motivate the groups, keeping the energy going and people to reassure them. They have had the opportunity to talk about themselves and get the right level of support and guidance."

It is clear from the feedback that all the physical activities provided across our schemes excited and engaged the children and young people attending, and

that their benefits were also appreciated by carers:

"Good activities, I didn't die; I was petrified for some but pushed myself to my limit. I'm shy and met new people who are now my friends."

"I enjoyed the holiday club. My favourite part was when we got to play outside."

"Pushed myself to do things I was frightened to do. I feel proud of myself when I did things. Staff supported me and encouraged me all the way. I am a young carer, and it was lovely to just do something for me"

"I think it was a fun club and it gave me time out of the house instead of being stuck in all summer."

"It's been great for me to get a bit of space and the children have stayed fit, made friends and had the chance to socialise with others."

Grantees

Organisation	Amount
Cramlington Voluntary Youth Project	£9,856
East End Youth and Community Centre	£7,670
Foundation of Light	£6,264
Gateshead Redheugh 1957	£8,900
Grace House North East	£9,050
Hadston House Youth and Community Projects	£5,900
Justice Prince	£10,000
North Tyneside Disability Forum	£6,232
Northumbria Youth Action	£9,000
Peace of Mind	£9,503
Pennywell Youth Project	£9,024
People and Drugs	£9,000
Success4All	£10,000
The Linskill and North Tyneside Community Development Trust	£8,046
True Colours Theatre	£4,126
Wallsend Mini Soccer Project	£5,000
YMCA North Tyneside	£5,250
Total	£132,821

Contributing Funds

Appletree
 Asian
 Bill & May Hodgson
 Carrie Reay Grassroots
 Chapman
 FB & PFB Lough
 Fogo
 Joseph Brough Charitable Trust
 Lendrum Family Community First
 Linden Family
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Front cover photo: Peace of Mind