

Institution: University of Northumbria at Newcastle		
Unit of Assessment: 3 (Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy)		
Title of case study: Improvement of out of school food and activity provision to mitigate food insecurity and improve wellbeing		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2014 – December 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Greta Defeyter	Professor	01/09/2003 - present
Pamela L Graham	Vice Chancellor Fellow	03/10/2005 - present
Zeb Sattar	Research Assistant/ Lecturer	03.07.2017 - present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2017 – December 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>Research undertaken by the Healthy Living Lab at Northumbria University has explored the experiences of food insecurity and the impact of out of school food and activities provision on children, parents and staff. This provided critical evidence for the development and expansion of the UK Government Holiday Activities and Food programme (HAF). As a result, the Department for Education allocated GBP20,400,000 to provide healthy food and enriching out of school activities, reaching an extra 50,000 disadvantaged children from 2018-2020. HAF Programme operators have used the research to implement and refine their services. The End Child Food Poverty consortium (led by footballer Marcus Rashford) confirmed that the findings provided vital evidence to support their campaign for the extension of summer holiday support to all areas in England, so that it could be made available to all children in receipt of free school meals. The expansion of the HAF programme enables it to reach an estimated 1,100,000 children, including some of the most disadvantaged in the country, making a significant difference to their wellbeing and that of their families.</p>		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>Food insecurity has become a significant issue in the UK over the past decade, with a well reported rise in the use of foodbanks, for example. In 2019 approximately a third of all children were believed to experience food poverty, which has direct consequences for their health and wellbeing. The Healthy Living Lab (HLL, https://healthylivinguk.org/) at Northumbria University is one of the UK's leading research groups focussing on out of school food provision for children. HLL research has been undertaken using mixed methods to understand the impact of breakfast clubs [R1-R3], after school clubs and holiday clubs [R2, R4-R6] on food insecurity and food choices, as well as socialisation and wellbeing [R1-R6]. The studies were among the first to privilege concurrently the voices of teachers and staff, parents or carers, and children [R1-R6].</p> <p>HLL research has investigated the role of school breakfast clubs in alleviating food insecurity for children [R1]. Including the views of parents, children and school staff (n=69), the qualitative research consolidated the view that breakfast clubs can play a key role in alleviating hunger and influence children's breakfast habits and food preferences. School breakfasts offered children opportunities for social interaction and led to improvements in concentration, mood and energy levels at the start of the day [R1]. Subsequent research compared the impact of attendance to breakfast and after school clubs on children's socialisation (n=285 primary school children) [R2]. Significantly, findings pointed to the possibility that breakfast clubs reproduce family mealtimes in offering opportunities for unstructured, face-to-face interactions in small groups, which is key in learning social skills.</p>		

Building on this, HLL undertook the first academic qualitative evaluation of holiday breakfast clubs [R3]. Involving children, adult attendees and staff (n=50), the study highlighted how food insecurity is an issue for many families, which is exacerbated during holidays when parents are unable to rely on school meals as a consistent source of food for their children [R3]. This was followed by an investigation of school holiday food provision, involving holiday club staff [R4], which highlighted the combination of experiences of food insecurity and social isolation for many children and families over the holiday. Wider benefits included provision of childcare, food security for the wider household and safe play spaces [R4].

A survey of holiday club attendees indicated that a large percentage of children attending holiday clubs come from households that can be defined as suffering from food insecurity and experience episodes of hunger [R5]. In addition, the research also suggests that children who come from households that are defined as 'food insecure' benefit disproportionately from these clubs when compared with children who come from households that are food secure [R5]. Subsequently, the team undertook an extensive investigation of the wider impact of holiday clubs, involving staff and volunteers (n=64), parents (n=77) and children (n=220). Beyond food provision alone, holiday clubs were found to often reduce social isolation, ease financial hardship, provide a safe place for children to play, improve community cohesion, and provide access to enrichment activities [R6], thus potentially playing a key role in alleviating the broader experience of poverty.

Since 2015, this body of research has been central to collaborative initiatives with organisations such as the Mayor's Fund for London, Feeding Britain, and local authorities such as Gateshead Council. HLL Director, Professor Greta Defeyter, is the academic lead for the Kitchen Social Advisory Group, London's largest provider. Defeyter is a member of the North East Child Poverty Commission, of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Hunger, and she is a founding member of the Holiday Hunger Task Group (a sub-group of APPG, focussed on School Food). In February 2020, Defeyter was also named as one of The Big Issue's Top 100 Changemakers for the important contribution the research has made to society. These examples give an indication of the esteem with which the research is held across the public, private and third sectors.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

R1. Pamela Louise Graham, Russo, R., Blackledge, J., and Margaret Anne Defeyter (2014) Breakfast and beyond: the dietary, social and practical impacts of a universal free school breakfast scheme in the North West of England, UK. *International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food*, **21**(3): 261-274 <https://doi.org/10.48416/ijsaf.v21i3.140>

R2. Margaret Anne Defeyter, Pamela Louise Graham, and Russo, R. (2015) 'More than just a meal: breakfast club attendance and children's social relationships' *Frontiers in Public Health*, **3**:183 doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2015.00183

R3. Margaret Anne Defeyter, Pamela Louise Graham, and Prince, K. (2015) 'A qualitative evaluation of holiday breakfast clubs in the UK: Views of adult attendees, children and staff'. *Frontiers in Public Health*, **3**:199 doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2015.00199

R4. Pamela Louise Graham, Crilley, E. , Stretesky, P. B.* , Long, M. A.* , Palmer, K, J., Steinbock, E., and Margaret Anne Defeyter (2016)** 'School holiday food provision in the UK: A qualitative investigation of needs, benefits and potential for development', *Frontiers in Public Health*, **4**:172 doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2016.00172

R5. Long, M. A.* , Stretesky, P. B.* , Pamela Louise Graham, Palmer, K. J., Steinbock, E., and Margaret Anne Defeyter (2017) 'The impact of holiday clubs on household food insecurity - a pilot study', *Health & Social Care in the Community*, **26**: 261-269 doi.org/10.1111/hsc.12507

R6. Stretesky, P. B. *, **Margaret Anne Defeyter**, Long, M. A. *, **Zeb Sattar**, and Crilley, E. ** (2020) 'Holiday Clubs as Community Organizations', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* doi.org/10.1177/0002716220917657

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**Crilley, E., Shinwell, J., Mann, E. – Northumbria University PhD Students

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Northumbria's Healthy Living Lab (HLL) research has been instrumental in shaping the UK Government's Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme and its delivery through over 280 holiday club partners. The research has (i) underpinned a series of funding decisions by the Department for Education (DfE), supporting the delivery of healthy food and activities across England, (ii) informed the expansion of the HAF programme to all of England, with an increase in budget to GBP220,000,000, and (iii) enabled delivery organisations to improve the health and experiences of children and families living in poverty over the holiday period.

4.1 Informing the creation and expansion of the (HAF) programme

Research highlighting the problems of food insecurity, and the role of out of school clubs in mitigating this, played a key role in Government setting up and funding HAF clubs. In 2015, Kellogg's issued a report using HLL research, 'Isolation and Hunger' [E1a], that was sent to all 650 MPs, including those on the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Hunger [E2]. The findings were subsequently highlighted in a report by the APPG's holiday hunger task force, which together enabled policymakers at Westminster to gain a detailed understanding of the scale of need and the important role that holiday provision schemes play [E1b]. The Chair of the APPG, Frank Field, MP, singled the research out as not only bringing the urgent issue of Holiday Hunger to mainstream attention [E3a], but also '*as transforming how policy makers ... understand and promote the function of holiday food clubs*' [E2].

Civil society organisations also used the research evidence to pressurise the Government, such as an extensive follow-up report published in December 2017 by Feeding Britain, an influential hunger charity chaired by the Archbishop of Canterbury [E3b]. Frank Field MP used the research to introduce a Private Members' Bill, 'The School Holidays (Meals and Activities) Bill' which would have placed a duty on local authorities to ensure disadvantaged children had access to food in the holidays. Once the Government committed to a major new holiday programmes initiative, the Bill was withdrawn [E4; E5, p12-15].

The DfE has acknowledged the contribution of HLL's work on health and other outcomes for children, parents, organisations and communities. Matthew Chappell, DfE Team Lead on the HAF programme stated:

These papers helped to inform the Department's awareness about the need, provision, and rapid expansion of school holiday programmes operating across England. This, in turn, has resulted in a series of developments that together represent a transformation in strategic thinking and policy with regards to ensuring children have access to healthy, nutritious food, physical and enriching activities that improve children's overall wellbeing over the school holidays, and provide important childcare support to working parents [E4].

These advocacy initiatives and policy developments, which relied on HLL research, underpinned the Governments' decision to commit GBP2,000,000 to fund a series of HAF pilot schemes during the summer of 2018, supporting organisations to deliver healthy food and activities to children living in some of the most disadvantaged areas of England [E4]. This provision was distributed via 280 clubs and reached more than 18,000 children [E4]. The original pilot scheme was later extended with further investment of GBP9,100,000 to support 50,000 children across the school summer holidays in 2019, with the DfE again allocating the same level of funding for

HAF delivery in 2020, totalling GBP20,400,000 [E4]. As the DfE noted, the *'successful, and arguably life-changing policy and funding initiatives [HAF programme], are in no small part a direct result of the vital contribution that Northumbria's research made during the development of the HAF programme'* [E4].

4.2 Shaping long-term allocation of resources by DfE for holiday provision

During the COVID-19 pandemic, public concerns around the issue of child hunger grew, informed by the efforts of a civil society coalition, End Child Food Poverty, led by footballer Marcus Rashford. The Executive Director of the Food Foundation explained that HLL research had underpinned the National Food Strategy. This came from an independent review commissioned by Government to set out a vision and a plan for a better food system [E6a]. The 2nd recommendation outlined in the report, was to *'extend the Holiday Activity and Food Programme to all areas in England, so that summer holiday support is available to all children in receipt of free school meals'* [E6a]. The End Child Food Poverty campaign worked to implement this and *'the civil society consortium drew on her [Defeyter's] evidence to inform their policy position and ensure their advocacy strategy was evidence-based'* [E6b].

In March 2020, the HLL co-hosted an event in Westminster with the charity Feeding Britain that was attended by senior representatives from the DfE, the Department of Work & Pensions, and key stakeholders from the third sector [E4]. The DfE noted that a key objective of the event *'was to draw upon the research expertise of the HLL (and knowledge gathered on the back of the initial pilot schemes) to deliver a "design sprint" that would generate a range of co-created and co-produced delivery and funding frameworks'* [E4]. Following this event, Defeyter produced a new paper for the DfE that focused on the development of four possible frameworks that could guide the future provision of meals, childcare, and activities for children during school holidays. The DfE confirmed how the findings enabled it to consolidate existing knowledge, expertise, and practical experience, *'and supported ...their thinking concerning the expansion of the HAF programme to the whole of England'* [E4].

The combination of HLL's research contribution to Government reviews, civil society advocacy, and parliamentary process was instrumental in the announcement by the Government in November 2020 of the expansion of the HAF programme to the whole of England in 2021, at a cost of GBP220,000,000 [E4]. As noted by MP Frank Field, in the six years since holiday hunger became a major political issue: *'the demonstrable benefits the new policy has had for thousands of families throughout the UK, is testament to the strength and importance of the research [carried out by the HLL]'* [E2]. The expansion of the service means that an estimated 1,100,000 disadvantaged children can now benefit [E6a, p2].

4.3 Mitigating food insecurity among families from disadvantaged backgrounds

The benefits of policies that have been informed by HLL research can be seen in positive results at a grassroots level. In 2015, Kellogg's acknowledged that research findings on food insecurity, the social and behavioural benefits of holiday clubs, and the optimum model for clubs identified in the research were the foundations of its holiday breakfast club model rolled out in London and Manchester [E1a, p11].

A further example can be seen with Kitchen Social (KS), the largest provider of food for children in London during the school holidays, reaching more than 5,000 children across 24 London boroughs [E7a]. After hearing about HLL's research in Parliament and during the Hungry Holidays Inquiry, KS requested assistance from Northumbria to assess its implementation of, and how it produces, social change [E7b]. The two-year process evaluation included interviews with holiday club staff, attendees, parents/caregivers and senior stakeholders (published in April 2020 by KS in a comprehensive evaluation report) [E7b]. Findings highlighted the significance of the impact of KS:

'My family were having difficulties with money, so at school I had to give up going to trips and couldn't really buy my own food. It was really hard, and we didn't really

have much food at home either. So, places like this are just really important for kids who are having difficult times with money' [Child participant, E7b, p2]

'It's good to see my children making new friends, being active and eating healthy food ...the programme also helped us as a family. Not only did it give me some much needed free time but it has impacted positively of the family budget' [Parent participant, E7a, p2]

The Head of Social Inclusion at KS confirmed the HLL research *'played a significant role in the development, implementation, and refinement of [KS programme] resulting in improved, positive outcomes for hundreds of children, parents, and communities'* [E7b]. The research evaluation for example, identified a problem with the food supply model used by KS, which enabled them *'to quickly rectify this issue, resulting in an improved delivery model and better dietary outcomes for children'* [E7b].

Similar results have been achieved with other HAF partners, including the StreetGames UK initiative, a national sports charity. The Chief Executive noted how the research *'inspired us to develop Fit & Fed – a new way of delivering sport and physical activity which would include the provision of food ... during school holidays'* [E8]. Launched in the summer of 2017, this national programme grew to support 19,839 young people by the 2019 summer holidays [E8], serving approximately 100,000 meals. The HLL team have been praised for their *'rare and valuable combination of the ability to blend academic rigour, knowledge and expertise with significant levels of professional empathy and understanding of the lives and circumstances of some of nation's poorest children, young people and families'* [E8].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

Ref.	Source of corroboration	Link to claimed impact
E1	a) Report (Kellogg's, 2015) b) Report (Holiday Hunger Task Group, 2015)	Confirms how research informed understanding among policymakers, and development of new HAF policy
E2	Testimonial - Rt. Hon Frank Field MP, Chair APPG Hunger	Confirms how research informed understanding among policymakers, and development of new HAF policy
E3	a) Collated media coverage b) Report, 'Ending Hunger in the Holidays (Feeding Britain, 2017)	Confirms how research raised public profile of holiday hunger issue and supported development of new policy
E4	Testimonial - HAF Team Leader, DfE, 2020	Confirms how research supported development of new HAF policy
E5	Parliamentary address, Under-Secretary of State for Education (Hansard, Nov 2018)	Confirms how research supported strategic thinking among policymakers to develop/expand the new HAF policy
E6	a) Food Strategy Recommendations in Full b) Testimonial - Anne Taylor, Executive Director, Food Foundation	Confirms civil society campaign relied on research
E7	Kitchen Social: a) Service Description b) Testimonial - Head of Social Inclusion	Confirms how research supported third sector organisations to mitigate food insecurity through HAF schemes
E8	Testimonial - Chief Executive, StreetGames UK	Confirms how research supported third sector organisations to mitigate food insecurity through HAF schemes