

HOLIDAY PROGRAMMES: ACTIVITIES AND FOOD

A PROGRAMME OF RESEARCH BY NORTHUMBRIA UNIVERSITY



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CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction | 4 |
| Holiday Programmes - Activities and Food | 8 |
| Case studies | |
| StreetGames | 10 |
| Gateshead Council | 14 |
| Kitchen Social | 18 |
| Feeding Britain | 22 |
| Meals and More | 24 |
| Children in Northern Ireland | 28 |
| Our Research | 32 |
| Abstracts | 36 |
| Healthy Living Lab Members | 40 |
| Our Offer | 42 |

INTRODUCTION TO THE HEALTHY LIVING LAB

The Healthy Living Lab brings together over twenty academic colleagues that develop, inform, and evaluate community and school-based interventions through the delivery of applied research, training, and consultancy.

Areas of focus include school and community breakfast clubs, school meals, and holiday hunger. Expertise is drawn from across disciplines including psychology, sociology, nutritional science, computer science, public health, and sport to research and address public health issues in a holistic way.

The Healthy Living Lab is situated within the Department of Social Work, Education and Community Wellbeing at Northumbria University. Through collaborating with a range of partners and key stakeholders the lab bridges the gap between scientific research findings, policy and practice. These include government departments, local authorities, schools, charities and businesses.

The lab specialises in co-designing research projects with stakeholders and user groups, especially young children, and uses a variety of methods to capture the voice of children. Importantly the lab ensures that not only are children's voices heard but that they are also included in the dissemination of the research findings and in future policy and practice decisions.

A full list of academics working on holiday programmes can be found at the back of this brochure and the key subject leads are as follows:

Professor Greta Defeyter, Director of the Healthy Living Lab is responsible for the overall strategic leadership of the lab and she is supported by Professor Paul Stretesky, Assistant Director.



Professor Greta Defeyter

BSc (Hons) CPsychol FRSA FHEA FBPsS PhD

The Director for the Healthy Living Lab is Professor Greta Defeyter. Her current research interests are food security, social injustice, school feeding programmes and holiday hunger.

She has received funding from multiple sources and has published numerous academic and parliamentary papers on school breakfast clubs and holiday provision. Indeed, the Healthy Living Lab was the first UK lab to publish peer-reviewed papers on the phenomenon of 'holiday hunger'.

She is now a recognised international expert in this area and in 2015, she was made a Fellow of the British Psychological Society in recognition of her research with children living in areas of social and economic deprivation. More recently, she won a Food Heroes Award from Sustain for her research on school breakfast clubs and holiday hunger. In 2017, the Healthy Living Lab won the British Psychology Public Engagement Award (North East) for their research on feeding disadvantaged children.

Greta is a member of the British Psychological Society Expert Reference Group, 'From Poverty to Flourishing' and a Subject Expert on the 'American Psychological Association-Equity Flattens the Curve Campaign', a member of the World Food Programme's Global School Health Research Consortium, member of the Royal Society of Medicine, a member of the APPG on School Food, a civic commissioner on the Gateshead Poverty Truth Commission, an executive member of the North East Child Poverty Commission and a Trustee of Feeding Britain, and founding member of the Holiday Activities and Food Alliance.

Since 2017 Greta has been an academic advisor to the Department for Education's Holiday Activities and Food programme. In 2020 she was recognised, by the Big Issue, as one of the top 100 change makers for her research and policy impact on childhood food poverty.

"Our research has shown that food insecurity and hunger is present today in the UK, and has led to policy shifts e.g. the National School Breakfast Programme and Holiday Activities and Food, both of which support some of our most disadvantaged children, parents and communities."

Professor Greta Defeyter, Director of the Healthy Living Lab



HOLIDAY PROGRAMMES: ACTIVITIES AND FOOD



Making a Difference

Millions of children in the UK who rely on free school meals are at risk of hunger during school holidays. In addition, many families face difficulties in being able to access affordable childcare, pay for family holidays, cultural activities and day trips, and find suitable places for young people to spend enjoyable time in a safe environment.

The risk and effects of food insecurity pose a serious threat to the health and development of children growing up in low-income households, both in the immediate and longer term. One in five children in the UK live in food poverty, and this number has been exacerbated in the past year during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Healthy Living Lab has conducted extensive nationwide research on interventions, both in and out of school, that address child food security, childcare provision, community networks, education, health and wellbeing.

Northumbria University and the Healthy Living Lab are committed to driving positive societal change. Through public and community engagement, we strive to transform lives and actively contribute to society. Links with user communities and policy makers are integral to our work and to making change happen.

Our findings have made a difference at both a national and personal level. They have shown the importance of programmes which support some of our most disadvantaged children, parents and communities. Research from the Healthy Living Lab has led to a national shift in school breakfast programmes and has directly influenced the development and expansion of the DfE's Holiday Activities and Food programme in England.

The case studies and publications presented here in relation to childhood food security and activities during holidays clearly highlight how our research has had a significant impact on local and national policies and public understanding and awareness of the issues families and children face during school holidays.

The issue of food insecurity

The term 'holiday hunger' was first used in the UK over 100 years ago following the implementation of free school meals in 1909. Generally, the term refers to situations under which families on low household incomes, many of whom rely on free school meals during term time, often struggle to put food on the table during the school holidays. It is difficult to believe that in 2021, we still have the same issue.

Replacing the meals provided by schools is costly and parents who are often unable to afford the additional costs will regularly skip meals and purchase food that has poorer nutritional content. This has led to a rise in the number of families accessing food banks during the school holidays, a clear sign of how serious an issue it remains in the UK.

Since 2014, The Healthy Living Lab has been a leader in researching childhood food insecurity and the inter-related problems associated with poverty. The interdisciplinary team within the Lab carry out pioneering, interdisciplinary research into the prevalence of holiday programmes across England and Northern Ireland, as well as the important role that expanded, centrally coordinated programmes can play in combatting food insecurity and the inter-related problems associated with it.

Holiday programmes work best when they provide consistent, easily accessible activities. We have supported, and continue to work with, international, national and regional organisations to review and evaluate their provision to shape improvements, share best practice and ensure it reflects the latest thinking, learning and



developments within the field. Our research has been instrumental in shaping the government's thinking and the DfE's decision to expand the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme across England.

We are delighted to be a founding member of the Holiday Activities and Food Alliance, a brand new coalition of charities and not-for-profit organisations working with communities to research and address inequalities, food poverty and inactivity. As the only higher education member of the Alliance, we offer extensive expertise and practical knowledge, combined with peer-reviewed research rated as world-leading for its impact in the last review of excellence in research outputs from UK universities.

FIT AND FED

StreetGames uses the power of sport to help make young people safer, healthier and more successful.



What the Programme Offers

StreetGames' innovative Fit and Fed campaign offers fun physical activities and nutritious, healthy meals to some of society's most vulnerable young people.

Fit and Fed sessions are designed around groups of 20 participants, each of whom can expect to enjoy around four hours of daily games and activities, alongside a healthy meal.

Find out more at:

www.streetgames.org/fit-and-fed

Through the work delivering multi-sport activities in disadvantaged communities through trusted community organisations, it was becoming increasingly clear that many of the children and young people taking part – especially during school holidays – were arriving hungry and lacking in energy.

This was the inspiration for Fit and Fed – a new way of delivering sport and physical activity which would include the provision of food as well as tackling the other challenges faced by disadvantaged young people during school holidays such as social isolation and a lack of things to do.

Created in response to growing demand from local projects, this new initiative would aim to attract greater funding and support for community-based interventions to tackle the so-called 'Holiday Gap' – a collective term for the increased risk of hunger, inactivity, and isolation facing poor young people during the school holidays.

19,839
young people
were supported
across all
locations.

90,000
meals have
been served to
young people
in need.*

**During first year of operation (2017)*

The Impact of the Programme

Launched in the summer of 2017, the programme succeeded in reaching 15,500 young people across 251 sites, in just its first year of operation. During that time, a whopping 90,000 meals were served to young people in need!

The programme has continued to grow rapidly each year and in 2019 Fit and Fed – as well as being rolled out in communities around the country – was adapted to deliver a citywide six-week holiday programme in Newcastle upon Tyne as part of the Department for Education's Holiday Activities with Food (HAF) pilot. Newcastle's Best Summer Ever (NBSE) was the single largest holiday activity and nutrition programme – with food – ever to be delivered in the city.

Across all geographical locations 19,839 young people were supported.

Participants received a healthy, nutritious meal made to Government Free School Meal standards and took part in a range of sports and other fun physical activity.

Children and young people expressed enjoyment at the range of activities on offer and the quality of the food. Projects where cooking lessons featured amongst the activities were especially popular.

"The support and insight that the **Healthy Living Lab** have provided during the development and delivery of our Fit and Fed program has been invaluable. Through collaboration and data sharing this partnership has allowed us to better identify the fundamentals of a successful holiday program and apply these lessons to maximise our reach and impact."

Jane Ashworth, Founder, StreetGames

"I have enjoyed the whole lot especially making food and cooking, I wish it was on every day. The best bit was making spaghetti bolognaise. I knew all the stuff that went into it and I wouldn't normally eat carrots and butternut squash, but it tasted nice. We are going away next week in a caravan and I am going to make loads of different sausage rolls for our picnics."

Paul (13)

"I liked making the food, the pizza was the best and I didn't know that coleslaw was cabbage, but it tasted good. I also liked making the recipe book so that I can do stuff at home."

Jessica (7)



Case Study: Play in Newcastle

Play in Newcastle had a wide range of activities on offer across Newcastle for different age ranges of children and young people. Using their experienced staff base and local knowledge they were able to deliver detached work targeting areas of high Anti-Social Behaviour, full day activity sessions for children to attend, street based play work and home deliveries to families.

They delivered a targeted detached programme in response to the increase in Anti-Social behaviour reported by the police and residents over the summer.

Across five sites per day, for seven weeks they were able to provide activities and food for 15 children and young people on each site. Through these sites they engaged partners like British Cycling and Dance City to provide a varied physical activity offer to the children and young people that took part.

In between the delivery on site and detached youth work, there was also an extensive support programme for children, young people and their families who didn't feel safe to engage in on site activities. So Play in Newcastle staff provided regular deliveries of food parcels and activity packs alongside family support and mentoring services to ensure no family was left out of their service over the summer.

One of the highlights for Play in Newcastle was their partnership with Dance City;

"It was noted that working in partnership with Dance City made a significant impact to the normal provision of the summer activity. It offered a new skill and activity and was viewed in high regard from parents of young people who struggled to get their children activity."

BRIGHTEN THE DAY

Gateshead Holiday Activities and Food 2020

Here are some of the fantastic examples of the activities delivered by Gateshead Council's "Brighten the Day" Holiday Activities and Food programme which ran from Monday 20th July to Friday 4th September 2020.



COVID-19 Impact on Programme Delivery

Gateshead Council working with its network of partners and community volunteers went the extra mile to ensure that during ongoing restrictions children and families in Gateshead enjoyed Holiday Fun & Food. The challenges associated with COVID-19 meant a very different approach to the 2020 programme, the result, included greater numbers of children benefitting and a broader range of community partners including new and additional schools.

The social distancing requirements encouraged a programme with more venues providing activities, with helped provided greater choice and variety in the activities offered, although on some sites the numbers of places had to be reduced.

Although lead in times were tight, this did not impact negatively on the reach the 2020 programme achieved with more venues and activities taking place than in previous years and the take up from children participating also higher than previously.

As a result of some organisations not operating as they had previously, the Council and its partners, secured help and support from some new sports and activity providers which again provided a broader range of activities throughout the programme.

In addition to planned in person activities a new digital programme of activity was added which included individual and collective challenges that all children and their parents could participate in. This included a summer reading challenge with Gateshead libraries, arts and crafts ideas online, sports and physical video challenges, steps per days and activities undertaken, with a social media campaign, celebrating the successes and encouraging further participation.

All digital activities were accessed via the holiday activities platform branded #BrightentheDay which was hosted on Council's website.

Find out more at:

www.gateshead.gov.uk/brightentheday

The Programme

In person activities for summer 2020 were much more targeted, with venues and providers inviting families in need who were already known to them, and already part of their local network. The programme targeted a much higher percentage of FSM eligible children to take up the places on offer rather than through an open bookings system. More of the provision took place outdoors wherever possible, and providers adhered to the latest government guidance on bubbles for delivering activities to children safely.

The Programme Venues participating were a mix of community settings and schools, with nine primary schools and one secondary school participating. Schools included; Brandling Primary, Carr Hill Primary, Chopwell Primary, Harlow Green Primary, Kelvin Grove Primary, Larkspur Primary, River Tyne Academy, St Joseph's Blaydon, The Drive Primary and Whickham School. Community venues who delivered activities included the Central Library, Elgin centre, Bewick Road Jewish community centre, Comfrey Project at Windmill Hills, Peace of Mind at Bensham Grove community centre, Felling Crowhall Towers, St Chads community project, TW Skills, Birtley community centre, Saltwell Park, Winlaton centre and Scouting Gateshead at Whickham Thorns outdoor activity centre. The Gateshead Community Food Network working collaboratively with the community organisations helped to make the programme as successful as ever.

The Impact of the Programme

Results

- 11,000 places offered to children on 41 projects over seven weeks
- Only 500 places were lost to adverse weather or Covid related issues at venues
- Smallest project – six children
- Largest project – 180 children
- 5,775 council packed lunches delivered over the programme
- 1,650 healthy breakfasts provided
- 3,100 meals provided to attendees by venues including some hot food
- Attendance data estimates 80% of all places were filled, with 8500 places attended
- Estimate that 75% of children attending were eligible for FSM entitlement 2,921.
- Over 13,000 views of the #BrightentheDay webpage for online content

Feedback received:

"It's been brilliant. Kids have loved it and our staff who are supporting have been really impressed with the coaching staff."

Head teacher at school venue delivering sports sessions

"My son has been at a local football club for coaching throughout the summer and it's been absolutely brilliant. He gets to play and have a healthy lunch each day and as a parent it's great to know he's getting exercise instead of playing Xbox all day long."

Dad on Cleveland Hall FC Food

Offer and Activity Packs

- Weekly fresh produce, branded cook n eat, boxes with recipe cards delivered to 1,347 FSM households over the summer holidays
- Each box fed a family of four, at total of 4,600 individuals from FSM families fed each week
- Eight healthy recipes included in the boxes were also posted online for all Gateshead families to try at home Some of the venues prepared a packed lunch or a hot meal on site.

The project at the Elgin Centre led by the Council's play workers offered 1,650 breakfasts over the six weeks of activity. Healthy packed lunches were provided for those projects without facilities on site with the Council's Catering Team preparing and delivering over 5,775 packed lunches over the seven weeks. Feedback on the food provided was highly complementary.

Feedback received:

"The breakfast provided by the Elgin Kitchen helped to kick start the kids each day."

The cooking activities offered by Corrina (Elgin Kitchen)

"Let our kids think differently about healthy food."
Head Teacher, Brandling School



Activity Packs

The programme worked with partners; Borderline Books, Children Northeast, Baltic Arts Centre and Sage Gateshead Music centre, to create and deliver activity packs for 1,200 FSM eligible families in disadvantaged areas. Much appreciated donations were secured including children's magazines, craft packs, arts activities and reading books. A pack contained a range of small items of sports equipment with physical activity challenges, arts and crafts materials, reading books and toys, where possible the team co-ordinating the creation of the activity packs, which included local volunteers tried to tailor the packs to the age and gender of the children in the household. Social workers, family support workers, and school staff identified families in need and distributed 1,200 packs to those children and young people, alongside a team of volunteers.



Local Economy Impact

The funding allowed Gateshead Council to commission 22 providers, mainly small businesses, community enterprises, local charities and self-employed freelancers to deliver activities. For many providers this was their first opportunity to contribute to the programme and in some cases due to the impact of Covid and was one of limited opportunities to generate income this financial year.

Helpful hints

The use of Gateshead Mapping Tool enabled the programme to be delivered across Gateshead and in those communities where the activities would have the biggest impact whilst ensuring that no child had to travel more than two miles from where they lived to access an activity.

"Professor Defeyter and her team at the Healthy Living Lab have supported the creation of the Gateshead Community Food Network which drives the holiday activities programmes but is now helping connect food poverty, climate change, health and wellbeing and community wealth building strategies across Gateshead. Complimenting the Council's support to tackling poverty in Gateshead, Professor Defeyter influenced the creation and development of the Gateshead Poverty Truth Commission. As a civic leader, Professor Defeyter plays an ongoing and active role in supporting the Commission's testifiers and experts by experience."

Ian Stevenson, Service Manager Neighbourhood Management, Gateshead Council

KITCHEN SOCIAL

Kitchen Social is the largest provider of holiday provision in London.



As a key part of the Mayor of London's Food Strategy, Kitchen Social has a vital role to play in addressing the growing and serious issue of children and young people facing food insecurity and social isolation outside of term time.

In 2019, the Greater London Authority estimated that 400,000 children aged 16 or under were living in food insecure households. Covid-19 has now exacerbated this issue and the figure is continually rising.

Poor nutrition and isolation not only affect a child's physical wellbeing, but also their long-term educational attainment and employment prospects, thereby perpetuating the cycle of poverty. The programme gives children and young people a safe place to go during the school holidays where they can socialise, learn, make new friends and get a free, healthy meal.

Find out more at:

www.mayorsfundforlondon.org.uk/kitchen-social



The Programme

Kitchen Social works with local grass root community organisations in deprived areas of London to create a familiar environment where children and young people, along with their families and/or carers, can attend during the school holidays.

Since 2017, Kitchen Social have worked with over 200 community organisations across London. The model is a tried and tested approach, providing integrated support in the form of technical training and small grants.

The programme capitalises on the existing reach of these organisations to keep young Londoners engaged, safe and learning when they are not in school. The organisations the programme works with are as diverse as faith groups, community groups, housing associations, schools, libraries, theatres, urban farms, adventure playgrounds, sports clubs, youth centres and special needs centres.



Over the summer, during the pandemic, Kitchen Social introduced 'Take & Make' boxes; providing families with a weekly box of nutritious, portioned ingredients to take away and cook at home. Alongside this were a series of fun and educational recipe videos and recipe cards to engage young people in cooking at home.

Kitchen Social have also campaigned along with other stakeholders for national policy change to ensure that free holiday provision for low income young people is high quality, inclusive and sustainable.

Total
number of meals
for 2020 is
336,485

Since 2017,
total number
of meals is
445,233

The Impact of the Programme

Community organisations working with Kitchen Social deliver statistically significant impact in the following areas:*

- positive community networks;
- improved diet in young people leading to nutritional intake improvement;
- less weight gain in young people in comparison to those who do not attend holiday hubs;
- exposure to foods that young people do not consume at home;
- significant increase in water consumption;
- involvement in more activities than those who not attend holiday hubs;
- improved behaviour in young people;
- increased readiness to learn;
- young people develop new friendships;
- young people spend time with people that they wouldn't otherwise meet;
- better employment opportunities for parents;
- greater parental optimism about the future;
- improved parents' wellbeing;
- parents being more integrated into the community;
- positive financial impact on families.

Hub

"Thank you for the amazing programme. Our participants and families are very grateful. They are enjoying playing sports, the school lessons and the food. Last Friday, everyone went back home with a big smile carrying the Take & Make box."

Burgess Sports Hub, Southwark

Young person

"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."

Young person attending a hub in Islington

Parent

"Thank you so much for having our children roam free in your lovely playground! Over the last few days, they have come home telling us who they've made friends with, the drama session scenes they had invented and their gardening exploits. Most of all, they come home with a light in their eyes - brimming with unusual confidence having played, explored and survived!"

Parent attending hub in Lambeth

"We have been delighted to partner with Northumbria University to evaluate the impact of Kitchen Social. Through this process, we have developed our service in line with key findings to ensure that the programme has remained effective and successful in its key aims. The team at Northumbria have understood the nature of a dynamic and evolving sector, with the opportunities and constraints that poses, and have designed evaluation and monitoring processes that have complemented activities."

Clara Widdison, Head of Social Inclusion



*(Healthy Living Lab, Northumbria University, March 2020)

HEALTHY HOLIDAYS - FOOD AND FUN

When Feeding Britain was established, food banks reported a rapid increase in need for emergency support among families with children during school holidays.



In addition, schools reported that some children returned to school hungry and, as a result, were ill-prepared to learn after the holidays. These two reports prompted the creation of our Healthy Holidays programme to support families at risk of going without food during school holidays.

Find out more at www.feedingbritain.org

The Programme

Feeding Britain secured funding to enable community centres across their network to provide free meals and activities for children and families during school holidays. From an initial group of 12 clubs in Wirral, in 2015, there are now more than 75 settings across their network that deliver this programme.

The Impact of the Programme

More than 40,000 children have accessed the programme across the Feeding Britain network, with more than 1.2 million meals administered. The programme has strengthened bonds within and between families, eased financial pressure on households, improved parents' mental health, and opened up additional employment and volunteering opportunities.

*"The **Healthy Living Lab** has provided a constant source of knowledge around good practice and maintaining high standards, as well as the development, coverage, impact, and outcomes of holiday programmes across the country. The Lab has been particularly helpful in shaping our policy work, with ministers and officials, towards achieving a national programme with government support."*

Andrew Forsey, Director, Feeding Britain

40,000
children
accessed the
programme

1.2 million
meals
administered

MEALS & MORE

Meals & More operates across the UK but mainly operates in areas of social deprivation.



Meals & More supports children who live with poverty and social isolation and have limited access to adequate food provision and activity throughout school holiday periods. Find out more at: www.mealsandmore.org.uk

The Programme

Meals & More started in 2015, recognising that there was a lack of support for children during the school holidays. Since then the programme has been catalyst for positive change, bringing like-minded people together, creating the opportunity to improve life chances, contributing to happier, healthier children and families. Through provision of nutritious food and enriching educational and physical activities, Meals & More partnerships contribute to supportive environments, boosting health, self-belief and aspirations.

Meals & More are a grant-giving charity supporting organisations that provide Holiday Provision in local communities that are either a charity, education based or a local authority.

Meals & More works in partnership with 15 partners and aided 220 clubs. Since the programme began, almost half a million meals have been provided to vulnerable young people.



15
partners
and helped
220 clubs

500,000
meals to
vulnerable
children

The Impact of the Programme

In 2019, more than 10,000 children attended a Meals & More supported holiday club, enjoying one of the 110,000 meals provided. In 2020 demand has increased significantly due to COVID-19 and the programme has already provided meal numbers exceeding 200,000.

"It is essential, and we are pleased that our programme can help some in the community in need. It is an ongoing challenge to reach families most in need but now established we are more able to reach out as a resource to families to as the local food bank this week ran out of food and demand is growing. From initially feeding a family of five (mum, dad and three children under six), Make Lunch has grown steadily and now regularly feeds up to 50 people in one sitting, including children as young as 9 months old, as well as their parents and grandparents with financial support coming from Meals & More as well as other community donations."

Lynda Mitchell,
Organiser Make Lunch Club (TLG) – Upper
Stratton Church – Swindon

"We have been coming to Chomp for about two years, it really needs to be promoted more. My children love Chomp, it breaks up the summer holidays. My older child meets with her friends. The little ones love seeing each other. It really takes the pressure off, if you can get out for the day, going out for the day can be lots of money, even at the park if there is a fun fair, it's Money, Money, Money. It's difficult."

"Chomp give the chance to talk with other parents it's a release and it's great that the kids get a meal, it can be difficult to balance the money people have and it really helps. The food is good and gives the opportunity for the children to try different foods."

The view of Natalie & Heather
Parents at Chomp Brighton

"We believe that taking an evidence-based approach to holiday provision is essential in helping to create a national movement to tackle its causes and effects. That is why Meals & More was delighted to fund a collaborative PhD studentship with Northumbria University to investigate 'Holiday Club Provision: Impact on Children's Educational Attainment, Nutritional Intake and Wider Family Benefits'.

This programme of research has been a fantastic vehicle to allow stakeholders to share the research findings on the benefits of holiday provision, and very importantly, provide information and data to Government and other parties to make informed decisions on future funding and support of future programmes."

Peter McGrath, Operations Director



GET ACTIVE

Children in Northern Ireland along with their community partners have been delivering holiday provision since 2016, after an initial pilot project.



During the school summer holidays, children from low-income families are at risk from hunger, boredom and social isolation. Moreover, it is considered that the time spent out of school during the summer holidays may contribute to the gap in educational attainment between children from different socio-economic backgrounds.

Find out more at:

www.ci-ni.org.uk/endholidayhunger

The Programme

We have responded to the challenges faced by disadvantaged children and young people during the summer holidays by developing and delivering holiday club provision. We provide children, young people and their parents with access to food, physical activities and learning opportunities during non-term time.

We deliver our projects in Carrickfergus, Limavady, Portadown and Downpatrick.

The Impact of the Programme

Positive community impact

"Being at holiday club, younger children would not see older children causing trouble, and given the sectarian history of a particular area, many see the club as a bridge between divided communities: 'it's basically, we're, in the area that we are in, it's between two estates and sometimes there can be violence against each other, one is (name of place) we are in and the other one is (name of place), very much a Republican area, there'll probably be a lot of issues with behaviour in this area, so we're based here obviously to try and take the young people out of the estates because if we don't, going they're going to be out there firing stones at cars, setting things alight which has happened already, so our club then hopefully provides for those two areas."

Addresses the issue of learning loss

During the summer holidays, school is no longer a factor in children's lives and their spheres of influence are their home environment and the neighbourhood and communities where they live. As a result, it is considered that all children are at risk of losing skills and knowledge across the summer. This is often called learning loss, and research has shown that those from disadvantaged areas are more susceptible to learning loss. Which is why Children in Northern Ireland made the conscious effort to include learning as part of the holiday provision.

6,767
children, young
people and parents
participated in these
projects*.

10,187
meals served
during their
projects*.

*During 2019

CASE STUDY 6 - GET ACTIVE

Personal development through accredited qualifications:

"They've all said it, how the CiNI programme has made a difference and how it's promoting the ideas of healthy eating that maybe they haven't thought about a lot beforehand, and pushing accreditation with young people, I don't think a lot of them would have done that before, they wouldn't have had the OCN leadership. And pushing it also inspires young children when they see others learning. They also get the little first aid programmes, which gets them interested in learning and it makes them proud that they've got little certificates and things."

Children receive food and emotional support in the holiday clubs and learn new skills, make friends and were able to socialise:

"I think the difference it's made, one is the hidden hunger has been addressed amongst children, the kids are starting to eat healthy and access food they wouldn't access before and kids are starting to eat a more diverse diet and that's what the funding has done, it has made a huge impact."

"Greta and her team completed an evaluation of our holiday hunger clubs. This has allowed us to share the evidence with government, disseminate the learning with others and in a credible way improve the outcomes of the project thus ensuring we continue to meet the needs of children, young people and their parents. We were delighted to be so involved in the research and co-authors on a peer-reviewed academic article."

Ellen Finlay, Policy Officer, Children in Northern Ireland



OUR RESEARCH

Informing Change to Social Policy and Practice

The Healthy Living Lab was one of the first labs in the UK to investigate the impact of food insecurity on vulnerable families and children during the school holidays (All Party Parliamentary Group on School Food 2015-2016).

In 2017 the Healthy Living Lab mapped free holiday provision in England across two consecutive years and found a significant need and increase for school holiday clubs.

Research by the Healthy Living Lab also made a significant contribution to the 'Hungry Holiday' Inquiry (2017) and an internal literature review commissioned by the DfE. These papers, alongside case studies from holiday providers, resulted in a transformation in policy regarding children's access to healthy, nutritious food, physical and enriching activities across the summer that improve children's overall wellbeing over the school holidays and provide childcare support to parents. In 2018, the DfE funded a series of pilot schemes across some of the most disadvantaged areas of England, reaching over 18,000 children.

In 2019, the DfE increased funding for their Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme to £9.1M to support 50,000 children. A similar level of funding was allocated in 2020.

In March 2020, the Healthy Living Lab co-hosted an event with Feeding Britain in Westminster that was attended by senior representatives from the DfE, the DWP, key delivery organisations, expert policy advisers and academics. A key objective of the event, was to draw upon the research

expertise of the Healthy Living Lab, knowledge gathered from the HAF pilot schemes and the expertise of key stakeholders to deliver a 'design sprint' that would generate a range of co-created and co-produced delivery and funding frameworks for a national holiday programme.

The output from this pivotal event was a paper summarising the developed frameworks, consolidating existing knowledge and expertise from across two government departments and a range of experts. Importantly this paper supported the DfE in their thinking and planning regarding HAF and in the 2021, the HAF programme was extended to the whole of England at a cost of £220M.

The Healthy Living Lab values a collaborative approach to co-designing interventions, policies and procedures and conducting research with multiple stakeholders. The lab has a policy of working closely with partners and stakeholders so research findings can inform both policy and practice in a timely manner.

Click here for details of the literature review carried out by the DfE.



Research Papers and Reports

The Healthy Living Lab has conducted numerous evaluations on holiday programmes, including

Mayor's Fund for London: Kitchen Social Research Report.

Defeyter, M.A., Stretesky, P., & Sattar, Z. (2018).

Click here to read more.

Working Paper for Children in Northern Ireland: Examine the Location of Holiday Club Provision in Northern Ireland.

Mann, E. & Defeyter, M.A. (2018).

Click here to read more.

Evaluation of 'A Day Out Not a Handout' holiday provision programme.

Defeyter, M.A., Stretesky, P., Sattar, Z and Crilley, E. (2018)

Click here to read more.

The Healthy Living Lab members believe that research papers should be available for all to read. Thus, wherever possible, the Healthy Living Lab will cover the costs of publication.

Policy Papers

The Healthy Living Lab regularly submits papers to Select Committees, Inquiries, and other organisations on key policy issues, through consolidating the most up-to-date research findings for the design and conduct of policy. Selected papers include:

Covid-19: Back to school: Rebuilding a better future for all children.

A submission (CIE0042) to the Education Select Committee inquiry on the impact of COVID-19 on education and children’s services.

Defeyter M.A., von Hippel P., Shinwell J., Mann E., Henderson E., Brownlee I., Pepper G.V., Stretesky P., Long M., McKenna J., Daly-Smith A., Lalli G., Bundy D., and Drake L. (2020).

[Click here to read more.](#)

Food and coping strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A policy paper from the Healthy Living Lab and Feeding Britain.

Defeyter M.A., Stretesky P., Forsey A., Mann E., Henderson E., Pepper G.V., & Walters P. (2020).

[Click here to read more.](#)

Pioneering new approaches to children’s food budgets.

A paper from the Healthy Living Lab and Feeding Britain.

Defeyter, M.A., Regan, M., Booth, G., Rodgerson, C., & Forsey, A. (2020).

[Click here to read more.](#)

Hungry for Change.

A working paper on free school meals for Feeding Britain.

Defeyter, M.A. & Stretesky, P. B. (2019).

[Click here to read more.](#)

Holiday hunger: The government must remove the inequalities in children’s access to holiday clubs.

A commentary for The BMJ.

Defeyter, M.A., Stretesky, P. B., & Long, M.A. (2019).

[Click here to read more.](#)

Professor Greta Defeyter currently sits on a number of boards that tackle poverty, social injustice and food insecurity:

- Subject Expert on the British Psychological Society Expert Reference Group – From Poverty to Flourishing
- Subject Expert on the American Psychological Association – Equity Flattens the Curve
- Civic Commissioner Gateshead Poverty Truth Commission
- Member of NIHR ARC in the North East and North Cumbria (Children & Families Theme).
- Member of the Child Health and Wellbeing Network (North of England).
- Member of the Executive Board of the North East Children’s Poverty Commission (NECPC)
- Newcastle City Council’s Food Poverty Board
- Trustee Feeding Britain
- Member of Global School Health Research Consortium

ABSTRACTS

Implementing holiday provision programmes: A qualitative investigation of the experience of senior stakeholders. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 8(7).

Mann, E., Widdison, C., & Defeyter, M.A. (2020).

The strategic organisation of all of the components of a comprehensive holiday programme, at local authority level, that includes multiple partners and individual holiday clubs presents a number of challenges. This paper discusses the challenges faced by senior stakeholders concerning cost, sustainability, organisation capacity and partnership working. It concludes by providing examples of best practice on how to utilise and develop existing community assets and networks to deliver quality holiday provision at scale.

[Click here to read more.](#)

Holiday clubs as community organizations. The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 689(1), 129-148.

Stretesky, P. B., Defeyter, M. A., Long, M. A., Sattar, Z., & Crilley, E. (2020).

One benefit of holiday clubs is that they provide healthy food to low-income children when schools are not in session. While holiday clubs are known for feeding children who may go hungry, they also provide additional anti-poverty benefits that strengthen community wellbeing. This research documents the important additional benefits beyond food that holiday clubs deliver to food insecure households. Researchers find that these additional benefits are delivered by staff and volunteers through the important networks they bring to the clubs. Feeding children is critical to the existence of holiday clubs, but support to carry out that provision must not undermine the other critical community services that these clubs provide.

[Click here to read more.](#)

Investigation of summer learning loss in the UK—implications for holiday club Provision. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 5, 270.

Shinwell, J., & Defeyter, M. A. (2017).

Summer learning loss is a problem for many UK households with school aged children. This research examined learning loss in spelling and word reading for school children in disadvantaged areas in the North East of England and west of Scotland who did not attend a holiday clubs over the summer. The results of this study showed that following the summer holiday break, a small but significant effect of summer learning loss occurred in relation to spelling. The researchers conclude that learning loss might be reduced by holiday clubs that can provide children with educational enrichment activities across the summer which may alleviate any drop or stagnation in educational performance.

[Click here to read more.](#)

The impact of holiday clubs on household food insecurity—A pilot study. *Health & Social Care in the Community*, 26(2), e261-e269.

Long, M. A., Stretesky, P. B., Graham, P. L., Palmer, K. J., Steinbock, E., & Defeyter, M. A. (2018).

Holiday clubs help feed children in the UK during school holidays, but it is not clear whether they reduce food insecurity in a child's household. This research surveyed parents and other caregivers about food security in their households. The research provides important evidence that holiday clubs reduce household food insecurity by feeding children. Holiday clubs are found to be especially effective at reducing food insecurity among low-income households. Holiday clubs may serve as an important resource to help reduce holiday hunger across the UK.

[Click here to read more.](#)

ABSTRACTS

A question of justice: are holiday clubs serving the most deprived communities in England? *Local Environment*, 23(10), 1008-1022.

Mann, E., Long, M. A., Stretesky, P. B., & Defeyter, M. A. (2018).

Holiday hunger in the UK has led to the establishment of hundreds of holiday clubs that feed children during the school holidays. This research examines where those clubs are located and if they are being established in communities where they are needed the most. The research finds that while holiday clubs are more likely to serve low-income communities, they are under-represented in low-income ethnically diverse communities. As a result, holiday club providers and local authorities should coordinate their efforts to ensure that no communities are excluded from the benefits that holiday clubs provide.

Click here to read more.

School holiday food provision in the UK: a qualitative investigation of needs, benefits, and potential for development. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 4, 172.

Graham, P. L., Crilley, E., Stretesky, P. B., Long, M. A., Palmer, K. J., Steinbock, E., & Defeyter, M. A. (2016).

Access to an adequate supply of nutritious food has been recognized as a basic human right and many communities have opened holiday clubs to help feed children during the school holidays when many families are unable to access the food they need. This research investigates the views of staff and volunteers working in holiday clubs to gauge their views about the needs and benefits of holiday food provision. The investigation revealed that staff and volunteers believe that holiday clubs are a valuable source of support for children and adults, providing food, activities, and learning experiences. Staff also strongly believed that public and private programmes that support holiday clubs should be implemented on a wider scale to promote the health and wellbeing of children and families.

Click here to read more.

Holiday Hunger and Parental Stress: Evidence from North East England. *Sustainability*, 12(10), 4141.

Stretesky, P. B., Defeyter, M. A., Long, M. A., Ritchie, L. A., & Gill, D. A. (2020).

Summer is a stressful time of year for many parents as they struggle to meet household expenses and feed children. The present study looked at the association between holiday hunger and parental stress among a sample of UK parents with school age children living in North East England. The research finds that holiday hunger caused considerable distress among parents during the summertime. As a result, government policies addressing economic hardship and holiday hunger should be implemented to improve mental wellbeing. Holiday clubs are noted to be one such type of organisation that has a role to play in reducing parental distress during the summertime.

Click here to read more.

Holiday Club Programmes in Northern Ireland : The Voices of Children and Young People. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(1337).

Shinwell, J., Finlay, E., Allen, C., & Defeyter, M. A. (2021).

National and local governments, as well as a host of other organisations across the UK have developed and implemented policies to support the setting up of holiday clubs so that children who normally get free school meals can access healthy food activities during the school summer holidays. However, very little research has been undertaken with children to find out what they think about holiday clubs, how they are run and if they could be improved.

In this study, the researchers used innovative methods to ask children who attended three holiday clubs in Northern Ireland what they thought about their holiday clubs. The depth of understanding that children showed about why holiday clubs are needed and the benefits they bring led the researchers to conclude that policy makers at all levels should seriously consider incorporating and listening to the voices of children and young people in the development and monitoring of policies that are particularly directed at them.

Click here to read more.

Lab members active in the Holiday Activities and Food Research Programme



Professor Greta Defeyter

Greta Defeyter is Professor of Developmental Psychology at Northumbria University Newcastle. She has received funding from multiple sources

and has published numerous papers on school breakfast clubs, school food programmes and holiday hunger programmes in the UK. She is now a recognised expert in this area and in 2015, she was made a Fellow of the British Psychological Society in recognition of her research with children living in areas of social and economic deprivation. More recently, she joined a prestigious line up of award winners, including Jamie Oliver, by winning a Food Heroes Award from Sustain and being recognised as one of the top 100 change makers for her research and policy impact on childhood food poverty in the UK.



Professor Paul Stretesky

Paul B. Stretesky is Professor of Sociology at Northumbria University Newcastle. He received his PhD from the Florida State University

and has studied issues related to social justice for the past 20 years. His current research interests are in the areas of food and environmental justice. Professor Stretesky's research has been funded by a different government and non-government organisations in the US and UK. He has published seven books and over 100 peer reviewed research articles and book chapters.



Dr Emily Mann

Emily Mann is a Senior Research Assistant in the Department of Nursing, Midwifery and Health. Emily is currently working on a joint

project with the Healthy Living Lab and Northern Hub for Veteran and Military Families' Research investigating food insecurity and financial hardship within the military veteran population.



Dr Jackie Shinwell

Dr Jackie Shinwell is a Senior Research Assistant in the Healthy Living Lab. Her research interests include holiday hunger, the impact of

food insecurity on nutritional intake, summer learning loss and the benefits of holiday provision for children and families.



Dr Zeb Sattar

Zeb Sattar is a Lecturer in the Department of Social Work, Education and Community Wellbeing. She is currently researching

holiday hunger issues and the development and evaluation of complex health interventions to improve public health.



Dr Mike Long

Michael A. Long is a Professor and Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of Sociology at Oklahoma State University,

USA. He is the author of four books and over 80 journal articles and book chapters, primarily in the areas of environmental sociology, food insecurity, political economy and quantitative methodology. He is the co-editor of the journal The Sociological Quarterly.



Dr Gillian Pepper

Dr Gillian V. Pepper is a Behavioural Scientist and Lecturer in the Department of Psychology at Northumbria University Newcastle.

Her work focusses on socioeconomic inequalities and their effects on psychology, behaviour, health, and wellbeing. Her current projects include studies on the effects of food insecurity on macronutrient intake, meal timings, mood, stress, and wellbeing.



Dr Iain Brownlee

Dr Iain Brownlee is an Associate Professor of Nutrition with Northumbria University since 2019. His recent work has particularly

focused on assessment of dietary intake in young adults children and infants, particularly in relation to their adherence to food-based dietary guidelines. His work has also focused on the assessing the impact of dietary fibre, whole grains and seaweeds on cardiovascular and metabolic health.



Eilish Crilley

Eilish is a PhD student working under the supervision of Professor Greta Defeyter, Professor Nancy Kelly and Professor Paul Stretesky

within the Healthy Living Lab at Northumbria University. Eilish is undertaking research, which evaluates the impact of Kitchen Social; a holiday provision programme funded by the Mayor's Fund for London.



Emily Round

Emily is a PhD student within the Healthy Living Lab at Northumbria University working under the supervision of Professor Greta Defeyter

and Professor Paul Stretesky. In particular Emily will be focussing on the impact of cooking sessions, involving children, in terms of behaviour change, learning and willingness to try novel foods.



Sarah Lea

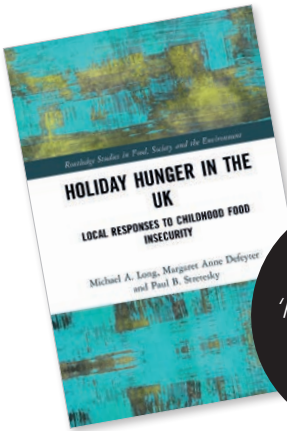
Sarah is a PhD Student working as part of the Healthy Living Lab at Northumbria University, under the supervision of

Professor Paul Stretesky and Professor Greta Defeyter. Sarah's research provides an ethnographic study of families that access holiday clubs and provisions within the North East, including the use of photographs and visual analysis.

OUR OFFER

As illustrated by the case studies outlined, testimonials, academic and policy papers, the Healthy Living Lab has a strong record in collaborating with a wide range of partners to deliver demonstrable benefits and impact.

We can work with you to inform, develop, implement and evaluate school and community interventions. Our interdisciplinary approach to research enables the lab to fully address complex interventions, processes and policies.



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'Holiday Hunger
in the UK'

We can work with you in several ways:

Consultancy

Organisations can draw upon our expertise and knowledge through short term consultancy projects to gain advice, guidance and insights on developing, implementing and embedding policies and processes on holiday programmes.

Contract Research

Partners can commission the Healthy Living Lab directly to gain a better understanding of your holiday programme to inform your local policy and practice. Specifically we can conduct process, implementation and impact evaluations. The lab is also very experienced in working with young children and youth in co-design and co-production to ensure their voice is heard and acted upon.

Collaborative PhDs

The Collaborative Doctoral Studentship scheme at Northumbria University seeks to develop relationships with partners by co-funding PhD projects over a three-year period. This enables us to conduct applied research on a longer-term programme of work that is agreed and co-developed.

Training

Members of the team have expertise in developing and delivering bespoke education and training packages to upskill employees and organisations to ensure they have the right capabilities to deliver school and community based health and educational interventions.

We are keen to hear from potential new partners to continue our work and support ways to address the challenges presented by holiday hunger.

If you would like to work with us, or know more about our experience and expertise, please contact us:

Professor Greta Defeyter
Director of the Healthy Living Lab
Greta.Defeyter@northumbria.ac.uk

Dr Emma Barron
Business Engagement Manager
for the Healthy Living Lab
Emma.Barron@northumbria.ac.uk





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