



# NORTHUMBERLAND'S HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND FOOD (HAF) PROGRAMME

NORTH EAST  
**CHILD  
POVERTY  
TRUST**

In association with:



**Northumbria  
University**  
NEWCASTLE

The North East Child Poverty Trust (NECPT) was registered by the Charity Commission in April 2015 and aims to raise funds for local partnerships to tackle the growing problems of child poverty.

**The North East has the second highest levels of child poverty in the United Kingdom.**

Our work started with a partnership to combat 'holiday hunger' (a term we no longer use) involving Children North East and a number of local agencies. The work was evaluated by Professor Greta Defeyter and Professor Paul Stretesky from Northumbria University and their research led to Parliamentary pressure for specific programmes to support children and young people in school holidays.

Pilot programmes were introduced and the government Comprehensive Spending Review in 2021 agreed an annual programme of £200M for each of the following three years, starting April 2022.

This document outlines the role played by NECPT with its partners, Leading Link (LL) and Northumberland County Council (NCC) in promoting additional activity funded by the National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF).

In March 2021, NLCF awarded NECPT a grant worth £300,000 over three years covering financial years 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24. In December 2022, NLCF agreed an additional grant of £25,000 in view of demand and cost increases driven by the 'cost of living crisis' experienced across communities.

The project aims to maximise impact and add value to the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme delivered through the local authority, which delegates programme oversight and management to Leading Link. Leading Link works with multiple local partners and agencies to ensure local engagement in codesign and delivery.

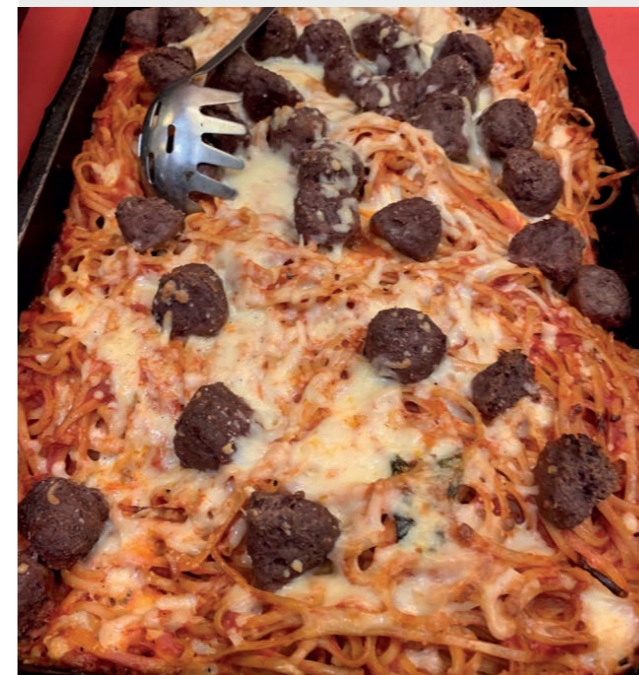
The grant funding extended this approach to other parts of the North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) area in years two and three.

Northumberland HAF programme activity – summer 2022

The Healthy Living Lab was commissioned by Leading Link to evaluate Northumberland's Summer Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme.

**The HAF aims to address:**

- Holiday hunger
- Inactivity
- Social isolation
- Childcare needs
- Learning
- School readiness



**The aim is to offer a community and youth-led programme building local partnerships and capacity and support for local organisations.**

**An evaluation of the HAF summer programme in Northumberland revealed:**



**42 clubs**

from across Northumberland provided food and activities for



**2,503**

children, served



**24,355**

meals, and totalled



**106,351**

hours of provision.

The Family and Teenage offer, supported by 14 partner organisations, engaged with **2,160** children and young people and a further **1,374** adults, and totalled **9,953** hours of activities.

# There is clear evidence that HAF summer programme in Northumberland was very well received and delivered a range of positive outcomes for children, parents/carers, and local communities.

“ I would just like to extend our gratitude and thanks for the opportunities we have been able to take part in this week as a result of the holiday provision.

“It is always a challenge to find new affordable experiences to entertain the children during the holidays and this year has been more challenging than ever. As a result of the provision, we have enjoyed a varied week and created some memorable times with our children during a particularly difficult time financially.”

**Sarah-Louise**

To evaluate the impact of HAF in Northumberland, the research team designed two online parent surveys, co-produced in consultation with a Participant Involvement and Engagement Steering Group, to compare HAF attendees to non-HAF attendees.

The combined parents sample consisted of **894** participants. One survey was distributed to **412** parents/caregivers with children attending HAF in Northumberland and the other survey was distributed to 482 parents/caregivers with children who did not attend HAF.

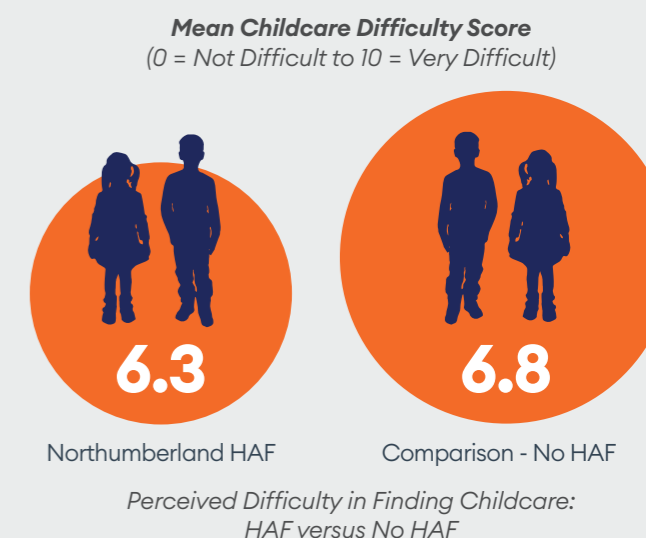
## Parent survey:

Demographics for HAF and Non HAF Parent Samples

|                           | HAF  | Non HAF |
|---------------------------|------|---------|
| Unemployment              | 19.3 | 27.1    |
| Free School Meals         | 51.2 | 48.2    |
| University/College Degree | 22.9 | 79.3    |
| Ethnic Minority           | 76.7 | 15.3    |

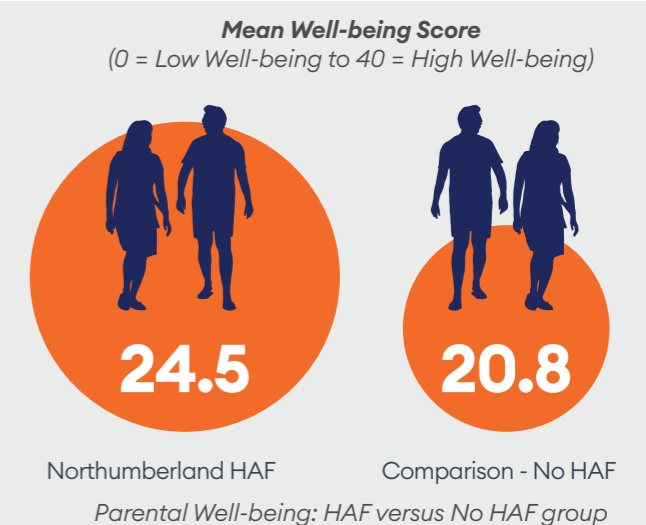
### Childcare:

The parent/carer survey asked parents **how easy it was on a scale of 0 (not at all difficult) to 10 (extremely difficult) to find affordable childcare during the summer holiday 2022**. The graph below clearly shows those parents whose children did not attend HAF found it harder to find affordable childcare compared to those parents whose children did attend during the school holidays.



### Parental wellbeing:

Parents, whose children attended HAF, also reported far better wellbeing than parents in the No HAF sample.

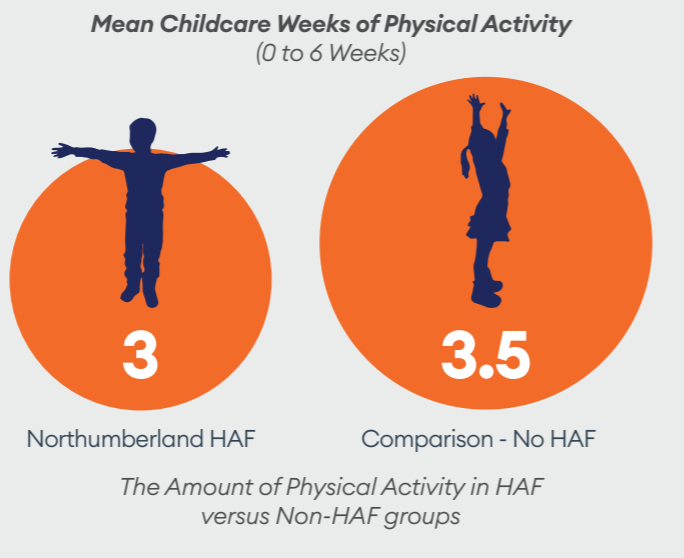


### Children's Physical Activity:

Nearly 24% (23.8%) of HAF parents/caregivers reported their eldest child spent 6 weeks engaging in physical activity at least 4 times per week for at least 60 minutes each time during the summer school holiday. The average HAF parent/caregiver reported that their eldest child (who attended HAF) engaged in physical activity an average of 3.5 weeks during the summer school holiday.



HAF parents/carers reported that their children engaged in significantly less physical activity compared to the Non HAF parents.



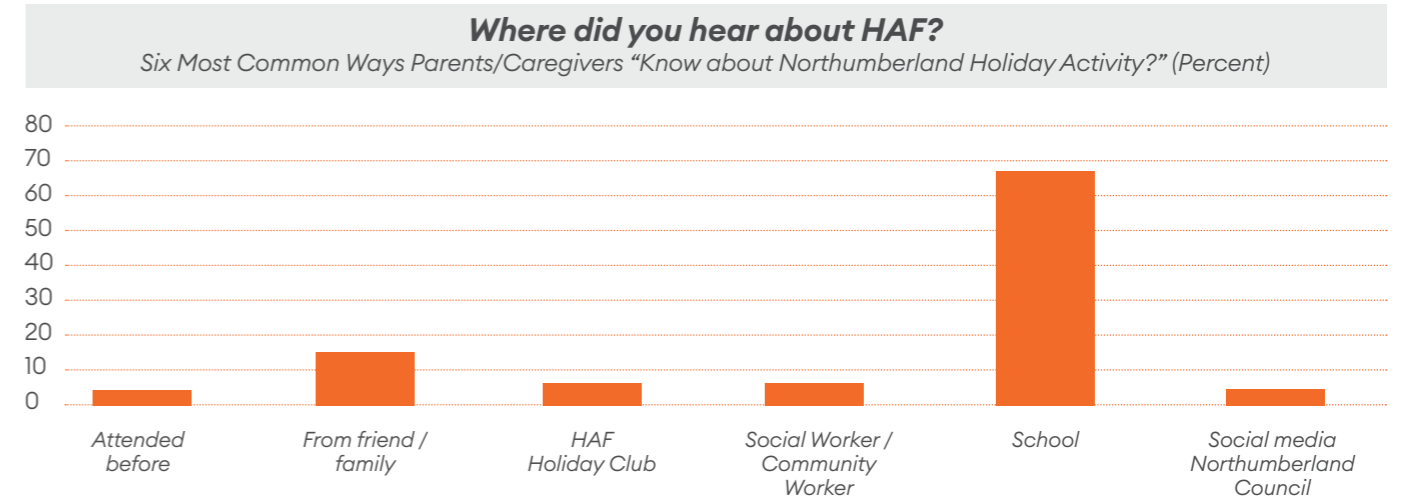
### Food security:

Only 24% of parents/carers reported that their households are food insecure, far less than the No HAF group, demonstrating that whilst there is a vital need to provide food for children and young people during the school holidays, participation in HAF appears to alleviate food insecurity in households.

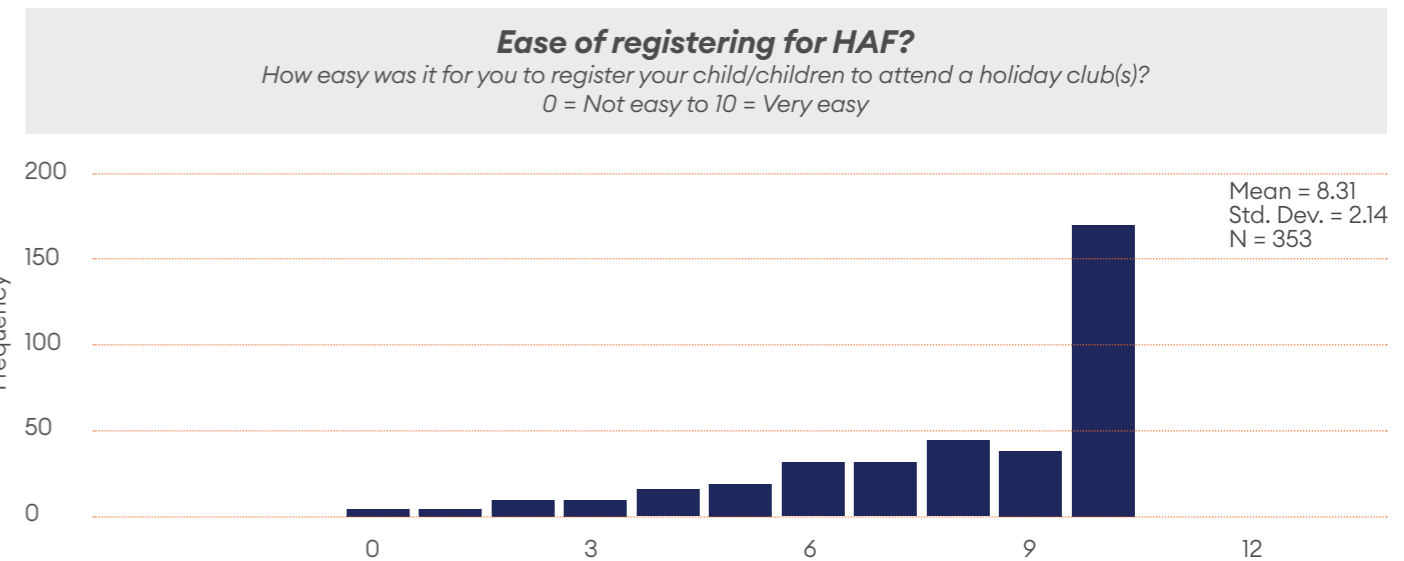


**A key aim of HAF is the provision of at least one healthy meal to children during the school holiday.**

## HAF Northumberland additional parents questions



Almost 70% of parents heard about HAF through school, suggesting that schools in Northumberland are excellent at referring families to HAF provision.



Regardless of registration route, most parents reported that the registration process was easy.

**Interestingly, despite offering a range of food-based activities, parents' perceptions of children's knowledge and opportunities at club for hands on food activities is really low. This will be explored in greater detail through working with parents to ensure that the food component of HAF meets their needs.**

“ Thank you for a lovely day out at Whitehouse Farm. My husband was unable to come with me so we asked my mam – who is 87 and has Parkinson’s – thinking she’d say no but she wanted to come with us to see the baby lambs.

“We had a fantastic time. He enjoyed the pedal go-karts, and sought out a double one, so he could drive my mam around the circuit to see the new lambs in the next field. We helped lift her into the child passenger seat and she waved like the Queen in a rickshaw! I can’t tell you how precious a moment it was. Memories that will stay forever.”

Jac



**Food:**

Parent/caregiver perceptions about food at HAF

|   | Frequency | % Agree |
|---|-----------|---------|
| Club served nutritious food                                     | 265       | 64.3    |
| My child(ren) enjoyed club food                                 | 244       | 59.2    |
| Child(ren) tried new foods at club                              | 176       | 54.3    |
| Child(ren) ate wider variety of foods at club                   | 177       | 43      |
| Club met food and dietary requirements                          | 231       | 71.3    |
| Opportunities at club for hands on food activities              | 112       | 34.5    |
| Club improved child(ren) knowledge & confidence to prepare food | 92        | 28.3    |

n=412; missing cases = 87

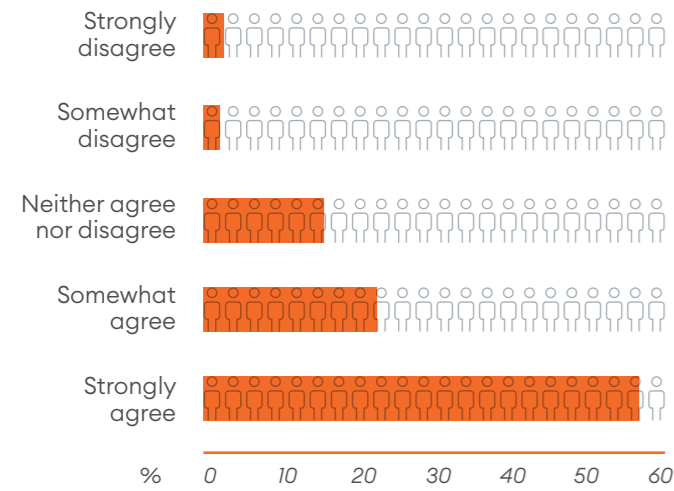
**Safety:**

A number of prior, peer-reviewed studies by the Healthy Living Lab identified that children felt safe at holiday clubs. In the present study, the researchers extended this original finding by comparing the percentage of parents who agreed that their children were safe while attending HAF Northumberland compared to their local neighbourhood. The results clearly show that 89.2% parents strongly agree that their children are safe whilst attending HAF clubs versus 63.9% strongly agreeing that their children are safe in their immediate neighbourhood.



### Anti-social Behaviour:

*I believe holiday club keeps my child/children from engaging in anti-social behaviour during the school holiday*



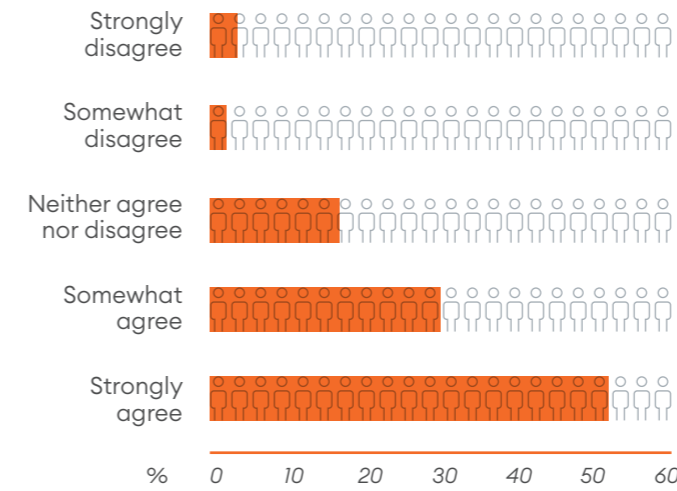
Distribution of Perceptions of Reducing Anti-Social Behaviour (n=302).

**Nearly 80% of parents strongly agree/agree that HAF kept their children from participating in anti-social behaviour.**

95% Confidence Intervals For "Agree/ Somewhat" Prevents Anti-Social Behaviour: 85.4% to 92.2%

### Children's Social Isolation:

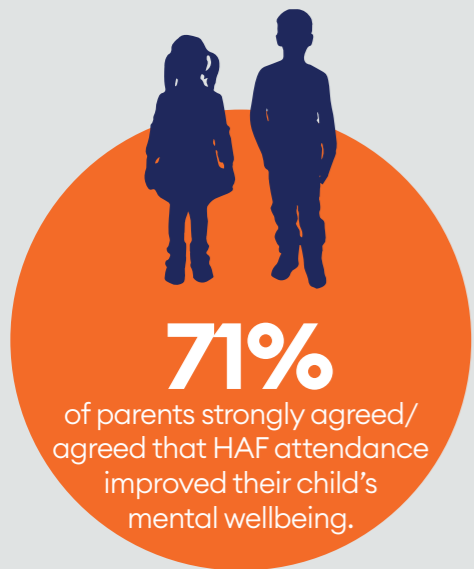
*My child/children are able to take part in enriching activities that supported their general well-being*



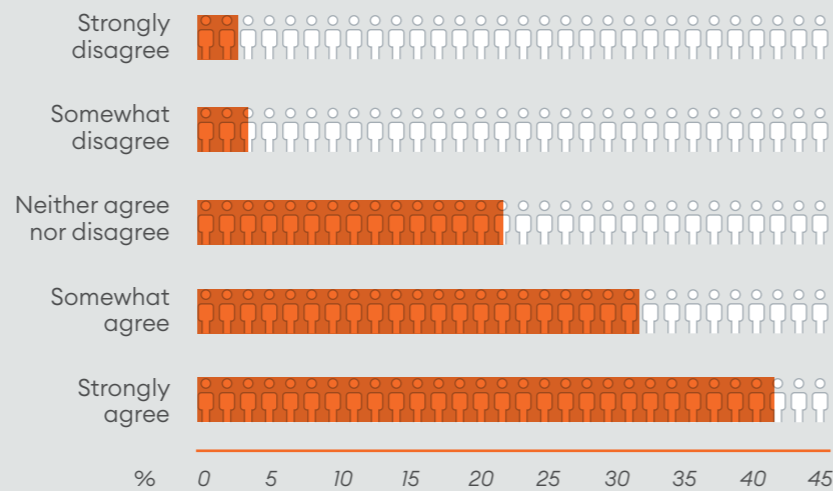
Parent/Carers(n =400) Perceptions About HAF Reducing Social Isolation).

**Parents/carers also reported that HAF provided opportunities for children to participate in enriching activities that supported their general wellbeing.**

### Children's Wellbeing:



*Holiday club improved my child/children's mental wellbeing*

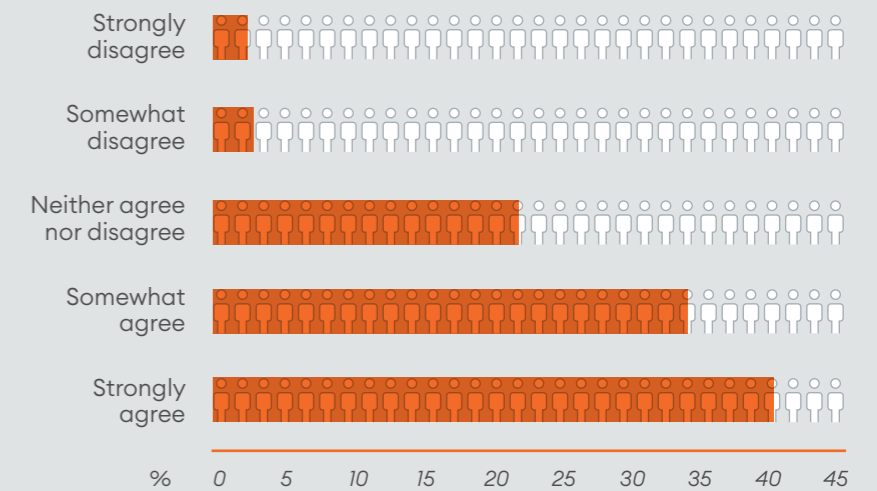


Parent/carers Perceptions of Children's Mental Wellbeing (n=400).

Parents also reported that HAF boosted their child's self-esteem and confidence.

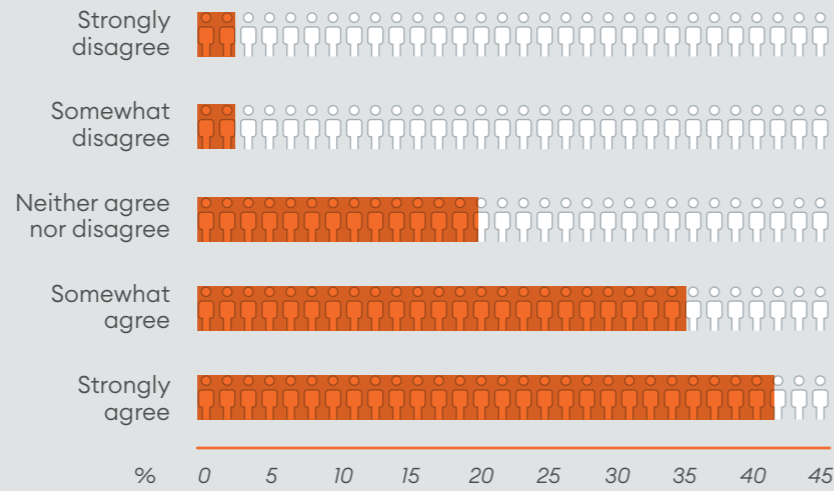


*Holiday club(s) boosted my child's/children's self-esteem*



Parent's (n=400) Perceptions on Whether HAF Boosts Children's Self-Esteem.

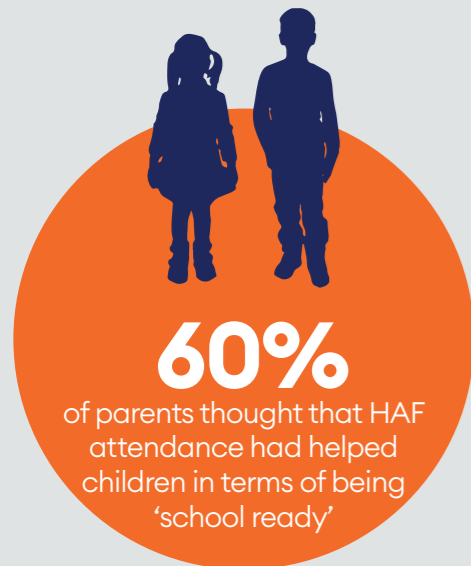
**Holiday club(s) boost my child's/children's confidence**



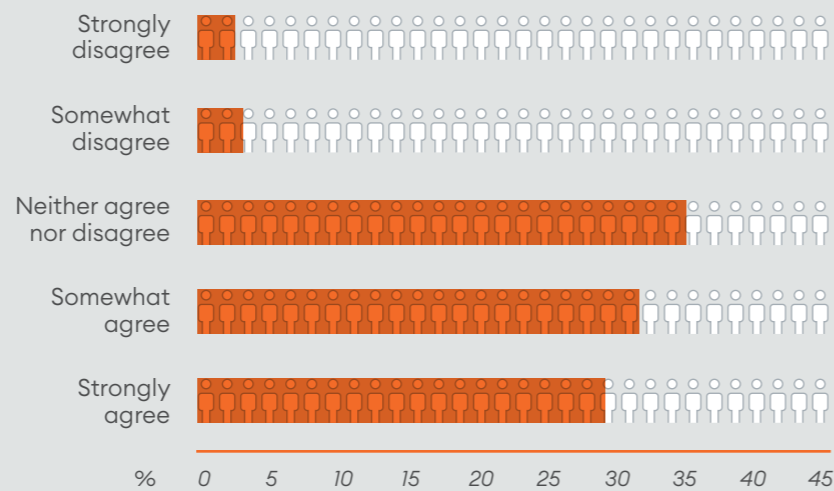
Parent's (n=400) Perceptions on Whether HAF Boosts Children's Confidence.

In exploring parents' perceptions on whether HAF had supported children's school readiness, defined as 'being ready to return to school in September', nearly 60% of parents thought that HAF attendance had helped children in terms of being 'school ready'.

**Holiday club has supported my child/children in being ready to return to school in September**



**60%**  
of parents thought that HAF attendance had helped children in terms of being 'school ready'



Parent's Perceptions on HAF and School Readiness

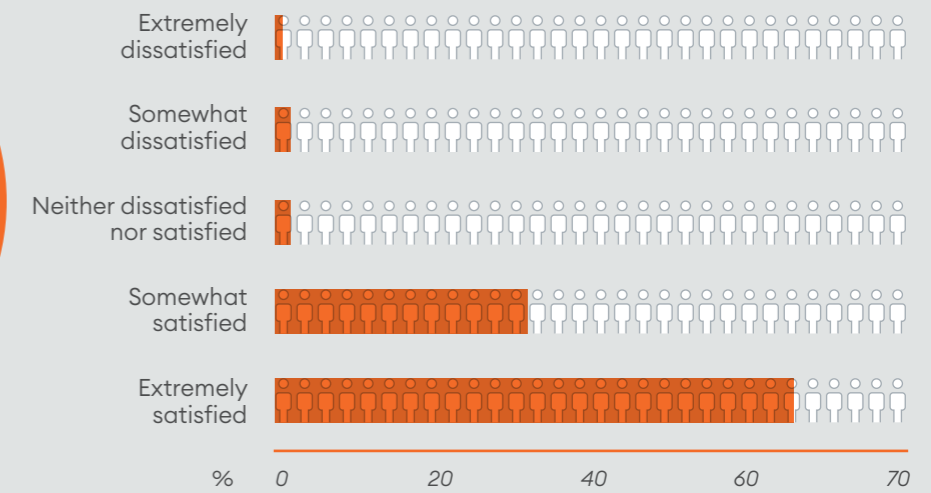
**Overall parent satisfaction**

Overall parent satisfaction was determined by the following three ways:

1. how satisfied parents were with the holiday club their children attended.
2. how satisfied parents were with the HAF co-ordinating team.
3. the likelihood of parents registering their children for HAF in 2023.

As shown below, the vast majority of parents/carers were either extremely or somewhat satisfied with their children's holiday club. The researchers found somewhat similar results for parents' satisfaction with the HAF Co-ordinator Team.

**Overall, how satisfied were you with your child/children's holiday club?**



“ Thank you for organising such an exciting selection of activities for the children.”

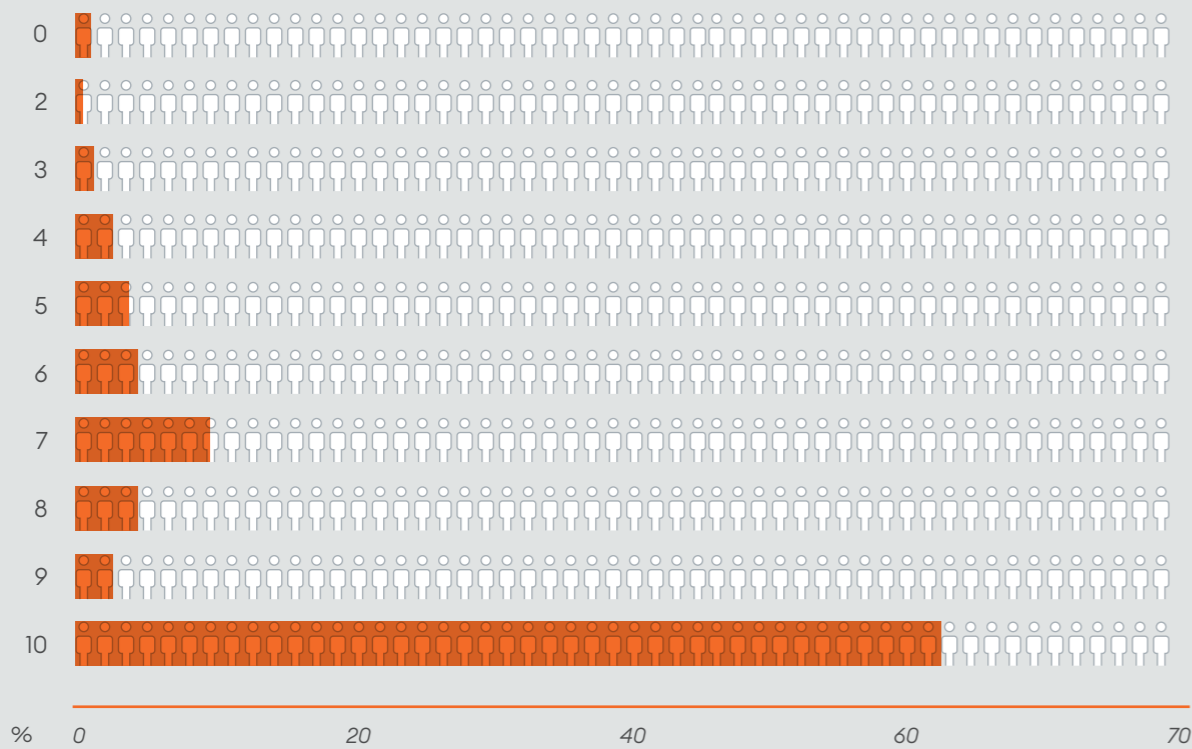
**Emma**

“ Thank you so much... can't thank the holiday provision enough for these opportunities, my kids are going to have the best holiday from school they have ever had. I can't explain how happy this makes me.”

**Michelle**

**The majority of parents are highly likely or likely to send their children to HAF in 2023. Cumulatively these findings suggest that HAF in Northumberland is very well received by parents and caregivers.**

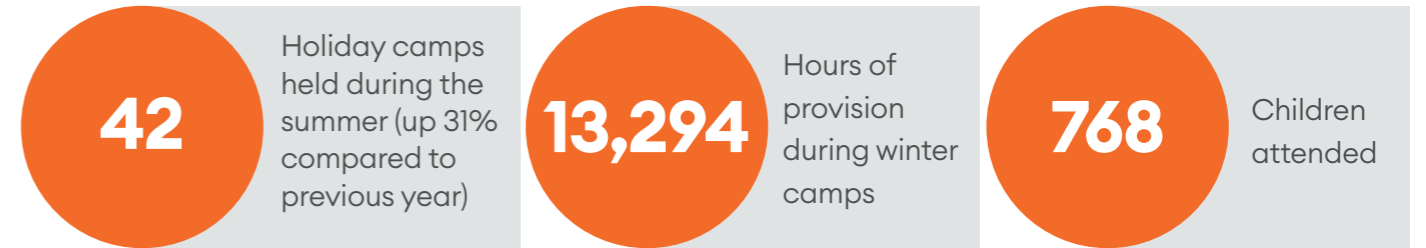
If the government funded holiday clubs next year, the likelihood of my child/children attending is:



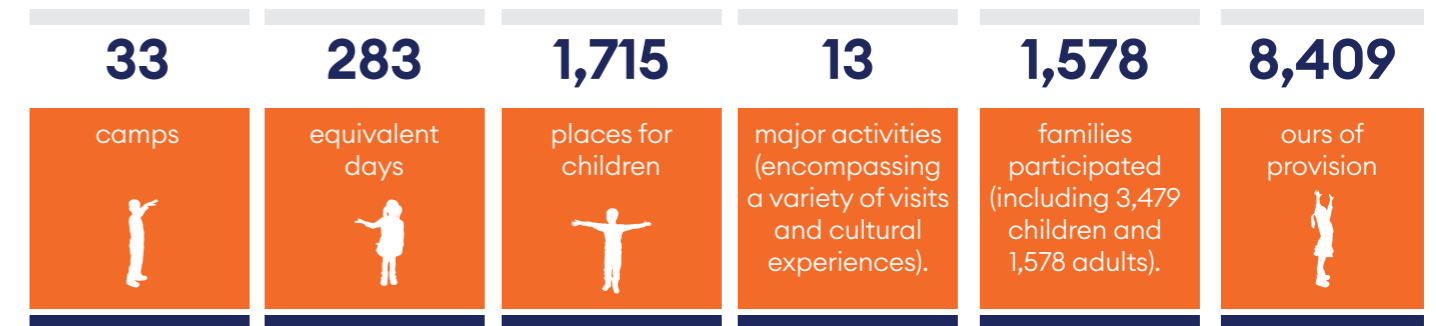
## North Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) summary

The Northumberland HAF programme grew substantially in 2022 compared to the previous year.

In summary... (data source: Leading Link)

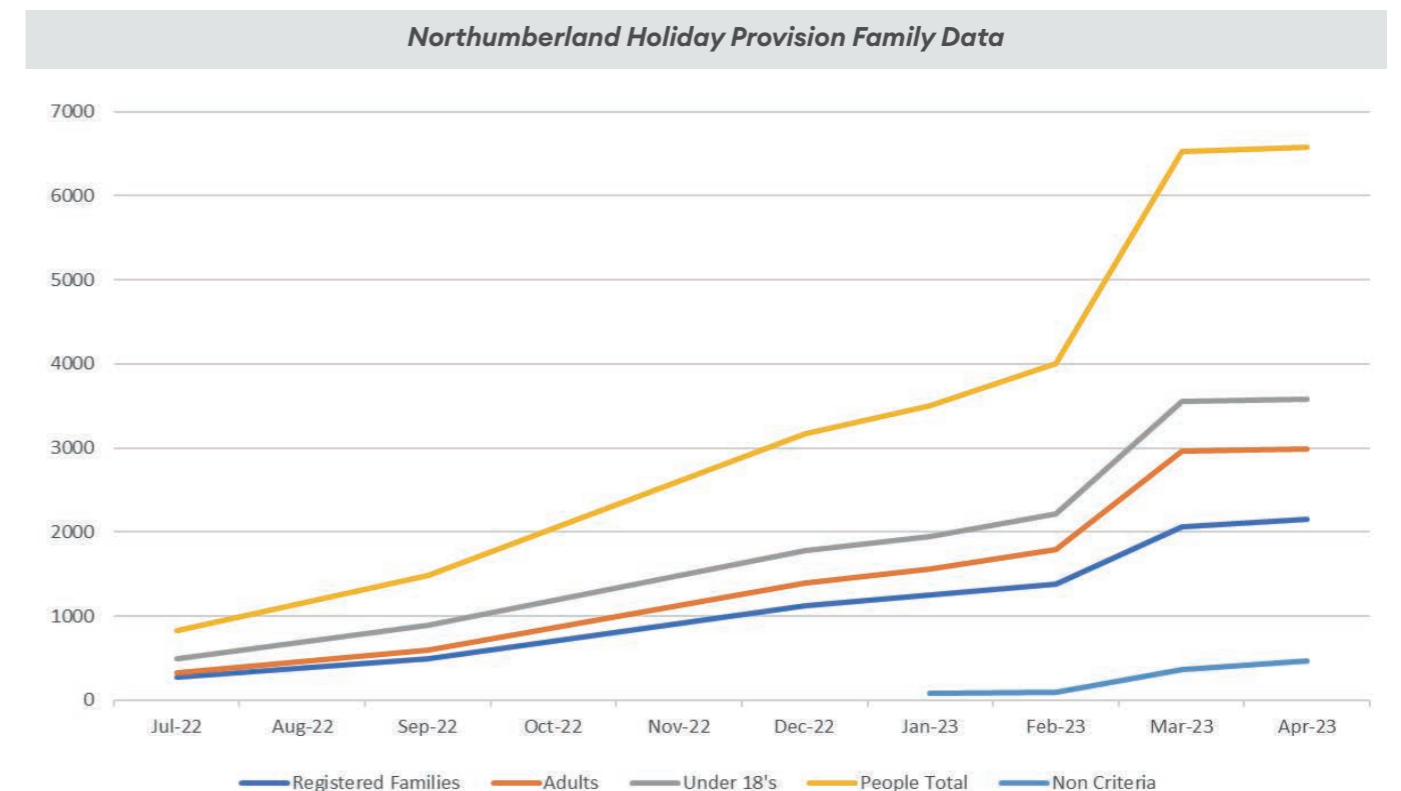


During Easter 2023, the focus was activities for families. There were:



The following chart shows the growth in families registered for Northumberland Holiday Provision and the timeline since July 2022.

The top yellow line is total number of people.  
The orange line is number of adults.  
The grey line is number of under 18s.  
The dark blue line is the total number of families.



## CONCLUSION

Overall, the strategic management and co-ordination of HAF by Leading Link was excellent and provides Northumberland County Council with a solid foundation on which to build future HAF delivery.

Schools provided an important referral route to the HAF programme, and this partnership with schools should be commended. Importantly, HAF delivered significant, positive outcomes across a wide range of factors, including childcare, food security, health and wellbeing, school readiness, anti-social behaviour, and many more at the individual, community, and county levels.



## There is clear evidence that HAF summer programme in Northumberland was very well received and delivered a range of positive outcomes for children, parents/carers, and local communities.

“ I am extremely keen to try to come along to some kind of holiday provision or activity in my area, specifically for SEN as in the holidays, we are very isolated due to not being able to attend typical activities due to the overwhelm it can cause my son. Prudhoe in particular is in great need of this kind of provision as there is very little support for our children at the moment.”

Zoe

“ Family of 6, disabled husband, I can only work part time to enable me to care for my husband, this changed the face of our Christmas holidays genuinely a complete game changer.”

Yvonne

The original grant agreement envisaged that in years two and three, there would be increasing activity in the areas of NTCA outside Northumberland to develop further the community and place-based approach. This has started on a pilot basis involving:

- Rigorous local needs assessment to establish a baseline;
- Engaging with secondary schools to recruit potential Young Leaders and monitor outcomes;
- Extensive training and development opportunities for Young Leaders (YLS);
- The introduction of participation in Children’s University programmes to develop learning.

As well as continuing the Northumberland Young Leaders’ programme, the introduction into the NTCA areas has developed well. In October 2022, 22 young people attended a residential programme from other NTCA areas with eight others joining as word of mouth spread. By December 2022, the retention rate was 95 per cent and the North of Tyne YLS’

feedback highlighted greater self-confidence, the acquisition of new skills and a wider social network. Certificates were awarded for planning, preparing and leading an activity, identifying leadership traits and self-evaluation. For some, there was experience of learning public speaking skills, making presentations and promoting after-school activity in a primary school. A number of individuals from this YL group ran after-school clubs at Burnside College and Wallsend St. Peters in November 2022 over a 4-week period.

There is current engagement with 19 YLS at Burnside College, 22 at Marden High School and recruitment is underway at Churchill College in Wallsend.

In addition to this activity, a Children’s University pilot started at two primary schools (Walkergate Community and St. Peter’s). This extended learning beyond the classroom has been shown by national data to achieve additional progress in maths and reading skills. This underpins the objective of building future aspirations, communication skills and self-confidence and resilience.



## Case study: Burnside College

Burnside College is a non-selective secondary college in Wallsend. It currently has 978 students, of which 31.6% (273) are entitled to free school meals. The pupil population is made up of 48.57% female to 48.57% male. In January 2020, Ofsted rated the college as 'Good'. According to the 2019 Indices of Deprivation map, Burnside College is situated in the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country. In 2015 it was classified in the bottom 20% of neighbourhoods, implying a declining socioeconomic trend within the catchment area.

In September 2022, I was able to recruit 22 Year 11 and 12 students to join the Young Leaders programme and attend a residential at Whithaugh Adventure Park in the October half term. During the residential, we offered sessions on leadership training, project management and event planning, as well as the more conventional adventure activities, such as zip lines and raft building. Solid outcomes of the residential included two afterschool lazertag clubs at Burnside College and a local feeder primary school, Wallsend St Peters COE Primary School.



The feedback from both clubs was hugely positive. Particularly Burnside students in a local primary school offered aspirational element whilst also giving students the opportunity to lead and plan sessions.

Since engaging with the original cohort of Young Leaders at Burnside, they have taken part in a broad range of enriching activities: Christmas celebrations at Hirst, outdoor training with Off the Grid, Peter Pan and Alice in Wonderland pantomimes, Seaton Delaval activity coproduction, first aid, to name a few. The reputation of the Young Leaders programme has spread throughout the school, and I have now recruited a group of year 10 students who will be offered an increasing range of activities and opportunities during the Summer HAF periods.

## Impact and learning: people and policy

The evaluation of the Northumberland programme was contracted by Leading Link to Northumbria University Healthy Living Lab (HLL) for the summer 2022 and summer 2023 activities. The work is funded jointly by NECPT and NC. The HLL team is led by Professor Greta Defeyter, a nationally recognised expert in HAF research and evaluation. The report and its recommendations were summarised in earlier sections of this document.

The evaluation report data details a number of positive outcomes. There are demonstrated positive benefits for children, parents and caregivers – improved mental wellbeing, engagement in enriching activities, reduced social isolation, boost in self-esteem and confidence, improved behaviour at home and better preparation for learning at school.

The National Lottery funding via NECPT has contributed to significant achievements in the Northumberland Holiday Programme. The additional resource has enhanced the 'test and learn' approach and enabled exploration of best practice and enhanced capacity building as well as creating space and opportunity to support the development of local relationships. Innovation has characterised the approach to building on the HAF foundations and that is reflected in many parts of the country leading the Department for Education to adapt its guidelines as the scheme develops.

A 'HAF plus' approach has enabled a more broad-based mix of activity and set of outcomes in going beyond the Free School Meal attendees approach to tackle wider aspects of family poverty and disadvantage for example through the 'family offer'. Northumberland FSM reach is in any event 47% of the eligible cohort, compared to the national average at 22%. Policy change has been impacted as a result, so the December 2022 Department for Education guidance now recognises a wider use by local authorities of the 15% tolerance margin, best practice for children with SEND needs is recognised, as well as capacity building, which has been central to the Northumberland approach.

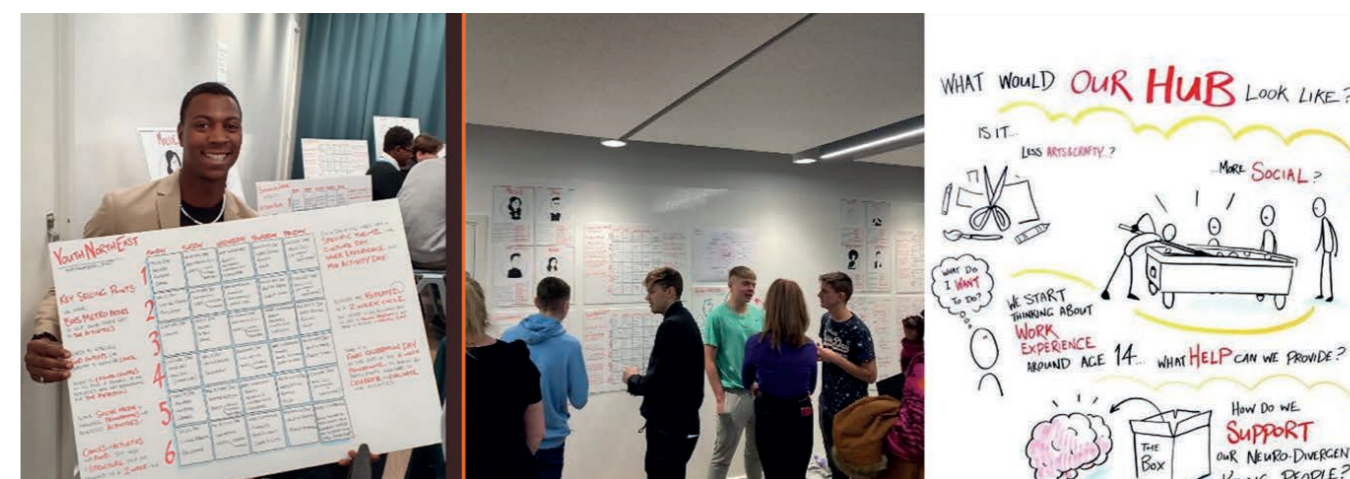
These lessons are being shared between areas across the country for example through the so-called 'design sprint' funded by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. This has been a year-long consultation with 500 young people and a recent policy roundtable coordinated by the Department for Education

where young people shared ideas and plans leading in the design and development of holiday activities.

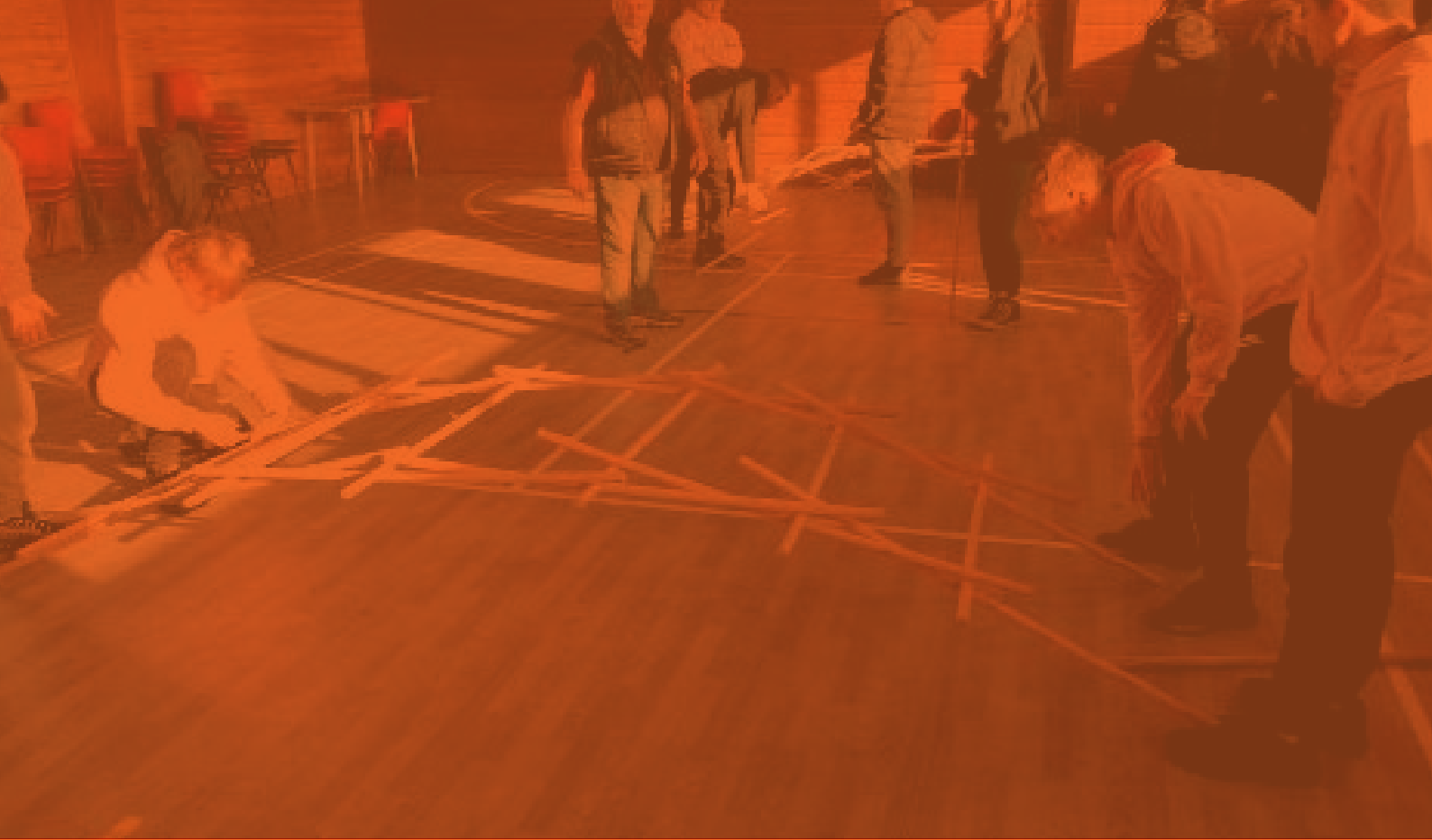
There were 14 YL participants from across Northumberland involved in this project. The project was co-ordinated by Professor Defeyter and a Department for Education event was attended by senior business executives interacting with the young people attending. An executive from Nike asked one of the Northumberland attendees to justify a company supporting the cost of a programme for young people. The young woman's response, "I'm an investment, not a cost", illustrates the growing self-confidence the YL programme can create. In the majority of holiday camps across the NCC area, Young Leaders play a leading role in managing and delivering activities, again demonstrating the growth of capacity and confidence.

The Northumberland work has also influenced the development of the government's levelling up policy with Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities directly engaged in dialogue in the Hirst area of Ashington. The HAF plus approach is vital to the levelling up agenda with an emphasis strengthening the capacity and assets of communities.

The Young Leaders' programme has been central to the capacity building approach encouraging broader community engagement and sustainability. That has been the basis of extending activity to the other NTCA areas.



## Teen National Design Sprint 2022



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