

Holiday Activities Programme 2024/25

#BlackpoolHAF



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Background

Context

In November 2020, the Government announced that the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme, which had provided healthy food and enriching activities to disadvantaged children since 2018, would be expanded across the whole of England in 2021. The Department for Education would provide funding for a Programme of activities, including a food provision to cover the Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays.

Blackpool had operated a holiday provision since 2019 and had an established partnership in place to deliver such a programme. The partnership agreed that our holiday provision should be provided throughout every school holiday and therefore developed a programme that would be delivered within the half term holidays in addition to Easter, Summer and Christmas.

The HAF programme is for children who are in receipt of benefits-related free school meals. The funding provided cover for:

- The provision of free (fully-funded) holiday places, which includes a food provision.
- Coordination of the programme at a local level.

Background

The school holidays can be a particularly difficult time for families due to increased costs and reduced incomes. Many children can experience holiday hunger and learning loss during the school holidays and children from low income families find it more difficult to afford activities outside of the home during holiday time. These children are less likely to access organised out of school activities, and more likely to experience 'unhealthy holidays' in terms of nutrition and physical health and more likely to experience social isolation. Free holiday provision is a response to these issues and evidence suggested it can have a positive impact on children and young people.

To help combat holiday hunger and learning loss during the school holidays, holiday activity and food programmes are offered across the UK, by a variety of educational, charity and community sector organisations. The type of programmes offered vary between areas and settings. They provide learning and socialising opportunities for children during the school holidays as well as providing food. The evidence for these type of provisions on what does or doesn't work is limited, however, the recent evaluation of government-led programmes reported that children and young people enjoyed attending and parents felt their children achieved positive outcomes.

Levels of Social deprivation within Blackpool are particularly high. Blackpool has the highest level of deprivation of all Local Authorities in England, with neighbourhoods in Blackpool accounting for eight of the ten most deprived neighbourhoods nationally (Index of Multiple Deprivation 2021). Children face particular high levels of poverty, with 42% of children living in income deprived households. Given these high levels of deprivation, children in Blackpool are particularly vulnerable to holiday hunger and learning loss during the school holidays. The Schools, pupils and their characteristics: Academic Year 23/24 Report highlighted there were 8,408 pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (FSM) across both our primary and secondary schools. There is a clear need to support children in Blackpool during the school holidays by offering holiday activity and food programmes.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme is to deliver a free holiday provision to children eligible for benefits related free school meals for the equivalent of at least four hours a day, four days a week for 6 weeks. This covers four weeks in the Summer and a week's provision in both the Easter and Christmas holidays – this provision is fully funded by the Department for Education.

The partnership in Blackpool also agreed to deliver a free holiday provision to these children in the February, May and October half terms following the same model as the HAF, meaning the total provision covered a minimum of 9 weeks – these extra weeks of provision being solely funded by Blackpool Council.

The aim of the programme was to ensure children who attended the provision:

- Eat more healthily over the school holidays.
- Be more active during the school holidays.
- Take part in engaging and enriching activities which support the development of resilience, character and wellbeing along with their wider education attainment.
- Be safe and not socially isolated.
- Have a greater knowledge of health and nutrition.
- Engaged with school and other local services.

Eligibility Criteria

The focus of the programme was to provide provision to school aged children eligible for benefits related Free School Meals (FSM). The local authority had to ensure that the offer of free holiday provision was available for all children eligible for FSM in the local authority area. However, this did not mean that all children were required to attend as the provision was voluntary. The local authority also had the flexibility to offer free places to children who were not eligible for FSM but were considered as vulnerable or in need of the provision, and were able to use up to 15% of the funding for these places.

Coordination of the Programme

Coordination of the HAF was taken back in-house by Public Health in September 2022, having been previously contracted out to Blackpool Football Club Community Trust (BFCCT) in 2020 and 2021 whilst the Public Health team were under pressure leading on the towns COVID-19 response.

Once returned to Public Health's control, a new open framework was created that allowed us to build a consortium of Providers that met both the Department for Education (DfE) and Blackpool Councils' requirements for the HAF Programme. The open framework enables providers to join during the life of the contract, at specified periods determined by the Authority, allowing the HAF to benefit from new entrants to the market throughout the year.

Three successful Tender exercises were undertaken during 2022 - 24 to increase the wealth and diversity of provision available. It further ensured we also had a SEND specific programme catering to children with mild or moderate needs. There are now ten contracted providers on the framework.

Steering Group

To support delivery of the programme a steering group was established with representatives from a wide range of local bodies, including:

- Representative for Youth Services
- Head of Service – Children's Services
- Early Intervention and Safeguarding Officer for Blackpool Schools
- Community Safety representation – Lancashire Constabulary
- School Improvement Consultant
- Early Help and Children Services
- Virtual School – Education Officer for Disadvantaged Children

Delivery Partners

Blackpool has been operating a Holiday provision since the summer of 2019, and has a strong partnership in place which consists of the Council, schools and voluntary and community sector. The delivery partners involved are:

- Blackpool Football Club Community Trust (BFCCT)
- Active Blackpool
- Park Rangers
- The BoatHouse Youth
- Boys and Girls Club
- House of Wingz/Skool of Street
- Magic Club
- Groundworks – @The Grange
- Dealmaker Ltd
- Blackpool Carers Centre

Delivery partners were required to provide a holiday activity programme that met the following core aims and objectives:

- The provision of at least one healthy meal a day and meet the School Food Standards throughout the provision.
- Delivery of enriching activities.
- Provision of physical activities which meet the physical activity guidelines on a daily basis.
- Provision of nutritional education.
- Signposting and referrals: provide information, signposting or referrals to other services and support that would benefit the children who attend their provision and their families.
- Policies and procedure in place to ensure they have appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place and have appropriate policies and procedures in place in relation to safeguarding, health and safety, insurance, accessibility and inclusiveness.
- Concise record keeping, with registers of attendance shared with the coordinators, allowing for precise evaluation and reporting of the HAF programme.

The provision is required to meet the following core aims:

- Healthy meals that meet the school food standards
- Enriching activities
- Nutritional education
- Signposting and referrals
- Policies and procedures

Marketing and Communication

Our Providers who run the HAF club promote the programme via social media/internet and also directly in the community and schools with posters, flyers, school assemblies. Council colleagues are also part of our strategy to encourage participation in the programme; social workers, virtual school and family workers all help to promote HAF whenever possible. The HAF Coordinator has also attended local safeguarding, head teacher and SEND meetings to promote HAF with local professionals.

With the help of our providers we produced a short YouTube video (<https://youtu.be/RZ-mT3tz5eY>) showcasing our HAF and including comments from participants and providers.

Department for Education Funding

Blackpool Council received grant funding for the 2024 to 2025 financial year from the Department for Education (DfE) for the mandatory Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays of £854,410

Table 1 - A breakdown of this expenditure is shown in the table below.

Item	Cost
Administrative Expenditure	88,981
Capital Expenditure	
Programme Expenditure (cost of providing free HAF places, including payments to providers and third parties for services provided)	754,559
Other Expenditure (Data system costs, Promotional material, Webpage and Video design/media production)	10,870
Total Expenditure (for 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024)	854,410

N.B The additional half term holidays were funded by Public Health at Blackpool Council

Summarised information for Holiday Activity & Food Programme 2024-25:

- 7,858 children accessed provision
- Over 33,900 meals were provided
- The age split for the whole year saw 79% primary-aged children and 21% secondary-aged children
- There were a total of 10 delivery partners
- There were a total of 36 HAF clubs in 29 locations
- There were a total of 3 SEND specific clubs

Easter Provision

The Blackpool Holiday Activity and Food programme (HAF), supported 1353 unique participants, across eight providers. 85% of participants being children on free school meals (FSM) and 15% being targeted through other vulnerabilities.

All delivery locations were inclusive and accessible for children with low - mild additional needs and we were also able to offer three SEND specific programmes run by our partners BFCCT, Active Blackpool and Boathouse Youth for participants displaying mild to moderate needs.

Our Easter HAF engaged both new and existing participants. Providers offered Easter themed activities plus the usual mix of sports, games, arts/crafts, dance, cookery and urban themed creative arts plus a wide range of trips to local venues. One provider also ran an Oral Health initiative, the "Big Brush Pilot". Blackpool is a "Dental Desert" with many families having no access to dental care. The initiative saw all attendees look at how they can improve their oral health and the importance behind it, as it can affect their health overall. Another Provider connected their attendees with nature working with local "Strawberry Gardens" volunteers. These volunteers donated gardening equipment and seeds for children to use on flower and vegetable boxes. Many of our children do not have gardens and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. A group of senior children had the opportunity to go away on a camping expedition, learning compass skills, hammock building and woodland craft, the group encountered torrential rain and pits of mud but were not deterred and now want to go on and join a Duke of Edinburgh award group.

SEND specific provision was fully booked and well attended and this year included a new provision solely for ages 15+ that saw participants take part in sports, arts/crafts and gaming and concluded with a meal on the final day at a local restaurant. Across all delivery the number of SEND participants increased from 15% last Easter to 19% this year.

Sessions aimed at our secondary school cohort were delivered at a range of times, including evenings and in various session lengths to increase engagement, particularly in those areas of high Anti-Social Behaviour.

Partners did experience some non-attendance but all have waiting lists in place; weather, holidays and sickness were some of the reasons for non-attendance.

The HAF programme was delivered from 32 clubs across the town in schools, parks, community and youth centres, thus enabling door step delivery to our young people. The unique numbers engaged increased slightly from the Easter HAF last year, no mean feat when delivery this year was only one week as opposed to the three we were able to offer last year when funding was higher. The average attendance across the provision was 94%, a significant rise from the 88.5% seen previously.

May/June Half Term Provision

The Blackpool Holiday Activity and Food programme (HAF), supported 1195 unique participants, across eight providers. 85% of participants being children on free school meals (FSM) and 15% being targeted through other vulnerabilities.

We were able to offer three SEND specific programmes run by our partners BFCCT, Active Blackpool and Boathouse Youth for participants displaying mild -moderate needs with a range of sports and arts/crafts activities tailored to their specific needs. Our Partner BFCCT ran their SEND provision for participants aged 15 and above for the second time, this group is particularly beneficial as it allows young adults to socialise with peers of similar ages and interests, addressing a significant need for increased social and physical opportunities for young SEND adults in Blackpool who are often isolated during academic breaks.

HAF opportunities available to our young people ranged from the usual wide variety of sports clubs and arts/crafts, to cycling, breakdancing, percussion lessons, archery, gardening, mindfulness cooking, board gaming, Lego craft and various trips.

Nature-based learning was a key feature this delivery, participants engaged in hands-on gardening activities, planting and potting a variety of vegetable and flower seeds to care for at home. They also created bird feeders and explored local wildlife, deepening their understanding of nature in their gardens and community parks. Organised trips provided further opportunities to connect with the environment, including visits to Blackpool's award-winning Stanley Park and Marton Mere Nature Reserve, as well as a trip to the Butterfly House at Williamson Park in Lancaster.

A group of 40 young people from our provider Boathouse successfully completed their Duke of Edinburgh Silver expedition, walking 45km over three days in the Forrest of Bowland. The young people worked together as a team, carrying their own kit including tents, cooking equipment and food, they remained self-sufficient for the duration of the trip despite facing extreme weather from sun to strong winds and thunder storms.

The HAF programme was delivered across the town, in schools, parks, community and youth centres. The unique numbers engaged increased from the previous year's May HAF by a total of 113 as did the range of activities in place and the number of HAF locations across the town.

Whilst attendance was impacted by extremes of weather during the HAF, resulting in a higher number of cancellations and no-shows than anticipated, the average attendance across the provision remained strong at 82%.

Summer Provision

The Blackpool Holiday Activity and Food programme (HAF), supported 2022 unique participants across 9 providers with 83% of participants being children on free school meals (FSM) and 17% being targeted through other vulnerabilities.

During the summer, we successfully engaged both new and returning participants, offering over 1,300 places daily across 36 clubs in 28 locations throughout the town. We supported 2,022 unique eligible children, whilst this is only a slight increase on last year's figure of 1964, it was a real achievement bearing in mind that last year our Providers were able to deliver for 6 weeks of the holidays but due to budgetary restrictions this year, delivery was limited to just 4 weeks for each Provider.

A dedicated SEND provision was in place, with three providers delivering clubs exclusively for children with mild to moderate additional needs across the town. One provider also offered a summer residential stay tailored to this group.

The programme featured a diverse range of activities encompassing sports, games, arts and crafts alongside meditation, fencing, golf, photography, swimming, birdwatching, parkour, woodland crafts, crabbing, journaling, cookery, judo, skateboarding, music production and urban creative arts including street dance, graffiti art, beatboxing and rap.

Several providers integrated an Olympic theme into their sessions, where participants researched participating countries, explored cultural aspects, prepared and sampled traditional foods and engaged in Olympic-style events.

Family engagement was notably strong; some families took part in Cook & Eat sessions, making delicious healthy food together from scratch whilst others took to the dance floor learning the Thriller dance routine and performing alongside their children. These shared activities positively influenced family dynamics and initiated conversations and common interests extending way beyond the HAF programme.

Sessions targeting our secondary school cohort were again at varied times and of different session lengths to maximize engagement. Activities were specifically tailored for this age group and included elements such as e-gaming, music and short-form social media content all which contributed to a successful increase in engagement to 20% this summer. A pop up sports club was run at Stanley Park on Friday evenings, well known as an area of higher anti-social behaviour, this saw a total of 339 attendances from young people that would otherwise have nowhere to go.

Residential opportunities were offered by two providers, delivering a total of four residential trips within Lancashire and the Lake District. For many young people, this marked their first experience staying outside of Blackpool. During these trips, participants took part in a variety of outdoor adventure activities such as canoeing, camping, rock climbing, paddle boarding, fishing, conservation and team-building exercises.

Additionally, numerous day trips were organised to local Blackpool attractions and further afield, including Eureka!, The National Children's Museum, Ninja Warrior, BeWILDerwood, Gulliver's World, and Haigh Woodland Park, amongst others.

To combat ongoing funding issues we saw fantastic partnership collaboration between our Providers; our sports and dance specialists traveling to other Provider's clubs to ensure that more young people were able to experience activities not on offer in their area. Other Providers worked with local musicians and artists offering workshops in drumming, drama, and music production and holding a "Streetfest" afternoon event for multiple clubs and their participants to attend.

Despite the shortened delivery period this summer both partnership size and participant numbers increased compared to the previous summer. Average attendance rose to 88.4%, up from 84.5% the prior year, reflecting our targeted efforts to improve engagement. Unfortunately non-attendance was affected by the tragic events in Southport and the resulting civil unrest riots we saw in our town; this was then further impacted by two high profile knife incidents at our Stanley park venue, used by two of our providers, which left some parents unwilling to let their children come to the HAF Clubs based there despite the best efforts of staff to dispel their fears. Another Provider further advised that due to the unrest in the town they unfortunately lost two young members of staff who didn't feel safe traveling across the town due to heckling and name calling in the midst of the dispute.

October Half Term Provision

The Blackpool Holiday Activity and Food programme (HAF), supported 1148 unique participants, across seven providers. 85% of participants being children on free school meals (FSM) and 15% being targeted through other vulnerabilities.

Our October provision had a Halloween theme, participants enjoyed pumpkin carving, spooky crafts, Halloween parties, skeleton building, ghost trails, and themed baking sessions. Alongside these, a wide variety of non-themed activities were available, including cricket, table tennis, swimming, pool, forest crafts, and urban creative arts such as skateboarding and free running, along with the usual diverse mix of sports and arts and crafts. The programme also included trips to the Blackpool Illuminations, the cinema, and two residential experiences.

Blackpool Carers Centre took a group of young carers aged 8 -11 years on a three day residential trip to YHA Malham in Yorkshire. With the theme of "A Night under the Stars " the group connected to nature, exploring the environment both by day and night, including a mini-beast hunt, a night hike, and campfire activities designed to stimulate their senses and promote well-being. Due to the demands of their caring roles, not all of the participants could attend the residential; instead alternative activities were offered, such as Cook & Eat sessions. These sessions allowed carers as young as five to prepare nutritious hot meals for themselves and create family-sized dishes, such as Shepherd's Pie to take home.

We were again able to offer three SEND specific programmes, providing a wide choice of sports, arts, crafts and themed Halloween events specially targeted to the attendee's needs and abilities. Building on the success of the previous year, our partner Boathouse Youth organised a residential canal boat trip for 14 members of their SEND camp. Supported by eight youth work apprentices, the group spent five days navigating locks and tunnels in Northampton. The experience provided a powerful opportunity for personal growth, helping participants develop independence, build self-confidence and step outside their comfort zones in a completely new and challenging environment.

Our October HAF was available across the town in 29 clubs in schools, parks, community and youth centres with an average attendance of 88%.

Christmas Provision

The Blackpool Holiday Activity and Food programme (HAF), supported 898 unique participants across 6 providers with 82% of participants being children on free school meals (FSM) and 18% being targeted through other vulnerabilities.

The Christmas programme faced significant challenges due to the timing of the school holidays, which limited opportunities for HAF delivery. Several providers and venues remained closed until after the New Year including ourselves at Blackpool Council, whilst some school venues closed for the entire holiday period citing staff leave and heating costs as reasons for closure. Consequently Providers holding clubs at these venues were unable to open.

These constraints obviously impacted on the number of clubs we were able to run, with those Providers who were open needing to split delivery across the holiday period. Some offered a combination of face-to-face and remote provision to maintain engagement.

Overall, club attendance was strong despite disruptions from adverse weather affecting outdoor activities and events. Providers also reported some participants were absent due to illness or family commitments.

The programme offered a diverse range of activities, including sports, trampolining, skateboarding, dance, e-sports, mindfulness, cookery, parties, and Christmas-themed events such as pantomimes, visits to our own Blackpool Illuminations and the Winter Village, alongside a wide selection of arts and crafts.

We again commissioned recipe boxes for a family orientated remote delivery activity. We have successfully used these for the last 2 years but this year due to reduced funding we collaborated with our local food bank "The Big Food Project" to produce the boxes, with all the ingredients and a recipe card to feed a family of 4 a healthy and nutritious main meal and dessert. These were delivered to 560 HAF families across Blackpool, engaging the whole family in a fun cooking activity and also highlighting the work of the food bank and how it can be accessed.

Despite the challenges faced with this delivery and the very small time frame of opportunity to provide the programme we saw 894 unique children attend across 18 clubs, a slight decrease from last year's figure of 926. However the average attendance across the provision was 94%, an increase of over 6% on last year's figure and the engagement of our secondary aged cohort reached a staggering 33%, as opposed to 24% last year.

February Half Term Provision

The Blackpool Holiday Activity and Food programme (HAF), supported 1242 unique participants, across nine providers. 86% of participants being children on free school meals (FSM) and 14% being targeted through other vulnerabilities.

An action packed February delivery saw a wide variety of fun physical and creative activities from craft workshops, skateboarding, karaoke, cookery, circus skills, and mad science to gardening, swimming, dodgeball, football, Dungeons & Dragons, yo-yo tricks and street dance. In addition to on-site activities, there were trips to the cinema, local tourist attractions, the Ribble Valley, and a residential canal boat experience

Our providers offered a mix of both daytime and evening clubs to attract participants of all ages, shorter pop up sessions were also successful in areas of higher anti-social behaviour attracting new attendees to the HAF.

Cook & Eat sessions remained a highlight across several clubs, with participants preparing nutritious, low-cost meals to take home and share with their families. Valentine-themed baking sessions were also popular, with young people making brownies and cookies as gifts. The Valentine's theme continued through discos, parties, and creative workshops where participants made bracelets, cards, and candles.

A group of senior aged participants embarked on canal residential in four boats along the Grand Union Canal. They were introduced to the NYA Curriculum Wheel and within their boat crews, chose a topic area that resonated with them as a group and that they wished to explore further. The groups opted to focus on Social & Emotional Development, Skills Development, Health & Well-Being, and Identity & Belonging. During the trip, with guidance from youth leaders, each group explored their chosen topic through themed activities including 'Self-Confidence Mirrors', 'Fitness Challenges' and even a spa evening, all whilst navigating the canal network and mastering it's locks and tunnels

Our SEND specific provision continued to deliver a wide choice of sports, arts, crafts and themed events tailored to the attendee needs and abilities. Among the highlights was a circus skills workshop, where young people learned to juggle, spin plates, and perform magic tricks

The HAF programme was delivered at 34 clubs across the town, in schools, parks, community and youth centres. Despite periods of poor weather, the average attendance across the provision remained strong at 87%.

Food

Our HAF provision provided all participants with at least one healthy nutritious meal per session with all food provided of school food standard. Where a hot meal was not possible due to location or activity then there were a variety of cold alternatives on offer.

The majority of our providers sourced and prepared their own food, cooked on site and of a high standard. These meals also met school food standards and if needed were safely conveyed to venues across the town. We worked throughout the year with these providers and their participants to ensure menus for each holiday provision had a suitable range of hot and cold food plus snacks that were agreeable to all.

Feedback

- “I am really grateful that you have fed her today and even sent her home with food, that’s such a big help” – **Parent**
- “I am really pleased with this summer club it’s helped me out so much especially because the kids get fed a proper meal. During the summer I’m more skint than usual, can’t thank you enough” – **Parent**
- “He cannot wait to tell me what he has eaten, I’ve seen such a change in what he will try now ” - **Parent**
- “These boxes went down an absolute treat, all of the boxes went and the families were very grateful” – **Provider**
- ““I liked the food it was really yummy and I was proud because I tried new things and I liked it” - **Participant**
- “Thank you ,you have no idea how much you feeding them helps over the holidays ” - **Parent**
- “We all love the food, it’s amazing and we get to have seconds!” - **Participant**
- “The recipe boxes were fantastic. My kids loved the Bean Chili which is unusual because they don’t like vegetables, this is a new favourite in our household” – **Parent**
- “I loved the Filipino noodles and Sam gave me the recipe for my mum to make it” - **Participant**

As previously mentioned, we partnered with our local food bank, The Big Food Project, to develop recipe boxes as a remote activity for some Christmas programme participants.

Each box provided ingredients to prepare a healthy, delicious main meal and dessert for a family of four. The meals adhered to the School Food Standards, were low in energy cost, yet high in nutritional quality. Along with the ingredients, each box included a recipe card designed to enable participants and their families to cook quick and easy meals together. This initiative also helped introduce families to the support and services offered by the food bank.

The recipe boxes also delivered environmental benefits, all meals were vegetarian or vegan and the packaging was fully recyclable. By encouraging plant-based eating, we aimed to promote both long-term health improvements and a reduction in the carbon footprint of Blackpool residents.

Nutritional Education and the promotion of healthy living/lifestyles

Our Providers all use mealtimes to talk about food nutrition and the importance of healthy choices to our HAF participants. Providers making food on site often use the food preparation and cooking time to demonstrate the importance of nutrition, involving the children in taste tests. During snack times, staff engage discussions on healthier alternatives and how these can fuel the body rather than sugary or salty snacks.

Several providers ran cookery sessions to engage children and their families in food preparation and nutrition to produce a healthy meal to either eat at the session or take home to the wider family. Other providers gave out recipes and leaflets promoting low cost healthy eating and recipes for the family

As described earlier we again used Recipe boxes at Christmas to encourage participants and their parents to make healthy, nutritious quick and easy to cook recipes together at home. These also introduced families to affordable plant based global cuisine.

HAF Participants are now conscious of what they are eating and the benefits of a healthy diet and the cost of food. Many providers have seen a change in the eating habits of the young people attending, reporting their participants are much more adventurous in their food choices now and even educating their families at home.

“We feel we can help young people change their perceptions of the food they are eating by helping them to understand the benefits of healthy eating, and by leading by example. We are embedding conversations around healthy eating in our projects and each project includes a rap with the lyrics encouraging healthy eating” - **Provider**

“We wanted to really encourage the young people to build on skills they already have and skills they will continue to use throughout their lives. We introduced the ‘make your own lunch’ model. Each day, young people were given the tools to successfully make their own lunches which they would then eat together around a table. This consisted of sandwiches, wraps, beans on toast and homemade pizza! It was amazing to see the confidence of preparing a meal for themselves grow day by day, and them taking ownership of the food they were about to eat. We saw young people go from not being able to butter bread at the start of the week, to being able to butter toast and correctly use a knife at the end of the week! We are so proud of this achievement and will continue to use this model moving forward.” – **Provider**

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Whilst most of our clubs are inclusive for all children and young people we also had three providers that ran SEND specific programmes catering to children with mild to moderate needs.

The Boathouse Youth’s Pathway Provision works to build confidence and self-esteem through focused group work sessions. It is a bespoke provision with additional staffing structures (including 1:1s) and is inclusive of a door-to-door transport provision to further reduce barriers to participation. It also included residential opportunities with various adjustments made to accommodate children to participate in the offsite activities and stay overnight.

The BFCCT SEND camp, provided an array of both physical and enrichment activities for children/young people living with mild to moderate learning difficulties and disabilities. Groups are smaller and have additional fully trained staff in attendance. Breakout rooms for quiet down time are also available throughout the sessions. Many of the young people in attendance are from local SEND schools that the trust work with during term time. This prior relationship helps in better understanding the children’s needs and helps them to be more confident about attending, particularly if it is their first time.

“This camp is particularly beneficial as it allows young adults to socialise with peers of similar ages and interests, addressing a significant need for more social and physical opportunities for young adults with SEND in Blackpool. It provides them with the opportunity to make new friends away from their education setting, as young adults with SEND they can easily become isolated during academic breaks.” – **Provider of 15+ SEND Camp**

“The whole team treat every child with respect and dignity. XXX is genuinely so excited to attend and loves her time at HAF.” – **Guardian of HAF participant**

The Active Blackpool team run a sports and physical activity camp for 5–18 year-olds who have mild to moderate additional needs. Sessions provide an opportunity for young people to experience a diverse range of different sporting activities, both indoor and outdoor and seasonal challenges to develop their physical, emotional, and social skills. Again, groups are smaller with additional fully trained staff in attendance. The Club is hosted at our Stanley Park Sports centre which is situated within Stanley Park, voted the UK's best park, with 390 acres of gardens, woodlands, recreation and sports facilities all utilised by the team.

Signposting and Referrals

We are very fortunate that all of our Providers offering #BlackpoolHAF provision are local to Blackpool and their trained staff are able to offer information, signposting or referrals to other local services and support to participants and their families. They engage with both the young people and their families during pick up and collection times plus online/text.

We facilitated interactive learning workshops in Early Help delivered by Early Help link workers, all experienced practitioners and also Safeguarding training with specific emphasis on HAF clubs.

We also ensured all of our providers were made aware of any local initiatives such as Warm Hubs, Food Banks, Energy advice/ Cost of Living workshops etc.

A number of Services were sign posted, these included:

- Citizens Advice
- Housing support officers
- School nurses,
- Warm Hubs
- Family support services
- Early Years
- Jobcentre Plus
- Foodbanks
- Household Support Fund

Challenges and Highlights

In a year of financial uncertainty we have strived to strengthen both our framework of provision and partnership collaboration, resulting in an expanded reach and a deepened commitment to supporting our eligible children and families.

Our framework currently includes ten contracted providers, all of whom have continued to increase their provision and attendance levels. Through targeted efforts, we have ensured that eligible young people and their families living in areas of highest need have doorstep access to HAF activities and nutritious meals (see Appendix 1 – FSM Areas and HAF Locations Maps).

To improve attendance, we have worked closely with providers to implement effective strategies such as waiting lists, follow-up phone calls and texts to non-attendees, and clear communication encouraging families to book only for days they intend to attend. While attendance will always be influenced by adverse weather conditions, providers consistently adapt by offering a range of engaging indoor and outdoor activities. Overall attendance across the year averaged over 90%, reflecting a 2% improvement on the previous year.

Our inclusive mainstream HAF provisions continue to serve many children and young people with SEND; however, the need for more SEND specific programmes was evident for those requiring smaller, more personalised group

settings. Currently, three providers deliver SEND-specific clubs catering to children with mild to moderate needs, which are extremely popular and well attended. Our SEND reach is now 14% of our total HAF cohort, a 3% increase on the previous year

Although attendance remains predominantly among primary aged children, participation from the secondary-aged cohort has increased to an average of 21%, up 2% from 2023/24.

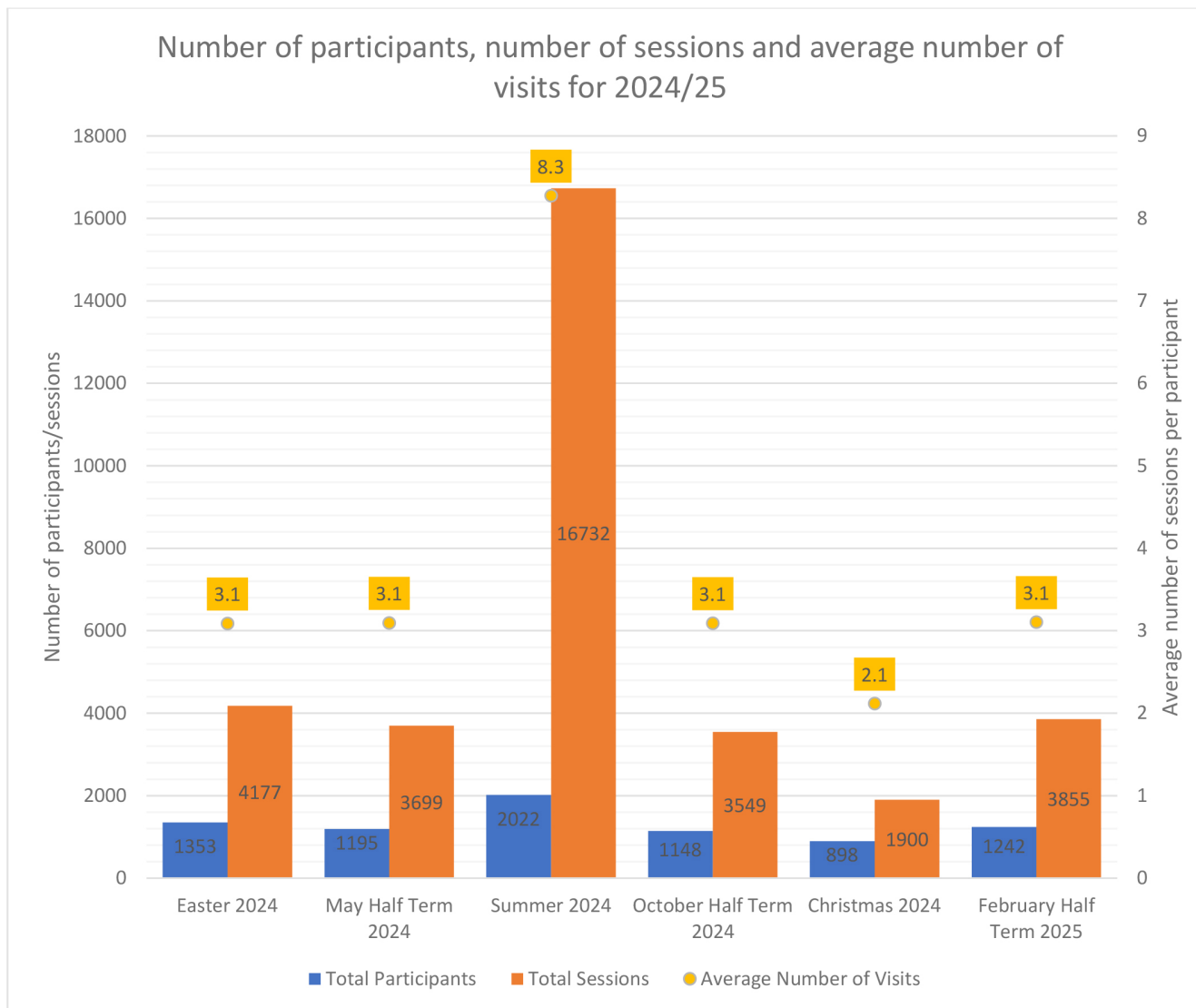
Engaging secondary-aged young people has always been challenging, but providers have specifically tailored their offer to this group by delivering clubs in locations where they naturally gather, offering shorter sessions with increasingly varied activities and scheduled at times more suited to their preferences, such as evenings. During the Christmas HAF, attendance from this cohort rose significantly to 33%. We also maintain provision in areas with higher levels of anti-social behaviour.

Our Summer HAF programme supported 2,022 unique eligible children, providing families with a safe environment to be active, learn, and enjoy enrichment activities, all alongside healthy meal provision. This marks an increase on last year's figure despite the number of delivery weeks being reduced from six weeks to four due to a reduction in government funding. Indeed the summer programme alone served 24% of our total Free School Meal (FSM) cohort.

The chart below illustrates the number of unique visits versus the total number of visits for each holiday provision, demonstrating strong repeat attendance. On average, children attend 4.5 sessions per holiday, with summer attendance rising to 8.3 visits per child, highlighting the sustained success of our programme with young people returning time and time again.

Despite a reduction in DfE funding that unfortunately limited the number of delivery weeks we were able to support this year, last year we supported an extra four weeks in total, two weeks extra at both Easter and Summer), our #BlackpoolHAF programme has nevertheless grown in both size and reach. The number of places attended by our participants over the course of the year was 33,912, which equally means that a total of 33,912 healthy meals were served to those participants. Alongside this growth, there have also been notable improvements in the quality and diversity of activities and food provision.

We are extremely proud of the programme's achievements and the lasting positive impact it has on our participants, their families and the wider Blackpool community.



Social Media Links and Feedback

Blackpool HAF Video: - <https://youtu.be/RZ-mT3tz5eY>

Blackpool Boys & Girls Club:-

We might have... - Blackpool Boys & Girls Club Mereside

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/19PgSX8pLx/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

Boathouse Youth:-

Instagram

https://www.instagram.com/p/C-VNu7-u_pq/?igsh=bXgycDZoMW9ieHJp

Instagram

House of Wings /Skool of Street:-

<https://www.instagram.com/p/C-sZ7Ndsdyp/?igsh=MTQxODRkYnowcXE3eg==>

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/16eVy23pPY/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/C-ahvw9sgJP/?igsh=bzV6YmIxeG02bXB6>

Blackpool Young Carers: - <https://www.facebook.com/share/1JqK2heNx2/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

Magic Club:-

☀ Last week we had loads more fun as... - Magic Club

☀ Thinking back to our last two week... - Magic Club

@theGrange:-

<https://www.facebook.com/share/1AtjNt7SGt/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

<https://www.facebook.com/share/r/15zqmosYMe/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

BFCCT: - <https://www.facebook.com/share/1JyhLrzpgC/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

Park Rangers: - <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/19TsSsDAse/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

Feedback

Participants

- “Everything was amazing, it’s so much fun”
- “I made a new friend”
- “This has made me really happy and I’m glad I came as I’ve not been happy in a while due to my dad passing away and missing him.”
- “I really enjoyed today and I coped well in confined spaces which I never thought I would”
- “I had a lot of fun at Blackpool Dungeons, it was thrilling, and I made new friends I could spend time with”
- “My favourite is learning about what we will eat that day and then I can smell it all day”
- “I like all the teachers they are cool”
- “I didn’t want to go home today as I had that much fun! Especially making bird houses, I’m going to hang one in my garden at home”
- “I learnt how to properly do a rock hold on the climbing wall. It was so good”
- “I really enjoyed learning cooking skills”
- “The best summer ever!”

Parents/Guardians

- “He has absolutely loved it, I thought he was going to struggle but the older kids have been helping him all summer making him feel so much more confident”
- “I feel like I have a different child, she normally struggles with her nerves but she has been full of it, so grateful”
- “The three of them come home full of beans every time so they will definitely be back”
- “Thanks again, XXX loves all the teachers here he wants to be just like them when he grows up”
- “We have just moved to the area and I am so relieved she can come, it’s helped her grow in confidence and make friends”
- “My friends kids have come for ages and she recommended it, it’s absolutely brilliant that they get fed, it takes the pressure off me”
- “It’s nearby, there is variety and it gives kids something to do in the holidays.”
- “I am just so grateful for the club it helps so much, with the cost of everything there’s no way I could do any of these things with them and the food is amazing”

Appendix 1

HAF Providers

Active Blackpool

1. Blackpool Sports Centre
2. Palatine Leisure Centre

Blackpool Football Club Community Trust

1. Armfield Academy
2. Aspire Sports Hub
3. Blackpool FC Community Trust Bloomfield Road
4. Claremont Park
5. Layton Primary School
6. Moor Park Primary School
7. Revoe Learning Academy
8. St John Vianney Catholic Primary School
9. Unity Academy
10. Westminster Primary Academy
11. Waterloo Primary Academy

Boathouse Youth

1. Grange Park Youth Centre
2. Boundary Primary School
3. St Mary's Catholic Academy
4. Christ The King Catholic Academy
5. Blackpool Gateway Academy
6. The Boathouse Youth Bloomfield
7. Thames Primary Academy

EPSCIC (Boys and Girls Club)

1. Talbot and Brunswick
2. Mereside

1. House of Wingz / Skool of Street

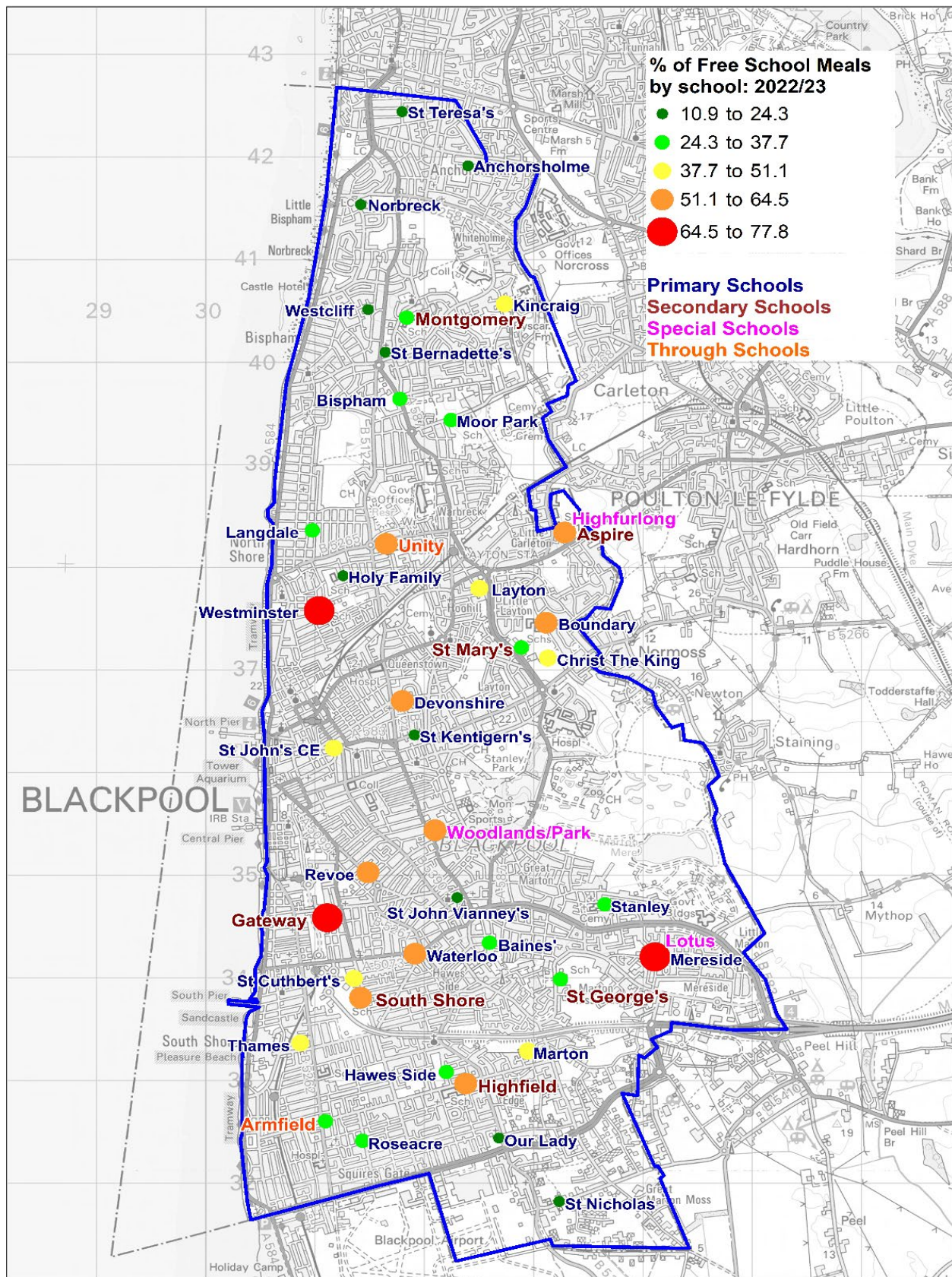
2. Magic Club

3. @thegrange

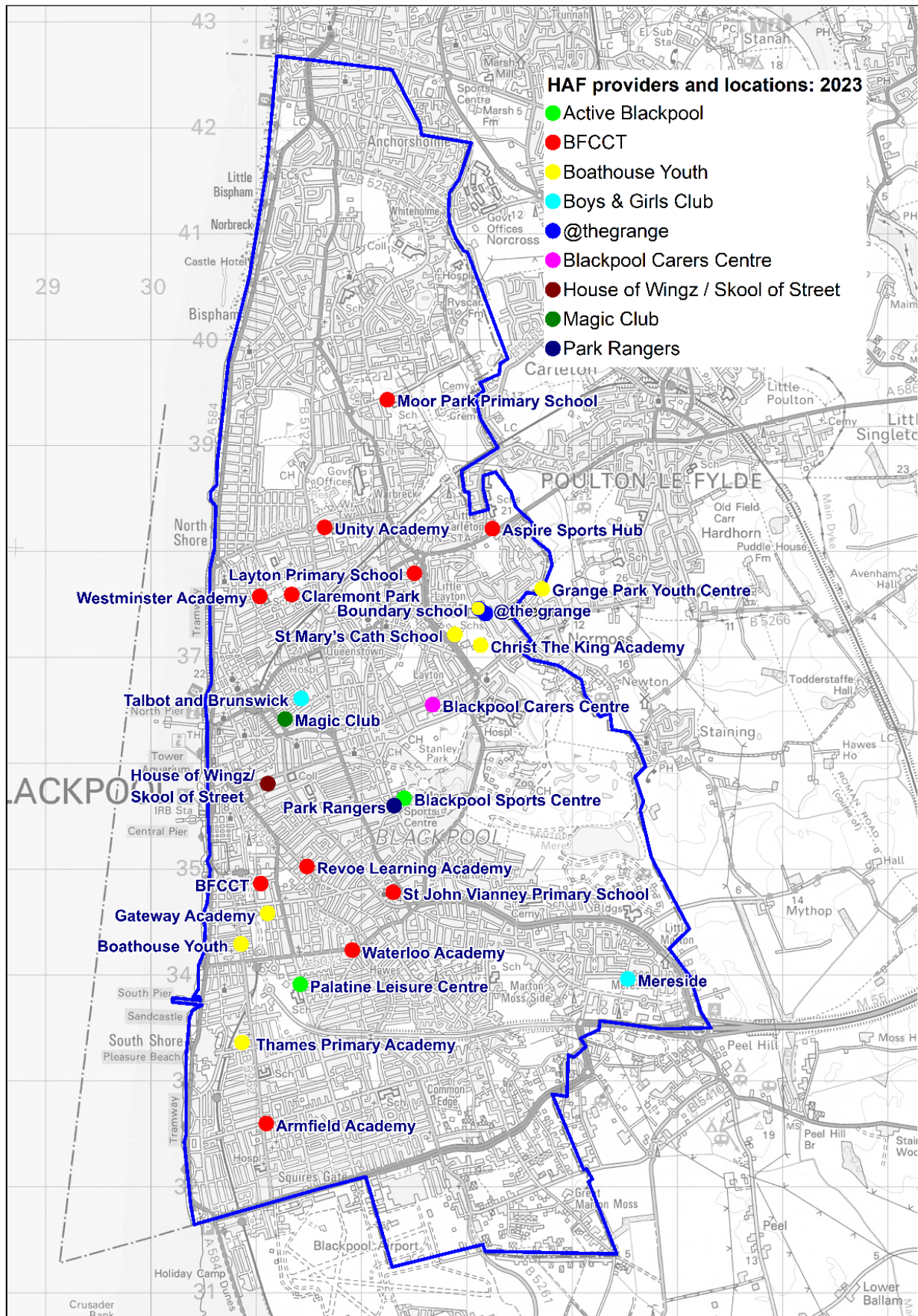
4. Park Rangers

5. Blackpool Carers Centre

Proportion of FSM by school: 2022/23



HAF Providers and Locations: 2023



We would like to thank all of the partners who have worked with us to make Blackpool's 2024/25 HAF Programme a success.