

STOKE-ON-TRENT HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND FOOD PROGRAMME

Annual Report 2025



Funded by



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for Education



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Consent for photographs used throughout this report has been obtained by The Hubb Foundation.

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Introduction

In 2025, Stoke-on-Trent City Council secured £1,575,890 in funding from the Department for Education (DfE) to support the development and coordination of the Holiday, Activities and Food (HAF) Programme. This investment enables upper-tier local authorities to provide free holiday provision during the Easter, Summer, and Christmas breaks for children from low-income households, particularly those eligible for benefits-related free school meals. The programme offers access to nutritious food, stimulating activities, and free childcare during school holidays.

Evidence at a national level highlight that school holiday periods can place significant pressure on families due to rising household costs and reduced earning opportunities. Research also shows that children from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to participate in physical or leisure activities or maintain a healthy diet when school is not in session, which can negatively impact their overall health and wellbeing.

In response, the HAF programme is designed around six core outcomes for children:

- Improved access to nutritious food throughout the school holidays
- Increased levels of physical activity
- Participation in enjoyable and meaningful activities that promote wellbeing, resilience, character development, and educational achievement
- Feeling safe, supported, and socially connected
- Enhanced understanding of healthy eating and nutrition
- Stronger connections with schools and local support services

Recognising that effective collaboration is essential to delivering a high-quality programme, Stoke-on-Trent City Council established a strategic partnership with organisations across the city. In 2022, the Council commissioned local charity The Hubb Foundation to lead the management and coordination of the Stoke-on-Trent HAF programme. This collaborative approach has enabled the programme to be delivered to a consistently high standard, meeting national HAF requirements and delivering positive, lasting outcomes for children and young people across the city.

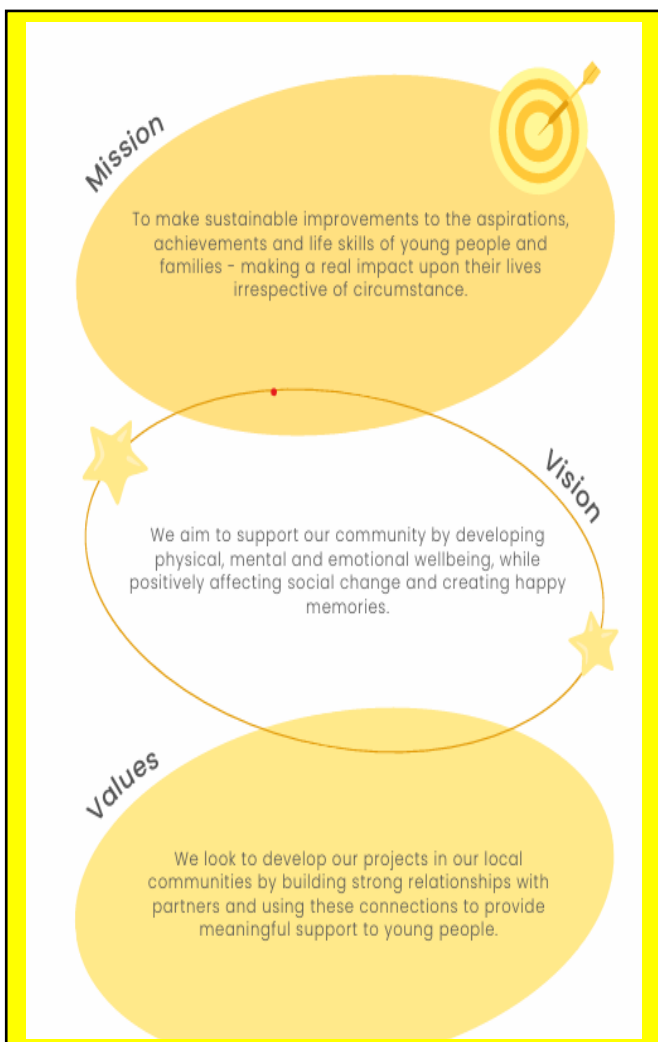


Our Delivery Partner – The Hubb Foundation

The Hubb Foundation is a charitable organisation dedicated to creating lasting, positive change in the lives of children, young people, and families, regardless of their background or circumstances. Its work focuses on raising aspirations, improving life skills, and supporting personal achievement. Through its vision, the Foundation aims to strengthen communities by promoting physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing, delivering social impact, and helping children and families create positive and memorable experiences. Central to its approach is the development of locally led projects, shaped through strong partnerships that enable tailored and meaningful support across the city.

The delivery of the Stoke-on-Trent HAF programme is underpinned by a wide network of established and emerging partnerships spanning multiple sectors. These include schools, community venues, voluntary and community organisations, Stoke-on-Trent City Council leisure services, local activity providers, food suppliers, transport services, and enrichment partners. By fostering a culture of collaboration and mutual trust, united by a shared commitment to improving outcomes for children and families, The Hubb Foundation has played a vital role in delivering a flexible and responsive HAF programme. This adaptability has been key to meeting evolving needs and ensuring the programme's long-term sustainability.

The Council is exceptionally proud of the breadth and quality of the HAF provision delivered across Stoke-on-Trent over the past year. The continued dedication of The Hubb Foundation, alongside the invaluable contribution of delivery partners across the city, has been instrumental in ensuring that eligible children, young people, and families can benefit from safe, enjoyable, and enriching holiday opportunities.



2025 Stoke-on-Trent HAF Programme: Highlights

We see the positive impact of the HAF programme every day. The figures below demonstrate how the programme continues to grow and improve over time.

- Provided a total of 1,328 sessions
- Delivered 5,065 hours of provision
- Created 45,192 opportunities
- Reached 88%* of children in receipt of benefits related FSM (*of overall attendance figures)
- Engaged with 8,965 unique participants
- Of these, 5,853 were children and young people with SEND
- School based sessions 571
- Community based sessions 651
- Trips 106
- Worked with 385 partners, including 116 schools, 59 community venues/providers
- 48 days of delivery
- Of all places attended, 60.9% attendees were primary aged, and 39.1% were secondary aged
- Sessions were delivered across various venues throughout multiple council wards.
- The programme is supported by a steering group including representatives from Stoke-on-Trent City Council (education, catering, families, communications, and commissioning), The Hubb Foundation, the Outdoor Education Centre, Staffordshire Police, schools and partner providers.

Total expenditure: £1,575,236.53



Easter 2025

Provision

Dates: Monday 14th April 2025 to Friday 25th April 2025 - 8 days of enriching activities and external trips.

Number of organisations worked with: 121

Number of venues: 30

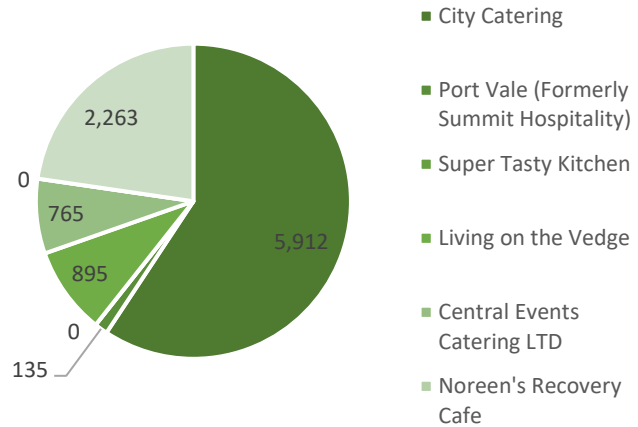
Number of sessions: 309

Hours of provision: 1,188

External trips: 32

Opportunities created: 9,970

Meals Provided 9,970



Unique Attendance

2,598 unique children and young people accessed HAF provision during Easter 2025 of which:

1,609 were primary school children

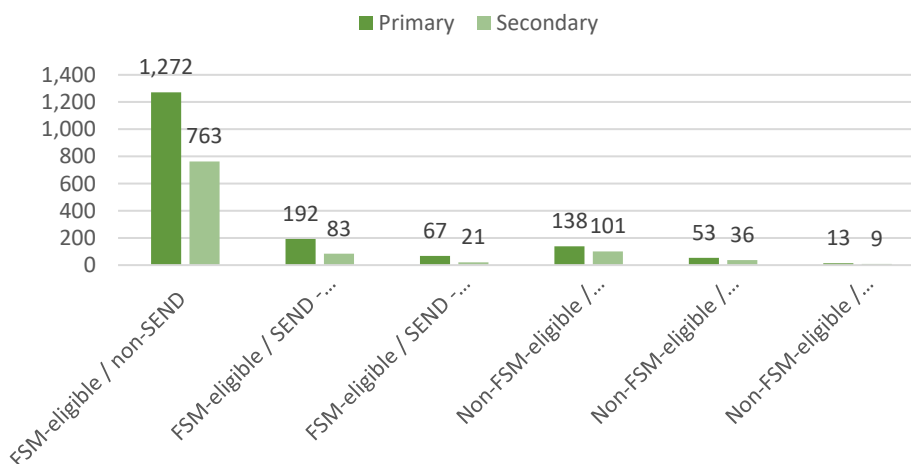
989 were secondary school children

1,062 SEND children

87% FSM Attendees

Average Attendance: Participating children and young people attended on average **2.7** days face to face holiday clubs

Unique Attendance



Expenditure

Total spent:

£309,009.03

Here are the key highlights from Easter 2025

Overall Delivery & Reach

- Delivered 9,970 holiday activity places, nearly reaching full capacity.
- Provided 309 events, 1,188 delivery hours, and engaged 2,598 unique children.
- Worked with 121 partners across 44 schools and community venues.
- Reached a high proportion of FSM-eligible children (87%), supporting those most in need.

Impact on Children & Families

- Delivered free activities, healthy meals, and safe environments, supporting physical, emotional, and social wellbeing.
- Increased confidence, friendships, and readiness for school among participants.
- Provided families with support, resources, and opportunities to engage, easing holiday pressures.

Strong Partnerships & Delivery Model

- Success driven by collaboration with schools, community organisations, and providers.
- Use of a flexible commissioning model ensured high-quality, inclusive, and cost-effective delivery.

Positive Feedback

- Consistently strong feedback from parents, providers, and schools.
- Notable improvements in children's confidence, social skills, and enjoyment.

Key Highlights & Activities

- Wide range of enrichment activities including music, sports, creative arts, and cultural experiences.
- Delivered 32 trips, boosting engagement and providing memorable experiences.
- Standout programmes included: Confidence-building alternative sports sessions, First Aid "Mini Medics" training & Leadership qualifications through sports programmes.

Improvements & Learning

- Introduction of the Eequ booking system improved accessibility, reduced admin, and enhanced data tracking.
- Identified need for: Earlier planning and communication, improved engagement with providers and families & better identification of eligible children.

Overall Message

The programme delivered significant positive impact, supporting thousands of children with learning, wellbeing, and life skills, while continuing to evolve and improve for future delivery.

Feedback and Testimonials

Brilliant, staff amazing and really understood the needs of my child who has autism, staff have been super.

This is a great little club to break the day up. Everyone seemed friendly and my daughter had a fantastic week.

The HAF programme enabled children of all ages and backgrounds to come together. They learnt how to be compassionate, supportive, and helpful to everyone.

It's an excellent service for the vulnerable children and meets their needs.

Summer 2025

Provision

Dates: Monday 21st July 2025 to Friday 29th August 2025 - 29 days of enriching activities and external trips.

Number of organisations worked with: 161

Number of venues: 51

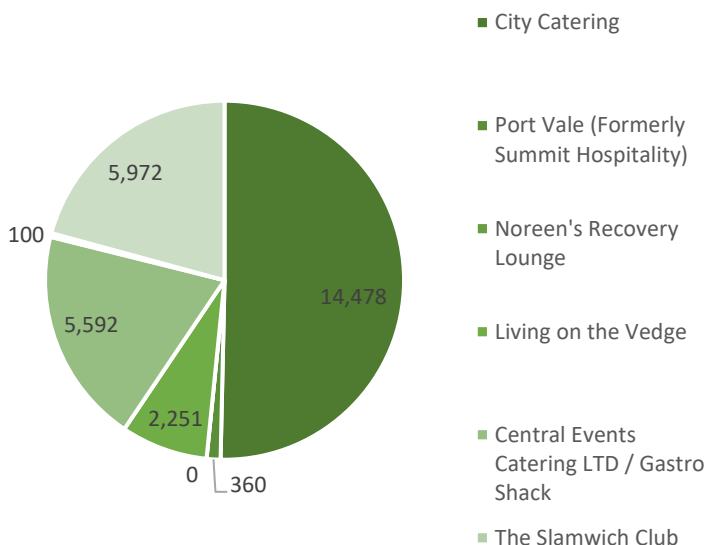
Number of sessions: 833

Hours of provision: 3,187

External trips: 43

Opportunities created: 28,735

Meals Provided 28,735



Unique Attendance

4,346 unique children and young people accessed HAF provision during Summer 2025 of which:

2,448 were primary school children

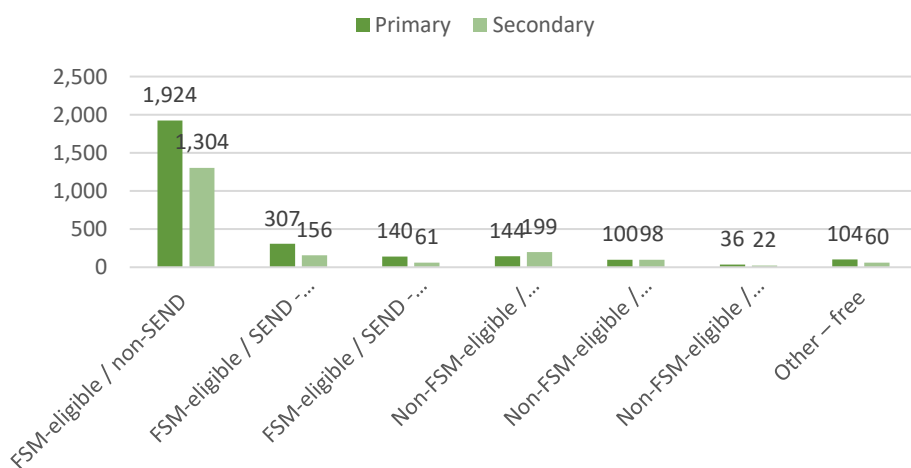
1,898 were secondary school children

3,760 SEND children

88.88% FSM attendees

Average Attendance: Participating children and young people on average attended **5** sessions

Unique Attendance



Expenditure

Total spent:

£870,955.57

Here are the key highlights from Summer 2025

Overall Delivery & Reach

- Delivered 28,753 activity places across the city, with over 4,300 unique children attending.
- Provided 3,187 hours of activities, 28,735 meals, and worked with nearly 400 partners and provider.
- Reached a high proportion of FSM-eligible children (88%), ensuring support for those most in need.

Impact on Children & Families

- Significantly improved confidence, social skills, wellbeing, and school readiness among children.
- Provided vital support for families, including childcare, routine, and access to services during holidays.
- Research findings show links between participation and improved school attendance and emotional development.

Strong Engagement & Communication

- Highly successful social media campaign (120,000+ views) and launch of a monthly newsletter with strong engagement rates.
- The Eequ booking system improved accessibility, data tracking, and overall user experience for families and providers.

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Key Highlights & Activities

- Wide variety of enrichment activities (sports, arts, STEM, wellbeing, performing arts).
- Delivered 43 trips and community events, providing memorable and confidence-building experiences.
- Strong focus on skills, leadership, and employability, including accredited programmes and hands-on experiences.
- Community events engaged over 1,000 residents, strengthening local connections.

Key Learnings & Improvements

- Earlier planning and longer mobilisation improved delivery, engagement, and provider confidence.
- Continued challenges include reaching all eligible children, managing no-shows, and food provision limitations.
- Ongoing improvements in safeguarding, communication, and accessibility are being implemented.

Overall Message

The Summer HAF 2025 programme delivered significant positive impact at scale, supporting thousands of children and families, strengthening communities, and continuing to evolve as a highly effective and valued programme.

Feedback and Testimonials

They are happier and more excited to attend school.

It has helped my eldest son with confidence and social skills. All my kids enjoy learning new skills and great exercise sessions. Also enjoyed making smoothies.

They have loved going in and have been happy throughout the 6 weeks. I have not taken them anywhere else as this was something they preferred over other days out.

Make new friends and I meet parents in a similar position to us.

Winter (Christmas) 2025

Provision

Dates: Saturday 20th December 2025 to Sunday 4th January 2026
- 11 days of enriching activities and external trips.

Number of organisations worked with: 103

Number of venues: 20

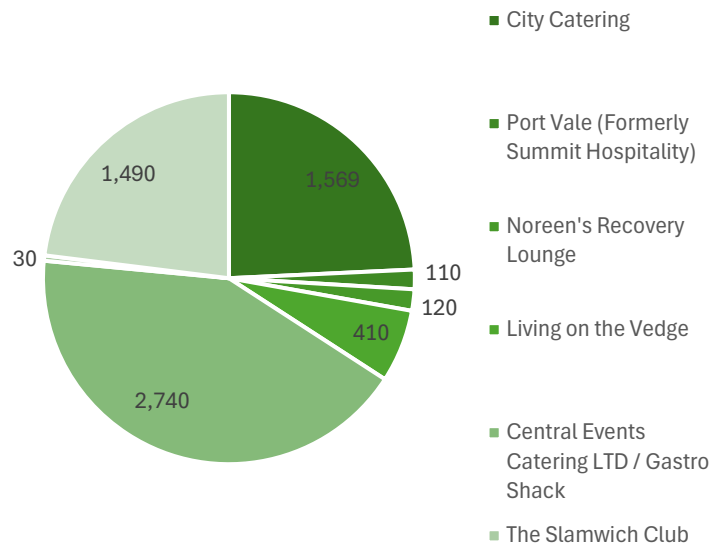
Number of sessions: 186

Hours of provision: 690

External trips: 31

Opportunities created: 6,469

Meals Provided 6,469



Unique Attendance

2,021 unique children and young people accessed HAF provision during Christmas 2025 of which:

1,301 were primary school children

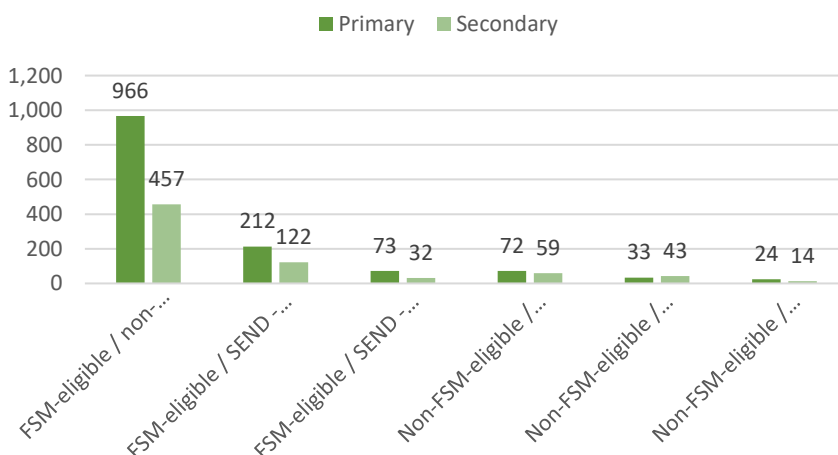
720 were secondary school children

1,031 SEND children

90.22% FSM attendees

Average Attendance: Participating children and young people on average attended **2.2** sessions

Unique Attendance



Expenditure

Total spent:

£237,682.93

Here are the key highlights from Winter 2025

Overall Delivery & Reach

- Delivered 6,469 holiday activity places and meals, supporting children during high-pressure winter period.
- Provided 186 sessions across 11 days, delivering 690 hours of provision and engaging 2,021 unique children and young people.
- Engaged a high proportion of FSM-eligible children (over 90%), ensuring targeted support for those most in need.

Impact on Children & Families

- Delivered free activities, nutritious meals, and safe, warm spaces, supporting wellbeing during winter months.
- Supported improvements in confidence, social interaction, and emotional wellbeing.
- Helped families to manage financial pressures and holiday challenges, providing structure and support.

Strong Partnership and Delivery Model

- Delivery driven by strong collaboration between schools, community providers, and local organisations.
- Partnership working enabled targeted, inclusive and localised delivery, tailored to community need.
- Additional contributions from partners extended support beyond sessions, including seasonal gifts and wider family support.

Key Highlights & Activities

- Delivered a wide range of seasonal and enrichment activities including sports, arts, forest school, animal encounters, and creative workshops.
- 31 trips delivered, offering memorable experiences such as climbing centres, theatre trips and adventure venues.
- Large scale community and family events, including 'Bounce into Christmas', strengthened engagement and reduced isolation.

Improvements & Learning

- Investment in workforce training (safeguarding, risk management and health promotion) improved delivery quality and provider confidence.
- Improved identification and engagement of eligible families.
- Greater flexibility in food provision models.

Overall Message

Winter HAF 2025 delivered significant impact during a critical time of year, providing essential support to children and families through high-quality, inclusive provision. Despite seasonal challenges, the programme successfully combined strong partnerships, targeted delivery and meaningful experiences, continuing to evolve to better meet the needs of local communities.

Feedback and Testimonials

The sessions were well delivered and the children enjoyed themselves.

My child really, really liked it and would like more things like this.

My child was very happy with all the activities she attended. There were a lot of different activities she loved to do.

Food Provision

Over the course of the HAF 2025 programme, a total of 45,174 nutritious meals were successfully delivered across 1,328 sessions, playing a vital role in ensuring that children and young people were well-nourished and able to engage fully in a wide range of activities.

Meal provision was delivered through a blended model of centralised catering and local distribution, enabling flexibility while maintaining consistently high standards of food safety, nutritional quality, and regulatory compliance. This approach ensured that all meals met required standards, while also being responsive to the needs of individual providers and local communities.

The Hubb Foundation played a central role in coordinating this provision, working in close partnership with delivery providers to ensure a smooth and efficient operation. This included the management of dietary requirements, such as allergies, intolerances, and cultural or religious needs, ensuring that all children could safely access suitable meals. In addition, robust logistical arrangements were put in place to support timely and equitable distribution across all delivery sites.

Overall, the programme demonstrated a strong, well-coordinated approach to food provision, contributing not only to the physical wellbeing of participants but also enhancing their overall experience by removing barriers to participation and supporting sustained engagement throughout the programme.



The commitment to providing energy-driven, healthy meals builds on The Hubb Foundation's significant milestone in August last year, where our one-millionth meal was served at The Glebe Academy primary school in Fenton.

Nutritional Education and Healthy Lifestyles

Alongside the delivery of nutritious meals, nutritional education remained a key pillar of the HAF 2025 programme, helping to promote long-term healthy habits among children and young people. Participants engaged in a wide range of interactive workshops and activities focused on healthy eating, increasing their understanding of balanced diets, portion control, and the importance of making informed food choices.

These sessions were designed to be both engaging and practical, with hands-on experiences such as cooking workshops, food preparation activities, and interactive learning sessions enabling children to develop real-life skills in a fun and accessible way. This approach helped to build confidence in the kitchen, while also encouraging positive relationships with food and greater independence.

The programme also continued to offer broader opportunities for personal growth and development. In several settings, young volunteers played an active role in supporting delivery. This provided them with valuable opportunities to gain practical experience, build confidence, and develop key skills such as teamwork, communication, and leadership.

Furthermore, by working closely with community-based providers, the programme contributed to strengthening local networks and supporting the local economy. This collaborative approach not only helped to create employment and volunteering opportunities within communities, but also fostered a sense of ownership and connection, enhancing the overall impact and sustainability of the programme.

Overall, the integration of nutritional education alongside wider developmental opportunities ensured that the programme delivered holistic benefits, supporting both the immediate wellbeing and longer-term outcomes of participants.



Enriching Activities

The HAF 2025 programme delivered a diverse and engaging range of enrichment activities, providing children and young people with opportunities to be creative, develop new skills, and remain physically active. Across the Easter, Summer, and Winter delivery periods, sessions were carefully designed to inspire curiosity, encourage self-expression, and create positive, memorable experiences.

A broad and varied programme of activities was offered, including:

Creative and Expressive Activities

Participants engaged in a wide range of creative opportunities, including arts and crafts, illustration and design, drama, music, and dance. Additional activities such as karaoke, creative writing, and acting workshops supported self-expression and confidence-building.

Hands-On and Educational Learning

Children were able to develop practical and technical skills through interactive sessions, including coding, Minecraft design, and 3D printing, alongside a variety of STEM-based activities. Cookery sessions and food and nutrition workshops further supported life skills development and reinforced healthy lifestyle messages.

Performance and Confidence Building

Specialist sessions, including those delivered by external organisations such as Pep the Poet, London Magic School, and Gifted Workshops, provided unique opportunities for children to build confidence, develop communication skills, and showcase their talents in supportive environments.

Unique Enrichment Opportunities

The programme also introduced a range of distinctive experiences, such as circus skills, DJ workshops, cultural dance sessions, inflatable activities, magic workshops, SPLAT sessions, roller discos, and climbing wall experiences. These activities added variety and excitement, ensuring sustained engagement across all age groups.

Outdoor and Nature-Based Activities

Outdoor learning remained a key feature of the programme, with activities including forest school, den building, environmental education, outdoor play, and seasonal experiences such as reindeer food making. Opportunities to engage with animals, including ponies and small animals, further enriched the offer and supported wellbeing.

Community and Social Experiences

A range of community-focused activities, including fun days, discos, enrichment sessions, and social action projects, encouraged participation, social interaction, and a sense of belonging among children and young people.

The combination of both new and returning providers ensured the programme remained dynamic, innovative, and responsive throughout the year. This diversity of provision played a significant role in driving strong participation, with children and families responding positively to the wide range of opportunities available and the chance to explore new interests.

Overall, the HAF 2025 programme delivered a high-quality, inclusive enrichment offer, supporting children and young people to build confidence, develop new skills, and access experiences that contribute positively to their personal development and wellbeing.

Physical Activities

Physical activity remained a central component of the HAF 2025 programme, with providers delivering a wide range of engaging, inclusive, and high-energy sessions throughout the Easter, Summer, and Winter holiday periods. Activities were carefully designed to ensure that children and young people remained active, motivated, and supported, while also promoting enjoyment and overall wellbeing.

Provision included a balance of free play, organised sport, and structured physical sessions, allowing participants to engage at a level appropriate to their individual interests and abilities. This flexible approach ensured that all children, regardless of experience or confidence, were able to participate in a safe and supportive environment.

The programme continued to offer a broad and varied physical activity offer, encouraging children and young people to try new experiences, develop skills, and build confidence. Activities delivered across the programme included:

- Team sports such as football, basketball, cricket, tag rugby, and handball
- Individual and skill-based activities including gymnastics, trampolining, boxing, and table tennis
- Adventure and outdoor pursuits such as canoeing, archery, skiing, and assault courses
- Specialist and recreational activities including indoor rock climbing and bouldering, roller skating, and gym-based sessions
- Creative physical engagement through activities such as beatboxing and active games
- High-energy recreational opportunities, including inflatable sessions and structured play activities

This diverse offer ensured that the programme catered to a wide range of interests, abilities, and age groups, while also supporting the development of key physical and social skills such as coordination, teamwork, resilience, and confidence. The strong emphasis on physical activity made a significant contribution to the overall success of the programme, supporting both the physical health and emotional wellbeing of participants. By providing consistent opportunities for movement, play, and structured activity, the programme helped children and young people to remain active during school holidays, while also fostering positive attitudes towards healthy lifestyles.

Overall, the HAF 2025 programme delivered a comprehensive and inclusive physical activity offer, ensuring that all participants had access to high-quality opportunities to stay active, have fun, and develop essential life skills.



Special Education Needs & Disabilities (SEND)

Our approach has continued to prioritise the development of strong, collaborative partnerships with local specialist parent and caregiver SEND networks. This has been central to ensuring the delivery of high-quality, engaging, and accessible provision within appropriate settings, enabling children and young people to thrive in line with the Stoke-on-Trent City Council SEND Strategy (2024–2028).

Across the Easter, Summer and Winter 2025 delivery periods, the programme successfully engaged 5,853 unique participants with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) (cumulative figure), all of whom accessed tailored, inclusive sessions designed to meet a wide range of needs.

Our SEND delivery partners bring a wealth of specialist expertise in supporting children and young people with diverse and complex needs. Their established relationships with families played a key role in encouraging participation, helping to build trust, and enabling families to engage not only with HAF activities, but also with wider support and community opportunities beyond the programme.

Through close collaboration with these providers, the programme delivered safe, inclusive, and supportive environments where children with additional needs and their families could confidently participate. This created opportunities for children and young people with SEND to explore new activities, build confidence, and develop socially and emotionally, while also ensuring access to healthy and nutritious meals.

Importantly, the programme also supported parental wellbeing and peer connection, providing spaces for parents and caregivers to meet, share experiences, and access informal support networks. This contributed to reducing social isolation among families of children with additional needs, while promoting a stronger sense of inclusion, belonging, and community cohesion.

Overall, the programme has demonstrated a strong commitment to inclusive practice, ensuring that children and young people with SEND are supported to access enriching experiences, develop their potential, and feel fully included within their local communities.



Feedback from SEND parents/carers

Brilliant, staff amazing and really understanding the needs of my child who has autism. Staff have been super.

It's an excellent service for the vulnerable children and meets their needs.

My daughter does struggle and these clubs helped with keeping her in a routine and helped her behaviour so much she was occupied and learning new things. They kept her mind ticking over.

Some of the Key Challenges

While HAF 2025 delivered significant impact across Stoke-on-Trent, the year also highlighted several important challenges that will need to be addressed to further strengthen delivery in 2026. These challenges span operational delivery, engagement, and system design, and provide valuable insight for future programme development.

- **Non-Attendance and Participation Gaps**

Despite strong overall engagement, non-attendance remained a persistent challenge, with around 18% of booked places not attended. This resulted in inefficiencies, including unused spaces and missed opportunities for other eligible children to participate. Feedback also highlighted frustrations where places were booked but not utilised, particularly when demand was high.

- **Limited flexibility in food Provision**

Although over 45,000 meals were successfully delivered, the model of centralised food provision created challenges for providers. Advance ordering requirements made it difficult to respond to changing attendance, late bookings, and dietary needs, sometimes resulting in surplus food or delays.

- **Balancing Central Systems with Local Responsiveness**

The introduction of booking and management systems improved coordination and data accuracy but relied heavily on compliance rather than engagement. Evidence showed that attendance was strongest where providers had established relationships with families, rather than where systems alone were relied upon.

- **Managing Demand and Oversubscription**

At peak times, particularly during the summer programme, there were instances of high demand and oversubscription. Providers needed to manage fluctuating numbers and last-minute changes, which added pressure on staffing, resources, and planning.

- **Ensuring Consistency Across a Large Partner Network**

With 385 partners and 116 schools involved in delivery, maintaining consistent quality, communication and standards across all providers presented an ongoing challenge. While the diversity of providers strengthened the offer, it also required robust coordination and monitoring to ensure alignment.

- **Reaching and Engaging the Most Vulnerable**

Although 88% of attendees were eligible for Free School Meals, ensuring consistent engagement from the most vulnerable families—including those less connected to schools—remains a challenge. Some families still face barriers such as awareness, accessibility, or confidence in accessing provision.

Overall, the challenges of HAF 2025 highlight a central theme: while systems, scale and structure are essential, flexibility, relationships and local adaptability are critical to success.

Addressing these challenges in 2026 will require a more balanced approach—combining strong coordination with greater provider autonomy, improving responsiveness to demand, and strengthening engagement strategies to ensure that provision reaches those who need it most.

Marketing and Communication

Insights from our Facebook platform demonstrate its growing importance as both a promotional and communication tool, helping to keep families and providers informed and engaged throughout the HAF programme.

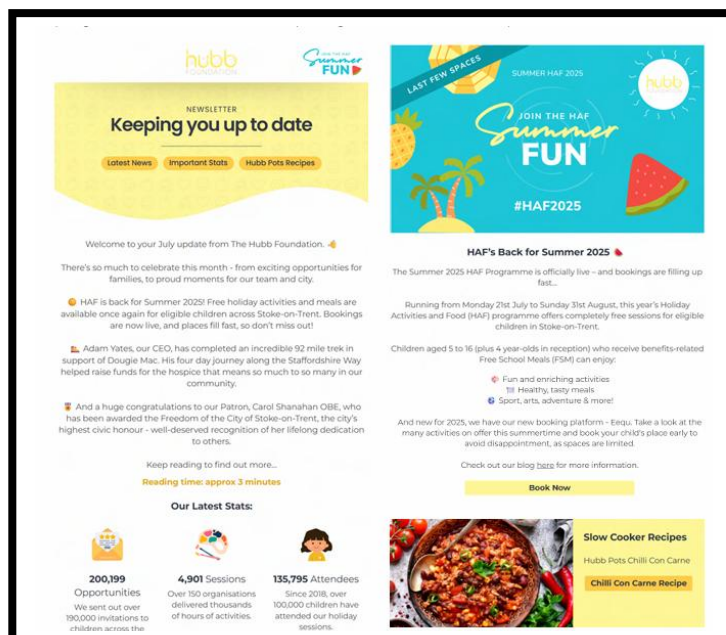
During the summer period, activity on the platform remained strong, with over 120,000 views recorded across June to August, alongside high levels of reach, page visits, and link clicks. June proved particularly effective for building anticipation, driven by countdown content and the bookings launch post, which generated the highest engagement. July saw continued high visibility as the programme began, with increased link clicks and visits as families actively accessed booking information. While activity reduced in August following peak promotion, engagement remained steady as families continued to use the page for updates and information.

Regular content from both The Hubb Foundation and delivery partners helped sustain interest, while the consistent growth in followers demonstrated an expanding audience.

Overall, these results highlight Facebook as a key channel for reaching families at scale, with clear evidence that early promotion, consistent updates, and shared provider content are essential to maximising engagement in future programmes.



The launch of the monthly Hubb Foundation newsletter in April has quickly become an effective communication tool, strengthening engagement with parents, providers, and schools. With consistently strong open rates (45–61%), high click-through levels—peaking in July—and minimal unsubscribes, the newsletter has proven to be both well-received and highly valued. It now plays a key role in sharing updates, supporting programme delivery, and keeping the wider Hubb community informed and connected.



Partnerships

Effective partnership working remained a key driver in the successful delivery of the HAF programme throughout 2025. While schools play an important role in identifying need and supporting engagement, they cannot reach all eligible families in isolation. The most successful outcomes were achieved where schools worked collaboratively with community organisations and local authority partners, creating a more coordinated and responsive approach.

This integrated model enabled the programme to extend its reach beyond traditional education settings, ensuring that a wider group of children and families could access support. Community-based delivery and local events were particularly valuable in engaging those less connected to schools or formal systems, helping to remove barriers and increase participation.

Collaboration also strengthened the overall quality of provision, bringing together local insight, established relationships, and coordinated resources. This collective approach supported the delivery of a more holistic and inclusive offer, better aligned to the needs of local communities.

Additional Resources

Our HAF programme was grateful to receive match funding from external companies, which helped to support and enhance our programme. Below is a detailed breakdown of the funding received:

Easter

- £31,250 to help reduce the funding required for schools to run their own HAF programme

Summer

- £99,000 to help reduce the funding required for schools to run their own HAF programme
- £3,500 to help with additional spaces for non-HAF eligible at one HAF club

Christmas

- £12,500 to help reduce the funding required for schools to run their own HAF programme



Case Studies

During the Easter, Summer and Winter delivery periods, The Hubb Foundation gathered insights in the form of written case studies on the HAF programme from various viewpoints. Below are three of the case studies that were collected.

Easter 2025

Case Study: Cueing Up Confidence Longton Snooker & Pool Club

Stoke City Community Trust delivered its first ever Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme at Longton Snooker & Pool Club, this was a venue chosen based on feedback and observations from its ongoing Premier League Kicks sessions.

Aim

As part of the wider Easter HAF 2025 Programme, the provision at Longton Snooker & Pool Club aimed to offer older young people a safe, engaging, and inclusive environment to take part in structured holiday activities. This venue focused on alternative sports such as pool and darts, providing a unique and appealing option for those who may not typically engage in traditional sports or youth sessions. The programme was designed to boost confidence, encourage social interaction, and support the development of essential life and employability skills.

Collaborative Partnership

The programme was delivered through a strong partnership between The Hubb Foundation and Longton Snooker & Pool Club, with additional links to the Premier League Kicks initiative. Insight gathered through regular Kicks sessions played a key role in shaping the offer. This collaboration provided not only an appropriate venue but has also enabled a platform for sustainable engagement beyond the holiday period.

Event Planning

The HAF sessions took place over four consecutive days - from Tuesday 22nd to Friday 25th April. The planning focused on maximising accessibility and impact for young people aged 11 plus, particularly those not typically engaged in mainstream sport. Activities included pool and darts tournaments, team games, confidence building activities, and the provision of healthy meals. Careful coordination ensured that staff, equipment, safeguarding measures, and refreshments were all in place to provide a safe and well managed experience.

Impacts and Outcomes

The programme achieved 84 unique attendances, with a high level of engagement from older young people. Many participants were introduced to structured holiday activities for the first time. Beyond enjoyment, the sessions encouraged growth in confidence, communication, teamwork, and focus - skills vital for both personal development and future employability. Participants have since been successfully signposted to ongoing Premier League Kicks sessions, enabling continued involvement in positive activities.

Conclusion

The Easter HAF at Longton Snooker & Pool Club proved that with the right setting and activities, older young people can also be engaged in holiday provision. The inclusion of features like Interactive Darts and the Darts Zone made the programme truly one of a kind - both fun and developmental. Building on this success, The Hubb Foundation plans to return in Summer 2025, continuing to use sport as a gateway to skills, confidence, and community connection.

Summer 2025

Provider Case Study: Confidence in the Spotlight Michelle Moss School of Performing Arts

Not every child feels at home on a football pitch but give them a stage, some music and encouragement and the results can be incredible. That's exactly what happened this summer, when Michelle Moss School of Performing Arts teamed up with Stoke City Community Trust to offer HAF workshops - full of dance, drama, and creativity.

Aim

As part of the Summer HAF 2025 Programme, the workshops were aimed at children aged 8 to 16, with the goal of giving young people the chance to explore the performing arts in a supportive environment. They were designed to help participants grow in confidence, discover new skills, and enjoy the excitement of working together towards a final performance.

Partnership Working

Delivered through a partnership between The Hubb Foundation, Stoke City Community Trust and Michelle Moss School of Performing Arts, the summer programme combined professional teaching with trusted community networks. Together, they created safe, welcoming sessions that encouraged children to step outside of their comfort zones.

Programme Delivery

Running throughout the summer holidays, the workshops offered a mix of musical theatre, hip hop, acro, commercial and jazz. Each day featured warmups, games, skill building activities, choreography and the highlight - a showcase to families. Nutritious meals were provided daily, ensuring participants were fuelled and ready to perform.

Impact in Action

One participant's journey captured the very heart of the programme. On her first day, a young girl arrived looking quiet and anxious. During the warmup activity she seemed upset and hesitant to join in. When spoken to, she explained that she hadn't realised the workshop would be dance based and was worried she wasn't "good enough" compared to the other children. Overwhelmed, she even asked to go home.

With patient encouragement and gentle support, she slowly began to take part. At first, she joined in cautiously, but as the day went on her confidence grew. By lunchtime she was practicing the routines on her own, determined to get the steps right and by the end of the day she was radiating confidence, proudly performing in front of her dad. Her progress didn't stop there, when she returned to later workshops with the same enthusiasm - throwing herself into activities with growing confidence and sociability. She made new friends, which helped her feel more relaxed and comfortable with the expectations of each session. Staff observed a clear boost in her self-esteem, resilience and willingness to try new things.

Food also played a role for the group. Some children, including the participant mentioned above admitted they hadn't tried certain meals before, such as fish cakes, but gave them a try and enjoyed them. This simple step encouraged children to be more open to new experiences, both on and off the stage. Across the workshops, many children showed similar growth. Confidence levels rose, especially when it came to performing routines in front of an audience. Behaviour improved as friendships formed and participants settled into the rhythm of the sessions.

Parents frequently commented on how much their children enjoyed attending and how happy it made them. While one piece of feedback mentioned limited food options not suiting all tastes, the

overwhelming response from children was clear: they loved the sessions and couldn't wait for the next one.

Conclusion

The Summer HAF 2025 programme at Michelle Moss School of Performing Arts proved just how powerful the performing arts can be in inspiring young people. By combining free access to drama, singing and dance with healthy meals and a safe, supportive environment, the workshops gave children the chance to grow in confidence, discover new talents and build lasting friendships.

With stories of transformation - from shy participants stepping into the spotlight, to children trying new foods and thriving in front of an audience, the impact was clear. This summer showed that when creativity, encouragement and opportunity come together - young people can truly shine.



Winter 2025

Evidence-Led Delivery of Winter HAF 2025 in Stoke-on-Trent Funded PhD research

Winter HAF 2025 in Stoke-on-Trent was shaped by a strong evidence base, combining academic research with lived experience. Central to this approach was a funded PhD studentship supported by The Hubb Foundation, reflecting a long-term commitment to understanding and strengthening holiday provision for children and families. This research has been led by Grace Podmore Baker, who began her PhD in 2023 in partnership with Staffordshire University. Grace's work explores the impact of The Hubb Foundation's programmes across Stoke-on-Trent, drawing on interviews with teachers, data analysis, and direct insight from parents and children accessing holiday provision. Journal of Nutritional Science Paper A key milestone in this research journey was the publication of Grace's first academic paper by Cambridge University Press in the Journal of Nutritional Science, reinforcing the credibility and national relevance of the evidence in time for Winter HAF delivery.

Aim

The aim of this evidence led approach was to ensure that Winter HAF 2025 was designed and delivered in direct response to need. By grounding decision making in robust research, The Hubb Foundation sought to strengthen food security, wellbeing, and access to enriching experiences during the winter holidays, while ensuring provision was inclusive, targeted and impactful.

Partnership Working

This case study demonstrates strong partnership working across academic, charitable and local authority settings. The Hubb Foundation funded and supported the PhD research, while working closely with Stoke-on-Trent City Council, schools, and delivery partners to translate research findings into practice. Academic insight was shared openly with partners to support planning, quality assurance, and continuous improvement, ensuring that evidence informed not only programme design but also delivery standards across the city.

Programme Delivery

Grace's published paper, "A scoping review of interventions aiming to improve food security for low-income families with school aged children outside of school hours" analysed 94 research studies from the UK, United States and Australia. The review examined the impact of breakfast clubs, after school provision and holiday programmes, including the UK's HAF Programme. The findings demonstrated consistent positive outcomes across these interventions, including:

- Improved social wellbeing for children and families
- Increased access to nutritious food and food education
- Reduced food insecurity and improved family finances
- Greater opportunities for learning and physical activity outside of term time

While confirming the effectiveness of these programmes in addressing immediate pressures, the research also highlighted the need for further investigation into longer term academic and health outcomes. This reinforced the importance of ongoing evaluation and sustained investment in holiday provision.

Impact in Action

Alongside global evidence, Grace's wider PhD research highlighted that school holidays act as pressure points for families, with winter intensifying challenges linked to food insecurity, financial strain, and social isolation. Increased household costs, colder weather, and reduced daylight hours all contribute to heightened need during the winter period. Parents reported that structured holiday provision had a clear positive impact on children's confidence, mood, and social interaction. Access to warm, safe spaces and reliable food provision was identified as a key factor in engagement.

These insights directly shaped Winter HAF 2025, influencing where provision was delivered, how it was designed, and which outcomes were prioritised.

Conclusion

Winter HAF 2025 demonstrates the strength of combining academic research with strong local partnerships. The Hubb Foundation's investment in evidence, including Grace Podmore Baker's published research, has directly strengthened Stoke-on-Trent's ability to deliver targeted, inclusive, and meaningful holiday provision. Through evidence led approach, the city continues to lead nationally in school engagement, programme reach, and the thoughtful use of research to support children and families during the winter holidays.

"We should have a future where families no longer have to worry about the challenges which occur outside of school hours when finances are limited. With the support of The Hubb Foundation and my PhD supervisors, this work represents a small but meaningful move towards that vision, and I'm proud to be part of it".

Grace Padmore Baker



Conclusion

Key Reflections and Forward Plans for the 2026 programme

The 2025 HAF programme has demonstrated the continued importance and impact of providing high-quality, inclusive holiday provision for children and families. With 8,965 participants, over 45,000 opportunities created, and 5,065 hours of delivery, the programme has achieved significant scale while maintaining a strong focus on wellbeing, engagement, and community connection. As the programme looks ahead to 2026, several clear and actionable learnings emerge that should shape future commissioning, delivery, and strategic planning.

Relationships and Familiarity Drive Engagement

One of the most consistent findings from 2025 is that trusted relationships and familiar environments are the cornerstone of attendance and impact. School-based provision and partners who already work with children during term time achieved stronger engagement, particularly among vulnerable groups and those with SEND.

2026 takeaway:

- Prioritise delivery through trusted organisations and school partnerships
- Maintain continuity of staff wherever possible
- Design provision around safe, familiar environments

A Blended School and Community Model Maximises Reach

While schools are vital for identifying and engaging those most in need, community-based delivery and events proved essential in reaching families beyond formal systems, reducing barriers and strengthening local connections.

2026 takeaway:

- Continue to invest in a hybrid delivery model (school + community)
- Expand hyper-local and “on the doorstep” provision
- Use community events as entry points for sustained engagement

Variety and Enrichment Sustain Participation

The breadth of activities offered—sport, creative arts, STEM, trips and enrichment—was key to maintaining interest, increasing attendance, and encouraging repeat participation.

2026 takeaway:

Maintain a diverse offer that goes beyond sport
Regularly introduce new activities to avoid programme fatigue
Ensure pathways for progression (e.g. leadership, accreditation)

Skill Development Adds Long-Term Value

Programmes focusing on leadership, employability and accredited learning showed clear benefits in confidence, aspiration, and sustained engagement, particularly for older young people.

2026 takeaway:

- Build structured progression routes into HAF delivery
- Increase access to accredited programmes and volunteering
- Embed life skills and employability into core provision

Flexibility is Critical to Effective Delivery

Operational learning highlighted that rigid systems—particularly around food and bookings—can limit responsiveness, leading to inefficiencies such as surplus food or missed opportunities.

2026 takeaway:

- Develop more flexible, hybrid food delivery models
- Enable providers to adapt to daily attendance fluctuations
- Balance central coordination with local autonomy

Systems Support Delivery, but People Ensure Success

Digital systems improved coordination and data quality; however, attendance and engagement were ultimately strongest where relationships with families were strongest.

2026 takeaway:

- Continue improving systems (booking, data, monitoring)
- Invest equally in relationship-building and outreach
- Address non-attendance through engagement strategies, not systems alone

Food Provision Remains Essential—but Needs Evolution

Meal provision continues to be a core pillar of HAF, supporting both immediate needs and long-term health outcomes. However, challenges around logistics and flexibility highlight the need for evolution.

2026 takeaway:

- Retain high standards of nutritional provision
- Explore hybrid models combining central and local delivery
- Reduce waste while improving responsiveness to need

Final Reflection

The success of HAF 2025 reinforces that the programme is at its most effective when it is relationship-led, locally responsive, evidence-informed, and flexible in its delivery. As the programme moves into its next phase, the focus should be not only on scaling provision, but on deepening quality, strengthening partnerships, and enhancing long-term outcomes for children and families. By carrying these learnings forward, the 2026 programme is well positioned to expand its reach, improve engagement and deliver even greater social impact across communities.

As the 2025 HAF Programme draws to a close, there is a strong sense of pride in what has been achieved. This year has been about creating lasting memories, building friendships, and providing meaningful support to families across Stoke-on-Trent. This annual report captures countless stories of smiles, achievement and the powerful impact of communities coming together. While the 2025 programme has come to an end, the commitment to making a difference continues, and the foundations laid this year will shape and strengthen the work still to come.

Acknowledgements

The City Council would like to take this opportunity to thank all our fantastic delivery partners, and in particular our coordination partner, The Hubb Foundation, who have supported the delivery of our HAF programme across Easter, Summer, and Winter. Together, they have helped to create a programme full of opportunity, connection and support for children and families throughout the year. Without them the programme would not happen!

Adv4nce Group
ASM Sport
Balance & Beam
Bee Active
Bentilee Family Hub
Bentilee Park Pavilion
Bentilee Volunteers CIO
Better Together Community Support
Birches Head Get Growing CIC
CAFAG (Whitfield Valley Centre)
Central Events Catering LTD /
Central Events Catering
Chair Basketball
Chell Heath Church of the Saviour
Chloe Breeze Illustrations
Circus in a Box
City Catering
City Music Service
Clip 'N Climb
Computer Xplorers
Diamond Families CIC
Diamond Families Therapeutic
Farm and Wellbeing Centre
Dizzy Heights CIC
Dizzy Heights Specialist Services LTD
DoubleTree by Hilton Stoke-on-Trent
Dresden Scout Hut
Engage Communities
Equality House
Family Focus
Fegg Hayes Futures
Fenton Manor Sports Complex
Flip Out
Florence Sports & Social Club
Formby Beach
Foundry CIC
Furry Friends CIC / Furry Friends
Gather the Community CIC /
Gather the Community
Gather the Community Gym
Gifted Workshops CIC

Goldenhill Community Centre
Greenhill Road Playground
Guerrilla Training
Hanley Hustlers Basketball Club
Hanley Park
Hanley Town FC
In2 Health & Wellbeing CIC
Indian Fusion / Indi Club
Inflato
Jump 2 It Coaching
Just Kidding
Kilnworx
Laser Quest
Little Athletes
Living on the Vedge
LMA Academy
London Magic School
Longton Park
Longton Pool & Snooker Hall
Meir Community Education Centre
Michelle Moss Performing Arts
Middleport Matters
Milton Pre-School
Milton Scout Hut
Mitchell Arts Centre
Moss Green Community Centre
Nelly's Nest
New Horizons Sports and Leisure
New Vic Theatre / New Vic Borderlines
Ninja Warrior
Noreen's Recovery Lounge
Northwood Stadium
Northwood Parish Hall
Norton Community Church
Norton Sports Court
Nurtured Through Nature
Oakwood Road (formerly Blurton
Community Centre)
PEGiS
Penkhull Village Hall
Pep the Poet

Port Vale Football Club
Port Vale Foundation Trust
Power League Stoke Excel
Power League Trentham Lakes
Project Indi
Regent Theatre
S.E.N.D Gin and Cheese
Shelton Youth Centre
Six Towns Sports and Community
Slamwich Club
SPLAT Staffordshire CIC
Staffs Lifting Club
St Andrew's Church
St Paul's Church
Stansmore Road Greenspace
Stanley Head Outdoor Education Centre
Stoke City Community Trust
Stoke Ski Centre
Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Leisure Services
Temple Street Methodist
Ten Count Boxing Gym CIO
Tenpin Bowling
The Bridge Centre
The Cricket Cave
The Hub @ ST6
The Pippin
The Portland Inn Project CIC
The Slamwich Club
The Spark Group
The Wallace Centre / The Wallace
Sports and Education Centre
The Yard Community Centre
Time4Sport
Transform Communities CIC /
Transform Communities
Staffordshire CIC
Trentham Gardens
Tunstall Methodist Church
Ulysses Youth
Unit 1 Park Works CIC (Skatepark)
Ummati Martial Arts
Weston Heights Community Centre
YMCA North Staffordshire
ZOO2U

Abbey Hill Academy and College
Abbey Hulton Primary School
Active Wellbeing School
Alexandra Infants' School
Alexandra Junior School
Ash Green Primary Academy
Ash Green Primary School
Ball Green Primary School
Belgrave St Bartholomew's Primary
Academy
Birches Head Academy
Burnwood Community Primary School
Carmountside Primary Academy
Christ Church CofE Primary Academy
City of Stoke-on-Trent Sixth Form
College
Co-op Academy Clarice Cliff
Co-op Academy Florence MacWilliams
Co-op Academy Glebe
Co-op Academy Grove
Co-op Academy Hamilton
Co-op Academy Northwood
Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent
Created Academy
Discovery Academy / The Discovery
Academy
Eaton Park Academy
Edison Pace School
Emerge School
Etruscan Primary School
Forest Park Primary School
Gladstone Primary Academy
Glebedale School
Goldenhill Primary Academy
Greenways Primary Academy
Hanley St Luke's CofE Primary School
Hanley St Luke's Church of England
Academy
Harpfield Primary Academy
Haywood Academy
Heron Cross Primary School
Hillside Primary School
Holden Lane Primary School
Jackfield Infant School
Kingsland C.E. Academy
Maple Court Academy
Mill Hill Primary Academy
Milton Primary Academy
Moorspark Junior School
New Ford Academy

Newstead Primary Academy
North Road Academy
Norton-le-Moors Primary Academy
Oak Hill Primary School
Ormiston Horizon Academy
Ormiston Meridian Academy
Ormiston Sir Stanley Matthews
Academy
Our Lady & St Benedict Catholic
Academy
Our Lady's Catholic Academy
Packmoor Ormiston Academy
Park Hall Academy
Portland School
Priory C.E. Primary School / Priory CofE
Primary School
Sandford Hill Primary School
Sandon Primary Academy
Smallthorne Primary Academy
Sneyd Academy
Springcroft Primary School
St Augustine's Catholic Academy
St George and St Martin's Catholic
Academy
St Gregory's Catholic Academy
St John's CofE (A) Primary School
St Joseph's Catholic Academy
St Margaret Ward Catholic Academy
St Maria Goretti Catholic Academy
St Mary's Catholic Academy
St Mary's Church of England Primary
School
St Matthew's Church of England
Academy
St Paul's CofE (C) Primary School
St Peter's Catholic Academy
St Peter's CofE Academy
St Teresa's Catholic Primary School
St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Primary
School
St Thomas More Catholic Academy
St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School
Star Academy
Stoke Minster CofE Primary Academy
Stoke-on-Trent College
Sutherland Primary Academy
The Crescent Academy
The Excel Academy
The Meadows Primary Academy

The Willows Primary School
Thistley Hough Academy
Trentham Academy
Watermill School
Waterside Primary School
Weston Infant Academy
Weston Junior Academy
Whitfield Valley Primary Academy

Thank you

