



Department  
for Education

## HAF 2024-25 Local Authority Annual Report

The annual report provides you with the opportunity to give an overview of the HAF 2024-25 programme in your LA.

Your report should include:

- the overall funding from DfE that you have spent on the HAF programme
- the proportion of the funding that was spent on administration and a breakdown of how this was spent
- how many unique children you have reached in each holiday period
- the proportion of primary age and secondary age children who have participated in your programme
- the number of children with SEND or additional needs who have participated in your programme
- information on the families and carers you have engaged with through the food education, signposting and referrals aspect of their programme
- which organisations are represented on your steering group
- which organisations you have worked with in delivering the programme
- any additional match funding you have received from organisations and or other government bodies that you have used on the HAF programme

Please also include:

- feedback from participants, their families or carers
- results of any surveys
- case studies or particular highlights
- how you have promoted the programme and celebrated it through the media and social media
- any evaluations of your HAF programme (please provide links in your annual report)

The report for the 2024-2025 HAF programme should be submitted to DfE by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

While LAs have flexibility in how they format and present their annual report, we have provided this document as a guide to help you structure your report. This is an optional template to use, you are welcome to produce your own report as you deem appropriate. Please complete and submit to [haf.programme@education.gov.uk](mailto:haf.programme@education.gov.uk) by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025. When submitting your report please include a link to the relevant webpage you post it to.

## Section 1 - LA details

*Which local authority is this report about?*

Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council

## Section 2 – Highlights

*In this section, you might cover how much funding you received and how it was spent and how many children you've worked with across the year. You might also include how many sessions you've delivered and which organisations you've worked with and provide details about who forms your HAF steering group and what the key strategies and themes have been for 2024-2025.*

### How is HAF delivered in Knowsley?

As with previous years, the HAF Programme in Knowsley sits with an established branded programme called Knowsley SNAP (Sports Nutrition and Active Play). We commission a local voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector organisation, One Knowsley, to deliver the programme whilst working closely with them on all aspects of HAF and ensuring full oversight is maintained by the Council.

For the period of 2024-2025, we have continued to use a booking system (Holiday Activities) which remains fit for purpose. Eligible families are able to receive vouchers directly and providers can utilise the system to better prepare for attendance at the sessions.

### Uptake

Though different factors have contributed to variations in uptake over the three delivery periods, we are pleased to see that many children attended multiple sessions and have fully benefitted from participating. We can confirm that a total of 25,487 HAF places were filled for the 2024-2025 period. This be broken down as follows:

| Period               | Easter 2024 | Summer 2024 | Winter 2024 |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Places Available     | 4372        | 21,739      | 4,091       |
| Places Attended      | 3870        | 19,178      | 2,439       |
| Percentage of Uptake | 88%         | 88%         | 59%         |

As anticipated, there was a significant drop in uptake during the Winter 2024 delivery. This is notably due to bad weather and other factors such as availability of other local and free indoor activities not relating to HAF.

Percentages of Uptake for Easter 2023, Summer 2023, Winter 2023 were 83%, 77%, 54% respectively. The comparative annual increases evidence a continued popularity in HAF provision.

### Sessions Delivered

| Delivery Period | Total Number of Providers | Number of Sessions Offered |
|-----------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Easter 2024     | 22                        | 127                        |
| Summer 2024     | 33                        | 687                        |
| Winter 2024     | 24                        | 70                         |

### Financial Information

For the 2024/25 financial year Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council spent £901,773.74 on the Holiday Activities and Food Programme. Of the total expenditure £72,844.30 was spent on administration of the programme, this figure was spent on partially funding staff salaries for the successful running of the programme and compliance with DfE requirements.

### Steering Group

Our steering group is made up of a number of senior council officers from several directorates including Children's Services, Communities and Neighbourhoods, Resources, Health and Adult Social Care. In addition, there is representation from external partners such as the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector along with representation from Headteachers at some of our local schools, education collaborative groups, Merseyside Youth Parliament and other partner organisations such as local housing providers and blue light services.

### Key Strategies and Themes

- **Provider Collaboration:** Before delivery, HAF providers were encouraged to meet and share their offers. This collaboration ensured awareness of the comprehensive range of available services. Evidence of this collaboration was observed during summer quality visits and reported in monitoring and evaluation. Providers discussed other HAF offers and how they signposted families when at capacity or not delivering on certain days, promoting a cohesive and well-informed network of providers and ultimately improving overall service delivery.
- **Communication and Cohesion:** Following the Southport incident, a Summer Debrief allowed HAF providers to discuss learnings and share insights, focusing on

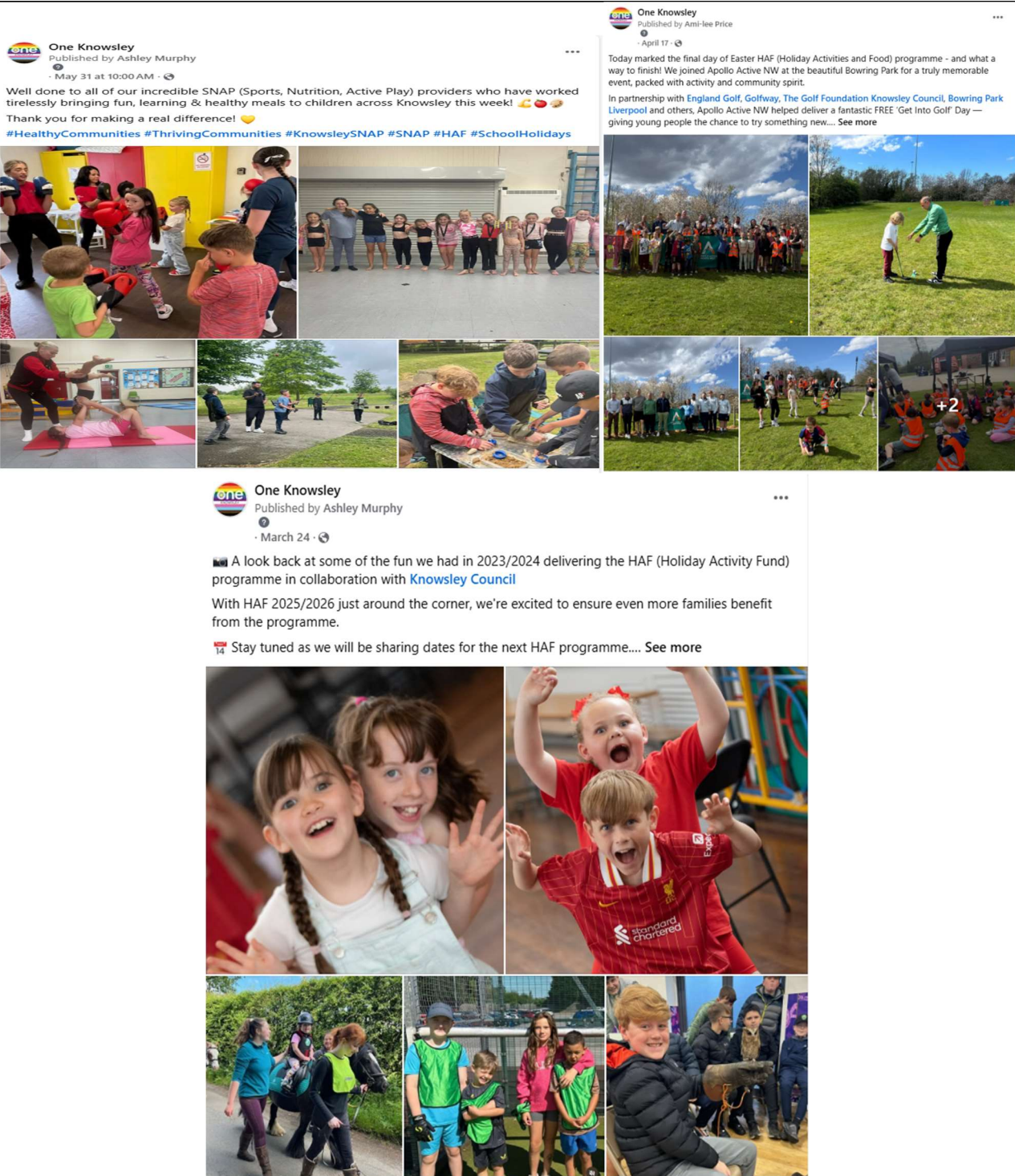
training needs around safeguarding and policies. The debrief emphasised shared leadership, monitoring and evaluation, finance, record-keeping, and powerful storytelling.

- **Digital Inclusion:** In line with Knowsley's Digital Inclusion strategy and the integration of the HAF online booking system, we pursued an innovative approach in exploring different ways of working. This creatively has mobilised HAF providers, connected funders and utilised platforms to improve digital accessibility for all. Sessions were co-ordinated to support digitally excluded families by providing access to the internet and the HAF booking system, ensuring that our most vulnerable families are connected.

### Section 3 – Children and families feedback

*Please provide links to social media activity/videos as well as testimonials or feedback that you have received about your 2024-25 HAF Programme*

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Whilst we have previously shared the following case studies, we wanted to highlight a few:

1. A child's parent (EC - Aged 5) provided a lot of positive feedback after EC attended Summer Camp in 2024. The parent described the HAF volunteers as friendly, approachable and fantastic. The child established strong relationships with staff and other children and went on to show a noticeable improvement in their behaviour at home and when socialising in general with other children.
2. Two children from a minority ethnic background who recently moved to the area were able to experience new activities which helped them develop new friendships with other children. The provision of hot meals and cold snacks further contributed

toward the positive experience they encountered and their wellbeing. Without HAF, these children would not have had the opportunity to engage with others, nor have been able to access the high-quality nutritional meals offered to them due to family related financial constraints.

3. T- Aged 10 moved to a new location in the borough and had great difficulty in settling in and integrating with other children. When providing feedback on attendance at the HAF American football-based camp, the child's parents reported, "This has been a lifeline. T has come out of his shell, he's eating better, sleeping better, and for the first time since moving, he feels settled and part of something."

## Section 4 - Food

*In this section you might cover: Did you provide children and young people with at least one nutritious meal a day? Did you work in any partnerships to provide food? What were the children and young people's attitudes to the food you provided?*

Knowsley HAF sessions involve the provision of at least one meal per day along with other snacks and drinks throughout sessions. Choices of food and drink are tailored to suit each session and factors that are considered are usually the time of year (*i.e. whether hot or cold meals should be served*) and the nature of the session itself (*i.e. is the activity indoors or outdoors?*).

As part of the grant application and ahead of each HAF period, providers are required to submit an example of a weekly outline menu / typical healthy food offer. Providers are encouraged to prioritise healthy foods and promote balance. The intention is to incorporate fresh foods and utilise the programme as an opportunity to introduce varied and nutritious foods to children who otherwise may not have had this experience.

We have also demonstrated a commitment to diversifying the food-related activities available. As a particularly memorable example of where this has been successful, a SEN child who took part in a food workshop made healthy pitta pizzas and showed enthusiasm and enjoyment when it came to the cooking tasks and working with others.

As part of our programme, all children and young people received at least one nutritious meal per day, ensuring consistent access to healthy food whilst engaging. HAF providers worked in close partnership with local businesses to enhance our food provision, including strong collaborations with Morrisons in Kirkby and Home Bargains, who generously supported our efforts—such as providing selection boxes for Christmas activities.

Insight gathered through focus groups with HAF providers and children, as part of the RECITE programme, highlighted that trusting relationships and consistent exposure to new foods are key to encouraging children to try unfamiliar ingredients and develop a better understanding of nutrition. HAF providers feedback that their approach creates safe, supportive environments where children felt confident to explore new tastes. As a result, children are more open to trying healthy options and more engaged in conversations about food and wellbeing.



## Section 5 – Enriching Activities

*In this section, you might cover: What enrichment activities did you provide? And why did you focus on those? How did your programme provide opportunities for children and young people to develop and consolidate their skills and knowledge and try out new experiences? What was the impact?*

In the past, HAF provision has been predominantly centred around sports / activity. We are pleased to see that the 2024-25 offer has continued to diversify, and the range has expanded to include a multitude of offers.

We have also continued to engage providers who have offers based around theatre and drama. These have proven to be successful and gained more popularity over time, with award-winning venue Shakespeare North Playhouse going on to fill all spaces in their Easter 2025 offer.

For Summer 2024 delivery, we partnered with a newly established provider specialising in support for children and young people with SEND to offer a unique enrichment activity: horse riding. The activity provided a rare and powerful opportunity for participants to engage with animals in a therapeutic, confidence-building environment. Horse riding is not only physically beneficial—especially for children with mobility challenges—but also emotionally transformative, offering a sense of achievement, independence, and joy.

Horse Riding empowered our SEND children, helping to overcome fears, build resilience, and develop new skills through hands-on animal care. One wheelchair-using participant, initially terrified of animals, progressed from observing to grooming and eventually riding a horse using a hoist. Her transformation—from fear to joy—highlighted the emotional and physical benefits of the experience, leaving her eager to return and proud of achieving something once thought impossible.

## Section 6 – Physical Activities

*In this section, you might cover: What range of physical activities did you incorporate into your programme? And why did you focus on these? How did you ensure the physical activities you delivered were engaging and inclusive? Did you have any particular successes or highlights?*

Multi-sport camps continue to be key element of the programme. These have included a whole range of activities such as football, outdoor pursuits, swimming, cycling, gymnastics, walking / running, martial arts. The focus was on these particular areas as such activities incorporate elements of both participating as an individual and as part of a team. The intentions were to ensure that the range of physical activities was varied enough to remain inclusive, but also creative enough to incorporate fun and child-friendly elements.

The 2024/25 HAF programme has tackled issues of accessibility to physical activities, simultaneously promoting awareness of the importance of physical health.

Our HAF programme for delivered a dynamic blend of physical, emotional, and social development through a wide range of structured activities. Children engaged in martial

arts, football, dance, circuit training, gymnastics, and team sports such as rugby, cricket, basketball, and hockey. Outdoor play, orienteering, and a group outing further enhance physical literacy and teamwork. Sessions integrated physical activity with emotional wellbeing, creative expression, and nutritional education, ensuring a holistic and inclusive experience for all participants, including those with SEND.

## Section 7 – Nutritional Education and the promotion of healthy living/lifestyles

*In this section, you might cover: Did your programme deliver activities to educate participants about nutrition? Did you involve parents, carers and other family members in training and advice sessions on nutrition and eating a balanced diet? If yes, how? Do the children and families you worked with now have a better understanding of nutrition and food budgeting? Did their attitudes change over the period of the programme?*

Our programme delivered a comprehensive range of activities designed to educate children, young people, and families about nutrition, healthy eating, and food budgeting. Children actively participated in food preparation, learning to cut, peel, and cook fruits and vegetables, and creating healthy snacks such as fruit kebabs and pitta bread pizzas. These hands-on sessions were integrated into mealtimes, encouraging informal discussion around food choices and preparation.

Interactive workshops covered topics such as healthy swaps, balanced diets, and meal planning, supported by food journals, packed lunch making, and sessions with a qualified school cook. Printed resources and Change 4 Life packs reinforced learning at home.

Some providers engaged Parents and carers through end-of-week cooking sessions, where they adapted familiar meals into healthier, budget-friendly versions. The “Hillside Knows Best” initiative encouraged community-led recipe sharing and nutritional improvement.

A dedicated four-week “Healthy Eating on a Budget” provided by one of our providers further supported families, combining education on salt, sugar, superfoods, portion control, food hygiene, and food waste. A supermarket visit and a budget meal challenge helped families apply their learning in real-life settings.

As a result, children and families gained a stronger understanding of nutrition and budgeting, with noticeable shifts in attitudes toward healthier eating and food preparation. The programme also promoted mental wellbeing by embedding healthy eating into daily routines and fostering positive food experiences.

## Section 8 – Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND)

*In this section, you might cover: What provision did you offer for children with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities? Did you offer bespoke provision for these children and young people? How did you ensure that all of the providers you worked with met the needs of children and families? Do you have strong examples that you could share?*

Knowsley demonstrated a focused effort to meet the needs of SEN children and young people and increase the range of provision. This resulted in five providers securing



funding and 10% of the HAF budget being allocated to SEN provision. £55,511.94 of the £500,927.61 summer budget was allocated. Overall, there was a clear strategy to increase engagement and ensure that steps for improvement of delivery in this area were actioned mindfully.

Provider “Moving Senses” incorporated sports, arts and crafts and there was visible improvement in the children’s confidence after attending the sessions. A single mother, (S), enrolled her two children. By way of feedback, she reported “With limited income, providing nutritious meals and stimulating activities is a challenge. Before Moving Senses, I worried about the long school holidays—keeping my kids happy and fed was a real struggle. Now, I feel like I’ve got a support system. The difference is incredible.”

Our programme was designed to be inclusive and adaptable, ensuring children and young people with SEND could fully participate in all activities. Sessions such as sensory play, interactive games, creative art projects, and team-building exercises were tailored to meet a wide range of needs and abilities. We worked closely with experienced providers to ensure all sessions were accessible, engaging, and supportive.

A standout example was our partnership with a specialist SEND provider to deliver therapeutic horse riding. This unique activity offered physical, emotional, and psychological benefits. One participant, a wheelchair user initially fearful of animals, progressed from observing to grooming and eventually riding a horse using a hoist. Her journey from fear to confidence was transformative, highlighting the power of inclusive, hands-on experiences.

Creative sessions also addressed social anxiety, emotional regulation, and mental health through art, supported by trusted partners like Dopamine Rooms CIC. Feedback was gathered after each session to ensure relevance and enjoyment, with signposting to services like Knowsley Young Minds when needed.

Our commitment to inclusion ensured all children, regardless of ability, had opportunities to build confidence, develop new skills, and feel a sense of achievement in a safe, supportive environment.

## Section 9 – Key challenges

*In this section, you should provide details about what the key challenges have been for your programme in 2024-2025.*

Some of the key challenges faced during the 24/25 period have included:

Engagement with the booking system - whilst the booking system remains fit for purpose and has proven to be advantageous, we acknowledge that the system can be difficult to adapt to for those who either do not have knowledge of the system, or who are generally not comfortable with navigating new online systems. We continue to encourage the providers and schools to optimize their use of the system and partake in any training

offered. We have also identified more opportunities to address issues surrounding digital exclusion and are taking active steps to narrow the gap. This has involved better collaboration with providers to identify those families who are most vulnerable.

Eligibility and Booking – as the HAF programme has now been running consistently, there has been an evident increase in its popularity, with many parents and children anticipating the next delivery and making recommendations to friends and peers to get involved. There have been occasions where this has led to some parents and/or children misunderstanding the eligibility factor and/or booking requirements. This can not only cause logistical issues, but providers have also raised this as a potential safeguarding issue. We have therefore reviewed and improved external communications and have steps in place to monitor this more closely during the 25/26 delivery.

## Section 10 – Marketing and Communication?

*In this section, you should provide details about how you have communicated with families, schools, providers, and others about your HAF programme. You might include social media engagement, your advertising and marketing strategy, etc.*

As with previous years, the HAF Programme in Knowsley sits with an established branded programme called Knowsley SNAP (Sports Nutrition and Active Play). This is advertised on the following pages:

[Holiday activities and food for children and young people](#)

[School holiday activities | Knowsley Council](#)

The map on the One Knowsley website also has all activities ‘pinned’ so users can see the location of all activities. Knowsley takes active steps to ensure that the programme is consistently marketed in the newsletter. Examples of these are:

[Free activities for children and young people in Knowsley for summer 2024](#)

[Free activities over Christmas break as part of HAF programme](#)

We have also taken time out to celebrate the success of the 2024/25 HAF delivery and give due recognition to the hard work and commitment demonstrated by all providers:

[Celebrating the success of HAF in Knowsley - Knowsley News](#)

Both Knowsley Council and One Knowsley frequently update their respective social media pages and providers are encouraged to keep their individual sites up to date and to feature details of their current offers. Many also post photographs or videos featuring particular highlights.

All providers are briefed with a comprehensive communications guide to promoting their individual programmes as well as the wider HAF programme including use of hashtags and @mentions to Knowsley HAF Partners.

Knowsley works closely with Holiday Activities to ensure that communications sent to schools and providers is clear and consistent.

## **Section 11 – Additional resources - This section should include any additional, match funding, partnership working, and aligning with other priorities**

*In this section, you should include information about whether you received any extra funding, support, resources, food, etc to support and enhance your programme. If you have received any additional match funding, please include a detailed breakdown of how much you have received stating which organisation/ government bodies. Please also include information about how you have aligned and joined up your HAF programme with other programmes and initiatives.*

### **Extra Funding**

Strategic leadership and strong stakeholder connections with funders and wider programmes, we successfully secured an additional £139,683 in added value for the Voluntary, Community, Social Enterprise and Faith (VCSFE) sector. This significant investment has directly enhanced the delivery capacity, resilience, and long-term sustainability of grassroots organisations across the borough. By leveraging these partnerships, we not only expanded the reach and impact of local initiatives but also empowered smaller organisations to grow, innovate, and respond more effectively to community needs. This collaborative approach demonstrates the vital role of infrastructure support in unlocking resources and strengthening the foundation of the VCSFE sector.

In addition to the added value, we were also able to secure £11,000 cash grant from the local Violence Reduction Partnership to support HAF activities. In addition, the Council was able to free up £75,000 of its discretionary hardship fund support HAF style activities in the half term holidays (May, October and February).

### **Aligning HAF programme with other initiatives**

**Commissioning Diversionary Activities:** Knowsley Council Commercial Services Team has worked closely with other internal departments, particularly youth and crime teams, to strategise on how better to identify and engage children who would most benefit from HAF attendance.

**MECC Training for Health:** In partnership with the Healthy Knowsley service, 95% of HAF delivery organisations completed MECC (Making Every Contact Count) Training for Health. This training equipped HAF leaders with the skills to deliver consistent and concise health and well-being messages, further enhancing their capacity to support the community.

**Why Weight to Talk Training:** Offered as part of the Cheshire and Merseyside Cancer Alliance Programme MCA funded Strategic Obesity Project, this training has become a

core component of HAF delivery. One Knowsley aims for 80% of HAF providers to complete this training, embedding it as a staple in their service offerings.

**Knowsley REclTE Collaboration:** One Knowsley led the REclTE submission and successfully secured funding to develop a community-led creative health approach aimed at tackling an entrenched health equity challenge. This collaborative effort involved HAF providers, Public Health, the Primary Care Network, KMBC, and wider stakeholders. Through the REclTE programme, well-established HAF providers will lead efforts to improve health outcomes by focusing on nutrition and obesity prevention. This initiative not only supports the immediate health needs of children and young people but also lays the groundwork for a healthier future by fostering a holistic approach to community health.

## Section 12 – Any other information?

*In this section, you should include any other information about your HAF programme that you want to share.*