



Holiday Activity and Food Programme and Household Support Fund

Children and Young People Select Committee 6 December 2024

HAF: Background and context

- The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme, launched in 2018, supports children eligible for free school meals during school holidays. Initially piloted from 2018 to 2020, it was rolled out nationwide in 2021. The programme aims to alleviate holiday pressures on low-income families by providing free holiday clubs that offer nutritious meals and enriching activities. This initiative helps bridge the holiday experience gap for disadvantaged children
- Since its nationwide rollout in 2021, the HAF programme has received over £200 million annually. The current funding settlement extends through the 2024-2025 financial year.
- HAF operates during Easter, summer, and Christmas holidays providing free holiday clubs for children eligible for free school meals. These clubs offer nutritious meals, physical activities, and enriching experiences. Additionally, up to 15% of the funding can support children not on free school meals but who could benefit from the programme.
- Over the past three years, the Department for Education (DfE) has provided detailed guidance for the HAF programme. This includes funding allocations, eligibility criteria, and operational expectations for local authorities. The DfE has made some adjustments to the HAF programme guidance over the past three years, but the core principles and objectives have remained consistent.

In Hampshire

- Hampshire County Council's share of the Holiday Activities and Food Programme budget has totaled **£14.1 million** since the start of the national roll-out in 2021.
- Hampshire County Council has worked with partners, including Schools, Colleges, Local Children's Partnerships, Hampshire Library Service, Hampshire Catering Services, School Nursing Service, and corporate communications to implement the 'connect4communities' branded programme.

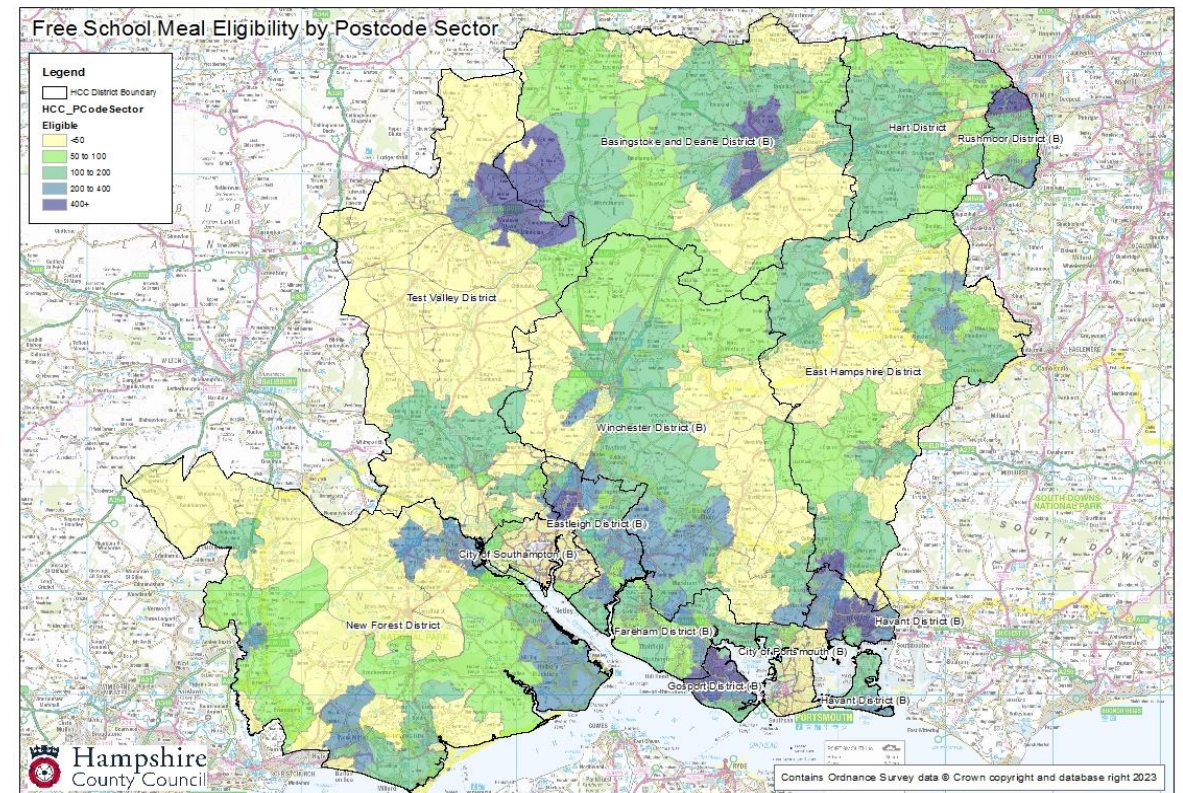
Low-income households

Benefit-related free school meals (FSM) are provided to children from low-income families to ensure they receive a nutritious meal during school days. For HAF, FSM acts as a means-tested check of financial vulnerability with eligibility based on receiving certain benefits, such as Universal Credit, Income Support, income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, and Child Tax Credit, among others.

The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme is a response to the challenges faced by low-income families during school holidays. Research shows that, outside the structure and consistency of the school environment, holiday periods can be pressure points, leading to issues like poor nutrition, physical inactivity, and social isolation for children.

Free School Meals Children in Hampshire

Although the geographic ‘hot-spots’ have remained consistent, since 2021 the number of benefit-related FSM children in Hampshire schools has increased from 29,208 to 36,223.



Hampshire has one of the biggest HAF programmes in the country in terms of number of eligible children, size of grant, geographic spread of programme, and number of funded delivery partners.

Continuity, familiarity and trust is an important feature of provision for families. As such, much of the programme looks very similar each holiday period by design.

There are c150 schemes running each holiday, supporting around 8,000 children and their wider families each year, which is currently 22% of the target cohort.

Throughout delivery, HAF schemes will be visited to monitor the quality of provision. Hampshire has a nationally-recognised framework and approach to monitoring.

Hampshire has a high quality of HAF provision available to residents.

Quality of Provision



None of our providers have been rated as red (very poor) or grey (poor)

Network of Providers

There are 59 organisations that are contracted to our supplier Framework, and additional organisations are secured each delivery period to help fill strategic gaps.

Organisations are a rich mixture of schools, childcare providers, community groups and sports activity providers.

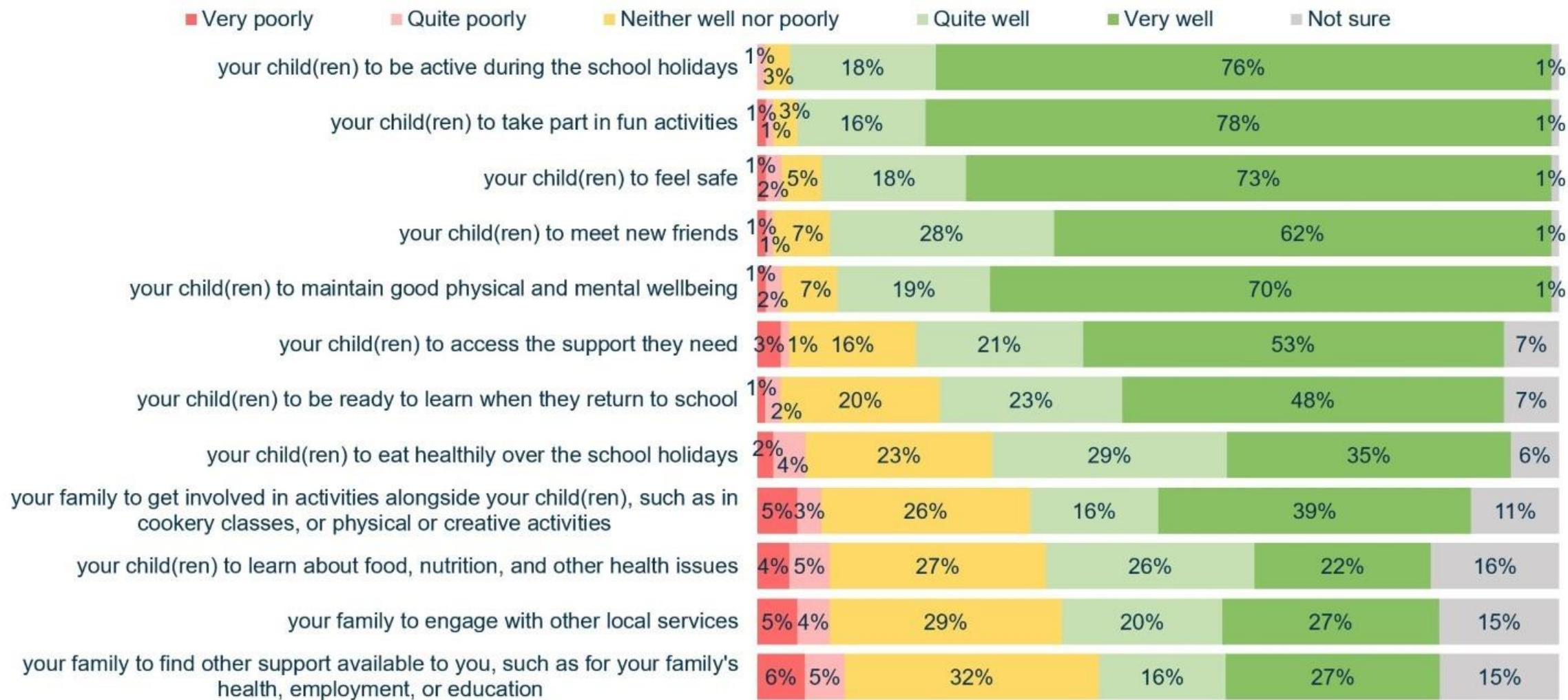
The programme has challenged many of our providers to re-orientate their traditional delivery to a much more holistic and supportive offer that delivers better outcomes for families and positions them well to access other forms of funding. The maturing of the supplier market is one of the impacts of the programme and will be one of the legacies.

St Barbe's are the South-East regional winner within the National HAF Awards. They were celebrated at the National Awards at the House of Commons at the end of November.



Meeting the aims of the HAF Programme – All Programme aims were seen as being met ‘well’ more often than ‘poorly’, with the aims relating to children’s experience seen as being most effectively met by respondents

How well do you think the activities / scheme helped...





“Thank you very much for the theatre experience. I just forgot these days about all my problems and about what is happening now at my home in Ukraine.”



“Thank you. You cant imagine how special this was for us especially when we honestly cannot afford anything.”



“I’m literally crying my eyes out right now, you don’t understand how much of a weight off my shoulders this is and how grateful I am for your support to my family and enabling me to work.”



“knowing my son was getting fed helped with my mental health. I've enjoyed our first summer hols and I was so anxious about it, especially knowing our financial situation.”



Conclusion

- School holiday food and activity clubs play a pivotal role in reducing the food insecurity and increased learning loss experienced by low-income families
- Evidence of positive impacts on children's mental health (confidence, self-esteem, and aspirations), social skills and experiences (friendships, new experiences, and school readiness), and physical health (nutrition and physical activity levels).
- Evidence of positive impacts on parental stress (child safety, food insecurity, and mental health) and employment.
- Wider benefits were also felt by the community, including an increased sense of community cohesion and job opportunities for local residents.
- **These impacts have the ability to shape children's life trajectory, forming positive habits to take into adulthood.**



connect4
communities

Any Questions?

HSF: Background and context

- The Government's Household Support Fund (HSF) was introduced in October 2021, following two prior releases of COVID winter grants, to support households in the most need with food, energy and water bills.
- £2.947 billion of Household Support Fund grant has been distributed to English local authorities in six discrete tranches.
- The fund can be used to support households with essential costs related to food, energy and water bills and with wider essential costs. Additionally, in exceptional cases of genuine emergency, it can be used to support housing costs where existing housing support schemes do not meet this exceptional need.
- The Fund is intended to cover a wide range of low-income households in need including families with children of all ages, pensioners, unpaid carers, care leavers and disabled people.
- Department for Work and Pensions' guidance varies for each round: proportions of ringfenced funds in some cases; introduction of a requirement to operate at least part of the scheme on an application basis; the ability to fund an element of advice or preventative support.

In Hampshire

- Hampshire County Council's share of the Household Support Fund since October 2021 totals **£49.87 million**.
- Hampshire County Council has worked with partners, including representatives from the voluntary and charitable sector, Adults' Health and Care, Local Children's Partnerships, the Supporting Families Programme, Schools, Colleges, Children's Social Care, Early Years and Childcare providers, Hampshire Library Service, District and Borough councils, and corporate communications to implement the 'connect4communities' programme.

Poverty issues

Joseph Rowntree Foundation “The essential guide to understanding poverty in the uk” <https://www.jrf.org.uk/uk-poverty-2024-the-essential-guide-to-understanding-poverty-in-the-uk>

“poverty in the UK is deepening. The deeper we look, the faster it is rising. People in poverty are moving further and further below the poverty line”

- 14.4 million people, including 8.1 million - around 20% working age adults, and 4.2 million – 30% of children were in poverty (2021/22 figures)
- Children have consistently had the highest poverty rates, with around 1 million experiencing destitution in 2022.

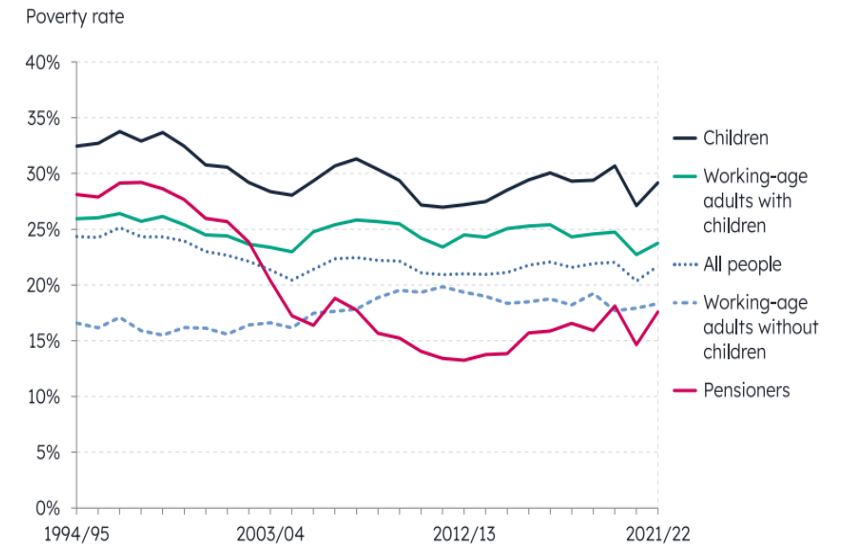
Citizen’s Advice national data

More than half of the people helped with debt advice are in a negative budget - nearly twice as high as in 2019.

- Someone is in a negative budget when their income is not enough to cover their essential costs, even after being helped by one of our advisers. They’re building up debt just to get by, with no way of repaying what they already owe. Like quicksand, it’s hard to get out of once you’re in.
- Est 75,000 residents in Hampshire.

Local Welfare Assistance Schemes are discretionary for Local Authorities

- 62% respondents to a LGA survey in January 2024 said they would provide no additional discretionary funding if HSF ended
[Household Support Fund survey report: January 2024 | Local Government Association](#)



Source: Households Below Average Income, 2021/22, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

Food insecurity

Food insecurity is when a person lacks regular access to enough safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and an active and healthy life.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

- **11% of people in the UK were in food insecure households in 2023**
- Among those in relative poverty, 15% were in food insecure households, including 21% of children.
- All measures of household food security for individuals were at their lowest recorded level in 2023, since recording introduced in 2020.

Official Statistics, UK Food Security Report 2021: Theme 4: Food Security at Household Level, Updated 5 October 2023

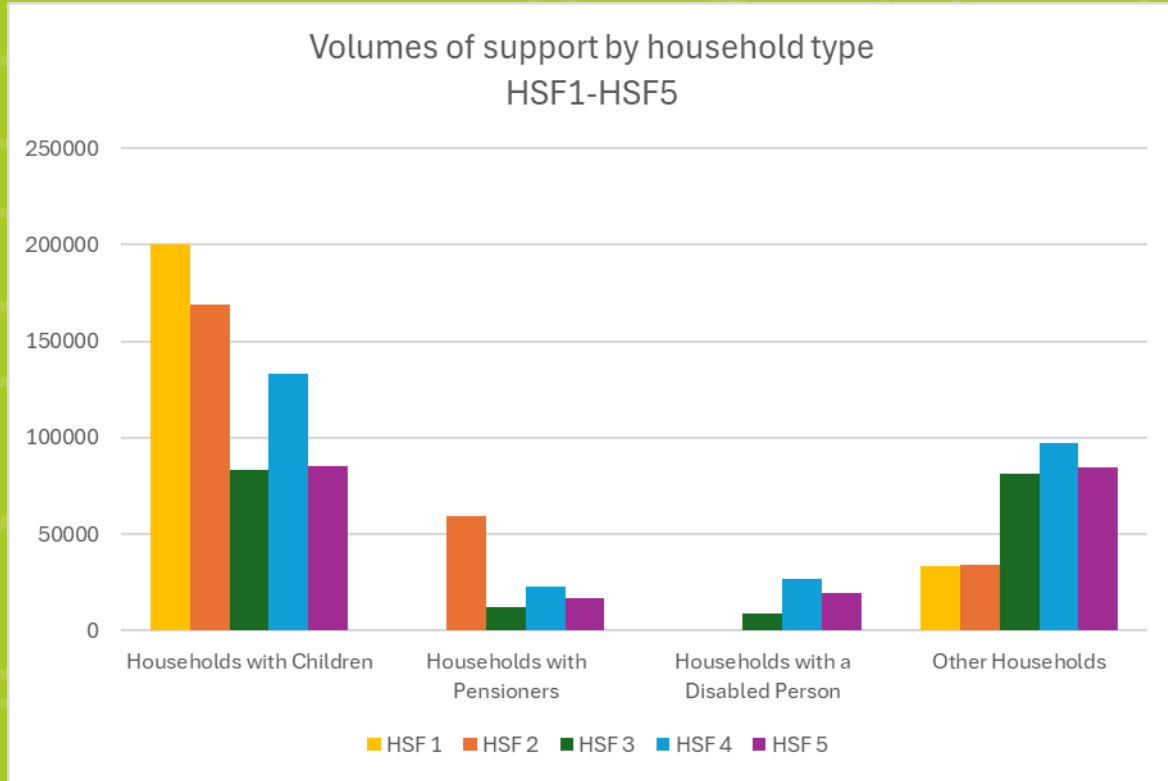
DWP Households Below Average Income report March 2024

Food Ladders are community scale interventions aimed at building local level resilience in the face of food insecurity: a tool used to scope the landscape, understand what food support provision looks like, and the way people are being moved away from food insecurity. A concept created by Dr Megan Blake to challenge how food insecurity is approached.

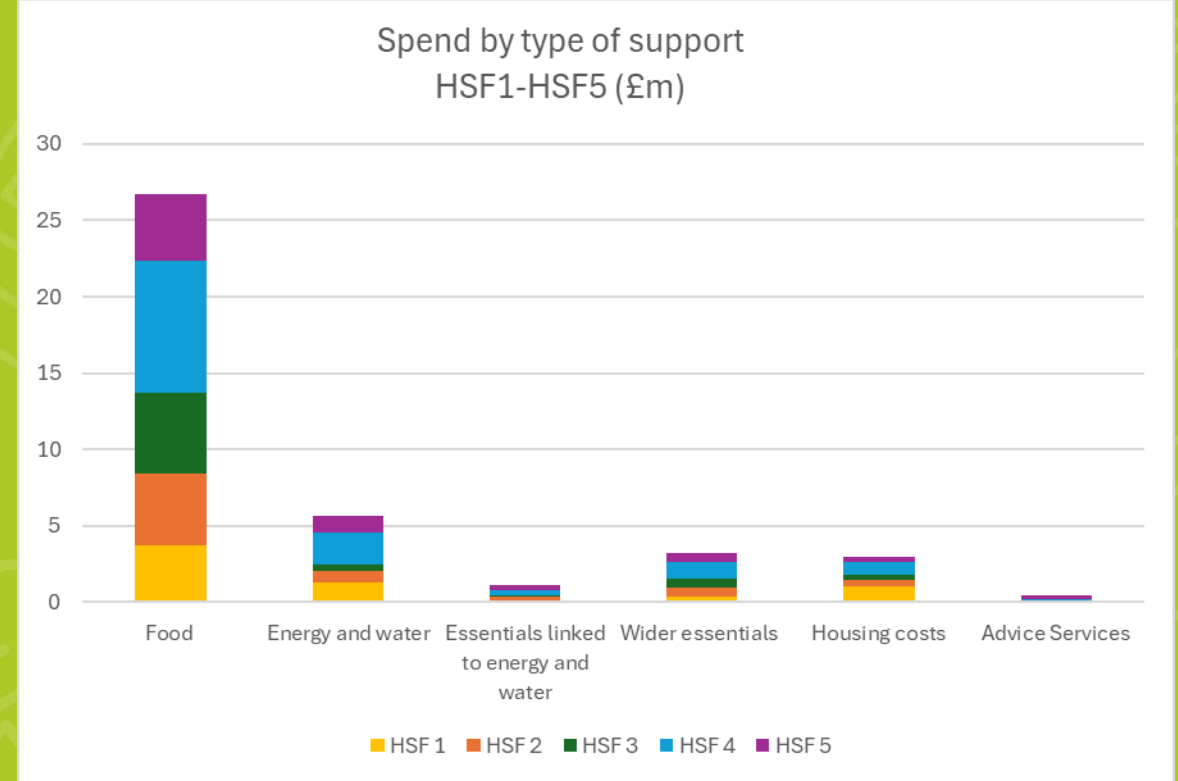
Ambition to establish **Hampshire Food Alliance** in 2025, to empower communities to become food secure, and to positively impact residents' health, well-being, and access to nutritious food.



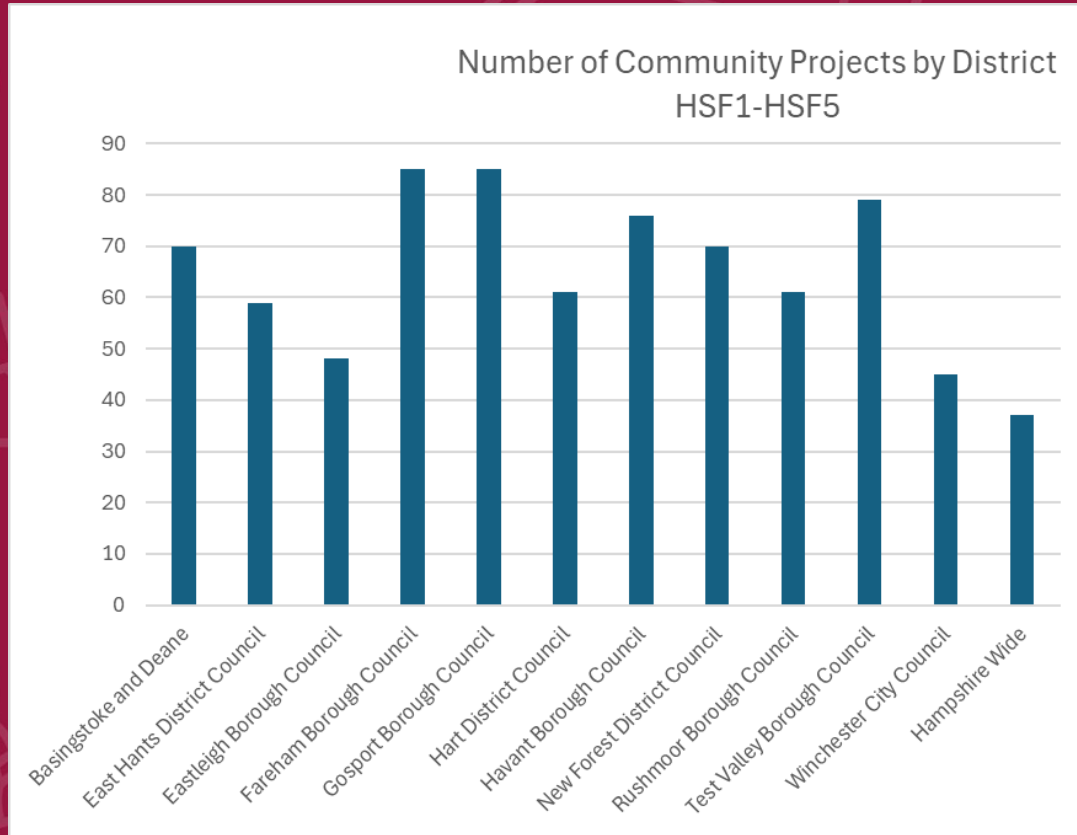
Impact and achievements (HSF1-5)



Total 1,167,668



Total £40.21m
(excl programme admin)



Development of community pantries ...

Whilst DWP directive has largely been towards short-term crisis support, there have been opportunities to support longer-lasting change

- Community grant programmes:

cooking healthy food on a budget; community growing and cooking; community education and employability skills; white goods and flooring; slow cookers and air fryers

- Boiler or water system replacements, and advice on keeping properties insulated

- Food surplus redistribution:

HCC/UKHarvest/Vivid partnership. Food rescued equivalent to 54,140 meals ~ 1 fully laden 20 tonne shipping container , food distributed 27.31 tonnes (65,022 equivalent meals)

- Family Information and Services Hub as a resource

- Supplementing fuel vouchers with fuel poverty advice:

HSF4: Citizen's Advice enabled residents to access £315,000 of additional income and £14,500 other financial support; 350 older residents benefited from community advice projects.

- Community pantry network

26 pantries, 10 Fareshare mobile larders, 2 further pantries planned.



Any Questions?