

A photograph of three young children sitting on a yellow inflatable slide. The child on the left is wearing a black t-shirt with a white Jordan logo and the word 'NIKE' in red. The child in the middle is wearing a pink tank top. The child on the right is wearing a white t-shirt. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera. The background shows green foliage through an opening in the slide.

**BARKING & DAGENHAM**

**Holiday  
Activities & Food  
Programme**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2024**



## The Holiday Activity Food programme



The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme is funded by the Department for Education. The HAF programme provides practical support to vulnerable school-age children and their families during the school holidays in a fun, inclusive environment.

The programme is available to those eligible for benefit-related free school meals and offers a nutritious meal and a variety of fun activities delivered by a range of local providers across the three main holiday periods of Easter, Summer, and Christmas and in deprived and isolated wards across the borough of Barking and Dagenham.

Our 2023 to 2024 HAF programme has brought together charities, schools, and businesses across the borough, delivering a positive and impactful programme for all eligible families.

This report will showcase some of the outstanding work of our providers, who have consistently added value to the programme which has been reflected in this report.

Thank you for all the work you've done and continue to deliver for the holiday activities and food programme here in Barking and Dagenham.

# HIGHLIGHTS

For the past three years, Barking and Dagenham have commissioned bespoke and specialist holiday clubs for eligible children and their families. In 2023, we received £1,220,290 in grant funding for the programme from the DfE.

This grant has enabled us to appoint a committed and inclusive team of providers who deliver the programme and continue to build and improve our offer, ensuring provision meets standards as set out by the DfE, with a core focus on enrichment, physical activity, nutritional education, safeguarding and reporting.

Always seeking to improve the quality of our offer, we have always commissioned at least one new provider each holiday period to test out provision and vary our offer.

As the programme continues to develop, the team has continued to develop and improve the offer to meet the changing needs of families within the borough. We have worked with local businesses, charities, schools, and community groups across Barking and Dagenham to provide support and impactful provision for families and young children.



**It was fun and exciting. I liked the parsnip relay race, and I liked the pizza party. I also liked the beetroot and apple salad. It was delicious. I didn't like beetroot before but now I like it and would like to have more of it.**

Working closely with our Food Education Partnerships Coordinator, we have developed relationships with local food organisations in the borough, providing fresh produce and healthy eating training, which created further food-based activities and discussions around how children can make healthier food choices.

Feedback shows that families, and our providers have positively received our approach to food education and nutrition.

Tackling deprivation and cost of living within isolated wards, has been key to the success of our holiday programme, enhancing the children experiences across sports and arts-based activities. Children and young people have also benefited from food education, nutrition, and seasonal food hampers, which have enabled families to bond over cooking and make healthier lifestyle choices on a budget.

Strong relationships with schools has also been key to our success, with the vast majority of our HAF activity hosted within schools settings. This has helped to secure positive take up from families, with many programmes being oversubscribed. The number of schools hosting HAF programmes has gradually increased over the years.

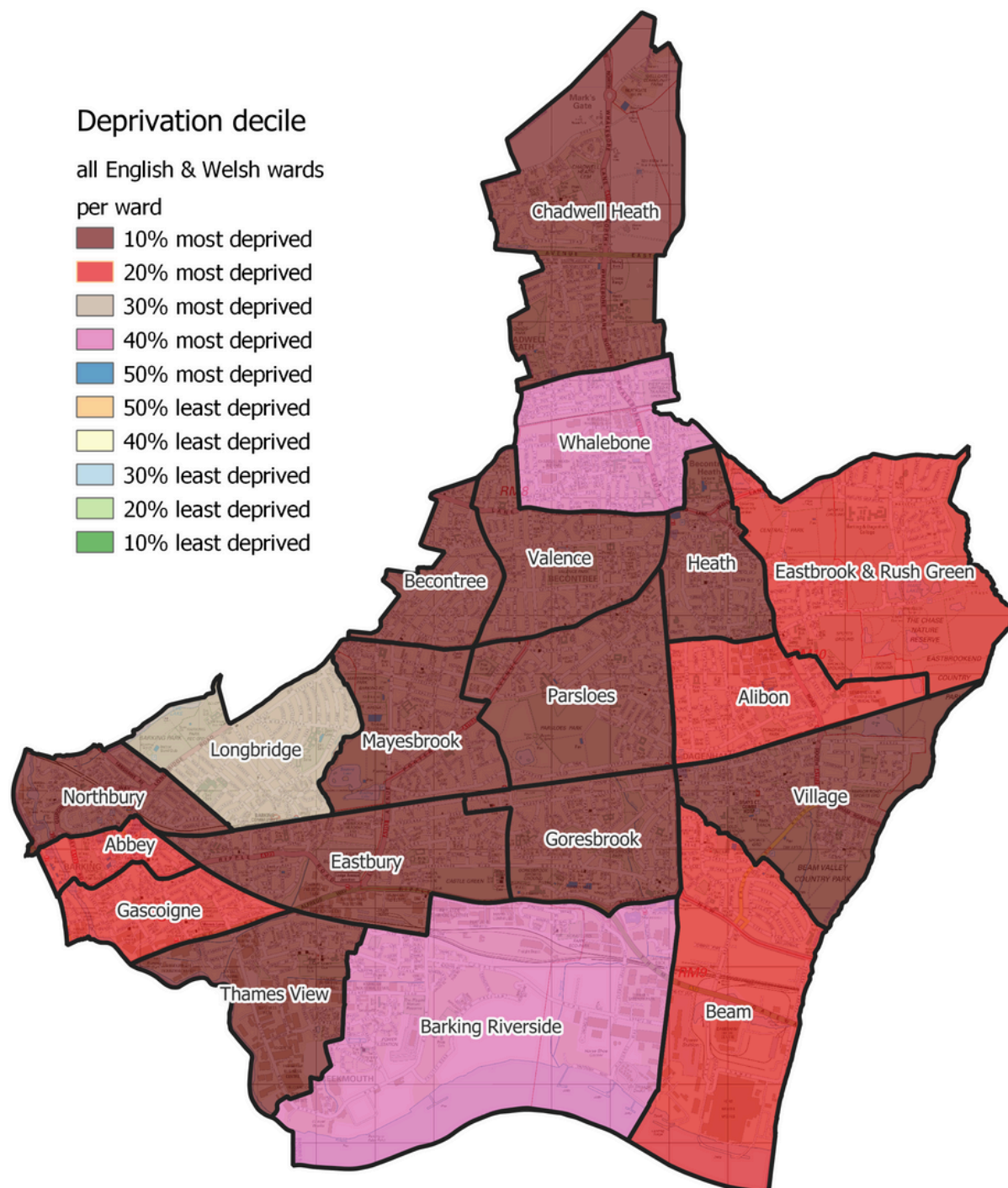


As we approach delivery of our 2024 programme, we continue to build on our strengths, while developing relationships with longstanding and new providers to the borough and welcoming new host schools. Providing new and exciting experiences to young people, their families and the local organisations who serve Barking & Dagenham. We have also secured additional funding through Public Health for our Easter and Summer programmes this year, totalling £130k, as well as funding that supports the borough's strategy to tackle childhood obesity.



# MAPPING DEMAND

Children eligible for free school meals (FSM) were mapped to inform and support effective commissioning of the Barking and Dagenham HAF provision. We always ensure Marks Gate and Thames View have provision, due to geographical isolation.



# 2023 HAF ATTENDANCE

## EASTER ATTENDANCE

# 1,924

For Easter 2023, we commissioned 16 providers to deliver 25 holiday clubs.

- Primary: 1446
- Primary SEND: 183
- Secondary: 263
- Secondary SEND: 32

## SUMMER ATTENDANCE

# 3,818

During the Summer period we commissioned 16 providers to deliver 27 holiday clubs.

- Primary: 2,644
- Primary SEND: 277
- Secondary: 762
- Secondary SEND: 136

## WINTER ATTENDANCE

# 990

During the Christmas period we commissioned 12 providers to deliver 20 holiday clubs

- Primary: 809
- Primary SEND: 91
- Secondary: 75
- Secondary SEND: 15





# FOOD PROVISION

As part of our delivery of HAF provision, we have worked closely with BD Together. BD Together is a property and facilities services group that serves the community of Barking and Dagenham. They provide healthy catering for schools, while creating opportunities for local people to live, work, and grow within the borough. As part of our HAF programme, BD Together provided one hot meal and two healthy snacks a day for those providers that are unable to delivery their own food offer. Barking and Dagenham have the highest level of childhood obesity in any London borough. BD Together have worked closely with their food suppliers to provide a healthy, nutritious food offer that meets school food standards. Leaning towards vegetarian healthy dishes, these have been received positively from the young people on our programme and the providers.

## FOOD EDUCATION & ACTIVITIES

We have worked closely with our Food Education Partnership Coordinator to develop the borough's Good Food Plan that increases access to healthy, affordable, and sustainable food in the borough. The aims of our Good Food Plan was to promote a 'whole-school approach to food': promoting healthy food culture in our HAF programme. We were able to do this this by:

- Developing resources and opportunities for purposeful learning around food.
- Strengthening food curriculum delivery and supporting providers and communities through a holistic approach.

### Key areas of success included:

- Practical cooking workshops.
- Gardening and growing (delivered by Pot Gang)
- Promoting an ethical approach to food catering.
- Food education and activities that complement the food provided by BD Together.
- Placing the enjoyment of food at the centre of food education and related activities.
- Developed recipe cards for HAF participant families.
- We provided hampers to all participants on the Easter and Winter Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF), using seasonal, organic veg sourced from the Better Food Shed – with plans to continue.

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# ENRICHING ACTIVITIES

As part of the Barking and Dagenham HAF programme, all participants for our HAF programme are given enrichment activities as part of the programme, with some providers making enrichment core to their offer. Our participants are involved in specific sessions targeted at their strengths and interests. Our enrichment activities aim to stretch and challenge all.

All HAF providers actively deliver a range of enrichment activities, which are monitored through site visits. These activities include:

- Parents and children were shown how they can use recycled materials to innovatively make age-appropriate toys and have fun;
- Using the public green space to grow vegetables;
- Photography;
- Arts and crafts;
- Jolly jungle soft play;
- Sensory play;
- Cooking sessions;
- Outdoor education;
- Dental Hygiene.

The enrichment activities have enabled participants to discover a greater sense of self and self-esteem. Through our enrichment activities, providers have reported that participants have shown improved engagement, self-confidence, and growth.

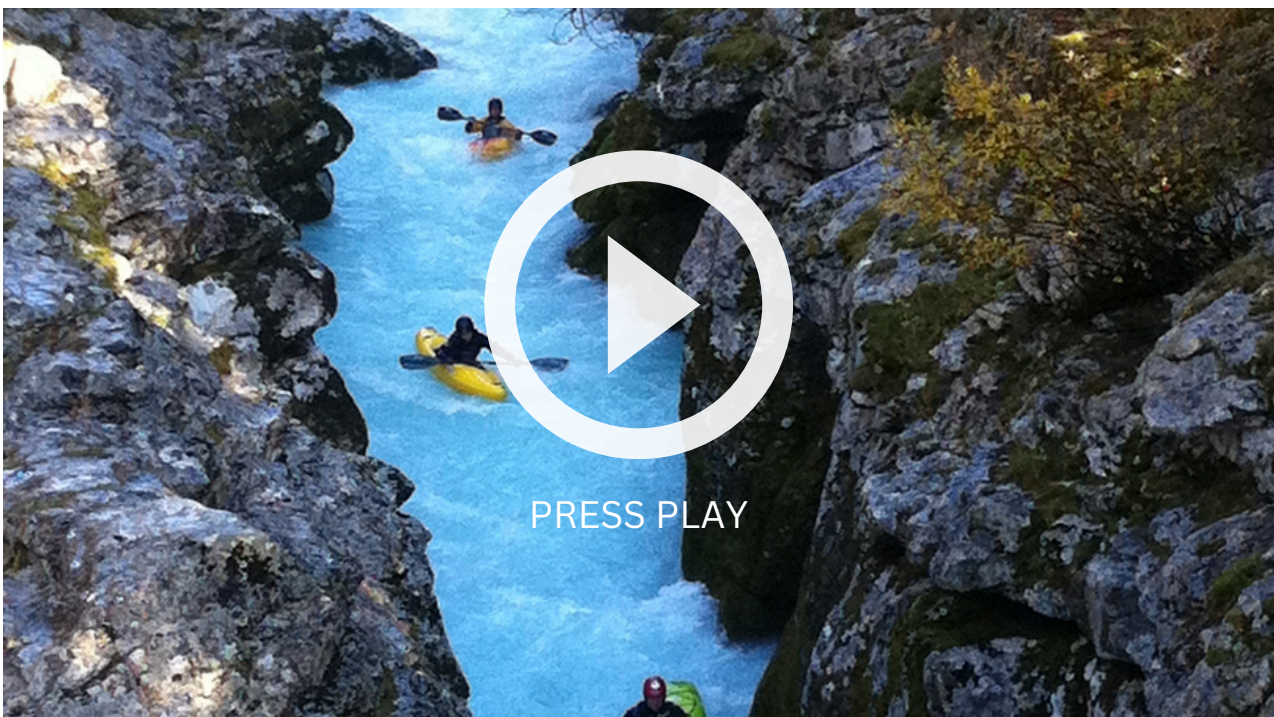




# PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

To ensure we delivered an engaging and inclusive HAF programme, providers consulted with the young people on their programme and gave input into the physical activities they would like to have included.

Providers designed and promoted activities that appealed to the attendees. They were able to do this through physical activities that were inclusive, active, and fun. Participants wanted activities where they could take part with friends, and to stay healthy.



In Summer 2023, Inspire Minds Through Sports completed a 4-day residential holiday camp in Trewern, the borough's Outdoor Education Centre in Wales. The activities on offer included caving, gauge walking, rock climbing, team building games and bmx biking.

Young people had the chance to learn some life skills, like making their beds, setting the table, and serving food.

This residential experience is to be repeated in the Summer of 2024.



***"I think that this holiday club was a great experience. I can't help but be thankful for the things that we all learnt".***

# CASE STUDY COMPANY DRINKS



Company Drinks partnered up with Made Up Kitchen for the HAF programme entitled 'Explore the Wild', to deliver nutritional food and cooking workshops through holistic approaches.

Each day, participants sat down for a daily feast of freshly prepared food. Made Up kitchen prepared daily meals that offered choice to the participant. An example of this would be two different types of curry, a bread option, rice, salad, samosas, and garnishes. Ahead of each meal,

a participant would talk everybody through the menu, and when the group were choosing what they'd like on their plate, they were encouraged to try a small piece of everything. Then they could go up for seconds if they've given everything a try.

As well as this, they packaged up any left-over food with the children being a part of this process, so they could take some of the food home for their families.

They found that the education aspect didn't end with the participant. By offering the food to the parents they can see and learn about what their child has eaten each day.

The council delivered us fresh produce each week, and they involved the children in packaging up the vegetables to take home. As they were packaging up these items, they could talk to the young people about what each of the items were and allow the group to ask questions.

They noticed a big impact on food education and how it affects of children's habits. They found that by showcasing the food, offering choice when taking produce home and having an open dialogue with the child, there was an increase in appetite and food knowledge.



# SIGNPOSTING

As part of our HAF provision, providers were required to supply information, signposting or referring families to other services and support that would benefit them. To support this, we provided detailed key information across several topics, affecting families in the borough of Barking and Dagenham. Providers could signpost services via a partner organisation or another service within the borough.

Some of these services included:

- KPC Nutritional food demonstration sessions;
- N.E.W.S.T.A.R.T. services - benefits of Nutrition, Exercise, Water, Sunshine, Temperance, Air, Rest and Trust;
- Financial services and benefit experts IncomeMAX;
- Local community groups within the borough of Barking & Dagenham;
- NHS Choices;
- Child and Family Centres;
- <https://streettag.co.uk/>;
- Barking and Dagenham aquatics;
- Barking and Dagenham canoe club;
- Barking cricket club;
- Barking and Dagenham junior park run;
- Barking road runners;
- Barking rugby club;
- Change 4 Life;
- East London JKA karate;
- Goresbrook cricket club;
- Make it Happen - RDF Sports.

The borough is currently finalising it's wider youth offer, which will also be shared with all HAF providers.

# SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS & DISABILITIES (SEND)

Ensuring providers have an inclusive offer in place has been a focus area of work for our HAF programme over the past year. Where a mainstream school hosts a programme, it is our expectation of all HAF providers that any child that attends that school should be able to access the HAF provision being hosted, regardless of their SEND needs.

Training has been provided to all HAF providers to support inclusive practice. To supplement this, we ensure that specialist SEND provision is also commissioned and delivered as part of each HAF programme, for those with more complex needs. DABD has been our provider of this specialist provision.



**I like the youth workers and the fun activities, its better than home because I actually get to do something.**





# THE DISABLEMENT ASSOCIATION OF BARKING & DAGENHAM

The Disablement Association of Barking & Dagenham (DABD) is a registered charity that provides essential support & services across Greater London and has done so for over 71 years. Their aim is to ensure that everyone has equal access to opportunities, be it work, benefits, training, transport, or social activities to help them live an independent life. Their support extends to anyone who needs our help with a focus on disadvantaged children, young adults, the elderly, disabled and the vulnerable people of all ages and of course their families and carers as well.

The groups they support include:

- Young adults
- Disadvantaged children & young people
- People recovering from long-term illness.
- People with special educational needs
- People with a disability
- The elderly
- People who lack training, education, or qualifications
- The homeless, ex-offenders and ex-service people
- Website [DABD | Enabling Independence](#)

DABD are commissioned to run a dedicated and specific HAF programme for special educational needs & disabled (SEND) children & young people who attend school/further education or live within the borough and who are eligible/receiving free school meals.

Activities have been specifically designed for the needs of SEND children/young people and include lots of fun and educational sessions including an eating healthy food demonstration and specifically designed exercise/activities. The range of activities include painting, soft play area, sensory play, water play, sand play, arts and crafts, drawing/colouring, music, dancing, playdough, Lego and specifically created sports/exercise activities such as football and yoga (sensory adapted).

## IMPACT

As a dedicated SEND focused charity, DABD provide much needed support for the children and young people who are eligible for free school meals within our home borough as an existing HAF partner to LBBD. They have a very positive and mutually beneficial relationship with borough commissioners who work, support, and challenge us to provide the best level of support possible for the people they serve.

Thanks to HAF, DABD provide over 16 hours of direct support for the children and young people across the 3 main school holidays. Through this service they also ensure that the parents and carers of the children people get some much-needed respite as they are caring for their children in a safe and supportive environment. This is a much valued and often overlooked as an unseen benefit of HAF provision for the SEND community.

# CASE STUDY DABD

In early December, DABD's Locality Lead Co-ordinator met with a single mother (mid 30's/early 40's) at a Locality Lead (LL) session that she was organising for DABD. The mother had recently moved her daughter to a new school that was better able to support the needs of her daughter (5YO) who is autistic and displays challenging behaviours. Unfortunately, this meant that she had to leave her job as a nurse as her child minder could not cover the additional travel expenditure and time that it would take to get to and from the new school.



Leaving work has meant that the mother was incurring a lot of money/cost-of-living issues, and this was causing her great concern. The Locality Lead talked to her about our LL work and specifically the services of DABD (welfare benefits) and the wider support available from other LL partners, the wider borough (e.g., BD Money, warm spaces, food banks etc, etc). As borough residents and as her daughter was eligible for free school meals, Annie talked about the Holiday Activity and Food Programme (HAF) service that the borough was running and the specialised service that DABD offer parents and carers of special educational needs and disabled (SEND) children. The Locality Lead mentioned that our HAF day sessions were running over the Christmas and New Year break and the mother was keen to see if we could find a space for her daughter. Annie made the necessary arrangements on the spot to book her daughter in to attend the service on the 30th Dec, 3rd & 4th Jan. The mother was overjoyed and became quite emotional.

As a follow-up her daughter attended all 3 days and had a great time exercising, playing, learning, and eating with the other children on the sessions. Whilst the mother was concerned that her daughter would be difficult to look after, DABD's experienced staff did not have any issues and that was reassuring for the mother. She was very grateful and keen to attend any other HAF session that we may be running in the future and any other such respite support that is available for parents of SEND children and the events themselves for the benefit, development, and growth of her daughter.



# KEY CHALLENGES

Our 2023 HAF provision saw a wide range of exciting activities provided to a high standard. However, through robust qualitative and quantitative monitoring we have identified areas for improvement, as follows.

**Eligibility.** Providers are required to conduct their own eligibility checks with families. Because of the announcement of universal free school meals across Key Stage 1 and 2, there has been confusion amongst some families regarding what constitutes free eligibility.

**Bookings.** Providers have been encouraged to overbook provision by 10 percent. This is to manage last minute dropouts and offer the spaces to walk-ins as and when they arise. As we ask providers to manage their own bookings rather than having a centralised booking system, this also results in parents booking on multiple programmes and/ or hopping from one programme to another.

**Attendance.** Christmas attendance is the lowest attendance across the 3 HAF programmes. This is seemingly due to parents forgetting they have booked a place or going on holiday. The weather and it getting dark earlier also has an impact. To reduce unfilled places and dropout, providers contact parents as a reminder and refer to their waiting lists. During the Christmas period, different schools within the borough break up at different points, which also has a significant impact when programme recruitment.

**Attendance.** For some provision, attendance has been affected because resident young people are still attending at neighbouring schools. Overall, only around 8% of places remained unfilled, which we believe still represents good value for money.

# MARKETING & COMMUNICATION

We have worked closely with the Council's Marketing and Comms Team to ensure our HAF programme has been included in school and resident communications and amplified on social media. We have created posters and digital assets aimed at young families and teenagers for each programme so that the branding is consistent.

We have also promoted the programme on our website, in our monthly newsletters, and in our regular communications across the partnership. We have also worked with our Revs and Bens Team to write out to eligible families.



# PARTNERSHIPS

**The Better Food Shed** supplies local produce grown on organic farms to food shops, schools and education services, holiday activities and food programmes, social care services, community kitchens and NHS services. Every week, they distribute up to 20 tonnes of fresh organic produce, sourced directly from 23 small and medium organic UK farms, many of which are within 70 miles of east London.

They supply ethically sourced fruit and vegetables to food businesses and council services. During our Summer holiday activity programme, Better Food Shed delivered food crates which came with a variety of fruit and veg, where families could cook fresh healthy meals together. These were supported by recipe cards.



**Made In Hackney** supplies local produce grown on organic farms to food shops, schools and education services, holiday activities and food programmes, social care services, community kitchens and NHS services. Every week, they distribute up to 20 tonnes of fresh organic produce, sourced directly from 23 small and medium organic UK farms, many of which are within 70 miles of east London.

They supply ethically sourced fruit and vegetables to food businesses and council services. During our Summer holiday activity programme, Better Food Shed delivered food crates which came with a variety of fruit and veg, where families could cook fresh healthy meals together. These were supported by recipe cards.



We worked with our local **Morrisons** to provide a gift voucher to our HAF provider Ultimate Vision Sports. Ultimate Vision used the vouchers to purchase healthy food options for the young people attending their HAF programme.



**Taste-ed** provide support, training, and resources to deliver a range of simple taste education lessons tailored to the English National Curriculum. Taste-ed are a charity aiming to revolutionise the way Food Education is taught in the UK, ensuring taste education becomes a basic aspect of every child's knowledge. Guaranteeing 'food literacy' that will help them become more confident, adventurous, and healthy eaters. During our Winter HAF provision, Taste-ed provided support, training and resources to our HAF providers, where young people were able to talk and write about what they see, smell, touch, hear and taste and whether they enjoy it or not.

We have noticed a big impact on food education and how it impacts children's habits. We've found that by showcasing the food, offering choice when taking produce home and having an open dialogue with the child there is an increase in appetite and food knowledge.

---**Dagenham Eagles**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to say a big thank you to our HAF providers, who have continued to deliver a fantastic provision across the borough.

List: 2023 – 2024

Ackee Tree LTD  
Ballerz  
Bow Arts Trust  
Box Up Crime  
Community Music Service  
Company Drinks  
DABD  
Dagenham Eagles  
Everyone Active  
Future Youth Zone  
Hope 4 Humanity  
Inspire Minds Through Sports  
Kick  
Learning Hive  
Malearn  
Premier Education  
Pullums Dance Academy  
Sports Works  
Studio 3 Arts  
The Dance Network Association  
Ukon  
Ultimate Vision Sports  
West Ham United Foundation.

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