

# 2019 SUMMER FIT AND FED PROGRAMME



## Context –

School holidays can be particular pressure points for some families because of increased cost (such as food and child care) and reduced incomes (such as loss of a free school meal, reduced working hours etc). There is now a growing body of evidence of a holiday gap – with children from disadvantaged families less likely to access organised out-of-school activities; more likely to experience ‘unhealthy holidays’ in terms of nutrition and physical health and more likely to experience social isolation.

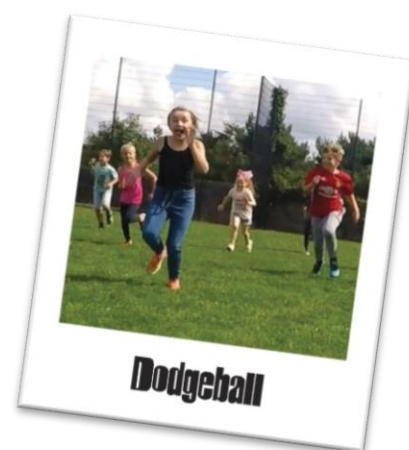
## Background –

In 2018 the Government launched a £2M programme of works to explore how best to ensure children from disadvantaged families benefited from enrichment activities and healthy meals during the school holidays. They worked with seven national organisations who delivered a variety of pilot projects. The Sports Development Unit, working in partnership with Street Games received £15,500 and delivered a successful four week Fit and Fed holiday programme at Marine Academy Plymouth.

In 2019 the Department for Education announced £9.1M of funding for a Holiday Activities and Food Research Programme to research how it could best support children eligible for free school meals during the summer holidays, testing a new model in which local coordinators oversee and fund holiday clubs in their areas.

The aim was to develop a more efficient and joined-up approach to free holiday provision for disadvantaged children; and to ensure there was enough good quality free holiday provision to meet the demand. In addition, there was also an expectation that participating children would:

- eat more healthily
- be more active
- take part in engaging and enriching activities which support the development of resilience, character and wellbeing and other skills
- be safe and not socially isolated
- have a greater knowledge of health and nutrition
- be more engaged and connected with school and other local services
- have a greater knowledge and awareness of local free holiday provision



## Plymouth's award -

The Sports Development Unit led on the initial bid with support from Food Plymouth, Plymouth Argyle Community Trust and CATERed and secured £604,260 to coordinate a citywide programme during the 2019 summer holidays, aimed at providing free meals and activities to disadvantaged children.

In total, 11 areas across the country were supported through this Government funded programme and Plymouth was the only successful project in the South West.

## 2019 Fit and Fed summary -

The Sports Development Unit coordinated 54 holiday clubs across the city providing 24,439 free places for children aged between 4 to 18 years. They worked in partnership with 35 different delivery partners including Argyle Community Trust, Plymouth Raiders, Everyone Active, Mount Batten Watersports Centre, Routeways, Libraries, local schools and others.

Each holiday club was designed to meet the following minimal standards:

- Duration – provide, as a minimum, 4 hours of provision a day, for 4 days a week for 4 weeks
- Food – provide at least one meal a day (breakfast, lunch or tea) and all food provided (including snacks) must meet the School Food Standards
- Nutritional education - include an element of nutritional education each day aimed at improving children's knowledge and awareness of healthy eating
- Enriching activities - provide age-appropriate fun and enriching activities that provide children with opportunities to develop new skills or knowledge, to consolidate existing skills and knowledge, or to try out new experiences
- Physical activities - provide 60 minutes of physical activity each day to meet the Department for Health's current physical activity recommendations for children and young people
- Policies and procedures - have suitable arrangements and appropriate policies and procedures in place

### Impact -

In total 1,618 disadvantaged children were able to enjoy a happy and healthy holiday. Out of those who attended 86.4% were in receipt of free school meals and the remaining 220 children had been identified as being in need through referrals from our partners.

Our 54 holiday clubs provided a range of offers and operated on different days, different times and delivered different themes. The reported cost per child/ per day ranged from £7.50 to £30.95 (average £20.49).

With the support of CATERed 23,867 healthy lunches were provided that met or exceeded the School Food Standards ensuring children received a nutritious meal every day. Nutritional education was embedded into each holiday club which involved a variety of activities including sugar smart, cooking skills, tasting challenges, smoothie bike and much more. As a result, the children felt they had a better knowledge of healthy food and had tried food that they wouldn't normally have had.

- 67% of children reported eating fruit and vegetables more often
- 83% of children reported eating less unhealthy snacks
- 76% of children reported drinking fewer sugary and fizzy drinks
- 88% of children reported drinking more water

The environment is of particular importance to children and young people and to limit the environmental impact of the Fit and Fed programme we provided reusable water bottles and prevented an estimated 36,500 single-use plastic bottles being used.





A major part of our Fit and Fed programme was to promote sport and physical activity and ensure that children undertook the recommended daily levels of activity to benefit their health. Our holiday clubs provided over 1,800 hours of physical activity including a range of new and exciting activities including bubble football, parkour, water sports and dodgeball. Our holiday clubs also provided a wide range of cultural and enrichment experiences including circus skills, animal encounters, STEM workshops and trips to local attractions.

£500,000 of our programme budget (82.7%) was spent directly on holiday club provision, using a number of local organisations, business and suppliers, which helped

to support our local economy. To ensure our programme was equitable and accessible we offered support with transport needs as well as additional staffing for children with SEND.

Through our coordinated and city-wide approach we were able to deliver new holiday clubs in areas of high demand, enhance existing provision and improve access, helping to provide greater choice and increase availability. By introducing and promoting minimum standards we were able to improve the quality of provision ensuring children could benefit from a welcoming and safe environment. This included supporting the holiday clubs with DBS checks, safeguarding policies and procedures, training and qualifications e.g. food hygiene.

**Parent comments –**

“My son loved it so much he wanted to go over the weekend!”

“I really appreciated the fact that my children had somewhere safe to play and would have something to talk about when they go back to school.”

“I’m not sure how I would have coped over the summer without Fit & Fed.”

**Children’s comments –**

Below are the top six words used by the children to describe this year’s Fit and Fed programme:

**FUN**  
**Amazing**

**Exciting**  
**COOL**

**GOOD**  
**HEALTHY**

**What next -**

The Department for Education has appointed a company called Ecorys to evaluate the national programme and we should receive a report towards the end of the year. This evaluation will be used to inform how any future funding from the Department for Education will be directed.

