



Herts Sports Partnership
Fit, Fed & Read Evaluation Report

Summer 2020 Programme

Funded by:



Partnered by:



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Background

There is an abundance of research and published data detailing the difficulties that families from low socio-economic backgrounds can face as a result of the school holidays particularly surrounding holiday hunger, social isolation and inactivity. Fit, Fed & Read is the Herts Sports Partnership (HSP) variation of the national StreetGames UK programme Fit and Fed which seeks to address this issue. Our project seeks to offer high quality holiday physical activity programme - including support with literacy - in Hertfordshire's most disadvantaged neighbourhoods, with a nutritious meal every day, free of charge. Following a series of pilot delivery programmes through 2016-18, HSP secured funding from the National Lottery Community Fund to deliver Hertfordshire's Fit Fed & Read in 10 locations every Easter and summer school holiday until (and including) 2022. This report provides details of the summer 2020 delivery based on the attendance information and various evaluation efforts made by HSP including feedback from the participants' parents/guardians, the delivery staff and the participants. Fit Fed & Read's target participants are young people in upper primary school (Key Stage 2) to create behaviour change, encouraging a reduction in inactivity, a healthier diet and reduced feelings of isolation. With the aim to increase physicality activity, improve the self-efficacy which in turn looks to tackle the negative effects of affluence inequality prevalent in the county. The programme embodies 6 outcomes that align with the partnerships Organisational Theory of Change and strategic direction, these outcomes are;

1. Increase knowledge & consumption of healthier foods
2. Increase physical activity
3. Reduce feelings of isolation
4. Improve wellbeing and self-efficacy
5. Reduce the educational attainment decline over the summer break.
6. Increase families' awareness of local provision to enhance the long-term sustainability of the proposed improved life outcomes.

Summer 2020 Summary

This summer posed significant issues due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and social distancing restrictions. Lockdown conditions appeared to exacerbate the issues prevalent within the young people the project engages with, especially issues around social isolation and educational attainment. After the postponement of Easter delivery, contingency planning began to ensure some form of delivery would be possible during the summer. Several options were explored, including a remote offer utilising online resources, but after the schools returned in May, face to face delivery looked promising. HCL worked extensively to secure 10 locations across the county at their delivery schools as the Fire Stations remained on lockdown and therefore not an option for delivery. As the project required outdoor space, indoor wet weather space and kitchens, schools were highlighted as the best option for delivery. HCL were able to secure nine schools to deliver across the county which ensured the project could happen. The final location was secured by HSP; Letchworth Garden City Rugby Club agreed to host their local project, which was very exciting as it meant Fit, Fed & Read could be delivered to full capacity. Each project's capacity had to be reduced from 20 children per site to 15 due to COVID-19 precautions (150 per day in total) and each project was required to deliver within strict national operational guidelines. This summer the project received over 400 referrals with some sites (Hatfield, Hemel & Stevenage) receiving between 40-90 each. To accommodate such high demand the higher referring sites ran two two-week phases to ensure that as many children could take part as possible. The remaining seven sites ran one four-week phase.

Partner Engagement

As ever, the strength of Fit Fed & Read lays in the partner delivery network. In order to run the programme, HSP have developed a strong partnership group with a variety of organisations in order to gather the necessary resources. Each of these partners are fundamental to the success of the programme; making very generous and very significant contributions within their area of expertise. We are pleased to welcome new partners with every delivery helping to enrich and grow the offer available to the attendees of the programme.

All of the project's regular partners were able to adapt their delivery to engage with frequently and ensure the project was delivered as close to the intended intervention as possible. Instead of hosting the projects Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) arranged for each site to have a visit which was fantastic and was well received. Instead of visiting their facilities, Hertfordshire Libraries designed and resourced interactive literacy sessions specifically for the project and made weekly visits to most sites to deliver their workshops. In addition to this, through their connections with The Book Trust, they provided each child with several books and resources to take home



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to continue their literacy progress at home with their family. This was a real highlight of the summer project and the children were visibly grateful and excited to receive such fantastic and meaningful resources.

Hertfordshire Catering Limited (HCL) provided each site with a cook for the duration of the summer and delivered nutrition workshops at each site each week. In addition to the workshop they equipped each school with a smoothie bike for the children to use and explore what a healthy and nutritious smoothie entailed. This resource was well received, and it created a real buzz around nutrition for the children. Another highlight of the summer came about from the pandemic itself; Hertfordshire Catering Limited were involved with providing shielding communities around the county with food supplies during lockdown which they were able to extend to the Fit, Fed & Read project providing a food box for each child on the programme. The boxes supplied each child with food for a week which was true highlight and demonstrated the great work the organisation is doing being part of the project. Hertfordshire Golf supplied golf equipment for each site and Stevenage FC Foundation delivered sessions at several sites. Where possible the Hertfordshire Constabulary arranged for visits to the sites and have committed to growing their offer within the programme in 2021. The University of Hertfordshire (UH) hired all the delivery staff of temporary summer contracts, many of which were, or had previously been, UH students. And of course, the project continued to engage with Families First within Hertfordshire County Council to ensure that the opportunity reached the most vulnerable families in the county.



Locations

Fit Fed & Read locations were previously highlighted as the most in need area for each of Hertfordshire's local authority areas whilst also boasting a Fire Station able to host the project. Despite the inability to deliver within the Fire Stations it was decided that these target locations should remain the same to continue to engage with target families. Therefore, the summer 2020 project ran at the following locations:

- Hatfield, Oakview Primary School AL108NW
- Stevenage, Bedwell Primary School SG11NJ
- Watford, Kingsway Junior School WD250JH
- Cheshunt, St Paul's Primary School EN76LR
- Borehamwood, Saffron Green Primary School WD62PP
- Hemel Hempstead, Tudor Primary School HP39LN
- Rickmansworth, St Mary's Primary School WD31NY
- Baldock & Letchworth, Letchworth Rugby Club SG6 2EN
- Bishops Stortford, Northgate Primary School, CM232RL
- St Albans, Cunningham Primary School AL15QJ

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Delivery Structure

Following from the project's previous delivery, we continued to operate between 10am – 2pm with the four one-hour sessions. We have found this to be the most suitable timing to suit a four-hour delivery structure and has been supported by parent and delivery staff feedback.

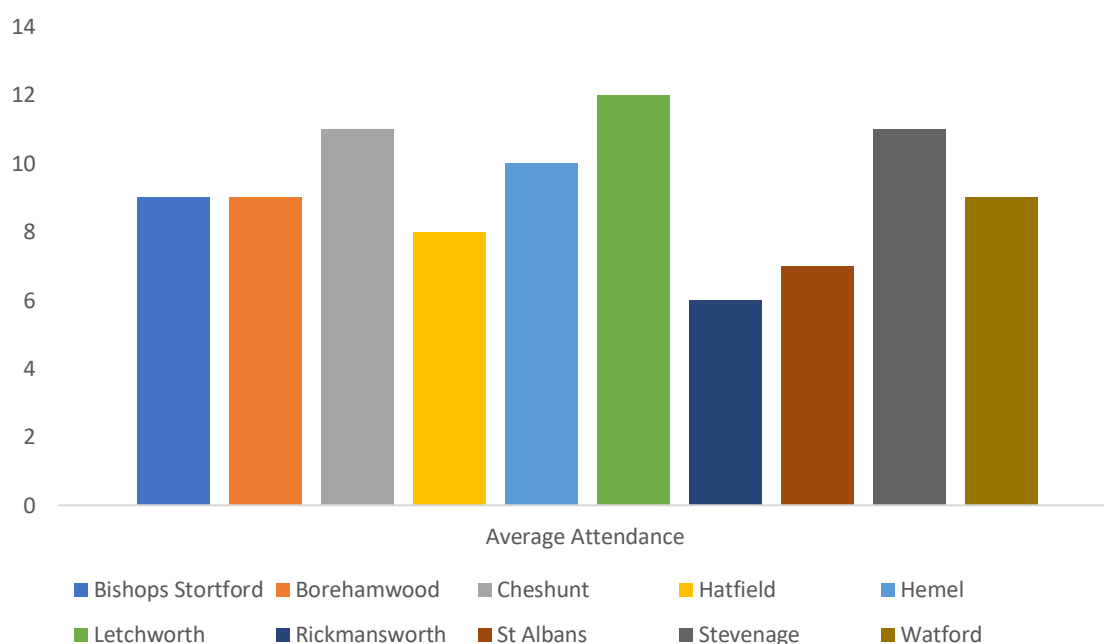
Generally, each day consisted of two hours of physical activity (games based), one hour of lunch, and one hour of fun education (Healthy Eating (HCL), Fun Literacy (Hertfordshire Libraries), Move and Learn (Stevenage FC Foundation), Community Learning (Herts Fire & Rescue Service, Hertfordshire Constabulary,).

Attendance & Demographics

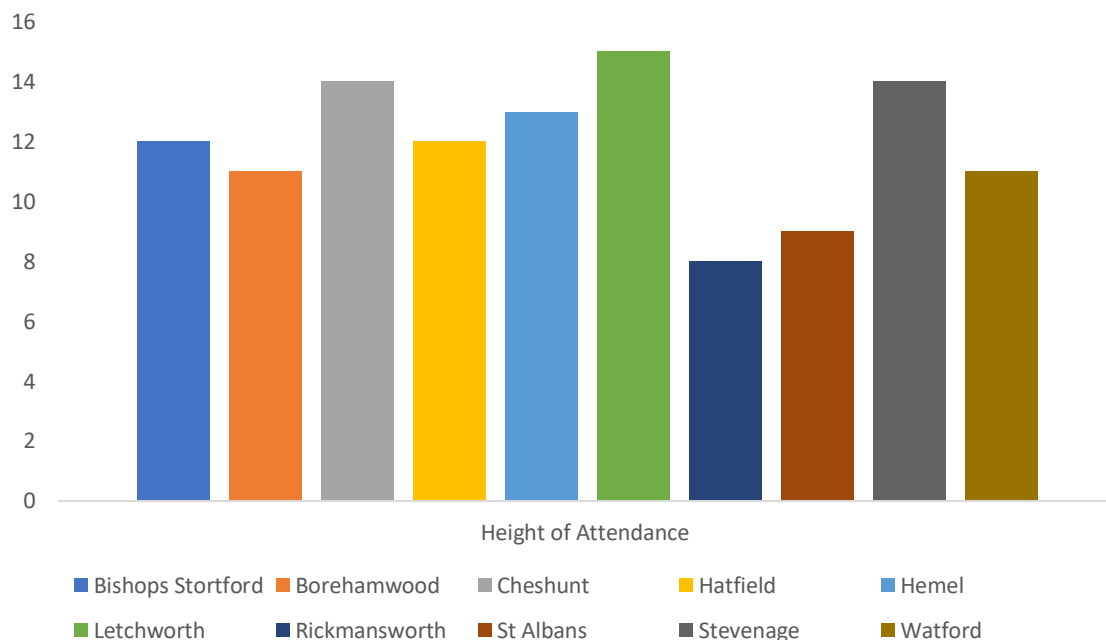
The average daily project attendance on the programme was 60% (displayed in the table below) suggesting the programme was just over half its capacity for most of its delivery. The breakdown of attendance by quartiles indicate that that most children (70%) attended more than half of the programme.

Considering 33,000 young people are living in poverty in the county the programme should be oversubscribed with a capacity of 150 daily places. The most common theme reported by parents for not turning up or/and lack of attendance was location of project due to a lack of accessibility of transport. In addition, a common theme was programme length, parents stated that the four weeks of delivery was a too long and being able to book week slots would benefit them more as it would allow for holidays away from home.

Attendance Graphs



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Participant Demographic

Fit Fed & Read's target participants are young people in upper primary school (Key Stage 2) to create behaviour change, encouraging a reduction in inactivity, a healthier diet and reduced feelings of isolation. It is vital the programme enables equal access to attend and supports the diverse needs of different groups within society and respond positively to eliminate discrimination.

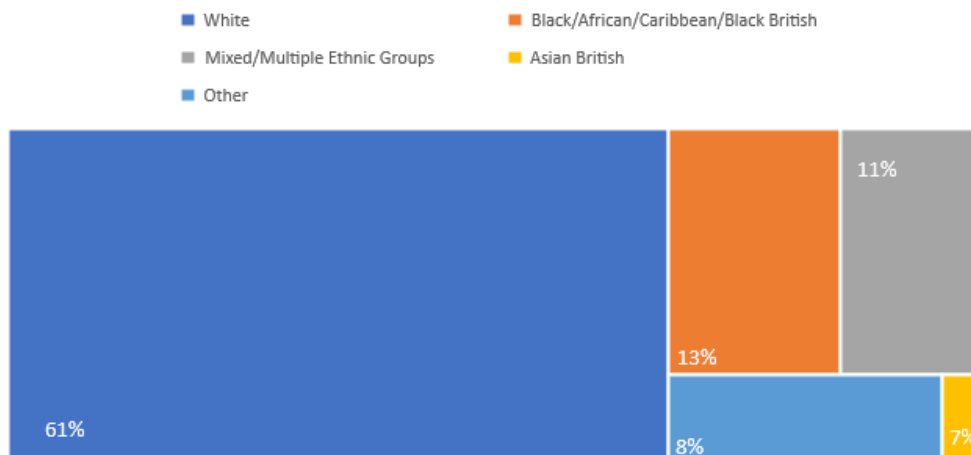
Age - The average age of attendee's was 8.9 years. 8-11 year olds made up 79.1% of participants and 94.9% were 7-12 years.

Disability - This summer the programme supported the needs of a wide of both physical and cognitive disabilities, with 25.4% of participants identifying to having a disability.

Ethnicity - The ethnicity of participants is represented in the graph below.

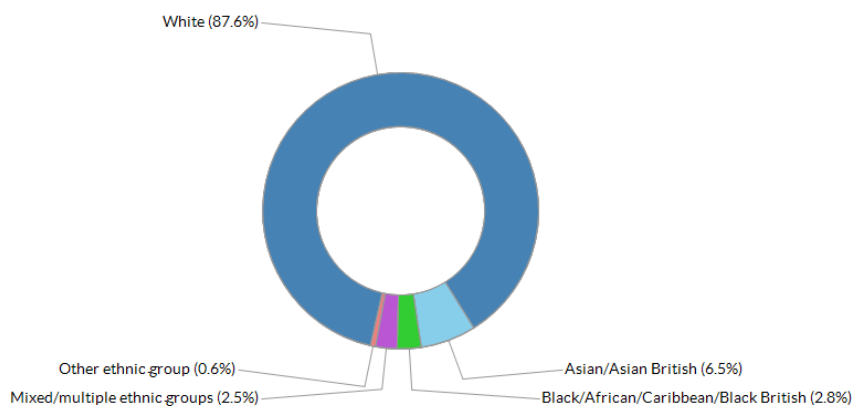
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Participant Ethnicity



Interestingly, when comparing to Hertfordshire broad ethnic makeup (below) the project engaged with higher averages of BAME participants suggesting the reach to BAME communities is strong.

Broad Ethnic Makeup of Hertfordshire



Source: ONS Census 2011, Table KS201EW

Gender



Female 40.1%



Male 59.9%

The gender breakdown of the summer participants. Hertfordshire averages are 48.96% Male and 51.04% Female (ONS Population Estimates, Mid 2019) which suggests this project has a greater reach to make participants which is not representative of the population.

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Impact Snapshot



More young people eating their 5 a day



20% increase in young people being physical active

Over 1,800 hot meals consumed



Av Attendance per day 110

20% increase in the number of children feeling confident in taking part in sport



700 Books donated

Outcome Evaluation

In line with the funding agreement with the National Lottery Community Fund, HSP conduct a mixed method evaluation of Hertfordshire's Fit, Fed & Read programme, implementing multiple forms of data collection including gathering feedback from:

- Participant Entry Data
- Online Participants Pre and Post Surveys
- Online Parent Surveys
- Delivery Partner Feedback Meeting and follow up consultation

Through these methods we aim to collect data against the outcomes we are measuring and any other feedback that can support the ongoing improvement of the programme, covering the sessions delivered, general operations and overall impact for the participants.

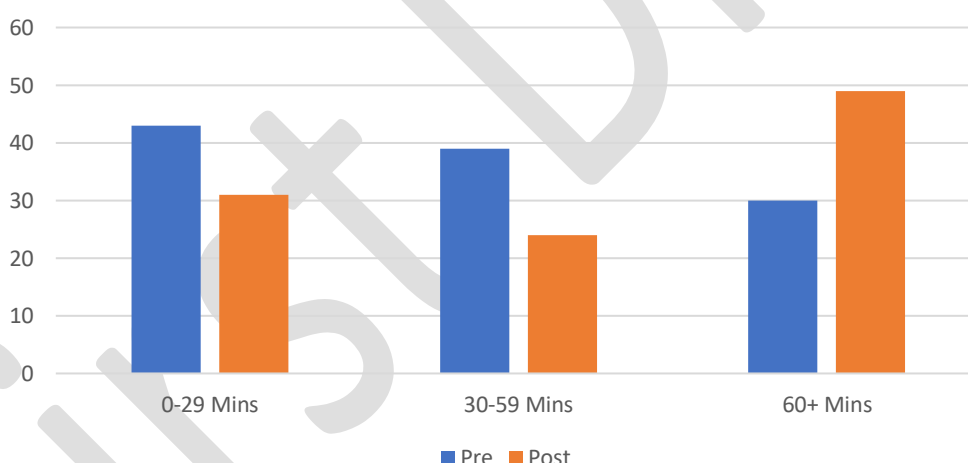
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Participant Questionnaire

The participant questionnaire was conducted on the first day of delivery to collect a base line of metrics to allow for a comparison 4 weeks later at the end of the programme. The questionnaire (Appendix A & B) detailed prompts that intended to measure the programme capacity to achieve outcome 1,2,3 & 4 (listed earlier in this report). 10 questions were design using the Sport England youth bank of questions that aligned with measuring intervention that looked to increase the knowledge and consumption of healthier foods, increase physical activity, reduce feelings of isolation and reported improve levels of wellbeing and self-efficacy.

Participant Physical Activity Levels

There were significant improvements in self-reported physical activity levels pre and post-delivery – See graph below). There was a 20% increase in those reporting that they exceeded their 60+ minutes target (CMO guidelines for children’s physical activity) which rose from 30% to 50% (+20%) whilst those reporting 0-29 minutes reduced from 38% to 26% (-12%).



The table below shows the percentage of participants answering ‘Agree’ or ‘Strongly Agree’ to the physical activity questions:

Question	PRE PROJECT	POST PROJECT
I enjoy taking part in exercise and sports	88%	91%
I feel confident when I exercise and play sports	78%	83%
I find exercise and sports easy	69%	65%
I understand why exercise and sports are good for me	88%	94%

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As the table shows, there was a small increase (3%) in those suggesting that they enjoyed exercise and sports and a 5% increase in those feeling more confident to take part in exercise and sports. There was a further increase in participants understanding why exercise and sports are good them with 94% of participants agreeing with this statement by the end of the project. There was a 4% decrease in those suggesting that they find sport and exercise easy, however this could be explained by a number of the participants trying new sports and physical activities at the project that they were not used to previously.

Healthy Eating Indicators

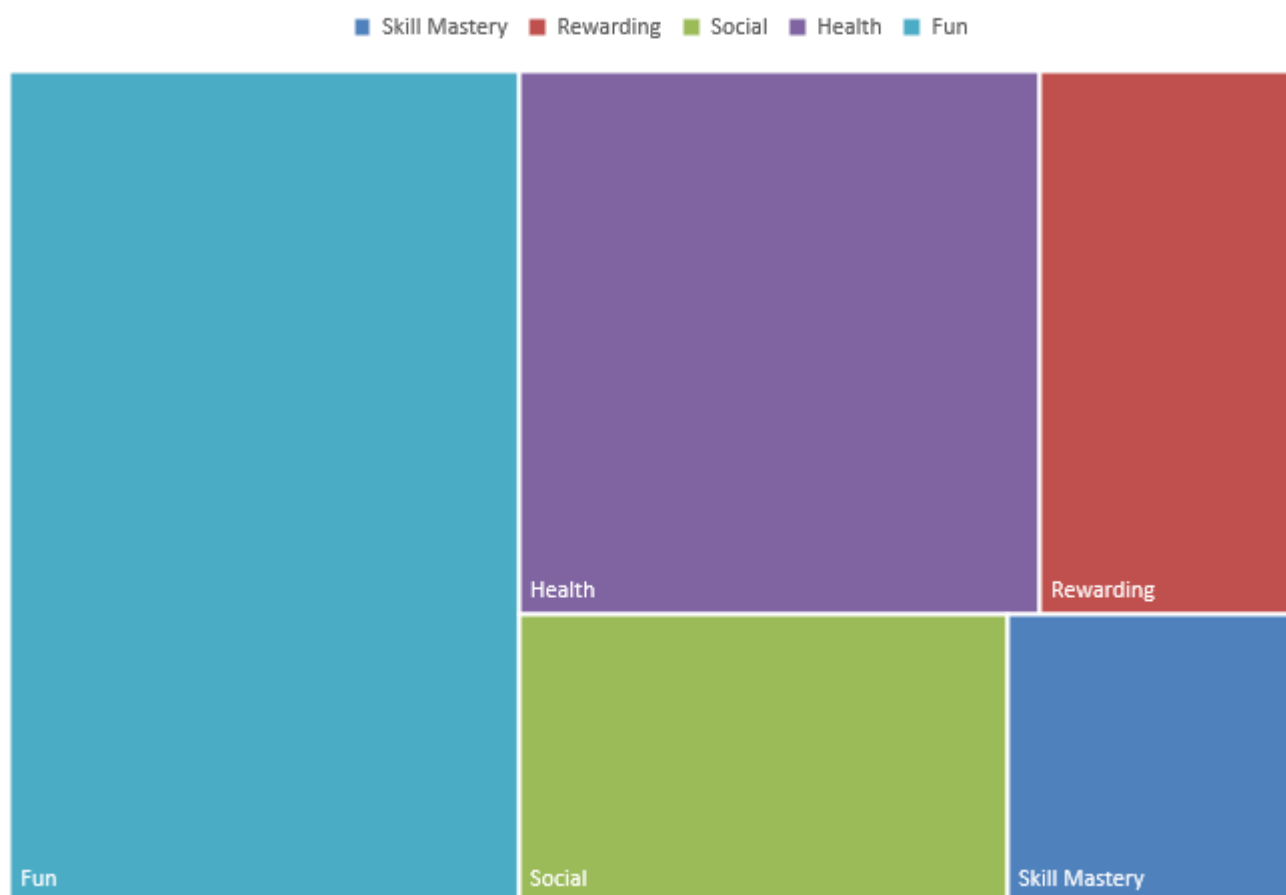


Questions 6 and 7 focus on measure outcome 1, increase knowledge & consumption of healthier foods. They are designed to measure what types of food the participants are regularly eating to identify whether the programme delivery influences these habits positively or negatively. There were some influences evidenced pre and post-delivery. In week 1 only 40% of participant were consuming their recommended daily amount

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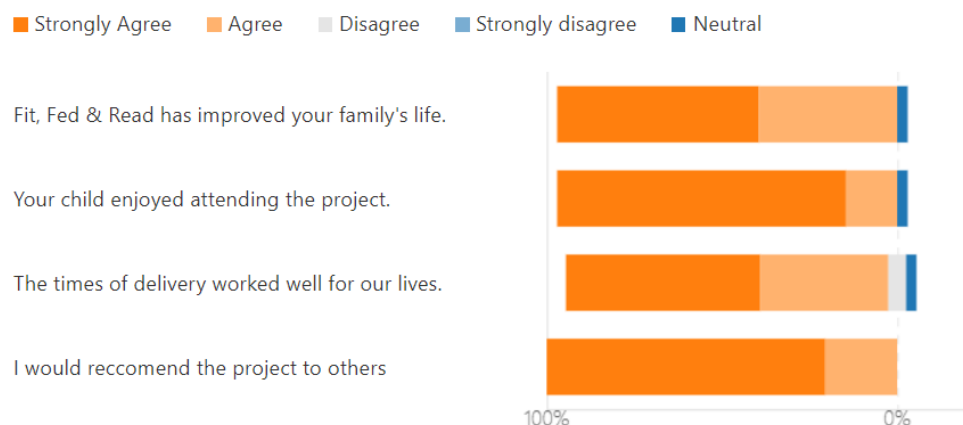
(RDA) of fruit vegetables, this increased to 43% in week 4. Whilst this is a small change the data also demonstrates that all participants increased their relative consumption of fruit and veg but only 43% were reaching their RDA.

The participants were also asked if they enjoyed sport and PA and if so can they describe why, below is a tree map (fig.6) that depicts the common themes extracted from the response text. 21% of participant attributed feelings of enjoyment (fun) and as the reason they like taking part in sport. 14% of participants attributed health motivations as to why they enjoy taking part in sport. 7% of participant mention reasons that embody a sense of rewarding connotations as to why they enjoy taking part in sport and PA, with the same percentage attributing social reasons why they like taking part in sport. Just 4% of participants attributed their enjoyment to learning a new skill.



As part of the project outcome measurements we invited all of the participants parents to complete an online survey adding an incentive of shopping vouchers as a prize draw to all entries. 63 parents responded and the results are shown below.

Project Experience



96.7% of parents agreed (57% strongly agreed, 39.7% agreed) that the project improved their family's life during the summer delivery period. 96.8% agreed (82.5% strongly agreed, 14.3% agreed) that their child enjoyed attending the project. The delivery time of the project suited 92% of the parents and guardians whose child attended the project (55.6% strongly agreed, 36.5% agree). 100% of parents and guardian who completed the questionnaire would recommend the project to the others.

Children's Eating Habits

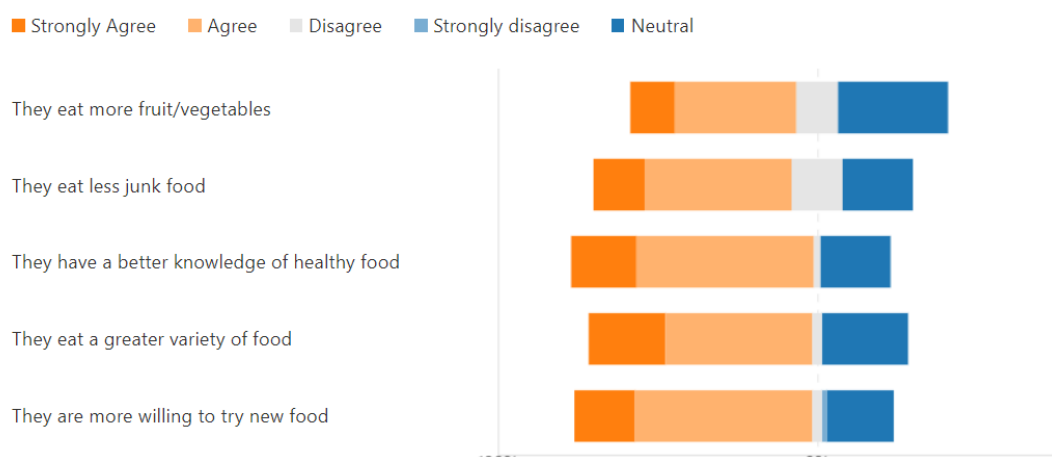


Figure 8. Parents responses when asked about their child's eating habits after four weeks of delivery.

52.4% of parents agreed (14.3% strongly agreed, 38.1% agreed) that their child ate more fruit and vegetables having attended the project whilst 12.7% of parents disagreed with this statement.

61.9% of parents agreed (15.9 strongly agreed, 46% agreed) that their child ate less junk food as a result of attending with 15.9% disagreeing with this.

76.2% of parents agreed (20.6% strongly agreed, 55.6% agreed) that their child had better knowledge of healthy food having attended the programme with only 1.6% suggesting that they didn't.

69.8% of respondents felt that their child ate a greater variety of food having attended the programme (23.8% strongly agreed, 46% agreed), with 4.8% disagreeing.

74.6% of parents believe that their child is more willing to try new foods having attended the programme (19% strongly agreed, 55.6% agreed). Only 3.2% of respondents disagreed with this statement.

Additional Parent Feedback

When the parents/guardians were asked what worked well the common emerging themes reflected positive connotations that demonstrated how grateful the parents and guardians are of the programme. Claiming the programme worked as a financial relief over the summer period and their children enjoyed the programme because it allowed them to socialise more often. Another common theme represented the positive relationship between the children, parents/guardians and the staff. Some examples of the feedback provided are below:

"I think the project is a great idea. I don't always have the money to provide varied and educational fun to my children so this helps relieve the pressure of the long break off school. I was happy for Monday to Thursday 10 until 2 but would've liked it for longer than 2 weeks. I also would've like to have seen a similar course for e.g. 12 to 15 year olds." **Parent 7**

"I feel Fitfed is a great way for kids to connect to each other, it would be even better if it closer to their home. Like a community thing." **Guardian 37**

"The staff did amazingly and we even brought cards an gifts bcuz we really appreciate there time an effort to making the children happy" **Parent 24**

"This program helped us with keeping my Grandson active and engaging with his peers" **Guardian 3**

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Partner Feedback

Following the summer delivery HSP held a round up meeting with the available contributing partners where the project was evaluated anecdotally and suggestions of plans for the future made. Some of the feedback from contributing partners is listed below:

Hertfordshire Catering Ltd said "The project is such a great cause and I never have any problem getting volunteers to prepare and serve the lunches. I also believe that using the schools which have larger facilities are better suited to support the other Partners activities"

Hertfordshire Libraries said, "The children were excited and enthusiastic both sessions and happy to join in, it worked well in a school setting as we had a large hall to run in." We are grateful for being involved with the programme, it's a brilliant thing for us to be involved with and we really benefit from being able to make a difference to some of Hertfordshire's most deserving families.

Hertfordshire Constabulary said " The scheme offered a great opportunity for us, the police, to meet and interact with young people in a fun setting. Our aim being to increase their confidence in talking to police officers and break down any barriers and pre-conceived ideas that there may have been about the police in general"

Hertfordshire Golf said " Fit, Fed and read allowed us to introduce golf as a sport to those who may not have had that opportunity without this programme. The age group is perfect for what we are trying to develop in the county and if we can get even 10% of these kids following on into club activity, that will be amazing"

Families First said " It was literally a life saver for one of families, with a suicidal mum . Mum works term time and it just gave her some space for herself. One young person attended every signal day and said it was fantastic. Well done again, if ever there was a need for Fit Fed and Read it was this one."

Conclusion

In conclusion, this summer provided some of the Hertfordshire's most vulnerable families an opportunity to resume something close to their normal lives following a three-month lockdown. Some sites were significantly over subscribed which lead to a change in delivery approach, three sites operated two-week phases to accommodate the high number of referrals. The project's partners also had to change their delivery approach to accommodate Covid-19 restrictions.

There was a 20% increase in the number of children being active at least 60 minutes a day and 20% of children stating they felt more confident being physically activity thanks to the programme. 25% of the attendees increased their daily consumption of fruit and veg and HCL served over 1,800 hot meals to the participants.

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The outcome evaluation process demonstrates there was significant impact evidenced in the pre and post-delivery in accordance to the programme outcomes. Parent/guardian feedback demonstrates high levels of appreciation and gratitude to the intervention highlighting four main theme, financial relief capabilities, visible physical activity increase, increase in the consumption of healthier food / awareness and the social opportunities in presented to the children.

Despite HCL securing an impressive nine locations to deliver we didn't have a location secured for our Baldock and Letchworth site. Connections were made with Letchworth Garden City Rugby Club who agreed to host their local project; the rugby club was a great facility with both indoor and outdoor space for the participants. The Letchworth site ended up being our best performing site with regards to attendance this seems to be attributed to its location being based very close to the Jackman's site which is known as a local area of deprivation. It is the first time the programme ran out of a community sports venue and it enabled the programme to engage with the community very effectively with the rugby club volunteering some coaches time to deliver taster rugby sessions on the programme. This engagement also allowed for the rugby club to apply for further funding through HSP's access to the *Tackling Inequalities Fund*. The club used this funding to run their own initiatives to engage local young people which was further subsidised for any Fit Fed & Read participants that wished to take part in. The Fit Fed & Read coach at Letchworth quoted;

"6 young people from FF&R wanted to join the rugby camp, the week after FF&R finished. They were all offered a free place for the week and enjoyed the camp and that they would go onto subsidise after-school sessions for children in receipt of FSM"

This summer posed it's challenges with the Covid-19 restrictions, but all the partners involved with the programme worked immensely hard to ensure we could provide a face to face delivery for the most in need young people across the county. We have learnt a lot from this summer's experiences and are extremely grateful for all hard the work that the partners put in this summer.

The impact it has had on the most in need families is invaluable at a time where most the county's provision was cancelled. The feedback we have received from the parents and partners is truly humbling and demonstrates the meaningful impact the programme has.

Implications for the Future

Project locations have been previously identified based on the availability of a local fire station, however, it is clear that some are not best placed for this project. This summer's delivery has identified the need to understand the project areas further to ensure that they can reach the right families. Locations that are not reaching the target families may need reconsidering and new venues/locations considered.

A better understanding of local need would improve the projects' ability to cater for them. Further targeting specific areas of deprivation more rigorously would increase the potential impact for the programme.

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The project round-up also identified a need to address project sustainability going forward by involving more local voluntary efforts that could continue once the funding ends.

These recommendations highlight the need for a place-based approach proving the ability for each project to take its own shape rather than pushing the 'one size fits all' approach. In order to do this HSP intend to involve Fit Fed & Read design into a place-based approach to addressing physical inactivity across hertfordshire going forward. This, we hope, will be implemented by Easter 2021 delivery.

First Draft

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