

Purpose of the report

To outline the *Fit, Fed & Read* initiative and to consider how this programme may be rolled out across Hertfordshire, in Summer 2018.

Background

Fit & Fed is a StreetGames UK initiative formulated in response to a growing body of research on the tripling inequalities of holiday hunger, isolation and inactivity. For those young people growing up in disadvantaged families, the school holidays can be a very challenging time - particularly when they are sat at home alone, or entertaining themselves on the streets whilst their friends are - unavoidably - flaunting the great time they're having on holiday or at the local sports camp.

Research shows, that there is a greater than 7 in 10 chance that if you are from one of the UK's poorest families then your family might well struggle to feed everyone - which is evidenced by the proliferation of food banks emerging across the country. 60% of families on an annual income of £25,000 can't always afford food in the holidays, and families on less than £15,000 report a "constant struggle".

School holidays are supposed to be a fun time of the year, but for a generation of children from low income families it is anything but. Children are very isolated because there are no free activity programmes on offer, and they are at risk of going hungry because there are no free school meals. Studies from France and Austria have indicated it can take up to eight weeks for pupils to recover from their summer holiday.

Fit, Fed & Read is the Herts Sports Partnership variation of this programme. It seeks to offer high quality holiday activity sessions - including support with literacy - in Hertfordshire's most disadvantaged neighbourhoods, with a nutritious meal every day, free of charge.

Last year we drafted a briefing paper which outlined our proposals, to encourage a range of multi-agency partners, to join HSP in meeting this challenge in Hertfordshire in 2018/19. As a result, the following agencies/organisations have offered their support:

1. Herts Fire and Rescue Service

The Herts Fire and Rescue Service has agreed to make available six of its fire stations to host the *Fit, Fed & Read* programmes in Summer 2018.

Working through Area Commander Steve Holton and his colleagues, who are keen to demonstrate the added value that the Herts Fire and Rescue Service can bring to community life.

The stations are equipped with kitchens and some have facilities and equipment that can be used in the delivery of sporting programmes. When the fire appliances are taken out, all have a useful indoor space that could, following a suitable risk assessment, accommodate



sport and physical activity for the young participants and, as the 2018 Easter pilot programme proved, when not required for other duties, Firefighters are keen to support the programme through active involvement.

2. Hertfordshire Catering Ltd

HCL is a subsidiary company of Hertfordshire County Council. HCL provides cost-effective catering services to schools and colleges within and beyond the greater-Hertfordshire area. Independently, HCL was keen to look at how it could help counter holiday hunger and we are pleased to have secured HCL involvement to the *Fit, Fed & Read* programme. The company is currently working with its suppliers to secure fruit and vegetables for the scheme and will provide a nutritious cooked meal for participants along with healthy eating workshops for those young people and their parents.

3. Hertfordshire Library Service

The Hertfordshire Library Service will be working in partnership with the project and has committed to delivering fun literacy sessions at the Summer 2018 projects. It is anticipated that this will be built around the *Chatterbooks* scheme – aimed at helping children build a lifelong reading habit. We also hope to tie in this offer to the library's Summer Reading Challenge.

4. Local Authorities

Our local authority Sports Development Officers have endorsed the proposed programme, and are currently scoping potential local delivery for 2018.

They will use their local insight, to ensure that the proposed programmes are targeted at the most disadvantaged young people and are delivered in a way which is complimentary to other local programmes on their patch.

They have also been charged with identifying any possible local funding streams that might be accessed to support this project.

5. Herts Sports Partnership

As well as co-ordinating the project, we have been working alongside a local coaching agency who will deliver the physical activity sessions during the Summer 2018 offer. We are also working with other partners with a view to potentially being able to offer off-site visits to local sports facilities and other attractions, for the participants.

6. Families First

Hertfordshire County Council's reach to education and community support services will be essential if we are to target and respond to the intended audience. It is also hoped that involvement by HCC will unlock some much needed financial support to underwrite the cost of this programme.



Families First is a HCC led, whole system, countywide multi-agency response to supporting family outcomes at a local level. It brings together organisations that provide early help services under one umbrella of consistent practice and clear processes.

Discussions are taking place with HCC's *Families First* unit to link the project to the families most in need of this service.

7. StreetGames UK

StreetGames UK CEO, Jane Ashworth, and her Senior Leadership Team at StreetGames have been impressed with the way Hertfordshire has taken up the *Fit and Fed* challenge, as well as with the outcomes of the 2017/18 pilot programmes. So much so, that representatives of HSP and partner organisations were recently invited to the launch of the national *Fit and Fed* programme at the Houses of Parliament, and going forward, have been invited to participate in round table parliamentary discussions.

Additionally, the StreetGames National Funding Manager has been allocated to support the fundraising effort needed to bring the 2018 proposals to fruition.

Programme Implementation – Summer 2018

A mapping exercise has been undertaken to highlight the areas in Hertfordshire where there are highest levels of free school meals and these have plotted against the local Fire Stations. Further to discussions with partner agencies the following initial roll out of the *Fit, Fed and Read* programme is proposed:

Year 1 – Easter 2018

Two one-week pilot projects were held at Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City Fire Stations which were well attended. An evaluation report has been produced of these pilot projects and can be requested by emailing w.slemmings@herts.ac.uk

Year 1 – Summer 2018

The following locations have been selected for the Summer based on the interest from the Fire Stations, local IMD scores, numbers of local children eligible for free school meals and the availability of local funding.

- Watford Fire Station
- Hemel Hempstead Fire Station
- Cheshunt Fire Station
- Stevenage Fire Station
- Borehamwood Fire Station
- Hatfield Fire Station Fire Station

The programme will be offered to 8-11 year olds, male and female.

The projects will run Monday-Thursday for four weeks commencing 30th July from 11.00am - 3.00pm.



Current and Future Offer

There are over 8,500 school age children in Hertfordshire that qualify for means-tested free school meals. Research shows that the intellectual, emotional and physical development of many of those young people will be affected over the school summer holiday period, if they are not accessing the requisite levels of nutrition and exercise.

The proposed *Fit, Fed & Read* initiative is supported by Sport England's *Towards an Active Nation* Strategy, the HSP Strategic Plan, Hertfordshire's Year of Physical Activity and Hertfordshire's Public Health Strategy. It specifically targets inequality and looks to support and give a better start in life to those young people from Hertfordshire's most disadvantaged communities and backgrounds.

The 2018 Easter pilot studies provided some fantastic insight and has proved a need for further development and delivery of the programme in Hertfordshire. The next development is to provide six simultaneous projects over the 2018 summer holidays using the same multi partner agency method as the previous pilot projects. This collaborative approach to reach a set of common objectives has already proved successful and will offer a very useful vehicle to showcase Hertfordshire's collective strength in using sport for social good.

There will undoubtedly be some key challenges that come with running simultaneous projects in addition to the identification of eligible participants without stigmatising those involved – and in securing the necessary resources to make it happen. Nevertheless, there is already considerable goodwill around this project, and we feel confident, that with the support of key partner organisations, that it can be delivered.

In doing so, it will enhance the life chances, aspirations and physical and emotional development of a group of young people within our communities, that are most in need. The vision is that each project will be run by the local community for the young people of that community, and to enhance the sustainability of these projects, a programme of community development involving the recruitment of volunteers, will be undertaken. The role of the volunteers will be central to the sustainability of the programmes beyond the external funding cycle, and those recruited will benefit from a comprehensive training and development package.

Looking further ahead we are currently in conversation with The Big Lottery regarding submitting a funding application that would allow us to provide a project in each District/Borough of Hertfordshire in the Easter and summer holidays from 2019 to 2022. We hope that this will also open up opportunities to help some local people to gain voluntary work experience whilst developing skills that might assist with their employability and/or help in reducing social isolation.

Whilst it is anticipated that HSP will remain the lead and accountable body for this programme, it will be overseen by a Project Steering Board, consisting of representatives of all the main support agencies.

