



UNIQUE
VOICE

SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT SUMMER 2021

WELCOME

2021 will go on record for many reasons; however, in simple terms it has been a quest to begin recovering from the effects of 2020. It has been the year that the government dedicated funding to support holiday provision. It has been the year a certain premiership footballer became a much needed voice and ambassador for families, and indeed our sector. It has been the year that children and young people’s mental health came into focus like never before.

Summer 2021 at Unique Voice was all about joining that long road to recovery and enabling more equal opportunities for the families we represent. Whilst we had a clear mission with measurable goals and statistics to obtain, we also had an unshakeable determination to ‘show up’ this summer in a way that we never could have done before. That meant, quite literally, ensuring we opened our doors every day, of course, but it also meant much more. It meant fully absorbing the responsibility of the risks associated with delivering provision on a large scale during a pandemic. It meant our staff ‘showing up’ with understanding, knowledge, skills and flexibility to support children and young people during this extremely challenging time. It meant ‘showing up’ in meetings with our colleagues across the city to explore and reinvent what community engagement means and looks like. Lastly, it meant ‘showing up’ as the provider we are recognised for by our communities, one that keeps an open mind to needs of young people; one that remains curious, flexible, reactive and importantly, targeted.

We showed up, we learnt, we grew and we delivered.

Thanks to everyone who enabled us to make this summer one of the most highly impactful in our 10 year history. We are beyond proud of the Unique Voice team who worked hard every day to meet the needs of the communities we are proud to serve.

Krystal, Claire & Cat

OUR MISSION

We believe that social and emotional education is the most important learning children and young people can receive. Our work aims to contribute towards a generation that is given the opportunity to spend time learning about emotions, respect, equality, empathy, acceptance and kindness. We want to enable young people to thrive with the resilience to overcome adversity, the confidence to make positive decisions, and a strong moral compass to guide them on their journey through life.

OUR CORE VALUES

That every child and young person deserves to receive validation that their feelings and opinions matter and are important.

That every child and young person deserves to learn how to express themselves and share their emotions.

That every child and young person deserves to be supported in learning how to process and recover from adverse experiences.

That every child and young person deserves to realise the power they hold to shape their own future by making positive, informed choices.

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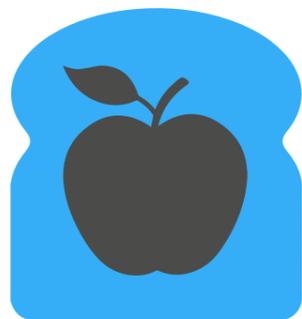
THE STORY OF SUMMER



6060
CHILDREN RECEIVED
OUR STAY AT HOME
ACTIVITY PACKS



319
CHILDREN ATTENDED OUR
FACE-TO-FACE HOLIDAY
PROGRAMMES



500+
HEALTHY LUNCHES
WERE SUPPLIED; MADE
AVAILABLE TO EVERY
CHILD ACCESSING OUR
PROGRAMMES



WE MADE **200+**
DELIVERIES IN THE
COMMUNITY OF OUR ACTIVITY
PACKS AND FOOD PARCELS



WE OPENED AND RAN OUR
HOLIDAY PROGRAMMES **88**
TIMES THROUGHOUT THE
SUMMER



WE RECEIVED **56**
HANDWRITTEN THANK YOU
CARDS FROM CHILDREN
AND THEIR FAMILIES



24 DIVERSE AND CREATIVE
TEAM MEMBERS WORKED
WITHIN OUR PROGRAMMES



WE DELIVERED **20**
WEEKLY PROGRAMMES
IN 4 WEEKS

14 CHILDREN SHARED
THEIR CREATIONS FROM
THEIR COMPLETED
ACTIVITY PACKS



WE DELIVERED HOLIDAY
PROGRAMMES IN **5**
AREAS OF NEED ACROSS
BRISTOL AND SOUTH
GLOUCESTERSHIRE



2 PROFESSIONAL CRICKET
PLAYERS SURPRISED OUR
CHILDREN WITH A VISIT TO
THE PROGRAMMES

0 IS THE NUMBER OF
TIMES WE CLOSED
OR WERE UNABLE TO
DELIVER PROGRAMMES



“I LOVED USING ALL OF THE ART STUFF! MY FAVOURITE THING WAS USING THE PENS AND I COULD SHARE THEM WITH MY FRIENDS WHICH WAS COOL FOR ME. CAN I PLEASE HAVE IT AGAIN NEXT SUMMER?”

HOLIDAY PROGRAMME PARTICIPANT

COVID-19

Throughout the course of 2021, Covid-19 has continued to challenge the way we interact with young people. By 1st July 2021 over 471,000 young people* were isolating in the UK, causing further disruption to their education and vital social interactions. These challenging circumstances are likely to have widened the disadvantage gap for children accessing Free School Meals (FSM), who may have had less access to technology, potentially challenging family dynamics, and other issues which many children experience.

Whilst our model of supplying activity packs to enjoy at home was still a powerful and creative alternative to remotely engage young people, we knew that running face-to-face provision was still needed in order to repair and restore some of the many challenges young people were facing. With unemployment and poverty rising, we also recognised that young people impacted by adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) were likely to be having increased challenges exacerbated by the pandemic.

100% OF PARENTS AND CARERS SAID THAT THEIR CHILD FREQUENTLY STRUGGLED WITH BOREDOM IN LOCKDOWN/ POST LOCKDOWN

98% OF PARENT/CARERS THINK IT IS IMPORTANT THAT ACTIVITIES ARE PROVIDED FOR CHILDREN WHEN THEY ARE NOT AT SCHOOL

62% OF PARENT/CARERS OF CHILDREN ATTENDING OUR PROGRAMMES THINK COVID-19 HAS HAD AN IMPACT ON THEIR CHILD



According to a recent 2021 UNICEF study*, young people reported what they enjoyed the most about play. These were; spending time with family, spending time with friends, and playing outside. Despite the digital pull to young people, the most common answers given for what they were excited about were the simple ones. This reinforced to us that the summer 2021 at UV needed to lean on the fundamentals and traditional formats of play at its best.

We also recognised that we needed to think carefully about how the impact of Covid-19 may impact a child's attendance at our programmes. We prepared with training on varied learning needs such as poor social skills, hyper-vigilant behaviour and social anxiety, enabling us to support young people's return to organised, group activity.

THE STORY FOR 2021 – HAF

In April 2021, The Department for Education's (DfE) Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) Programme was launched. The HAF programme is a national programme to provide holiday activities and nutritious food to school age children and young people in receipt of benefits-related free school meals (FSM) during the Easter, Summer and Winter school holidays of 2021.

Funding was allocated to local authorities based on the number of children and young people in receipt of FSM in local areas. The government expectation was that local authorities would work with local holiday activity providers to increase capacity to offer free spaces to children and young people in receipt of FSM.

A big difference to this year for our communities was the scale of available funding. Typically, we would have spent 6-8 months of the year independently raising the funds needed to deliver half of the amount of provision we went on to deliver for disadvantaged communities. Following an application and consultation with community partners, we were awarded funding for three areas of Bristol and two areas of South Gloucestershire for face-to-face programmes.

Our feedback on this successful commission was that we were one of the few solely targeted providers who had both the connections and reputation to engage hard to reach young people. This is a role we felt we had earned over the years thanks to the trust enlisted by community members, young people and families. We felt extremely privileged to be recognised as this provider.

Following this news, we were able to quickly respond as a targeted provider who had the connections with families to maximise engagement and attendance to this offer. All of the areas that we delivered within were priority areas with high levels of deprivation and need.

In addition to the programmes, we were also commissioned by South Gloucestershire Council who wanted to maximise the offer to targeted young people by supporting with one of our stay-at-home activity packs to every child in receipt of FSM.

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In Bristol, we also supplied packs to young people who faced barriers attending a face-to-face HAF supported programme. We were even fortunate enough to be independently supported by local business, Astra Security, who awarded us funds to give activity packs to disadvantaged families.

To complement both the HAF funding objectives and our own social mission, we devised the following aims and expectations for our delivery in summer 2021:



SAFE We want every young person to feel that our programmes provide a safe haven



SUPPORTIVE AND TARGETED We want the environment of our programmes to be inclusive to all and we are particularly driven to support those most isolated and disengaged in programme offers



STIMULATING Fun is important! We want young people to feel empowered to express themselves in play



SKILL-BASED Whilst having fun, we want young people to try new experiences and offer them a high quality art experience that can boost their education and confidence



FOOD We want to see food incorporated into our programme with healthy lunches and awareness activities focusing on nutrition

“IT IS IDEAL FOR LOW INCOME/SINGLE PARENT HOUSEHOLDS WHO MAY NOT HAVE THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT OTHER FAMILIES HAVE. IT ALSO GIVES PARENTS TIME TO DO THINGS WITH OTHER CHILDREN AND DAY-TO-DAY TASKS”

PARENT/CARER –
HOLIDAY PROGRAMME PARTICIPANT

OUR PROCESS & PARTNERS



FOR PROGRAMMES – BRISTOL AND SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE

In order to ensure that the programmes reached the desired demographic, we implemented an in-depth referral process. In the initial stages of the process, all lead contacts from the host schools, following communication with the families, submitted referrals for their FSM children who they believed would benefit.

Following the initial referrals and closer to the Summer launch we hosted individual meetings with each school lead, often safeguarding leads and pastoral care staff. During these meetings we discussed each child in depth, allowing the lead to share beneficial information and guidance for supporting the children whilst at the programme. This allowed us to complete a written brief on each child and create any necessary care plans which were shared with team managers at their managers' briefings prior to the holiday programme.

This information was invaluable in ensuring that we were able to successfully support the children whilst they were attending our programmes.

In addition to the prioritised host schools' referrals, we were also able to accept referrals from other agencies, such as social workers, frontline professionals representing children in need, and to neighbouring schools. We had a network of over 500+ contacts to whom we were able to advertise the programmes. These were processed through direct contacts and all information was shared with the professionals ahead of parents/carers being contacted.

For many of our referred young people a digital programme sign up remains a barrier. We have identified that this can be due to a number of factors such as trust, connection to their family or hesitancy to try a new experience. For this reason, over half of our sign ups are successful due to our calling families directly and signing up over the phone. Despite having prior information supplied by the referring agency, we took the time to talk through the offer to families and get to know them on a personal level.

“I WANTED TO REACH OUT AND PERSONALLY THANK YOU FOR THE AMAZING SUMMER ACTIVITY PACK THAT (MY CHILD) RECEIVED. IT WAS FULL OF AMAZING IDEAS AND HAD EVERYTHING WE NEEDED FOR SEVERAL DAYS OF FUN. IT HELPED US OUT IN AN INCREDIBLY TRICKY TIME, AS I’VE RECENTLY HAD SPINAL SURGERY AND IT WAS VERY DIFFICULT TO GET OUT AND ABOUT DURING THE HOLIDAYS. SO THANK YOU, THANK YOU. WE REALLY SPENT SOME LOVELY HOURS TOGETHER CRAFTING!”

PARENT – ACTIVITY PACK RECIPIENT

FOR ACTIVITY PACKS – BRISTOL

Commissioned by Bristol City Council, through funding from the Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) Programme, Unique Voice, Children’s Scrapstore and The Children’s Kitchen partnered to provide creative activity packs with different focuses to children who would be unable to attend holiday provisions during the summer holiday period.

We cascaded this offer to referring professionals who represented young carers, children seeking medical attention and where mental health makes leaving the house challenging.

All referred children received one of each pack which included a variety of activities:

The Children’s Kitchen - Ideas and supplies for fun and delicious dishes

Unique Voice - Engaging and fun art activities and materials

Children’s Scrapstore - Colourful and exciting outdoor craft activities and materials

Many families also received a food parcel in addition to their activity pack deliveries, supplied by Feeding Bristol. These were delivered with the packs to both agency settings to distribute and directly to children’s homes.

SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Commissioned by South Gloucestershire Council through funding from the Holiday Activity Fund, Unique Voice and The Real Wrap Company partnered to provide creative activity packs with food boxes to every child in receipt of FSM.

These were distributed before the summer holidays and delivered direct to schools to hand out to families. Every box consisted of our activity pack and food which was accompanied by recipe ideas to make healthy meals at home.

“WE HAVE HAD SO MANY POSITIVE COMMENTS FROM PARENTS. THEY WERE SO APPRECIATIVE AND COULDN'T SPEAK HIGHLY ENOUGH OF THE IMPACT IT HAD ON THEIR CHILDREN.”

ALAN WALTERS, HEADTEACHER, CONISTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

OUR PREPARATION

COVID

Throughout the delivery of the 2021 summer programme, we remained vigilant in protecting our staff, young people and their families. Robust controls were enforced at every programme and our distribution of activity packs, following government guidance, our own best practice and support from health agencies.

CAPACITY

TO DELIVER HAF FUNDED PROGRAMMES IN 5 AREAS OF NEED WE RECRUITED 12 ADDITIONAL SKILLED YOUTH AND CREATIVE FACILITATORS TO SUPPORT DELIVERY ALONGSIDE OUR EXISTING TEAM.

TO DELIVER 6,060 HAF FUNDED ACTIVITY PACKS WE RECRUITED AND TRAINED 15 OPERATIONAL WORKERS TO ASSIST IN ASSEMBLING AND DELIVERING.

To support with the overall running of both streams, we recruited a Summer Co-ordinator to support with the management and successful delivery.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

We were present at community briefings that were set up in to ensure each HAF provider was complementing each other's provision and participated in strategy meetings to determine the best location and times to run each of our sessions.

TRAINING

Our programme staff participated in a 2-day training course designed to establish the aims of the HAF programme, set goals on how we could embed our trauma informed approaches to delivery and work as a collaborative and supportive team to each other. This included focusing on human hungers linked to 'Transactional Analysis Theory' that allowed the team to develop strategies to embed certainty, recognition and stimulation within the programme for the children.

As an organisation we participated in government briefings and utilised the additional training offered to HAF providers which included boosting skills to our leadership and general running of holiday programme sessions.

Managers of the programme underwent additional training to ensure that every programme was delivered in line with OFSTED regulations, Unique Voice policy, robust safeguarding measures and that general safety was adhered to at all times.

We trained and funded more team members who were able to support with the signing up of children to our programmes which included administration and 1:1 calls with families.

We invested in external training to support our staff's delivery at programmes. This included first aid training, child development training and crucially, trauma-informed training. This included understanding the effects of early childhood experiences on the brain and looking at the preventative measures to reduce the impact.

We hosted weekly briefings for all our team to ensure that staff were looked after. In these group sessions, we encouraged staff to pay close attention to their own stress mechanisms and how we can identify signs of struggling to build community resilience as a team.

THE PROGRAMMES AND PACKS

HOLIDAY PROGRAMMES

During the holiday programme, children took part in a wide range of physical activities, such as yoga, dance and outdoor games. Every day there was a different activity which promoted movement and developed physical skills. We aimed to incorporate our 'theme of the day' into our choices of physical activities; for example, on the day themed 'We're going to the beach!', we played a game of beach volleyball using balloons, teaching the children volleyball rules and encouraging team work.

Drama and physical theatre was a key skillset covered during the programme, and children learned to use their physicality to express themselves through freeze frames, drama scenes and role play games. The UV team was highly conscious of inclusivity throughout the planning and delivery of physical activities and plans were put in place to ensure all abilities were catered for. One of many success stories includes the pairing of a wheelchair-using child with a UV facilitator who is also a wheelchair user and was able to model physical activities for them in a way which was fully accessible, including yoga, volleyball and dance.

Drama and performance were a key focus of the holiday programme and our skilled facilitators offered the children an opportunity to experience a wide range of specialist enrichment workshops. The children took part in drama and role play activities, a body percussion workshop, practised performance skills such as projection and characterisation, and learned to sing in a 3-part chorus. The daily arts and crafts section of our scheme gave children the opportunity to work with a variety of different materials to make collages,

masks, sensory toys, magic tricks and much more. Our child-centred approach to the programme meant that the children were able to explore their own creativity through a wide range of enriching activities.

One of the big highlights of the programme was that a couple of players from Gloucestershire Women's Cricket Team made a surprise visit. Mollie Robbins and Sidra Khan showed up during the final day of the 4-day workshop, providing delight and excitement all-round! They encouraged the children to come out of their shells and support one another through a series of physical games, races, and activities. These were such a huge hit that the plans for the afternoon were re-arranged so the children could continue playing, so as not to interrupt the fun! This visit was kindly organised by our long-standing supporters, Astra Security.



**THIS SUMMER
6,060 CHILDREN
RECEIVED
OUR ACTIVITY
PACKS**



**THIS SUMMER
319 CHILDREN
ATTENDED
OUR HOLIDAY
PROGRAMMES**



**“IT IS FUN TO DO.
IT ALSO MEANT
SPENDING TIME
WITH MY MUM
AND DAD IN
COMPLETING IT.”**

RECIPIENT OF ACTIVITY PACK

ACTIVITY PACKS

Even with Covid restrictions easing this summer, the model of activity packs enables young people and their families to feel connected at home and also helps to address the gaps in how disadvantaged young people can access support.

The Unique Voice Activity Pack summer edition was filled with engaging age-appropriate art activities and materials. Activities included crafting, drama and games. The pack is designed to reach low-income households who are isolating or do not have access to creative opportunities. The primary pack is designed with younger audiences in mind; to inspire creativity in the home and spark the recipient's imaginations.

THIS SUMMER WE HAVE SUPPORTED... 6379 CHILDREN

98% OF CHILDREN REFERRED TO OUR PROGRAMMES CAME FROM LOW INCOME FAMILIES

100% OF PARENT/CARERS THINK THAT THEIR CHILD HAS BENEFITTED FROM ATTENDING THIS UNIQUE VOICE HOLIDAY PROGRAMME

100% OF PROFESSIONALS AGREE THAT OUR PROGRAMMES HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT ON THE CHILDREN WHO ATTEND

100% OF PARENT/CARERS FELT THAT THE ACTIVITY PACK HAD AN IMPACT/INFLUENCE ON THE PARTICIPATING YOUNG PERSON IN RELATION TO OFFERING A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE



100% OF PROFESSIONALS AGREE THAT OUR PROGRAMMES HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT ON THE FAMILIES/CARERS OF THE CHILDREN WHO ATTEND



THE AVERAGE AGE OF CHILDREN REFERRED TO OUR PROGRAMMES WAS 8



86% OF PARENT/CARERS WERE NOT AWARE OF ANY OTHER HOLIDAY PROGRAMMES IN THEIR AREA THAT IS ACCESSIBLE FOR THEIR FAMILY



99% OF PARENT/CARERS WOULD RECOMMEND THE UV PROGRAMME TO ANOTHER PARENT



86% OF PARENTS/CARERS FELT THAT THE ACTIVITY PACK HAD AN IMPACT ON IMPROVING THEIR CHILD'S MENTAL HEALTH



89% OF CHILDREN WHO ATTENDED THE HOLIDAY PROGRAMME SAID THAT THEY MADE NEW FRIENDS



78% OF CHILDREN SAID THAT THE PROGRAMME MADE THEM FEEL MORE CONFIDENT IN SHARING THEIR IDEAS



87% OF CHILDREN SAID THAT THE PROGRAMME HAS MADE THEM FEEL MORE CONFIDENT MAKING FRIENDS



100% OF PARENT/CARERS FELT THAT THE ACTIVITY PACK HAD AN IMPACT/ INFLUENCE ON THE PARTICIPATING YOUNG PERSON IN RELATION TO OFFERING A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE



100% OF PROFESSIONALS WOULD REFER A CHILD TO OUR PROGRAMME AGAIN



55% OF PARENT/CARERS NOTICED A CHANGE IN FAMILY LIFE DURING THE PROGRAMME

These statistics were taken from feedback surveys completed by families we supported, holiday programme participants and professionals that referred them to us.
Activity Packs - 41 families (67 children in total) took part in the feedback survey. 18 professionals took part in the survey and they received packs for 252 children/ young people.
Holiday Programmes - 183 parents completed the feedback form, 230 children completed the pre questionnaire, 210 children completed the post questionnaire.

THE COMMUNITY HAVE THEIR SAY

COMMENTS FROM PARENTS / CARERS

"The kids have not stopped talking about it (the holiday programme). I would tell them the staff are friendly, caring, supportive, it's safe and it's time for the kids to make new experiences."

"Thank you so much for this week. Not only has he enjoyed it but it has given me time to sort the 'adult' things at home which would have escalated his behaviour."

"I hope your team can continue to help the children who need you. You really are heroes to many children"

"I loved it, (the holiday programme) it gave us time to spend time individually with each child. My son is autistic and a lot of our time is devoted to him. So to be given that extra time with our daughters was amazing."

"The help and support offered through these channels has been fantastic. I have found myself supporting my family without employment for the first time in 15 years and we are very grateful for all the support we have received."

"I can't say anything better than I've said already. There was somebody on the gate greeting you every day, telling you where to go, they were very friendly people"

"I can't thank any of you enough. It was a time for her just to be a little girl"

"The activities and meals are great, made the summer holidays much easier"

COMMENTS FROM REFERRING SCHOOLS / PROFESSIONALS

"Increase in confidence and self-esteem. They returned to school happy with stories and information about activities that they had been up to in the school holidays. Unique Voice improved trust relationships with an increased number of adults at school due to school staff working at the programme." Kirsten Parton - Assistant Vice Principal May Park

"Parents were relieved that professionals were around in the summer and that their children were given opportunities they wouldn't have had" Jo Williams - Headteacher Barley Close

"Support/respice from challenging behaviour, time to work and attend appointments, food provision and financial benefits" Lucy Lang - Headteacher Fair Furlong

"I would like to pass on my thanks to you and your team for all they did for the children at Coniston over the summer. The children and the parents were so grateful and the positive comments I have received have proved what an amazing job you all did. I came in a few times during the holidays and the children were having so much fun. The adults were kind, caring and provided our children with activities that were new and exciting. I can't thank you enough." - Alan Walters Headteacher

"One family said how much their children loved the packs last time, so they were thrilled to receive them again. They said how their children couldn't wait to open the box and had everything out as soon as they got home! This helped to focus the children on a positive activity when things around them may have been more challenging to manage." - Professional referring for activity packs



“THESE CHILDREN WILL HAVE ACCESS TO REGULAR CONTACT, FRIENDSHIPS, FOOD AND SUPPORT AND THOSE IN DOMESTIC ABUSE HOUSEHOLDS ARE SAFE WHILST ATTENDING THESE SESSIONS.”

JULIE BRITTON – FULTON AVENUE PRIMARY SCHOOL

WHAT'S NEXT?

Due to the government Holiday Activity Fund, we have had a bigger reach this summer than ever before, working with families across Bristol and beyond. As an organisation, this is the scale of work we would welcome every school holiday.

The work we delivered made a significant impact, and proved to us and those around us the quality of the service we provide. Like our colleagues across the country we now are awaiting the government's review on the HAF, and what funding, if any, they will decide to dedicate for the future.

As ever, we are proud to be an independent organisation, with the drive and innovation to push forward to deliver our valuable services. Over the course of the next year we will be working with our partner organisations and generous funders to plan our strategy for holiday provision. We are realistic in knowing that this level of funding will be unlikely to be accessible on a regular basis; however we are determined to carry on with the confidence to succeed in serving our communities to the best of our ability.

OUR THANKS

FUNDERS

The Foundation for Children

Nisbet Foundation

Department for Education

Bristol City Council

South Gloucestershire Council

Rolls Royce

Astra Security Ltd.

Our Help100 Club Members

OUR PARTNERS, SUPPORTERS AND COLLABORATORS

Our host schools

Community partners and referring agencies

Our development advisory group that wonderfully guide and support our journey

To all of our hardworking Unique Voice team

And most importantly, to all of the young people and families we are proud to serve

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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