



Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee

5 May 2021

Title	Covid 19 Winter Fund Scheme and Holiday Activity Fund Updates
Report of	Chairman of the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee
Wards	All
Status	Public
Urgent	No
Key	No
Enclosures	Appendix A – Covid 19 winter fund scheme policy Appendix B – Holiday Activity and Food presentation Appendix C – CWFS demographics report from school payments: December 2020 and March 2021
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Summary

On 8 November 2020 the government announced a £170 million COVID Winter Fund Scheme (CWFS), the objective of which was to provide support to vulnerable households and families with children particularly affected by the pandemic throughout the winter period where alternative sources of assistance may be unavailable.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) provided funding to local authorities, to administer the scheme and provide direct assistance to vulnerable households and families with children particularly affected by the pandemic.

Barnet was allocated £986,960, with a further £343,114 allocated when the scheme was extended from 31st March 2021 to 16th April 2021. The criteria for the allocation of the funds was approved by the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee on 30th November 2020.

On 8 November 2020 the DfE announced that the pilot Holiday Activity and Food programme (HAF) would be extended to all Local Authorities. This programme requires Local Authorities,

with partners from the VCS sector to provide holiday activities with food and nutritional education to all children eligible for free school meals (FSM benefits element) and their families. Children from low income families who do not access FSM can also be included in the programme

Barnet has been allocated £1,163,420. for delivery over Easter, summer and Christmas holidays in 2021

This report sets out the delivery progress for both the CWFS and the HAF programme for note by the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee.

Officers Recommendations

That the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee note the following:

- 1. The progress of the distribution of the CWFS**
- 2. The progress and future plans for delivery of the HAF programme.**

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the progress of the distribution of the Covid Winter Fund Scheme (CWFS) against the criteria agreed by the committee on the 30th November 2020. The report also provides updates on the Easter delivery of the Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme and sets out delivery plans for the summer and Christmas holidays in 2021.

2. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Covid 19 Winter Fund Scheme

- 2.1 On 8 November 2020 the government announced a significant package of extra targeted financial support for those in need over the winter period. The £170 million COVID Winter Fund Scheme saw new funding issued to local authorities to support those most in need across England with the cost of food and energy bills
- 2.2 The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) provided funding to local authorities, who administered the scheme to vulnerable households and families with children particularly affected by the pandemic. This included some families who normally have access to Free School Meals during term time. The London Borough of Barnet was allocated £986,960 to cover the period from early December 2020 until the end of March 2021 and a further £343,114 to cover the extension period of 1st – 16th April 2021.
- 2.3 The objective of the COVID Winter Fund Scheme, as set out in the guidance, was to provide support to vulnerable households and families with children particularly affected by the pandemic throughout the winter period where alternative sources of assistance may be unavailable.

- 2.4 Local authorities had flexibility to develop a local delivery approach that best fits the scheme's objective. The agreed criteria for Barnet is attached as appendix A
- 2.5 80% of the fund was ring-fenced to support families with children, and up to 20% of the fund to support other vulnerable households or individuals who meet the eligibility criteria. At least 80% of the total funding was ring-fenced to provide support with food, energy and water bills (including sewerage), with up to 20% on other items.

Holiday Activity and Food Programme (HAF)

- 2.6 Since 2018, the department for education have invested in local programmes that deliver free healthy meals and fun activities to disadvantaged children in the summer as part of targeted pilot programmes
- 2.7 In summer 2018, £2 million was available in seven summer holiday pilots across England, in summer 2019 £9 million was available in programmes in 11 local authority areas, to improve coverage, joint-working, promotion, consistency and quality, In summer 2020 £9 million was available in 17 local authority areas
- 2.8 The learning from delivery in these areas is being shared now that the programme has been extended to all local authorities in England.
- 2.9 The Holiday Activities and Food programme has expanded in 2021 so that children on free school meals in England will be offered free healthy meals and enriching activities over the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays.
- 2.10 £220 million will be delivered through grants to all local authorities, London Borough of Barnet's grant allocation is £1,163,420.
- 2.11 The objective of the Holiday Activity and Food Programme is to reduce 'unhealthy holidays' and provide fun activities for children who would likely not otherwise have access to such activities and healthy food during holiday periods. It has been demonstrated that school holidays can be pressure points for some families because of increased costs and reduced incomes and that some children are more likely to experience 'unhealthy holidays' in terms of nutrition and physical health.
- 2.12 Such programmes promote a child's welfare and development and improve their outcomes for education, health and wellbeing. Children who attend holiday provision will:
- Eat more healthily
 - Be more active
 - Take part in engaging and enriching activities
 - Be safe and not isolated
 - Have greater knowledge of health and nutrition
 - Be more engaged with school and other services
 - Have greater knowledge and awareness of holiday club provision

2.13 The criteria and requirements of the DfE on local authorities delivering this programme are set out in Appendix B

Updates

2.14 To identify families with children who were eligible for support via the Covid Winter Fund Scheme we have worked closely with schools and Early Years providers as they know their children and families best. All partners have been helpful in this process and we have been able to support 9,965 children in the December/January payment, 9,938 in the February payment and 13,866 in the March Payment (financial details are in the finance section below).

2.15 We ensured that the scheme was publicised to families and had a small number of families who approached us directly, their request was clarified with their child's school/EYs provider and then processed

2.16 We have worked with neighbouring boroughs to ensure any Barnet children attending schools in other boroughs who would meet the criteria for the fund were identified and had reciprocal arrangements in place.

2.17 We gathered data in relation to the age and ethnicity of children receiving the fund and looked at demography through the schools/settings they attend which is detailed in the chart below. It has not been possible to identify if the same cohort of children accessed each payment of the fund as we do not gather any personal data however requests from schools and providers in terms of numbers of children were similar in each round of funding administered. Chart 1 and 2 below show the participants of the scheme broken down by age and ethnicity groups for the scheme so far.

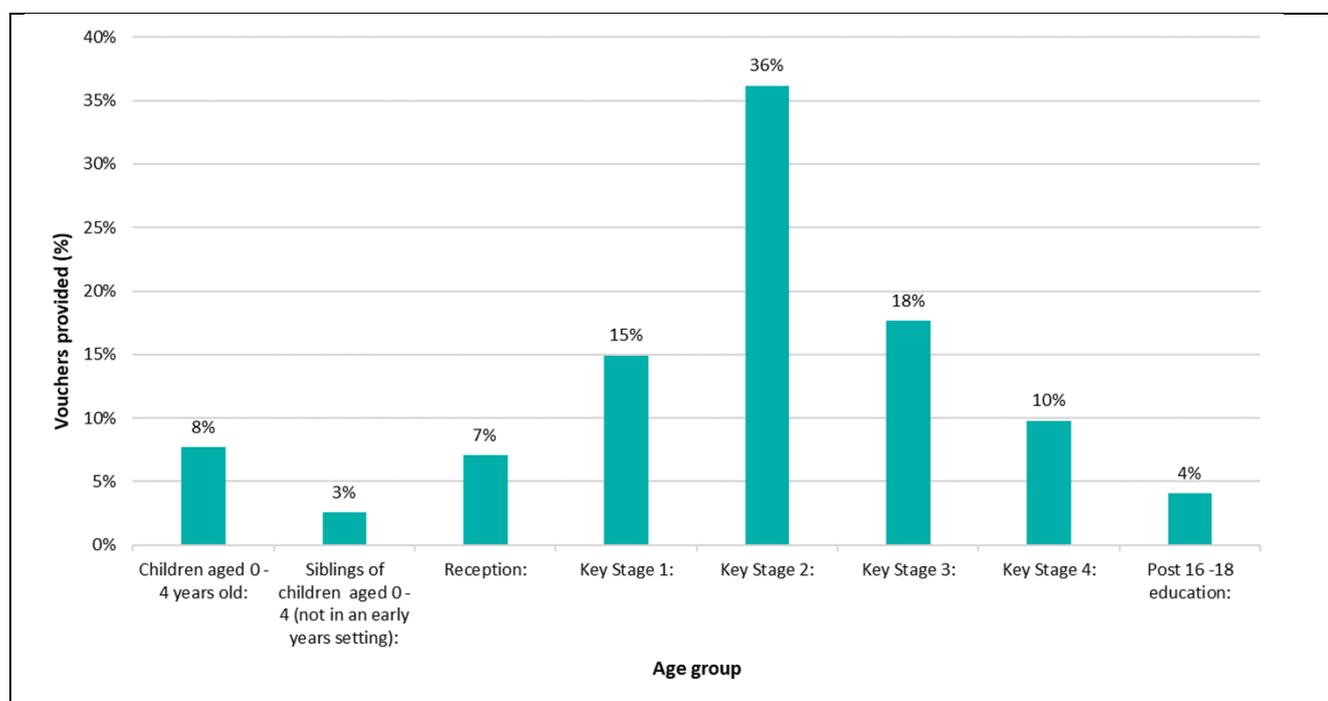


Chart 1: Percentage of vouchers provided across the whole scheme by age group Note: Data is only available for 20,221 children. Due to combination of data sets some children will be duplicates.

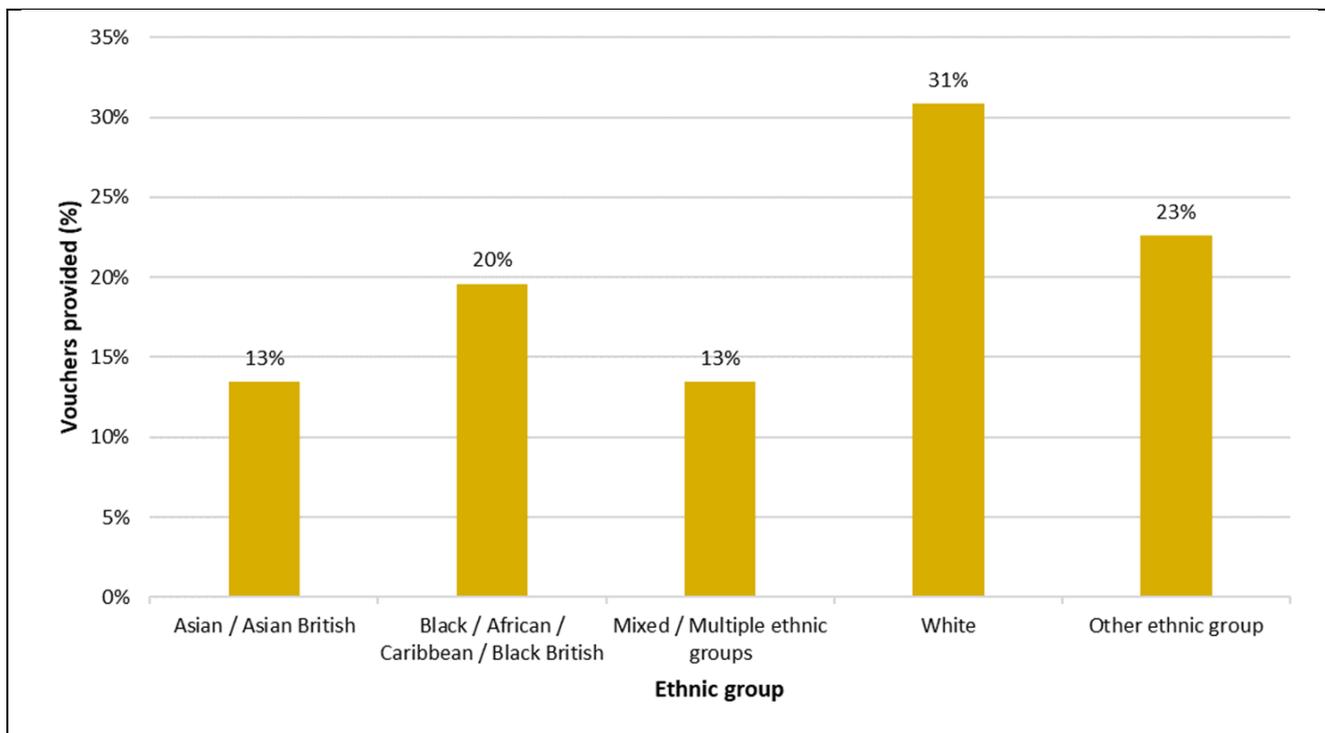


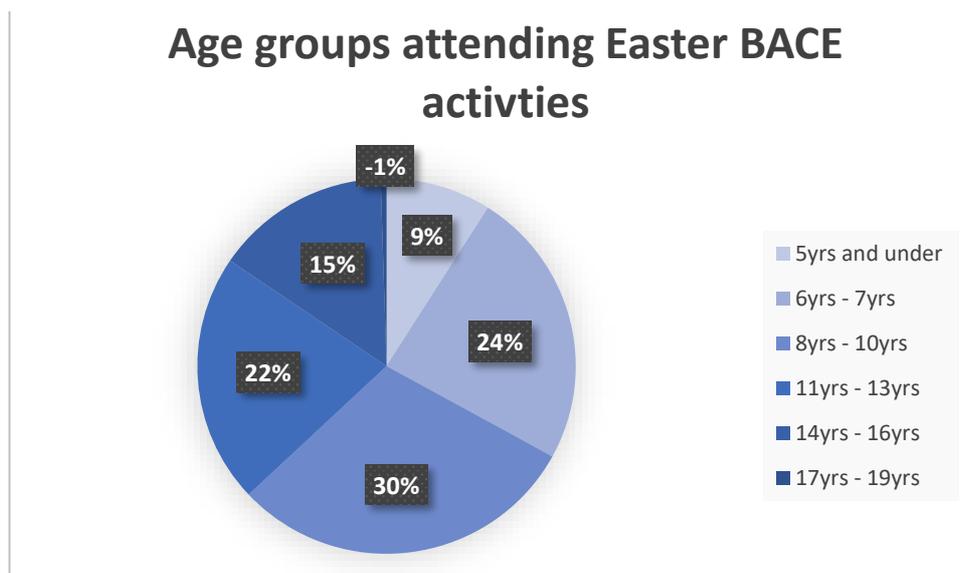
Chart 1: Percentage of vouchers provided across the whole scheme by ethnic group Note: Data is only available for 11,089 children. Due to combination of data sets some children will be duplicates.

- 2.18 £191,643.35 was provided to adult services to support adults without children. Partners such as Mencap, Age UK and BOOST have provided help and support to adults and families through their offer.
- 2.19 We have been notified by the Department for Work and Pensions that an additional round of funding, now called the Covid Support Fund will be issued from the 17th May 2021 to the 20th June 2021, all criteria remains the same. Barnet's allocation is £232,226
- 2.20 For the Holiday Activity and Food programme a steering group with relevant partners has been established to progress this work in preparation for the delivery of the programme across the year. The group has looked at
- Mapping of current provision and identification of any gaps with plans to build capacity as required. This included a survey and briefings to schools, out of school providers and key partners within the voluntary sector. This was also informed by the positive activities lead within the 0-19 Early help service.
 - Gathering and analysis of data in relation to the number of eligible children, areas of need and deprivation. The majority of Barnet schools have participated in the scheme. This includes schools in the most deprived areas based on Index of multiple deprivation 2019 deciles. Further details of the analysis are included in Appendix C.
 - Integrated work with those leading on food security
 - Development of application and monitoring process for those who wish to deliver
 - Financial modelling

- Supporting families beyond the bespoke activities through communications and wider support in relation to healthy eating and exercise including accessing affordable food and menu planning
 - Developing a quality framework for those who wish to deliver as part of the programme
- 2.22 There is allowed capacity in the budget to employ a co-ordinator for the programme given the volume of work required. A three day post is being recruited by The Young Barnet Foundation and the 0-19 Early Help positive activities lead has had their duties extended to operationally lead in this area. In addition, we have a graduate placement and support from Public Health and finance colleagues.
- 2.21 We continue to work with partners in relation to food security so that children and families have access to foodbanks, community social kitchens and welfare advice through a range of partners.
- 2.22 A competition to name the programme was undertaken with children at Fairway school and the winning entry was Barnet Active Creative Engaging holidays (BACE). The young person was given a prize.
- 2.23 Activity packs were in place for 1500 children, which included the BACE brochure, healthy eating advice, donations from Britvic, Planet Junko toys, local Tesco and stationery including paper and pencils. These were distributed through schools with the highest numbers of Free School Meal children. There were also collection points at Canada Villa and Finchley Youth Centre. The charity Give Help Share distributed some packages with their food bundles that they give to people in need.
- 2.24 A brochure, leaflet and website content were developed with the communications team at the council. The leaflets were distributed to schools and brochures detailing information about activities and which age groups were included in activity packs. Information was sent out on the Barnet Youth website and the Council website as well as both social media channels. A video was also created with the communications team to compliment the online provision.
- 2.25 Due to Covid restrictions, the majority of Easter activity provision was held online. This included a number of Zoom sessions, including martial arts, creative writing and cookalongs. We had sessions from 12 different providers and had 83 children and young people attend these sessions. BACE activities comprised 19 online activities and 124 sessions for four days during the first week of the Easter Holidays. Positive Activities were held in the second week of the Easter Holidays.
- 2.26 It was critical that we provided face to face sessions for certain vulnerable families because of financial disparity in the borough for those who do not have access to Wi-Fi and/or devices. UNITAS and Greentops offered us over 70 places on their Easter provision. Satellite sessions were provided at four of our Children's Centres and schools to allow children to participate in the online activities supervised by Early Help Practitioners. These venues were Newstead CC, Parkfield CC, Coppetts Wood School and Canada Villa Youth Centre. Face to face delivery for SEN children and young people was also held at Canada Villa Youth Centre throughout the week. There was a total of 147 children who attended the face to face sessions.
- 2.27 An outside organisation offered to fund Fun football sessions with FA registered coaches for 4 days at Fairway School and Coppetts Wood School. The 8-11yrs

session at Fairway School was the most popular face to face activity with 25 young people attending.

- 2.28 The voluntary sector in collaboration with the Young Barnet Foundation put on activities for 1140 children through 10 different providers. Actual figures of how many Free School Meal children attended is currently being collated.
- 2.29 A total of 230 young people attended BACE sessions over Easter. Positive Activities were held in the second week of the Easter Holidays and 47 young people in receipt of Free School meals attended these sessions. Although we did not capture the data around if children attended BACE and Positive Activities, we are confident from a quick analysis of the names and as some sessions such as UNITAS and Greentops were running at the same time, that most of the 47 children did not additionally attend BACE.
- 2.30 At this time we estimate that we reached at least 500 children and young people in benefit of free school meals through the online provision, face to face provision and voluntary sector provision.
- 2.31 The BACE sessions were attended more by younger children than older, with two-thirds of activities being attended by children 10 years and younger. Less than 1% of 17-19 year olds attended activities. See below chart for the breakdown of ages.



It was difficult to gauge uptake with the changing Covid regulations around the start of April. Anecdotally some parents had told us because of the weather and Covid restrictions they had decided to do other activities with their children.

Feedback from parents and young people was very positive and many asked eagerly about future provision. The most popular activities were the story telling for young children and fun football sessions for 8-11 year olds. The parent evaluation forms feedback showed overwhelmingly that children had positive experiences, they found staff professional and passionate. Some parents struggled with accessing zoom and had technical issues. We tried to avoid this as much as possible by providing an

information video on how to access zoom and sessions and face to face sessions for those with no access. Because of the reduced face to face provision, some had said it was difficult to get to some activities across the borough without a car. As we are hoping to do the majority of summer provision face to face we will take into account access and mapping out an equal spread of activities across the borough and try to focus activities where there are high numbers of Free School Meal children and high levels of deprivation. One quote from a parent below, shows the impact of the activities among children and their families.

"My daughter have been joining zoom class for first time. I'm delighted by her yoga classes, dancing class, healthy eat and Art craft. it has given kids knowledge and activities aim. My daughter is quite enjoying this classes. She enjoying learn from different activities. It given mind development from small age to learn yoga. It quite impressive. She is learning n taking activities ahead. I think you should have more this kind classes. It helping children a lot n most they are enjoying. I'm happy with teachers and everyone is involved helping kids program. Thank you for making very best. For children this kind activity given learning ability platform. They not staying iPad or watching tv or playing game."

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is asked that the Committee note the updates on both the CWFS and HAF Programme as set out in this report

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 4.1 N/A.

5. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 5.1 N/A

6. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

6.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 6.1.1 The objective of the COVID Winter Support Scheme is to provide support to vulnerable households and families with children particularly affected by the pandemic throughout the winter period where alternative sources of assistance may be unavailable and the Holiday Activity and Food Programme enables disadvantaged and vulnerable children to access fun activities that promote physical health and wellbeing, nutritional education and nutritious healthy food during the school holidays. This supports the Family Friendly vision set out in the Children and Young People's Plan and the Corporate Plan, as well as the Corporate Plan outcome that residents live healthy, happy, independent lives with the most vulnerable protected.

6.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

6.2.1 The London Borough of Barnet has been allocated in total £1,330,074 for the COVID Winter Fund Scheme. The table below shows the financial modelling of how the fund was distributed. The COVID winter fund is to support those identified for the period December 20 to April 21 and for children identified, there was a payment of £105 per child. This equates to 5 weeks (1 for each of the months) of payments at a daily cost of £3 per day (in line with child benefit payments at £21.05 per week).

	£63 Vouchers	£19 Vouchers	£23 Vouchers	Grand Total
EY Settings	244	191	420	855
Schools	9,787	9,683	13,444	32,914
Grand Total	10,031	9,874	13,864	33,769

	£63 Vouchers	£19 Vouchers	£23 Vouchers	Grand Total
EY Settings	£15,372	£3,629	£9,660	£28,661
Schools	£616,581	£183,977	£309,212	£1,109,770
Grand Total	£631,953	£187,606	£318,872	£1,138,431

Total Spent by CFS:	£ 1,138,431.00	85.6%
Total Spent by Adults:	£ 169,643.35	12.75%
Admin costs	£ 22,000	1.6%
Overall Spend:	£ 1,330,074.35	100%
Grant Allocation Dec to Apr:	£ 1,330,074.35	100%
Variance:	£ -	0%

6.2.2 The intention was to keep the administration costs to a minimum in order to distribute the maximum amount of the fund possible to those who need it most. The percentage spent on administration for the CWFS was £ 1.6%.

6.2.3 To ensure fraud risk was minimised, the fund was distributed through a voucher system rather than cash. Children and families eligible for the scheme were identified through schools, health visitors, early years settings and Children's centre with vouchers provided through the schools and settings or through a central resource for those settings who did not have access to the Wonde voucher system.

6.2.4 Management insight reporting on this has been via two returns to the DWP, the first report was on the 14/2/21 and the second one on the 21/4/21. The format of this was provided to us by the DWP and completed with the service and finance input prior to being signed off by the S151 officer and also the relevant LA point of contact. Following notification of an extension until 20/04/21 a final report will be due in May 2021.

6.2.5 The London Borough of Barnet has been allocated in total £1,163,420 for the Holiday Activity and Food Programme. The table below shows the financial modelling of how the grant is to be distributed, based on £9 per child per day of provision.

	£ Total	Comment
Total grant allocation:	£ 1,163,420	
10% for admin costs		
YBF Project Lead:	£ 40,900	
Graduate staff member:	£ 9,000	
Other: publicity, etc.:	£ 66,442	
10% for post, grad, publicity, etc.:	£ 116,342	10% of total grant
EASTER		
YBF Payment:	£ 23,400.00	30 bubbles of 15 CYP per day x 4 days = 1800 CYP
LBB Early Years 0-19 activity costs:	£ 80,549.73	
LBB Early Years 0-19 food costs:	£ 12,392.27	
SEND Contingency:	£ 9,695.17	
10% for Easter	£ 116,342	Plus SEND
SUMMER		
YBF Payment:	£ 129,600.00	30 Orgs across 16 days, 3600 CYP
LBB Early Years 0-19 activity costs:	£ 543,073.27	
LBB Early Years 0-19 food costs:	£ 83,549.73	
SEND Contingency:	£ 38,780.67	
65% for Summer	£ 756,223	Plus SEND
CHRISTMAS		
YBF Payment:	£ 32,400.00	30 orgs across 4 days,
LBB Early Years 0-19 activity costs:	£ 72,749.73	
LBB Early Years 0-19 food costs:	£ 11,192.27	
SEND Contingency:	£ 9,695.17	
10% for Christmas	£ 116,342	Plus SEND
Total YBF:	£ 226,300.00	Post plus activities/food
Total LBB Early Years 0-19 activities:	£ 696,372.73	
Total LBB Early Years 0-19 food:	£ 107,134.27	
Other Misc Admin costs:	£ 75,442.00	Grad, advertising, etc.
5% contingency for SEND	£ 58,171.00	
Total Spend:	£ 1,163,420.00	

6.3 Social Value

6.3.1 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits.

6.3.2 The Barnet COVID Winter Fund Scheme eligibility framework and approach was designed with the objective of targeting the available funding to vulnerable households and families with children particularly affected by the pandemic throughout the winter period where alternative sources of assistance may be unavailable. Social value was achieved by ensuring that the funding is targeted to families that meet the eligibility criteria.

6.3.3 The Holiday Activity and Food programme eligibility and criteria is set by the DfE with the objective of targeting children accessing free school meals so they could have access to a range of fund activities, healthy food and nutritional education during the school holidays. Social value will be achieved by ensuring that the funding is targeted to families that meet the eligibility criteria.

6.3.4

6.4 Legal and Constitutional References

6.4.1 N/A.

6.5 Risk Management

6.5.1 N/A

6.6 Equalities and Diversity

6.6.1 The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and
- other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
- foster good relations between people from different groups

The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day to day business and to keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services.

6.6.2 The DWP has undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment on the COVID Winter Fund Scheme. The Barnet eligibility framework and approach has been designed to make it simple and clear so that people are not disadvantaged or treated unfairly by this scheme.

- 6.6.3 The criteria for the Holiday Activity and Food programme is set by the Department for Education which is that this scheme is targeted for all children and young people in receipt of the benefit element of the free school meal entitlement and that activities delivered as part of the programme should be inclusive and accessible to all in the cohort.

Any partners who deliver as part of the programme are required to demonstrate how they will ensure the activities are inclusive and accessible. Consideration is given to identified additional needs of any child or young person and a plan to address these needs to enable access will be put into place.

Our communication strategy has ensured that information is accessible to this cohort and their families, particularly through working closely with the schools the children attend.

- 6.6.4 Both the Covid Winter Fund Scheme and the Holiday And Food programme have been designed so that those that meet the eligibility criteria will be identified by organisations which work with all communities and all children and families.

6.7 Corporate Parenting

N/A

6.8 Consultation and Engagement

- 6.8.1 A series of briefings were delivered to schools and the VCS sector to share the programme and engage these partners in planning and delivery.

- 6.8.2 A survey of schools, out of school providers and the VCS sector took place to identify existing provision that can be built upon and establish any gaps.

- 6.8.3 A communication programme was developed that utilised existing mechanisms used for engaging children, young people and families such as the Schools Bulletin, Barnet web site, Barnet Youth webpage and social media such as Facebook and Twitter (through corporate accounts). The Young Barnet Foundation as partners will also promote through the VCS sector

- 6.8.4 Feedback and evaluations forms were sent out to all parents who signed up to Easter Activities. These are currently being collated. This feedback as well as anecdotal feedback parents and young people gave in person or online after attending sessions will be used to inform and shape summer BACE delivery. We have asked parents what they thought was good and what they thought could be improved. This feedback will be shared with the steering group to set strategic direction for BACE activities going forward.

- 6.8.5 Further consultation with parents, schools and young people may be used to inform

the BACE provision and we ultimately reach more children.

7. INSIGHT

- 7.1 As part of the application process schools completed a survey in December 2020 and March 2021. From this survey analysis has been done on the demographics of scheme participation. This includes school participation by areas of deprivation and analysis of the age and ethnic group of scheme participants. Appendix C provides a report on the demographic analysis for payments to schools.