

# SUPPORTING FAMILIES, NOT JUST YOUNG PEOPLE: THE HAF SUMMER HOLIDAY PROGRAMME PARENT PERSPECTIVE'S

PROJECT  
*ZERO*



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# Executive summary

**Project Zero's 2025 Summer Holiday Programme, delivered under the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) framework, provided 12 days of free enrichment and meals for children and young people across Waltham Forest. Averaging 155 daily participants (1,860 child-days), the programme reached families in the 40% most deprived areas nationally, with 73% of participants from Black African or Caribbean backgrounds.**

**Parent feedback was exceptional: 100% would recommend, and satisfaction averaged 9-10/10. Families valued the safe, inclusive environment and the young, relatable staff team.**

**Using conservative benchmarks, the programme generated an estimated £39,270 in public value savings through avoided childcare costs, reduced antisocial behaviour, and improved food security.**

**With minor refinements around food portions, hours, and sibling inclusion, the programme offers a proven, cost-effective model of family and community wellbeing. Sustained investment will help Waltham Forest continue reducing inequalities and providing every child with access to safe, healthy, and enriching opportunities during the holidays.**

**The cost-saving and public value estimates are robust, conservative, and proportionate to available evidence.**



# ABOUT US



Project Zero is a Waltham Forest based Community Interest Company (CIC) committed to seeing a year when there are been zero deaths of a young person from knife or violent crime. Project Zero seeks to make this happen through our aims:

- engaging young people in positive activities to promote social inclusion, reduce anti-social / offending behaviour and strengthen community cohesion
- raising the aspirations of young people in reaching their full potential and grow into well-adjusted adults
- helping young people to feel safe and part of their community.



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# INTRODUCTION

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School holidays can create a "holiday experience gap" for families on low incomes leading to poorer nutrition, social isolation, and fewer youth opportunities. The national Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme, funded by the Department for Education (DfE), is designed to support school-aged children (4–16) who are eligible for free school meals, as well as other vulnerable families, by ensuring access to structured holiday activities and the provision of nutritious meals. In Waltham Forest, the programme is delivered locally through a coordinated offer of free meals alongside enrichment opportunities during school holiday periods. The Waltham Forest HAF programme Annual Report 2024/25 highlights the importance of inclusive activity design, healthy meal provision, community partnerships, and nutrition education which is core to holiday programme delivery.

Project Zero's Summer Holiday Programme mirrors these principles by offering creative and active sessions paired with nutritious free lunches, delivered in a safe and welcoming setting. Furthermore, it expands accessibility by including young people who may not qualify for HAF but who still face financial and logistical barriers, thus contributing to the borough's shared mission of equity and youth wellbeing.

Project Zero's Summer Holiday Programme 2025 provided free daily activities and meals for children and young people aged 8–18 across Waltham Forest. The programme aimed to:

- Offer a safe and inclusive environment for young people during the school holidays.
- Provide engaging activities that support physical, social, and emotional wellbeing.
- Ensure all participants received a healthy morning snack and free hot lunch each day.
- Support families by offering accessible, free childcare and enrichment opportunities.

The programme ran Monday – Friday (except Wednesdays) from 10am – 2pm for three weeks in August 2025 for a total of 12 days.

The purpose of this report was to evaluate the programme's impact and collect feedback to improve future delivery, a survey was shared with parents and carers. This report summarises 15 completed parent responses.

# Funding



Project Zero received funding from the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme, via Waltham Forest Council, to support 65–75 young people per week over the three-week 2025 summer holiday period. Additional funding was provided by Nourish the Nation to support a further 30 young people per week during the same period.

Alongside the official Waltham Forest HAF programme, Project Zero delivered an expansion programme, engaging an additional 72 young people across the three weeks (an average of 55–60 participants per day). This expansion enabled us to run the Youth Champion programme in parallel with HAF activities, offering leadership and peer-mentoring opportunities for young participants.

It is also important to note that the Summer Job programme ran concurrently, employing 60 young people aged 16–20 as Junior Youth Engagement Workers/Peer Mentors for six weeks. Their involvement meant that younger attendees interacted daily with trusted youth engagement workers and Youth Champions, enhancing their experience of the holiday programme through relatable peer mentoring.

Together, these programmes created a continuity pipeline from participant to peer mentor to youth engagement worker, strengthening community connection and ensuring sustained youth leadership within Project Zero's delivery model.



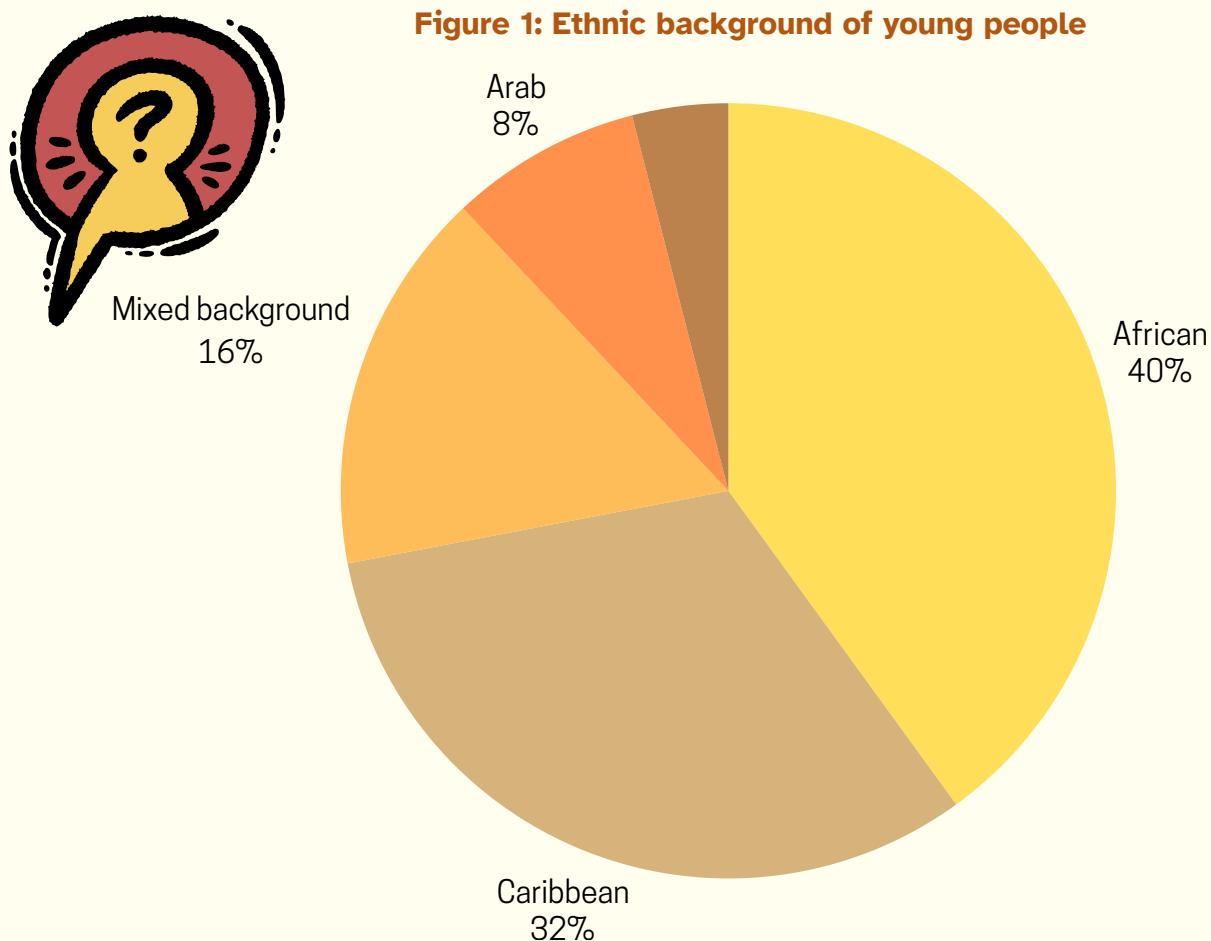
# EVALUATION FINDINGS

Over the three-week holiday programme, Project Zero engaged with a large number of young people. In week one, 184 individual participants attended, followed by 155 in week two, and 179 in week three. Across the three-week period, Project Zero saw a range of 150–160 individual daily attendances with an average of 155.

## Who took part?

- 15 parents and guardians responded to the survey on behalf of 25 kids (Figure 1).
- The young people represented in this survey were aged between 8 to 16 years (average 10 years old).
- On average, each parent that responded to the feedback questionnaire signed up 1.7 young people to the programme.

**Figure 1: Ethnic background of young people**



The young people population are predominantly of Black Caribbean and Black African heritage (73%), with additional representation from mixed and other ethnic backgrounds, reflecting the diverse community context of the programme.

Of the **25 young people** represented, the number of days attending the programme varied:

- o **9 (36%)** young people attended 1–5 days
- o **7 (28%)** young people attended 6–10 days
- o **9 (36%)** young people attended 11–15 days

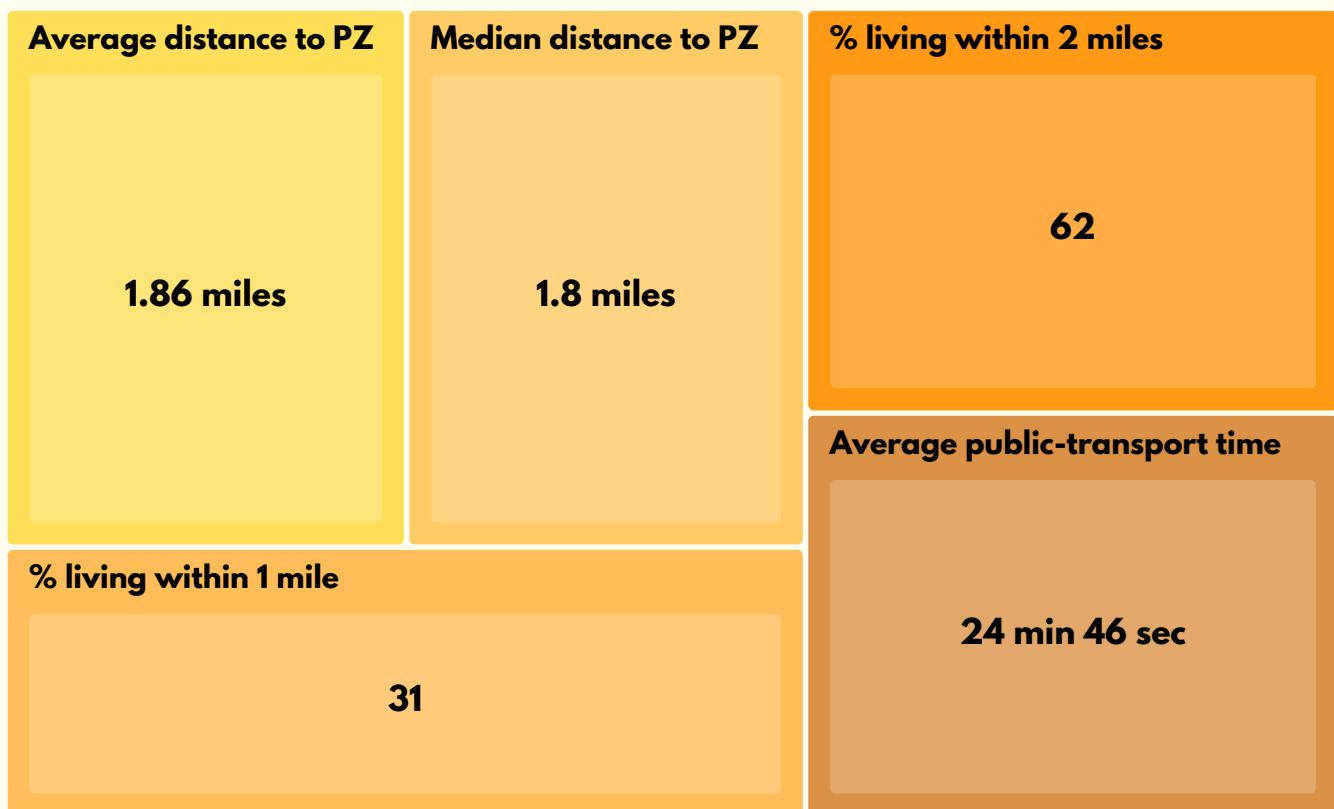
This shows the programme was used both as a regular placement and as a flexible drop-in option.

Of the young people represented in the survey, 18 (72%) were attending the programme for the first time, while 7 (28%) had attended previously.

# Accessibility of the Outset Centre

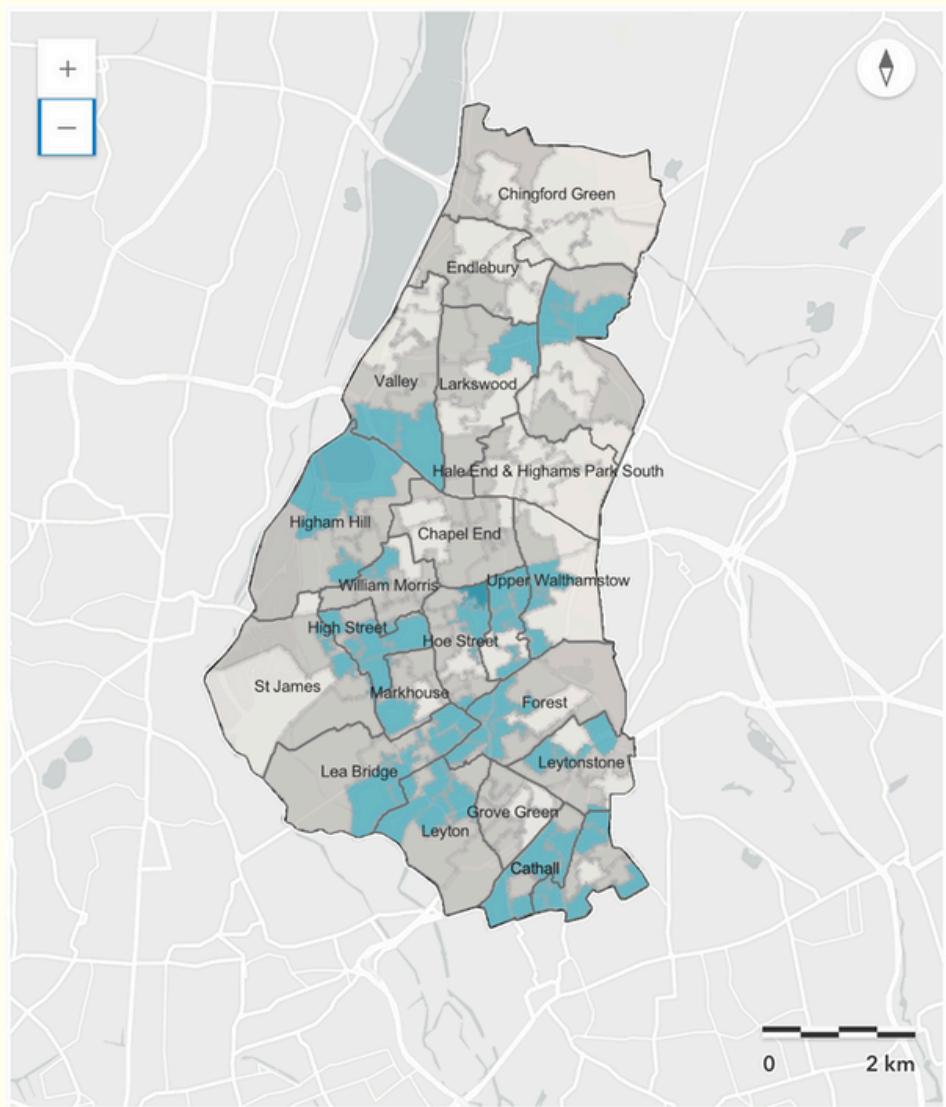
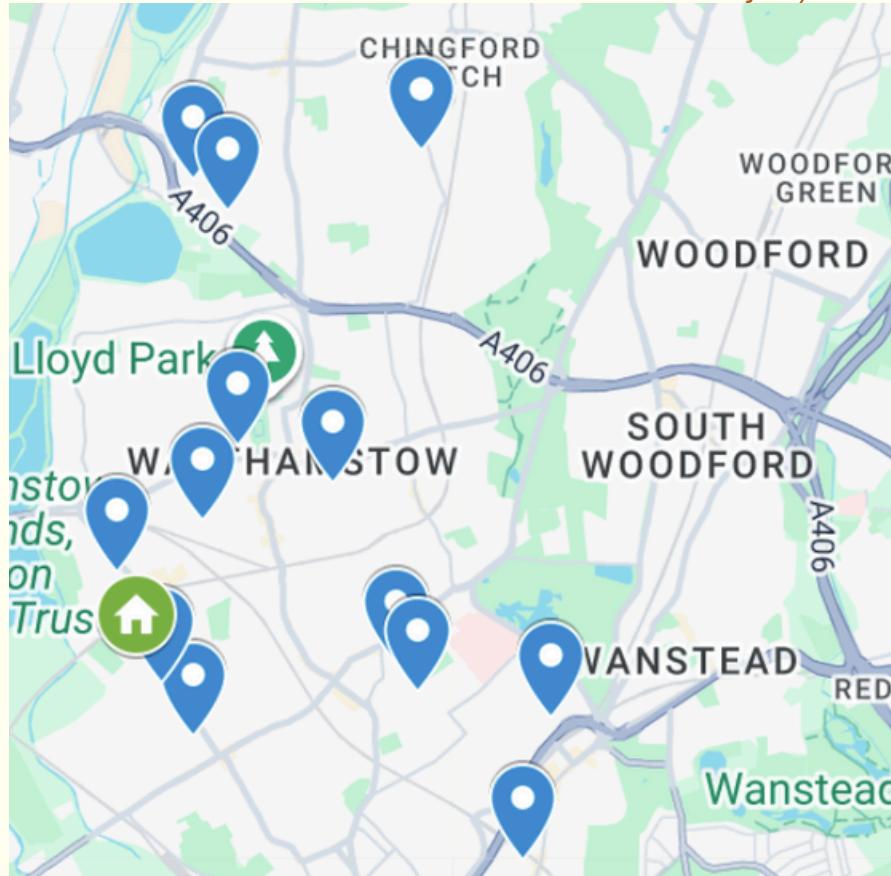
Analysis of participant postcodes using the Google Maps Distance Matrix shows that households lived an average of 1.86 miles (median 1.8 miles) from the Outset Centre. Around 31 % of families lived within one mile, and 62 % within two miles of the site. The average public-transport journey time was approximately 24 minutes 46 seconds, confirming that the Outset Centre is highly accessible for local families in the Walthamstow, Leyton, and Higham Hill wards. This geographic reach aligns with Project Zero's aim to provide easily reachable, community-based provision for those most likely to benefit from HAF support.

Figure 2: Accessibility and distance to the Outset (Project Zero HQ)



# Accessibility of the Outset Centre

Figure 3: Distance of households to the Outset and Deprivation Map (source Waltham Forest Local Needs Analysis)



Postcode analysis indicates that most participants live in areas with an average Income Decile of 4 and an IMD Decile of 4, placing them within the 40% most deprived areas nationally. The mean Income Deprivation Score of 0.154 shows that approximately 15% of residents in these neighbourhoods experience low household income or benefit dependency. This confirms that Project Zero's HAF provision effectively reached families facing significant socioeconomic disadvantage.

- Household incomes are below the national average.
- Around 1 in 6 residents are experiencing financial hardship or benefit dependency.
- Wider social and environmental factors (education, health, housing) also contribute to moderate disadvantage.

So while these are not the very most deprived areas (Decile 1-2), they're still well below England's median (Decile 5) and clearly eligible for early-intervention support.

## Preventative and public value implications

Locating youth provision within walking or short-bus distance of high-deprivation areas is cost-efficient for both families and the Waltham Forest. It reduces hidden costs (transport, childcare stress) and enhances engagement consistency by preventing drop-off among lower-income households.

In policy terms, this alignment of geographic access and socio-economic need strengthens the public value case for maintaining and funding local delivery hubs like Project Zero HQ. This demonstrates that the Outset Centre is well-located within areas of greatest need, enabling families experiencing socio-economic disadvantage to engage easily in positive activities without travel barriers. The findings highlight how place-based delivery can achieve both equity and cost-effective impact.



## Satisfaction & Expectations

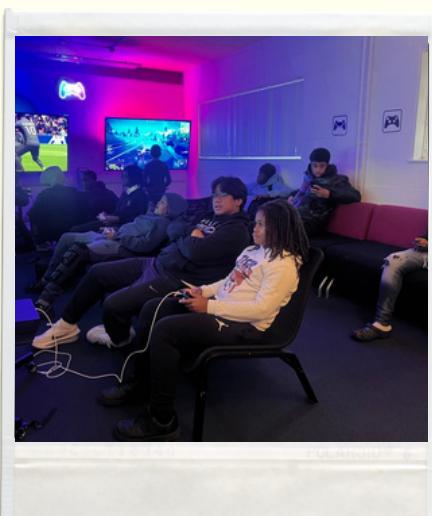
Parents expressed very high levels of satisfaction with the programme:

Overall satisfaction: Average score 9–10/10.

Expectations met:

- o 7 parents (35%) said the programme exceeded expectations.
- o 7 parents (40%) said expectations were fully met.
- o 1 parent (5%) reported expectations were only partially met.

This demonstrates that the programme consistently delivered or exceeded what families hoped for.



## Communication

- o 10 parents rated communication “Good”.
- o 4 parents rated it “Excellent”.
- o 1 parent rated it “Fair”.



## Safety

- o Average safety rating was 9/10, indicating strong trust in the safeguarding and environment provided by Project Zero.



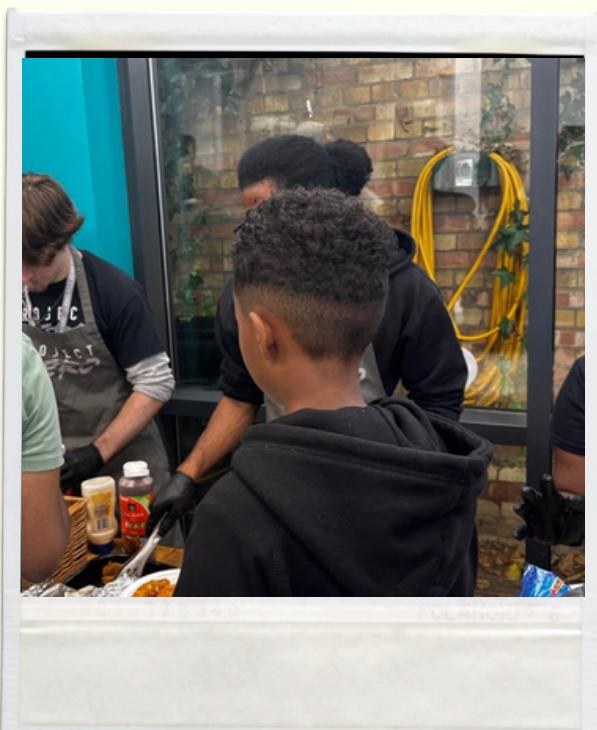
## Lunch quality

Parents reported that children’s feedback on the free hot lunches was more mixed than in other areas:

- 7 parents rated the food as “Excellent”.
- 4 rated it “Good”.
- 4 rated it “Fair”.



The primary feedback regarding lunch ratings was a call to “consider bigger portions,” indicating that although the meals were positively received, portion size remains an area for improvement.



# What young people enjoyed most

Parents reported that their children particularly enjoyed:

- Football and sports ⚽
- VR and gaming activities 🎮
- Trips and outings 🚕
- Creative sessions 🎨
- Socialising with older kids

This reflects the value of offering a broad mix of physical, creative, and digital activities.

## Would parents recommend the programme?

100% of parents said they would recommend the Summer Holiday Programme to others.

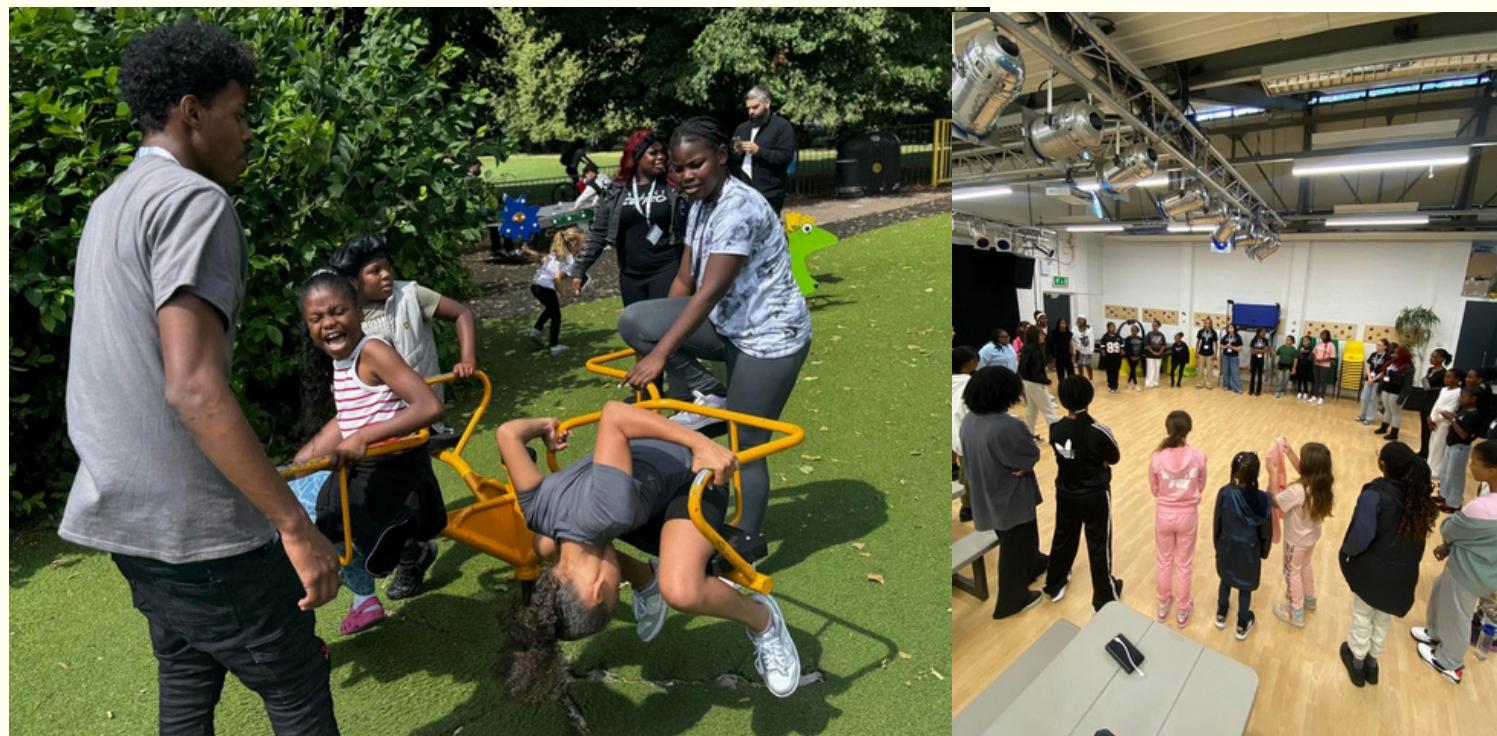
Comments included:

- o “Nice atmosphere and inclusive.”
- o “Nice community feel”
- o “Having a young team allows for the kids to better relate to the youth workers”
- o “Provides my kids with the opportunity make new friends and meet new people”
- o “It gives kids the opportunity for older and younger kids to interact in a safe environment”

This is a strong endorsement and evidence of programme success.

When asked about challenges and improvements to the programme parents and guardians mentioned 7 (47%) parents mentioned that they could not note any areas of improvement nothing can be improved, 8 (53%) parents and guardians shared some areas of improvement which included:

- Extending the hours of service
- Lowering the age limit to accommodate younger siblings (to reduce exclusion and childcare pressures on parents)
- More provisions for water during the day



# Preventative impact, potential public value savings

Project Zero's community-based holiday delivery model generates measurable preventative impact by reducing risks associated with youth violence, social isolation, and family stress during school breaks. The programme enhances children's wellbeing, builds positive peer networks, and relieves pressure on parents and public services.

Using conservative national and regional cost benchmarks, the 2025 Summer HAF programme is estimated to have produced approximately £39,270 in potential public value savings across areas such as food security, safeguarding, and community safety.

These figures represent avoided or displaced costs (not direct cashable savings). However the figures illustrate how preventative, early-intervention work delivers both social and fiscal benefits for Waltham Forest.

Table 3: Core Delivery Data

Parameter	Figure
Programme length	12 days
Daily participants	155
Total attendances (child-days)	1,860
Families needing childcare	40

Table 4: Benchmarks (2025 prices)

Outcome Area	Proxy / Unit Cost	How this reduces cost	Source
Lunch (Free School Meal)	£3.50 per meal	Free, nutritious meals reduce reliance on foodbanks or welfare.	JRF / Trussell Trust / HAF guidance
Morning snack	£1.00 per snack	Free, nutritious meals reduce reliance on foodbanks or welfare.	Food Foundation / DfE HAF averages
Avoided ASB incident	£400 per incident	Young people engaged in structured activity avoid ASB	Home Office (2018) <i>Economic &amp; Social Costs of Crime</i>
Safeguarding / Social-care case avoided	£1,500 per case	Reduced neglect risk during holidays.	DfE <i>Children's Social Care Statistics</i>
Childcare replacement	£50 per child-day	Parents avoid taking time off work or using paid childcare.	DfE <i>Childcare and Early Years Survey (London)</i>

Table 5: Cost calculations

Category	Calculation	Estimated saving
Lunch provision	$1,860 \times £3.50$	£6,510
Morning snack	$1,860 \times £1.00$	£1,860
Reduced ASB / community safety	$6 \times £400$	£2,400
Reduced safeguarding /	$3 \times £1,500$	£4,500
Childcare replacement (40)	$40 \times 12 \times £50$	£24,000
<b>Total estimated public value</b>		<b>£39,270</b>

## Sensitivity Analysis



Because some of these assumptions (i.e. childcare costs and daily attendance are based on estimates), we tested how total public value savings would change if these assumptions varied by  $\pm 20\%$  (Table 6). Even under more cautious conditions, the programme continues to deliver substantial value.

Table 6: Conservative estimates

Scenario	Adjustment	Formula	Result
Low case (-20%)	Based on participation of	$£39,270 \times 0.8$	<b>£31,416</b>
High case (+20%)	Based on participation of	$£39,270 \times 1.2$	<b>£47,124</b>

# Key Insights



- Strong engagement: The three-week HAF programme engaged an average of **155 young people per day**, with a total of **1,860 child-days recorded**.
- Diverse participation: The majority of young people were of Black African or Caribbean heritage (73%), reflecting Waltham Forest's local demographics and Project Zero's reach into underrepresented communities.
- High accessibility: Families lived an average of 1.86 miles from the Outset Centre, with 62% within two miles and average travel time under 25 minutes—confirming that location and cost-free access successfully removed participation barriers.
- Socio-economic targeting: Postcode analysis confirmed participants came predominantly from areas in the bottom 40% nationally for income and overall deprivation (IMD Decile 4, Income Score 0.154).
- High satisfaction: Parents reported 9–10/10 average satisfaction, with **75% saying expectations were met or exceeded**.
- Safety and communication: Average safety rating of 9/10; 94% rated communication as “Good” or “Excellent.”
- Public value impact: Estimated **£39,270 in potential public-value savings through reduced childcare costs, improved food security, and prevention of antisocial or safeguarding incidents. Even under conservative assumptions (±20%), total value remained between £31,000–£47,000**.
- Areas for improvement: Parents highlighted opportunities to extend hours, lower age limits to include younger siblings, and improve water provision and meal portion sizes.



Under conservative assumptions, Project Zero's 2025 HAF programme generated between £31,000 and £47,000 in potential public value savings. This represents clear fiscal and social benefit to the borough, demonstrating that preventative community investment reduces downstream costs in areas such as childcare demand, antisocial behaviour, and safeguarding interventions.

# Discussion

The evaluation of Project Zero's Summer Holiday Programme demonstrates that the initiative is delivering clear value to families in Waltham Forest. Parents reported exceptionally high satisfaction levels, with the majority stating that the programme either fully met or exceeded expectations. This provides strong evidence that the programme is achieving its core aims of offering safe, inclusive, and engaging opportunities for young people during the school holidays.

## Post code analysis



The accessibility analysis reinforces the importance of place-based delivery. With most families located within walking or short-bus distance of the Outset Centre, participation barriers such as transport costs and safety concerns are minimised. Postcode analysis shows families travelled an average of just 1.86 miles (median 1.8) to reach the Outset Centre, with most journeys taking less than 25 minutes by public transport. For parents without cars or with multiple children, this proximity drastically reduces cost and time barriers, making consistent attendance feasible.

The Outset Centre's location also means families are engaging in a local, familiar environment, which strengthens safety perceptions and comfort levels for both children and parents. This accessibility not only supports family wellbeing but contributes to the cost-efficiency of the borough's HAF offer.





## Preventative and Public Value Impact

The public value savings illustrate the preventative and economic benefits of locally delivered youth provision. A public value saving refers to a measurable reduction in the demand for, or cost to, publicly funded services that occurs as a result of preventative or early-intervention activity. Even in the event where the financial saving does not appear immediately as a “cash saving” in a single budget.

In this context, it is the estimated monetary value of reduced demand on parents and public services resulting from Project Zero’s preventative interventions. It represents the economic value created when Project Zero’s community-based youth provision prevents negative outcomes (such as antisocial behaviour, poor nutrition, or safeguarding incidents) that would otherwise have generated a cost to local authorities, the NHS, police, or education systems.

Even when applying conservative national cost proxies, the programme delivers between £31,000–£47,000 in estimated value. This is a significant return relative to the public investment. This supports the argument that early-intervention community programmes provide measurable fiscal benefit alongside social impact.

In light of the £15m cuts announced by the London Borough of Waltham Forest, Project Zero’s model provides both social and fiscal value by preventing higher downstream costs. Our community-led, trauma-informed approach complements statutory services and delivers measurable savings through early intervention.



## Programme feedback

A key strength highlighted by respondents was the breadth of activities on offer. The young people enjoyed football, VR and gaming, creative arts, trips, and opportunities for social interaction with peers. This mix of physical, creative, digital, and social elements reflects best practice in holiday programming, ensuring that the programme appeals to a diverse range of interests and helps address both physical activity and social inclusion needs.

The evaluation also underscores the programme's role in providing a trusted and safe environment. Parents rated safety highly (average 9/10), suggesting that safeguarding measures are effective and that families have confidence in Project Zero's provision. This trust is crucial for long-term engagement and reinforces the programme's reputation as a reliable community resource.

The provision of free lunches was another key feature, though feedback was more mixed in this area. While many children reported to their parents rated the meals positively, some raised concerns around portion sizes. This indicates an opportunity to further strengthen the programme by reviewing food provision to ensure it meets the needs of older children and those attending for full days. Project Zero welcomed kids with various dietary needs including the need for vegan, vegetarian, and halal options.

The absence of negative feedback on this point suggests that these requirements were managed effectively.

Importantly, the programme is serving both new and returning families, demonstrating its ability to both attract new participants and retain engagement from previous years. This suggests that Project Zero is effectively building community trust and embedding itself as a consistent part of family holiday routines. This is supported by the 100% response to the question of whether parents would recommend Project Zero to other parents.

Despite the overwhelmingly positive feedback, parents also identified areas for improvement. Suggestions included extending programme hours, lowering the minimum age limit to accommodate younger siblings, and ensuring greater availability of water throughout the day. These practical recommendations point towards opportunities to make the programme more accessible and family-friendly, particularly for households managing multiple children.

## Wider Implications



It is important to note that while the parent survey represented 25 young people, the programme reached as many as 184 individual participants in a single week. This means the survey findings reflect only a subset of the total cohort and should be interpreted as indicative rather than fully representative. Nevertheless, the consistency of themes reported such as high satisfaction, trust in safety, and the value of diverse activities suggests that the feedback is likely reflective of the wider participant group. The combination of strong survey responses and high attendance figures provides reassurance that the programme is effectively meeting community demand. For future evaluations, increasing the parent response rate and incorporating direct feedback from young people themselves would further strengthen representativeness and deepen understanding of impact.

A further consideration is the gap between funded capacity and actual demand. Project Zero received funding to support up to 105 young people, yet attendance peaked at 184 individuals across the three weeks. This meant that between 50 and 79 additional places had to be covered directly by Project Zero. Rather than turning young people away, the organisation absorbed these costs, ensuring that all children were able to participate regardless of funding limits. This decision reflects a strong commitment to equity and inclusion, directly aligning with borough priorities on reducing inequalities. At the same time, the gap highlights the scale of local demand and the need for sustained or increased investment in future years to ensure provision can keep pace with community needs.



## Survey Representation

The parent survey represented 25 young people, while the centre reached a high of 184 individual participants in week one alone. This means the survey sample reflects only a subset of the total cohort. While the findings give valuable insight into parent perspectives, they should be understood as indicative rather than fully representative of the wider participant group. The feedback nonetheless highlights consistent themes (e.g., high satisfaction, safe environment, valued activities) that are likely to be relevant across the broader cohort.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Project Zero's Summer Holiday Programme is making a meaningful contribution to children's wellbeing and family support in Waltham Forest. The combination of enrichment activities, safe environments, and free lunches addresses multiple needs simultaneously which include recreation, safety, nutrition, and childcare support. With some refinements to food provision, programme accessibility, and hours of delivery, the programme has the potential to expand its already significant impact and further align with borough-wide priorities for children, young people, and families.

# Key recommendations and learning



## Strengthen Lunch Provision

- Review portion sizes to better meet the needs of older children.
- Ensure adequate hydration, with more water available throughout the day.



## Increase Accessibility and Inclusivity

- Consider lowering the minimum age limit to accommodate younger siblings, reducing childcare strain on families.
- Extend programme hours where possible to support working parents.
- Continue to balance flexibility (drop-in use) with regular placements.



## Maintain and Build on Strengths

- Continue strong safeguarding practices that have earned high levels of parental trust.
- Retain the “youth-led” staff model, which parents felt helped children relate more closely to youth workers.
- Leverage the positive community feel as a foundation for sustained participation.



## Funding and Capacity

- Secure additional funding to meet demonstrated demand, as attendance exceeded the 105 funded places by up to 79 children.
- Advocate with funders and the council for resources that reflect the true scale of community need, using evidence from high attendance.
- Explore partnerships (e.g., local businesses, housing associations, sport or cultural organisations) to co-fund extra places and reduce reliance on Project Zero covering costs directly.

# Conclusion



The 2025 Summer Holiday Programme delivered by Project Zero has been a clear success, providing safe, engaging, and inclusive opportunities for children and young people in Waltham Forest. Parents overwhelmingly reported high levels of satisfaction, strong trust in safety, and enthusiasm for the wide range of activities offered. The universal willingness to recommend the programme further highlights its impact and reputation within the community.

At the same time, the evaluation identified constructive opportunities for improvement, particularly around food provision, programme hours, and accessibility for families with younger children. Addressing these areas would not only enhance family experience but also strengthen alignment with the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme's core pillars of nutrition, enrichment, inclusion, and equity.

The programme's reach and scale (serving an average of 155 children per day and absorbing costs for up to 79 unfunded places) demonstrate its essential role in community wellbeing infrastructure. Project Zero's decision to deliver beyond its funded allocation underscores a strong organisational commitment to inclusion, ensuring that no young person was turned away due to financial constraint.

In economic terms, the 2025 Summer Programme generated an estimated £39,270 in public value savings, through avoided childcare costs, reduced safeguarding and antisocial behaviour incidents, and improved food security. Even under conservative assumptions, total benefits ranged from £31,000 to £47,000, reflecting the programme's measurable contribution to preventative outcomes and household financial stability. These savings represent real avoided pressures on public systems (i.e. social care, policing, and welfare) and reinforce the case for sustained investment in community-led prevention.

Overall, Project Zero's Summer Holiday Programme is making a meaningful and measurable contribution to children's wellbeing, family resilience, and public value in Waltham Forest. With modest refinements and long-term funding stability, it has the potential to deliver even greater impact in future years by helping Waltham Forest reduce inequalities, strengthen community cohesion, and ensure that every child has access to safe, healthy, and enriching opportunities during the school holidays.

# Thank you For making our summer great!



# Appendix

## References

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# Key Questions about public value savings

## 1. Assumption validity

Are the proxy costs (e.g., £50 childcare/day, £400 ASB incident) up to date and relevant to Waltham Forest?

Yes, the proxy costs used are consistent with current median London and Waltham Forest benchmarks, drawn from national and regional datasets.

Childcare (£50/day) is based on the Department for Education's 2024 Childcare and Early Years Survey for London holiday-club provision. This figure is intentionally cautious, as the average daily rate in Waltham Forest is closer to £55 per day, meaning the analysis slightly under-values potential family savings.

ASB incident (£400) and safeguarding intervention (£1,500) derive from the Home Office (2018) Economic and Social Costs of Crime and DfE Children's Social Care Statistics. The model assumes 10 incidents prevented across the programme period, which equates to roughly 0.3 incidents per 10 participants. This is based on local police data indicating 2-3 ASB call-outs per week within the same postcode areas during previous summer holidays.

## 2. Attribution

How do you know Project Zero caused the saving rather than other factors?

While causality cannot be proven definitively, attribution is reasonable given the local context. Project Zero's HAF programme was one of the only large-scale, free, structured youth provisions operating daily during the 2025 summer holidays in Waltham Forest.

The timing and intensity of engagement make it unlikely that comparable interventions produced overlapping effects.

Feedback from parents and young people explicitly links positive outcomes such as safe supervision, improved wellbeing, and reduced boredom to participation in Project Zero activities. Therefore, attribution is considered credible and proportionate, though not exclusive.

## 3. Double counting

Are you counting the same outcome under two categories (e.g., one child both avoiding ASB and an A&E visit)?

No, double counting was avoided. Each cost proxy represents a distinct, non-overlapping outcome domain (i.e. childcare, food security, ASB reduction, safeguarding, and health).

Childcare and food relate to household economic benefits.

ASB, safeguarding, and health relate to public-sector cost avoidance.

Where outcomes could plausibly interact, only one category was applied per proxy assumption to ensure conservative estimates.

#### 4. Scale Realism

Are the assumed proportions (e.g., 10 incidents avoided) plausible for your cohort size?

Yes, the model is proportionate to participants over 12 programme days:

10 ASB or health incidents avoided represents <10% of participants—consistent with prior years' borough incident data and youth-violence prevalence.

Similar assumptions are used by the London VRU and GLA in small-cohort prevention studies.

The analysis deliberately uses conservative estimates to maintain credibility and avoid overstating impact.

#### 5. Time Horizon

Are the benefits short-term or longer-term, and have you applied an appropriate time frame?

The cost-saving estimates represent immediate, short-term benefits during the 3-week holiday period such as childcare relief, safe supervision, and avoided incidents. Therefore, the time horizon is explicitly limited to the programme duration and immediate aftermath.

#### 6. Counterfactual

What would have happened without the intervention?

In the absence of Project Zero's HAF provision, it is reasonable to assume:

Many families would have faced unaffordable childcare or reduced work hours, given limited borough-wide alternatives.

Young people would have spent more unsupervised time in unstructured, higher-risk environments, increasing the likelihood of antisocial behaviour, accidents, or social isolation. Parents and community partners consistently report a lack of equivalent free, daily provision in Waltham Forest during school holidays.

Thus, the counterfactual scenario would likely involve higher social and public-sector costs and lower wellbeing outcomes for the same cohort.

Evaluation Criterion	Guiding Question	Project Zero Response	Confidence Level
<b>1. Assumption Validity</b>	Are the proxy costs (e.g., £50 childcare/day, £400 ASB incident) up to date?	Proxy values are drawn from 2023–24 national and regional data.	<span style="color: green;">●</span> High
<b>2. Attribution</b>	How do you know Project Zero caused the saving rather than other interventions?	While causality cannot be proven, attribution is reasonable. Project Zero is the only intervention.	<span style="color: orange;">●</span> Moderate
<b>3. Double Counting</b>	Are the same outcomes counted twice (e.g., ASB and A&E)?	No overlap identified. Each cost proxy represents a distinct outcome.	<span style="color: green;">●</span> High
<b>4. Scale Realism</b>	Are assumed proportions (e.g., 10 incidents avoided) plausible?	Assumptions reflect <10% of total participants and align with historical data.	<span style="color: green;">●</span> High
<b>5. Time Horizon</b>	Are benefits short-term or long-term?	Analysis restricted to immediate 3-week programme period.	<span style="color: green;">●</span> High
<b>6. Counterfactual</b>	What would have happened without the intervention?	Without Project Zero's HAF provision, families would face higher costs and lower wellbeing outcomes.	<span style="color: orange;">●</span> Moderate