

MedwayGo

**FREE ACTIVITIES DURING
SCHOOL HOLIDAYS**

MedwayGo

Annual Report 2025-26



MedwayGo

MedwayGo is the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme in Medway. The Department for Education fund Medway to provide holiday activities for children eligible for benefit related free school meals.

Medway received a total amount of £1,198,100 from the DfE to deliver the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme in Medway, otherwise known as MedwayGo. The total spend for 2025-2026 was £1,150,373.

The MedwayGo Programme

MedwayGo activities ran during the Easter, Summer and Winter holidays across 2025-2026. The three programmes ran for 4 days at Easter, 4 weeks at Summer and 4 days during the winter break. MedwayGo worked with over 30 activity providers and 5 caterers to deliver these activities. MedwayGo activities are planned and delivered in line with the HAF Guidance and HAF Framework of standards. This involves ensuring each activity includes physical activity, enrichment activities, nutritional education and a hot, nutritious meal. Each provider also has to ensure they are fully compliant with the HAF requirements. This includes all staff having an enhanced DBS check, safeguarding training, as well as them having the appropriate documentation such as public liability insurance and all necessary policies such as Health and Safety and Safeguarding. This ensures the quality of provision and safety of children attending.

Engagement

This year, MedwayGo has provided activities for 1454 children at Easter, 2742 children during the Summer and 1247 children attend the winter activities. These children received a total of 22,038 hot nutritious meals across the 3 programmes. A total of 6962 sessions were made available during the Easter programme, seeing 4326 of those sessions booked. Across the Summer programme, 21,961 places were available and out of this number, 18417 were booked. Lastly, across the Christmas programme 3657 places were available and 3369 were booked. Across the year there was an average of 82% attendance of those booked places.

The MedwayGo team sits within Public Health, at Medway Council. Across the last year MedwayGo has been supported by a number of internal and external stakeholders. At the end of this financial year, there are a total of 34 external approved MedwayGo providers on the framework. This includes 3 approved caterers, contributing to providing each child with a nutritious, hot meal.

Being a MedwayGo provider enables organisations to apply for funding to deliver holiday activities for eligible children. It is important MedwayGo providers offer high quality provision for MedwayGo families. To support providers, MedwayGo offers a training package. This year, many training sessions have been delivered, these consisted of:

- First Aid
- Safeguarding
- Social Media
- SEND Awareness
- Nutritional Education & Oral Health

Please refer to *Appendix 2* for the list of approved providers on the MedwayGo Framework. This also includes internal stakeholders that supported with MedwayGo delivery across 2025-26.

Eligibility for MedwayGo

The DfE provides funding to deliver holiday activities and food, for children in receipt of Benefit Related Free School meals. Whilst this is the main eligibility criteria to attend activities for free, the funding also allows 15% to be spent on other eligible criteria. In Medway, this concession has been extended to:

- Children with SEND and/or EHC plans
- Children from military families
- Children in care
- Vulnerable children

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) Provision

1244 children that attended MedwayGo were listed as having an EHCP or SEND. In order to support as many children as possible, MedwayGo offers SEND Specific activities that offers 1:1 and specialist provision. As well as this specialist provision, MedwayGo has supported universal providers to incorporate SEND provision. All MedwayGo providers were offered SEND Awareness training to increase the quality of their provision. This means children with low level needs can be supported at universal provision, giving them a wider offer of activities.

MedwayGo has 4 SEND providers; ROCC, Strive, Sendtivate and The Rowans, that deliver bespoke 1:1 or 2:1 SEND-exclusive activities to children with higher level needs. These premium provisions are in high demand and regularly receive a lot of positive feedback from families.

HAF Activities

MedwayGo run a range of activities for children and families in Medway. These activities must involve the following components.

Food Provision

As part of the HAF standards, each MedwayGo activity must provide a nutritious, hot (where possible) meal for every child. Across the year, MedwayGo has delivered 22,036 meals for children in Medway.

MedwayGo providers either prepare and provide their own meals, or they will use one of the Medway approved caterers on the framework. Currently, MedwayGo works with a number of caterers, some on the framework and some outsourced by providers.

MedwayGo approved Caterers 2025/26

- Forks & Corks
- Fuzion Active
- Medway Norse
- Pasta Rasta
- Contract Dining Company (sourced by provider)
- Claires Catering (sourced by provider)
- The Wasted Kitchen (sourced by provider)

Food provision is monitored with Quality Assurance visits each holiday programme. MedwayGo also designs a menu for every holiday programme to ensure meals are standardised and in line with School Food Standards. If any concerns are identified at quality assurance visits, it is logged and promptly addressed with the provider, corrective measures are agreed, refresher training is offered and followed up with regular inspections to ensure and track improvement.

Nutritional Education

Nutritional education is a big part of the MedwayGo activities. Across the year providers have given opportunities for children to learn and explore more about nutrition and food. Each provider running a holiday club is required to deliver this in a fun and engaging way. This year, there have been many exciting activities take place.

- Cooking and food preparation
 - Planting and growing
- Food related arts and crafts
 - Teddy Bear picnics
 - Nutritional quizzes
- Guess the vegetable game
 - Active nutrition games



Enriching Activities

Enriching activities support children with their learning and development, giving them ways to express themselves, be creative, learn as well as supporting their wellbeing. Each MedwayGo activity must involve enriching activities. Enriching activities keep children engaged and learning in the holiday periods where they are not at school. They can learn new skills, experience something new and share experiences with friends.

The holiday activities delivered under MedwayGo this year have seen children take part in a range of enrichment activities. Enabling children to explore what they are good at or try something completely new. Children have taken part in hundreds of enrichment activities, some examples of these include:

- Forensic science
 - Robotics
- Wall Climbing
- Slime experiences
- Animal Encounters
 - Art and Crafts
 - Archery



Due to popular demand, MedwayGo increased the offer of family activities on offer. Families have continued to feedback that they enjoy this offer and do not always want to send their child to a child only activity. This year MedwayGo has provided family experiences at local zoos, pantomime visits, santa experiences, visits to the Historic Dockyard and tickets to local soft play centres. This offer will continue to increase for the year ahead as these activities continue to be fully booked.

As part of the enrichment offer this year, a new initiative was introduced for the winter programme 2025. A range of providers were supplied with oral health packs to give to MedwayGo children. The packs consisted of a toothbrush, toothpaste, timer and a chart. Children were given the oral health packs to take home as well as engaging in oral health discussions and activities to raise awareness around good oral hygiene. This initiative was supported by the oral health team that works within the Public Health team at Medway Council. The initiative continues and will be rolled out every holiday programme, aiming for every child attending a MedwayGo activity to receive fun oral health packs to take home and some food for thought about how to ensure they keep their teeth healthy.

Providers were given training on oral health to increase their knowledge and ensure they are sharing the correct information and advice to the children.

Physical Activity

During MedwayGo activities, children must have at least 60 minutes of physical activity. This is in line with government standards and allows children to stay active and engage in a range of different activities.

These activities are pre-planned by providers and shared with the MedwayGo team ahead of each holiday programme. Many children have shared their love for physical activities, such as gymnastics, football, basketball and an all-time favourite dodgeball. For children that may not share an interest in sports, providers have been creative in delivering a variety of activities. Some alternative activities have been inflatable days, dance and musical theatre, outdoor games, forest school, swimming, gym passes and more.



Marketing and Communications

The MedwayGo website (go.medway.gov.uk) is the repository of information about the programme. It includes an eligibility information, a booking platform, booking instructions and details on available camps. It also hosts a page of support for families with a wealth of signposting information.

MedwayGo's Facebook page, and other Medway Council pages, highlight the benefits of HAF, promote upcoming HAF programmes and providers' offers. They also share information on launch dates and booking details while redirecting traffic to the MedwayGo website.

Articles in Medway Council publications, such as the Medway Food Partnership, Physical Activity Alliance, Housing, and Medway Matters newsletters, all frequently feature information on MedwayGo. These publications reach diverse audiences to inform those working with our target group about the programme. Information is further distributed among school and education staff across Medway.

MedwayGo work closely with stakeholders to promote the programme, as well as using promotional materials and attending local events. The use of MedwayGo promotional materials at local charities and family hubs helps raise awareness to a variety of communities. Events are also utilised to allow the public to meet the MedwayGo team directly, get up to date information and support with bookings.

MedwayGo held a face to face network meeting in November 2025, which connected existing activity providers, interested providers, caterers, schools and the MedwayGo team. This event allowed the team to share updates and increase engagement from local providers and schools. As a result of the event, two new schools now deliver their own HAF provision.

MedwayGo Family Fun Days

To promote MedwayGo directly to families, two Fun Days were held this year - a Summer Fun Day on Thursday, 24th July and a Winter Fun Day on Thursday, 23rd October. Each Fun Day started with a quiet hour where families of children with SEND were able to enjoy a low-noise version of the event before the main activities commenced.

Providers showcased their services to families and children enjoyed taster sessions of some services available in the upcoming holiday. Booking assistance was provided to families who may have had barriers to access.

All children received a hot healthy meal during the summer funday. For both events, there was also free fruit and access to water.

Both fun days had a range of Medway internal and external support services providing engaging activities and information. These included support and information around oral health, food and nutrition as well as local information about local support services. There were also exciting activities like meeting creepy crawlies and face painting.

The summer event had an attendance of 170, whilst the winter event had an attendance of 172.

Partnerships

MedwayGo relies on many partnerships to support the success of the programme. Many internal and external partners, working closely with families support to share the MedwayGo programme.

Internal stakeholders such as the physical activity team provide opportunities such as being part of the Physical Activity Alliance which enables us to meet new providers and educate those in the field. This allows us to attend events to engage with other local organisations, improving MedwayGo's awareness and learning more to improve to programme.

Schools are a vital part of the programme, research has shown parents rely on information from schools to promote MedwayGo. They are a trusted, reliable source for families and we rely on their participation to help with promotion to families. Not only do schools act as a vital way of sharing information, they also act as venues for the HAF programmes and some run activities themselves.

The steering group for MedwayGo involves a range of internal and external stakeholders. This steering group allows us to communicate and network with a range of professionals. This group enables us to understand different groups in the community. For example, the Medway Parent Carers Forum provide a valuable platform for parent feedback and act as a voice for families of children with SEND. Their input into the MedwayGo programme has allowed us to enhance the SEND offer for MedwayGo and continuously evaluate provision and how it can be improved.

MedwayGo Insights Research

To help develop the MedwayGo programme and understand more about the perception and barriers for families, a research study took place. This involved focus groups with families who have never heard of MedwayGo and those who know of MedwayGo but have attended. Providing some good insights from a range of users.

The findings indicate strong underlying enthusiasm for Medway Go and highlight clear opportunities to enhance engagement by strengthening visibility, accessibility, and trust. While current awareness is uneven, parents respond very positively once they encounter the programme, demonstrating significant potential for growth through more consistent communication and clearer routes to information. Interest in the offer is high, particularly for children to access enriching activities they may not otherwise afford, though practical barriers such as booking processes, availability, transport, and scheduling currently limit conversion from interest to attendance. Ensuring provision is predictable, inclusive, and responsive to SEND and wider family needs is also critical, as confidence in suitability often determines whether whole households participate. Finally, strengthening perceptions of value, fairness, and reliability through transparent communication and trusted delivery will be essential to sustaining engagement over time and translating positive sentiment into consistent attendance.

Findings have influenced future plans for the programme and feedback will shape priorities for 2026/27.

Key Reflection and Future Plans

HAF funding has been confirmed for a further three years, meaning MedwayGo is set to continue to run until March 2029. This allows MedwayGo to put longer term plans in place to improve the programme.

Increasing Youth Participation

While overall attendance among young people (aged 13–16) has been historically low, some children who previously participated at primary school level have now grown into secondary school age. This creates an opportunity as these participants are already familiar with the programme. MedwayGo is partnering with the Youth team to reach new audiences of young people by exploring new activities and promotions. As well as the Youth Team, MedwayGo is exploring other opportunities to engage more young people in this age bracket to ensure that the offer is big enough to increase these numbers.

School Engagement

During the last year, MedwayGo has onboarded 3 new schools who are running their own closed provision for their pupils. Schools are an important part of MedwayGo as they form a trusted partner, trusted and listened to by parents. MedwayGo are working to ensure all schools are involved with MedwayGo and sharing the offer with families, to ensure all families are aware of what is on offer for them. The research and insights recently completed shows schools are the most trusted and common way of families hearing about MedwayGo.

Improvement of MedwayGo awareness

MedwayGo are working to improve the understanding of MedwayGo, who is eligible and how you can access the programme. This will involve a new, simple eligibility checker on the MedwayGo website. Clearer messages on communications and promotion. More information shared with schools and more engagement with local families. It is important that families understand what MedwayGo is, how they can access it and how they can get help and more information.

2026/ 2027 Provision dates

2026/ 2027 Provisions are scheduled to hold on the following dates:

Spring: book from Monday 16th March 2026

Summer: book from Monday 29th June 2026

Winter: book from Monday 23rd November 2026

Appendix 1 – Feedback

"My daughter said, it's lovely that I get to do fun things and mummy can sit down for a bit!"

"My child really loved the adults running the club and the chance to be with his friends and active everyday"

"Enjoyed the activity"

"My children absolutely love going to sports cool"

"He tried something new and really enjoyed it"

"My child loves attending the SEN strive PE"

"My daughter she is very sociable and she likes to do a friends avec she enjoyed in this centre better than stay at home"

"It gave my child who has sen needs to try and new activity and make friends"

"She got to try things she hasn't done before"

"It's hard to socialise with other children his age."

"It really helps break up the time off so that they're not driven mad by each other and they have something to look forward to that doesn't require loads of money or pre booking over Christmas"

"Being an only child and having no other family it gave my son a chance to be surrounded and socialising with others whilst also staying active."

"Arlo enjoys football so this helps him improve his skills"

"excellent activities"

"My son had lots of fun"

"Loves being with others similar to him"

"Excellent programme from MFSE"

"We were blown away by how much fun we had."

"My son has had a few amazing days over thr Christmas holidays thanks to Medway go activities"

"Being able to partake in activities with other children"

"A good selection"

"My child likes the activities provided by Medway Go"

"They had fun"

"My son enjoys meeting other children, when sometimes it's difficult for him to independently meet up with friends because of his SEN"

"It saved us money as a family and enabled us to take the children out during half term, to do activities we wouldn't usually get to do"

"Because that's what he told me"

"They don't go to the nearest school so don't have any friends close by and by making new friendships they gain more confidence and get the chance to do new activities"

"My daughter loves the activities such as ninja warrior and monkey bizz and rock climbing in Chatham"

"Struggles with interaction so really benefits from these session"

"He really enjoyed this well managed social event for teenagers"

"He said he enjoyed it, it was fun."

"Sen care provider"

"Run around keeps her active"

"We have no family and our friends live far away so we depend on these clubs for social interaction in the holidays, plus they help maintain healthy routines and learning about new places and activities"

"My daughter is an only child so being able to be around other children and stay active"

"They tried new things"

"My 8 year old loved Challenger Troop, the food and laser tag. As an adult I felt really safe leaving the children there, staff friendly and approachable. They enjoyed the pizza! Wonder lab VR/AI activity was good."

"Army camp he loves the military"

"My child is someone who needs a lot of stimulation and lots of physical activities to do"

"My daughter likes her holiday clubs provide by Medway Go and Medway Youth"

"Adults were fun and engaging. My child loves swimming and VR so the activities were perfect."

"My son had a wonderful time, thank you"

"My son attended the football, archery and swimming session through medway go. Staff are always fabulous and welcoming, kept my son active and moving and overall got him out of the house and having fun."

"Challenging activities and group work. Enjoyed the army training and working together with new colleagues"

Appendix 2 – Provider List

Challenger Troop CIC	The Rowans AP Academy
Elite Pathways Sport & Training	UK Sapphire Foundation
Forks & Corks	WHAM Theatre Schools
Great Leaps Adventure CIC	Football Fun Factory
Group 23 Services Ltd	Peekaplayers Ltd
Hoo Sport	Fuzion Active
Icon Theatre	SportsCool Maidstone
Jimmys Tennis – Frindsbury LTC	MKA Karate Kickboxing Academy
Little Voices (Kent)	The Wonder Lab Project CIC
Little Yoga Warriors	Chimera Climbing Chatham
London Gospel Music Company	NexGen Sport
Olympia Boxing CIC	Strive PE & Sport
Pasta Rasta Ltd	Kent Crusaders / Crusaders Community Basketball CIC
PIXIE MAGIC PLAY ZONES LTD	ID PE & Sport
Raising Youth CIO	Ace Solutions
Rivermead Outreach Community Challenge	Laser Tag
Sendtivate CIC	Planet Ice
Sport on Your Doorstep CIC	Soul Collective
Sports Connect Community CIC	Temple of Kulture CIC
Teamtheme Kent	The Bench Café
Zebedees	The Wasted Kitchen

For further information on this report please contact go@medway.gov.uk

www.medway.gov.uk/medwaygo