


# Evaluation of the School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP) 2019



Data  
**cymru**



CLILC • WLGA



Produced by: Data **Cymru**

On behalf of: Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)

Published: August 2020

[www.data.cymru](http://www.data.cymru)



029 2090 9500



[enquiries@data.cymru](mailto:enquiries@data.cymru)

This report is also available in Welsh.

## Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
2. The logic model .....	2
3. Data collection.....	4
3.1 Administrative data.....	4
3.2 Case studies .....	4
3.3 Survey data .....	5
4. Key findings – administrative data .....	6
5. Input findings – an assessment of the resources and support necessary to run the SHEP programme .....	7
6. Core element and outcome findings.....	9
Outcome area one: improved mental health and emotional well-being.....	10
Outcome area two: school engagement and education attainment.....	18
Outcome area three: improved aspirations .....	24
Outcome area four: improved physical activity.....	27
Outcome area five: improved dietary behaviour .....	31
7. Summary and recommendations.....	37
Mental health and emotional well-being.....	37
Improved aspirations.....	39
Improved physical activity .....	40
Improved dietary behaviour .....	41
Programme wide findings and considerations .....	42
Research and evaluation recommendations.....	43
Further research .....	44
Finally... ..	44

# 1. Introduction

The School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP), is a school-based summer programme that aims to address health, social, and educational inequalities. Run under the 'Food and Fun' brand, the overall intention of the SHEP is to contribute to long-term improvements in the health and well-being of children in socially deprived areas by:

1. Addressing the food insecurity experienced by some children in the summer;
2. Attending to their emotional health and well-being; and
3. Maximising the potential of underused school facilities during school summer holidays.

The SHEP programme was pioneered in Cardiff during 2015 and piloted nationally by the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) in five local authorities during 2016. Since 2015, the programme has grown steadily, with match funding from Welsh Government, from five schemes in 2015 to 76 schemes in 2019. A total of 3,680 places were available across 21 local authorities in Wales in summer 2019.

SHEP schemes are run in schools that have a Free School Meals (FSM) eligible population of over 16%, determined by each local authority. Each scheme must run for a minimum of 12 days over at least three consecutive weeks during the summer holidays. The programme is primarily aimed at school children aged between seven and 11 years old, with younger and older school-aged children also being provided for.

The SHEP is managed by its national coordinator and research and administration officer, situated within the WLGA, and is advised by its National Steering Group. At local authority level, the programme is coordinated by Local Steering Groups, comprising representatives from local sports development, public health, and education catering organisations, as well as the Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes and programme schools themselves. Communication is primarily channelled through regional meetings and email.

As the programme has grown, it has become increasingly important for all stakeholders to understand how effective the SHEP is in delivering on its objectives. To make its health and well-being objectives possible, a framework has been developed to evaluate the **inputs**, **core delivery elements**, and **outcomes** of SHEP, known as a **logic model**. This logic model is used as the basis for evaluating the impact of the programme in this report.

The projected cost of running the SHEP is £10,000 per cohort of 40 children. Schemes were 50% funded by Welsh Government to a maximum of £5,000, with the remaining balance being matched or provided in kind by the host local authority, the programme school, the Local Health Board, or partner agencies. Additional funding agreed by Welsh Government in early 2019 supported the introduction of an additional five hosting local authorities and a further 24 schemes across Wales in comparison to 2018.

The cost of running the SHEP in 2019 totalled £771,373, which comprised delivery, development and training (including Nutrition Skills for Life™), communications and resources, research, evaluation and WLGA internal costs.

## 2. The logic model

In 2019, the WLGA commissioned Data **Cymru** to support further development of the logic model, which was initially conceptualised by the Centre for Development, Evaluation, Complexity and Implementation (DECIPHer) between 2016 and 2017. Data **Cymru** also supported the WLGA with the planning, management and implementation of the evaluation for the summer 2019 programme.

A logic model provides an overview of the envisioned cause and effect relationships between different elements of an intervention or programme. The SHEP logic model depicts the relationship between the programme's core activities and its intended effects.

The logic model used to assess SHEP 2019 relies upon inputs, core elements, and outcomes:

- **Inputs** are the resources and support necessary to successfully run SHEP schemes across Wales. Inputs include Welsh Government funding, local authority match funding, school facilities, catering and staff, Nutrition Skills for Life training™, qualified community physical activity providers, and a Knowledge Hub.
- **Core elements** are defined as the activities or factors necessary to be eligible to run a SHEP 'Food and Fun' scheme. In addition to taking place within school settings, these include providing enrichment activities (arts and crafts, science, new skills), structured physical activity sessions, All-Wales SHEP Food and Nutrition Education sessions, a healthy breakfast and lunch, and one weekly family meal. These have been included in the logic model so that the effectiveness of SHEP's key components and activities on its five outcome areas can be assessed.
- **Outcomes** represent the measurable changes that result from the programme being run. There are five broad outcome areas:



**Outcome area one - improved mental health and emotional wellbeing**



**Outcome area two - school engagement and educational attainment**



**Outcome area three - improved aspirations**



**Outcome area four - improved physical activity**



**Outcome area five - improved dietary behaviour**

These high-level outcome areas are broken down into change indicators:

- initial (**short-term**) change indicators; and
- lasting (**longer-term**) change indicators.

The SHEP delivery team and Data **Cymru** defined the relationships between these elements according to a predicted change narrative i.e. how the elements were thought to interact to produce change over time. This change narrative was based on prior research and engagement with stakeholders, undertaken by evaluators<sup>1</sup>.

Data were collected to evaluate all elements of the logic model (inputs, core elements, and outcomes). In this way, the programme's overall impact was charted and assessed against the framework. Furthermore, the analysis methods used allowed unplanned and emergent findings to surface; these are highlighted and presented at the end of each findings section (where applicable).

---

<sup>1</sup> Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), *School Holiday Enrichment Programme [reports](#)* (2017, 2018).

### 3. Data collection

The data collection process was driven by the design of the logic model. Given the wide-ranging nature of the inputs, core elements, and outcomes, a mixed-methods research design was used which utilised both **qualitative** and **quantitative** methods.

There were limitations to this analytical approach, one of the main ones being that an element of personal judgement was inherent in the coding and weighting of the data. This was mitigated as far as possible by two researchers undertaking the coding and cross-referencing their conclusions. Disagreements in coding decisions were reasoned through and a consensus sought on each. However, some subjective interpretation may still be present in the final analysis.

A further limitation is that some of the data collection took place in different environments and through different media. For example, stakeholder interviews took place on a one-to-one basis, whereas parent focus groups took place in group settings at school locations. It is possible that these differences in approach had some effect on responses.

#### 3.1 Administrative data

Administrative data were collected by each scheme. Participating children's gender, year group, and attendance record were also collated. These data were collected by the WLGA and supplied to Data **Cymru** for processing and analysis. Findings have been shared throughout this report with relevant caveats noted, where appropriate.

#### 3.2 Case studies

##### 3.2.1 Qualitative research methodology

Case studies are an effective tool to understand actual and perceived experience, as well as the impact of a programme or intervention. To understand the effectiveness of the SHEP schemes across different contexts, a varied group of schemes were selected to inform case study research. The case study design comprised **children's workshops**, **parents' focus groups**, and **stakeholder interviews** run by third-party researchers. All the qualitative data referred to in this report were derived from third-party researcher reports and aggregated and analysed by Data **Cymru**.

##### 3.2.2 Sampling

To produce a sample that represented the SHEP populations as closely as possible, case studies needed to consider urban and rural areas, Welsh medium schools and Additional Learning Needs (ALN) centres, as well as mainstream primary and secondary schools. Five schemes were ultimately selected based on best-fit with the requirements. These were:

- one rural Welsh medium primary scheme (the 'Welsh medium' case study);
- one additional learning needs scheme, age group 3-18 (the 'ALN' case study);
- one urban primary scheme (the 'urban' case study);
- one town-based primary scheme based in West Wales (the 'West Wales' case study); and
- one town-based secondary scheme, where children transitioning from primary school to secondary school were SHEP attendees (the 'transition' case study).

This convenience sampling is not statistically representative, and results drawn from the case study data should be viewed as indicative only.

### 3.2.3 Children's workshops

Children's workshops were held during the last week of the SHEP schemes in the case study schemes with the local SHEP coordinator responsible for recruiting participating children. The workshops involved engaging six to eight children in conversational and creative activities around evaluation of the SHEP scheme.

### 3.2.4 Parents'/guardians' focus groups

Parents/guardians were asked to reflect on changes they had observed or experienced as a result of the SHEP. Therefore, these focus groups took place two to three months after the SHEP (between October and December 2019). The informal discussions allowed parents to offer their perceptions of the SHEP and its impact on their children's and their own well-being. The focus groups were structured around the **five** broad outcome areas. Parents/guardians from each case study school whose child (or children) attended SHEP 2019 were asked to participate. The same recruitment process used in the children's workshops was followed for parents. However, recruitment success varied and relied on parents having existing communication streams with the schools. Therefore, participation numbers were lower than expected in some, ranging from two to eight parents/guardians per focus group.

### 3.2.5 Stakeholder interviews

Stakeholder interviews were conducted with staff members involved in the operation and management of the case study SHEP schemes. These took place in November 2019. Two staff in each case study were contacted by local SHEP coordinators initially, followed up by the third-party researchers. As the stakeholders had oversight of the scheme run in their school, they were asked questions relating broadly to all inputs, core elements, and outcome areas.

## 3.3 Survey data

Data **Cymru** created a suite of online questionnaires to collect feedback from participating children and their parents/guardians about their experience of the SHEP and its perceived impact. Survey data collection was undertaken in two waves, with participants asked to give feedback immediately following the schemes in August 2019, and again in November 2019. All participating schools were encouraged to promote the survey, with invitations to complete questionnaires (either online or on paper) sent out via local authority and individual scheme coordinators. Children with ALN, as well as younger children, were offered extra support to complete the questionnaires from school coordinators.

Of the 76 participating schemes, 63 supplied some survey data with approximately a third (32%) of participating children and a fifth (19%) of their parents/guardians taking part in the first wave. Response rates to the second wave were limited and therefore the results are not included in this report.

In addition, information from staff members that attended the Nutrition Skills for Life™ training course was included, to supplement core element and input findings related to nutrition education.



## 4. Key findings – administrative data

In 2019, a total of **3,359 children** signed up for the **76 SHEP schemes** hosted across 21 local authorities in Wales. The children were split into 94 cohorts (i.e. groups of around 40). Administrative data were captured for 89 of these cohorts across 73 schemes.

**Attendance:** The SHEP schemes typically ran for 12 days across three consecutive weeks during the summer holidays. Children were encouraged to attend all 12 days, although those attending for a minimum of one day were considered to have ‘attended’ for analytical purposes. Attendance rates across Wales were therefore typically above 80%, with schemes in three local authority areas falling slightly below this average.

Of the **3,050 children** who attended at least one day, the average child attended **7.9 days**. Therefore, children attended an average of approximately two thirds of available days. This figure varied considerably across local authorities.

**Gender:** Of the **3,273 children** that gender data was provided for, **49% were male** and **51% were female**.

**Welsh medium:** **Four of the 76 schemes (5%)** were run at Welsh medium schools (three in Gwynedd and one on the Isle of Anglesey) and one at a dual medium school (Powys). Across Wales approximately **16% of school pupils attend Welsh medium schools**<sup>2</sup>, suggesting an under-representation of Welsh medium schemes in the SHEP. However, it is worth noting that the SHEP is still in its infancy, with some authorities delivering it for the first time in 2019.

**Additional Learning Needs (ALN):** Three schemes received funding to offer provision for children with Additional Learning Needs (ALN); these schemes were based in Rhondda Cynon Taf, Cardiff, and Caerphilly. Additional funding for one-to-one support was also provided to schemes in Torfaen, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Cardiff and Monmouthshire.

---

<sup>2</sup> Megan Jones, National Assembly for Wales Research Service, [Welsh-medium education and Welsh as a subject](#) (2016).

## 5. Input findings – an assessment of the resources and support necessary to run the SHEP programme

Inputs to the SHEP programme comprise funding from Welsh Government, match funding from local authorities, school facilities, as well as Nutrition Skills for Life™ training.

**Partnership arrangement and match funding.** A SHEP '*progression survey*' was circulated among local authorities following initial reviews of the 2018 SHEP. Responses to this survey, accompanied by anecdotal stakeholder feedback and DECIPHER recommendations, advocated for SHEP's continued funding and expansion. Additional funding was awarded by Welsh Government in January 2019, which supported an extra five hosting local authorities and a further 24 SHEP schemes across Wales in 2019.

**Input finding 1:** Stakeholders in one of the case study schemes suggested it may be worthwhile reassessing SHEP's budget allocation at a local authority level to allow more emphasis to be placed on emotional and mental health related interventions, and to accommodate more family members to attend the weekly family meals.

**Input finding 2:** Match funding requirements meant local authorities, the SHEP schemes, schools and other partners were equally responsible for the effective marketing and coordination of their local SHEP programmes. Two case studies noted effective partnership working resulting from this arrangement.

**Input finding 3:** Two case studies highlighted the need to elevate the role of programme schools within the partnership and funding allocation arrangements. Doing so would result in school's having appropriate scope to customise the SHEP in line with cohort-level needs, which could increase its effectiveness.

**Training around healthy nutrition:** All the SHEP schemes were required to ensure staff were trained to deliver nutrition education sessions to children and parents. In 2019, each scheme was allocated two slots for staff to attend Agored Cymru's accredited Nutrition Skills for Life™ Level 2 Community Food and Nutrition Skills training course. This focused on healthy eating messages, structured around the Eatwell Guide, as well as reinforcing practical skills around budgeting, shopping for healthy foods, understanding food labels, and the adaptation of recipes. In total, 96 staff attended Nutrition Skills for Life™ training. Also, 69 staff attended the optional 'cooking and potions chemistry' well-being training sessions, intended to enhance the SHEP staff's skillset.

**Input finding 4:** The following findings are sourced from a survey completed by staff who attended the Nutrition Skills for Life™ Level 2 Community Food and Nutrition Skills training course. Where evaluation of training could be linked directly to the SHEP staff, it was found that:

- 100% of learners received Agored Cymru accreditation;
- 100% of learners rated the course as excellent;
- 100% of learners would recommend the course to others; and
- 100% felt more confident in passing on key nutritional messages.

**Input finding 5:** The All-Wales SHEP Food and Nutrition Education sessions delivered within the SHEP schemes gathered feedback directly from children. All findings come from feedback shared by Nutrition for Life coordinators.

**Positive themes:**

- Children found sessions interactive, enjoyable and engaging;
- The tutor pack was used well;
- Excellent reflection and interaction with children; and
- Extension activities were planned.

**Challenges and development potential:**

- Not all children received nutrition sessions (due to absences);
- The extent of session preparation determined the success among children; and
- Links with catering could be improved.

## 6. Core element and outcome findings

For presentational clarity, core elements are presented within the lasting change and outcome areas they have impacted, and are later integrated into discussions of delivery effectiveness within Section 7 ([Summary and recommendations](#)).

The qualitative nature of the case study findings has led to inevitable overlaps between **core elements** and **outcome findings**. While parent and children case study participants were not asked to comment directly on core elements, some of their responses, as well as survey findings, naturally refer to the effectiveness of them.

The **five** main outcome areas are presented consecutively, each introduced by an infographic that visualises its related lasting and initial change indicators. To avoid repetition, each long-term indicator is mentioned only once, although it is made clear when an indicator relates to more than one outcome area.

Emerging indicators are variables/concepts that were not initially included in the logic model but whose importance, and future inclusion, has been highlighted by the results themselves. These indicators are highlighted in red and are reported, where applicable.

## Outcome area one: improved mental health and emotional well-being

### Lasting change indicator: improved mental health and emotional well-being

#### Core element findings

##### Core element finding - enrichment activities:

In three of the five case study schemes, stakeholders reported a connection between enrichment activities and an improvement in the SHEP attendees' mental health and emotional well-being through:

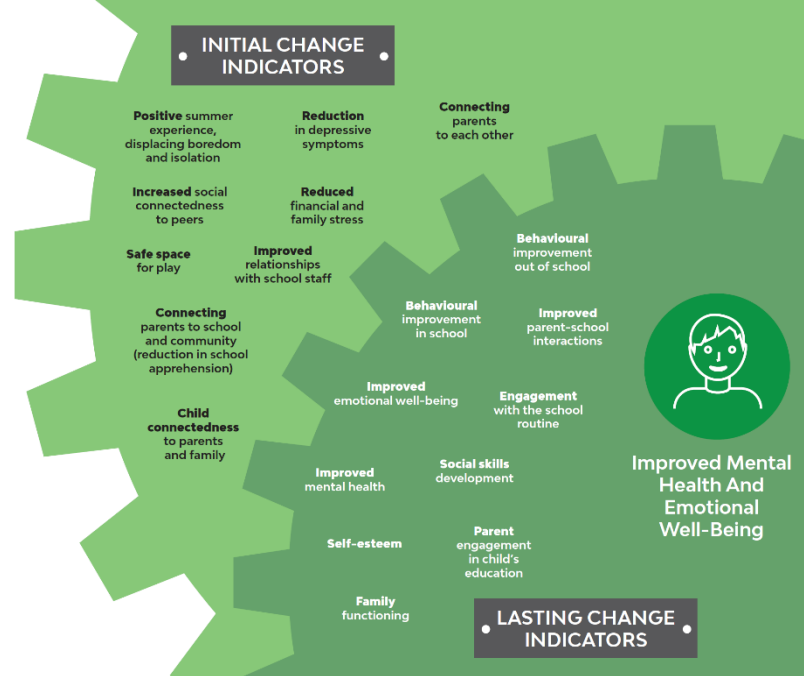
- A **safe place to play**;
- **The positive summer experience SHEP provided which displaced boredom and isolation**;  
A reduction in **depressive symptoms** ('urban' and 'ALN' schemes); and
- Focused mental health sessions (e.g. mindfulness) and after-school clubs that children were more likely to attend into the new term because of SHEP ('transition' scheme).

**Core element finding - structured physical activities:** In three of the five case study schemes, stakeholders reported a link between structured physical activities and an improvement in the SHEP attendees' mental health and emotional well-being through:

- **The positive summer experience SHEP provided which displaced boredom and isolation**;
- A reduction in **depressive symptoms** including anxiety in children with additional learning needs; and
- A **reduction in non-learning screen time**.

**Core element finding - weekly family meals:** Stakeholders in the 'Welsh medium' and 'West Wales' case study schemes reported a link between weekly family meals and an improvement in the SHEP attendees' mental health and emotional well-being through:

- **The positive experience** created through weekly family meals, which enhanced parental and child general well-being, leading to a **reduction in depressive symptoms**.



**Core element finding - school-based programme:** Stakeholders in all five of the case study schemes suggested that the school-based element of the SHEP was key in enhancing children's general and school-based happiness. This resultantly supported their school engagement through:

- **The positive summer experience SHEP provided which displaced boredom and isolation;**
- A reduction in **depressive symptoms;**
- A **safe place to play;** and
- Stimulation and routine in the summer holidays; supporting September back-to-school transition.

These findings were highlighted as particularly pertinent to the well-being and engagement levels of children with additional learning needs, and children who were transitioning to high school, and supported their re-integration and orientation into the September school routine where there was an evidenced reduction in:

- Anxiety relating to transitioning from primary into high school in the 'transition' case study; and
- Stress levels of 'ALN' case study children.

## Outcome findings

**Outcome finding 1** - There was evidence of the SHEP having a positive impact on child attendees' mental health and well-being, especially in relation to a **reduction in depressive symptoms** and **increased happiness levels**. Parents from all five of the case study schemes, as well as children from three, commented on this progress.

**Qualitative extract** - *"One parent believes that thanks to SHEP, her child has become more open and relaxed."* ('West Wales' parents' report)

**Outcome finding 2** - Children's emotional well-being manifested in how much time they spent **alone or felt lonely**. Four of the five parent case study schemes, as well as three of the five stakeholder case study schemes, noted this connection. Survey results supported these observations.

**Qualitative extract** - *"The children felt better being with their friends, and less frustrated than they would have been at home."* ('ALN' parents' report)

### Parent survey findings –

- 89% said their child/children spent less time alone by attending SHEP.
- 95% said their child/children kept a good daily routine during.

**Outcome finding 3** - Parents and stakeholders noted a **reduction in financial and family stress** as a result of the SHEP schemes, as they were better able to meet their own well-being needs. Parents in three of the five case study schemes, as well as stakeholders from two of the five, including the 'ALN' and 'transition' schemes, reported this improvement.

**Qualitative extract** - *"I was able to do small things such as Hoover, clean and even make a cup of tea."* ('ALN' parents' report)

**Parent survey findings -**

- 78% said SHEP helped them meet the financial cost of the holidays.
- 79% said they had time to themselves to get jobs done or relax because of the SHEP.

**Outcome finding 4** - Feedback from the parents' survey, as well as the parent and stakeholder case studies, suggested a link between child mental health and emotional well-being and the play opportunities provided through the SHEP's physical activity and enrichment sessions. These opportunities included:

- Having a **safe place to play** - parents in all five case study schemes, as well as stakeholders in four of the five, commented on this.
- **The positive summer experience SHEP provided which displaced boredom and isolation** - Parents in four of the five case study schemes, as well as three of the five stakeholders, observed this. Parent survey findings somewhat supported it.

**Parent survey findings -**

- 99% said their child/children had fun at the SHEP.
- 99% said the SHEP provided their child/children with something to do.

**Emergent indicator 1:** Case study and survey findings revealed an emerging initial indicator: **routine**. Specifically, routine **fun** opportunities **resulting from the enrichment sessions and regular physical activity**. This initial indicator was spoken about in relation to children's general well-being maintenance throughout the summer which had long-term implications, including their mental health and emotional well-being. Routine seemed to play an especially important role for parents of the 'ALN' case study children.

**Qualitative extract** - One parent said *"You could see the difference, one year when there was nothing in the 6 week holidays it was hard work with [child's name] you know he was, melt downs, you could just see how he was not happy and he gets to the point where he is like physically unwell because he is so stressed out...When he has gone to holiday clubs and he has got those activities to do he is much happier in himself he is just, it can't explain how much of a difference it makes not just mentally but physically as well it is a big thing."*

**Parent survey finding** - 95% said their child/children kept a good daily routine during the SHEP.

## Lasting change indicator: social skills development

### Core element findings

**Core element finding - enrichment activities:** Stakeholders in the 'Welsh medium' and 'West Wales' case study schemes suggested that the SHEP's enrichment activities strengthened peer connections and facilitated child-directed play, which supported the development of children's social skills.

**Core element finding - structured physical activities:** Stakeholders in the 'ALN', 'Welsh medium' and 'urban' case study schemes noted a link between SHEP's structured physical activity sessions and attendees' increased social connectedness to peers, as well as the forming of links with external providers.

**Core element finding - nutrition education delivery:** Stakeholders in the 'transition' and 'ALN' case study schemes thought that the nutrition education strengthened children's interactions with peers.

**Qualitative extract** - *"In the interactive nutrition sessions, children had to "wait their turn" ('ALN' stakeholders' report)*

**Core element finding - healthy breakfast and lunch:** Stakeholders in four case study schemes noted that SHEP's healthy breakfasts and lunches provided opportunities for attendees to increase their social connectedness to peers. Furthermore, stakeholders in two case study schemes praised staff for their ability to put children at ease when encouraging them to try different foods in "unpressurised" environments.

**Qualitative extract** - *"The Head felt that eating together helped children to see the social side of eating. The coordinator felt that children seeing others eat healthily and trying new things helped other children do the same." ('urban' stakeholders' report)*

### Outcome findings

**Outcome finding 5** - Children's **connections to peers** during the SHEP was reported to have improved their social skills development. Children from two case study schemes, and parents and stakeholders from all five case study schemes, noted this. Child and parent survey results supported these findings.

**Qualitative extract** - *"I have enjoyed playing new games and having fun with my friends." (Children's report)*

#### Child survey findings –

- 96% felt that "Spending time with friends (in Food and Fun)" was "Excellent" (81%) or "Good" (15%)
- 87%, after attending the SHEP said it was true "I have formed stronger or new friendships."

**Parent survey finding** – 87% said their child/children made new friends at the SHEP.



**Outcome finding 6 - Learning new skills** played an important role in the development of children's social skills. At least one of the three initial indicators around learning (**learning a new skill, informal learning**, and **applying learning from the summer**) was mentioned by parents in each of the five case study schemes. Furthermore, stakeholders in three of the five case study schemes also noted this, and the children's survey results supported this finding.

## Lasting change indicator: self-esteem

### Outcome findings

**Qualitative extract** – *"An external provider's exercises such as putting up tents really helped the children develop their social skills."* ('Welsh medium' stakeholders' report)

**Child survey finding** - 77% (when the SHEP finished) thought they would *"Spend time using new skills (e.g. hobbies, volunteering)."*

**Emergent indicator 2:** Parents and stakeholders identified two emergent supporters of children's social skills development enabled by the SHEP:

- 1) **maturity and responsibility;** and
- 2) **independence.**

Parents in three of the five case study schemes, and stakeholders in three of the five, identified these themes.

**Qualitative extract** - *"The SHEP helped the children develop social skills such as waiting their turn and caring for younger children. Each morning, one of the older children took one of the younger children to water the fruit, showing a nurturing nature."* ('ALN' stakeholder)

**Outcome finding 7:** Children in all five case study schemes related **learning new things** to the development of their self-esteem. Child survey findings supported these observations.

**Child survey finding** – 86%, (after attending the SHEP) said it was true *"I have more confidence in my ability to learn new things."*

**Outcome finding 8:** Stakeholders from three of the five case study schemes observed a link between the **improved relations between school staff and children** and the development of children's self-esteem.

**Emergent indicator 3:** Stakeholders and parents identified emergent, unplanned indicators that supported self-esteem:

- 1) **positive self-image;** and
- 2) **a sense of achievement.**

Stakeholders in three of the five case study schemes, and parents in one, observed these changes.

**Qualitative extracts –**

- *"Thanks to making new friends and seeing them in their own clothes, one child realised he did not need the most expensive footwear - his self-esteem improved, as he started to feel more comfortable in the clothes he was wearing."* ('transition' parents' report)
- *"The graduation ceremony was very important for the children, giving them "a sense of achievement", with the certificate giving them "something to talk about and a focal point for their praise". The certificates were something to feel proud of, and one parent said her child still has it displayed in her room."* ('ALN' parents' report)

## Lasting change indicator: behaviour improvement out of school

### Core element finding

**Core element finding - structured physical activities:** Stakeholders in the 'ALN' case study scheme linked children's improved out of school behaviour to the structured physical activities; a reduction in children's challenging behaviour was attributed to the varied group-based sports activities, which were reported to have strengthened children's social interactions and behaviour.

**Qualitative extracts –**

- *"A litter picking activity was done with external providers, allowing the children to get out and do some good in the community, learning to respect their area."* ('Welsh medium' stakeholders' report)
- *"One parent believes she saw an increase in maturity from her daughter following the programme, offering to take care of a friend who was ill by taking her bags home for her without being asked."* ('urban' parents' report)

## Outcome findings

**Outcome finding 9:** A connection was identified between children's **social skills development** and their involvement in relating to, and caring for, their local community. Parents in two of the five case study schemes, and stakeholders in one, commented on this. The children's survey findings provided some corroboration.

**Child survey finding** - 77% of surveyed children thought they would "Spend time using new skills (e.g. hobbies, volunteering)" after the SHEP had finished.

## Lasting change indicator: family functioning

### Core element findings

**Core element finding - weekly family meals:** Stakeholders in four of the five case study schemes, as well as child survey results, reported that the weekly family meals made a direct contribution to **child connectedness to parents and family**.

However, according to parent survey findings and stakeholders in the 'urban,' 'transition,' and 'West

**Child survey finding** - 93% rated "Eating together with your friends/family (lunch)" as "Excellent" (73%) or "Good" (20%).

Wales' case studies, **the short-term nature of the SHEP, pre-existing family dynamics** (including high levels of family functioning

prior to the SHEP), and **limited parental attendance levels** challenged the effectiveness of the weekly family meals on family functioning.

### Qualitative extracts –

- "It gave them the opportunity to sit at the table with their family, which some of them are not able to do. Thus, it may have an impact on family functioning over the summer. However, given that they may not have a table of their own, this is unlikely to have continued." (Urban stakeholder report)
- "Children were excited to see their parents which could suggest good family functioning before the programme." (Mid Wales scheme stakeholder report)

### Parent survey findings -

- 48% joined their child/children for breakfast at the SHEP at least once.
- 63% joined their child/children for lunch at the SHEP at least once.

**Core element finding - healthy breakfast and lunch:**

Stakeholders in the 'Welsh medium' case study reported that the SHEP's routine healthy meals were connected to enhanced family functioning.

**Qualitative extract** - Two nutritious meals per day *"positively contributed to alleviating parents' financial stresses and improving their well-being over the summer."* ('Welsh medium' stakeholders' report)

**Parent survey finding** - 49% of surveyed parents would like to have more opportunities to play or join in with the children.

**Core element finding - enrichment activities:**

The parent survey results indicate that there may be opportunities to maximise the impact of enrichment activities by broadening the range available.

**Outcome findings**

**Outcome finding 10:** Feedback from parents in four of the five case study schemes, stakeholders in all five, as well as child and parent survey responses point to improved **child-parent connectedness**.

**Qualitative extract** – *"Children who previously would not take part in family activities now do, for example going on family walks rather than wanting to stay at home all weekend."* ('Welsh medium' parents' report)

**Child survey finding** – 77% (after attending the SHEP) said it was true *"I feel closer to my parents or family."*

**Parent survey finding** - 73% said they feel a closer connection with their child/children.

**Outcome finding 11:** While children did acknowledge the positive experience of spending time with their parents/guardians during the SHEP, survey findings demonstrated the scope to create more family-time opportunities during the SHEP.

**Outcome finding 12:** A **reduction in family and practical stress** was noted by parents in three of the five case study schemes, as well as by stakeholders in the 'ALN' case study scheme. Parent survey findings supported this.

**Child survey finding** - 57% said they *"Spent time having fun with your family"* "A lot" on the SHEP days compared to 58% on non-SHEP days.

**Qualitative extract** – *"One parent was able to spend more time with her child's siblings thanks to the SHEP, improving their emotional well-being."* ('ALN' parent's report)

**Parent survey findings -**

- 66% said they were able to spend more time with their other children outside of the SHEP.
- 79% said they had time to themselves to get jobs done or relax because of the SHEP.

## Outcome area two: school engagement and education attainment

### Lasting change indicator: improved parent-school interactions

#### Core element findings

##### Core element finding - enrichment

**activities:** One of the case studies reported that enrichment activities increased **parental engagement with school**. However, survey findings suggested that there was more opportunity for parents to benefit directly.

##### Parent survey findings -

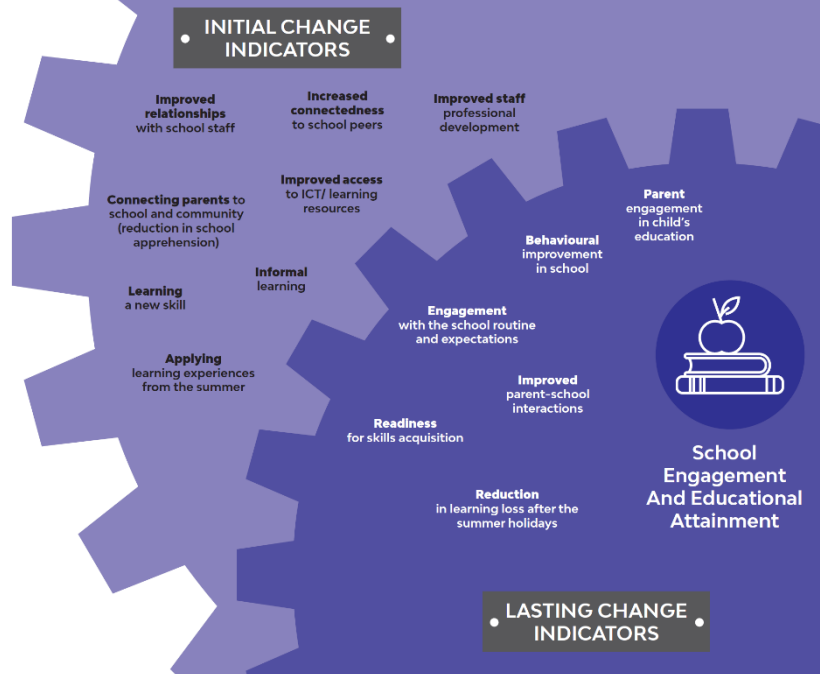
- 44% of parents said they (personally) learned new skills/hobbies at SHEP.
- 65% would like more (or different) cooking activities.
- 49% would like more (or different) arts or creative activities.
- 55% would like more trips out.

**Core element finding - weekly family meals:** According to stakeholders, the weekly family meals supported **connections between parents and school and community** to varying degrees. For example, there was considerable improvement in the 'Welsh medium' case study because parents maintained good communication with school staff after the summer. However, in other case studies the impact of the SHEP was limited by **its short duration** ('urban' case study) or by a **pre-existing strong relationship between parents and school staff** ('ALN' scheme).

**Core element finding - nutrition education:** In the 'West Wales' case study scheme, stakeholders reported that parents' willingness to discuss their family dietary concerns with the SHEP staff increased.

##### Qualitative extracts –

- *"I knew them sort of quite well anyway but I'd say a lot more (sic) better, I know a couple more teachers, and I'm more willing to talk to them about my child's progress and stuff like that now or any events that are going on. So it's brought me out of my shell a little bit more to speak to the school ground people and everything."* ('Welsh medium' parent participant)
- *"The coordinator was able to find more time to resolve "little problems" with parents, allowing them to build a rapport."* ('ALN' stakeholder report)



## Outcome findings

**Outcome finding 13:** Parents in all five case study schemes, as well as stakeholders in three of the five, noted an improvement in the **connection between parents and the school community**. Parent survey findings moderately supported this finding. This connection has far reaching potential, particularly around parents and teachers working together to meet children's needs.

### Parent survey findings -

- 62% said they got to know teachers/school staff.
- 77% said they feel more connected to their child/children's education and/or school environment.

## Lasting change indicator: parental engagement in child's education

**Outcome finding 14:** Parent survey findings, and parents in four of the case study schemes, reported an increase in their engagement in their child's education.

**Qualitative extract** – *"One parent spoke about how her child has developed more confidence to ask for help with homework, allowing her to have more of a role in their education"* ('Welsh medium' parents' report)

**Parent survey finding** - 77% said they feel more connected to their child/children's education and/or school environment.

Whilst parents' feedback is promising, evidence of change in this area is limited because neither children nor stakeholders were asked about parental engagement in their child's education.

## Lasting change indicator: engagement with the school routine and expectations

### Core element findings

**Core element finding - school-based programme:** Stakeholders were unanimous in linking increased **engagement in the school routine** with the SHEP's school-based approach. The SHEP staff were seen as a central factor through their encouragement of children's school-based happiness, rule engagement, and general self-care.

**Qualitative extract** – *"The programme being delivered in school was thought to positively contribute to improved school engagement. It bridged the gap and provided structure over the summer."* ('Welsh medium' stakeholders' report)

## Outcome findings

**Outcome finding 15:** Children, parents, and stakeholders in four of the five case study schemes noted that **children's improved relationships with school staff** supported engagement with the school routine. Child and parent survey responses reinforced this finding.

**Qualitative extract** – *"Meeting their new teachers during the SHEP helped reduce transitional apprehension."* ('transition' scheme parents' report)

**Child survey finding** - 77% said it was true *"I know my teachers and/or other school staff better."*

**Parent survey finding** - 81% said their child/children have a better relationship with teachers/school staff.

**Outcome finding 16:** Child survey respondents reported an improvement in adherence to **school rules and expectations**.

**Child survey finding** - After attending SHEP, 88% said it was true *"I understand more about my school's rules and expectations of good behaviour."*

**Outcome finding 17:** Parents in two of the five case study schemes, and stakeholders in one, noted that maintaining a **routine** throughout the summer aided children's reintegration to school in September.

**Qualitative extract** – *"The routine of the SHEP appeared to help the children settle back into school after the holidays. One parent said her son was getting himself ready very early to go to the SHEP where getting him up in the morning would normally be difficult."* ('Welsh medium' parents' report)

**Outcome finding 18:** Parents in three of the five case study schemes noted that **improved access to ICT/learning resources** facilitated children's engagement in the school routine.

**Qualitative extract** – *"...the learning activities had an impact on the children, with parents saying "they remember this, for example sugar content in food, far more than in a normal play scheme..."* (Welsh medium parents' report)

**Emergent indicator 4:** Stakeholders in three of the five case study schemes, and parents in two, identified **motivation** levels as an emergent indication of children's improved engagement in the school routine. Child and parent survey findings support these observations.

#### Qualitative extracts -

- *"Children who were reluctant to attend at first were ready and waiting for breakfast to open by the end of the first week. Attendance in the programme was higher than last year"* ('Welsh medium' stakeholder's report)
- *"Coordinators saw children's attitudes change over the course of the SHEP, with some older children starting out sceptical about having to go to school but not wanting it to end after the three weeks."* ('urban' stakeholder's report)

#### Child survey finding -

- After attending SHEP, 81% said it was true *"I am looking forward to going to school in September."*

#### Parent survey finding -

- 87% said their child/children were more prepared to return to school in September.

## Lasting change indicator: behavioural improvement in school

### Core element finding

**Core element finding - school-based programme:** Stakeholders in the transition case study scheme noted that the SHEP being school-based supported their efforts to introduce school **boundaries** and expectations, which supported improvements in children's behaviour once term started.

### Outcome findings

**Outcome finding 19:** Stakeholders in four of the five case study schemes, and parents in one, reported a **reduction in children's school associated depressive symptoms**, which they related to improved in-school behaviour.



## Qualitative extracts –

- *"Some children tend to get anxious when not in school and found a great benefit in being in school for some of the summer. This also helped when changing classes in September. The structure of the programme helped the children become more relaxed, improving behaviour during the summer as the children were "displaying less challenging behaviour." ('ALN' stakeholder's report)*
- *"The headteacher noticed that after the programme, "one child was happier coming into school" and that "to have less time being away from school makes the transition into their next year group in the September a little smoother". The headteacher also feels that some children who participated in the SHEP are more relaxed." ('urban' stakeholder's report)*
- *"...the learning activities had an impact on the children, with parents saying "they remember this, for example sugar content in food, far more than in a normal play scheme..." (Welsh medium parents' report)*

## Lasting change indicators: readiness for skills acquisition and reduction in learning loss after the summer holidays

### Core element findings

**Core element finding - enrichment activities:** In three of the five case studies ('West Wales', 'Welsh medium' and 'transition'), enrichment activities were linked to a potential improvement in children's learning capacity and reduced summertime learning loss. This relationship was attributed to efforts to **incorporate academic skills and subjects into fun activities; informal learning; regular learning reflection opportunities; and opportunities to apply summer learning.**

**Core element finding - structured physical activities:** Stakeholders in the 'transition' case study scheme familiarised children with the **school-based Physical Education (PE)** in an informal environment, which they reported resulted in children being able to **apply their summertime learning** during the next school term.

**Core element finding - nutrition education:** Stakeholders in the 'ALN' scheme continued to use the SHEP's Nutrition education learning resources to **support children's school term learning and engagement** in the new term.

## Outcome findings

These lasting change indicators are not easy to assess in terms of progress; they were commented on predominantly by stakeholders who were not able to report on long-term progress at the time of field research.

### Outcome finding

**20:** Surveyed children reported an increase in their learning confidence resulting from the SHEP.

**Child survey finding** – After attending SHEP, 86% said it was true *"I have more confidence in my ability to learn new things."*

### Qualitative extracts -

- *"As children's self-confidence improved during the SHEP and their 'fear of failure' disappeared, they became more willing to try new things and develop new skills."* ('West Wales' scheme stakeholders' report)
- *"She [stakeholder] also felt many children learned skills during the programme without realising, 'putting them at an advantage with those who did not attend SHEP.'" ('transition' stakeholders' report)*

### Child survey findings -

- 64% said they *"[Learnt] a new skill or improve[d] skills you already had"* 'A lot' on the SHEP days compared to 35% on non-SHEP days.
- 4% said they 'Never' *"[Learnt] a new skill or improve[d] skills you already had"* on SHEP days compared to 17% on non-SHEP days.

### Parent survey finding -

- 90% said their child/children have learnt a new skill/gained new knowledge at SHEP.

**Outcome finding 21:** Stakeholders in four of the five case study schemes, as well as parents in two, noted that **informal learning opportunities** improved children's readiness for skills acquisition. Child and parent surveys supported these observations to varying degrees.

**Outcome finding 22:** Parents in two of the five case study schemes noted that the SHEP supported a modest reduction in learning loss; this was especially highlighted in the 'Welsh medium' scheme, with **routine connections between children and staff** supporting Welsh language maintenance.

Evidence from the parent survey supports this finding.

**Qualitative extract** - *"I'm fluent Welsh with him at home, have been since he was little but all my family's full English so over that long period he just switched back on to English and start talking to me in English again and then he'd step back a little bit with his Welsh, but with this SHEP it was handy because it was all back to Welsh again, so he was still getting that input, plus from me, so it caught up with him again."* ('Welsh medium' parent)

**Parent survey finding** - 66% said their child/children caught up with learning at the SHEP.

## Outcome area three: improved aspirations

### Lasting change indicator: self-efficacy

#### Core element findings

##### Core element finding - enrichment activities:

Stakeholders in the 'ALN' case study scheme reported a modest increase in children's **self-directed learning and independence** as a result of attending **enrichment activities**, which resultantly helped children to identify their strengths and talents.

**Core element finding - structured physical activities:** Stakeholders in the 'West Wales' case study scheme noted an increase in children recognising strengths and talents related to structured physical activities.

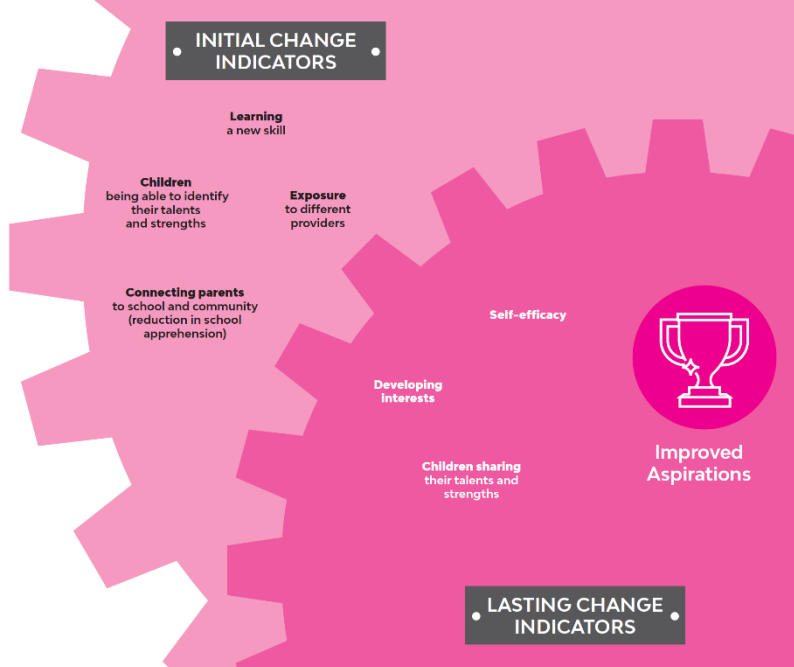
**Core element finding - nutrition education:** Stakeholders in the 'West Wales' case study scheme reported a relationship between the SHEP's nutrition education and children's awareness of their growing ability **to make healthier eating choices**; this displays children's increased recognition of their abilities and strengths.

**Core element finding - school-based programme:** Stakeholders in the 'transition' case study scheme saw a correlation between the school-based nature of the SHEP and an increase in children's self-efficacy. Children's growing familiarity with the environment throughout the summer was reported to have led to a **reduction in school-based anxiety and depressive symptoms**, resulting in some feeling confident enough to show other children around the school in September.

#### Outcome elements

**Outcome finding 23:** Parents and stakeholder in four of the five case study schemes identified a link between children's **identification of their talents and strengths** and increased self-efficacy.

**Qualitative extract** – “One parent mentioned that her child used to give up during maths at the slightest hurdle but is now more confident in her ability and perseveres as a result.” ('urban' parents' report)



**Outcome finding 24:** Children in all five of the case study schemes reported a link between the **healthy eating and physical activity core elements** and the development of their self-efficacy.

**Qualitative extract** – *"It [SHEP] made me think I can change my diet... It [SHEP] made me think I can do more sports."*  
(children's report)

**Outcome finding 25:** Parents in one of the five case study schemes identified benefits for themselves. They noted an increase in **the identification of their own strengths and talents and increased connection with children**, indicating a need to further explore how parents could benefit in this area through the SHEP's activity package.

**Qualitative extract** - *"One [child] even inspired his mother to return to university."* ('West Wales' scheme parents' report)

**Outcome finding 26:** Stakeholders in one of the five case study schemes reported that the SHEP benefitted their school through **improved connection between children and staff** and **children being able to identify their talents and interests**.

**Qualitative extract** - *"The stakeholders were able to involve students from year 8, 9 and sixth form in the delivery of the SHEP. These children attended the SHEP when they were coming up to year 7 and wanted to volunteer, demonstrating self-efficacy...SHEP provided a valuable experience in developing skills and taking initiative."* ('transition' stakeholders' report)

## Lasting change indicator: developing interests

### Core element findings

**Core element finding - enrichment activities:** Stakeholders in all five of the case study schemes reported a positive link between enrichment activities and the development of interests.

**Core element finding - structured physical activities:** Stakeholders in all five of the case study schemes reported a positive relationship between structured physical activities and the development of children's interests.

**Core element finding - nutrition education:** Stakeholders in the 'transition' case study scheme reported a modest connection between nutrition education and the development of interests, with children engaging well in the attached cooking activities.

## Outcome findings

**Outcome finding 27:** Children from all five case study schemes, stakeholders in four, and parents in three, reported that **exposure to different providers** was a primary enabler of children developing interests. Parent and survey findings supported these observations.

**Qualitative extract** - *"SHEP has given one child the confidence to join the choir and take part in running and athletics, as well as rekindling his interest in swimming and wanting to join after-school clubs."* (West Wales' scheme parents' report)

**Child survey finding** - 82% of children thought they would *"Spend more time doing fun things in your local area."*

**Outcome finding 28:** Parents in the 'ALN' case study scheme identified **community benefits** linked to **exposure to providers**.

**Qualitative extract** - *"Parents felt having external providers visit the children was beneficial, not only in having the children meet new people but because it would help to educate the wider community about children with additional needs."* ('ALN' parents' report)

## Lasting change indicator: children sharing their talents and strengths

### Core element findings

**Core element finding - nutritional education:** Stakeholders in the 'transition' case study scheme reported a narrow link between nutrition education and **children's willingness to share their talents and strengths**, with them wanting to share their cooking skills with their parents/guardians and families.

## Outcome findings

**Outcome finding 29:** Parents in three of the five case study schemes, as well as stakeholders in all five, reported that **children's willingness to share their talents and strengths** was inherently linked with their **social skills development**. Child and parent surveys supported this finding.

**Qualitative extract** - *"One child who used to sing when he was alone has started sharing his singing with others."* ('West Wales' scheme stakeholders' report).

### Child survey findings –

- After attending SHEP, 82% said it was true *"I have new skills or knowledge that I want to share with others."*
- When SHEP is finished 77% thought they would *"Spend time using new skills (e.g. hobbies, volunteering."*

## Outcome area four: improved physical activity

### Lasting change indicator: take up of sport after the summer holidays

#### Core element finding

**Core element finding - structured physical activities:** Stakeholders in the 'Welsh medium', 'West Wales', and 'transition' case study schemes reported moderate links between the SHEP's structured physical activity offering and the take up of sport after the summer holidays.

#### Outcome findings

**Outcome finding 30:** Children, parents, and stakeholders in all five case study schemes noted an increase in the intention to take up and/or continue sport after the summer holidays. **Exposure to sport** and **increased summer physical activity** were recognised as clear contributors. Child and parent survey results support this finding.

**Qualitative extract** - "...children in SHEP have taken up swimming, athletics, running, boxercise, netball and others." ('West Wales parents' report)

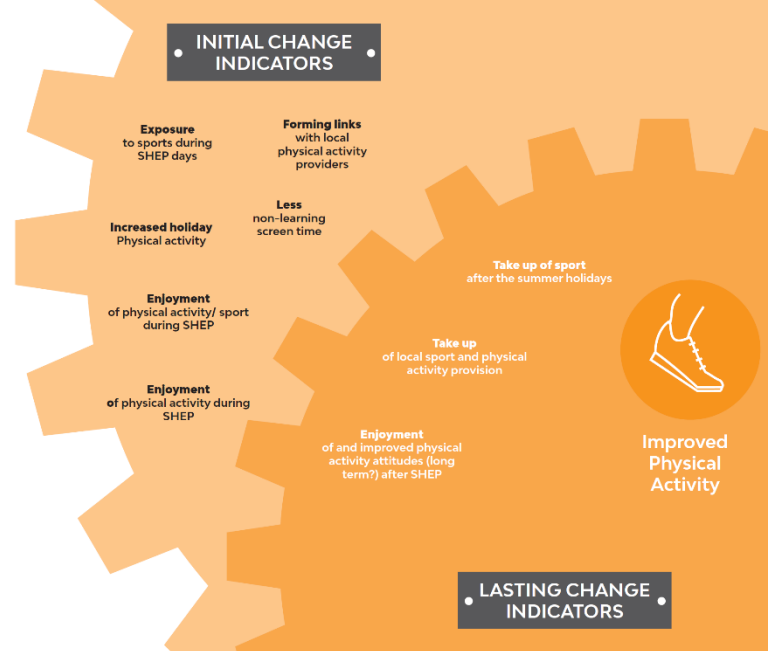
#### Child survey findings –

- When SHEP is finished 87% thought they would "Be more physically active or do more exercise."
- 84% thought they would "Try more new sports or activities."

**Outcome finding 31:** Children in all five case study schemes, parents in two, and stakeholders in two, reported that children's **increased social connectedness to peers** supported their take up or continuation of sport after the summer.

#### Qualitative extracts –

- "Children reported feeling better physically, but also enjoying doing activities with their friends." (children's report)
- "Some boys still play football together at breakfast time." ('urban' stakeholders' report)



**Outcome finding 32:** Parents and stakeholders in the 'urban' and 'ALN' case study schemes reported that the continuation of sport was short-lived, or partially achieved.

**Qualitative extract** – *"This activity did not continue after the summer, however keeping them active during summer was hugely important."* ('ALN' scheme parents' report)

## Lasting change indicator: take up of local sport and physical activity provision

### Core element finding

**Core element finding - structured physical activities:** Stakeholders in the 'transition' case study noted that the SHEP's structured physical activity sessions contributed to an increased **take up of local physical activity provision**, which was enabled by the links made with **local providers**.

### Outcome findings

**Outcome finding 33:** Parents and stakeholders from four of the five case study schemes reported that **exposure to sport** and the **forging of links with external providers** encouraged children to join local sport and physical activities. Parent survey results offered some validation.

**Qualitative extract** – *"The coordinator felt that external providers really listened to the children's voices in how they did the sporting activities, and this made the children feel more included and more likely to continue sport as it was enjoyable to all of them."* ('urban' stakeholders' report)

**Parent survey finding** – 64% thought that (when the SHEP was over) their child/children would *"Join a new sports or activity club."*

**Outcome finding 34:** There were no reported instances of children from the 'ALN' scheme taking up local sport or physical activity provision.

## Lasting change indicator: enjoyment of and improved physical activity attitudes after the SHEP

### Core element findings

**Core element finding - enrichment activities:** Stakeholders in the 'urban' and 'ALN' case study schemes reported that enrichment activities contributed to children's **increased enjoyment of sport and physical activity**.

**Core element finding - structured physical activities:**

Stakeholders from all five of the case study schemes reported that structured physical activity sessions contributed to children's increased enjoyment of sport and physical activity.

**Outcome findings**

**Outcome finding 35:** According to parents and stakeholders, four of the five case study schemes experienced improvements in children's enjoyment of sport and physical activity. Children's survey responses agreed with this finding.

**Qualitative extract** – *"SHEP seemed to improve the children's attitudes towards physical activity, largely through providing less competitive and less structured activity."* ('West Wales' scheme stakeholders' report)

**Child survey finding** – 93% felt that *"Playing sports and being active"* at SHEP was "Excellent" (78%) or "Good" (15%) (0.5% 'I didn't do this').

**Outcome finding 36:** In relation to the 'ALN' scheme, stakeholders only remarked on short-term indicators, implying no lasting change in attitudes to sport and physical activity.

**Qualitative extract** – There was no evidence of a long-term change, but the short term was valuable for the children. The SHEP coordinator said that normally *"these children will never go out and play sports, they will never go out and run in the park."* ('ALN' scheme stakeholders' report)

**Outcome finding 37:** Parents in three of the five case study schemes reported that children's increased exposure to physical activity has provided opportunities **to increase their connectedness to parents and family** through doing sports together.

**Qualitative extracts –**

- *"Families are doing more activities together now."* (Welsh medium parents' report)
- One child who did not enjoy sports has now found a love for football *"He's not the sort of boy that's sporty, you know he doesn't like football he doesn't like rugby, whereas when they were out playing football he realised 'Oh actually, I do quite enjoy this' and from then on, him and his dad play football".* ('West Wales' scheme parents' report)



**Outcome finding 38:** Stakeholders in one of the five case studies, and parents in two, identified an **increase in parents' holiday physical activity**. While surveyed parents indicated their increased willingness to take up sport, they also showed how a small number of them participated in the activities.

**Parent survey findings –**

- 73% thought that (when the SHEP is finished), they (personally) would *"Be more physically active."*
- 24% took part in *"Sports/physical activity"* (45% said this wasn't available at their setting).

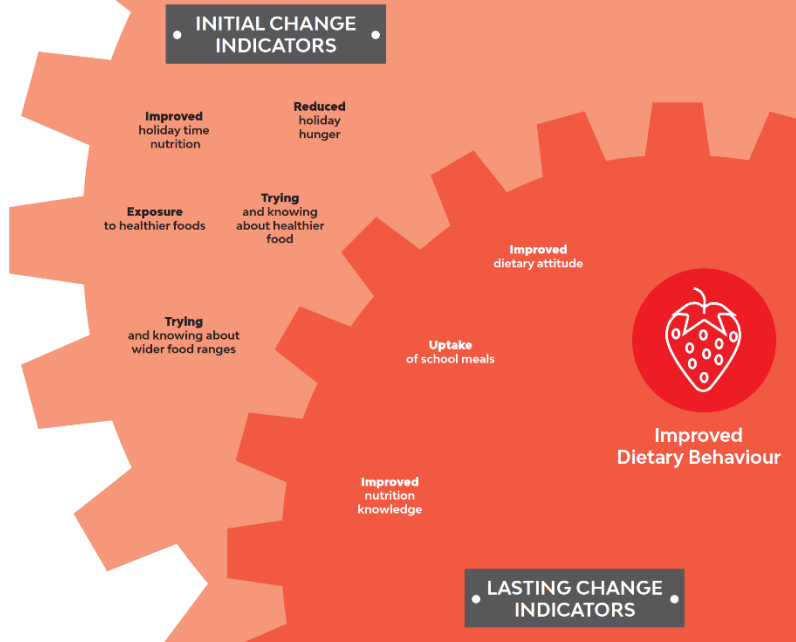
## Outcome area five: improved dietary behaviour

### Lasting change indicator: children's uptake of school meals

#### Outcome findings

**Outcome finding 39:** Parents in four of the five case study schemes, and stakeholders in three, saw a potential link between the **improved holiday nutrition** the SHEP provided and school meal uptake. Additionally, parents in four of the five case studies, and stakeholders in two, noted how the SHEP's efforts to help **children try and know about healthier food** could lead to increased school meal uptake.

However, it is unclear whether these led to a sustained increase in children's school meal uptake. Survey findings are positive but reflect intentions rather than actions.



#### Qualitative extracts –

- “One child who previously only ate packed lunches has taken to eating school meals thanks to enjoying them during SHEP.” (‘urban’ parents’ report)
- “The menu during the programme led to children trying new things.” (‘transition’ parents’ report)
- “Even children who normally have packed lunches really enjoyed the food during SHEP, though one parent said that this may be because “there was a different cook and food during SHEP”...however there has not necessarily been any increased uptake of school meals...” (‘Welsh medium’ parents’ report)

#### Child survey findings -

- 76% thought that (when the SHEP finished) they would “Eat school meals at lunchtime more often”.
- 86% thought that (when the SHEP finished) they would “Eat breakfast (at home or at school) more often.”

**Outcome finding 40:** Stakeholders in three of the five case study schemes noted that a regular eating **routine** had the potential to influence children's school meal uptake. However, no long-term correlation was evidenced.

**Qualitative extract –** “SHEP aimed to ensure students were getting fed over the summer, and as a result many children who would not normally eat breakfast started to do so in SHEP. At least two children have started going to breakfast club together after SHEP, showing clearly the impact of the programme.” (transition’ stakeholders’ report)

## Lasting change indicator: Improved nutrition knowledge

### Core element findings

**Core element finding - nutrition education:** According to stakeholders in the 'urban', 'Welsh medium,' and 'West Wales' case study schemes, as well as all children who participated in the 'All Wales SHEP Food and Nutrition Education' evaluation, the use of **engaging teaching methods**, including **blind-tasting and sugar swapping activities**, supported an improvement in children's and parents' nutrition knowledge.

**Core element finding - nutrition education:** Stakeholders in the 'urban' and 'Welsh medium' case study schemes identified the influential **role of parents and guardians**, as well as **the school curriculum**, in strengthening or limiting the effectiveness of nutrition education.

**Core element finding - weekly family meals:** Stakeholders in the 'West Wales' case study reported that the weekly family meals facilitated parents' improved nutritional knowledge by **exposing them to wider and healthier food ranges**, as well as **improving their holiday time nutrition**. However, these stakeholders were not able to comment on the long-term impact of this core element.

### Outcome findings

**Outcome finding 41:** Children in all five of the case study schemes, and parents and stakeholders in four of the five, reported that children's **exposure to healthier food** during the SHEP **improved their knowledge of nutrition**. Child and parent survey responses also aligned with this finding.

**Qualitative extract** – *"One child has stopped drinking Lucozade and started drinking water."*  
(‘transition’ parents’ report)

**Outcome finding 42:** Parents in three of the five case studies reported an improvement in their nutritional knowledge through **exposure to healthier food**. Parent survey findings supported this claim.

#### Parent survey findings -

- 79% thought that (when the SHEP is finished), they (personally) would *"make healthier food choices."*
- 84% thought that they (personally) would *"Keep trying new foods or eating a wider variety of foods."*

**Outcome finding 43:** Children in all five of the case study schemes, and parents and stakeholders in four, reported that **informal learning** provided through nutrition education and activities supported improved nutritional knowledge. Child and parent survey responses supported this finding.

**Qualitative extract** - One parent said *"they were talking a lot about the healthy eating. Mine were really like "oh that is so much sugar" and they would read the packaging and say "oh no you can't eat that." ('urban' parents' report)*

**Child survey finding** - 93% (after attending the SHEP) said it was true *"I understand more about looking after myself with healthy food and exercise"*.

**Outcome finding 44:** Parents in four of the five case study schemes reported that some children continued to **apply their summer learning** around nutrition. Child survey findings somewhat supported this observation.

**Qualitative extract** - One parent said that her child says, *"I'm going to do healthy eating from now on", ...she still goes through phases where she'll refer back to it, which is an interesting one."* ('Welsh medium' parents' report)

**Outcome finding 45:** Stakeholder findings pointed to the pivotal role of parents in supporting or limiting children's nutritional knowledge. This was especially evident in the 'ALN' case study scheme where children are especially reliant on parental nutritional knowledge for sustainable change.

**Child survey finding** - 81% thought that (when the SHEP is finished) they would *"Make healthier food choices."*

**Qualitative extract** – *"The dietary changes made by the children are unfortunately limited by parental knowledge, so the stakeholders would like to get parents more involved in nutrition education in future."* ('ALN' stakeholders' report)

## Lasting change indicator: improved dietary attitude

### Core element findings

**Core element finding - nutrition education:** Stakeholders in all five case study schemes, as well as children who completed the 'All Wales SHEP Food and Nutrition Education' evaluation reported short-term improvements in dietary attitude.

The **creative teaching methods** used within the SHEP's nutrition sessions, and the opportunities the **SHEP provided to connect children and families**, were identified as important; children asked their parents or guardians to recreate the meals they learnt about during the SHEP; and some delivered sessions to parents and guardians.

**Core element finding - healthy breakfast and lunch:** Stakeholders from all five case study schemes and survey findings point towards the effectiveness of the **healthy breakfasts and lunches** in exposing children to **healthier and wider food ranges** and good eating habits. This was shown to have a promising influence on their dietary behaviour.

**Qualitative extract** – *“This component was significant in improving dietary behaviour. It encouraged children to have breakfast, with some children now attending breakfast club. Additionally, the meals encouraged children to try new foods over the summer.”* (‘transition’ stakeholders’ report)

**Core element finding - weekly family meals:** Case study findings indicated a positive effect of the weekly family meals upon parent and children’s dietary attitudes and nutritional knowledge.

**Qualitative extract** – *“She felt the parents were benefiting as much as the children were.”* (‘urban’ stakeholders’ report)

**Core element finding - school-based programme:** Stakeholders from the ‘urban’, ‘West Wales’, and ‘transition’ case study schemes reported a connection between improved dietary attitudes and the **school-based nature of the SHEP**, specifically noting **engagement with the school routine**. Stakeholders in the ‘urban’ case study scheme noted that the **healthy eating and lifestyle messages** promoted within the SHEP strengthened the school’s existing healthy eating branding and messaging. Stakeholders in the ‘West Wales’ and ‘urban’ case study schemes reported that **staff** were key to encouraging children to try new food and make them feel comfortable in the transition school canteen environment.

## Outcome findings

**Outcome finding 46:** Children and stakeholders in all five of the case study schemes, and parents in four, reported that children’s **exposure to healthier food** was linked with an improvement in their dietary attitude. Child survey findings also indicated these improvements.

**Qualitative extract** – *“One child has become willing to try many new and healthy foods, such as peas, sweetcorn and roast dinners, and is willing to try new dishes that contain the foods he likes, such as tuna pasta... One child who used to only eat the parts of a meal he liked now eats all of it without fuss, and fussy children have generally become more willing to eat a wider range of foods.”* (‘West Wales’ parents’ report)

### Child survey findings

- 53% said they *“Try new foods or drinks for the first time”* ‘A lot’ on SHEP days compared to 30% on non-SHEP days.
- 81% thought that (when the SHEP is finished) they would *“Keep trying new foods or eat a wider variety of foods.”*
- 48% said they *“Eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables”* ‘A lot’ on SHEP days compared to 28% on non-SHEP days.

**Outcome finding 47:** Stakeholders in all five case study schemes, and parents in two of the five, noted that children's **increased social connectedness to peers** positively influenced their willingness to eat healthier and more diverse foods.

**Qualitative extract** – *"By encouraging him to sit with his friends and nibble new foods and praising him for doing so they were able to get him to try new things to the point where 'his mum was 'shocked' at how successful they were.'". (Welsh medium stakeholders' report)*

**Outcome finding 48:** Parents in four of the five case study schemes, as well as stakeholders in three, reported that children's **improved connectedness to parents and family** also supported improved dietary attitudes. These findings were echoed in child and parent survey results.

**Qualitative extract** – *"Thanks to the children's willingness to eat more foods, parents are able to cook one meal for the whole family, allowing them to eat together and bond more."* (West Wales scheme stakeholders' report)

**Child survey findings -**

- 93% rated *"Eating together with your friends/family"* (breakfast) as *"Excellent"* (74%) or *"Good"* (19%).
- 67% thought that (when the SHEP is finished) they would *"Be more involved in meal planning and preparation at home."*

**Parent survey finding** - 96% thought lunch *"Eating together"* was 'Excellent' (78%) or 'Good' (18%).

**Outcome finding 49:** Children in the 'urban' and 'ALN' case study schemes spoke of the potentially inhibitory role of parents in improving diet. Stakeholders in the same two schemes also commented on the critical role that parents play.

**Qualitative extract** – Children's dietary attitudes may be hampered by their parents' knowledge and attitudes. The head said *"Our children are quite well-educated about healthy eating anyway. It is about how much impact they can have on the parent putting together a packed lunch for example."* The coordinator felt that by improving parental engagement, the effectiveness of this aspect may be improved. ('urban' stakeholders' report)

**Outcome finding 50:** Parents in four of the five case study schemes, as well as stakeholders in two, noted positive changes in parents' dietary attitudes. Parent survey responses support these findings.

**Parent survey finding** - 79% thought that (when the SHEP is finished) they (personally) would *"make healthier food choices."*

**Outcome finding 51:** Parents in three of the five case studies, as well as stakeholders in one, reported a **reduction in financial and family stress** as a result of improvements in children's dietary attitudes.

**Qualitative extract** – *"One parent has commented on her reduced stress due to not having to cook her child separate meals."* ('West Wales' parents' report)

**Outcome findings 52:** Stakeholders in three of the five case studies noted children's **increased willingness to eat a wider food range**, and overcome associated well-being challenges.

#### Qualitative extracts –

- *"One child ...began the programme eating only ham sandwiches her mum packed for and refusing to try anything else, however seeing her peers eating the different foods on offer encouraged her to try new foods."* ('transition' stakeholders' report)
- *"One student would only eat mashed potatoes and gravy for every meal, and by the end of SHEP was trying new foods such as bubbled salmon, surprising her parents."* (West Wales scheme stakeholders' report)

## 7. Summary and recommendations

This section presents a summary of key findings and future development considerations drawn from the evaluation of the SHEP 2019 programme, presented under the headings of the five main outcome areas. A list of programme-wide findings and development considerations is also reported. Finally, this section closes with **recommendations** related to future evaluation work.

### Mental health and emotional well-being

#### Key learning points

1. SHEP had a positive effect on the mental health and emotional well-being of attending children, through its **enrichment activities, physical activities, nutrition related core elements, and school-based setting**. These were shown to:
  - Promote children's social connections with peers, school staff and external providers, which enhanced their social skills, and
  - Provide children with positive summer experiences and a safe place to play, displacing boredom and isolation, and reducing non-learning screen time.
2. SHEP provided increased opportunities for social connection and reduced the amount of time that children spent alone.
3. Parents experienced mental health and emotional well-being benefits, as the SHEP provided their children with enrichment activities and social opportunities which relieved financial and practical pressures during the summer break.
4. The SHEP supported family functioning by providing opportunities for children and parents to spend quality time together, through physical and nutrition related activities (particularly the weekly family meals).
5. **Emergent finding** - The summer-holiday **routine** that the SHEP provided emerged as being beneficial to children's mental health and emotional well-being, particularly for children with additional learning needs.
6. **Emergent finding** - Children's behaviour outside of school was shown to be supported by their social skills development at the SHEP, which allowed them to demonstrate **maturity** and **independence**.
7. **Emergent finding** - **Sense of achievement** and **positive self-image** emerged as supporters of children's self-esteem.

#### Delivery considerations and implications

1. To continue to address mental health and emotional well-being progress in children, the SHEP should continue to deliver activities and support related to children's emotional, physical, cognitive, and social needs.
2. The fun and play opportunities the SHEP provided through enrichment activities improved children's happiness levels and relieved practical and financial pressure for parents. There is therefore evidence need to continue with enrichment activities.



## School engagement and educational attainment

### Key learning points

1. Parents and stakeholders observed that the SHEP's school-based setting, complemented by enrichment and physical activities, had a positive impact on children's school engagement.
2. Survey findings were also promising in relation to parent's engagement with their child's school and education, with parents reporting they felt more connected as a result of SHEP. The qualitative findings supported this, demonstrating that children were more willing to discuss their school day and homework needs with parents. While positive, the long-term impact of these shifts on school engagement and attainment levels are not clear.
3. The evaluation demonstrated the effectiveness of the weekly family meals and some physical activities in improving parent-school interactions. Survey feedback suggested that broadening the range of activities for parents could strengthen these impacts.
4. While stakeholders alluded to the positive impact of the SHEP on children's in-school behaviour and engagement, it was not possible to draw long-term conclusions on how schools and staff benefitted from this change.
5. The presence of internal school staff had far-reaching benefits on children's and parents' school engagement and well-being, and this is evidenced throughout the findings.
6. Case study findings demonstrated modest but promising benefits resulting from improved relations between schools and parents, particularly in the 'ALN' case study where staff's continued professional development was enabled by parents and staff working in joined-up ways to assess and meet children's needs during the SHEP.
7. Stakeholders in two of the case study schemes highlighted the need for the SHEP local authority steering groups to more closely consider school insight within match funding arrangements. Doing so would allow schools to customise the programme in line with individual cohort's needs.
8. There was limited evidence to suggest that the SHEP supported a reduction in summertime learning loss and improved readiness for skills acquisition (educational attainment outcomes). Changes in both areas were observed by stakeholders to be tentative.
9. Most of the children who responded to the survey noted that after attending the SHEP they had more confidence in their ability to learn new things.
10. **Emergent finding** - Parents and stakeholders identified increased **motivation** in children to attend the SHEP and school in the new term as emerging from the positive experience the SHEP provided.
  - Stakeholders connected children's increased motivation to improved school-based happiness and well-being, resulting from opportunities to connect with the school environment, staff and peers, and learning new things in an informal and fun context at the SHEP.
  - Parents more readily connected children's increased school related motivation to their improved access to ICT and learning resources which allowed them to maintain a learning routine. This shows a slight variance between parent and stakeholder understanding of school motivation enablers, which may have future implications on parental involvement levels in the programme and how the SHEP's messages are communicated to both groups.

## Delivery considerations and implications

1. Children's behaviour and school engagement were closely connected with their feelings of school-place happiness, which was enhanced by the positive summer experience the SHEP provided. There is therefore evidence that continuing to host the SHEP's package within schools will have meaningful impacts on schools and attending pupils.
2. Findings indicated that school staff need to be a continued essential element of the SHEP.
3. Closely considering school level insight into local match funding arrangements may allow schools to better customise the programme to their cohorts' needs.
4. Findings revealed a divergence between parent and staff understanding of school engagement motivators. This may require further investigation. Where possible, it may be worthwhile considering fuller parental involvement in programme planning and delivery. Doing so may have wider benefits, including school staff professional development where staff are provided with more knowledge on children and their family circumstances.

## Improved aspirations

### Key learning points

1. There is evidence that children developed new and existing interests, supported by the physical and enrichment activities provided by the SHEP.
2. Survey and case study feedback point towards an increase in children's self-efficacy. In addition to the enrichment and physical activities, the methods used to deliver nutrition education were also helpful in promoting children's awareness of their strengths and insight.
3. Case study findings revealed that providing children with supportive networks and connections; and the freedom to undertake informal self-directed learning proved to be beneficial in the development of their aspirations and confidence. The supportive factors in these areas were the enrichment activities and the SHEP's daily structure, which allowed time for breaks, free-play and structured activity time.
4. Improvements for parents in this area were reported on a small scale. However, the limited number of changes that were reported included parents widening social networks and one parent being inspired to return to higher education.
5. Evaluation evidence revealed that children's improved aspiration materialised in their volunteering and community participation plans; as well as their willingness to share their skills with families and peers.
6. Limited school and community benefits were reported, and these were mainly connected to children and young people's increased interest in volunteering in their school or local community as a result of their increased self-efficacy and widened interests. In one case study, it was shown how the SHEP could benefit from children's increased involvement in its delivery.

### Delivery considerations and implications

1. Children's further involvement in the SHEP planning and delivery may have wider impacts for children, schools and communities, including volunteering and skills enhancement.
2. Improved aspirations have proven to be a largely cross-cutting area, with links being made between its mobilisers and all other outcome areas. This outcome area may therefore need to be mainstreamed into the SHEP's core messages and aims.

### Improved physical activity

#### Key learning points

1. Children's intentions to continue physical activity after the summer, as well as their intention to take up local sport provision, were shown to be favourably influenced by the SHEP.
2. Structured physical activities were shown to have broad benefits, relating to children's general well-being, social and family connections, and especially their engagement with school routine through extra-curricular sporting opportunities.
3. In the 'ALN' and 'urban' case studies, physical activity progress was related to short-term change such as exposure to sport and increased holiday physical activity. Long-term change pertaining to continued sport engagement could not be confidently reported. It could be premised that continuing sport after the summer is dependent on factors beyond the SHEP, including children's independence levels (potentially in the case of children with additional learning needs) and access to outdoor space and provision (potentially in the case of urban areas).
4. Survey and case study findings indicated that family-centred physical activities supported family functioning. This had a circular impact, with improved family functioning resulting in increased physical activities beyond the SHEP in some cases, in the form of family walks and other family-centred sport.

### Delivery considerations and implications

1. SHEP's structured physical activities proved to be an effective means of engaging children with the physical education (PE) elements of the school curriculum and routine, including school-based extra-curricular activities. Further linkage between the SHEP and schools' PE may therefore be helpful in meeting school engagement outcomes.

## Improved dietary behaviour

### Key learning points

1. Substantive changes were evidenced in this outcome area for children and parents in relation to improved dietary attitude and improved nutrition knowledge, and relatively limited changes were reported for school meal uptake.
2. Children's and parents' improved nutrition knowledge complemented an improvement in dietary attitude.
3. Where parents were able to observe children's continued healthy eating, they were also able to identify improvements in their behaviour which related to **maturity** and **responsibility** levels, with children taking a lead in family meal preparation and planning.
4. In some cases, family circumstances limited the quality and extent of evidence relating to long-term change. This was observed in the 'urban' case study where family knowledge and access to resources potentially compromised long-term change, and in the 'ALN' case study, where children were especially reliant on parental choices and knowledge.
5. Stakeholders suggested that integrating the SHEP nutritional messages into school curriculums could strengthen the impact of the SHEP's nutrition education.
6. Broad well-being benefits resulted from the SHEP's core eating activities, which related to children's social skills and mental health. Case study stories evidenced how, in some cases, children's social connections, alongside the positive and safe eating environments (school-bases) offered within the SHEP, supported children to address well-being challenges related to diet.
7. In reference to the inputs, some stakeholders commented on how further considering the SHEP's budget would enable more families with multiple children to attend the weekly family meal.
8. Long-term improvements in children's school meal take up were not definitively evidenced. However, initial improvements, linked to children's exposure to healthier and wider food ranges, and meals like those served in term-time were indicated.

### Delivery implication and considerations

1. Integrating healthy eating messages into school curriculums may strengthen long-term dietary behaviour.
2. Further consideration of the SHEP's budget allocation could potentially enable more families and family members to attend the weekly family meal and benefit from the SHEP's healthy eating principles.

## Programme wide findings and considerations

1. Across Wales, over 80% of children who signed up for the SHEP typically attended at least one day, apart from in three areas where attendance ranged from 67% to 77%.
2. On average, of those children who attended at least one day, 7.9 of 12 available SHEP days were attended. This varied greatly across Wales, ranging from 5.6 (47%) days to 10.2 (85%) days.
3. The intention of the SHEP delivery team was to bolster the evaluation with additional secondary data relevant to school attendance, behaviour, and child-level demographics. However, the absence of centralised, accessible sources for this data, as well as difficulties in establishing data sharing procedures with participating schools (in part due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic), meant that no analysis of secondary data could be completed. Nevertheless, learning gained from this experience, including a detailed understanding of the relevant data sources, availability, and gaps mean that such analysis would be feasible in future years.
4. Social connections, in the form of engagement with peers, staff, and external providers, produced reciprocal benefits in all five outcome areas for children and parents. Also, social connections produced benefits for staff in relation to improved aspirations and school engagement. For example, physical activities supported an improvement in children's social skills, and children's social connections supported a take up in physical activity.
5. Findings for all outcome areas mentioned the need for a wider range of activities to further engage parents and support family functioning.
6. Parents, stakeholders and children involved in the 'ALN' case study reported on outcome progress to a lesser degree than other schemes; this was particularly the case for the dietary and physical outcome areas that relied on the support of parents and carers for their continued implementation; short-term impacts were reported only. Nonetheless, the impacts of the SHEP has proven important for this cohort in relation to their mental, emotional and general well-being.

## Research and evaluation recommendations

1. **Administrative data:** Processes, guidance and minimum requirements around the collection and sharing of administrative data should be formulated and agreed by the national coordinators, in liaison with regional partners. They should agree consistent coding standards, specifically addressing how missing data should be recorded. This will ensure a robust, reliable and consistent evidence base for future evaluation. Furthermore, administrative data should be consistently collected on:
  - The age, year group, and language requirements (Welsh/English/Other) of children attending the SHEP, by scheme;
  - The age, employment status, and language requirements (Welsh/English/Other) of parents whose children attend the SHEP, by scheme;
  - The SHEP attendance records, by scheme; and
  - The percentage of the SHEP attendees who are FSM eligible, by scheme.
2. **Surveys and case study planning and design:** Information about planned surveys or feedback opportunities should be shared with parents/guardians and other SHEP stakeholders and staff at the earliest opportunity (e.g. during registration). Where possible, permission for direct phone or email contact between the SHEP delivery team (and/or their data processors) and parents/guardians should be obtained. This has the potential to:
  - Lessen burden on local the SHEP coordinators to recruit participants and administer questionnaires;
  - Increase the potential sample size for evaluation exercises; and
  - Enhance response rates to evaluation exercises examining the longer- term impact of the SHEP (e.g. by minimising contact loss due to transition between schools or staff changes).
3. **Accessibility and representation:** Consideration should be given to ensuring that children across participating schools have an equal opportunity to contribute to the evaluation of the SHEP programme. Where possible, evaluation methods and materials should be piloted with children in participating schools to ensure accessibility and validity of measurement across age groups and additional learning need requirements.
4. **Emerging indicators:** In order to assess their impact, emerging indicators should be operationalised and included in future data collection and evaluation exercises:
  - **Routine**, which is linked to the mental health and emotional well-being outcome area.
  - **Maturity and responsibility** and **independence**, which are also linked to the mental health and emotional well-being outcome area.
  - A **sense of achievement** and **positive self-image**, which are also linked to the mental health and emotional well-being outcome area.
  - **Motivation**, which is linked to the school engagement and educational attainment outcome area.

## Further research

1. To gain more detail on the long-term impacts of the SHEP programme, longitudinal research is required i.e. the same children, parents, and stakeholders should be assessed over multiple years to determine whether impacts demonstrated during the summer, and in the months immediately after the SHEP, are maintained over time. All outcome areas and lasting change indicators should be assessed. However, special attention should be paid to the following lasting change indicators because they have proved to be difficult to assess:
  - Parent's engagement in their child's education;
  - Children's in-school behaviour;
  - Readiness for skills acquisition;
  - Reduction in learning loss after the summer holidays; and
  - Take up of school-meals (ideally with the use of cashless systems).
2. Nutrition education has been demonstrated to be linked with improvements in learning and school engagement areas. It may be helpful to explore this overlap through further research and evaluation design.
3. It was found that in some cases children expanded their food range as a result of the SHEP. This could have wider well-being implications, which should be further explored.
4. There needs to be further consideration of the influential and complicating factors that affect children's emotional and general well-being but currently fall outside of the SHEP sphere. These include children's health and learning needs; their living environments, including access to green spaces and resources; family circumstances and resources. This became especially apparent in the areas of mental and emotional health and well-being; physical activity and dietary behaviour. Therefore, external factors that impact children's summertime well-being should be investigated and the research design updated to include these.

## Finally...

This report is the first mixed-methods evaluation carried out in the history of the SHEP. The complexity of the **logic model**, and of the research design, made this an ambitious undertaking. Nevertheless, the project produced insightful findings, demonstrating the generally positive impact of the programme on children, parents, and stakeholders. Additionally, the evaluation highlighted important areas of development. Lessons learnt will be used to refine future delivery such that the programme is appropriately positioned to address the challenges faced by Welsh children and their families during the summer holidays.



For further details regarding this report please contact:

Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)

[www.wlga.wales](http://www.wlga.wales)

[enquiry@wlga.gov.uk](mailto:enquiry@wlga.gov.uk)