



Briefing 15-41 August 2015

Holiday Hunger

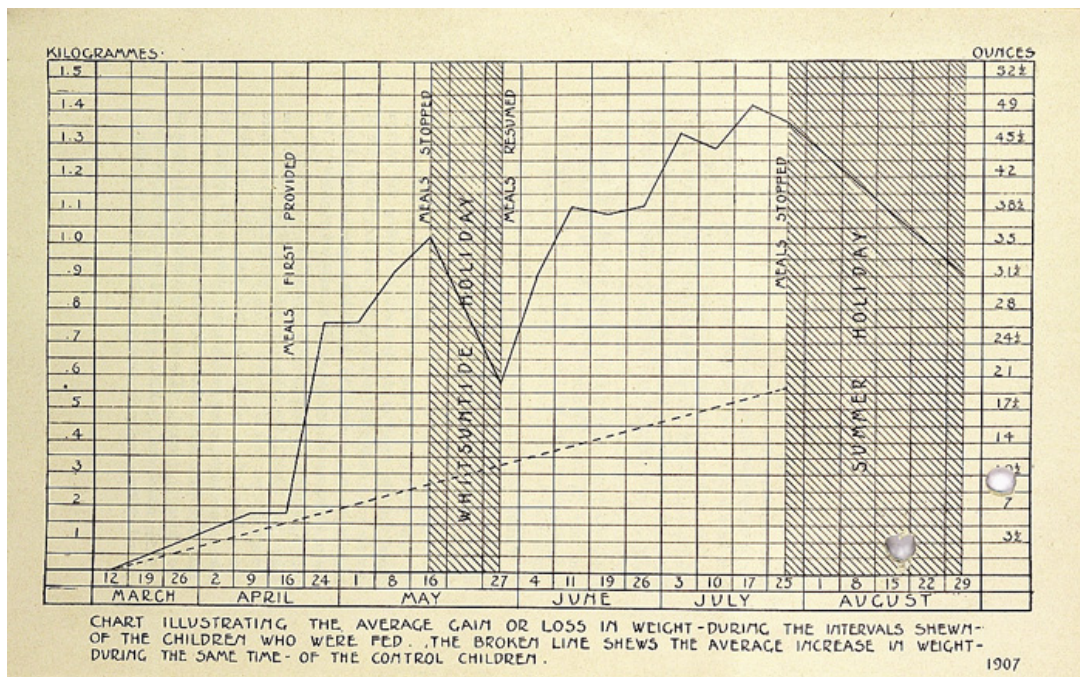
As part of APSE’s work as secretariat for the All Party Parliamentary Group on School Food, APSE conducted a UK wide online survey of local authority councillors and officers to determine the awareness of the issue of holiday hunger, the extent of current summer feeding provision and the type of facilities used for holiday activity programmes. This briefing provides a synopsis of the results.

Key issues

- Over 70% of respondents recognise holiday hunger as a key issue in their area
- 73% run holiday schemes with the majority based around leisure centres
- Only 30% of schemes include food at present and parents are normally expected to pay for that

Overview:

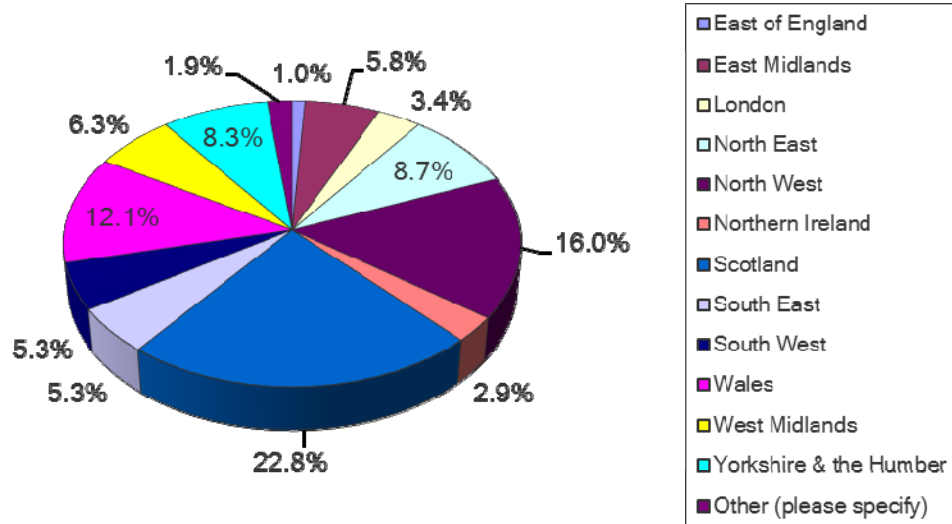
Back at the start of the 20th century, evidence emerged showing significant weight loss during the school holiday periods for those children in receipt of free school dinners. Whilst society has changed beyond recognition over the past 100 years, unfortunately the issue of holiday hunger remains a real one.



(City of Bradford Education Committee Report by the Medical Superintendent, 1907)

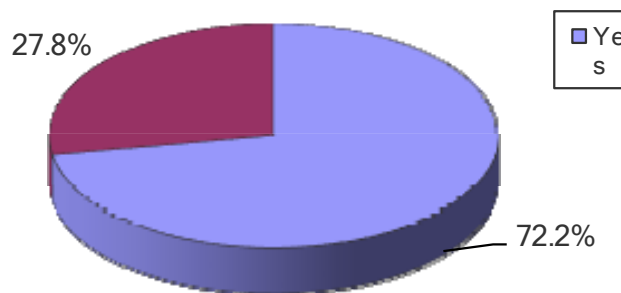
In an attempt to gauge the current view of local authorities and provide an indication of current activity in the field, APSE sent surveys to a wide range of local authority elected member and catering contacts across the UK during February /March 2015. Responses were received from across the UK with Scotland (22.8%) and Wales (12.1%) figuring significantly.

In which part of the UK is your Council?



Of the Councils that responded, 24.3% were County Councils, 35% Districts, 29% Unitary authorities and 2.5% London boroughs. 21.88% of respondents were elected members, 64% officers of the Council and 4.7% described themselves as contractors to the Council.

Is hunger during the school holidays an issue in your area?

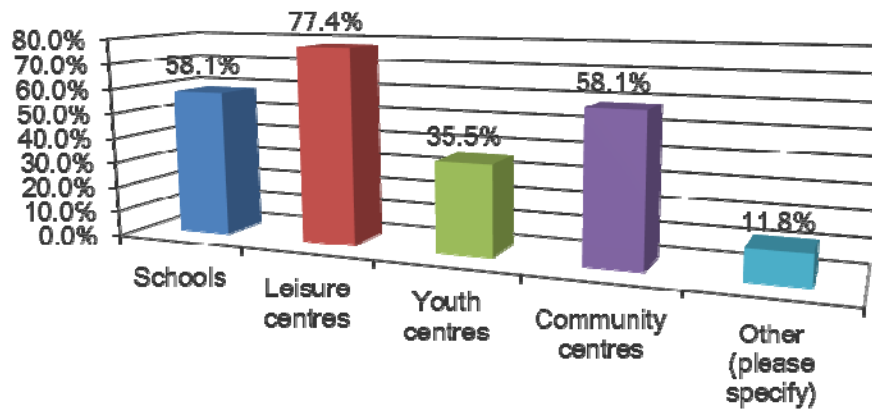


The vast majority (72.2%) recognised holiday hunger within their Council area

Many Local authorities already run activity programmes during the summer holiday period. Currently 73.5% aim to run a scheme this year with only 16.6% never having run one. Perhaps reflecting a funding squeeze, 7.3% have discontinued their schemes.

Does the local authority run activities during the school holidays?	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Yes	73.5%
No - never	16.6%
No - now ceased	7.3%
Planned for next 12 to 18 months?	2.6%

We asked where holiday activity schemes are based, with the most being sited around existing leisure centres. 58% run schemes in schools and a similar number in community centres.



Where do these activities take place? (please tick all that apply)

Of those authorities who run holiday activities, 60% are paid for by parents although 35% provide funding for those who currently qualify for free school meals. 30% have mixed provision ranging from full funding to partial subsidy for all, with a few recognising individual health funding for those identified as obese

Only 30% of activities include food provision and of those around 50% offered a pack lunch against 50% offering a cooked meal. Others responses included a meal allowance to spend elsewhere and other expected participants to bring their own packed lunch. Several activities were session based covering a morning or afternoon and specifically exclude the lunch period.

Encouragingly 75% of respondents thought there was potential to provide food as part of their existing holiday activity and 90% regarded the concept as a good idea.

Barriers:

Cost was overwhelming seen as the main barrier to expanding holiday meal provision. Additionally many did not have access to kitchens or appropriate facilities and a few were concerned about staff being adequately trained or possessing food safety qualifications.

APSE Comment

Holiday Hunger has been recognised at Federal level in the USA and is funded centrally. The issue has gained increased attention over the past 2 years as concerns over child poverty have risen along with responses to deprivation such as food banks. Some Councils have an existing track record with East Renfrewshire Council running holiday camps including feeding for several years and North Ayrshire Council has a new scheme for 2015

APSE encourages local authorities to find a balanced approach to improving the welfare of young people. Ensuring they continue to receive sufficient food in those periods outside of the school term is important. Other issues such as tackling obesity is however likely to have a significant impact on individual children and therefore a targeted solution should be considered, combining the elements of nutrition and physical exercise. This is a legitimate area for the use of Health & Wellbeing funding of which more information may be found in the APSE publication 'Ensuring action on health and wellbeing' available from the website.

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