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Project challenging impact of food poverty expands to 7 Glasgow schools

Children in Scotland is expanding its innovative project tackling the impact of food poverty on education and health, with seven schools across Glasgow signing up to take part over the summer.

Food, Families, Futures (FFF), aims to ensure families that find themselves in need when term-time free school meal ends can access meals and support.

From Monday 3 July, seven Glasgow schools will remain open offering children and families lunch, activities, free play and trips out. Food will be supplied by Children in Scotland's project partner Brakes as part of its Meals & More programme.

Maureen McKenna, Executive Director of Education, Glasgow City Council said:

"The outcomes from last year's FFF pilot were so positive and encouraging and I'm delighted that many more of our families in need across the city will benefit this year as well.

"The beginning of the school holidays is a joy to so many but creates additional, unwanted pressure to people experiencing food poverty. This worthy initiative will help reduce some of this stress for families across Glasgow."

Children in Scotland Chief Executive Jackie Brock said: "Children in Scotland is very pleased to be working with communities throughout Glasgow on this vital project. We have to bear in mind however that increased interest in FFF also reflects increased need, with schools throughout the city telling us that there are more children and families urgently requiring help over the summer.

"Through FFF we will do our best to respond, and alongside our partners ensure that we make inroads fighting food poverty and delivering the summer holiday experiences children in these communities deserve."

"Any school that needs to run holiday clubs as part of their wider work to tackle inequalities in children's health, wellbeing and learning should be supported to do so. We believe our FFF project can contribute to that ambition."

As part of this year's summer programme, two FFF projects will also run in West Dunbartonshire, at Clydebank and Vale of Leven.

The expansion follows last year's successful FFF pilot at Dalmarnock and Ibrox primaries in Glasgow, with interest in the holiday clubs exceeding capacity by up to 60%.

Early findings from an academic evaluation of summer holiday clubs across the UK, including last year's FFF projects at Dalmarnock and Ibrox, will be presented at a special Children in Scotland conference held in Glasgow today (Thursday 1 June).

Professor Greta Defeyter of Northumbria University, who is leading the evaluation, will discuss the role of summer holiday clubs in countering 'Holiday Hunger' and 'Summer Learning Loss' at the event, The Role of Food in Addressing Wellbeing, Learning and Attainment.

The evaluation indicates that there is a trend for improved reading scores across the summer holiday for both holiday club attendees and non-attendees. However, the gain in reading is more pronounced in children who attended holiday clubs than children who did not attend.

Pem Helusi, Programme Manager for Meals & More, said:

"Our programme's success, along with continued support from across Brakes, has enabled more funding - this year we extend the Meals & More programme from four to 14 clubs. We're delighted to increase our commitment in Scotland, to help more children in need over the holidays."

As well as Dalmarnock and Ibrox in Glasgow, during the past year the FFF project has worked with two schools in Eastern Perthshire and Irvine in North Ayrshire – also areas experiencing significant levels of child poverty.

Further details about the Glasgow schools taking part in FFF will be announced later this month.

(ends)

Find out more about today's event, The Role of Food in Addressing Wellbeing, Learning and Attainment

http://www.childreninScotland.org.uk/sites/default/files/FoodConf_Programme_final.pdf

Watch a film about last year's FFF summer holiday programme (Vimeo)

<https://vimeo.com/178001930>

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