



# ENGLAND FOR EVERYONE

THE IMPACT OF A UK HOLIDAY ON FAMILIES FACING TOUGH TIMES

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QaResearch

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Family Holiday Charity and Qa Research would like to thank all families that have taken the time to complete surveys and talk to us about their holidays, thank you for sharing your experiences so openly. We would also like to thank the referrers that have supported the project and the evaluation.

England for Everyone has been possible thanks to support and funding provided by VisitEngland and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).



Department for  
Digital, Culture  
Media & Sport

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## ABOUT FAMILY HOLIDAY CHARITY

Family Holiday Charity helps families get time away together, often for the first time ever.

We're here for children who've never seen the sea. For teenagers who can't remember when they last saw mum smile. For parents having to choose between a day out and a pair of school shoes. For young carers, grandparent carers and families facing illness, isolation, or bereavement.



Holidays open up new possibilities. There's time enough to share a laugh, watch the tide come in, and make happier memories. From a caravan on the coast, a woodland adventure, or a day out at a theme park. Whatever the weather, if it means time spent together, even a day's holiday helps build relationships, confidence and hope for the future.

*Family Holiday Charity - for holidays that make a lifetime of difference.*

Registered Charity: 800262 in England & Wales, and SC048203 in Scotland

## FOREWORD

Thank you to everyone who has participated in the England for Everyone pilot programme.

I'd like to pass on particular thanks to Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, and VisitEngland for providing the funding for the England for Everyone project. As a result of their vision, 822 families have been able to enjoy a holiday. Many for the first time ever.

I would also like to thank Qa research. Their work in completing this study helps to explain and express the impact and benefit that a holiday has for a family, particular a family facing a tough time. We can see clearly the confidence inspired in families and the wider economic and social benefits, too.

And of course, we thank the families who have so kindly given their time to participate in this research.

I have laughed, cried and been inspired by the love, warmth and commitment that families have for each other, even as they've experienced significant challenges and difficult moments.

It's heartening to read how holidays help heal, inspire, and bring families together. How holidays help stressed mums, dads and carers breathe out and break out of a routine, just for a little bit. How they reach teenagers who haven't seen their mum smile for such a long time. They help tiny toes feel the sand and sea for the first time. And how a holiday helps everyone feel lifted and encouraged for what's next.

In reading this report, I hope you too feel uplifted by the potential that holidays offer to families, and the genuine and lasting impact that something as straightforward as a few days away can have on us all.

If you would like to know more about the Charity, please do get in touch. And if you are moved to help, we welcome donations from individuals and partners alike. Any donation you kindly make will make a direct difference to a family just like those you read about in this report.



**Kat Lee**  
**Chief Executive**  
**Family Holiday Charity**

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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Introduction

In March 2022 Family Holiday Charity commissioned Qa Research to measure the impact of a social tourism project, namely *England for Everyone*.

Social tourism initiatives seek to remove barriers to participation in tourism. *England for Everyone* is a partnership project between Family Holiday Charity and VisitEngland which is supported and funded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The partnership and funding of £600,000 was to enable 830 families in need in England to take a short family break in England.

The overarching aim of the project was to provide 830 families in need with a short break. Additional aims and objectives were to improve confidence and wellbeing in families and increase participation in sport/outdoor activities and culture. It was hoped that the project would help remove barriers to participation in tourism amongst disadvantaged families, and also have a positive impact in terms of the cost to the public purse of supporting these families via statutory support in the future.

## Profile of those accessing breaks

In total 34% of applications were on behalf of one-adult families whilst a majority of applications were on behalf of families with two or more adults (66%).

The application data suggests around 3,487 people may have benefitted from the England for Everyone breaks.

- Almost half of the families being referred for a break had **never** had a family break before (49%).
- Over half of the families faced mental health issues (55%) and four in ten experienced low confidence (43%). On average families being referred for a break under the England for Everyone programme were experiencing/had experienced four different challenges.

## Impact

### Making Memories

Many of the families who participated in the project had been through traumatic events and it was clear that being able to create positive memories after a period of particular hardship (which is often ongoing) has been profound.

- 96% of families agreed the holiday had helped them to have more fun and create happy memories as a family.

### Family Bonding

The holidays also clearly have an impact on family bonding, 94% agreed (with 73% *strongly* agreeing) that the holiday had enabled them to spend more quality time together as a family.

**England for Everyone: The impact of a UK holiday on families facing tough times**

There is also positive indication this quality time may be sustained for many families on their return from their holidays.

- Six in ten families (61%) agreed that they had been spending more time together as a family since returning from the holiday. It was clear that the holidays have helped some families to realise and value the importance of spending quality time together and being present with one another.

Supporting relationships was a key theme, with referrers describing improved relationships between parents and children, and between partners/spouses. Improvement in these relationships sometimes translated into improved child behaviour, and engagement with school, on the return from holiday, although this was not always sustained.

### **Mental Health and Wellbeing**

- Almost all families agreed that the holiday had a positive impact on the mental health and wellbeing of their family (95%).

Whilst worries and anxieties are not magicked away by the holidays, holidays have clearly provided a period of respite for the families; a change of scenery and focus and as such, have clearly been beneficial in terms of mental health and wellbeing.

A different and more relaxed setting (for most) has helped relax families, offer freedom, and some families have seen improved behaviour in their children which has all had a knock on effect on the wellbeing of the family.

### **Confidence**

- In total, over four-fifths of families (83%) agreed that the holiday had a positive impact on their family's confidence.

Families often spoke about how they'd grown in confidence in their ability as a parent/carer to manage a holiday away from the home, and be assured that they could do it. Some realised that the fears and anxieties they had prior to the holidays, were perhaps unwarranted. This is important in the context of half of these families never experiencing a holiday before.

A clear benefit for many families was that being awarded a holiday has boosted children's self-esteem, by providing them with something their families are unable to afford themselves. The holidays have given them the same experiences as many of their peers.

### **New Experiences**

- Nine in ten families agreed that the holiday had given their family an opportunity for new experiences (91%).

It was clear through the discussions, that many families had quite limited and restricted experiences of engaging in activities together prior to the holidays, particularly outside of the house, and particularly as a family unit.

The holidays have therefore enabled families to have new and different experiences to the norm, and it was clear that this has also helped develop confidence and interest in pursuing more activities in the future.

- Six in ten families (59%) agreed that their families are now more likely to take part in these kinds of activities going forward, as a direct result of the holiday.

### **Family Coping Mechanisms**

- Three-quarters of families agreed that the holiday had a positive impact on their family's ability to deal with the challenges they face as a family (75%).
- Almost nine in ten families also agreed that the holiday had helped to reduce their feelings of stress and worry (87%).

Comments highlight how the break in routine, and being away from stressors at home, has helped families to feel refreshed and able to return to face any ongoing challenges.

### **Community Activity**

- Just over a third of families completing the survey, agreed that they had become more active in their local community since the holiday (35%).

Discussions and some of the questionnaire comments highlight a subtle shift in community engagement, particularly a sense of belonging, even if this wasn't recognised by families themselves.

The main area of impact here is giving families a connection with others, and providing a conversation-starter. Some families have talked about their holidays with staff at school and neighbours, and children have spoken about their holidays with their peers and teachers.

In relation to this, taking the holidays have boosted children's self-esteem and feelings of 'normality'. In some cases, children have returned from their holidays more willing and able to socialise with other children, again improving their sense of community belonging.

### **Looking Towards the Future**

- Over three-quarters of families agreed that the holiday had helped them to feel more optimistic about the future (78%).
- A large majority of families also agreed that they would feel more comfortable and confident in taking a holiday with their family in the future (89%).

Comments from families highlighted that the aspiration to have future holidays (or more days out if not holidays) is definitely there. Whilst many families spoke openly about hoping to take further holidays many also acknowledged this would be difficult or impossible to afford.

The holidays have clearly provided positive experiences for many families that they would like to replicate in the future. Now families have done this once, they often have increased confidence to take holidays, and do more as a family going forward.

It was clear that prior to the holidays, many families were so embedded in their daily challenges, including low finances, that a holiday was simply not on their radar. Many



discussions highlighted that, despite what they were going through, many families did not know how much they needed their holiday until they had it. Now they have had a holiday, they've seen how valuable and enjoyable it could be.

Half of the families reached by Family Holiday Charity had never had a holiday and therefore were unaware of its potential value to their overall wellbeing. Once they have had a holiday, they appear to be more likely to prioritise this in their future spending plans, they now recognise the true value of a family holiday.

## Overall holiday experience

A large majority of families rated their holidays as between 7 and 10 on a scale of 1-10, where 10 is excellent (95%). Over half of families gave their holiday the highest rating of 10 out of 10 (54%).

Accommodation was also rated very highly, with 91% giving a rating of between 7 and 10, with just less than half of families giving a score of ten out of ten (46%).

## Activities on holiday

Families had undertaken a range of activities during their holidays.

- Almost all families had taken part in outdoor activities (95%) whilst just over six in ten had taken part in sport either indoors or outdoors (63%).
- A further six in ten families had visited towns/villages near to where they were staying (61%).
- Over a third of those completing the post-travel survey had also visited tourist attractions during their holidays (37%) with a smaller proportion taking part in cultural activities whilst away (17%).

A majority of families were not taking part in the types of activities they did on their holidays prior to the holidays (59%). This demonstrates how the holidays have provided families with new opportunities and experiences.

Positively around six in ten families (59%) agreed that their families are now more likely to take part in these kinds of activities going forward as a direct result of the holiday.

## Affordability

A majority of families were still spending some of their own money on food during the holidays despite receiving a contribution towards the cost of food and travel as part of the holiday offer, however this was largely less than £100.

Families were less likely to be spending their own money on travel and pre-holiday essentials, with a third or more families not spending any money on these.

- Whilst 79% of families spent some of their own money on activities/entertainment whilst away this also tended to be less than £100.
- Positively, a large majority of families said the money they had spent on the holiday was either within their budget (51%), or manageable (41%).



It was clear through wider comments made within the post-travel questionnaire and particularly through the qualitative discussions with families that the vouchers for food and travel were an essential component in many families being able to take these short holidays and helped with budgeting plans.

## Social Value

A social value calculation was undertaken to provide an independent assessment of the impact and value of the project for all stakeholders, not just the families taking the holidays and referral organisations, but value for the public purse. This piece of research has used the Social Value Engine, a tool accredited by Social Value UK <https://socialvalueengine.com/>

- This found that **for every £1 invested in England for Everyone, this generated £6.21 (net) value.**

Please see the full report for more detail on the Social Value Engine assessment.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

In March 2022 Family Holiday Charity commissioned Qa Research to measure the impact of a social tourism project, *England for Everyone*.

Social tourism initiatives seek to remove barriers to participation in tourism. *England for Everyone* is a partnership project between Family Holiday Charity and VisitEngland which is supported and funded by Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The partnership and funding of £600,000 was to enable a target number of 830 families in need in England to take a family holiday in England.

Families had to be referred for a holiday and meet specific eligibility criteria, namely:

- are defined as adults with primary caring responsibility for at least one child under the age of 18 and their siblings.
- are referred by a professional working with them in a supporting role as a representative of a statutory agency or registered charity.
- will have a household income of less than £24,000 per annum.
- should not have been on a holiday together for 4 years.

All holidays took place before 5<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

The overarching aim of the project was to provide 830 families in need with a short holiday in England. A large majority of these holidays were for 3-4 nights although a small proportion were for 5 or more nights. Additional aims and objectives were to

- improve confidence and wellbeing in families, and
- increase participation in sport/outdoor activities and culture.

There was hope that the project would help remove barriers to participation in tourism amongst families facing tough times, and also have a positive impact in terms of the cost to the public purse of supporting these families via statutory support in the future.

Family Holiday Charity appointed Qa Research as external evaluator to conduct a quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the project and explore the extent to which the project has met the aims and objectives. Qa have been supported by Ann Hindley in this evaluation. Ann, of Cross Key Associates completed a Social Value Engine report for the project. This report presents the findings of the evaluation.

### 3. Aims & Objectives

Qa Research was asked to explore the extent to which the delivery of the *England for Everyone* project has met the required aims and objectives, namely to:

- provide 830 holidays to families in England.
- reach families who would otherwise not participate in tourism.
- improve the confidence of individuals (adults and children) participating.
- improve the wellbeing of individuals (adults and children) participating.
- increase participation in sport, outdoor activities and culture.
- achieve a potential net benefit to the public purse in the future.

A further objective was to draw out lessons from the project which could indicate how social tourism initiatives could be improved in the future.

## 4. Methodology

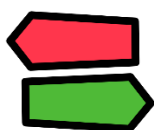
A range of methods have been used as part of this evaluation including gathering quantitative and qualitative data from families and referral organisations. Relevant open-source data has also been used to feed into the Social Value Engine report.

### Primary Research with Families

Anonymised application data has been analysed to be able to present an overall picture of families being offered holidays.

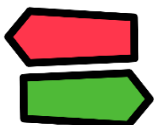
Qa Research, in conjunction with Family Holiday Charity and Ann Hindley, reviewed an existing post-holiday questionnaire for families. This was changed substantially to allow key project aims to be measured. Family Holiday Charity managed the administration of post-holiday questionnaires to referral organisations to complete with the families.

In total, 266 post-holiday questionnaires were completed by the cut-off date of 4<sup>th</sup> July. Using statistical rules, we can be 95% confident that the post-travel survey findings have a potential variance of no more than **plus or minus 5%** from the figure shown. These standards specifically apply to 'confidence levels'.



#### Confidence levels

This indicates how representative findings are of the resident body as a whole. In this instance we have used 95% confidence levels – or put more simply– this requires that the chances of the sample group reflecting the wider resident population will be 95 out of 100. The confidence level is essentially a fixed value which must be looked at in conjunction with standard error.



#### Standard error

'Standard error' demonstrates how answers provided by sampled residents potentially vary from the responses that would be obtained if all tenants had responded. In the research industry, commonly accepted levels of error are +/- 5% and +/- 3%.

In addition to the survey it was important for families to be able to feed back their opinions and experiences, in their own words, regarding the impact of the holiday. As such, Qa completed in-depth telephone interviews with 22 families that had taken a holiday in the previous month. A broad range of families were interviewed.

These interviews were audio-recorded with consent, and those taking part were provided with a £30 e-voucher to thank them for their time. Those taking part in the interviews had the choice of feeding back views anonymously and were also asked if they would be willing for their story to feature as a case study (again either anonymously or identifiably). Case studies are provided in Section 6.

A range of supporting quotes are presented in the report. These are all from different families or referrers and come from the depth interviews, as well as the post-travel survey responses. The case studies provide further details of individual stories.

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## Primary Research with Referral Organisations

Some key questions for referral organisations were included in the post-holiday questionnaire, in order to capture insight from as many referrers as possible. As stated earlier, 266 post-break questionnaires were completed by the deadline for the evaluation work.

Fifteen telephone interviews were also completed with those making referrals, to allow this key stakeholder group to give their views on the need and impact of the project in their own words.

When we had completed interviews with families consent was sought to speak to the referrer, all the families interviewed provided consent for this. Whilst most referrers were happy for their comments to be included within the case studies, (when appropriate), some preferred to provide overarching feedback on their experiences of referring several families or wished for their feedback to remain anonymous.

## Social Value Assessment

This evaluation has used the Social Value Engine, <https://socialvalueengine.com/> a tool accredited by Social Value UK which is based on more than 360 peer reviewed financial proxies updated annually, to produce a figure for social return on investment. The assessment found that **for every £1 invested in England for Everyone, this generated £6.21 (net) value**. Please read Section 7 of this report for further explanation of the Social Value Engine.

## 5. Key findings

### 5.1 Profile of those accessing breaks

As discussed, families being offered the holidays must meet certain criteria to be eligible. Criteria relate to income; time since last holiday and having a dependent child under the age of 18 at home. Families also had to be referred for a holiday by a professional that has been working with the family. The application data for these families gives further insight into the range of challenges and situations experienced by those being put forward for holidays.

Application data has been analysed for families, including some which met the same criteria but were not funded by VisitEngland. This is due to a slight oversubscription/buffer and accounts for the fact that not every family will end up taking a holiday. It is noted that there were also some missing responses to some questions, and as such, the base figures vary depending on response.

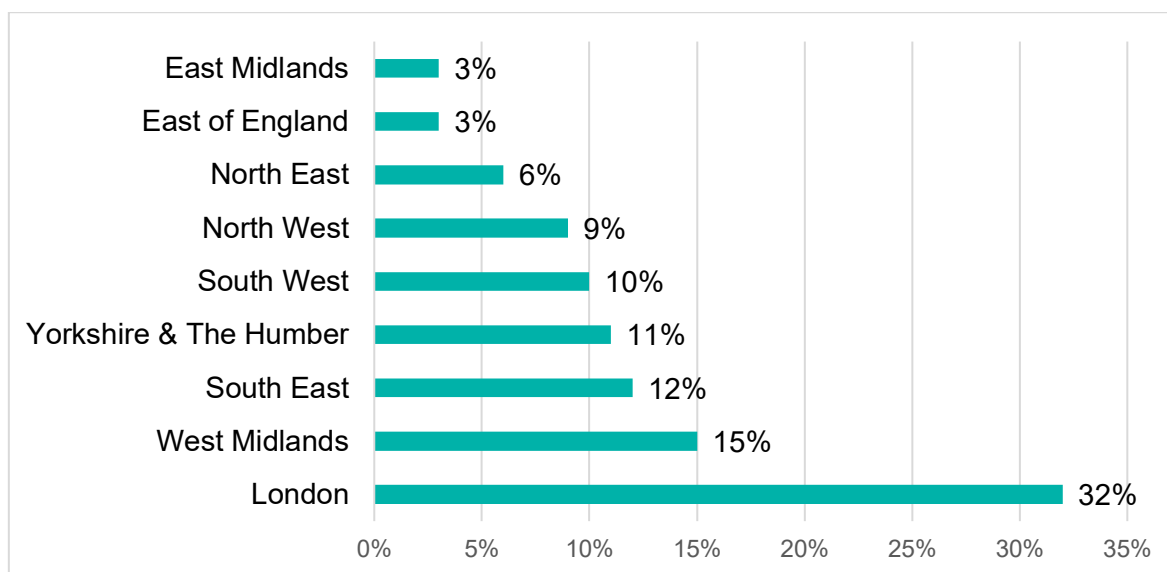
In total, 34% of applications were on behalf of families that would be travelling with one adult whilst a majority of applications were on behalf of families with two or more adults (66%).

- On average, families would be taking two children on the holidays, although 39% of families had three or more children going on the holidays.
- On average four people would be going on each holiday, although this reached as many as 13 people in one case.

The application data suggests around 3,487 people may have benefitted from the England for Everyone holidays. This is further broken down to 1,429 adults and 2,058 children.

The programme has reached families across all regions in England, as indicated on the next chart, with just under a third of applications being made on behalf of families living in London:

**Figure 1: Applications by region of residence**



Base: 861

On the application form referrers were asked to select whether the families were experiencing or had experienced particular circumstances or challenges.

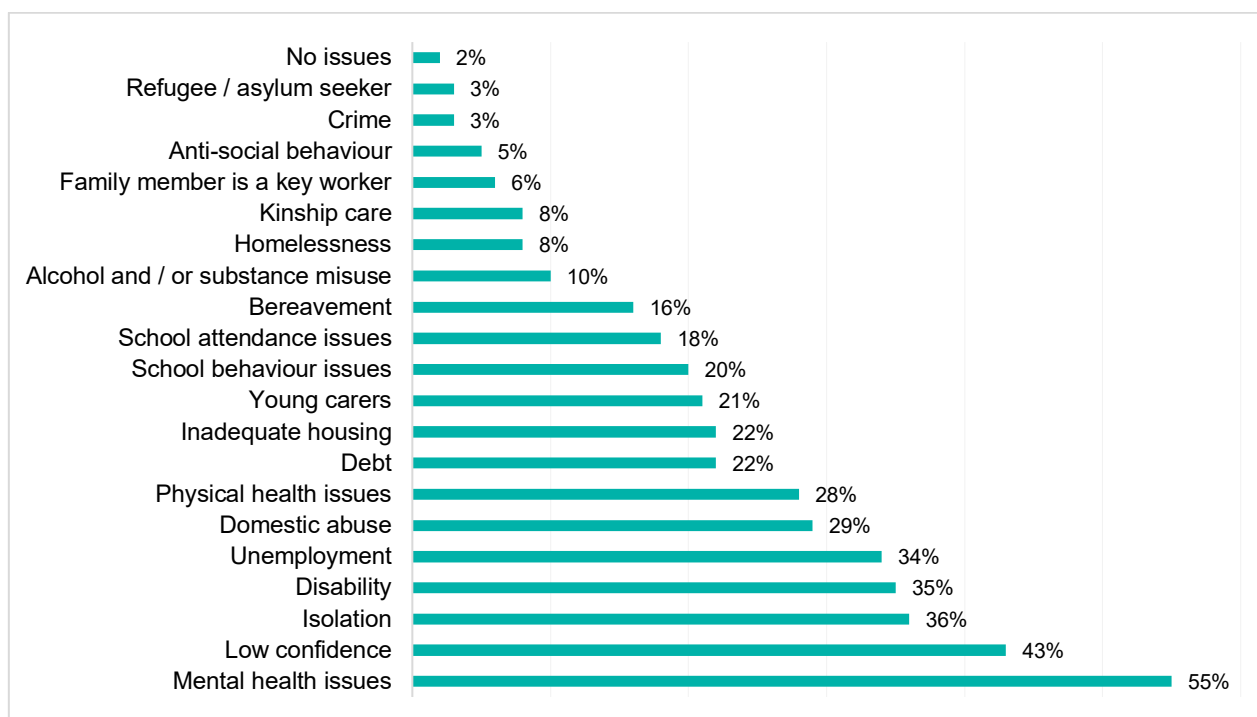
A list of 20 possible experiences were included, with experiences ranging from kinship care to domestic abuse, and school behaviour issues.

- On average, families being referred for a holiday under the England for Everyone programme were experiencing/had experienced four different challenges.
- Around four in ten families (39%) were experiencing five or more of these challenges, demonstrating that life can be extremely difficult for these families.

The next table shows the breadth of challenges experienced by families. As seen

- over half of the families faced mental health issues (55%),
- four in ten experienced low confidence (43%).

**Figure 2: Challenges faced by families**

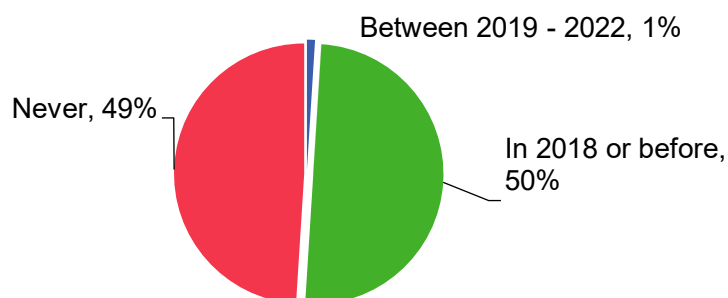


Two-thirds of the professionals had been working with the families they had referred for six months or more (65%) with a majority having a minimum of weekly contact with the families (75%).

Almost half of the families being referred for a holiday had **never** had a family holiday before (49%) as shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3: Length of time since last holiday**



Base: 848

Referrer comments made within the applications suggest that the main reason families have been unable to take a holiday for some time (or ever) is lack of finance. Other recurring themes include:

- poor mental or physical health of parents (and sometimes children),
- relationship/family breakdown
- domestic abuse.

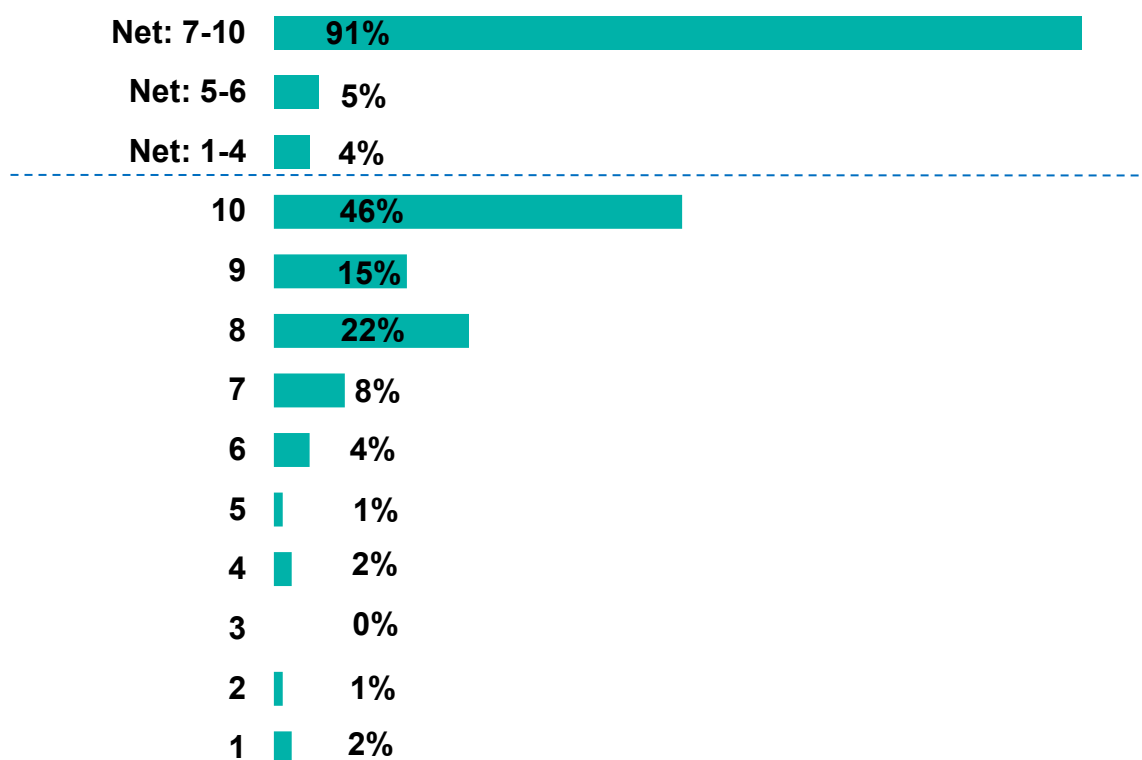
Just over half of families would rely on public transport (53%) to get to and from their holidays.

## 5.2 Overall holiday experience

### 5.2.1 Family perspective

- A majority of families rated their holidays as between 7 and 10 on a scale of 1-10, where 10 is excellent (95%).
- Over half of families gave their holiday the highest rating of 10 out of 10 (54%<sup>1</sup>).

**Figure 4: Overall ratings of holiday**



*"Having time together as a family. We had a fantastic time all round. We would never had had an opportunity to go on holiday and it's the first time we have been on holiday as a family, it gave us a break from home life and the stresses and strains of that".*

*"it's waved like a magic wand over the family. It's lifted a dark cloud"*

The best parts of the holidays for families were mostly related to:

- Spending quality time together as a family/being more present
- Making memories as a family
- Seeing the children enjoy themselves and have fun
- Relaxing/a break from 'home' and worries/recent experiences
- Freedom and safety
- Being by the sea
- Activities available on site

*"The best moments were, every moment for this family, they have been homeless and stuck in a bed and breakfast for a long time and never been on a holiday . They were touched by the lovely welcome pack in the room (milk cheese bread etc ) They welcomed the free activities as money is very short. Most of all they were grateful for the time together carefree". Referrer*

*"The freedom and the wonderful sea air. The variety of opportunities many of which we accessed, the beaches, the accommodation and evening entertainment. We had an amazing time".*

*"The holiday was just fantastic. The children loved being by the beach and having all the freedom they don't usually have"*

*"My little girl being so excited to go she never stopped being excited she was on the go from morning till night I have never seen her so happy"*

*"Seeing [daughter] interacting with the other children that were there, just letting her hair down? And, you know, being who she wants to be, being who she is not having people telling her? Oh, you shouldn't be doing like, shouldn't be doing this"*

*"The time we spent together where we were not worried about my ex-husband turning up. My boys felt free, they played together with other children, they absolutely loved it as did I, I can't thank you enough".*

*"I just felt free, I can't tell you the feeling that when I stepped out into the sun when we first arrived. And to feel the sand and the breeze and it was just like, wow, and the boys were so happy. It was such a good environment for them to be"*

*"Break was much needed for us as a family unit having lost our daughter/sister/mother last year. Just to be away from the traumatic event and area it happened really made us appreciate what we have".*

*"Kids getting on really well and having the old [Child] back". [Child is 14 and has been presenting with some really challenging behaviour].*

*"Spending time together as a family and having quality time together , we done lots of swimming which we would not normally be able to afford and being by the seaside was great".*

*"Being together as a family and having quality time. This is not easy at home due to living in a very cramped flat"*

*"The site was lovely, and the caravan was amazing and the vouchers were so helpful".*

*"The holiday was just fantastic. The children loved being by the beach and having all the freedom they don't usually have"*

*"The arcades and fun". (Child)*

When asked how the holiday could have been better for families, comments suggest families were largely happy with the holidays as they were. However, of those that did make suggestions these can be grouped into the following themes:

- **Sourcing suitable accommodation/location** – not everyone felt they were advised (or asked enough questions/did enough research themselves) about the suitability of the accommodation or the venue for the family
- **Last minute** – families didn't always have a lot of time to plan for/save up for additional spend during the holidays
- **Vouchers** – some families were stressed by the late arrival of the vouchers for food and fuel/in some case families didn't have these before their holidays/they were lost in 'spam'. Some would also like the vouchers to be more flexible, e.g. although vouchers were available to split spend and spend online, some families did not realise this
- Some **housekeeping/maintenance issues** with accommodation or amenities not as advertised

*"We would have liked to have done more of the activities, but they were too expensive. Had we had more notice we could have saved up to do more of the activities".*

*"I was stressed as you did not get the confirmation and vouchers in time. I also was not able to pay for travel expenses, so I had to find other means in short time to cover cost of the travelling, I was not given any money for the travel"*

*"Couldn't access some activities as they had to be booked 6 weeks in advance"*

*"The travel arrangements were an issue as the tickets came through but the code wasn't working. We got delayed to travel so we travelled the next day so missed a day and night of the holiday"*

*"The holiday was disappointing. In their bio, there were things advertised that were on site that weren't such as a shop, clubhouse and easy to use walkways. Being as there was no shop, I had to drive all the time, when the intention was that we would walk".*

*"I don't know the difference between the caravan and lodge is my mistake. I can select the caravan. Yeah, if I know about the lodge maybe I select this one. Yeah, it's my mistake. Because my feeling is an autistic child need a big space?"*

### 5.2.2 Referrer perspective

Referrers were keen to emphasise how excited and grateful families were on hearing that their holiday application had been granted. Generally, referrers had made the application to Family Holiday Charity to allow families to have quality time together, away from the pressures of their daily lives to give them the opportunity to re-connect with each other, often at a critical time or crisis point.



Some referrers commented that the holiday could be seen as a 'reward' for some families that had been working hard to achieve their goals, or as an acknowledgement or recognition of the role that they play (e.g. family carers).

*"Because they've [the parents] been so good at working with us, it was nice to give them sort of like an end target, like an achievement, a reward for an achievement...so that was the holiday." Referrer*

*"I just really felt that they needed to spend some quality time together, just to make some nice memories really. And, you know, I just felt like they needed to sort of go out and see somewhere else, go and visit somewhere and go to the beach and just do things that lots of other families have opportunities to do." Referrer*

*"The granddaughter has been kind of exhibiting some challenging behaviours, which has not been easy for the family. So we really felt that a holiday would provide time for them to just have some quality time together where they could actually reunite if you like." Referrer*

Referrers explained how they had supported families prior to the holiday, in terms of booking/organising the holiday and travel. Some families required no support, but others did, especially parents with anxiety who were keen to go away but found the prospect of a holiday quite daunting.

In a couple of cases, the funding appears to have been granted at relatively short notice resulting in families feeling under pressure to book quickly with little time for planning.

*“It was very short notice. So I think for this family, that's where the anxiety kicks in. But I believe the funding was given at short notice...I think it's better if people can plan. Certainly, if they've got anxiety issues it's better to plan.” Referrer*

The following table illustrates referrer’s responses to the post-travel survey question around family support.

**Figure 5: Support provided by referrers pre-holiday**

On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is strongly agree and 5 is strongly disagree, to what extent do you agree with the following statement?	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither /Nor	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Net: Disagree	Net: Agree
The family needed help and support with being mentally prepared and ready for the holiday	7%	29%	12%	32%	20%	52%	36%
The family needed a lot of help in choosing where to go and booking the holiday with the provider	8%	18%	15%	40%	20%	59%	26%
The family needed a lot of support to plan and prepare for their holiday eg. organising time off work, packing, transport	8%	14%	17%	36%	25%	61%	22%
The family needed help with budgeting for the holiday	4%	18%	19%	37%	22%	58%	22%

Responses from referrers were mixed in terms of how much support families required, however it seems referrers were more likely to be supporting families to be mentally prepared for the holiday, rather than supporting with budgeting and planning.

The following chart illustrates referrer’s responses to the post-travel survey question on their overall experience of working with Family Holiday Charity this year.

**Figure 6: Referrers experience of working with Family Holiday Charity**

Question: on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is excellent, as the referrer, how would you rate your overall experience of working with Family Holiday Charity this year?



Base: 264

- As illustrated, the experience has been very positive with the majority of referrers (98%) giving a rating of between 7 and 10.

Within the qualitative interviews, referrers were generally very positive about the holiday application process and the advice and guidance they had received from Family Holiday Charity. One suggestion for improvement was around eligibility and the income threshold and whether there could be some flexibility if a family was only slightly over the income threshold but had five children to support on one income.

## 5.3 Activities whilst on holiday

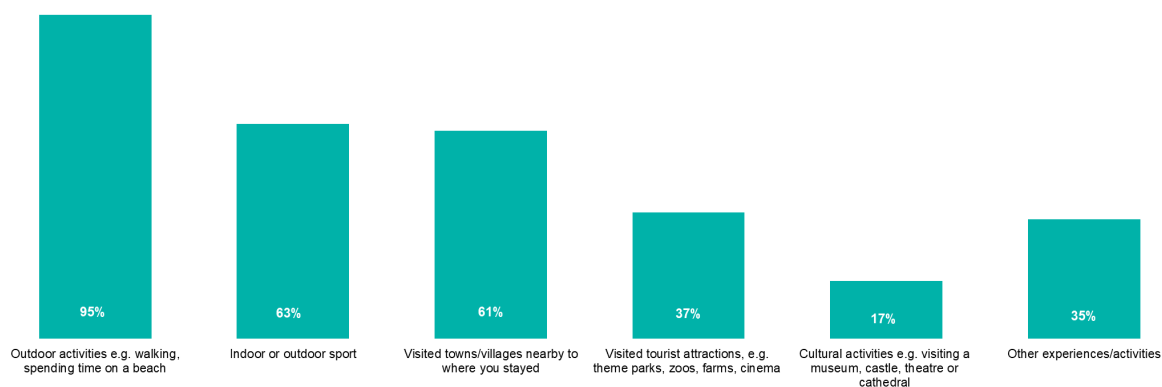
### 5.3.1 Family perspective

Families had undertaken a range of activities during their holidays.

- Almost all families had taken part in outdoor activities (95%) whilst just over six in ten had taken part in sport either indoors or outdoors (63%).
- A further six in ten families had visited towns/villages near to where they were staying (61%).

#### Figure 7: Activities undertaken on holiday

Question: Did your family visit/take part in any of the following whilst on your holiday?



Base: 266

- Over a third of those completing the post-travel survey had also visited tourist attractions during their holidays (37%) with a smaller proportion taking part in cultural activities whilst away (17%).



It appears most of the holidays provided families with a range of activities on-site, and as such, many families were able to remain solely or largely on site without venturing much further afield.

A few activities some families participated in included: kayaking; indoor jet skis; hoverboards; bungee swings; archery; build a bear; roller skating and fossil hunting as well as activities like swimming; going to the beach which many families did (sometimes for the first time).

Comments suggest families were generally happy with on-site offers and they planned what they did as a family based around on-site provision, even if a few activities were payable.

Cost was also a factor in not travelling further afield and visiting attractions.

*"Budget was a big factor"*

Those travelling on public transport also faced additional challenges in getting around, and thus tended to stay local to where they were staying.

A few families mentioned impromptu visits to nearby local attractions on the day they were leaving their holidays.

In the main, families found there was plenty to do without having to have extra spend/travel on what was already a short holiday.

*"There was so much to do we didn't have time or feel the need to visit castles/museums"*

A majority of families were not taking part in the types of activities they did on their holidays prior to the holidays (59%).

- This demonstrates how the holidays have provided families with new opportunities and experiences.

*"With three children we could really only do the swimming as the other activities were quite expensive".*

*"The child with disabilities cannot handle high arousal so they just enjoyed time on the beach"*

*"We wanted to take the steam train but that was very expensive £60 for all of us return trip"*

*"We could not afford to visit places where money was needed to pay for entrance etc"*

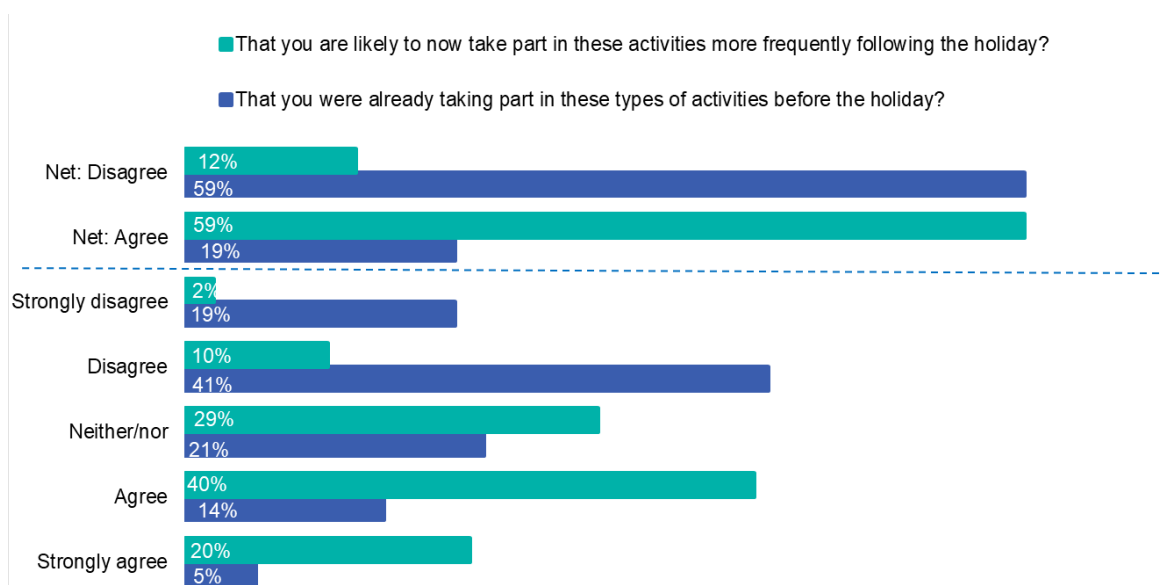


*"Shortage of time and everything on site"*

Positively, around six in ten families (59%) agreed that their families are now more likely to take part in these kinds of activities in the future as a direct result of the holiday.

**Figure 8: Proportion of families already undertaking or being more likely to take part in these activities now**

Question: on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is strongly agree and 5 is strongly disagree, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements.



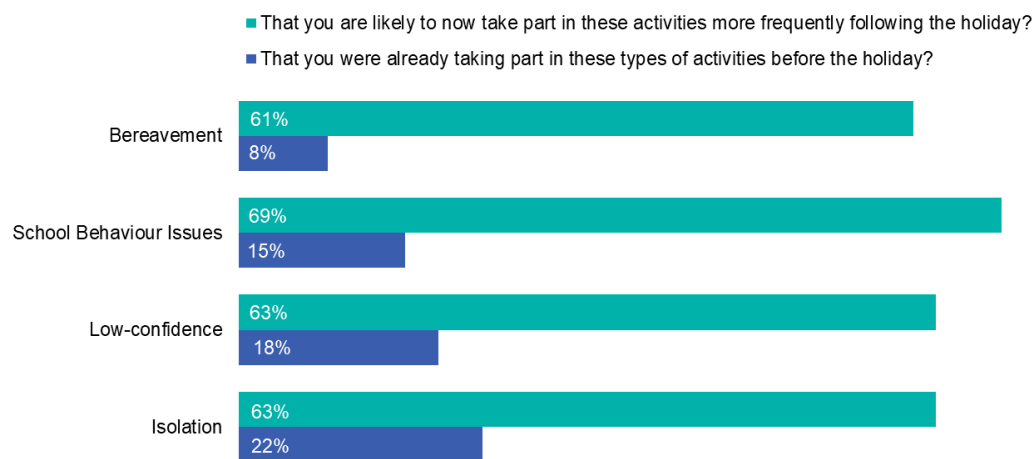
Base: 266

Interestingly, a higher-than-average proportion of families that were experiencing issues relating to bereavement; school behaviour issues; low confidence and isolation said their families would take part in these kinds of activities going forward (see Fig 10).

This suggests increased confidence by these families in engaging in activities, as well as perhaps, an acknowledgement of how beneficial such activities are, and a commitment to recreating these benefits for their families.

**Figure 9: Proportion of families already undertaking or being more likely to take part in these activities now – by families experiencing specific challenge**

Question: on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is strongly agree and 5 is strongly disagree, to what extent to you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Bases: bereavement: 51; school behaviour issues: 55; low confidence: 115; isolation: 94

### 5.3.2 Referrer perspective

Referrers noted some of the activities and experiences that families had taken part in on holiday. For the children, the opportunity to spend more time outside and be able to run around was noted.

This was of particular importance for lower income families, often living in cramped accommodation, and without the finances to take their children out on day trips to wide open spaces.

Some referrers noted that families that had previously struggled to access activities and days out with their children (due to parental or child anxiety) had renewed confidence since the holiday.

*"I think it's really important that the kids in our area see that there's more to life than just what's in their area. It gives them an opportunity to branch out of their area, to support them with their needs to give their children an experience the families can't afford."* **Referrer**



*"Since they've been away, the children want to get out more. So when they've finished school, they're wanting to go out after and play out and things which they weren't doing before, they were quite isolated. And so it's been quite a big revelation really, they've gone out, they've experienced some of these things over a long weekend and now they're back and back home and they're wanting to be out more and with their peers and just be as socialising as young people do."* **Referrer**

*"I think they'll probably feel more confident to access things in the future, which they might not have done before. I wonder if there was a little bit of apprehension before about crowded places...but now they've done it once they realize that it's actually you just need to plan it [and] it's okay."* **Referrer**

*"It gives them the confidence to go away somewhere different, and to socialize with a different group of people."* **Referrer**

## 5.4 Affordability

### 5.4.1 Family perspective

As part of the holidays, families were provided with vouchers towards their food costs (£30 per person per day) and a fuel/travel voucher (either £30 per person for travel by public transport or to a value of £50 for fuel).

Questions were included in the post-travel survey to establish, roughly, how much of their own money families were spending on their holidays, and how affordable this was for families.

**Figure 10: Amount of Own Money Spent on Holiday**

Whilst on holiday, roughly how much did you spend of your own money on the following?	None	Less than £50	Between £50 and £100	More than £100 but less than £200	More than £200 but less than £300	More than £300 but less than £400	£400 or more
Food	10%	35%	35%	15%	3%	<1%	<1%
Travel	34%	37%	24%	5%	<1%	-	-
Activities/entertainment	21%	40%	23%	14%	2%	-	<1%
Purchasing pre-holiday essentials such as suit cases, suncream, beach towels	48%	36%	14%	2%	1%	-	-
<b>Base: 265</b>							

As shown, a majority of families were still spending some of their own money on food during the holidays despite the vouchers, this was largely less than £100. It is noted that not all families redeemed the vouchers however, which may affect these results.

Families travelling with one adult spent less on food whilst away than multiple adult families (55% of families travelling with one adult spent nothing/less than £50 of their own money compared to 41% of multiple adult families).

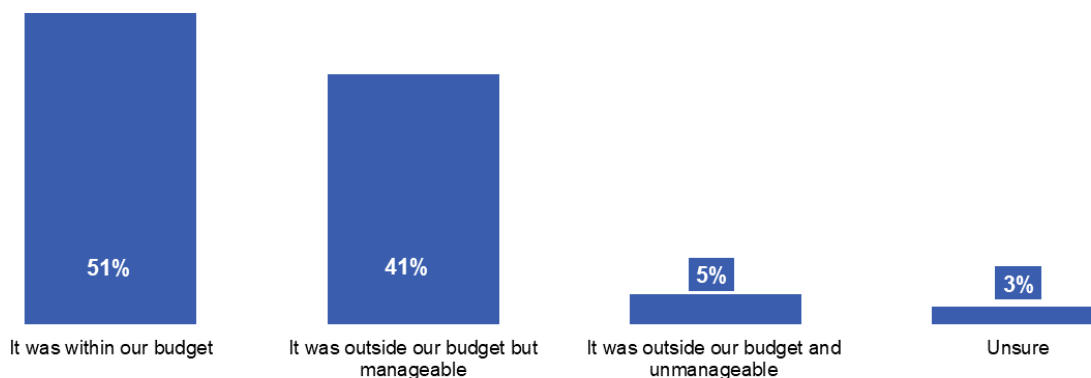
Families were less likely to be spending their own money on travel and pre-holiday essentials with a third or more families not spending any money on these.

Whilst 79% of families spent some of their own money on activities/entertainment whilst away, this also tended to be less than £100.

- Positively, a large majority of families said the money they had spent on the holiday was either within their budget (51%), or manageable (41%).

### Figure 11: Affordability of Holiday Spending

Question: how would you describe your holiday spending?



Base: 263

It was apparent throughout the interviews that some families had planned the timing of their holidays around when they would receive benefit payments; and this had worked well for them. Most also discussed saving up when possible, and some had been given money to spend by other family members.

Families being offered holidays where many activities, such as swimming, were already included in the cost has also worked well in terms of reducing the pressure to spend. Many families discussed how their children were happy with the activities already included in packages, from pools to playgrounds and entertainment.

It was clear through wider comments made within the post-travel questionnaire, and particularly through the qualitative discussions with families, that the vouchers for food and travel were an essential component in many families being able to take these holidays and helped significantly with their budgeting plans.

It was clear that by providing these vouchers it was one less concern for families, and families were able to prioritise any spending of their own money on things like paid-for activities/occasional treats for their children, which they otherwise wouldn't have been able to afford.

*"The food and petrol voucher was a god send not having to worry about this and knowing the holiday had been paid for, the fact that I could without thinking how can I afford this, I instead had a brilliant time with my daughter many thanks"*

Families generally viewed the amount offered for food to be generous, allowing for treats as well as essentials to be bought whilst away.

It was also felt to be realistic given families often had to buy everyday staples (e.g. soap; washing up liquid) for a few days away.

Despite this, an occasional comment was made regarding the expense on-site for any additional spend particularly at on-site grocery shops; distance to supermarkets that took the vouchers (particularly for those travelling by public transport), and at the bar on an evening when buying drinks if they were enjoying evening entertainment.

*"When you're so impacted by life, them little luxury things that people take for granted are actually big, massive things for kids and families that actually wouldn't be able to afford it if that make sense?"*

*"I think it was absolutely amazing. It's just unfortunately, we couldn't take a lot of food with us. Because with us going on the train and on the bus, we, and obviously we had we had a big suitcase each and that had our clothes and then we needed medication"*



*"It wasn't so bad because the food was paid for, it sort of took the burden off it a little bit. So I was able to if the boys wanted like, I don't know, like ice cream or, you know, maybe one day I didn't cook and I just went out to I think one day for lunch, we just went out we had pizza on the pier and stuff like that. So it's sort of like the money that I would have used for the petrol and the food, the shopping food, I used it to do activities".*

*"The fact that there was funding for the petrol and the food as well made all the difference. It funded the whole week's shop. That was so helpful, thank you. That meant that I could afford to take them out to do a few other things because I didn't have to pay for our breakfasts and lunches".*



### 5.4.2 Referrer perspective

Referrers described families' situations and it was clear that in addition to being unable to afford a holiday, many of the families were in acute financial distress.

Referrers were often supporting families with finance, debt and benefit issues, and access to food banks. Some of the parents were unable to work due to poor health or were carers for children with additional needs or disabilities.

Referrers noted that families really appreciated the grocery and travel vouchers as this took away some of the stress around finances during the holiday and prevented escalation of any existing financial issues.

Some acknowledged they may not have been able to put so many families forward for the holidays, or some families would have been unable to take the holidays, without these additional vouchers.

*"As much as I love to get people breaks. It's easy to get the breaks, but it's not easy to secure the funding to get them money to go on the breaks.*

*So this was game changing for me. As soon as I seen it, it was game changing.*

*I thought there's what's needed. That was exactly well thought out, done in totality with a real understanding of the people who are going on the breaks". Referrer*

*"And it was nice to be able to say you'll get a grocery voucher, so you'll be able to do your shopping while you're there, so all she then needed to think about was getting some spending money to take the children on trips. So it kind of took that pressure off the family." Referrer*



*"I think a lot of families wouldn't go if that food voucher wasn't an option. Because one of the first things a lot of the families have said is they get excited about it, and then they've been a bit like, but how am I going to afford to get there and how am I going to afford food?" Referrer*

Referrers did describe a few glitches with the supply of food vouchers to families, such as them going into spam, or some parents/carers finding it difficult to redeem them online.

It was also noted that some money towards activities for families would be useful, as resorts can include amusement arcades or fairgrounds, which can be costly and difficult to avoid with young children.

Some referrers had done a bit of research themselves, (or had supported families to do their own), to find out what low cost or free activities are available at or near the resort so that families can plan/budget in advance and do not find themselves under pressure to spend money. However, for some families the holiday had provided an opportunity to try out new activities or ways to pass the time, some of which were free or low cost.

*“This family are really starting to do new things and now realise that you can have fun that doesn’t cost too much.” Referrer*

Some referrers noted that families had had to amend their bookings to somewhere closer to home due to the prohibitive cost of train travel. Even with a financial contribution, some families struggled to fund the rest of this themselves.

## 5.5 Impact

### 5.5.1 Family perspective

#### Making Memories

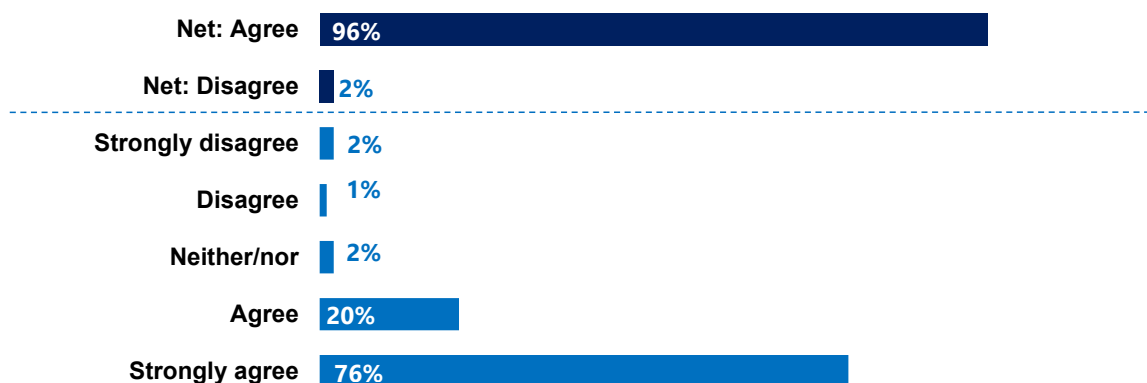
As mentioned earlier, families often referred to ‘making memories’, and positive memories, as being one of the best things about the holidays.

- 96% of families agreed (with 76% *strongly* agreeing) that the holiday had helped them to have more fun and create happy memories as a family.

**Figure 12: Level of Agreement that Holiday Helped create Fun and Happy Memories**

Question: the holiday helped us to have more fun and create happy memories as a family.

#### The holiday helped us to have more fun and create happy memories as a family



Base: 266

Many of the families offered holidays had been through traumatic events and it was clear that being able to create positive memories after a period of particular hardship (which is often ongoing) has been profound, something which families are extremely grateful for.



*"Thank you for this amazing opportunity, it has been really helpful for my family and we have made some invaluable memories together".*

*"This holiday was so well organised, that we didn't have to worry about anything, just enjoy the time together, we had a very relaxed time and enjoyed the holiday. We came home rested and filled with good memories and experience".*

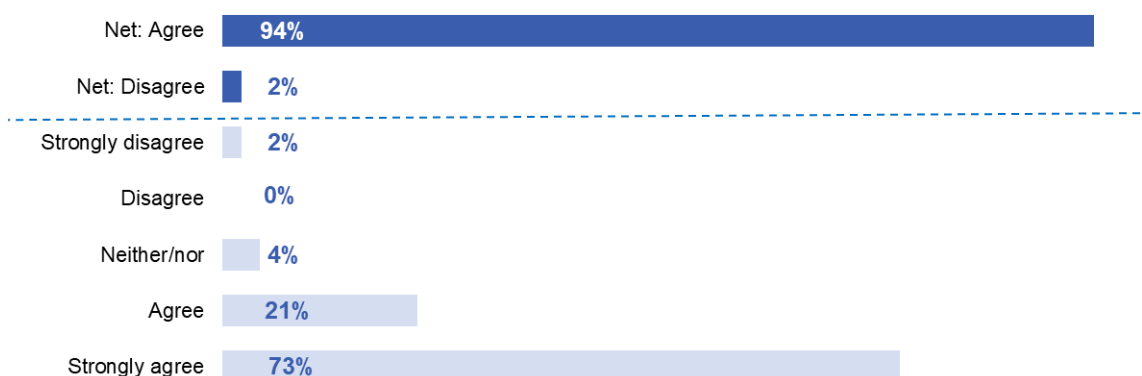
## Family Bonding

The holidays also clearly have an impact on family bonding.

- 94% agreed (with 73% *strongly* agreeing) that the holiday had enabled them to spend more quality time together as a family.

### Figure 13: Level of agreement that holiday enabled quality time as a family

Question: the holiday enabled us to spend more quality time together as a family.



Base: 266



*"I keep tearing up now. Because I don't think you guys understand what this has done for us. You know like a bit of a fix; you've mended a broken family a little bit".*

*"Nice to see all the children laughing and getting on together".*

*"Being able to chat in a place away from where my daughter might run away was really good it meant we had to finish conversations rather than arguing".*

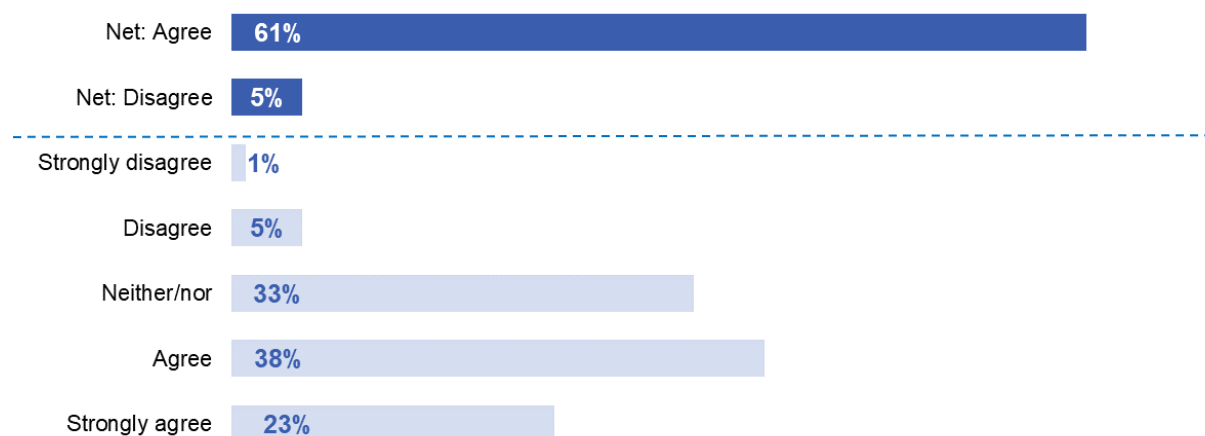
There is also positive indication that this quality time may be sustained for many families on their return from their holidays.

- Six in ten families (61%) agreed that they had been spending more time together as a family since returning from the holiday.

It should be acknowledged, that some families may have already been spending a lot of time together prior to the holidays, which would have an impact on how they responded to this question.

#### Figure 14: Level of agreement that families have spent more time together since the holiday

Question: we have spent more time together as a family since returning from the holiday.



Base: 266

It was also clear from comments and discussions, that the holidays have helped some families to realise and value the importance of spending quality time together and being present with one another. Some families were spending more time playing board games, having regular movie nights, and so on. Communication has often improved within families.

*"Since obviously, we've come back from holiday my partner's not obviously been working as much in the weekend and the kids seem to enjoy it as well. It is really nice. And I think I don't know, I think that's what we needed was the holiday to prove that if that makes sense?"*

*"So since the holiday me and the kids have had, it's been a lot less stressful in the house. But I think that's to do with the fact that we talk more now. Like, that's weird. But when you're on holiday, and the kids start asking questions, like, I don't know like something about nature or? Since we've come back the kids have like, oh, can we go for a walk? They want to do more together?"*

*"Made us realise we should spend more time doing family stuff"*

*"We are spending more time in the same room as a family where before the boys would be fighting"*

*"We realised we can work together as a unit and a team. My disability can be difficult for the kids but I think it helped them realise that mum isn't as bad as it can seem sometimes".*

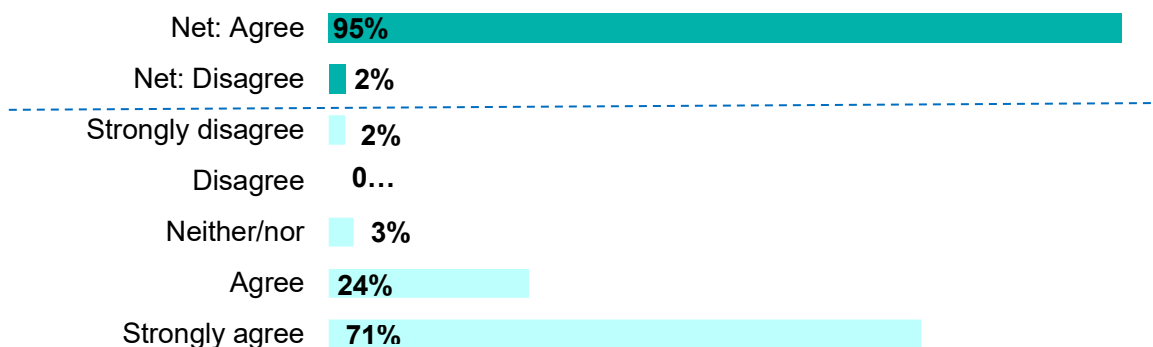
*"We spend more time together as a family and communicate more often"*

## Mental Health and Wellbeing

- Almost all families agreed (with 71% *strongly* agreeing) that the holiday had a positive impact on the mental health and wellbeing of their family (95%).
- 94% of families that were experiencing mental health issues prior to the holiday also agreed there had been a positive impact on their mental health and wellbeing.

**Figure 15: Level of agreement that holidays have had a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing**

Question: the holiday has had a positive impact on my mental health and wellbeing



Base: 266

As outlined earlier, families are largely facing multiple challenges in their lives, and can understandably be somewhat consumed by these challenges.

The holidays have provided families with a physical break away from their usual routines; a multitude of appointments and responsibilities; and stressors and ongoing reminders about the challenges they face.

Whilst worries and anxieties are not magicked away by the holidays, holidays have clearly provided a period of respite for the families; a change of scenery and focus, and as such, have clearly been beneficial in terms of mental health and wellbeing.

A different and more relaxed setting (for most) has helped relax families, give freedom and some families have seen improved behaviour in their children which has all had a knock-on effect on the wellbeing of the family.

*"I feel great for the first time in years seeing my small boys being happy has made me feel happy too"*

*"It has had a massive impact on my mental health - I felt like I could conquer the world".*

*"Before the holiday I was very low in my mood and my anxiety was high which had a detrimental impact on my boys. Since we have been away and had such a wonderful time I feel so much better and my anxiety is manageable, which is now having a positive impact on me and my boys".*

*"It had a wonderful impact on my son's wellbeing, he has ASD and communication difficulties, this gave him and me an opportunity to be in a calmer and more relaxed settling which had a great result for him. This also had a good impact on my own health and wellbeing"*

*"My son was really chilled out, no melt downs, a different child, so chilled while we were there"*

*"We are a large family who have many medical needs the chance to break the daily cycle of care and become a unit again was fabulous"*

*"This helped us all to just enjoy each day, without having the worries of normal daily life. The kids were able to be carefree too. It was nice to see"*

*"Being out of home environment, away from trauma triggers, no flashbacks while away, kids able to relax, improved their mental health".*

*"I'm the only person they've got and if I'm not there emotionally they've got no one and I think it let me re-evaluate me really"*

*"We've come back off holiday it's like the kids have gone oh, got rid of everything that they was stressed about and come back literally carefree".*

*"Seeing our children enjoy themselves like this reminded my husband and I that there is life beyond disabilities and the endless medical appointments and professionals in our lives. We just felt normal for a moment".*

*"It was the first time in a long time that we felt we could talk openly about what had happened without the fear of being overheard. It was so good to talk freely, it was like a weight had been lifted from all of our shoulders".*

*"Being out of my comfort zone completely isn't me, like I, I don't cope very well. But because I don't know how to explain it. It was like. I was just like, I was managing my anxiety for the kids because the kids needed a mum to see how happy they are having fun, if that makes sense. I didn't, I was too happy too busy staring at them to keep thinking of my anxiety"*

*"Because we're very stressed especially my daughter. And that's the big break. Because the holiday, it feels relieved. It relieves the depression, the stress is spared"*



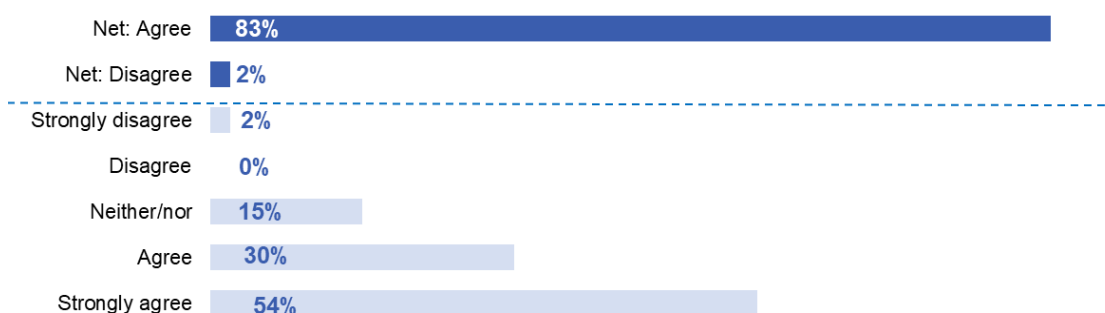


## Confidence

- In total over four-fifths of families (83%) agreed that the holiday had a positive impact on their family's confidence.

This rises slightly to 85% agreement amongst families that were experiencing low confidence prior to the holidays.

**Figure 16: Level of agreement that holidays have had a positive impact on confidence**



Base: 266

The holidays have helped develop confidence in a number of ways. For many families, taking the holiday in the first place has taken them out of their comfort zone. As highlighted earlier, many families had never had a holiday before, or if they had this was now many years ago (often pre-children). Therefore, taking a holiday was something families weren't necessarily familiar with, and to some extent, families have largely been braving the unknown on these holidays.

It was also clear, through the discussions with families, that there could sometimes be a lot of apprehension about taking these holidays.

This could relate to uncertainty about how children would manage with change/behaviour; or managing their (often multiple) children in a new/unfamiliar place. as well as concerns about using public transport.

Families often spoke about how they'd grown in confidence in their ability as a parent/carer to manage a holiday away from the home, and be assured that they could do it, and that their fears and anxieties were perhaps unwarranted.

*"That was something actually at the start that before we went away that was making me anxious. I wasn't sure how this was going to go. But I must say the parks so well equipped for children that I didn't have any issues there at all, he was 100% safe".*

*"I just want to thank you so much for this holiday. It's made me and [child] so much more confident to do things together even on bad days"*

*"My son has ADHD he became more confident and open with speaking to us and getting involved in activities"*

Often families were pleasantly surprised to find their children adapted very well to the holidays; relished the opportunities presented to them, including socialising with other children and making friends amongst those that may normally struggle with this.

Several families spoke of their children being more comfortable/confident around water as a result of the holiday.

A clear benefit for many families was that being offered a holiday has boosted children's self-esteem, by providing them with something their families are unable to afford themselves. The holidays have given them the same experiences as many of their peers.

*"They all they're all really good children. And so to be able to sit there and let them have something that because this is what we've had in the past, they were my little boys say silly things. Like, for Christmas, I only got this and you know, that naughty boy in class, he got a PlayStation, does Father Christmas think he's better than me? You know, where they judge themselves on that sometimes. [ ] that used to make me feel terrible, because I'm like that it's not a value on you as a person. The fact that we can't do these things. And to be able to say and let them have exactly what they say, or other people get, you know, was so nice. And you could see it and you could actually see how uplifted they were they felt instead of the underdog they felt equal. If that makes sense. It was so nice to see"*

*"I've had behaviour problems with him. I mean, like I said, the holiday was amazing. I cannot praise it enough, the place that we went to, was so well equipped to deal with the children. You know, like all the fears I thought I'd have with him were quite, quite quickly disintegrated when we got there"*

*"I feel more confident and relaxed it has made me value my worth"*



*"We became more confident after this experience, knowing we can do this"*

*"The way obviously my son is I always think oh you know you might get a bit funny looks but as parents, they made us feel welcome there, it was a lot easier"*

*"We all pulled together, we socialized - I think it has given us some confidence to be together and not argue and to enjoy being together"*

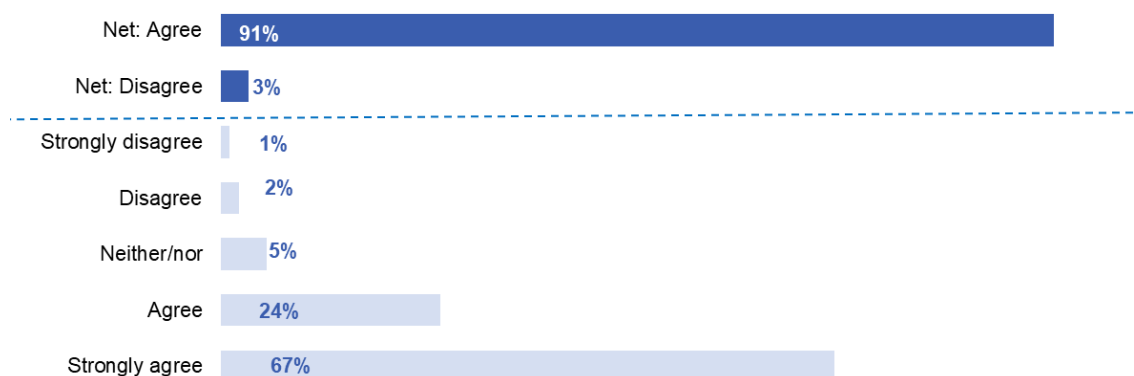
*"It did help being somewhere else. It did help me a little bit of my confidence because I just stay at home that's all I do"*

*"I feel it build up confidence and it has helped me overcome my fear as I have not attempted to take my family on holiday before".*

## New Experiences

- Nine in ten families agreed that the holiday had given their family an opportunity for new experiences (91%).

**Figure 17: Level of agreement that holidays provided an opportunity for new experiences**



Base: 266

It was clear, through the discussions, that many families had quite limited and restricted experiences of engaging in activities together prior to the holidays, particularly outside of the house, and particularly as a family unit.

*"It has given me more confidence as a parent in giving my children new experiences to try as before I was scared it would all go wrong and I wouldn't be able to manage".*

For many families, the most they would do outside of the home as a family is visit the local park.

The holidays have therefore enabled families to have new and different experiences to the norm, and it was clear that this has also helped develop confidence and interest in pursuing more activities in the future.

*It is very difficult where we live to access a local park suitable for my youngest child, was so lovely for both children to be able to play together in the park on site"*

- Six in ten families (59%) agreed that they are now more likely to take part in these kinds of activities going forward, as a direct result of the holiday.

For example, whilst many families in the discussions would take their children swimming very occasionally, if ever, seeing children enjoy swimming on the holidays has stirred interest in undertaking this activity more in the future, when funds allow.

*"We will try to go swimming now which we had not done before".*

*"Previously we've done swimming but through COVID that sort of as tailed off. We're gonna go back to the swimming pool more often, because [child] absolutely loves it. So yeah, and it was lovely because actually she was swimming in the pool because it was so quiet. She literally, I'd forgotten her armbands, but they just had like a woggle thing. And she was swimming, she was swimming for herself. So she literally learned to swim in the pool. So it was just really lovely"*

*"We have some new memories and new experiences, never done kayaking or archery before and we would definitely consider doing this again".*

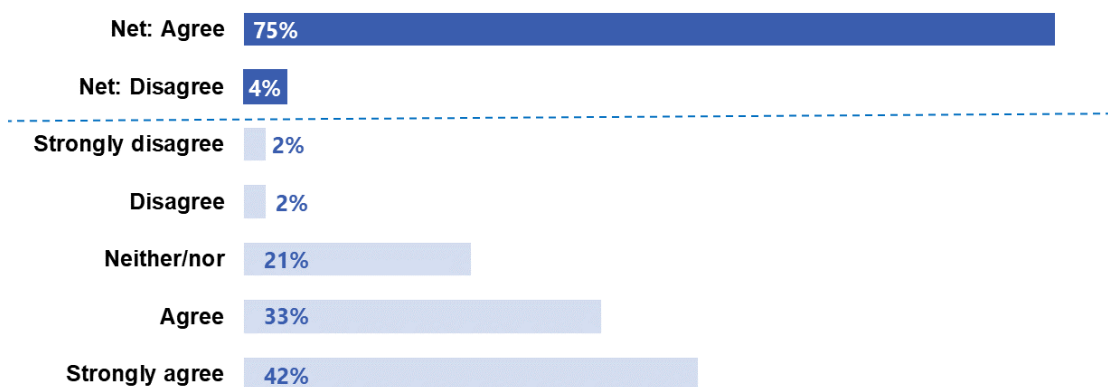
*"We had the most calmest time ever, my husband managed to restart a physical activity routine whilst on holiday and managed to continue to exercise the routine up to date".*

*"There's a lot more positivity. For example, my children want to take up skating as a hobby. Because once you owned a pair of skates, like I said, once we buy skates you don't have to buy expensive ones do you do you not, I mean, you've got birthdays coming up for I said, well, we could use the birthdays to get the things for the hobbies that you've now picked up that you love. And you don't have to pay to go skating, you can do that and go and find a quiet place".*

## Family Coping Mechanisms

- Three-quarters of families agreed that the holiday had a positive impact on their family's ability to deal with the challenges they face as a family (75%).

**Figure 18: Level of agreement that holidays have had a positive impact on ability to deal with challenges**



Base: 266

Over half of families that had experienced domestic abuse *strongly* agreed with this statement (52%), with a further 28% agreeing with it (net agreement of 80%), which suggests the holidays are having a positive impact for families that have experienced this trauma.

Comments highlight how the break in routine, and being away from stressors at home, has helped families to feel refreshed and able to return to face any ongoing challenges.

*"I just feel like I am more able to cope because I was able to re-set while I was away".*

*"It has given me the strength to carry on and deal with any challenges when we got home as we both were still feeling relaxed because before the holiday, I did at times feel like I could not carry on and felt like giving up on life".*

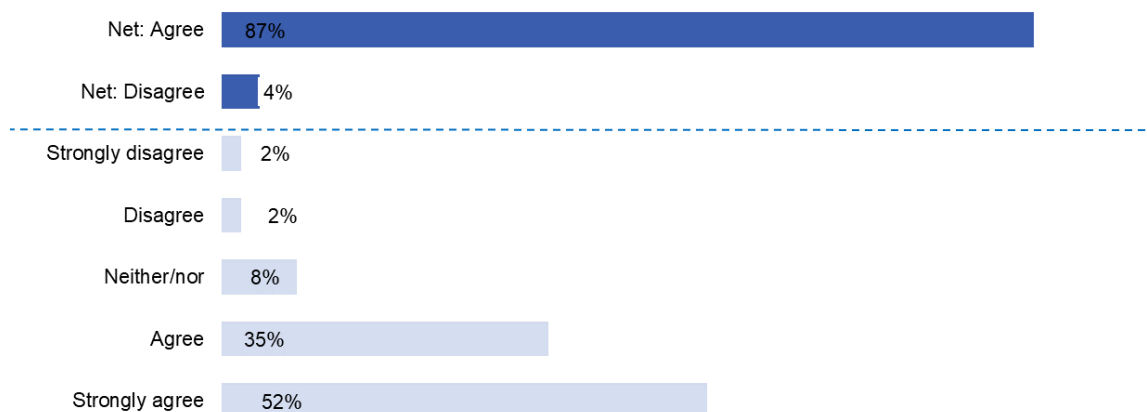
*"Having some time out recharges our batteries and makes us more resilient for when things get tough"*

*"I am feeling more relaxed and I have more time for my daughter. We have a difficult time ahead but feel able to deal with any issues. My daughter understands more and we have a much closer and understanding relationship".*



- Almost nine in ten families also agreed that the holiday had helped to reduce their feelings of stress and worry (87%).

**Figure 19: Level of agreement that holidays have helped reduce stress and worry**



Base: 266

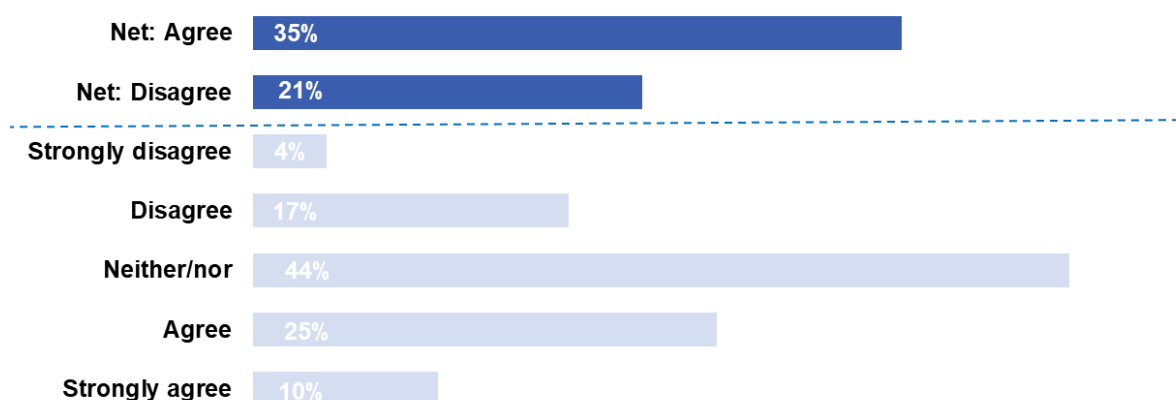
Families that had experienced bereavement were particularly likely to *strongly agree* that the holiday had helped to reduce feelings of stress and worry (61%), a further 35% agreed, giving a net agreement of 96% for these families.

## Community Activity

- Just over a third of families completing the survey agreed that they had become more active in their local community since the holiday (35%).

This consisted of 25% who agreed with this and 10% who strongly agreed with this.

**Figure 20: Level of agreement that families are more active in the community**



Base: 266

- In total 37% of families experiencing isolation agreed they have become more active in the community since the holiday.

Families often found this a difficult question to answer within the qualitative research or would often say that their level of community activity has not changed since taking the holiday.

Discussions and some of the questionnaire comments do however, highlight a subtle shift in community engagement, particularly a sense of belonging, even if this wasn't recognised by families themselves.

The main area of impact here is giving families a connection with others and providing a conversation-starter. Some families have talked about their holidays with staff at school and neighbours. Children have spoken about their holidays with their peers and teachers.

*"The children seem more relaxed and can boast to their friends that they have actually had a holiday this year when in previous years they hadn't"* **Referrer**

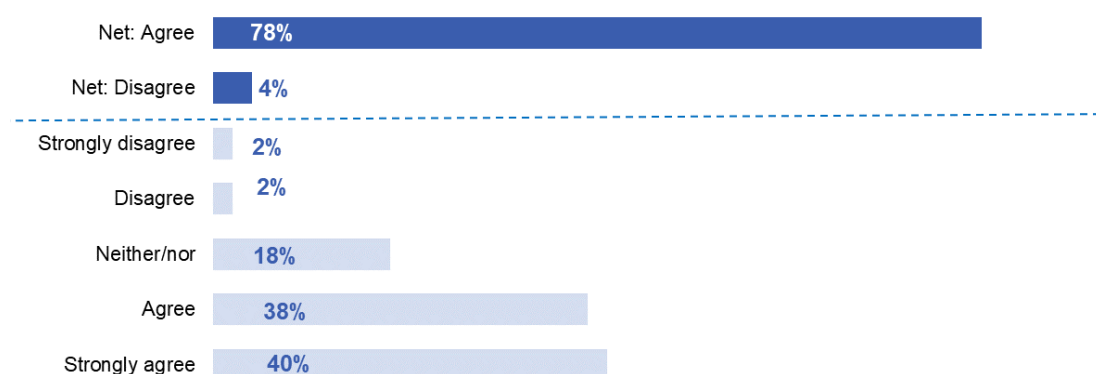
In relation to this, taking the holidays have boosted children's self-esteem and feelings of 'normality', and in some cases children have returned from their holidays more willing and able to socialise with other children, again improving their sense of community belonging.

*"Mum said that one of the children was able to write about his experience as part of his school homework. That has definitely boosted his ego in that it gave him something new to share as opposed to previously when he never had anything to say when others are sharing about their own holiday & exciting experiences they had with their families".* **Referrer**

## Looking Towards the Future

- Over three-quarters of families agreed that the holiday had helped them to feel more optimistic about the future (78%).

**Figure 21: Level of agreement that families are more optimistic about the future**

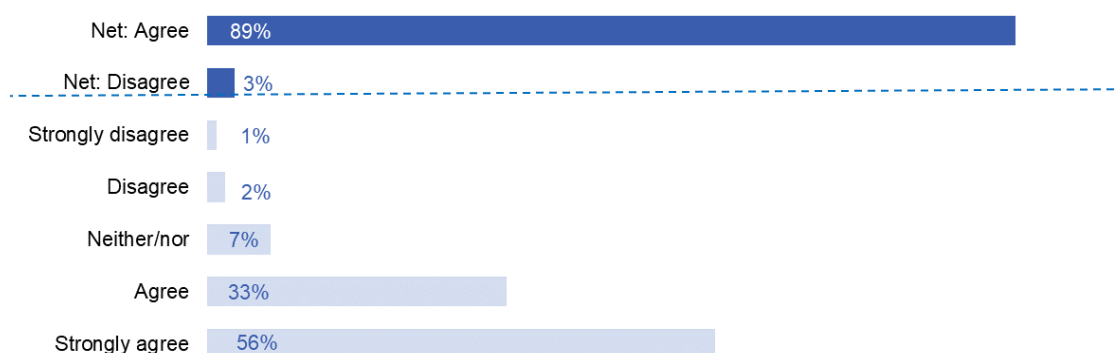


**Base: 266**

A higher-than-average proportion of families that had experienced domestic abuse agreed that the holiday had helped them to feel more optimistic about the future (85% net agreement).

- A large majority of families also agreed that they would feel more comfortable and confident in taking a holiday with their family in the future (89%).

**Figure 22: Level of agreement that families are more comfortable and confident about taking a family holiday in the future**



Base: 266

- In total, 90% of families experiencing isolation, and 87% of families experiencing low confidence, agreed that they would feel more comfortable and confident taking holidays with their families in the future.

Comments from families highlighted that the aspiration to have future holidays (or more days out if not holidays) is definitely there. Whilst many families spoke openly about hoping to take further holidays many also acknowledged this would be difficult or impossible to afford.

*"We have been talking about and planning the future and possible outings which hadn't ever happened before"*

The holidays have clearly provided positive experiences for many families that they would like to replicate in the future. Now families have done this once, as shown, they often have increased confidence to take holidays and do more as a family going forward.

*"that's the whole surprising thing was, I don't think you realise...everyone could tell me I needed a holiday, I could say I need a holiday. But until you've actually had that holiday, then come back and realized how much you actually DID need that?"*

It was clear that, prior to the holidays, many families were so embedded in their daily challenges, including low finances, that a holiday was simply not on their radar.

Many discussions highlighted that, despite what they were going through, many families did not know how much they needed their holiday until they had it.



Now they have had a holiday, they've seen how valuable and enjoyable it could be, and some families were already considering how they could make this happen again in the future.

The holidays were also seen as beneficial for raising aspirations in children.

Some families spoke of how their children's eyes have been opened up to new possibilities; new areas, and as shown below in some cases, is impacting how young people prioritise their current spending to enable future holidays to be more achievable.

*"I'm not saying I'd be able to do it in a year. But even if we said like we started putting just a bit, even 10 pounds a month away. Maybe in two years' time I could do it again. Do you know what I mean? Where you've set the tone for us. And that, if I'm honest, this is probably the most valuable thing that you've given us with this is that the opportunity is not impossible. We thought it was impossible. And it's not impossible".*

*"We had a lovely time. We were relaxed and completed lots of activities. We now have the confidence to go away together and to experience the countryside".*

*"I was so anxious about going on the holiday to the point where I didn't want to go but after a few hours in our little caravan I felt so happy and relaxed and also I felt like [child] felt really happy".*

*"I found organising the travel etc stressful, but now that I have done it, I would feel more confident about doing it again".*

*"We are excited to plan more short breaks where possible to give us time away from it all and to create positive memories".*

*"We had a lovely time. We were relaxed and completed lots of activities. We now have the confidence to go away together and to experience the countryside".*

*"I'm trying to sort out my carers allowance so once I've got that in, you know, hopefully, we'll be able to go on another holiday, fingers crossed anyway. If the cost of living don't go up any more than what it is"*

*"We are so much happier and less stressed at trying new things".*

*"I was so anxious about going on the holiday to the point where I didn't want to go but after a few hours in our little caravan I felt so happy and relaxed and also I felt like [child] felt really happy".*

*"We would love to be able to take the family on holiday in the future however our financial situation has prevented this and possibly would prevent this in the future so it might be that realistically we could only do day trips. However it is something we can look into trying to manage our finances to allow for a future holiday".*

*"I now have more confidence to take my children away overnight particularly as my daughter had learning needs and finds it hard to manage any change. My daughter did really well going to a new environment and it has given me confidence to do this again".*

*It has been the FIRST ever caravan holiday for the girls & it made us talk more about where we would like to go when we can afford a holiday & opens up new horizons for knowledge & experiences"*

*"The kids have enjoyed the experience a lot. The only issue is that they now would like to go more, but I feel bad, as it is not something I could afford for them".*



*"I want to stop smoking, because then I can put that money aside and put that away. You know what I'm realizing selfishly, sometimes we can waste money on things that we don't need. Yes, we think we need them, but we don't need them. When actually something like that is far more valuable to everyone and for the morale of the family"*

*"Since we got back me and my husband are actually planning for this to be our family holiday every year? Like something to look forward to"*

*"My son is adamant now, because he's doing part time. All of a sudden, he's like, I'm going to spend less money on, you know, silly things like coffee when I'm out I won't buy a cup of coffee and stuff like that, he said because I'd rather put my money away and go on holiday. Now he's been on holiday he's actually realised the value of a holiday and what it does for you, because he'd never had one before. He didn't know. So we've never thought about that. It's changed his mindset, if you like"*

### 5.5.2 Referrer perspective

The following table illustrates referrer's responses to the post-travel survey question around the impact of the holiday for families.

**Figure 23: Level of agreement amongst referrers of impact of holidays**

Question: on a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 is strongly agree and 5 is strongly disagree, to what extent do you agree or disagree with any changes you have personally noticed in the family since they got back from their holiday?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither /nor	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Net: Disagree	Net: Agree
The holiday helped the family to have more fun and create happy memories	77%	20%	1%	1%	2%	2%	97%
The family had the opportunity for new experiences	72%	22%	4%	1%	1%	2%	94%
The holiday had a positive impact on the mental health and wellbeing of the family	71%	23%	3%	1%	2%	3%	94%
The holiday had a positive impact on the family's confidence	57%	31%	9%	1%	2%	3%	88%
The family seem to be more comfortable and confident about taking a holiday together in the future	50%	37%	11%	1%	1%	2%	87%
The holiday had a positive impact on the family's ability to deal with the challenges they are facing as a family	42%	38%	16%	3%	2%	4%	80%
The holiday enabled the family to spend more quality time together	35%	42%	17%	4%	2%	6%	77%
The family seem to be more optimistic about the future	31%	45%	19%	4%	1%	5%	77%
The family seem to have reduced feelings of stress and worry	33%	41%	20%	5%	1%	6%	74%
The family have been spending more time together as a family since returning from the holiday	22%	36%	36%	5%	1%	6%	58%
The family have become more active in the community since the holiday	12%	20%	52%	14%	3%	16%	32%
No changes noticed	2%	9%	21%	49%	19%	68%	11%

As illustrated above, referrers were most likely to agree that the holiday helped the families to have more fun and create happy memories, provided the opportunity for new experiences, and had a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing. Impacts around increased community activity and spending more time together as a family were less evident. Positively, only 11% of referrers had observed no change.

Within the qualitative interviews, referrers described the range of impacts for families in more detail. Supporting relationships was a key theme, with referrers describing improved relationships between parents and children, and between partners/spouses.

Improvement in these relationships sometimes translated into improved child behaviour, and engagement with school, on the return from holiday, although this was not always sustained.

The holiday can provide families with a positive reference point to return to if problems reoccur.

*"The family needed some respite away from daily stresses and to allow Dad and baby to spend more time together to bond. The holiday definitely achieved this, but after a holiday life returns to 'normal', the day-to-day wheel continues the same as it was before, just with happy memories."*

*"[child] is more settled at school and has actually come off of report, which is a real step forward".*

*"I think the best thing is, they were able to make like a little memory book of it. So that's quite a nice thing to refer back to. So when behaviours do escalate they can look at those shared experiences together and pinpoint that was a good time."*

*"Possibly they [parents] become slightly more confident...she's asking now when we, as a school, run coffee mornings for parents and [she] is now actively asking when the next one is rather than me saying, come on, there's a coffee morning, let's go. She's actually inquiring as to when it is. So it's [the holiday] possibly helped with her confidence...I guess she was out of her comfort zone and she would have had to have communicated with people that she doesn't know [on holiday]."*

Positive impact around mental health and emotional well-being, and increased confidence, for parents and children were frequently mentioned by referrers. Exposure to a new experience, such as a holiday, has enabled some parents with their own mental health issues to feel more confident about facing the world.

*"I have seen a change in mum, she really enjoyed this experience. Her confidence has grown and she is more positive. Mum has begun to eat more healthily, take more care of herself and now goes swimming herself with a friend, once a week."*

A few of the children were young carers, and referrers noted specific impacts for them in being able to have a holiday from their caring role. These children and young people, and others whose opportunities are limited in other ways, benefit from having a 'normal' life experience to talk about with their peers.

This was mentioned by a few referrers as an example of positive impact, as demonstrated by the following two referrer quotes.

*"We can see it in [name of young carer]. She's gained that confidence. It was like we said before, four walls doom and gloom and now she can see positivity outside of those four walls, so it's not just school, home, school, home, school home...[the holiday] really helped her because she's got her exams coming up. And she went in with a different focus on them, not carefree, but not so panicked about them. Whereas before, she was very panicked. It's like she took a step back".*

*"[Child's name] made friends with other children and tried new experiences something he would not have achieved at home. [He] has increased his confidence in new situations and recently stayed overnight at a friend's home, something he has never done before."*

*"It's nice for the boys to be actually able to share that they've done something at the weekend. So, [if they are asked] at carpet time what did you get up to at the weekend...they can actually share something positive with their peer group."*

From the perspective of referrers it was evident that the impact of the holiday would be sustained longer for some families than others. The post-holiday 'glow' could fade fairly quickly for families with multiple and complex pressures.

However, for others the holiday provided a valuable re-set for families to continue in their daily lives with renewed resilience and allow them to build upon their strengths.

A fresh perspective on parenting techniques, and the importance of constructive activities for children was also noted by referrers.

*"I think that one thing...going forward in the future, I think Mum will realise how important it is for the children to get out and do things. So I think if anything, I will say that because I think it's probably opened her eyes to what she can provide her children with".*



*"I guess all holidays have an impact on people...unfortunately for [name], she comes back into a fairly chaotic life again...but you know, that's inevitable in this sort of situation. So, back to the humdrum again, but it was definitely something that she looked on positively and felt that they enjoyed."*

*"We're meant to really highlight the strengths that are there for people, even if there aren't many, you have to work on the strengths. And I think that [holiday] is the time when strengths can come out, when you take away the stresses and strains of daily life."*

*"[The holiday] has helped to build her resilience back up a little bit. So for example, with the child that was originally referred to me with her attendance, it's still an issue. But Mum's come back very focused on what she needs to do...to give her a little bit more of a push to go in regularly and have that consistency. So I think it's the improvement in her mental health has a knock-on effect to the children."*

One referrer explained the importance of the holidays for kinship carers in particular, and the role they can play in averting a crisis situation when families are under pressure.

*"I think if we're able to step in and offer things like this before it gets to that point, you know, we're unlikely to get to that [crisis] point with them. In some really, really, really difficult situations, we could have families where their children's placements are at risk of breakdown, and they're at risk of going back into the mainstream foster care system. I think it's a really important part of my role, and to be able to access things like that for our carers where it's needed."*

## 6. Case Studies

This section contains 12 case studies to provide greater insight into how holidays have benefitted particular families. When possible, a referrer viewpoint is also included.

### Case Study 1: Rachel

#### Family Perspective

Rachel lives in the West Midlands with her husband and three children, one of whom, Brendon (aged 9), attends a Special Educational Needs (SEN) school. Brendon's elder sister, Tina (aged 14), helps Rachel to look after Brendon. Day to day life for the family can be very stressful, coping with managing Brendon's challenging behaviour, alongside disrupted sleep, and the impact on school and work.

The family receive support from a local support organisation for young carers, and Tracey, their support worker, referred them to the Family Holiday Charity.

Rachel explained that the family have not been away on holiday for many years, partly due to the cost, but also it can be difficult to find a holiday that suits Brendon's needs. She was thrilled to find out that their application to Family Holiday Charity had been successful, but had some worries about how they would cope:

*"I thought fantastic. It'd be lovely. Because we haven't been away for so many years. And then obviously, when I came off the phone, I thought will he be okay? We've not been away for years, will everything be okay? Will it be alright, you know, will he handle it?"*

The family travelled to a holiday park near Lancaster, which was an area that they had never visited before. They did lots of activities, most of which they don't tend to do at home.

*"We went shopping. We went to the arcade. We went swimming. We went for walks. We went to Lancaster for the day...it was nice."*

Rachel explained that she had some time to herself whilst Brendon was sleeping, and her husband spent some quality time out with the older children.

*"It's nice just spending quality time together and having a laugh and not being stuck in the house. You know, the same things day in day out. It was just nice, something different. Even if we stayed in the caravan, it was just nice to get away."*

The family did come home one day earlier than planned, but everyone agreed that this was the right thing to do.

*"It was supposed to be 4 nights, but we only managed three nights, because my son had had enough to be honest with you. We were really proud of him...he actually did three nights, and it was lovely."*



All in all, the holiday was a very positive experience for the family and had some clear benefits for everyone's well-being and an opportunity to reflect.

*"My son has been so well behaved since he came back. And everybody seems more positive in the house as well. And I think that's the holiday. I think it does have an impact on your mental health. I really do...it's made me take a step back and think hang on a minute, sometimes if I get stressed about things and being away, and you actually start observing, and you know, think about things when he was asleep. Well, maybe I should do this a bit differently. You know, maybe we should do that. When we get back home"*

The family has continued to do some of the activities that they did on holiday, such as going for walks and going out for coffee. Rachel also feels that the holiday has helped the family to appreciate each other a bit more.

*"We go for little walks a bit more. And we have started venturing out a little bit more...going out for coffee sometimes. [Brendon] likes to do that because he did that on holiday."*

*"I find that we spend more time together now. Everybody, will watch telly together...I think it makes people appreciate each other and spend more time together."*

### **Referrer Perspective**

Tracey primarily works with Tabitha, Rachel's teenage daughter, to support her as a young carer, however, she also supports Rachel and the wider family. Tracey referred the family for a holiday because she felt that they would benefit from a break in routine and stress at home, and she also wanted them to have the opportunity to create some positive memories together as a family.

Tracey worked with the family to find the right holiday for them, which included activity clubs so that mum and dad could have a break, but also the right environment, and some outdoor space, to meet Brendon's needs. Other families supported by Tracey were also going to the same resort and this provided an additional, familiar, support network for Tina.

Following the holiday, Tracey has seen some positive changes, for Tabitha in particular, but also the whole family:

*"We can see it in Tina. She's gained that confidence...it was like we said before, four walls, doom and gloom and now she can see positivity outside of those four walls, so it's not just [all about] school and home."*

*"That break, it's given them a little bit of a, like a kickstart and a restart...there's a bit more patience there again...now we can deal with it again."*

Tracey feels that some of the benefits will be long-lasting, especially for Tina's confidence, and wellbeing:

*"[The break] really helped Tina because she's got her exams coming up. And she went in with a different focus on them, not carefree, but not so panicked about them. Whereas before, she was very panicked."*

The quality one-on-one time during the holiday has also had benefits for parents and children:

*"I think with the parents as well, being able to see their children in a different light, one to one, instead of just like, 'let's all get through this day together'...it was just nice to go with the flow and see what happens."*

## Case Study 2: Jemma

### Family Perspective

Jemma lives in East Yorkshire and is a single mum to two girls, one of whom is going through the ASD assessment process. The family had struggled with various issues during the pandemic lockdowns, including poor mental health and isolation, and were receiving support from Emma, an Early Help Practitioner.

*"We were all pretty desperate. It was getting to the point where we're all just, you know, every day was the same. It's just go to work, go to school. There's nothing to look forward to. We were just really quite down. It was like we weren't a family. We were just sort of surviving."*

Jemma had taken the girls on holiday a few years ago but she had saved for a long time to do this, and current financial circumstances meant that she was not in a position to do this again. Jemma was very pleased, and grateful, when Emma told her that funding for the holiday had been agreed.

*"When we got told that we had a holiday to look forward to, it just gave us something to work towards, and look forward to, and [life] just seemed to brighten up."*

The family, accompanied by Jemma's mum, travelled by car to the resort, two to three hours' drive away. Jemma found the resort quiet, and with hindsight, would probably have chosen somewhere with more activities for the children, but the family enjoyed their holiday, nonetheless.

*"So we went into a little town called Settle and we managed to go for nice walks. And we had fish and chips, went around a few shops and the girls had ice cream...I took the girls bowling. We managed to go in the pool on site."*

Unfortunately, the family had to leave their holiday early as one of the girls contracted COVID, however despite this, Jemma felt that the holiday had some clear benefits.

*"It really brought us all together, you know, just spending time together in a different setting, not having to worry about, you know, the bills and the housework and work, and school. It was just nice. Just to get away from everything, which is lovely."*

Jemma felt that her mental health, and that of the girls, had improved.

*"I think it's just the break from the norm and just having that to look forward to. And the impact, I guess is that I think sometimes when you haven't got anything to look forward to, and there is no break in the chain of life, shall we call it...I think, yeah, we do start to despair."*

Jemma mentioned that she is trying to take the girls swimming more since returning from their holiday. Partly due to having bought a money-saving pass, but also as it is time for them to spend together doing an activity.

*"We are going swimming a lot more...I try and get the girls to go swimming at least twice a week, really. And that's time for us, really, we do that after work and school, usually on a Monday and Thursday."*

### **Referrer Perspective**

Emma supported Jemma and her family for about a year and has recently closed the case. The family were referred to Emma after Jemma's eldest daughter needed support; however she has also supported Jemma to manage her own stress and anxiety and access some services for this purpose. Emma referred the family for a holiday because although she felt they had a lot of strengths as a family, the pressure and isolation experienced during the pandemic had taken its toll.

*"They do rely on each other; they are a real unit. And I think they've just forgotten that, and you know, were fighting with each other basically...so I saw that getting them away from the house, the things that bog them down would just be brilliant for them. I just thought it'd be a treat, and they could just reconnect and remember that they do like each other."*

Emma explained that, as a single parent, Jemma could often feel unsupported, so the offer of a holiday was a real boost to her wellbeing.

*"I think Rebecca, as a single parent, feels like she's got no support...no one to fight in her corner. And to have that offered, for free, I think it was really important...that, you know, something positive has been offered to me."*

Emma felt that the holiday would have some lasting impact for the family in giving them a positive experience to look back on.

*"I think it's something that they'll go back to and remember, and it's an example of them having spent positive time together. So they know that they can...and I think it probably just reinforced all their relationships."*

### Case Study 3: Penny

#### Family Perspective

Penny lives with her husband and their three-year-old daughter Rachel in Oxfordshire. The pandemic has hit the family hard, with Dean who had previously run his own business becoming unemployed as a result of having to fold his business. He has been unable to source employment since. This has left Penny as being the sole wage earner within the household which has brought with it added stress, both financially (with the family accruing debts) and emotionally within the relationship. Dean's mental health has also suffered as a result of his change in circumstances, and this was felt to have a knock on effect on parenting their daughter.

The family have been supported by Teresa, a Children's Practitioner within the Family Solutions Service in Oxfordshire. The support has predominantly revolved around finances and parenting strategies, with a view to the parents working together as a team and increasing Dean's confidence. This support initially stemmed from signposting via Rachel's health visitor when the family were experiencing some delays with Rachel's speech and language development.

Prior to the holiday offered by Family Holiday Charity the couple had not been on a holiday for around five years, Rachel had never had a holiday. Speaking about the family situation just prior to their recent holiday Penny described it as:

*"Quite sort of maybe tense, routiney, I felt like we just needed like a bit of a refresh if I'm honest".*

Penny added that the family could not afford to do much with their daughter and Dean's low mood also meant he was becoming increasingly isolated and not wanting to go out, meaning any trips to the local park often involved just Penny and Rachel rather than the whole family.

The idea of a holiday was presented as a kind of reward for working hard on the family goals with Teresa and the family were pleasantly surprised to hear this could be an option for them. It gave them something further to work towards and look forward to. It was seen as a chance to be away from normal worries and stresses and have fun.

Whilst the family were excited about the pending holiday there were anxieties about spend.

*"I guess I was like, quite excited to have the chance to go away. But yeah, it was just more the normal concern I think most people would have about going holiday when you haven't got a lot to spend".*

Anxieties were heightened (particularly for Dean) due to concerns about activities not being included in the holiday they were taking as they might be at some sites. It appears this relates to availability and there being a quick turnaround in time between being offered, and taking the holiday, which was around three weeks for this family. At one point the family considered not taking the holiday due to financial worries although in the end were lent some money from a family member which enabled them to go.

*"So we were given another option of where we went. But got told that everything was included. When that booking confirmation come across, nothing's included. So then we kind of were thinking about not going that week. So we ended up speaking to my mum who ended up lending us money. Because, yeah, we had the fuel and food voucher, but we wouldn't be able to do anything on site."*

The grocery and fuel vouchers were considered to be extremely valuable therefore to this family, and were a key factor in enabling the family to take the holiday:

*"Very very [important] because then I only had to worry about what we were spending on... at least I know, fuel and food was covered. So we had the basics of it. Because when you're there like you still got to buy even washing up liquid. You have no basics just to be there"*

The family spent time walking; swimming (although only once as this cost them £25); going on the beach and enjoying rides and activities such as bingo. Penny felt the key benefit for her daughter was that she got focussed time with both her parents without the usual stresses and tasks of being at home.

*"if we was at home, I would have got distracted or just, you know, the basic washing and cleaning things and wouldn't have given her that time. Whereas when we're away, we give her all of our attention together, not a bit of me and a bit of Dean. And just like the normal stresses we actually just had fun to be honest. So it was definitely worth going. And she still keeps talking about it now"*

Penny also discussed how the holiday allowed her to feel 'normal', by being able to see her daughter have fun and enjoy herself with her family.

*"I just felt a bit normal if I'm honest not, not thinking that I'm not good enough, because she had that I felt like I was able to give her something good. It was really nice. She just kept saying like, thank you like, she was so grateful. And it was just nice to be able to do that for her"*

It was also apparent the holiday has prompted the family to try and do more together going forward and be healthier. The family have been playing more board games together as a family since the holiday and due to how much Rachel enjoyed swimming whilst away they are currently exploring swimming lessons for her and also would like to take her swimming more as a family.

*"we've been playing more board games since we've been home because I did take some with us. So normally, I don't really have a lot of time and Dean's, just a bit low in his mood to think to do them. So we have actually been doing that on a weekend since"*

*"I think that's what the holiday made us realise is that we do things a lot individually and not together"*

Whilst on the holiday Rachel was able to use her scooter freely whereas she rarely used this at home. This has given Penny the confidence and push to go out for more walks where Rachel will be able to scoot as she's seen that she can now scoot safely.

Penny also reflected that the holiday has had a positive impact on Dean. She outlined how it seems to have given him further motivation to keep applying for jobs, adding that the incentive of being able to have a holiday like this in the future is a key motivator.

*"I think it's mainly really impacted Dean more than anything it's given him more of an incentive made him even feel a little bit more confident in himself. Even though it's like his volume of job applications and stuff like that has really improved".*

### **Referrer Perspective**

Teresa has been supporting the family for over a year, supporting them with finances and parenting in the main. Teresa has been pleased with how hard the family have worked at their goals and discussed the idea of a holiday as being almost like a reward to come once the work was drawing to a close:

*"Because they've been so good at working with us, it was nice to give them sort of like an end target, like an achievement a reward for an achievement"*

Teresa wanted to refer the family for a holiday to:

*"give them a bit of enjoyment together, because dad was quite sort of quite negative about lots of things".*

Teresa strongly feels that family dynamics have improved since the holiday. She feels Dean's motivation to seek employment and his confidence levels have both been bolstered by the holiday which she's really pleased to see. A key benefit of the holiday is considered to be that Dean, as someone struggling with his mental health is increasingly looking forward to and planning for the future which is having a positive knock-on effect for the wider family.

*"Dad's feeling a lot better about himself. So it's surprising how a holiday can whip that around, you know....straight away, he's talking more positively about everything. So it's not all sort of mundane, because it was it's quite hard to get somebody motivated. When you're not, I mean, to get them to take anything in if they're not feeling good about themselves. So massive impact... I genuinely believe that the holiday was exactly what he needed."*

Teresa worked with the family to overcome some barriers and anxieties surrounding the trip, particularly helping the family to explore free activities they may be able to do whilst on the holiday such as identifying a nearby beach they could enjoy. She feels the fact that everything wasn't included (even if some of this appears to be related to mixed messages about what was/wasn't included and the need to book activities before arrival) is a good thing as it can motivate families to save and inspire to save for future trips by being aware of the cost of activities.

From a referrer perspective the holiday has provided the family with what she hoped it would and has supported and enhanced the work she is doing with the family. Dean was just about to have his first interview since becoming unemployed which was considered a really positive step.

*"I'm very appreciative of having this support, to be honest, because it makes my job a lot easier, you know, sort of, you know, and the fact that this little girl's feeling more confident in nursery there's nothing better, brilliant"*

## Case Study 4: Amy

### Family Perspective

Amy is a single parent to a ten-month-old baby and is in her late 20s. Amy has spent over half her life living in an abusive relationship which became progressively worse when she fell pregnant. After leaving this relationship whilst pregnant Amy has mostly been living in temporary accommodation, including hostels and a mother and baby unit before recently securing a more permanent home in a new area. Her mother also passed away last year, and she now has no real family other than her child.

At the moment Amy doesn't work, she has struggled with her mental health with what she has been through, particularly over the past year. Amy has received substantial support from the P3 Charity since being referred to them whilst living in a hostel. Her child has a social worker at the moment as her child has some limited supervised contact with their father. The support has been both practical (helping her to bid for flats; help in sorting out bills) as well as emotional. This support has recently come to an end.

Amy is slowly getting used to her new area but doesn't really know anyone. She takes her child to the park and to a weekly group, which social services encouraged her to do.

*"I've been here since October, and I still haven't met no one so it's literally just me and [child] at the minute"*

Amy hadn't had a holiday for over a decade. Describing the situation prior to the holiday she explained:

*"Erm everything was just on top of me, obviously last year was bad. Well, the last few years have been bad but last year everything just changed for me losing my you know, being with someone since I was 17. Then getting pregnant, thinking that pregnancy was going to be good, which it was but obviously I was in a hostel so it wasn't the environment and then having to go into the mother and baby unit had to go to [area] so literally I just went didn't have nothing with me. So I've just basically just started all again".*

Amy welcomed the idea of a holiday when it was mentioned to her, she felt it would benefit her to be somewhere different for a few days and particularly was pleased that it would allow her to provide her child with an experience that she might not otherwise be able to provide them with. With no transport however Amy did have some concerns about how it would be travelling by public transport on her own with a baby. She had never been on a train with her child prior to this holiday.

In the end the travel went smoothly, and Amy managed two train changes smoothly on each journey, seeking support from fellow passengers as needed. Her referrer also helped her to plan the travel which helped ease anxiety.

The family spent three nights away in a caravan in a seaside resort. The main activities they undertook whilst away were swimming and going to the beach. This was the first time Amy had taken her baby swimming and she now hopes to do this more often.



*"he doesn't like the bath so I weren't expecting him to like the swimming pool but he did he loved it"*

Due to not having transport Amy didn't travel far off site due to needing taxis. She paid for a Build a Bear activity for her child although somewhat regrets that now as this was quite expensive.

Amy particularly enjoyed seeing her child have fun on the holiday and it was clear she benefitted from the experience and that the holiday has helped increase her confidence, which had already been growing slowly since ending her relationship and the staff supporting her in boosting her self-esteem. This increased confidence in travel with her child, and the enjoyment of the holiday are likely to see the family enjoy more trips out and travel in the future.

*"It's made me realize I can go on holiday with him now and get to places with him and stuff 'cos that's what I was scared of, especially being on my own it's going places is he gonna cry is he gonna scream Is he gonna? What's going to happen? But yeah, just that basically and I just feel a bit better since I've been I don't know if it's the sea air or not. I don't know. It's just picked my mood up a little bit".*

*"I think [I'll] probably just go on more breaks. Because it's, it's, it's inspired me to do more things. And now I know, I can travel and stuff. And I mean, I've always been able to travel, but on my own, but now I know, I can do it with [child]. It'll be a lot more holidays, I think".*

Amy was interested in going on coach trips for the day going forward and is feeling more confident about planning trips.

*"And I think I can you know, organise it myself as well, whereas I never used to organise things, but now I think I know what I can do. But yeah, definitely. I'll be going away. However many times I can possibly".*

Without the holiday Amy felt she may still be struggling mentally, and still feeling very isolated whereas the holiday appear to have opened up possibilities to Amy.

*"I was getting a bit more depressed. It's only because I don't know anyone up... you know, just don't go out. So I was sort of like getting a bit more depressed as I was going. But now but now, it's made me feel better now I've been away and cleared my head a little bit and realised I can do stuff on my own. I am you know; I can do everything by myself now".*

### **Referrer Perspective**

Angela works as a Housing Support Worker for a charity. She started supporting Amy when she moved to temporary accommodation after fleeing domestic abuse with the goal being to secure permanent accommodation, which Amy now has.

Angela outlined how Amy had been through significant challenges, leaving a long-term abusive relationship and resettling and coming to terms with this whilst being pregnant and in insecure accommodation. Once she had secured her new accommodation it seemed a good time to refer this family for a holiday, particularly given how much they'd been through and how isolated they continued to be in a new area:

*"She felt quite isolated and lonely. So we just thought it would be I don't know, almost like a breath of fresh air for Amy and help her feel a bit more centred".*

Angela feels the holiday has given Amy the space to take stock and consider the future:

*"She is now talking about wanting to do an education course she's talking about when [child] is a bit older going into some kind of supportive role herself. So I think it's helped just to have a bit of a break her and her son and away from where she's been feeling isolated and re-evaluate things maybe herself"*

Angela feels holidays like this can boost self-esteem, which has a positive knock-on effect on the work she does with families. Whilst somewhat early to say, she also feels the holiday may have a positive impact in how confident Amy feels in going out and trying different groups with her child.

## Case Study 5: Nina

### Family Perspective

Nina is in her late thirties and is a single parent to two dependent children aged 9 and 16. The family live in the Northwest of England. They relocated at the start of 2022 due to a violent incident at their former home which the family inadvertently got caught up in. One child was seriously harmed, and this has been an extremely stressful and life-changing event for the family. Prior to this Nina was also in an abusive relationship which has naturally had its toll on the family.

*"it's been horrific and I'm here now"*

The family began receiving support from safeguarding leads at school due to this abusive relationship when social services became involved due to the severity of Nina's injuries. Support has continued as the family relocated to a new area. The support provided has been both emotional (for the children) and practical in terms of navigating a move to a new area whilst the children were remaining at their former schools as the added commute has resulted in some lateness.

Generally the family were not doing much together prior to the holiday they were offered by the Family Holiday Charity. Nina feels the family were perhaps not as close as they could be, and Nina was still very much processing what she had been through. Nina also lives with a long-term health condition which is progressively getting worse as she gets older (muscular dystrophy), this can mean she doesn't get out and about with her children as much as she'd like.

*"It's my youngest I feel sorry for really, because as well, I have muscular dystrophy. And it's only like getting bad in my later life now. With the older two, I was a lot younger, so I could do a lot more. And I didn't go through all these events that have happened. And then with Ewan I mean, the other two they've been abroad and everything, but Ewan had never even been on a holiday and he's nine"*

Nina herself had not had a holiday for around ten years and it was her that sourced Family Holiday Charity as a possible means of securing a holiday. She described the family situation prior to the holiday, and how she felt it may help them:

*"We've been through a hell of a lot. And. And I think emotionally, me and the children have not been very you know, I've been dealing with overcoming the domestic violence. And then this, the next trauma happened. So I don't think we've all been very close even though we live under the same roof, if you know what I mean".*

*"To give us a bit of headspace and a bit of time together without life"*

The family had a four-day holiday in Cumbria. Whilst it was different to any kind of holiday Nina had had before, it was considered to be a "good different". The family enjoyed shopping, amusements, swimming and the beach and would drive short distances to nearby locations to where they were staying.

The best thing about the holiday for Nina was:

*"Getting away from real life. Giving me head a bit of space".*

She added that the holiday helped her re-evaluate things, and made her more aware of the need to be present for her children:

*"It's made me stop and re-evaluate and like I have mental health and I let things get on top of...I can't deal with trauma though you'd think I would... So it was nice to sit back and actually think that life is too short and your children no matter what life throws at you your children needs quality family time. And like I'm they don't they don't see the dad so sometimes I'm the only, well all the time I'm the only person they've got and if I'm not there emotionally they've got no one and I think it let me re-evaluate me really"*

Nina also felt the children benefitted from having some quality time with their Mum and as a family, away from the usual surroundings and stresses. She also curbed how long her teen could spend on her phone which she felt enabled them to get closer, even if the teen didn't like it necessarily!

*"I think they just enjoyed me, all being you know, just chilled and just having fun and quality time together".*

*"They were just kids again. I think it's benefited him because he's seen look life happens but then you get a holiday, and you get to relax, and you get to have fun and family time and .... He loved it, he's never done that before... He probably feels a bit normal now".*

Since having the holiday the family have started having a weekly film night together. Nina is also now taking her nine-year-old swimming after seeing how much he enjoyed that, this is something they weren't doing prior to the holiday. She also hopes they will enjoy more trips and holidays together going forward.

*"We benefited a hell of a lot because of it. You know, it gave up. This sounds stupid, but we got to know each other better. I know my kids but you know what I mean I got to actually listen to them properly"*

## Case Study 6: Jen

### Family Perspective

Jen is a single mum to five children aged between 5 and 17, the family live in the Northwest of England. One of her children is diagnosed with Autism and she is currently waiting on an assessment for ADHD for another child. Jen lives with a long-term health condition (fibromyalgia) and her eldest child is a Young Carer for her. This child experiences anxiety and has recently started counselling sessions.

Jen struggles with her health condition and low confidence and hasn't historically been able to, nor had the confidence, to get out in the community and access services for her and her children, cost was also a barrier. The main activity the family would do together outside of the house would be going to the same local park. Until referred to the Early Help Hub Jen had little awareness of what could be available to her and her children. Much of the support provided to the family has related to a child being a Young Carer. Due to this responsibility the children have been able to attend a range of activities and provision free of charge which the family had previously been unaware of. Jen has also received support to build her self-esteem and confidence.

*"I couldn't afford things but also I didn't know what was going on. I'm not an outgoing person where I find out a lot of information or what goes on in our community and stuff. And so Tracy helped with loads of paperwork like different activities, different places to go if it wasn't for Tracy I wouldn't even know about those things and now like looking at well through them Facebook and WhatsApp it's just build me up to actual think all right, that's all right. That's easily done you know things like that".*

The family had never been on holiday together before, predominantly due to being unable to afford it. Jen explained how her children would often ask about holidays though:

*"the children used to ask all the time about going away. They'd mention planes and things because obviously other children were going and saying what they're doing, we're going in a caravan or we're going there. And they used to just ask me questions all the time, but it was like sometimes I didn't know what to say, it ended up coming to it where I said I can't afford the holidays I said I just can't afford to take you anywhere".*

A holiday was seen as a good way of getting the family all out of the house together:

*"It just felt like this felt like we just couldn't do anything in the life was just dependent on the house, staying in constant. That's all there was thinking that that's all we do. Just stay in. Things like that".*

The family had a four-night holiday in Cornwall so about a six-hour drive from their home. They chose this holiday due to the views. Jen welcomed the support provided by both her referrer in booking and planning the holiday as well as the support from Family Holiday Charity, which helped calm any anxieties in getting ready for the trip. The grocery and fuel vouchers were very welcome and important for the family.

*"It was absolutely great they literally helped you with everything. So you get a fuel voucher, and you get a grocery voucher and that grocery voucher was amazing because it wasn't just a little amount it was like, you know, I've gotten them out for each person as well individually. Which was amazing".*

Jen explained how excited her children were when she was able to tell them they'd be going on a holiday:

*"Oh, they was literally over the moon and Maisy-Mae was bouncing all over the bed screaming going 'yay we're going on holiday!'. And then because Logan's got autism it's a lot of explaining to Logan but the smile on his face was just literally a picture"*

The family swam every day during their holiday; they hired bikes and cycled around and also enjoyed local amusements and the on-site park and evening entertainment. The only time they left the site was to go to the beach.

*"They absolutely adored that park. They just didn't want to come out of the park at nighttime. Watching them on that park all playing together and then just being able to sit and watch them with that view it was good because they got on so well. And we absolutely loved the park"*

Jen explained what she as a parent enjoyed most about the holiday:

*"For me, just watching them children having such a great time and not you know, no arguments and no nothing, just sitting there and watching them all get on dead nicely. It was just amazing. I was just like, in my own element watching how happy the children were".*

A key benefit for the children was that it's enabled them to have new experiences, go to a different place and meet new people.

*"I think it's done them some good I think it's what they needed. They needed to get away, associate with different people and see what was out there for them what life or you know, what life's about, what you can do in life".*

The fact that the family remained largely on-site with key amenities such as swimming and a park included in conjunction with the grocery/fuel vouchers helped the family keep costs to a minimum.

Whilst the children do not 'play out' as such at home, Jen does feel the children are more involved in their community since the holiday as they've been accessing more of the activities available to young carers (and siblings) available locally, which is a shift for the family. Jen is also considering doing some courses in the future.

*"They done a little before the holiday. But the holiday pushed them more to do more and pushed me more to do things like the activities with them through the week"*

Jen and her children are all keen to do more going forward, activities and trips and holidays.

*"We'd love to go away again have a little holiday again but they also love going out places for the day like Blackpool and Southport they're always on about places like that"*

### **Referrer Perspective**

Tracy within her role for the Early Help Hub has been supporting this family for several months. This has involved supporting Jen with challenges regarding her physical disability, her eldest being a Young Carer and living with anxiety as well as some behavioural and financial struggles within the family. Various support/action has been put in place for the family, including a gym membership for the Young Carer.

*"[Mum's] provided very well for children, but she didn't know anything that was going on in the community didn't know anything about applying for funding for the children to be able to do things. So that's the biggest thing that we did for her. And them children are now going to dance classes, Barney's going to the gym. So I think it's changed things, you know, quite a lot".*

Tracy outlined whilst the family may do a lot at home together as a family, until recently the children were not going out much. When asked why she felt the family would benefit from a holiday she explained:

*"You know, I just felt that I just felt they had a lot on, especially Barney, and Mum, you know, Mum with her physical health, and having to deal with the children's behaviour, the younger children's behaviour, I just really felt that they needed to spend some quality time together, just to make some nice memories really? And, you know, I just felt like they needed to sort of go out and see something, you know, somewhere else, go and visit somewhere and sort of go to the beach and just do things that lots of other families have opportunities to do. And the family have never had that opportunity before".*

The family being able to access a holiday via Family Holiday Charity also sat nicely with the work Tracy was doing with the family as she explained:

*"Because obviously, one of the goals was for us as well, it was one of the main things that came in, can you please support this family sort of access activities? So to me, you know, a holiday was sort of..and it was the top of their list, if you ask this family what they wanted, even the children? What sort of things would you like us to support with? And two of them children said, we've never been on holiday we don't really go on day trips. You know, so that they were the children's goals. So for me, that's why it was really important to me to try and do it if I could".*

Tracy could see benefits for the family in taking this holiday as outlined below:

*"I think it's had a really positive impact. I think it's, without a doubt improved Mum's emotional wellbeing and Barney's. I mean, all the family have benefited from it. But they were the two for me that I felt really needed a break, you know, just to do something nice. Because like I say Mum's not well, and Barney has a caring role. And I felt like he needed to just go out and, you know, sit on the beach with his brothers and sisters and sort of have some fun rather than just sort of looking out for everybody all the time. You know, he has quite severe anxiety as*

*well. And, you know, even he was like, no, it was really good. It was great. You know, they really enjoyed it, the family loved it”.*

*“I mean, just to go out and be able to sort of see a different place. I mean, to them it could be anywhere, couldn't it? You know, people go to different countries, but to them this is like this was massive. Because going to Cornwall is such a big thing for this family. They've never been never even been to Blackpool or Wales”.*

Tracy is hopeful the positive impact the work she's being doing with the family, and the benefits of the holiday will come together to mean that the family continues to access services and activities in their community and are already considering future holidays.

*“I think that one thing I would say is maybe going forward in the future, I think Mum will realise how important it is for the children to get out and do things. So I think if anything, I will say that because I think it's probably opened her eyes to what she can provide her children with”.*

*“they're now accessing the community, which is really good. And they're even talking about going on holiday again. Now, it's something that they want to do again, so they've done it once, they've had that experience, and they want to do it again. So, you know, I've talked to Mum then about sort of having this whole year now to kind of try and save up and that's what she's talking about doing”*



## Case Study 7: Samantha

### Family Perspective

Samantha lives with her four children and her sister (to whom she is legal guardian). The family have a history of mental health issues and Samantha has also experienced domestic abuse. Samantha has been receiving support from Janet, her Family Support Worker. Janet has been supporting with a range of issues, primarily focused around her nine-year-old daughter's anxiety. This has included help with CAMHS referrals and support to remain in school.

The family had not been away for many years; however Samantha had been saving very hard to fund a trip away. However, unexpected family expenses meant that this money had to be spent elsewhere. Samantha described the family as feeling 'quite low' and 'isolated' before the holiday. Due to her own anxiety Samantha can find travelling and getting out to do activities quite difficult.

*"Because I don't drive and because of my own mental health, I sort of shut the door and don't want to face the world a lot of the time. And, you know, I was very anxious about the travel...public transport with children sends me into a massive anxiety...but it was really easy. And once I'm there and doing it I'm alright."*

Janet referred Samantha and her family for a holiday, and they travelled in May. Samantha was very happy to have received the holiday as the children were disappointed when their original plans could not happen due to lack of finance.

Although the resort they visited would not have been Samantha's first choice; having a car would have been beneficial and some activities were closed outside of term time, the family still enjoyed the holiday.

*"It was still lovely And all the children were great. And they appreciated the fact that we were just away. So you know, it was just nice to be somewhere different...and explore a little bit."*

*"I think it's just sort of refreshed everybody. I think the kids appreciated that bit of time away from the house. You know, we spent obviously a lot of time here [during lockdown]...so I think it did boost everybody's mood a little."*

Samantha acknowledged that holidaying with children can be stressful, and life has pretty much returned to normal now, but the holiday did afford them some temporary reprieve.

*"The mental health issues in my family are ongoing and long term. So it hasn't unfortunately rectified that."*

*"Having a big family, you know, lots of children is really hard...we don't always do things together, don't always go out, rarely go out all together. But that was nice, being able to spend some time all together, doing different things."*

The holiday has been a positive experience for the children in giving them a 'normal' experience, like their peers.

*“They see their friends doing things at weekends, and you know, we just don't do those things...I can't, I just think it's my anxiety, you know, just stops me, it just makes me feel overwhelmed. And then I'm like, Oh, I can't do it. It's not doable. So I make excuses.”*

### **Referrer Perspective**

Janet explained that she has been supporting Samantha and her family for coming up to two years, initially with her daughter's anxiety and school attendance, but other mental health and finance issues have come to light along the way. Janet explained why she referred the family for a holiday:

*“Their finances are very, very stretched. And there was a point where I was aware that mum was saving for a holiday, to pay for herself...and she had to use her savings, and it was going to be quite a long shot anyway. And like I said, there's sort of multiple issues within the family. And I felt that the reason she was saving was because she'd recognise that it would do them really good to sort of get away out of their immediate environment. There's quite a lot of them in a small space...so once it became apparent that she wasn't going to be able to fund that, I thought that it would be an opportunity for me to look into funding that for them.”*

Janet helped Samantha with the organisation of the holiday, mainly to remind her to complete certain tasks as she can be forgetful due to amount of things going on at home. Janet also explained that a friend had arranged to clean and declutter the families home (with their knowledge) whilst they were away. The home had become cluttered and Samantha found this difficult to manage alongside her mental health issues.

Janet felt that the holiday had a clear positive impact for Samantha, and it had enabled her to build back her resilience to deal with issues on her return.

*“I think the main benefit that I can see for them is more with Samantha, because I think...if she's struggling, they all struggle. And so I think it helps build her resilience back up a little bit. So for example, the child that was originally referred with her attendance, it's still an issue. But mums come back very focused on what she needs to do and sort of, you know, has that resilience to maybe give her a little bit more of a push to go in regularly and have that consistency. So I think it's the improvement in her mental health has a knock on effect for the children.”*

*“[Samantha] felt very overwhelmed with everything before she went away. And it's hard to do stuff when you feel overwhelmed. But that certainly seems to have lifted...she's certainly been very focused on getting her daughter into school regularly. And she seems to be sort of sticking to that, because it's the consistency that wasn't there before she wanted to do it. But on days, when she felt overwhelmed, it just didn't happen. But since they've been on holiday, she's been getting her into school every day, even though it's not been for whole days.”*

## Case Study 8: Claire

### Family Perspective

Claire is in her mid-fifties and lives with her partner and three of her grandchildren (aged 7-12) who she has a Special Guardianship Order for. Claire and her partner worked full-time prior to being awarded custody of the children three years ago, they gave up work to concentrate on caring for the children. The children have minimal supervised contact with their parents.

Claire and the children have been receiving support from a project worker from a Kinship charity since being awarded custody of the children. Support has ranged from putting the family in touch with peer groups for kinship carers; support in accessing grants and furniture (they had to move to a bigger house) and emotional support. The family also receive some support via the Special Guardianship Team within the local authority, they are able to access therapeutic interventions and emotional support.

Claire is a self-declared 'homebird', holidays she had in the past prior to the children moving in with her were few and far between and were generally holidays in the region. As such Claire was a bit unsure when the idea of a holiday was first put to her, but she could see it would be beneficial for the children so went ahead.

*"I did go for the children's sake they've never been to a seaside resort. [ ]. Because I've not been away for many, many years, because we've just worked and worked. For me it was a big step leaving the house for a few days and going somewhere different"*

The family spent three nights away at Skipsea Sands. They spent their time on the beach; went swimming; bowling and bingo. The family also enjoyed the evening entertainment, the children enjoyed dancing and made new friends.

Claire outlined what the best thing about the holiday was for her:

*"Just a break away from home and just watching the children's faces. It was such a good atmosphere".*

The children enjoyed new activities, which were usually quite limited to trips to the park and occasional swimming when they're at home. The main observed impact of the holiday for the children is that they now have more confidence and keenness to socialise with their peers. Prior to the holiday the children didn't really socialise, now they would play with other children in the local area.

*"When we was there for the weekend, I know it was only a short break but they made quite a few friends and now they've come back and they've started playing out with the children here, which they never did that"*

Claire said the family are "definitely" keen to take another similar holiday in the future.

### Referrer Perspective

The Project Worker has supported the family for three years. She outlined the complexities and challenges faced by kinship carers such as Claire:

*"there's so many layers to being a kinship carer, you know, it's very different to sort of adopting a child, you know, you don't have that added the added dynamics of, of extended family, you know, birth parents and other aunts and uncles and grandparents and things. So these just the all those added extras that come with raising these children".*

The Project Worker has supported the family through introducing them to kinship peer groups; advocacy and link work with the schools and ensuring the family are accessing what they are entitled to. Due to some mental health struggles amongst the children, school, and some of the children's behaviour has been challenging in recent times, and this has meant the children have been somewhat isolated. This was the main reason for applying for a holiday for the family:

*"they just needed to be able to leave all that behind for a little while, it's a lot to cope with, you know, thinking about all the challenges that are going on in school and the challenges for the children themselves how they're feeling about where they live and who they live with. And then that worry of Claire's that is just there from, you know, 24/7 when you wake up every day, and you go to bed, so it did come at a really good time for them to be able to take that break"*

The children had never visited the seaside prior to the holiday and any days out were limited to the local area where they lived. The family were very appreciative of the holiday, as the Project Worker outlined:

*"She couldn't thank me enough. And it was it was almost like, you know what she said to me? Nobody's ever done anything for us. They've always struggled along. The children always have hand me downs. And, you know, so she was so grateful to be able to do that with the kids, you know. So yeah, it's something that they've never been able to do. They've never been able to leave the local authority".*

As a non-working household money is tight for the family and as such the fuel and food vouchers were imperative for this family in being able to take and enjoy the holiday:

*"Fortunately for her, you guys were offering the fuel voucher at the time and the food voucher so that really, really helped financially for them to be able to go away and the money they'd kept aside allowed the children to take part in activities that were paid for on site, which she may have not been able to do if she had not had that, that helping hand with fuel and food"*

It was felt that the holiday has helped the family to relax and build on their family unit:

*"they've been able to build that build on their relationship as a family unit. Just because there wasn't I mean, when you were at home there's lots of structure isn't there, you know, lots of boundaries. And often, our children in these situations push back against those boundaries. So it can feel quite, quite emotionally draining. And physically draining, not having that on holiday Claire felt that it was just amazing to let the children just be children. You know, and she feels like, since they've been away, the children wants to get out more"*

Although Claire herself didn't feel her confidence had changed as a result of the holiday (feeling she was already a confident and sociable person), the Project Worker

felt Claire's confidence has grown through the holiday, and that it's helped to break down some of the fear of going out with children when there can be behavioural challenges present. This will hopefully see the family get out more and engage in activities:

*"I think, because, because it's always been so much focus, and it generally is for our families, on all the challenges, that kind of stuff's forgotten about, and then it can be quite, quite challenging to actually go out and do that out of fear of something going wrong. So I think it's boosted Claire's confidence in terms of actually taking the children out more and doing that kind of thing. Even if it is just more local, or, you know, actually, her confidence is much, much bigger, much better in in terms of that. And the children, you know, likewise, they're, they're more engaged, you know, actually, when, you know, when she's saying, let's go do something, and you know, and they're like, yeah, okay, so. So yeah, it's really nice. I do think that that will increase their activities overall, because it's boosted Claire's confidence"*

## Case Study 9: Jim

### Family Perspective

Jim is in his early thirties and is a single parent to an eight-year-old son. He has had sole custody of his son for four years following a court battle after his son spent time in foster care. This resulted in Jim giving up work and has meant that money is tight for the family. They have limited wider family connections and have had to move area in recent months which has been stressful for the family. Jim's son is about to start a new school.

Jim and his son had never been on a family holiday together before and Jim hadn't had any kind of holiday since he was a teenager. Whilst they are close and do a lot together on a weekend this is limited to low-cost activities but does include sports and gaming.

*"as a single parent cost is everything"*

The family has been receiving support from a Family Support Worker for almost a year. Support has included ensuring the family are accessing support and grants they can and being signposted to any support required.

Jim was delighted at the prospect of being able to have a family holiday, something he wouldn't be able to afford otherwise. The holiday came at a good point for the family after a really stressful period in their lives having just moved to a new home which is essentially an 'empty shell':

*"it's been a difficult six months, my relationship broke down with my partner, my landlord decided to sell the house so we had to move and all this I have not had much support through all of it really so to have that short break was really, it came at a really good time and we'd just moved, a very stressful couple of weeks and then we had this break away. So it was almost like right, we've moved now we can go away forget about everything go away, have a nice time and then come back to reality".*

The family enjoyed a break away in Bognor Regis and spent their time swimming, on the beach, playing crazy golf and spending time in the arcades. The food vouchers were deemed "crucial" to enabling this family to being able to enjoy the holiday.

Quality time together, away from the stress of situations at home was the key benefit for Jim whereas getting to discover new surroundings was considered the best thing for his son.

*"sometimes it gets the sort of same stuff, different days. So to be able to go somewhere different, do something different was really good"*

*"I mean he's never been to the arcade before. So that was sort of like his highlight, you know, get to spend loads of money in the arcade, all these flashing lights and games. He was so happy".*

Whilst there hasn't been any particular change in terms of confidence for this family or activities undertaken since returning home, it was clear that the holiday has stirred interest in having future holidays of a similar nature.

*"I wouldn't say new interests, but it's definitely I'm definitely sort of thinking we'd definitely like to do that again. That's something that we've not done before and we will definitely do again purely because we've sort of tried it out and done it".*

Jim hoped that he would soon be able to start work again and hoped to save up for a future holiday as soon as possible.

*"If it's something that I can save up for in time for the summer holidays, then we'll definitely be going back".*

Prior to the holiday Jim wouldn't have appreciated the benefits of such a holiday for the amount it would cost, since having the holiday this has clearly changed as he outlines below:

*"I would have looked at the price and just thought, oh, my goodness, can't afford that. Don't know what it's gonna be like, but it was it was a real eye opener that okay, it might have been, you know, 400 pounds, but that's money well spent. We had a really good time".*

By way of a closing comment Jim thanked Family Holiday Charity and added:

*"I wouldn't say you've changed our lives but definitely you know, created a weekend of memories that we wouldn't have had without that, you know?"*

## Case Study 10: Annika

### Family Perspective

Annika has two primary-school aged children, one of whom is diagnosed with ADHD. The family lived in London until a few months ago when they left due to a series of traumatic events including domestic abuse at the hands of the children's father. As such the children have had an unstable start to life and have already attended four different schools.

Due to the domestic abuse which social services and the school became aware of a Family Support Worker became involved with the family and this person has ultimately been Annika's "support system" in recent years. The FSW has not only been a 'middle person' between the family and the school (where there have been issues in relation to getting to the point of ADHD diagnosis and support) but also in terms of supporting the family to access grants and items they needed. The property they moved to was unfurnished therefore this support has been key.

Annika was busy managing the essential concerns in life at the point at which a family holiday was mentioned to her, a holiday was not on her radar. At the time the family were by their own admission isolated in a new area they didn't have the confidence to explore, this has now improved.

*"When she suggested that [the break] I was a bit anxious at first because I'm like, oh my gosh, how am I going to get there? Then all of this is on me, and I can't, I've never been out of the country with the boys, let alone the seaside. So it's just like, but I did it. And it helped me, boosted my confidence".*

Prior to the holiday due to the life-events experienced the family tended to stay at home, or at most go to the park. By her own admission Annika didn't realise, until having had the holiday how important getting out and about more could be beneficial for her and her children:

*"it's because I'm a single parent, there's nobody to share the responsibility with so sometimes it can get a bit overwhelming going out with them. Like, oh, it's hard work. So I just I just tend to stay in my house. But I think now I think it's given me the confidence now to get out more and to do more with them, like trips out and days out like that".*

The best thing about the holiday for Annika was seeing her children smile, as she describes below:

*"To see my children smile, and to see them so excited about just going away. And for them to experience it. I think it was the experience and the memory that it will hold that's the most important".*

The benefits in terms of emotional wellbeing were also clear for this parent:

*"you can tell that I needed it. And as from for the boys, as well, as we got away, my mental health, I've got to sit down, I've got to relax, I've got to collect my thoughts. I've got to be a better parent, I've got to enjoy one on one time with my children, like, I was so distracted of what happened was happening in London, that*



*it was so good. Like, I just felt free, I can't tell you the feeling that when I stepped out into the sun when we first arrived. And to feel the sand and the breeze and it was just like, wow, and the boys were so happy. It was such a good environment for them to be. It was positive, it was lively staff were friendly, they were so nice. And I was just like, you know, the boys were like, Mummy do we have to leave. I was just like, thank you. Like, I just, I think I just needed that that time to just reflect and to get away and just to relax, because it helped. It helped all of us and I still feel refreshed now like I can I can get back on my horse and fight again".*

The holiday has also provided a talking point, a conversation starter for both Annika and her children. All have enjoyed talking to neighbours, peers and staff at the school about their holiday. In this sense this has been increasing their sense of community connectedness.

*"I'm getting a connection now".*

Annika now has aspirations, and the confidence to take her children out more and aims to have a holiday abroad in the future.

*"it's boosted my confidence to take them out. And I definitely want to do more things and go and do even like go to London and to go and will go and act like tourists on the bus and things like that. So it's prompting me to go and do more things with them".*

The family are already saving up for a further UK holiday with wider family for next year.

*"Well, I want to save up for a holiday. Now we're gonna go on a plane. And, and so I'm like, you know, she's given me the little, that boost of confidence that you know what? You know what [Annika], you can do this? You don't need anybody to hold your hand".*

Annika shared a final powerful message about the importance of an organisation like Family Holiday Charity:

*"People put importance on the other things in life, but having a little getaway and you know escape once in a while is what you need sometimes, and it will bring you together as a family. So I think this is a great little organization and what they're doing and just, I want them just to continue, because it's just spreading, you know, love confidence and so much positiveness into families who have gone through trauma."*

### **Referrer Perspective**

A Family Support Worker linked to school has supported this family for several years with housing, support needs in terms of the child with ADHD and emotional support. They felt this would be a good family to refer for a holiday due to the issues the families had experienced relating to domestic abuse and the instability experienced by the children in their lives. It was also felt that a holiday would be beneficial in helping the family to be less isolated and become more aware of what else is 'out there'.

*"I think it's really important that the kids in our area see that there's more to life than just what's in their area. And not only that, that they weren't having much outlet, because of the move and because of the issues of the DV"*

Exposure to new experiences, and new places was key for this referrer in building aspirations in children and young people.

*"They just spend most of the time at home. So that's why for me it was important and imperative for them to have this experience because at least if they've had it once they know what's out there. And as they get older and they can afford it they know what to do and where to go for these experiences".*

From a FSW perspective the family, both Mum and children have been stimulated and inspired by the holiday. Mum has seen how important it is to get out there and seen how she can support develop interests in her children, and how important this is for them to be exposed to new experiences.

*"I think it's opened their eyes to what's available now in their area, and around London as well"*

The FSW feels the benefits of a holiday for this family will remain with them for the long-term.

## Case Study 11: Barbara

### Family Perspective

Barbara is legal guardian to three grandchildren aged 8, 9 and 10. She has some quite severe health issues and finds caring for the children physically demanding, and mentally stressful. She also cares for her elderly mother.

Barbara has been receiving support from Nina, following a referral from her GP. Nina has been supporting Barbara with her mental health and with housing issues. Barbara was feeling quite low prior to the holiday.

*"Things were getting so bad...it's just the situation really. I was getting bit down...depressed. You know, we were locked down and everything else. Yeah. getting fed up, finding it difficult to cope with the stresses of life really."*

Barbara and the children went to a coastal caravan park for their holiday and really enjoyed it. Barbara managed to get some pockets of time to herself and the children were able to spend time outside and have some freedom. The only downside was the presence of a games arcade on the site which was expensive, so Barbara took the children on some trips away from the site to avoid spending too much money.

*"The caravan was absolutely gorgeous...it was a bit expensive because they had loads of [arcade] machines. I took them down to the beach. And to the pirates cove. We also went on to a couple of shows in the evening. But apart from that not a lot. Just let the kids, not run riot, but just get out and enjoy themselves."*

*"We weren't that far from the main office or from the little shop and the main hall. And the kids could go over there on their own. So once I'd gone over there with them. And they knew where everything was. And then they'd go over there? And then 20 minutes later, they'd be back. Hold on. Can we have some more money? But yeah, I did manage to get a bit of light relief."*

Barbara felt that the holiday had relieved some of the stress for her and had certainly been enjoyable for the children. However, the usual routine resumed pretty quickly on their return.

*"For a little while, but then you fall back to the old same old humdrum routine because it's just constantly chasing kids and asking them to do this and don't do that and put that away and cleaning up behind them, that sort of stresses me out, the constant cleaning up behind them."*

However, the children had some new experiences, such as travelling on a ferry, and going to see some shows – both experiences they would not have had at home.

### Referrer Perspective

Nina has been supporting Barbara for around 9 months, providing emotional support, signposting to organisations that provide support for grandparent carers, and support with benefits and housing issues. Nina explained why she referred the family for a holiday:

*"I just felt that they needed something to look forward to. I mean, the children are really well behaved. And she does seem to find the money somehow to pay for clubs and various things for them to go to. And she's only on benefits, she doesn't get any additional help. I just felt that they needed a treat really, they just needed time to decompress...and for [Barbara] to get away from the care of her mum for a few days."*

Nina spoke to Barbara on her return and felt it was clear that the holiday had been a positive experience for the family.

*"She was very positive, full of experiences and showing photographs of what they've done. She felt that they'd really enjoyed it, and they'd appreciated the break."*

Like Barbara, Nina felt that the usual routine of life did return fairly quickly.

*"I guess all holidays have an impact on people, unfortunately for Barbara she comes back into a fairly chaotic life...so, back to the humdrum again, but it was definitely something that she looked on positively and felt that they enjoyed. I just think it gave them time to connect and enjoy themselves without any pressures and worries. I just think it gave them that time to do a bit of decompression. But Barbara is a survivor and she would have survived without it. Of course she would, but it's nice to be able to give people something that makes them feel valued and feel that the job they're doing is valued and I think that's definitely what it did for Barbara".*

## Case Study 12: Jessica

### Family Perspective

Jessica is in her late forties, married and has three grown-up children. She was granted custody (special guardianship) of her granddaughter Laurel almost four years ago just as the couple's youngest daughter was about to leave home. The family live in Devon.

Laurel's mother was unable to care for her with multiple abusive and toxic relationships as well as mental health issues. Laurel currently has a 'broken' relationship with her mother, with rare contact. Laurel is now six. The change saw Jessica cut down her working hours as a mental health nurse, from full time to now working part-time hours to allow school pick-up thanks to having a flexible and understanding employer. Her husband also works.

*"we couldn't really do anything else but take her on because the thought of her going into care would be not an option for us. We've adapted our lives and you know, and now I don't know any different really. She's one of our children and that's it"*

Laurel is currently awaiting an assessment for ADHD and is displaying behavioural issues at school, but largely not at home. She has SEMH needs, currently has one to one support in school and has TAC involvement. Laurel needs to be very active and as such Laurel attends a range of after school clubs and groups during the week.

Teresa had one previous holiday with Laurel to Cornwall which was several years ago now. The idea of a holiday was mentioned to Jessica at a time when the family were facing numerous challenges in terms of behaviour.

*"At the time, it was extremely well needed. You know, with Laurel at school and stuff, and she's absolutely fantastic at home, but you go and pick her up at school gates and hear what she's been up to that day it gets you down".*

Jessica as such was very receptive to the idea of a holiday and thought it would be perfect for Laurel who loves the seaside whatever the weather. It also opened Jessica's eyes to a new area she'd not considered visiting before for a holiday:

*"Never thought about going to North Devon before. You know, I normally have gone to Cornwall in the past, but everything was there that you needed. You know, and the beach was walking distance from the caravan park just across the road. Yeah, we didn't even need to drive to the beach. So I'll certainly definitely go back there again, absolutely. Nice place and it's quite secluded. And it's, it just gets you away from work and home and school and everything and just let's you recharge your batteries, doesn't it?"*

An added benefit of the holiday for this family was that it enabled some members of the wider family to get together, which rarely happens. As the holiday was less than two hours away it meant Jessica's parents (pensioners), who often care for Laurel, as well as one of Jessica's daughters (who doesn't live in Devon) to join them for part of the holiday. This was particularly beneficial for Laurel who rarely gets to spend time with the wider family as a collective, and also softened the blow of Jessica's husband only being able to join them for part of the holiday due to having to work.

*"She loved the idea that my parents were coming. Absolutely loved it. Because it's nice, because what happens is, once a month, she goes with them. And then my daughter is very close to her who lives up in Evesham. So she doesn't get to see her very often".*

The only slight issue the family faced when away was that they were told that activities should be booked prior to arrival, which was something they couldn't do as they went through a third party. Thankfully it turned out Laurel was able to access some activities including daily swimming and a nature trail activity. They also spent time on the beach and went to a nearby village to a craft fair and had ice creams and fish and chips. They also enjoyed the evening entertainment, and Laurel particularly enjoyed dancing.

*"They had a, like a children's pool next to the big pool. And the children's pool had like a boat and a slide and sprinkler. And the big pool had like a lazy river. She didn't know what to do first herself did she, you know, to keep jumping out of the big pool to the little pool back and forth. Yeah, she absolutely loved it"*

On the way home the family visited a nearby visitor attraction (a reptile experience), this was an impulsive decision. Jessica was certain they wouldn't have visited such an attraction had it not been for the holiday, particularly as she has a fear of snakes.

*"I would have never done anything like that before. But my fear shouldn't rub off on her [ ] she got brave first put one on her shoe and then she put one on her lap and then she was stroking one. So that was something that I probably would have never done with her before. Oh, I wouldn't have gone there if I didn't go to the holiday".*

The family hope to take a similar holiday in the future in the UK:

*"I'd definitely go back to the same holiday place again, you know, somewhere, I would have never considered going, I think, to me before I thought holiday would be in a different county, you know, but absolutely not. That was that was lovely up there"*

### **Referrer Perspective**

The family have been supported by a Family Practitioner within the local authority Special Guardian Support Team. Support includes helping families to access support groups/meet other kinship carers; liaising with schools and arrange therapeutic interventions.

The Family Practitioner felt the family would benefit from a holiday due to the Lexi's challenging behaviours. Laurel struggles with anxiety and doesn't like crowds which can make going to busy places difficult.

*"I wanted them to have the opportunity to kind of challenge some of those behaviours, but in a safe space. So they were able to access different scenarios than they usually would within an everyday basis. So they were able to kind of be in more crowded areas, but it was kind of in a controlled way. So it kind of challenged boundaries, if you like".*

In terms of Laurel's anxiety the Practitioner felt the advisor was really informative and useful when booking the holiday, exploring what options may work best for the family.

The Practitioner felt Laurel's confidence and self-esteem improved on the holiday, helped by winning a dance competition. She also felt some of the fear and anxieties about taking Laurel to crowded places may have been somewhat eased by having had this positive experience:

*"I think they'll probably feel more confident to access things in the future, which they might not have done before. I wonder if there was a little bit of apprehension before about crowded places and stuff. But now they've done it once they realize that it's actually... you just need to plan it, it's okay"*

The holiday has also provided a positive reference point for conversations when behaviour is escalating:

*"I think they were able to make like a little memory book of it. So that's quite a nice thing to refer back to. So when behaviours do escalate, they can look at those shared experiences together and pinpoint when that was a good time? Or, you know, when she won the dancing competition, so it's good. It can be used as like, a mood thing if you like"*

## 7. Social Value Assessment

Social value is the quantification of the relative importance that people place on the changes they experience in their lives.

Consideration of public value is required by public bodies under the Public Services (Social Value) Act of 2012 when awarding large contracts and local authorities now have a Best Value Duty placed on them in terms of service provision.

This evaluation has used the Social Value Engine, <https://socialvalueengine.com/> a tool accredited by Social Value UK which is based on more than 360 peer reviewed financial proxies updated annually, to produce a figure for social return on investment.

One of these financial proxies is set against each of the indicators of change set by the Family Holiday Charity and VisitEngland. A further aspect of the Social Value Engine is that it uses the UN Sustainable Development Goals to provide an overview of how activities make a place better to live in.

The post travel data collected from both families and their referrers was used to calculate the level to which targets set by the funder and the charity were met. The number of completed questionnaires received represented approximately one third of the number of families receiving a holiday.

It was, therefore, possible to scale up the responses by one third to demonstrate the levels of outcomes achieved. Set against these are a number of deflators. The deflators used here were:

- deadweight (what might have been achieved without this activity?)
- attribution (what proportion of the outcome might be claimed by others?)
- drop off (the proportion of the outcome that will diminish over time)

The qualitative information collected in the interviews and case studies was analysed to develop a picture of what might have been achieved anyway, in this case, determining who might have organised a holiday anyway, and scaling up the figures in proportion to the numbers of people interviewed.

Drop off was calculated by analysing the information for those who had demonstrated that no significant change had been experienced from the holiday or for whom the effect declined very quickly. There were very few who described this, with most describing longer lasting effects. This number was again scaled up to give a percentage for the Social Value calculation.

Attribution was harder to assess as all families had support from the referring agency and all described quite intensive and high-quality support which highlights that the holiday is only one part of a whole package of support.

The final piece of information to be fed into the Engine is the inputs, in this case represented by the funding from VisitEngland and additional resources contributed by Family Holiday Charity. This allows the Engine to calculate the value generated to the public purse for each pound invested.



In summary, Social Value Engine calculations have identified that the social return for the project is as follows:



- **£7.21 per £1 of investment**
- **Net social return of investment: £6.21 per £1**

## Insights

- The figures and the interviews all evidence the high number of families who have not had a holiday for some years, if ever, which proves that this fund is reaching people who would not otherwise participate in tourism.
- The holiday is clearly one part of a package of support that families are receiving from a wide range of agencies and is therefore contributing to the family's wellbeing in a number of ways.
- The deflators that have been used are deadweight which refers to what might have happened anyway if the holiday had not been offered and there were some families who had organised regular holidays pre pandemic or had attended camps and residentials organised by support agencies and might have done so this year had the holiday not been offered. These were relatively small in number.
- The figure for attribution is quite high, (30%), because of the level of support that most families reported receiving so the holiday needs to be seen as one part of a whole package, Drop off refers to the effect diminishing over time and is often expected to be quite considerable after a short intervention such as a holiday. The numbers reporting only a small change after the holiday were low and sometimes resulted from circumstances such as a bereavement or testing positive for Covid at the end of the holiday. The figure for this deflator is low as most respondents reported some lasting effect, often around mental health and confidence of both parents and children.
- The indicators used related to improved wellbeing through art, culture and sport and reduced social isolation, and sport, outdoor activity and culture. Most of the activities reported were of outdoor activity and some sport with a positive impact on the confidence of family members. There was also a reporting of reduced social isolation as children took part in activities with others and a lasting impact on return home as family members developed the confidence to become more involved in local activity.

## Recommendations

- This is a short-term intervention that has the potential to have a long-term impact.
- The families involved, however, have widely differing circumstances which will have an impact on the length of time the impact will last. The interviews have been carried out quite soon after the holiday. A post hoc survey of families is recommended to discover what the longer-term impact has been.
- More details about the Social Value Engine can be found within the Appendices.

## 8. Conclusions & Considerations

The *England for Everyone* project has enabled 822 eligible families and around 3,487 individuals to have a holiday in England. The families taking the holidays have largely been facing multiple, complex and ongoing challenges in their lives.

Those taking the holidays would be unable to afford a holiday themselves, and for most families the idea of a holiday was either simply not on their radar or wasn't considered an achievable goal for them. Half of families had never had a holiday before and discussions suggested family activities were rare and limited, with many families staying quite local. As such, the project has successfully reached families who would not otherwise participate in tourism.

Four in ten applications for holidays were from families that were experiencing low confidence (often in conjunction with other challenges). The project has successfully helped to improve the confidence of individuals participating.

Post-travel data revealed that 83% of families agreed they were more confident as a result of taking the holiday. If we look solely at the data for families where low confidence was an issue prior to the holidays; the figure is 85%. Positively, 89% of families also agreed they would now be more confident and comfortable taking their family on a holiday in the future.

The wellbeing benefits of the holidays have been clearly outlined in the report. Almost all families completing a post-travel survey agreed that the holiday had a positive impact on the mental health and wellbeing of their family (95%).

Significant majorities also felt holidays had reduced their feelings of stress and worry (87%); 78% felt more optimistic about the future. Given that families were often likely to be returning home to ongoing challenges it is positive to note that 75% of families felt more able to deal with challenges that they may face as a result of the holiday - family resilience has been supported by the holidays.

As mentioned, families were often quite insular prior to the holidays, with families sometimes being overwhelmed, and understandably focussed on the challenges they were facing, taking things day by day. Many parents openly talked about being pre-occupied and not as 'available' as they could be for their children. This research suggests the holidays have had a positive impact in this area, through the holidays enabling quality relaxing time away from home, taking part in new experiences, and helping some families to re-evaluate their situations and goals.

The research suggests the holidays will result in an increase in participation in sport; outdoor activities and tourism in the future, families appear to value these more as a result of the holidays. Six in ten families said they were more likely to take part in the kinds of activities they enjoyed on holiday in the future.

Families are more confident in taking future holidays (89%) and aspirations have been set for many families. Half of the families reached by Family Holiday Charity have never had a holiday and don't know its value to their overall wellbeing. Once they have had a holiday, they appear to be more likely to prioritise this in their future spending.

In terms of social value, calculations and evidence suggest that the project's potential net benefit to the public purse in the future is £6.21 per £1 spent on the project.

This figure is positive particularly considering the holidays are quite a brief 'intervention' for families, often coming at the tail-end of intense support from referral organisations. The holidays are one tool that is being used to support people with obviously complex needs.

It is clear that families that would otherwise not participate in tourism are more likely to have confidence and aspirations to engage in tourism, sport and outdoor activities going forward.

The research suggests that it could be worth considering the following within future social tourism projects. These are in a suggested order of priority.

1. The research identified that many families have aspirations to take future holidays, but this won't be easy for many. To sustain momentum, could discounted holidays/subsidies be offered to families by FHC or the holiday providers? One family mentioned they'd arranged to pay for a future holiday in instalments and this may be something other families could benefit from information on. A post-travel programme of support, focussing on financial literacy, could be considered.
2. In terms of the food vouchers issued to families could there be greater flexibility in choice over where these can be spent? Whilst not necessarily increasing value, it would be more practical for some families to be able to buy items from a shop on/very near to the site, particularly for those using public transport which just over half of families were.
3. A minority of comments suggest support/information in selecting suitable venues/accommodation for families could be improved. As an example one family left their holiday early due to it being 'room only' and not being able to store or cook food. Whilst it appears most referrers are involved in discussions with families, perhaps the need to discuss accommodation needs fully with families could be emphasised, something to re-check with families when actual bookings are being made (e.g. differences between caravans, hotel room only and lodges).
4. Some discussions suggested some nominal spend towards activities/drinks on site could be welcomed for families. However, from the perspective of referrers there needs to be a balance, families shouldn't be given everything otherwise replicating a holiday in the future is simply not achievable. In the main, families felt spend was manageable, therefore there doesn't appear to be a significant need to introduce further vouchers. It could perhaps be beneficial to provide families with information on generic low cost/free things to do.
5. A minority of families had been joined by other family members on the holidays that didn't live with them such as a grandparent. This has been a positive, and the ability to be able to be joined by another adult could perhaps be discussed more pro-actively. For example one single parent struggled with their health whilst on the holiday and with hindsight may have welcomed being able to have someone else with her, to ensure their child could get maximum benefit from the holiday. This parent did not ask about this at the time as they didn't want to appear 'cheeky'.

6. It could be beneficial for any future funded projects to have a longer timescale; to allow families to plan/book time off work more easily; save up when possible and negate some of the issues and stress families had in relation to receiving the vouchers in time.
7. This research has focussed on families that have had holidays within the last few months. Could it be worth capturing consent in future awards to consult with families at a later point to explore longer-term impact of holidays? This will help explore beyond more immediate impact/intentions, and explore the challenges faced by families in realising aspirations for future holidays.
8. Longer-term research could also be used to feed into the SVE going forward, to give indication of longer-term impact on the public purse. The SVE uses estimations of 'drop-off' and further research would give a more realistic picture of drop-off after the holiday 'glow' has perhaps passed. For example, we saw some people planning to save, stop smoking etc, if they were contacted in 3-6 months would they still be doing so?

## 9. Appendices – Social Value Engine

### 9.1 Social Value Engine – what is it?

- Social value is the quantification of the relative importance that people place on the changes they experience in their lives. Consideration of public value is required by public bodies under the Public Services (Social Value) Act of 2012 when awarding large contracts and local authorities now have a Best Value Duty placed on them in terms of service provision.
- This piece of research has used the Social Value Engine, a tool accredited by Social Value UK which is based on more than 360 peer reviewed financial proxies updated annually. One of these financial proxies is set against each of the indicators of change set by the Family Holiday Charity and Visit England. A further aspect of the Social Value Engine is that it uses the UN Sustainable Development Goals to provide an overview of how activities make a place better to live in.

### 9.2 What financial proxies were used and why?

Appropriate financial proxies had to be selected to measure the social value of this project. These are carefully selected to be realistic in terms of the project's aims and objectives, the length of time over which it is operating and the resources committed as well as being realistic about what can be achieved by a short term intervention. The chosen proxies were:

1. **Therapeutic effects of arts and heritage** because of the target of increasing participation in culture which uses the evidence included in the report, *Heritage and Society 2020: Heritage Counts* produced by Historic England on behalf of the Historic Environment Forum in 2020
2. **Contribution of sport to social cohesion** because of the target of increasing participation in sport and outdoor activities. This is based on the Sport England report on the Social Value of Sport produced in 2017.
3. **Value of reduced social isolation** – based on the target of improving confidence and wellbeing and increased participation. This is based on the *London Sustainable Development Commission's report on the social value of helping London to build back better*
4. **Improved emotional wellbeing** as a result of enhanced self esteem and confidence is based on the target of improving confidence and wellbeing of those taking holidays with an emphasis on outdoor activities. This is based on evidence produced by the Wildlife Trusts in 2017 in their report *Protecting Wildlife for the Future: Social Return on Investment analysis of the health and wellbeing impacts of Wildlife Trust programmes*.
5. **Cost of inefficient collaboration** because the whole project was based on partnership working with the referring agencies and the *Talk Business* report produces evidence of the cost to companies of inefficient collaboration. This is a report produced by Webtorials and Opinium in 2017.

### 9.3 What other data feeds into the Social Value Engine?

- The post travel data collected from both families and their referrers was used to calculate the level to which targets set by the funder and the charity were met.

- The number of completed questionnaires received represented approximately one third of the number of families receiving a holiday. It was, therefore, possible to scale up the responses by one third to demonstrate the levels of outcomes achieved.
- Set against these are a number of deflators. The deflators used here were:
  - deadweight (what might have been achieved without this activity?),
  - attribution (what proportion of the outcome might be claimed by others?)
  - and drop off (the proportion of the outcome that will diminish over time).
- The qualitative information collected in the interviews and case studies was analysed to develop a picture of what might have been achieved anyway, in this case, determining who might have organised a holiday anyway, and scaling up the figures in proportion to the numbers of people interviewed.
- ‘Drop off’ was calculated by analysing the information for those who had demonstrated that no significant change had been experienced from the holiday or for whom the effect declined very quickly. There were very few who described this with most describing longer lasting effects. This number was again scaled up to give a percentage for the Social Value calculation.
- ‘Attribution’ was harder to assess as all families had support from the referring agency and all described quite intensive and high quality support which highlights that the holiday is only one part of a whole package of support. The figure was ultimately set at 35% to reflect this level of support.
- The final piece of information to be fed into the Engine is the inputs, in this case represented by the funding from VisitEngland. This allows the Engine to calculate the value generated to the public purse for each pound invested.

#### 9.4 Value Generated by England for Everyone

In terms of social value, calculations and evidence suggest that the project’s potential benefit to the public purse in the future is:

- **£6.21** per £1 spent (net)
- **£7.21** per £1 spent (gross)

## 9.5 Social Value Engine Report

Output title	Outcome	Proxy	Quantity	Stakeholder	Years	Unit	Value	Leakage %	Attribution %	Deadweight %	Displacement %	Drop off %	Impact	Yr 1	Source	During Activity Value
Improved participation through recreation	Improved wellbeing through arts, culture and sport	Therapeutic effect of art and heritage	3487	Children's and Adult Services	1	per person	3550	0	40	32	0	3	5050557	5050557	1	5050557
Improved wellbeing through art, culture and sports	Improved wellbeing through arts, culture and sport	Contribution of sport to social cohesion	3487	Educational services	1	return per £ of public investment	8.73	0	40	32	0	3	12420.14	12420.14	2	12420.14
Partnership working	Working collaboratively and through partnerships	Cost of inefficient collaboration	50	Children's and Adult Services	1	Per organisation per year	9180	0	75	32	0	0	78030	78030	3	78030
Reduced social isolation	Reduced social isolation for community members	Value of reduced social isolation	3487	Educational services	0	per person	4668.9	0	30	32	0	3	7749480	0	4	7749480
Improved confidence of the children and adults taking part	Improved mental health	Improved emotional wellbeing as a result of self-esteem and	3387	Educational services	0	per person	1552.2	0	30	32	0	3	2502492	0	5	2502492
													15392978	5141007		
														4967156		

## Source

1. <https://historicengland.org.uk/content/heritage-counts/pub/2020/heritage-and-society-2020>
2. <http://social-value-engine.co.uk/calculator/Social%20value%20of%20sport%20%20Sport%20England.pdf>
3. <https://www.talk-business.co.uk/2017/06/20/inefficient-communications-and-collaboration-costs-uk-companies-8000-per-employee-per-year/>
4. [https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/social\\_value\\_insights\\_paper\\_0.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/social_value_insights_paper_0.pdf)
5. <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/sites/default/files/2019-%0909/SROI%20Report%20FINAL%20-%20DIGITAL.pdf>

<b>IMPACT AREA</b>	
17. Partnerships for the Goals	78030
3. Good Health and Well-Being	15314947.95
<b>INPUTS</b>	
<b>Money</b>	<b>688947</b>
<b>Total Present Value</b>	<b>4967156.24</b>
<b>Net Present Value</b>	<b>4278209.24</b>
<b>Social Return on Investment</b>	<b>7.21</b>
<b>Net Social Return on Investment</b>	<b>6.21</b>

### Notes on Figures:

- The figure of £15,392,977.95 is the total of impact of the activity.
- The figure of £4,967,156.24 is the present value, i.e the social value still being created after a year. The nature of social value is that it has a habit of decreasing over time.
- The figure of £7.11 is the total present value divided by the total inputs (i.e. the funding) while the figure of £6.11 is the net present value divided by the inputs.
- The net present value is the total present value adjusted by the three deflators. These prevent the inflation of the social value figure beyond what can reasonably be expected.
- The net social return is the net present value divided by the total inputs.



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