



Parent and Volunteer feedback report

We welcomed 16 children and young people with learning disabilities to our holiday week.

A main goal of our week is to give holiday-makers a chance to try new things. This year, trips out included The Yard, East Links Family Park, Gravity trampoline centre, Fountain Park ten pin bowling, The Raeburn, and M&Ds. An amazing collection of performers and friends came to visit us on site at Fettes College. We met Ninetto the clown, two extreme artists, and had a dinosaur-themed treasure hunt, a pageant, a ceilidh and a disco! We went swimming at Westwoods three times – a big favourite!

We recruited 21 Fettes pupils, and another 20 experienced helpers, group leaders and senior helpers.

Our volunteers attended training through the months leading up to the holiday and stayed on-site during the week.

Volunteer Feedback

Feedback from our volunteers was very positive. Volunteers indicated that they felt well supported throughout the holiday. One volunteer commented, *"I was new to this type of work, but felt utterly supported by everyone, and ready to go out of my comfort zone"*. Another expressed that, *"The whole holiday was an effective system of care, in which everyone cared for everyone else."* The less senior volunteers praised the support they were given by the senior team who ran the holiday, *"I don't know how the week could've happened without them- they were magical in difficult situations and I am in absolute awe of them"*.

"The sense of mutual support and purpose made me feel like there was nothing we couldn't handle"

a senior helper

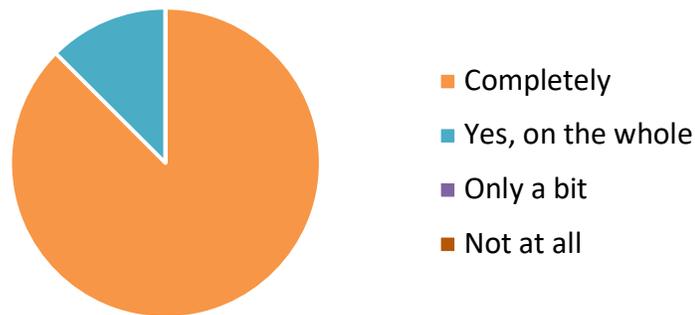


"I loved volunteering with SuperTroop. It's a full-on fun-filled busy week. I really hope to do it again next year!"

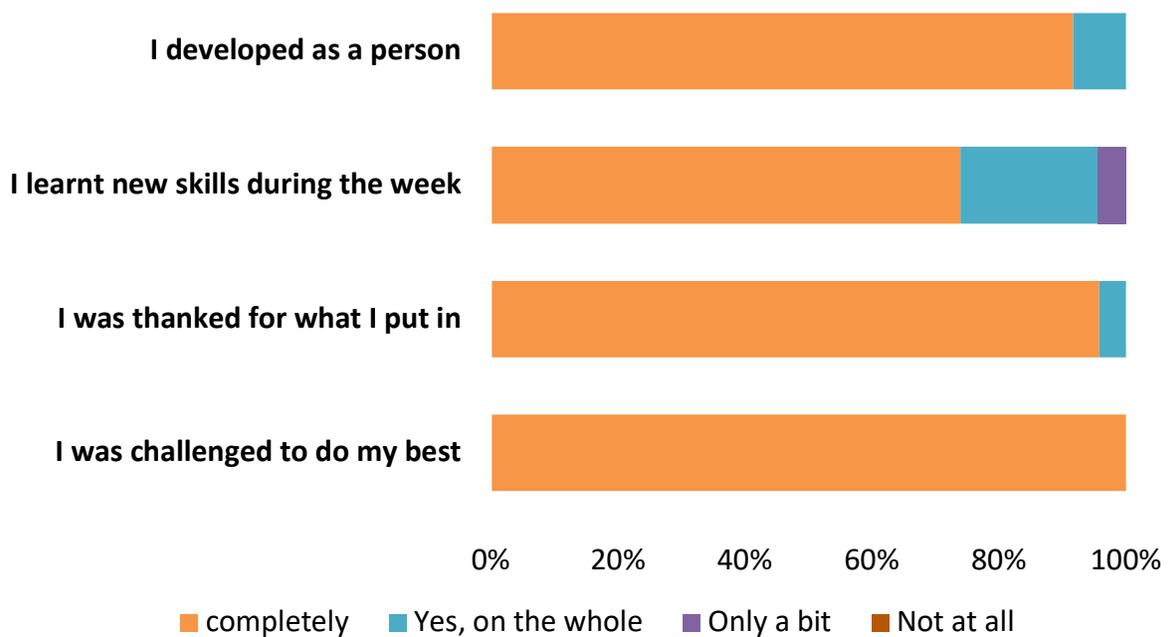
a one-to-one helper

The volunteers felt supported as part of a wider team:

I felt like I was part of a team



Our volunteers found the holiday both an enjoyable experience and a valuable opportunity to develop new skills. One volunteer commented, *"I absolutely LOVED SuperTroop. ...I was very apprehensive but I loved it and would like to do it next year."* In fact, 14 out of the 21 pupils recruited from Fettes College have applied to return in 2019. The volunteers largely felt that SuperTroop has allowed them to develop as a person and to learn new skills:



While our volunteers felt well supported, some volunteers suggested improvements regarding receiving information about the holidaymakers. These included feeling that they would have benefited from receiving advance information about every holidaymaker and not just the individual they were paired with on day one, prior to the holiday. Some volunteers also expressed a desire for more support and information on non-verbal methods of communication such as Makaton.

Parent Feedback

The feedback we gained from parents was overwhelmingly positive. Parents indicated that their children had a very enjoyable and rewarding experience, *"Alanna really enjoyed her holiday... she came home feeling really good"*. They also felt that their children gained new skills and tried new things as a result of the holiday, *"This was a fantastic opportunity for Jon to not only take part but to experience staying away from home/family and increase independent living skills"*. Another parent told us, *"Anna ... recently stopped going to all her classes ... as she was feeling low... now wants to start tennis as she enjoyed it so much at SuperTroop"*. Importantly, lots of parents told us how they were able to relax and focus on their other children thanks to the holiday: *"it was the one of the best quality time we all had in ages without having to worry about Haamid's care"*.

When asked for their opinion of the holiday as a whole, parents indicated that they were left with a very positive impression:



"Everyone we dealt with was warm, friendly, perceptive and completely professional and caring."

a holiday-maker's parent



"This was an absolutely life-changing experience for all of us"

a holiday-maker's parent



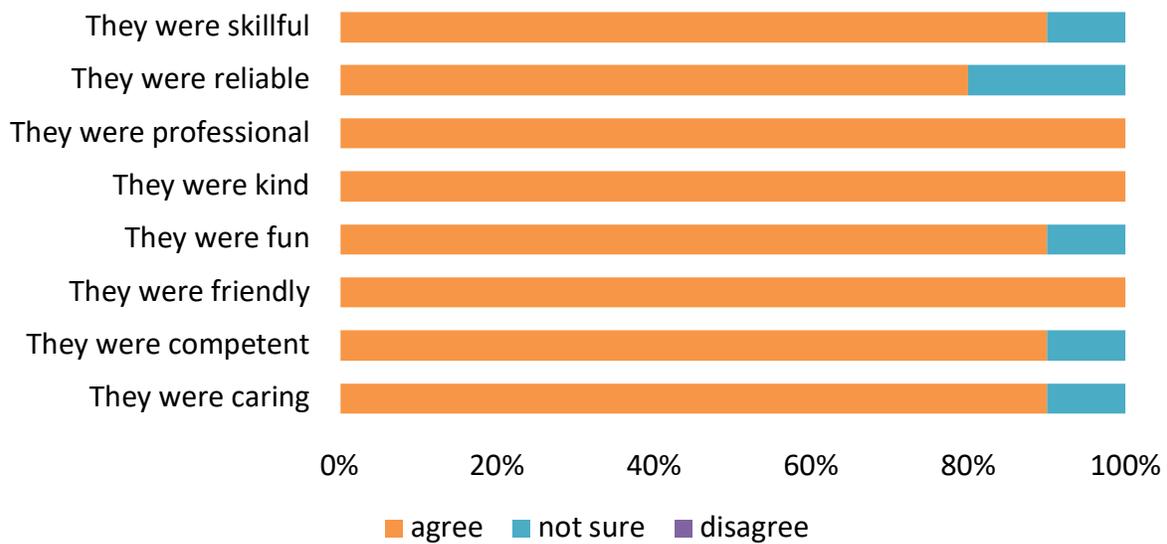
"The programme, accommodation, staff and helpers were all amazing."

a holiday-maker's parent

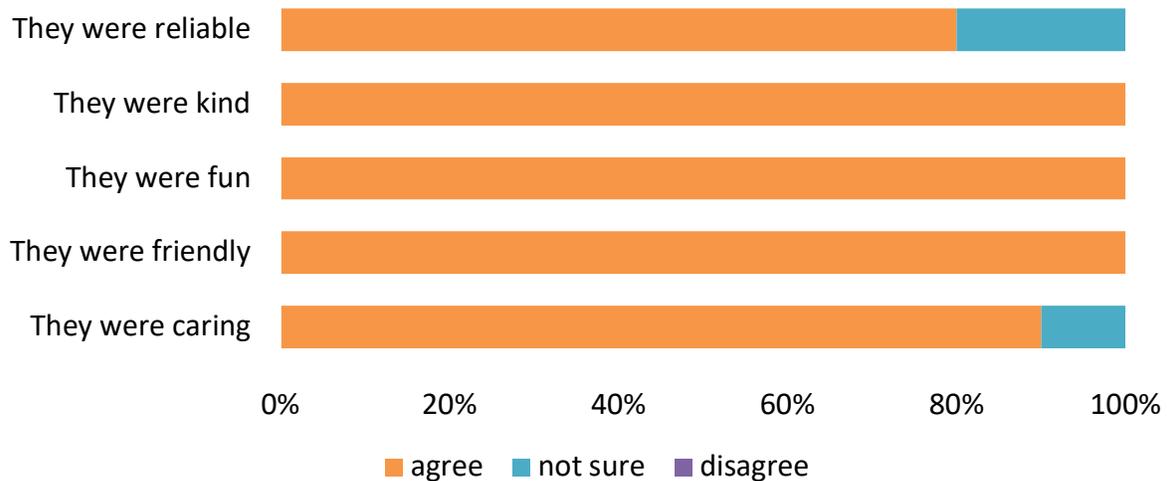


Parents were very satisfied with the quality of care provided by holiday staff and helpers. Holiday-makers quickly built connections with the volunteers: *"Jenny seemed to make some very special friends. She obviously loved being with people with energy and a sense of fun who were patient and caring too. The selection and training must have been top-class to have created such a perfect team."* One parent commented that, *"Full team was friendly caring full of smiles, it was hard to say good bye to all and not enough thanks we could do in return of their efforts."* Parents told us that *"Staff made you feel at ease as soon as you pulled up in the car"* and, *"we could tell Jim was comfortable with the helpers, he was happy there and was sad to leave the camp."*

Parents were pleased with the support provided by the senior team:



Parents also had a positive impression of the one-to-one helpers:



The success of the week sometimes surprised the families, with one parent saying of the one-to-one helpers that, *"I was very nervous about leaving my son with people I hardly knew and the fact that the helpers were so young did concern me but I'm delighted to say I was completely wrong."*

The majority of feedback from parents was very positive. When asked for suggestions for improvement, some parents felt they would have liked more communication throughout the week. One parent commented, *"We felt a bit nervous for the first 24 hours and hung on any text or photo. After 2 days we were much more relaxed but it might be worth prioritising a couple of personal texts or photo or two to new families in the first 24 hours."* Some parents would have liked more in person contact with staff and volunteers both before and after the holiday, *"Would be good to meet the staff and volunteers in advance of the holiday if possible - just an hour in a hall or something similar to the drop off activities."* One parent commented, *"would be helpful to have more time to discuss or have bit more detail about e.g. communication supports, personal care/ how Jon responded to certain aspects of being away from home. Jon is limited verbally so more detailed feedback always welcome."* While feedback about resources was generally positive, one parent recommended, *"more disability specialised disability equipment"*.



Actions for 2019

We have been delighted by the positivity of the feedback received from both parents and helpers. This is augmented by our direct observations of the holiday-makers themselves. Nonetheless, we are keen to improve our service year on year, delivering the best possible experience for everyone concerned. Based on our parent and volunteer feedback, we have identified several improvements for our second ever SuperTroop holiday:

- More frequent text updates to parents during the holiday, especially new parents
- Providing timely feedback reports to parents after the holiday
- Purchasing new specialised equipment for holiday-makers with physical disabilities
- Sharing comprehensive information about holiday makers for volunteers, in advance of the holiday
- Training for volunteers on non-verbal methods of communication, e.g. Makaton signing
- Developing ways to capture holiday-maker feedback more systematically during and after the week

Some of these have already been enacted. For example, we shared feedback reports about each holiday-maker with their parents in September 2018. Others will be delivered over the coming 8 months. A key factor which will facilitate these improvements, is that we now have an established team with direct experience of the week, and of each other.