

# Holiday activities and food programme

## Information for external stakeholders

### Context

On 8 November 2020, the Government announced that the Holiday Activities and Food programme, which has provided healthy food and enriching activities to disadvantaged children since 2018, will be expanded across the whole of England in 2021. The programme will cover the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays in 2021, and we will make up to £220m available to local authorities (LAs) for the programme.

We want all children to be well nourished and to develop healthy eating habits. Good nutrition is essential to children's health, development and their ability to fulfil their potential in life, and our clubs ensure that children have access to healthy food and enriching activities throughout the school holidays.



It will be available to children in every local authority in England and will build on the success of the local holiday programmes – including summer 2020, which supported around 50,000 children across 17 local authorities.

### Background

School holidays can be particular pressure points for some families because of increased costs (such as food and childcare) and reduced incomes. For some children that can lead to a holiday experience gap - with children from disadvantaged families less likely to access organised out-of-school activities; more likely to experience 'unhealthy holidays' in terms of nutrition and physical health; and more likely to experience social isolation.

Free holiday clubs are a response to this issue and evidence suggests that they can have a positive impact on children and young people. It also shows they work best when they provide consistent and easily accessible enrichment activities, when they offer more than just breakfast or lunch, and when they involve children (and parents) in food preparation.

Clubs will offer engaging and enriching activities such as arts, sports, drama, and music, and which provide opportunities to develop or consolidate skills or knowledge. Activities on offer can also include trips and other valuable learning experiences. Clubs must also provide healthy free meals, nutritional education, and physical activities on a daily basis.

Childcare Works, our HAF programme support contractor, are now in place and working alongside DfE to continue the already established strong working relationships with local authorities as we head towards the summer.

### Aims & Eligibility

The primary focus of the programme is on school-aged children eligible for benefits related Free School Meals, and LAs must ensure that the offer of free holiday club provision is available for all children eligible for free school meals in their LA area. This does not mean they are all required to attend, as the provision is voluntary.

The aim is to make free places available for the equivalent of at least four hours a day, four days a week and for six weeks a year. This would cover four weeks in the summer and a week's worth of provision in each of the Easter and Christmas holidays in 2021.

We also encourage LAs to make the holiday clubs available to any children not eligible for free school meals, who can pay to attend. This might be through operating bespoke provision or operating as part of already existing holiday provision in the area, with the likelihood of a mixed arrangement depending on the local supply and demand for provision.

