

Report to Director of Education & Skills

July 2021

Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) Allocation of Funding

Report by Assistant Director Skills and Commercial Services

Electoral divisions: All

Summary

This report concerns the allocation of funding from the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme.

The Department for Education (DfE) have provided every local authority in England funding, to coordinate free holiday provision, including healthy food and enriching activities for children eligible for benefits related free school meals (FSM). The funding is for the Easter, summer and Christmas Holidays in 2021.

Expressions of Interest (EOI) have been received from a range of organisations in West Sussex to provide activities and food during the summer holidays. Following an evaluation of these EOIs this report seeks approval to distribute the funding to organisations that have met the required criteria; it also outlines the proposed arrangements for the remainder of the funding allocation the County Council will receive.

Recommendations

The Director of Education and Skills is asked to approve:-

- (1) The award of Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme summer grants to the organisations identified in Appendix A up to a total value of £424,209.
 - (2) The allocation of further HAF funds to the anticipated value of £300,000 to organisations delivering services that meet the criteria of the grant set out in paragraph 1.7 to broaden the HAF summer offer and supplement any gaps identified at a local level, as set out in paragraph 2.6.
 - (3) The allocation of remaining HAF funds, currently estimated at £928,351 after completion of the summer programme, to enable the delivery of the Christmas programme and to cover the cost of the County Council administering the programme.
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Proposal

1 Background and context

- 1.1 Since 2018 the government's [Holiday Activities and Food programme](#) has provided healthy food and enriching activities to disadvantaged children in pilot authorities. In November 2020 the Government announced that the limited pilot [HAF programme](#), will be expanded across the whole of England in 2021. The Department for Education (DfE) have provided every local authority in England funding, to coordinate free holiday provision, including healthy food and enriching activities for children eligible for benefits related free school meals (FSM).
- 1.2 The HAF programme covers the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays in 2021, and the DfE will make up to £220m available to local authorities for the programme. West Sussex County Council have been allocated funding of up to £1,652,560. This funding is specifically to offer activities and meals for children eligible for FSM.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 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, offer more than just breakfast or lunch, and involve children (and parents) in food preparation.
- 1.5 The aim of the HAF programme is to make free holiday club places plus a meal available to children eligible for free school meals 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. Organisations who run the clubs will also be able to offer additional places to fee paying families, at the same rate that the Council will pay to providers for FSM places.
- 1.6 Across West Sussex, there are in the region of 15,500 children who are potentially eligible to access holiday places funded by the HAF programme based on June 2021 FSM eligibility numbers.
- 1.7 The desired outcomes of the programme are to encourage children and young people :
 - a. To eat more healthily over the school holidays;
 - b. To be more active during the school holidays;
 - c. To take part in engaging and enriching activities which support the development of resilience, character and well being along with their wider education attainment;
 - d. To be safe and not to be socially isolated;
 - e. To have greater knowledge of health nutrition;

- f. To be more engaged with school and other local services.
- 1.8 The HAF programme also aims to ensure that the children and families who participate in the programme develop their understanding of nutrition and food budgeting as well as being effectively signposted towards other information and support for example health, employment and education.
- 1.9 During the Easter holiday, the HAF Programme was delivered through the Library Service in West Sussex who provided a remote programme through a mix of activity packs and online activities. This was due to COVID restrictions which meant face to face activities were unable to be offered inside buildings. The government also extended the FSM voucher scheme so the requirement to offer a meal alongside activities was reduced. However, by working in partnership with [UK Harvest](#), a food rescue and education charity that aims to eliminate hunger and food waste through education and the redistribution of quality surplus food, the remote offer retained a focus on healthy eating and nutrition. Over 3,000 children participated, 971 were eligible for Free School Meals (FSM). At the time this represented 7% of all children in West Sussex getting Free School Meals.
- 1.10 For the summer holidays it is proposed that the HAF Programme will be delivered through holiday clubs and activities provided by schools and external organisations. This returns to the original intention and principles of the national HAF Programme, and the easing of COVID restrictions in the summer will allow this to happen. The County Council will 'passport' the HAF programme funding via a grant scheme to organisations able to offer a holiday club that meet the set criteria, as explained in paragraph 2.1.
- 1.11 As part of the wider government support to assist with the impact of Covid-19 on communities, funding has been provided through the COVID-19 Local Support Grant which is distributed by local authorities in England. The funding is ring-fenced, with at least 80% earmarked to support with food and essential utility costs. Using this grant, FSM eligible families in West Sussex will be entitled to a £15.00 voucher per child per week to cover the six-week school summer holiday period in addition to the provision available through the HAF.

2 Proposal details

- 2.1 Between 25 May and 15 June 2021, the Council invited grant applications from organisations able to provide holiday activity and food schemes during the 2021 Summer holidays. Applications had to deliver to the DfE HAF programme outcomes identified in paragraph 1.7.
- 2.2 Applications were received from 27 organisations. These were evaluated by a panel of council officers. Follow up conversations have been undertaken with organisations to ensure best value and that standards could be met. The evaluation has resulted in the recommendation to award grant funding to 25 providers up to a total value of £424,209.
- 2.3 The provision will offer 21,376 free days of holiday activities and a meal over the summer holiday for eligible children. The activities range from local holiday clubs, to sports coaching, forest schools and outdoor pursuits. Depending on the type of activity a child can take part for one day or sign up for a series of days. This should cater for least 1,247 children each day.

- 2.4 Providers will be required to report back to the Council on the delivery and outcomes of the holiday activities. This includes numbers of children and young people participating and case studies to ensure that the funding is reaching the cohort that it is intended for.
- 2.5 The DfE have invited the County Council to be an evaluation site for the national HAF Programme along with 15 other Local Authorities. This will involve tracking participation to give a deeper level of insight and understanding about the impact of the programme.
- 2.6 Alongside the Expressions of Interest officers have been engaging and collaborating with partners to establish other opportunities including District and Borough councils, the Cultural Education Partnership, the Music Service and internal providers such as the council's Bikeability scheme. It is anticipated that additional provision will come through these collaborations to fill gaps and increase the expenditure for the summer programme.
- 2.7 Applications for Christmas holiday provision will be sought from organisations in the coming months taking account of the lessons learnt from the summer programme. It is anticipated the programme will again be delivered via holiday clubs and activities and the expectation is that the requirements set by the DfE for the summer will be retained for Christmas.

3 Other options considered (and reasons for not proposing)

- 3.1 The options to distribute HAF funding across the county were limited. There is not a developed market-place in West Sussex as this is the first year of HAF in the county. It is possible that if funding continues the council may explore a more formal commissioning programme along with a blend of local organisation.
- 3.2 Consideration was given to innovative solutions, but they did not fit with the requirements from DfE for use of the funding. This included exploration of the 'West Sussex pound' to be used to buy food in local shops or cafes in return for participation in activities. However, DfE advised that HAF funding should not be used to fund vouchers and this initiative would be too similar.
- 3.3 The decision to distribute grant funding and invite Expressions of Interest follows good practice and learning from the Easter Programme run by East Sussex County Council. and is in line with approaches by other local authorities. It provided an opportunity to build on existing social capital and engage with the community and voluntary sector and schools at a local level and direct funding to meet the diverse needs in the county.

4 Consultation, engagement and advice

- 4.1 Stakeholders have been engaged through a mixture of universal and targeted messages using existing circulation lists, targeted emails, newsletters, social media, and word of mouth
- 4.2 Specifically, communications about the opportunity to apply for grant funding went out to;

- Schools and colleges
- Headteachers Letters
- Early Years & Out of School Childcare settings
- Parish & Town Councils Newsletter
- District & Borough Councils
- Health & Wellbeing / Leisure Providers
- Voluntary Community Services Infrastructure
- Youth Clubs & Organisations
- Food Banks & Food Provision
- School meal providers

4.3 The Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills has been consulted on the proposed method of delivering the HAF programme for the summer and Christmas period and will be kept update as firmer plans for the Christmas programme develop.

5 Finance

5.1 The Department for Education (DfE) will provide the funding to the County Council under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003, who will administer the scheme.

5.2 The Holiday and Activities Food Programme is ring-fenced and any unspent funding will need to be repaid to the DfE. Funding is being received by the County Council via a four-stage payment approach:

- In March 2021 the council received its 2020/21 allocation (£166,190). This was paid upon satisfactory receipt of a delivery plan from the Authority setting out the intended scale and reach of the programme for Easter 2021;
- In June 2021 the council received a further £743,185 (50% of the total 2021/22 allocation), upon satisfactory receipt of a report detailing the delivery of the programme at Easter 2021 along with a delivery plan for Summer 2021;
- In November 2021 the council should receive up to £445,911 (30% of the total 2021/22 allocation), upon satisfactory receipt of a report detailing the delivery of the programme at Summer 2021 along with a delivery plan for Christmas 2021;
- In February 2022 the council should receive up to £297,274 (20% of our total 2021/22 allocation), upon satisfactory receipt of a report detailing the delivery of the programme at Christmas 2021 along with final report for the whole 2021 programme and a certificate of expenditure.

5.3 By paying the grant in stages based on returns submitted to the DfE ensures that funds are being drawn down based on demand and that funding allocations are being spent within the time restriction. This will also enable the DfE to adjust the amount of the final two payments accordingly. As a result, there is no financial impact on the County Council.

5.4 Although the Library Service offered a remote programme through a mix of activity packs and online activities during the Easter holidays, no costs were incurred against the HAF programme as donations and voluntary contributions

were received from community partners and any additional costs incurred by the council were able to be charged against existing Hardship grant programmes.

- 5.5 The £424,209 to be spent over the summer therefore represents the first expenditure against the available DfE funding of £1,652,560 this year. The remaining funds available will be used to pay for additional provision over the summer through the collaborations set out in paragraph 2.6 (£300,000), the approved applications for Christmas holiday provision later in the year (value tbc), and the expected cost of the County Council administering the programme (£50,000).
- 5.6 All applications received for the summer programme were evaluated by a panel of council officers, and good value was included as one of the key criteria. Follow up conversations were also undertaken where it was considered necessary.

6 Risk implications and mitigations

Risk	Mitigating Action (in place or planned)
Insufficient provision and lack of coverage for families eligible for FSM in part of the county leaving some children without a meal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted engagement to fill gaps; • Raising awareness to providers; • Signpost all families including those eligible to the Community Hub • COVID Local Support grant being used to fund supermarket food vouchers at £90 for the 6 weeks summer holiday per FSM child
The total value of the HAF grant only provides around £90per FSM child for Easter, summer and Christmas. This is clearly not sufficient to provide full access for every potentially eligible child for the full duration of holidays in 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target provision in areas of most need • Signpost to Community Hub so families can access other forms of help • All families will be able to access food vouchers
Timescales mean that clubs may not be able to fill places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WSCC to support with comms to eligible families through letters, social media and referral mechanisms
Provision may not meet required DfE standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Assessment against policy and procedures as part of Grant Agreement • WSCC reserves the right to inspect and spot checks will be undertaken; Information Advice and Guidance on training etc to help providers meet standards
Children may drop out of provision or don't turn up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WSCC to monitor and create systems to track numbers of FSM children engaging and monitoring take up
National coverage and media campaigns may create additional demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Communications plan created to keep up to date lists of provision. • Allow providers to bid for funding for additional places
Demand for the HAF programme exceeds the total DfE funding available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The value of successful bids will be capped at the total value of the grant.

Risk	Mitigating Action (in place or planned)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schemes will be prioritised to ensure that provision is targeted to the areas in most need

7 Policy alignment and compliance

- 7.1 The COVID pandemic has led to a greater understanding of the needs of some families during the school holidays especially around food and wellbeing. In response the government expanded the HAF funding nationally. In West Sussex the local programme supports the priorities set out in [Our Council Plan 2021-25](#) as shown below;
- a. Keeping people safe from vulnerable situation** as providers will be advised how they can help signpost children and families to support agencies and services embracing a 'whole family' approach and multi-agency early help in the widest sense. Being engaged with local services is a key aim nationally.
 - b. A sustainable and prosperous economy** as West Sussex has aimed to create an inclusive opportunity for all providers and organisations to access this funding to support parts of the economy like hospitality that have been hardest hit by the pandemic.
 - c. Helping people and communities to fulfil their potential** as HAF in West Sussex has intended to build on existing initiatives in the community and collaborate with schools to maximise the positive impact for our children and young people whilst supporting local groups.
 - d. Making the best use of resources** as all expression of interest have been evaluated in terms of Best Value recognising the costs involved to provide a range of enriching activities.
- 7.2 This is not a statutory duty, but the funding has been clearly ringfenced to meet a set of outcomes from the DfE. Legal and Procurement have advised to 'passport' the funding under Grant Agreements that set out conditions of the funding and the legal implications and standards that are expected to be followed as a condition of the grant.
- 7.3 Legal Services has advised on Subsidy Control and organisations will be required to enter into a Grant Agreement with the Council to ensure that the funds are spent in accordance with the guidelines set by the DfE.
- 7.4 The funding has been distributed in a fair and equal way in line with the Equality Duty, and WSCC will monitor and quality assure the delivery to ensure that there is no discrimination, equality of opportunity is promoted and good relations are fostered.
- 7.5 All providers have completed Self-Assessment of standards to meet; this includes support of the environment and climate change by using sustainable resources responsibly.
- 7.6 The HAF programme supports public health aims and the participation in clubs and activities and receiving nutritional meals caters for children that lose the

support that they get during term time. This assists in supporting their health and wellbeing.

- 7.7 The Expression of Interest and subsequent Evaluation has been conducted in a transparent way and within an ethos of social value.

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Appendix A- – Recommended Providers for Grant Awards

Background Papers - None

Appendix A – Recommended Providers for Grant Awards

Organisation Name	Number of Places per day	Total hours of provision	District / Borough	Age Range	School
Activ8 For Kids Ltd	60	1200	Arun / Worthing	Primary	St Margaret's School in Angmering
Activ8 Henfield Nursery	30	600	Horsham / County wide	Primary	
Active Stars	25	300	Horsham		
All Kids	30	600	Mid Sussex	Primary	Estcots School
Angling4Education	12	240	Adur, Arun, Chichester, Crawley, Horsham, Mid Sussex,	Primary & Secondary	Alternative Provision College
Ben Overton Club	10	40	Crawley	Primary	
Bersted Green Primary	60	960	Arun	Primary	Bersted Green Primary School
Busy Lizzies's Ltd	16	256	Chichester	Primary	Kingsham Primary School
Crimsham Farm	40	800	Arun, Chichester	Primary & Secondary	
Freedom Leisure (Active Play)	30	480	Arun	Primary	
Freedom Leisure (Day Camp)	32	512	Arun	Primary	
Pioneer Childcare	30	480	Mid Sussex	Primary	Manor Field Primary School Harlands Primary School
SB Sports Coaching Ltd_Prem	134	2680	Arun	Primary	West Park Primary School St Wilfrid's Primary School Our Lady of Sion Senior School
Shalom Childcare Project	110	1760	Crawley	Primary	
South Coast Sports Coaching	91	1456	Arun, Chichester	Primary	Nyewood Junior School Tangmere Primary Academy Bishop Tufnell Primary School Lavant Primary School Easebourne Primary School Handcross Primary School
Southeast kids camps	120	2400	Adur, Crawley	Primary	Pound hill Junior School

Organisation Name	Number of Places per day	Total hours of provision	District / Borough	Age Range	School
The Bridge Youth Dream	80	1600	Chichester	Primary & Secondary	
The Sid Youth	20	400	Worthing	Secondary	St Andrews C of E High School St Oscar Romero Catholic High School
Thomas A Becket Childcare Club	12	192	Worthing	Primary	Thomas A Becket First School
Tree Tops Club	110	2200	Chichester	Primary	St Wilfrid' Primary School Birdham Pre-School Blackthorns Community School
UK Harvest	30	480	Adur, Chichester, Horsham	Primary & Secondary	
West Chiltington Montessori	15	240	Horsham	Primary	
West Sussex West School Sports Partnership	120	960	Arun, Chichester	Primary	The Regis School
Wittering Pre-school	15	240	Chichester	Primary	Wittering's Village
Woodland Wonder Forest School	15	300	Arun, Chichester	Primary & Secondary	
Total	1,247	21,376			