

HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND FOOD PROGRAMME 2022 GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Overview

This document provides information for local authorities delivering the holiday activities and food programme for 2022/23 and should be read alongside the grant determination letter.

On 27 October 2021, the government announced a further investment of over £200m per year over the next 3 financial years for the holiday activities and food programme (HAF) which follows the successful roll out of the programme across England in 2021.

The funding for each local authority will be confirmed in the grant determination letter for the programme on an annual basis.

This funding is for the 152 upper tier local authorities to coordinate and provide free holiday provision, including healthy food and enriching activities. The programme will again be available to children in every local authority in England. The holiday periods that we expect local authorities to cover are set out in the “Holiday Period” section.

Background

Since 2018, our holiday activities and food programme has provided support to children in receipt of free school meals through holiday periods.

Following successful pilots between 2018 and 2020, the programme was rolled out to all upper tier local authorities in 2021.

Research has shown that the school holidays can be pressure points for some families. For some children that can lead to a holiday experience gap, with children from low-income households being:

- less likely to access organised out-of-school activities
- more likely to experience ‘unhealthy holidays’ in terms of nutrition and physical health
- more likely to experience social isolation

Our HAF programme is a response to this issue with evidence showing that free holiday clubs can have a positive impact on children and young people and that they work best when they:

- provide consistent and easily accessible enrichment activities
- cover more than just breakfast or lunch
- involve children (and parents) in food preparation
- use local partnerships and connections, particularly with the VCSO sector

In 2021, the HAF programme enabled us to support hundreds of thousands of children and their families throughout the Easter, summer and Christmas school holidays.

Who is the programme for?

This holiday provision is for school aged children from Reception to Year 11 (inclusive) who receive benefits-related free school meals.

Benefits-related free school meals (FSM) are available to pupils if their parents are in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits and have a claim verified by their school or local authority.

For further information on eligibility, please visit [Apply for free school meals - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Local authorities are asked to ensure that the offer of free holiday club provision is available for all children in receipt of benefits-related free school meals in their area, though this does not mean we expect all to attend as the provision is voluntary.

We also encourage local authorities to make the holiday clubs available to any children not receiving free school meals, who can pay to attend. This might be through operating:

- bespoke provision
- as part of already existing holiday provision in the area
- a mixed arrangement depending on the local supply and demand for provision.

Universal infant free school meals

All children in reception, year 1 and year 2 in England's state-funded schools receive a free meal under the Department for Education's universal infant free school meal (UIFSM) policy.

Infant pupils who receive a free meal under UIFSM must also be eligible for benefits-related FSM to be able to access a place on the HAF programme.

Other children and families

Local authorities have discretion to use up to 15% of their funding to provide free or subsidised holiday club places for children who are not in receipt of benefits-related free school meals but who the local authority believe could benefit from HAF provision.

This may include, for example:

- children assessed by the local authority as being in need, at risk or vulnerable
- young carers
- looked-after children or previously looked after children
- children with an EHC plan (education, health and care)

- children who have low attendance rates at school or who are at risk of exclusion
- children living in areas of high deprivation or from low-income households who are not in receipt of free school meals.
- children in transition phases between nursery and primary school or primary and secondary school

This list is not exhaustive, and it is open to the local authority to decide which children should benefit from the 15% flexible funding element of their HAF funding.

Unlike in 2021, there is no longer a requirement to seek written approval from the DfE for the use of this 15% flexibility but local authorities are expected to continue to monitor and report on this element of their expenditure to ensure it remains within the limit.

Help with childcare costs

Families may be eligible for [tax-free childcare or the childcare costs element of Universal Credit](#), through which families may be able to claim back up to 85% of their childcare costs.

Aims of the programme

As a result of this programme, we want children who attend this provision to:

- eat healthily over the school holidays
- be active during the school holidays
- take part in engaging and enriching activities which support the development of resilience, character and wellbeing along with their wider educational attainment
- be safe and not to be socially isolated
- have a greater knowledge of health and nutrition
- be more engaged with school and other local services

We also want to ensure that the families who participate in this programme:

- develop their understanding of nutrition and food budgeting
- are signposted towards other information and support, for example, health, employment, and education

The core offer

Overall, local authorities are expected to offer the equivalent of six weeks' holiday provision to eligible children.

Easter:

- We expect that all participating children should benefit from **at least** a week of face-to-face provision at Easter, which should be for a minimum of four days.

- For most children, each day at Easter should consist of at least four hours of provision but the local authority should ensure that provision is tailored to need.

Summer:

- For local authorities that have a summer holiday that spans 6 full calendar weeks, participating children should be offered **at least** four weeks of face-to-face provision, which cover a minimum of 16 days.
- For local authorities that have a summer holiday that is less than 6 full calendar weeks, participating children should be offered **at least** 3 weeks of face-to-face provision, which should cover a minimum of 12 days. If only 3 weeks are offered at summer, then these local authorities, are expected to offer an additional week during a half-term holiday period (see below), so that their overall provision reaches 6 weeks across the year.
- For most children, each day during summer should consist of at least four hours of provision but the local authority should ensure that provision is tailored to need.

Christmas:

- We expect that all participating children should benefit from a week of support which covers a minimum of 4 days. As in 2021, our preference is at least four days of face-to-face provision, however where this is not possible, it should consist of **at least** two days of face-to-face provision complimented by **at least** two days of HAF support which can be provided in the form of high-quality food hampers and activity packs.
- For most children, each day of face-to-face provision at Christmas should consist of at least four hours of provision but the local authority should ensure that provision is tailored to need.

We know that many areas will continue to provide a HAF programme that runs for more hours, days and weeks than our minimum expectation and we encourage them to continue to do this. The paragraphs above set out our minimum expectations and we welcome those areas that are offering more than the minimum.

Other holiday periods

Funding for this programme is available for the Easter, summer, and Christmas holidays only.

The only exception is for local authorities with a shorter summer holiday period (less than 6 full calendar weeks). These authorities have the flexibility to limit their summer provision to 3 weeks and provide an additional week (a minimum of four days) in one of the half-term holiday periods.

Standards for holiday provision

We have developed a framework of standards to provide a benchmark of what we expect from those delivering the holiday, activities and food programme.

One of the key roles of the local authority will be to:

- improve the quality of provision across the local area
- ensure that providers are supported to meet the high-level standards

We expect all providers who are funded through the programme to meet our framework of standards.

Framework of standards

This section sets out the standards we expect for all HAF providers. In designing and implementing their HAF programme, we expect local authorities to make best use of the variety of local and national organisations who are available to support them and their providers in the delivery of these aspects of the HAF programme.

From delivery of the programme in 2021, we know that delivering the HAF programme to these high standards can be a challenge and local authorities should ensure that they seek support to ensure that the providers they work with meet them.

It is the local authority's role to ensure standards are met across the programme and to support local providers who do not meet them to ensure they are adequately supported through training, support and partnerships.

Not all providers have to deliver all aspects of the programme but our clear expectation is that all eligible children and their families should benefit from all aspects of the programme. This might mean that local authorities adopt a blended approach to ensuring children and families can access different aspects of the programme through different providers.

Food provision

Providers must provide **at least** one meal a day (breakfast, lunch or tea) and all food provided at the holiday club (including snacks) must meet [school food standards](#).

Our expectation is that the majority of food served by providers should be hot, however, we acknowledge that there will be occasions when this is not possible and cold food should be used where it is appropriate.

We know that this aspect of the programme, which overlaps with nutritional education and food education, can be challenging and we encourage local authorities to adequately plan and prepare for this, including engaging with experts and partners as appropriate.

All food provided as part of the programme must:

- comply with regulations on food preparation:
- take into account allergies and dietary requirements (see the [allergy guidance for schools](#))
- take into account any religious or cultural requirements for food

There is flexibility in the design of the food provision which should always be tailored to ensure that all food meets the dietary needs of the children and families who

attend. The food served should also be appropriate for the nature of the session, for example, offering cold packed lunches for parks or outdoor venues or for day trips.

While there can be benefits to using a central food service to provide meals to HAF clubs, we expect local authorities to carefully consider whether using a central food service is the right approach for providing high quality, attractive and tailored meals for those attending the HAF programme.

Providing food on site can provide an opportunity to engage children and families in food preparation and nutrition. Providers have reported that when children are involved in designing menus and the preparation of food, they are more engaged and more willing to try new and healthier food. We recommend that local authorities consider the provision of the food element of the HAF programme, in particular, in making sure that providers and children are involved in the planning and preparation of food. Such a developmental approach is key to effecting long-term change in engagement with food and nutrition.

There are also environmental factors to consider when planning the food provision and local authorities should consider whether clubs preparing food on their own premises would produce less food and packaging waste and result in fewer food-miles than off-site, centralised provision.

Food providers

Local authorities should ensure that the providers they work with are, where applicable, registered as a food business. This provides reassurance to those involved that food safety standards are being met.

A food business is defined as anyone preparing, cooking, storing, handling, distributing, supplying or selling food. For further information, visit [Food business registration - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/food-business-registration).

Local authorities are responsible for enforcing food hygiene laws and can inspect any registered food business at any point in the food production and distribution process. We recommend that HAF coordinators within each local authority are in regular contact with their food safety inspectors to ensure that HAF providers are fully compliant.

Food information regulations - Natasha's Law

From 1 October 2021, changes to the Food Information Regulations 2014 came into effect, adding new labelling requirements for food that is pre-packed for direct sale (PPDS).

Local authorities should take the time to read the [guidance](#) on the Food Standards Agency website and ensure that all food provision for the HAF programme meets these requirements.

Enrichment activities

Holiday clubs must provide fun and enriching activities that provide children with opportunities to:

- develop new skills or knowledge
- consolidate existing skills and knowledge
- try out new experiences
- have fun and socialise

This could include but is not limited to:

- physical activities, for example, football, swimming, table tennis or cricket
- creative activities, for example, putting on a play, junk modelling or drumming workshops
- experiences, for example, a nature walk or visiting a city farm
- free play, for example, fun and freedom to relax and enjoy themselves

Physical activities

Holiday clubs must provide activities that meet the [physical activity guidelines](#) on a daily basis.

In line with those guidelines, we expect:

- All children and young people participating in the HAF programme should engage in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity for an average of at least 60 minutes per day. It should be noted that this does not have to be in the form of a structured activity session, but can include active travel, free play and sports.
- Children and young people participating in the HAF programme should engage in a variety of types and intensities of physical activity to develop movement skills, muscular fitness, and bone strength.
- Children and young people should aim to minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary, and when physically possible should break up long periods of not moving with at least light physical activity.

Nutritional education

Providers must include an element of nutritional education each day aimed at improving the knowledge and awareness of healthy eating for children. These do not need to be formal learning activities and could for example include activities such as:

- getting children involved in food preparation and cooking
- growing fruit and vegetables
- taste tests
- discussing food and nutrition
- including food and nutrition in other activities

Food education for families and carers

We expect HAF providers to make available weekly training and advice sessions for parents, carers or other family members. These should provide advice on how to source, prepare and cook nutritious and low-cost food. This could be combined with the nutritional education aspect of the programme, for example, by inviting children and their families to prepare and eat a meal together.

Signposting and referrals

HAF providers should be able to provide information, signposting or referrals to other services and support that would benefit the children who attend their provision and their families. This could include sessions provided by:

- Citizen's Advice
- school nurses, dentists or other healthcare practitioners
- family support services or children's services
- housing support officers
- Jobcentre Plus
- organisations providing financial education
- early years and childcare, including help to pay for childcare (e.g. Tax Free Childcare)

Policies and procedures

There are a wide variety of organisations and individuals involved in the delivery of the holiday, activities and food programme including but not limited to:

- schools
- colleges
- nurseries
- private providers
- charities
- youth clubs
- community groups

All of these groups must be able to demonstrate that they have in place relevant and appropriate policies and procedures for:

- safeguarding, including the recruitment of staff and volunteers
- health and safety
- relevant insurance policies
- accessibility and inclusiveness

Safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. We want every HAF club to be a safe and happy place for children to be and for parents, carers and families to feel confident that their child is well looked after and that robust safeguarding arrangements are in place.

Local authorities are statutorily responsible for safeguarding in relation to children in need, under s.17 of the Children Act 1989, and looked after children under s.20 of the Children Act 1989.

We encourage all local authorities to work closely with their local safeguarding children partnership to make them aware of the HAF programme and what it can

offer and to ensure that they can support the programme to ensure robust safeguarding arrangements are in place.

As set out in [working together to safeguard children](#), safeguarding is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action if you identify children to be at risk of harm

Local authorities should ensure that their local safeguarding partners understand the holiday, activities and food programme and those working on the delivery of the programme are familiar with the [working together to safeguard children](#) guidance.

There are a number of accredited organisations who can provide safeguarding and child protection training courses for those involved in working with children. We expect local authorities to be able to demonstrate that those involved in the delivery of the holiday, activities and food programme in their area are competent and have received adequate training and support.

We expect every local authority to produce and maintain a central register of all of the providers they fund through their HAF programme and to put in place a robust system for inspecting each provider and ensuring all adhere to the standards set out in this guidance.

Holiday clubs in school settings

We know that schools are safe places and have robust safeguarding arrangements in place.

Where activities are provided by the governing body or proprietor of a school, under the direct supervision or management of their school staff the school's child protection policy will apply.

Where the activities are provided separately in the school but by another body, the governing body or proprietor should seek assurance that the body concerned has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedure in place.

We recommend that anyone involved in the delivery of a holiday club in school settings is familiar with part 1 of [keeping children safe in education](#).

Holiday clubs in out of school settings

By out-of-school settings we mean organisations or individuals that provide tuition, training, instruction or activities to children in England without their parents' or carers' supervision, but are not:

- schools

- colleges
- education settings providing alternative provision
- 16 to 19 academies
- providers caring for children that are registered with Ofsted or a childminder agency

These settings generally provide tuition, training, instruction or activities outside normal school hours (for example, evenings, weekends, school holidays), although some settings are run part-time during school hours to help meet the needs of those in home education.

The guidance for providers running out-of-school settings on [keeping children safe during community activities, after-school clubs and tuition](#) covers advice on what policies and procedures providers should have in place for health and safety, safeguarding and child protection, staff suitability, and governance.

Volunteers and DBS Checking

We know that in some settings, volunteers can play an important role in the delivery of holiday clubs.

Under no circumstances should a volunteer in respect of whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

For some of the voluntary staff involved in the delivery of the holiday, activities and food programme in holiday clubs, this work will be done regularly and considered to be regulated activity. This means they will be subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check with barred list information.

There may be a very small number of volunteers who do not regularly carry out this role, and so it may not be considered as regulated activity. This means they may not be required to have an enhanced DBS check.

The guidance on [regulated activity in relation to children](#) contains definitions of what we mean by regular and regulated activity.

Example

A guest speaker or presenter visits a holiday, activities and food programme club to deliver a talk on nature.

The guest is escorted by staff at the club (who are DBS checked) while on the premises and is not left unsupervised with children at any time. In these circumstances, we would not expect a DBS check to be carried out.

To provide reassurance to parents, families and carers, we strongly recommend that **all** volunteers who are involved in the delivery of the holiday, activities and food programme in holiday clubs should have an [enhanced DBS check](#) (which, where applicable, should include children's barred list information).

We do not recommend holiday clubs using volunteers that are not DBS checked, but if this occurs, it is the responsibility of the local authority to ensure that volunteers are not at any point left alone and unsupervised with children in holiday clubs.

Other workers

All staff who are employed by holiday club providers funded through the holiday, activities and food programme should be subject to an enhanced DBS check with barred list information.

Part 3 of [keeping children safe in education](#) sets out a clear process for safe recruitment. We recommend local authorities and holiday clubs providers follow this best practice when recruiting volunteers.

Ofsted registration

Holiday clubs may need to register with Ofsted or they may be [exempt from registration](#). Both clubs and providers that would require registration with Ofsted, and those that are exempt, can participate in the holiday, activities and food programme.

Families may be eligible for tax free childcare or the childcare costs element of Universal Credit. Through this families may be able to [claim back up to 85% of their childcare costs](#) if they are attending and paying for extra childcare at Ofsted registered settings.

Tailoring your provision

Local authorities and their providers will have flexibility about how they deliver provision to best serve the needs of children and families in their area. We encourage all LAs to have a rich mix of provision catering for children with different interests and of different ages. There should also be good geographical spread across the LA but with increased supply in areas with higher levels of FSM families in order to maximise attendance levels.

Working with children with SEND/Additional needs

There is flexibility in how the programme can be delivered to children with SEND or additional needs who are in receipt of FSM. Some of the key points for local authorities to consider when designing and implementing provision for children with SEND or additional needs include:

- Identifying the most vulnerable children, young people and families;
- Making decisions and, where appropriate, delegate responsibility for decision making to different levels of the system to enable responsive support;
- Speaking to families regularly to understand how their needs may have changed and may have continued to change;
- Being flexible in supporting families;

- Ensure staff are trained, supported and provided with appropriate equipment in order to provide flexible and responsive care in line with government guidance
- Maintaining a positive level of trust in staff from a parent perspective and ensuring staff receive the right level of training from a provider perspective

Risk assessments are an important part of this provision and should be used as an enabler to providing support rather than a barrier. A good risk assessment which supports effective risk management and creative thinking will lead to different approaches to face-to-face support rather than support being withdrawn particularly for children, young people and families who are particularly vulnerable or at high risk.

There are many local and national organisations including special schools with expertise in working with children with SEND or additional needs and we recommend that local authorities engage with them.

Working with the secondary school age range

We know from previous years that providing a HAF programme that is appealing and has high engagement levels with the secondary school age range can be challenging. Provision for this age range will often look different to that aimed at the primary age range and local authorities should make specific plans for the secondary age range.

There should be flexibility in the programme you offer to older children with careful consideration being given to a different model of food and activity provision, for example, considering the location of provision, such as, pop up parks or urban areas. Some areas have reported a reduction in anti-social behaviour around those areas with a focussed HAF provision. Others have reported increases to the levels of assurance among parents and families that their children and young people safe and secure when attending a HAF programme.

You might also consider the role that older children can have in supporting, designing and leading sessions for their peers or for younger children – to help them to socialise and develop leadership skills which can be crucial for those in year 9-11.

Based on previous years of the HAF programme, we know that there are a number of factors that local authorities should think about when designing a programme for the secondary age range:

- Consider running focus groups with older children in your area to better understand their needs.
- Consider the costs of running secondary age focussed provision - the costs of provision for this age range can, in some cases, be higher than for the primary age range and may need to be considered when commissioning provision.
- The food and activity offer for secondary age range will be different to that for the primary age range.
- This age range might benefit from a different operating model, for example, offering afternoon or evening sessions. Some areas have reported success running twilight sessions with an evening meal being the focus for the food

aspect of delivery. Some areas have operated a flexible “street food” style offer for the secondary age range.

- The choice of venue is often critical in building an attractive offer for this age range. Some areas have reported that school venues can be less popular but pop-up provision in parks and city centres can be highly effective in ensuring provision is where it is needed.
- Travel costs can be a barrier to attendance. Local authorities should try and ensure provision is local and accessible. You may wish to work with local transport providers to offer free/discounted travel to offer greater freedom and mobility during the holidays.

There are many local and national organisations with expertise in delivery to the secondary age range and we recommend that local authorities are engaged with them. Working through trusted and established organisations is one way of achieving effective reach and delivery

In 2021, we provided local authorities with a pack highlighting those organisations who were committed to working with them on the delivery of HAF across the country and we will update this work in due course.

Environment and sustainability

The Department for Education is committed to sustainable development practices and believes it is important for local authorities to consider sustainable practices and their impact on the environment. We strongly encourage local authorities to make their own judgements on how sustainable development can be reflected in their ethos, day-to-day operations and throughout the delivery of their HAF programmes.

Some practices that local authorities may wish to consider are:

- Minimising the use of single-use plastics
- Where possible using locally sourced food and ingredients
- Making use of food surplus organisations
- Ensuring there is a wide range of recycling and compost facilities for waste
- Growing fruit and vegetables and showing how they can be used and cooked.
- Encouraging uniform banks/exchange schemes

This list is not exhaustive and local authorities are encouraged to reflect on their settings and consider ways that their HAF programmes can be more environmentally friendly and sustainable.

Example

As part of the HAF programme in Leeds in 2021, Zero Waste Leeds ran a school uniform exchange scheme. The aim of this was to make it easy to share good quality, used school uniform and preventing it from going to landfill. With clothing production having a sizeable carbon impact, Zero Waste Leeds found that they could reduce their environmental footprint by sharing uniform so that it is worn for longer and demand is reduced for new uniforms. Schemes such as this can also assist those families who might need help with the cost of new uniforms.

Local coordination by authorities

Some local authorities may coordinate the HAF programme themselves, and others may choose to work with another organisation to coordinate the provision on their behalf.

It is a requirement that every local authority will appoint or have in place a HAF coordinator who takes responsibility within the local authority for the delivery of the HAF programme. This will be alongside having sufficient staff who are dedicated to working on HAF all year round. The level of resource in each local authority will be determined locally but should be proportionate to the level of funding received.

Coordination of local programmes

Local authorities have responsibility for the coordination and implementation of the HAF programme in their area, which involves a number of important aspects which are set out below.

Mapping provision and demand. Creating and implementing a local plan

We expect each local authority to have carried out mapping of the available holiday provision in your area to ensure that sufficient levels of holiday provision exist. This mapping should be considered alongside data showing the location of FSM eligible children. The local authority can then ensure that their provision is targeted at the right areas and continues to support those of greatest need. Local authorities should ensure that when mapping provision, they distinguish between the different age ranges and types of provision that are available and ensure all needs are met across their area.

This mapping will allow you to develop a local plan for provision including any commissioning activity, based on what you know about local supply and demand.

Steering Group

In 2021, all local authorities will have established a steering group whose role it is to support the delivery of the programme and ensure that the right partners continue to be engaged with and supportive of your programme. We know that the HAF programme works best when it is a cross cutting and collaborative effort and we recommend that your steering group should include representatives from a wide range of local bodies, including:

- local public health officials
- school leaders
- youth services
- social services and safeguarding leads
- charities and the voluntary sector
- local police and other uniform services

Complementing your programme with other support

In many areas, local authorities have been successful in drawing in wider support to enhance their local programme, for example, by bringing in funding from other sources such as philanthropists, sponsors, food providers as well as supermarkets and local businesses to boost the core HAF offer.

Putting in place sufficient, high-quality provision for children with SEND or additional needs.

It is vital that every local authority ensures that sufficient, high-quality provision is available across your area for children with SEND or additional needs who are in receipt of Free School Meals.

This could be through making sure that your providers plan how they will accommodate children with SEND or additional needs or making sure that those with more complex needs are able to access suitable provision, for example, by working with Special Schools in your area.

Awarding funding to providers

We recognise and greatly value the important role that community and voluntary organisations will play in the HAF programme, and we encourage all local authorities to work with a wide range of partners in the delivery of this programme. Effective mapping, alongside building an understanding of the sorts of enriching activities that children of different ages want to engage in will support an effective commissioning strategy.

Ensuring providers meet the HAF programme standards and driving up the quality

A key element of the local authority's role is supporting all providers to meet our programme standards, which are set out in full in the "Framework of Standards" section of this guidance.

Local authorities should also have a system in place to monitor the provision they are funding and ensuring that they support providers to comply with or improve the quality of their provision, for example, through arranging bespoke training or qualifications.

Working with families

Local authorities should ensure that the HAF programme extends to the families of the children who attend provision and we want all areas to continue to develop this aspect of their programme in 2022 and beyond.

They should work with families to reduce dependency by providing nutritional education for both children and families around purchasing and preparing healthy meals on a sustainable basis. We recommend that this is done through weekly sessions that children and families attend together.

They should also work with families to ensure they are, where needed, linked to other local services or agencies to ensure a joined-up and efficient approach, for example, signposting and sharing resources. There may be opportunities to use

these contact points with children and their families to provide opportunities for them to engage with health services.

Promoting your programme

For 2021, we produced a communications toolkit for local authorities to support them in promoting and communicating HAF to families across England.

The toolkit will be updated for 2022 and made available to local authorities to help them to: focus and target provision towards families who are eligible for free school meals; prompt parents and carers to explore activities and provisions available for children in their area, and book a place for their child; and provide off-the-shelf communication materials (including for social media) that can be easily utilised to effectively promote the scheme, which credit and note the Department for Education's central funding of the programme.

Local authorities should ensure that when promoting and advertising their programme, great care is taken to ensure that the children and families who could benefit from the HAF programme do not feel stigmatised and that the language used is celebratory, aspirational and focuses on the positives.

Local authorities **must** make it clear in their communications that the HAF programme is funded by the Department for Education and a DfE logo is available and should be used for this purpose.

Following the success of the #HAF2021, for this year we will use #HAF2022 – we encourage all local authorities to use this across their social media channels.

Sharing best practice and cross boundary working

We encourage all local authorities to build local partnerships and networks to share learning and to participate in events and on platforms that share best practice on a local or national level.

We also encourage local authorities to work closely with neighbouring local authorities and to establish clear cross border working protocols. This will help to ensure that adequate provision and support is offered to children that live close to boundaries.

Support for local authorities

The Department for Education's Local Authority Support Team worked with local authorities to deliver the HAF programme during the Easter holidays in 2021.

In April 2021, the Department started working with the organisations Mott MacDonald and Hemsall's, jointly known as Childcare Works, to provide support, advisory and performance monitoring services to assist local authorities with HAF provision.

Each local authority has been allocated a named Childcare Works HAF adviser who they can contact with queries and requests for support. As part of the package of

support, group meetings, regular communications and training sessions will continue to be promoted and facilitated.

Childcare Works also have a helpdesk which is run by the coordination team and is open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm for queries. Local authorities have been given the helpdesk contact details directly. The Department for Education team is still in place, working with Childcare Works, and will continue to send out regular communications and oversee the Grant arrangements.

Alongside the responsibilities set out in the coordination section of this guidance, we expect each HAF coordinator to engage with the support offer provided by the Department. As a minimum, we expect HAF coordinators to:

- Attend the majority of cluster meetings to support knowledge sharing across local authorities
- Attend sessions with their appointed delivery adviser as requested
- Collaborate with their appointed delivery adviser on developing and implementing action plans where required
- Cooperate with the Department's MI collection requirements and any requests for involvement in research.

All other support, such as bitesize sessions, is optional but strongly encouraged to drive continuous improvement of this programme nationally and locally.

Funding

Local authorities will receive grant funding to deliver the holiday, activities and food programme in their area.

Our grant funding is calculated based on the numbers of children eligible for and in receipt of free school meals in your area.

In 2021, the department allocated a contingency fund to local authorities, but we do not intend to have similar contingency arrangements from 2022 onwards.

What the funding covers

The funding local authorities receive is to cover the:

- provision of free holiday places
- coordination of the programme locally

The aim of the programme is to make free places available to children in receipt of free school meals during the longer school holidays.

We anticipate that the cost of provision within an LA area may vary to take account of the variety of needs, for example provision which specialises in specialist activities, expert tuition or input supporting those with SEND may have a higher unit cost.

Administrative costs

We know that there are administrative costs associated with setting up and running the holiday activities and food programme. Therefore LAs will be able to use up to 10% of their total allocation to cover such costs.

Purchasing equipment

Funding can also be used to purchase equipment for the programme, for example, to improve the catering or sports equipment at an individual club. However, programme funding can only be used where this meets our criteria for capital expenditure. The amount you spend on this should be limited to a maximum of 2% of your overall programme expenditure.

Capital expenditure is classed as:

- individual assets worth over £2,500
- grouped assets, that is assets of a similar nature that are purchased at the same time, which cost £2,500 or more overall
- bulked assets, for example, a bulk purchase of equipment where the value of the individual item is below the set value, which cost £2,500 or more overall

Any equipment that does not meet these criteria, will not be classed as capital expenditure or be subject to the 2% cap.

Awarding funding to providers and other delivery organisations

In awarding funding to other organisations, whether through the awarding of grants or through a larger scale tendering process, we encourage local authorities to adopt a flexible approach to ensure their programme makes the most of the broad range of organisations available to them, in particular, those smaller community organisations who hold existing relationships with children and families.

Where local authorities work with community and voluntary organisations whether as a coordinator or as a delivery partner, we expect this to be done on a cost-recovery basis. This is so that these organisations are fully funded for the work they undertake.

Payments and reporting

Local authorities will be responsible for gathering management information from the providers and clubs they fund about the children and families they are supporting. Following each holiday period (Easter, summer, and Christmas) we will ask local authorities to report on their activity.

The requirements for local authorities are set out in the [grant determination letter](#) which we will use to monitor performance at a high level.

Local authorities can set other performances indicators to measure their own performance or that of partners.

Payment and reporting schedule for 2022/2023

April 2022

Payments of up to 80% of the total 2022/2023 allocation will be made in April 2022 following satisfactory receipt by 1 March 2022 of a report setting out:

- how your 2022/2023 programme will work including a comprehensive plan for each holiday period in scope
- details of how many children you expect to work with.

By 29 January 2022, we will provide you with a template for the completion of this report.

February 2023

Payments of up to the remaining 20% of the 2022/2023 allocation will be made in April 2023 following satisfactory receipt by 15 February 2023 of a report setting out:

- the actual number of children you worked with during delivery of the programme at Easter, summer and Christmas in 2022.

This should include:

- The overall number of unique children who participated in the programme
- The overall number of unique children in receipt of FSM who participated in your programme
- The number and proportion of children who are in the: primary school age range; the secondary school age range; and any children outside of those age ranges who attended the programme.
- The number of children with SEND or additional needs who have participated in your programme

By 15 December 2022, we will provide you with a template for the completion of this report.

Data collection

After each holiday period, including the optional additional half term period for those local authorities with a summer holiday of 6 weeks or less, we will require a data return from each local authority that will set out:

- What the cost of the programme has been for the financial year to date
- How many children participated in your programme during the last holiday period including, but not restricted to:
 - The overall number of unique children who participated in the programme
 - The overall number of unique children in receipt of FSM who participated in your programme
 - The number and proportion of children who are in the: primary school age range; the secondary school age range; and any children outside of those age ranges who attended the programme.

Where necessary and in addition to the 1 March 2022 report, the Department may also ask local authorities to provide additional information on their plans for specific holiday periods.

All of the data and information collected by the holiday clubs and providers should all be collected in strict adherence to the [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)](#).

Additional data collection

Our intention for HAF 2022/23 is to ask a small number of local authorities to collect additional data on the children that attend their HAF programme. This will allow DfE to cross match the data with our National Pupil Database, which contains a variety of information on pupil characteristics, education and family set-up. This will help us to understand more about those who the HAF programme is reaching and also allow us to monitor any long-term impacts on children who attend the programme. Having more information in these areas will help us to ensure that the HAF programme is set-up in a way that is most beneficial to eligible families, as well as strengthening the evidence base for HAF more broadly.

If we select your local authority to participate in this additional data collection, we will notify you by 31 December 2021 or earlier where possible and will provide you and your providers with additional support (including data collection teach-ins), templates and guidance.

At Annex C of the grant determination letter, we have set out the DfE's standard GDPR clauses and how personal data will be collected, processed and stored by local authorities. Please note that this Annex applies only to those local authorities who will participate in this additional data collection. The annex also contains a list of variables for data collection.

Annual report

In addition to the reporting requirements set out above, we require each local authority to produce an annual report on their HAF programme which should include:

- The overall funding you have spent on the HAF programme.
- The proportion of the funding that was spent on administration and a breakdown of how this was spent.
- How many unique children you have reached in each holiday period.
- The proportion of primary age and secondary age children who have participated in your programme.
- The number of children with SEND or additional needs who have participated in your programme
- Information on the families and carers they have engaged with through the food education, signposting and referrals aspect of their programme.
- Which organisations are represented on their steering group.
- Which organisations you have worked with in delivering the programme.

You may also include:

- Feedback from participants, their families or carers.

- Results of any surveys.
- Case studies or particular highlights.
- How you have promoted the programme and celebrated it through the media and social media.

The report for the 2022/23 HAF programme should be submitted to DfE by 30 June 2023. We will allow local authorities flexibility in how they format and present their annual report, but we will make a template available to LAs in early 2023.

We encourage local authorities to be transparent and to publish this annual report, though this will be at the discretion of the LA.

Certificate of Expenditure

We will also require a certificate of expenditure (or statement of grant usage) which should be completed after the end of the 2022/2023 financial year and be submitted to the Department by 1 May 2023. We will provide you with a template and guidance for this document at the end of the reporting period.

This certificate of expenditure will report on the activities funded by the Department for Education and confirm that the grant outputs that have been delivered as part of the HAF programme, have been delivered to a satisfactory standard and the expected benefits have accrued or will accrue.

These reports will support the regularity assurance statement for the National Audit Office and your statement will need to be signed off by your Chief Financial Officer/Chief Internal Auditor.

Impact of coronavirus (COVID-19)

The following guidance is available to support the delivery of the HAF programme in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19):

- [Protective measures guidance](#): for holiday or after-school clubs and other out-of-school settings
- [Contingency framework](#): a set of guiding principles designed to help decision makers when considering plans to apply, tighten or ease measures affecting education and childcare.

Under the terms of the [grant determination](#), if the local authority cannot hold face-to-face holiday clubs as a result of COVID-19 restrictions, the local authority may operate flexibly to ensure that eligible children still receive the type of support detailed in the [aims of the programme](#).

For example, this may involve children receiving a) recipe boxes or food parcels that provide healthy meals, b) activity packs, and/or c) access to online support if they are unable to congregate in holiday clubs due to COVID-19.

However, if local authorities are considering any such flexible provision due to COVID-19 they should agree this in advance with the Department for Education. Otherwise the provision should all be face-to-face at holiday clubs.