



Will Quince MP

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families

Sanctuary Buildings 20 Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/contactus/dfe

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Dear colleagues

HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND FOOD PROGRAMME (HAF)

I am writing to update you on the delivery of the government's Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme. As you know, our programme, provides free school holiday club places with enriching activities and healthy meals for children who receive benefits-related free school meals.

First of all, I would like to thank you and your colleagues for the fantastic work you have done to deliver the HAF programme during the challenging circumstances of 2021. We are delighted that HAF has been able to run in every local authority area across England supporting hundreds of thousands of children and their families through the longer school holidays.

Following the success of this programme in 2021, you may be aware that the Chancellor confirmed in October that the programme will continue in all local authorities in England for the next three years, with funding of over £200m each year. This new funding covers the length of this spending review period – 2022-23 to 2024-25.

We are delighted that we will again be investing over £200m a year to local authorities to deliver our programme and we are writing this week to all of the local authority HAF coordinators across the country to set out the indicative funding allocations for 2022 as well as our enhanced and updated guidance on the programme.

This three-year funding settlement provides important stability to you and your colleagues as you continue to build and develop the HAF programme within your area. It provides an opportunity to enhance and grow your programme in line with the programme objectives and local priorities and the three-year certainty will allow you to fully embed and resource the programme within your authority.

I know that many local authorities have found excellent ways to work with local partners and across local authority teams to join HAF together with wider local priorities. For example, in relation to improving public health, tackling childhood obesity, supporting the environment, sharing arts and cultural offers, enhancing sports initiatives and taking action to tackle youth crime. I very much welcome this creative and strategic approach, and we can build on this together over the next three years to make sure HAF has the most positive impact possible on children and young people.

We know that the HAF programme works best when it is a cross cutting and collaborative effort. We therefore recommend that every local authority continues to have a strong steering group in place, which should include representatives from a wide range of local bodies such as public health, schools, youth services, social services, the police and the voluntary sector. This steering group will play an important role in identifying wider strategic opportunities and building effective and lasting partnerships.

Support for you and your colleagues

As we head towards delivery of the 2022 programme from next Easter, we will continue to work with Childcare Works, our national support partner for this programme, who will provide local authorities with additional practical guidance, planning and delivery advice to authorities, as well as overseeing local performance.

Our independent evaluation report on the programme, which was carried out over the summer, looked at how the programme has been implemented as well as measuring the impact that the programme has on eligible children and their families. The report will be published next year, and we will share the findings with you at the earliest opportunity.

I am grateful to you and your colleagues for all of the excellent work done on this important provision in 2021 and look forward to your continued support as we develop and grow this vital programme.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Will Quince', written in a cursive style.

Will Quince MP
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