



Holiday Activities and Food programme (HAF) Quick Guide

Overview

Herefordshire council has been awarded £460,000 by the Department for Education to deliver the Holiday Activities and Food programme 2025/26. The programme provides healthy meals, activities, and free childcare to families on a low income, promoting their health and wellbeing. The programme is mainly for children on benefits-related free school meals; however, a portion of the grant can be used for children that are referred for a discretionary place based on eligibility criteria.

Provision for all

The DfE guidance recommends that providers, where possible, offer a mixed provision of paid and non-paying spaces that is inclusive for all children. This helps the programme to be sustainable for future delivery.

Existing providers are encouraged to review and refresh their programmes to keep them engaging and relevant for returning participants, some of whom may have attended for up to four years.

Priority may be given to providers which propose venues and facilities in the following areas: Bromyard, Leominster and Wigmore and Golden Valley.

SEND children

Tier 1 - Universal providers are expected to be able to provide for the majority of children including those with low-level SEND needs by making reasonable adjustments.

Tier 2 – Providers who can offer extra support for children, that require it, with an EHCP tariff A – C. Additional hourly supplement can be applied.

Tier 3 – Providers who can offer enhanced support for children who require it, with an EHCP tariff D and above or have special circumstances that have been previously agreed. Additional hourly supplement can be applied.

Objectives

This programme offers numerous benefits for children, and we want all HAF providers to ensure a high-quality experience that will result in children:

- Receiving healthy and nutritious meals
- Maintaining a good level of physical activity
- Being happy and carefree, having fun and making friends
- Developing their understanding of health, nutrition, and other wellbeing issues
- Taking part in fun, engaging activities that support their development and well-being.
- Feeling safe and secure
- Getting access to the right support services
- Returning to school feeling engaged and ready to learn.

Number of hours that children are entitled per holiday period

The maximum length of a HAF sessions is considered by the DfE to be four hours. If you would like to run a longer session this would need to be listed on the booking system as two HAF sessions.

Easter holiday – 16 hours (1 week equivalent 4 days of 4 hours)

Summer holidays – 64 hours (4 weeks equivalent 4 week, 4 days, or 4 hours)

Christmas holiday – 16 hours (1 week equivalent 4 days of 4 hours) min. of 2 days face-to-face provision.

Ofsted

Both clubs and providers that are registered with Ofsted, and those that are exempt, can participate in the HAF programme.

HAF providers may need to legally register with Ofsted depending on the provision they offer, it is the responsibility of the provider to check if they may also be eligible to register with Ofsted on the voluntary register or they may be [exempt from registration](#) entirely.

Food provision

All providers must provide a snack and at least 1 meal a day (breakfast, lunch or an evening meal) and all food provided at HAF clubs must meet [school food standards](#) and must comply with [Natasha's Law](#). For some children, the opportunity to enjoy a hot meal at a HAF club is important and the DfE recommend that providers should, where possible, try to offer hot meals to children attending HAF clubs. However, we acknowledge that this is not always possible and that alternatives to hot meals can sometimes be more suitable.

Due diligence

The following documents will be required on successful application:

1. Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedure
2. Health and Safety Policy and Procedure
3. Behaviour Policy and Procedure
4. Uncollected child Policy and Procedure
5. Adverse weather Policy and Procedure
6. Public Liability Insurance certificate
7. Copies of DBS Certificates or numbers for all staff and volunteers
8. Safeguarding training certificates for all staff and volunteers
9. First aid training certificates for all staff and volunteers
10. Evidence of staff qualifications
11. Food Hygiene certificate and allergen training
12. Risk assessments for all planned activities including venue and emergency evacuation

Quality Assurance visits

We expect all providers funded through the programme to meet our framework of standards. Quality assurance visits will be conducted to ensure suitability.

Rates of pay

Option 1 – provide activity and food for children at the rate of £6.00 per hour. **Please note** – if preparing food on site, the establishment will need to be compliant with food standards.

Option 2 – provide activity for children at the rate of £5.00 per hour. Food will need to be provided by a HAF-approved provider. You will be expected to directly consult with food provider on the number of children, allergies, or special dietary requirements

Payments

Payments are made based on the number of children booked on to your programme. Payment will be issued in two instalments. The initial payment will be 50% of the **approved allocated spaces** on receipt of your completed grant agreement. This may be less, if you are a new provider and this will be detailed in your offer letter. Payments will take 30 days to process from receipt of signed grant letter and approval of required documents.

The grant balance will be paid upon completion and return of the final report, based on the booked places in accordance with the booking system.

If less than 50% of allocated spaces are not booked, it could result in a partial clawback of the funds from the initial payment.

Kit/ Equipment

A small amount of the grant can be used to purchase equipment for the programme, for example, to improve the catering or equipment at an individual club. These costs are subject to approval by the panel.

Administration costs

For the HAF programme to be successful administration tasks that are required. Admin costs need to be proportionate and are capped at a maximum of 10% of the costs of allocated space.

- Onboarding of activity listing onto Eequ and regular monitoring of the booking system
- Checking numbers, dietary requirements, allergies, SEND needs.
- Contacting parents/carer of children with additional needs before start of the programme
- Make follow up calls for children that do not attend the programme.
- Publicise and market activity sessions.
- Attend any mandatory training sessions.
- Completion of final report