

Subject:	Holiday Activities and Food Programme		
Date of Meeting:	8th March 2021		
Report of:	Executive Director, Families, Children and Learning		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Vicky Jenkins, Childcare Strategy Manager	Tel: 01273 296110
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 The report informs the committee of the new government funded Holiday Activities and Food programme for children who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals, which will start in Brighton & Hove during the Easter holidays 2021

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the committee notes the programme and agrees the proposed approach

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme is a new national government initiative which will fund all local authorities to offer enriching activities and free healthy meals to children eligible for benefits-related free school meals.
- 3.2 HAF projects ran as a pilot in the past three summers in a limited number of local authority areas in the country.
- 3.3 The HAF programme will run for one week at Easter, four weeks in the summer and for one week at Christmas 2021.
- 3.4 The total funding for the programme for FYs 2020/21 and 2021/22 is £780,000. Grant terms and conditions from the DfE state that up to 10% of the grant can be used to fund central costs. A programme manager and a part-time support officer are being recruited, which are both fixed term posts in accordance with the programme timescale.
- 3.5 DfE guidance is that the programme should be made available to all school-age children (aged four to 16) who are eligible for free school meals – approximately 6,200 children in the city. The DfE have not given any guidance on unit costs. An initial budget has been developed from the DfE's grant for Brighton & Hove, based on providing places for 20% of eligible children and young people at Easter and 40% over the summer. This level of provision should be possible within the DfE's funding allocation. Some additional funding will be available to support places for children with special educational needs and disabilities. More work will be done to develop information on unit costs and to look at other sources of funding.

3.6 The key elements of the programme, outlined by the DfE are:

- Enriching activities
- Healthy food ([meeting school food standards](#))
- Physical activities ([meeting physical activity guidelines](#))
- Nutritional education
- Inclusive of children with SEND
- For four hours a day and for four days a week

3.7 The DfE wants children attending to

- Eat more healthily
- Be more active
- Take part in engaging and enriching activities
- Be safe and not isolated
- Have greater knowledge of health and nutrition
- Be more engaged with school and other services
- Have greater knowledge and awareness of holiday club provision

3.8 The programme in Brighton & Hove will be led by early years and childcare, in the FCL education and skills section, working closely with the Family Information Service and public health, with oversight from a city-wide steering group of stakeholders including representatives from education, social work, youth provision, family support, children's disability services, public health, schools, the voluntary and community sector, and the police. Meetings of the HAF steering group were held in February and March.

3.9 The **HAF programme for Easter 2021** will be run as a pilot because of the limited time available to set up a full programme, and because of the potential limitations of Covid-19. In addition the HAF funding available is insufficient for all FSM children in the city to be offered the programme.

3.10 The aim for Easter is to provide as many places as possible which:

- provide places in wards with the highest number of children eligible for free school meals
- ensures that both primary and secondary school children and young people are provided for
- is accessible to and meets the needs of the diverse range of children and young people in the city, including those with SEND, and
- can be offered within the budget available

3.11 An application form for funding to offer HAF activities for Easter 2021 has been developed in consultation with the council's procurement team and sent to a wide range of providers. Potential providers include Ofsted registered holiday playschemes, schools, youth providers, activity providers including sport, dance, music, art and drama and community organisations which already provide food and activities.

3.12 Information events were held for providers in week commencing 22nd February and the deadline for applications is 8th March 2021. The council has asked for applications for funding for:

- direct activities for children (and families, where appropriate) alongside a meal in a school or community setting
- if this is not possible as a result of Covid-19 restrictions in operation at the time, to be able to adjust their offer to provide on-line or home-based activities for children and families together with food parcels. This could include packed lunches or carefully sourced food that families can cook alongside an accompanying recipe and support to prepare the meal. This approach may also be appropriate for families who are reluctant for their children to attend face to face provision because of Covid-19.

3.13 The aim is to publicise activities to families from 17th March 2021.

3.14 A fuller programme will be developed for the summer and Christmas holidays.

3.15 Schools will play a critical role in both offering activities and engaging with children and families to ensure awareness and high take-up, as will community groups with work with more disadvantaged children and families.

3.16 The aim is for the HAF programme in Brighton & Hove to provide a comprehensive offer of activities which will be attractive to a wide range of children and families with a particular focus on those who are more disadvantaged.

3.17 The HAF is not a replacement for holiday food vouchers for FSM children. The funding is insufficient to fund food for all children and the programme will only run for six weeks of the year. DfE has been clear that HAF funding must not be used to buy food vouchers but can be used for food parcels linked to activities if necessary because of Covid-19 restrictions.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1 The DfE have set out clear guidance for how the programme should be run. Because of the short lead-in time, Covid-19 and current limited staff capacity the programme will be more limited at Easter, with wider provision developed and delivered in the summer holidays.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

5.1 A steering group has been established.

5.2 For the summer the programme will include consultation with children and families to ensure that activities offered are those which are attractive to children, particularly those with SEND, and from more disadvantaged groups.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 Committee is asked to note the HAF programme in Brighton & Hove and agree the proposed approach

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

7.1 Expenditure will need to be contained within the grant funding resources, including the costs of the programme manager and support officer. Grant funding

is not guaranteed beyond 2021/22 and so the posts will be recruited on a fixed term basis. A Grant Determination Letter was issued by the Department for Education in February 2021.

Finance Officer Consulted: Steve Williams

Date: 29/01/21

7.2 Legal Implications:

The holiday activities and food programme is now expanded to every local authority in England and Wales. The requirements of the HAF programme are as set out in the report. The programme will cover the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays in 2021. Local authorities are asked to ensure that the offer of free holiday club provision is available for all children eligible for free school meals, but the government guidance makes clear that it is not envisaged that in practice all eligible children will participate.

Lawyer Consulted: Natasha Watson

Date: 23/02/21

7.3 Equalities Implications:

The HAF programme will ensure that children with SEND and more disadvantaged children, including children with English as an additional language, have access to the programme, through working with specialist groups and organisations which support these children and families.

DfE guidance states that if local authorities are offering the programme comprehensively across their full geographical area and are fully meeting demand from FSM eligible children, the DfE can be approached for written approval to use up to 15% of allocated funding to provide free or subsidised holiday club places for children who are not in receipt of benefits-related FSM but who are considered to be in need of this provision, for example LAC, children with EHCP, otherwise vulnerable or living in areas of high deprivation. Brighton & Hove will act accordingly.

7.4 Sustainability Implications

Sustainability implications include ensuring that provision is included in the areas with the largest numbers of free school meal children and ensuring that food meets school meals standards.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. DfE Guidance
2. DfE Grant Determination Letter
3. HAF Application form Easter 2021