

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Lead Member for Children's Services
Date:	7 March 2025
Title:	Approval to Spend for 2025 - 2026 – Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF)
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to outline the proposed approach for allocation of £3,599,700 from the Department for Education's Holiday Activities and Food Programme for the financial year 2025 to 2026.
2. This report seeks approval from the Executive Lead Member for the programme approach, spending up to £3,599,700 on the provision of school holiday placements through the existing contract framework. Alongside contracted provision, the programme also provides funding to Hampshire's Short Breaks programme and to the Hampshire Library Service for the delivery of holiday activities.

Recommendation(s)

3. It is recommended that the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services gives approval to spend up to £3,599,700 for a Holiday Activities and Food Programme for a total period of one year from April 2025 to March 2026. Payments to external providers will be made through the existing contract framework and payments will be made as and when individual school holiday provision is commissioned.

Executive Summary

4. The Department for Education (DfE) announced on 20 January 2025 that there would be £200m overall funding for the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme to be extended for an additional financial year, from 2025 to 2026. Hampshire County Council's allocation of this has been confirmed as up to £3,599,700.

5. The HAF programme, first piloted in 2018, supports children eligible for free school meals to access free holiday clubs that provide nutritious meals and enriching activities during the school holidays, as summarised in **paragraphs 9 to 11**. Since the national rollout in 2021, the Council has accessed £14.1m funding, with the programme running approximately 150 schemes each holiday period and supporting around 8,000 children and their wider families each year.
6. Approval is sought to spend up to £3,599,700 for a Holiday Activities and Food Programme for a total period of one year from 2024 to 2025. The proposed breakdown of this funding is summarised in **paragraphs 20 to 22**.

Contextual information

7. The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme, launched in 2018, supports children eligible for free school meals (FSM) during the school holidays. The programme aims to alleviate pressures on low-income families by providing free holiday clubs that offer nutritious meals and enriching activities. The programme was rolled out nationwide in 2021 and, following the Government announcement that HAF would be funded for three financial years, in March 2022 the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services approved spend of £10.3m for a total period of three years from 2022 to 2025.
8. On 20 January 2025, the Department for Education (DfE) announced that there would be £200m overall funding for the HAF programme for an additional financial year, from 2025 to 2026. Hampshire County Council's allocation of this has been confirmed as up to £3,599,700. It is anticipated that programme guidance for 2025-26 will be in line with the first three years, meaning the council is able to allocate 15% of funded places to other vulnerable children and young people who do not quite meet the criteria for benefits-eligible FSMs.
9. The HAF programme is a response to the challenges faced by low-income families during school holidays. Research shows that, outside of the structure and consistency of the school environment, holiday periods can be pressure points, leading to issues like poor nutrition, physical inactivity and social isolation for children.
10. The aim of the programme is to make free places 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 covers four weeks in the summer and a week's worth of provision in each of the Easter and Christmas holidays.
11. The 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.

12. The Council's share of the HAF programme budget has totalled £14.1m since the start of the national roll-out. Since 2021, the number of benefits-eligible FSM children in Hampshire has increased 26% from 29,208 to 36,790 (Autumn 2024 school census), and the Council has one of the biggest HAF programmes in the country in terms of eligible children, grant size, geographical spread and number of delivery partners.
13. Approximately 150 schemes have been run each holiday period, supporting around 8,000 children and their wider families each year, which is 22% of the target cohort. 59 organisations are currently contracted to provide HAF placements, with additional organisations secured each delivery period to fill any strategic gaps. The organisations are a rich mixture of schools, childcare providers, community groups and sports activity providers. The Council has a nationally recognised framework and approach to monitoring providers used, and all Hampshire HAF providers have been rated at least acceptable (64% 'good' or 'very good') for the quality of their provision.
14. Alongside contracting external providers to provide placements, the programme also provides funding to:
 - *Hampshire Short Breaks Programme*: Enables children and young people with disabilities or additional needs to join in with safe and fun activities, giving parents or carers an opportunity to have a short break from caring.
 - *Hampshire Library Service*: Delivery of HAF events, activities and bespoke projects with existing contracted delivery partners, within libraries in FSM hot-spot areas.
15. In order to enter into timely and cost-effective arrangements with providers, and to create longer-term relationships with them, the Council established an open procurement framework to purchase places and schemes that meet DfE requirements for the programme. The open framework enables providers to join during the life of the contract. Providers contracted through the framework can then be approached by the Council through a procurement 'mini competition' to deliver specific HAF services, identified in 'Lots'. The Council uses the evaluation process set out in the Invitation to Tender to secure actual places and make funding awards.
16. To deliver a varied programme that meets the needs and interests of participants, two 'Lots' were identified and form the basis of the framework:
 - **Lot 1 - Childcare places by age and area**: Activity sessions must be structured around the age and assessed level of needs of children and young people accessing the service. Providers tender to supply a specific number of childcare places in a geographical area and must be Ofsted registered. Approximately 80% of the programme is 'Lot 1' provision.

- **Lot 2 – Bespoke specialist activities/schemes:** Bespoke projects (for example camping/residentials, outdoor adventure activities, schemes for children and young people with SEND). Providers must set out how they will meet relevant national requirements, such as appropriately qualified staff. Approximately 20% of the programme is 'Lot 2' provision, and will most commonly be family, teen-only or SEND provision.
17. The Council has recently opened the framework in anticipation of the additional year of funding and is in the process of securing additional providers for the 2025-2026 delivery period. **Appendix 1** sets out the providers currently contracted through the framework, including those added through January 2025 applications so far. Two further providers will be awarded contracts subject to a parent company guarantee.
 18. The current contract framework ends on 30 June 2025, with option of further agreement periods for up to two years. Following approval to spend the additional £3,599,700, the contract framework will be extended for a year to reflect the expanded timeline (to at least 31 March 2026) and anticipated spend.
 19. Approval to spend is sought from the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services for spend to be committed under the open framework up to the total value of £3,599,700 over the one year period 2025-2026. The funding is provided by DfE grant, which is used for the purposes of procuring these services.

Finance

20. Hampshire County Council has been allocated funding of up to £3,599,700 for 2025-2026 by the DfE.
21. The funding will be allocated between direct delivery (HAF places across the three school holidays, including provision SEND support, short breaks provision and library service provision) and administration costs (programme staffing, marketing and IT).

The funding allocated for each delivery period will be proportionately split by district area, based on the number of FSM children in each.

Consultation and Equalities

22. Equalities Impact Assessment to follow, and will be provided and published ahead of the Decision Day.

Climate Change Impact Assessment

23. Hampshire County Council utilises two decision-making tools to assess the carbon emissions and resilience impacts of its projects and decisions. These tools provide a clear, robust, and transparent way of assessing how projects, policies and initiatives contribute towards the County Council's climate change targets of being carbon neutral and resilient to the impacts of a 2°C temperature rise by 2050. This process ensures that climate change considerations are built into everything the Authority does.
24. A full assessment of climate change vulnerability was not completed as the initial vulnerability assessment showed that the project is at minimal risk from the climate vulnerabilities because it is largely administrative and short-term in nature.

Conclusions

25. It is recommended that the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services gives approval to spend up to £3,599,700 for a Holiday Activities and Food Programme for a total period of one financial year from 2025 to 2026. Payments under the contract will be made as and when individual school holiday provision is commissioned.

Appendix 1 – Holiday Activities and Food Programme Contracted Providers

360 DSC Ltd*	Edith Stein Catholic Academy Trust	Magna Groups Enterprises Limited
4wards multi-activity	Educamps Ltd	Marwell Wildlife
Activate Management Ltd	EJCL Ltd T/A CrossFit Iron Duke	Motiv8 South Ltd
Active Future Franchising Ltd (on behalf of Active Future Southampton Ltd)	F Sports & Play Hants Ltd*	New Forest Child Care CIC
Active Kids Holiday Club	Freedom School Holidays	North Baddesley Infant School
Active Me 360 CIC	Gateway Central Services Ltd	OSCA Childcare Limited
Active8 Minds After School Clubs Ltd	Get Golfing CIO*	OurParks
AFC Bournemouth Community Sports Ltd*	Globe Fit Ltd	Park Community School
Apis Global Ltd t/a Natures Nurture	Gol Elite Coaching Ltd*	Personal Best Education (Mountbatten School Services Ltd)
Castle Early Birds	GoSport Activity Centre Ltd*	Physical Development Ltd t/a Premier Education
CM Sports UK LTD	Hayling Island Community Centre Association CIO	Premier Sports Bournemouth LLP
Community Childcare Centres	Integr8 Dance Ltd	Pro-coaching Education Ltd*
Cook Stars Woking to East Aldershot	Isis Out of School Club	RSR Sports Limited (T/A Get Active Sports)
Core Kids Club	JC Sports Development Ltd	Soccer Coaching Ltd
Creative Kidz Childcare Ltd	JG Tennis Coaching Ltd	Sports Xtra Basingstoke
CX Southampton Ltd ta Computer Xplorers Southampton	JLMS Management Ltd t/a Active for All	SportSkool Ltd
Denmead Day Care	Kala The Arts	St Barbe Museum and Art Gallery
DFJ Multisports C.I.C.	Kidz Supersportz	Step8Up Ltd t/a Jam Coding
Disability Challengers	KOOSA Kids Ltd	Superstar Schools Ltd (Superstar Sports)
Eastleigh Borough Council	Little Explorers Nursery School Partnership	Testlands

The HoneyPot Children's Charity*	Woodpeckers Childcare Limited	Your Sports Education
The Carroll Centre	Y Plus Youth Services CIC	Youth Options
Vision 4 Youth	Y Services for Young People CIC	
Westside Community Association CIO	YMCA Fairthorne Group	

***Providers awarded a contract through January 2025 applications**

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	Yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	No
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	Yes

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
HAF Grant Recommendations	24 February 2021
HAF Grant Recommendations	8 June 2021
HAF Grant Recommendations	10 November 2021
Approval to Spend for 2022 - 2025 – Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF)	23 March 2022
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

Equalities Impact Assessment – attached at appendix