



Cabinet report

Date	10 MARCH 2022
Title	HOLIDAY ACTIVITY AND FOOD (HAF) GRANT RECOMMENDATIONS - EASTER 2022
Report of	CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND LIFELONG SKILLS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for grant awards to organisations offering holiday activity and food schemes to benefits eligible Free School Meal (FSM) children during the Easter 2022 school holidays, funded by the Department for Education's Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme.
2. Across the Isle of Wight, there are currently 3,883 children who are potentially eligible to access places on the HAF programme based on Free School Meal data from the last school census.
3. The aim of the DfE funded HAF programme is to make free of charge places available to children eligible for benefits related free school meals for the equivalent of at least four hours a day, four days a week and for six weeks a year. This cover four weeks in the Summer and a week's worth of provision in each of the Easter and Christmas holidays in 2022. Organisations are also able to offer additional places to fee paying families.
4. The Department for Education (DfE) has provided every local authority in England funding to coordinate free holiday provision, including healthy food and enriching activities, for children eligible for benefits related free school meals. The programme covers the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays in 2022. The Isle of Wight Council has been awarded a total of £428,170.
5. During January/February 2022, the Council invited grant applications from organisations able to provide holiday activity and food schemes during the 2022 Easter holidays from 9 – 24 April 2022. Applicants had to show their capability to deliver to the DfE HAF programme outcomes described in paragraph 23.
6. Applications have been received from local organisations and were evaluated by a panel of Council staff and a representative from a local community organisation. This resulted in the recommendations contained in Appendix 1 to this report for grant awards up to a total value of £63,344.80.

7. Market engagement was undertaken with a range of providers, including Early Years providers, primary and secondary schools, parish councils, Short Breaks providers, holiday clubs as well as existing HAF providers to ensure that they were aware of the opportunity for funding and could apply for a grant.
8. Successful organisations will need to submit monitoring to the Council to ensure that the funding is reaching the target cohort of children and young people and that the provision is of good quality.

RECOMMENDATION

9. Cabinet approves the award of grants to the organisations identified in Appendix 1 to this report to a total value of £63,344.80.
10. In the event that a provider is unable to fulfil the funded number of places or has to amend its offer in the light of Covid, it is recommended that the Cabinet Member delegates approval to the Director of Children's Services to reallocate any underspent Easter HAF grant funding to ensure an Isle of Wight wide offer, within the grant allocation for Easter of £64,223. Any such reallocations will be determined in consultation with the Cabinet Member.

BACKGROUND

11. On 8 November 2020, the Government announced that the HAF pilot programme, which had provided healthy food and enriching activities to low-income children since 2018, would be expanded across the whole of England from 2021. The October 2021 spending review included the government commitment to £200 million per annum nationally from 2022/23 to continue the programme for 3 years. Grant allocations and revised requirements were published by the DfE on 20 December 2021.
12. The HAF programme covers the Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays from 2022 - 2025, and the DfE has made up to £220m available in 2022/23 to local authorities for the programme. It is available to children in every local authority in England and builds on the success of the local holiday programmes that the Government funded since 2018.
13. The Isle of Wight Council has been allocated funding of up to £428,170.
14. School holidays can be particular pressure points for some families because of increased costs (such as food and childcare) and reduced incomes. For some children that can lead to a holiday experience gap - with children from low-income families less likely to access organised out-of-school activities; more likely to experience 'unhealthy holidays' in terms of nutrition and physical health and more likely to experience social isolation.
15. Free holiday clubs are a response to this issue and evidence suggests that they can have a positive impact on children and young people. The DfE found

that they work best when they provide consistent and easily accessible enrichment activities, when they offer more than just breakfast or lunch, and when they involve children (and parents) in food preparation.

16. Organisations bid to provide HAF activities and food schemes to eligible children and young people during the Easter holidays. The applications recommended for approval are listed in Appendix 1, along with the venue and area of the Island where each provider is proposing to deliver.
17. The funding could provide for up to 1,835 places available, which could reach c.458-916 children on the Island, an estimated 12-24% percent of all eligible children. The key objective for the Easter programme is to ensure that as many places as possible are taken up by eligible children.
18. All funding granted to third party organisations (including schools, and early years providers) will be supported by a grant agreement setting out the conditions of the funding as well as reporting requirements. Third party organisations will be required to report to the Council on how they have spent the funding provided, in line with the DfE grant criteria.
19. The Council has developed a monitoring approach which will embed and drive quality from the outset of the project. Monitoring is completed in three phases with the first being a self-assessment process mapping provider planning against HAF standards.
20. In phase two, the HAF Project Officer reviewed the provision offered and challenging providers where needed, highlighting and sharing exemplar practice. Phase two also includes monitoring visits.
21. The final phase pulls together qualitative data to include the views of children and participating families. In this phase, the most significant changes made to individuals, families and communities will be identified. This will form the basis for the DfE's evaluation of the IOW HAF Programme.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

22. The desired outcomes of the HAF Programme are to encourage children and young people:
 - a. To eat more healthily over the school holidays;
 - b. To be more active during the school holidays;
 - c. To take part in engaging and enriching activities which support the development of resilience, character and well being along with their wider education attainment;
 - d. To be safe and not to be socially isolated;
 - e. To have greater knowledge of health nutrition;
 - f. To be more engaged with school and other local services.
23. The Council seeks to achieve the DfE's HAF aims through the provision of holiday clubs and activities. Organisations will be grant funded to provide free of charge places at their schemes for eligible children and will be required to provide a healthy meal as part of their core delivery. They will provide a range of activities for the children and young people to engage with and participate in, with a focus on healthy eating and healthy lifestyles as a common theme.

Organisations will also be expected to support the wider family and signpost to other key community resources as required.

Responding to climate change and enhancing the biosphere

24. The recommended awards enable lower-income families to access free holiday activities with a healthy meal close to home. This should reduce participants' need to travel longer distances.

Economic Recovery and Reducing Poverty

25. The HAF programme is targeted towards lower income families and the signposting standard requires all providers to support parents to access employment advice and support. Signposting activity also encourages parents to access benefits and other support to aid those most in need.

Impact on Young People and Future Generations

26. The HAF 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 related to physical and mental health and wellbeing, employment and education.

Corporate Aims

27. The aim of the Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme is to support benefits-eligible free school meal children and young people to eat more healthily, be more active over the school holidays and have a greater knowledge of health and nutrition as well as be more engaged with school and other local services. The Corporate Plan 2021-2025 has a core value to engage with partners to make the most of integrated working, helping communities to help themselves and being a strong council team that delivers on these values.
28. The HAF Programme will support the work of the community as the Council looks to rebuild the social, economic, and environmental wellbeing of the Island's community. The families participating in HAF schemes are central to planning future delivery, which continues to evolve and improve due to ideas from feedback received. The Programme will continue to build links and work closely with parish and town councils to help and support them to empower and support their local communities.

CONSULTATION

29. Consultation was undertaken with providers before delivery, in training sessions, briefings and workshops. During the delivery of the programme HAF providers completed an audit tool and received a monitoring visit. This resulted in best practice being shared and provided lessons to be learnt. This ultimately led to the improvement of the application process, advertising campaign and in the support to providers.
30. Consultation was carried out in 2021 with other agencies and IWC departments to ensure activities were available in rural areas and areas of

deprivation where there are a higher number of FSM children recorded. This resulted in additional places being made available where necessary.

FINANCIAL / BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

31. The Isle of Wight grant allocation from the DfE is £428,170. The table below reflects the actual and recommended spend to date, and the balance remaining for Christmas.

Table 1:

A Total Budget*	B Easter grants	C Summer grants	D Christmas grants
£428,170	£63,344.80 (remaining balance of £878.20)	Up to £256,907	Up to £64,223

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

32. Grant agreements have been drawn up by the Isle of Wight Council's Legal Services to be signed by all providers to ensure due diligence from both a financial and legal perspective.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

33. The Council as a public body is required to meet its statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equal opportunities between people from different groups and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
34. Under the Equality Act 2010 the Council is required to have due regard to our equality duties when making decisions, reviewing services, undertaking projects, developing and reviewing policies.
35. These grants will have a positive impact on the following protected characteristics:
- Age - children and young people and their families will benefit from these grants.
 - Disability – services provided will be inclusive.

OPTIONS

36. The recommended option is to seek approval for grant awards to organisations offering holiday and activity and food schemes to benefits eligible Free School Meal (FSM) children during the Easter 2022 school holidays, funded by the Department for Education's Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme. The alternative is not to award funds and decline to claim the funding being made available by the Department for Education for the benefit of lower income and vulnerable children and families on the Isle of Wight.

RISK MANAGEMENT

37. As part of the application process, organisations were asked to detail their Covid risk assessments. They were also asked to provide contingencies to their delivery plans should face to face sessions not be possible. Online activities and resources, and home food deliveries will enable organisations to mitigate against further restrictions, if necessary, whilst still offering a level of support to eligible children and their families.
38. In the event that a provider is unable to fulfil the funded number of places, any underspent funding will be deducted from the grant payment to the provider. The amount of any reclaimed funding will be decided based on the final data submitted by the provider at the end of the HAF Easter provision, verified by attendance data submitted prior to and throughout the delivery period.

APPENDICES ATTACHED

Appendix 1 – Recommended Grant Awards

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