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Holiday Activities & Food (HAF) Programme
South Tees

Application Process Guidance

**SUMMER
2026**



The holiday activities and food programme (HAF) is Government funded as part of Best Start in Life



Funded by
UK Government

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This guidance is for HAF Clubs aimed at working with children and young people of primary and secondary school age.

Middlesbrough Council is processing grants for the Holiday Activities and Food Programme for Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland - applications may be shared with Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council colleagues as part of the assessment process and ongoing work around tackling poverty.

INTRODUCTION

We have now had over 3 years of the HAF programme being delivered locally. The success of the programme has been due to the great partnerships that have developed with providers, the hard work of those delivering the programme and the sharing of lessons learned.

We will continue to allocate the funding equally between primary age provision and secondary age provision, and within this we have allocated funding specifically for SEND provision for both age groups. Please carefully consider your focus when applying.

A grants panel will consider all fully completed applications that are submitted. Mapping of provision, in line with local needs, will support the grants panel when considering applications.

BACKGROUND

The funding for this programme comes from the Department for Education (DfE) and was given to Local Authorities to ensure free holiday provision, including a nutritious meal, available to all school children eligible for benefit related free school meals.

More details on the national HAF programme are available at

Holiday activities and food programme 2026-7 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

We are looking for organisations to help deliver this programme during the Summer holiday period; you don't need to have delivered in a previous programme to apply for this funding.



THE MODEL

Proposals must provide an offer whereby an eligible child can access HAF provision:

SUMMER

**Minimum of 4 hours per day
x 4 weeks (16 days)**

We want to ensure that there is a wide offer, full of variety and opportunity, available to our children and young people. Therefore, we are welcoming applications from providers to apply for funding to deliver HAF programmes for the named delivery period, that offers a model / provision that contributes to the overall programmes. A minimum of 2 hours per day x 1 day during the named school holiday period is the least that can be considered. This could be provided by a group of organisations or independently – collaborations are welcomed.

Holiday periods for schools can differ, therefore we encourage providers to consider this when developing their offer and application.

Providers are welcome to bid for funding for multiple HAF Clubs. For example, in the past some providers have delivered two HAF Clubs a day (e.g., morning and afternoon) – in this instance, these should be for different cohorts of children.

If in doubt, please email us to discuss.

PROGRAMME INFORMATION

Information on when the school holiday periods are can be found at:

- **Middlesbrough Council term dates (for maintained schools):**
<https://tinyurl.com/2s4mccjw>
- **Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council term dates (for maintained schools):**
<https://tinyurl.com/mpzfhtyb>
- **For noting, some schools and academies may vary their dates**

Any activity you provide must happen during this period.

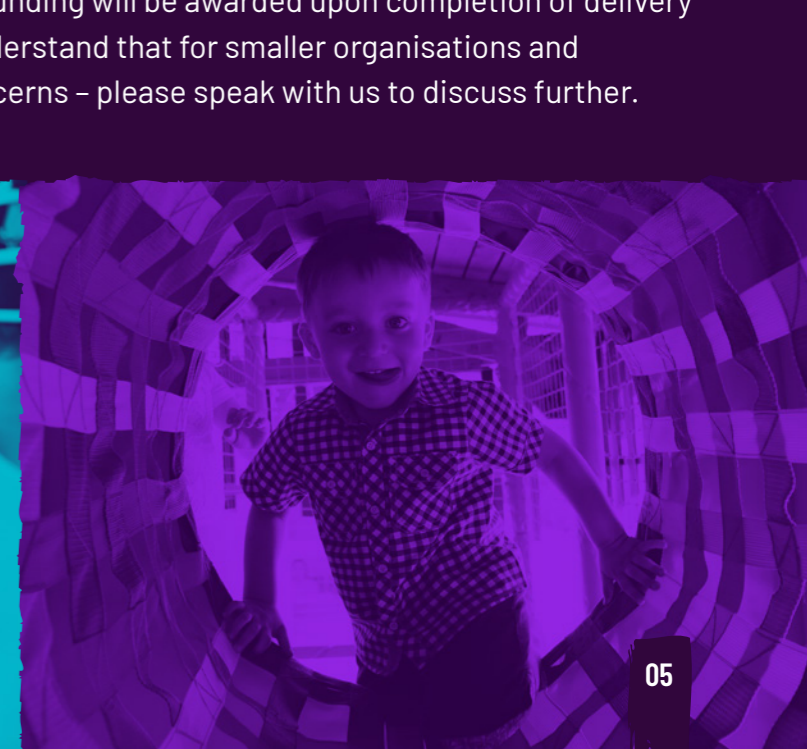
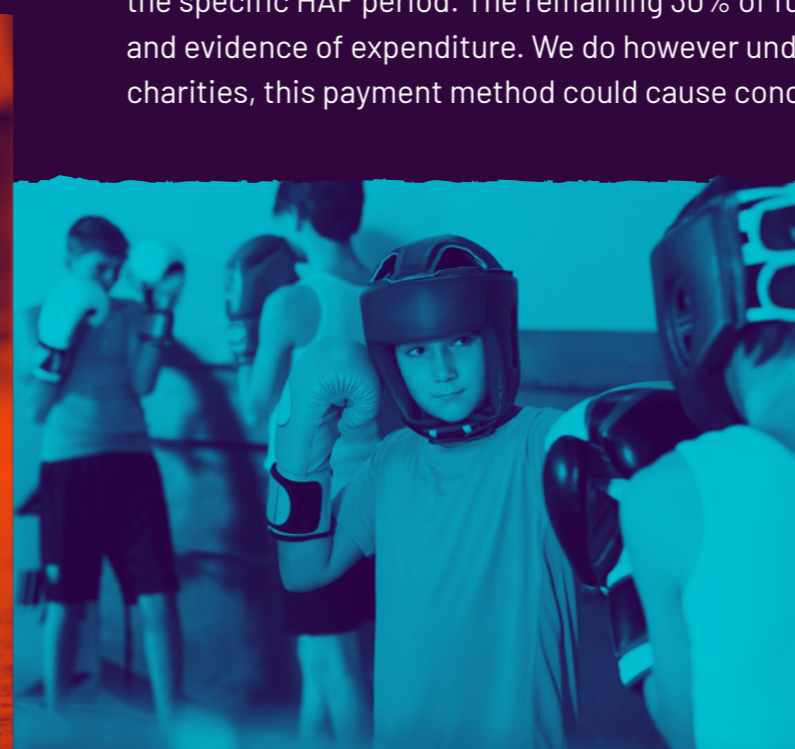
After considering the available funding against the increased number of local children eligible for benefit related free school meals and the targets set by the Department for Education, we need providers to consider their proposals carefully so that a maximum cost per child per day of £25 is achieved. This figure may be higher for SEND providers. We ask that costings from the providers reflect the true costs. There will be increased scrutiny on your costings.

Providers will not be able to apply for places for children that are not eligible for benefit related free school meals. If a provider chooses to offer these places, they must have a suitable charging policy in place.

The 15% of the funding allocation that is available to provide places for children that are not in receipt of benefit related free school meals will be managed by the Local Authority.

No additional funding will be available for trips. All costs must be covered within the £25 maximum allocation.

If an application is successful, providers will be paid 70% of the grant awarded prior to delivery for the specific HAF period. The remaining 30% of funding will be awarded upon completion of delivery and evidence of expenditure. We do however understand that for smaller organisations and charities, this payment method could cause concerns – please speak with us to discuss further.



We have a HAF Booking System that providers are required to use – EEQU – including undertaking the required training and uploading your HAF Club information onto it (this will be your responsibility). The system will allow you to manage your bookings including real-time registers and the ability to contact the families booked onto your HAF Clubs. There will be clear deadlines of when the information needs to be uploaded onto the booking system. If your grant application is successful, you will be notified of these dates.

There will be central promotion of the HAF programmes, but it is your responsibility to ensure that all of your HAF Club places are filled. We encourage you to advertise these yourself as well.

Programmes need to enable children and young people to; please indicate how you will achieve this in your application form:

- **Eat more healthily over the school holidays;**
- **Be more active during the school holidays;**
- **Take part in engaging and enriching activities which support the development of resilience, character and wellbeing along with their wider educational attainment;**
- **Be safe and not to be socially isolated;**
- **Have a greater knowledge of health and nutrition;**
- **Be more engaged with school and other local services.**

Programmes need to also ensure participating families:

- **Develop their understanding of nutrition and food budgeting;**
- **Are sign posted towards other information and support.**

Please ensure when completing forms that you also include the contact details for the people who will actually be delivering the activity and the exact location of that delivery if this is different to the applicant.



CRITERIA

Delivery organisations can be charities, social enterprises, commercial companies, or any other type of organisation.

Delivery staff **must** be appropriately qualified/experienced and have the appropriate DBS clearance in place.

It is the legal responsibility of delivery organisations to ensure that they have the correct Ofsted registration. Please read the HAF guidance using the link above. If an organisation is registered with Ofsted, a rating of 'good' or 'outstanding' must be in place.

Organisations **must** be in a position to complete the monitoring required.

The beneficiaries of the holiday clubs **must** be school aged children and young people in reception class or above (up to Year 11 or Year 13 if SEND), who are eligible for free school meal related benefits and are resident in the Local Authority areas of Redcar & Cleveland or Middlesbrough.

Activity **must** take place during the named school holidays (see weblinks above).

Capital expenditure will normally be limited to about 2% of the total value of the application and will only be considered in special circumstances. Expenditure that is on an individual asset worth over £2,500 will be considered to be capital expenditure. Expenditure on a group of assets, that is, assets of a similar nature that are purchased at the same time, which together cost £2,500 or more will be considered capital expenditure. This will be dependent of the fact that the assets are not "used up" during the delivery of the clubs and will have a residual usefulness and/or value following the end of the delivery of the clubs.

Sessions **must** be delivered face to face.

Proposals **must** include at least one hour of physical activity per day. This should be a diverse offer.

Proposals **must** include an element of nutritional education for the children, young people and their families.

All providers **must** provide at least one meal per day, and all food provided **must** meet the school food standards.

All staff that handle food, **must** hold the relevant food hygiene qualifications.

All HAF funded provision **must** provide enriching activities to allow children to develop or consolidate new or existing skills and knowledge, try out new experiences and have fun and socialise.

HAF providers should be able to offer information, signposting or referrals to other services and support that would benefit children and their families.

If an organisation submits an application without the requested supporting documents on the application form - it will not be considered further.

Successful organisations will have diligence checks completed by the awarding body - failure to comply with these will result in the grant being declined.

If an organisation has any outstanding business debts with either council, the application will be rejected.

All buildings used by organisations for the delivery of HAF **must** be safe. All relevant checks and risk assessments **must** be completed. If a building is not, the application will be rejected.

Where mandatory training and e-learning is proposed, all providers **must** engage with this.

Where applicable, checks will be done with both local authorities.

FOOD

Food **must** be provided for each eligible child and young person and where possible a hot meal should be provided.

All of the food in your HAF Club (meals and snacks) **must** meet school food standards and we are requesting menus to evidence this at the bidding stage.

The food provider in all bids **must** be registered as a food business with the Local Authority and those preparing and handling food will be trained to level two food hygiene standards, and the food provider will have a food hygiene rating of four or above, if applicable. School Food Standards must be adhered to.

All of the food preparation will comply with the regulations (e.g., preparation) and take into account allergies, dietary and cultural requirements.

Please note that lessons learned have shown us that for morning HAF Clubs that a light breakfast on arrival enables participants to better engage in activity; in addition, funding can also be requested for healthy snacks and drinks throughout the session.

ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE

- **Venue hire costs:**
- **Staffing:**
- **Support for children with additional needs in line with their education statement:**
- **Food and refreshments:**
- **Activity materials:**
- **Day trips, including transport costs:**
- **Promotional materials - please note must include appropriate HAF branding and there is a limit of £50 per HAF provision:**
- **Reasonable and directly attributable equipment costs - see note above regarding capital expenditure:**
- **Entry fees and ticket costs.**

If in doubt, ask the question!

RIGHTS RESERVED

The funding provider will retain the right to retrieve funds being provided to the lead organisation when the funds:

- **Have not been spent on the provision of HAF clubs;**
- **Have been spent in a manner that does not reflect what is agreed through the application process;**
- **Have been spent on provisions that are made outside the agreed time scale;**
- **Have been spent on activities that performed substantially less well than what was agreed through the application process.**

The HAF advisor and/or local authority reserve the right to attend any premises granted with HAF funding without prior notice to inspect and/or assess the conditions of the above mentioned criteria, food and eligible expenditure.

Should the HAF advisor and local authority consider the above criteria to be a misrepresentation or wholly inaccurate to that which has been submitted within the application form, the HAF advisor and/or local authority reserve the right to retrospectively reject the application and seek reimbursement for any funds provided. It is the responsibility of the entity receiving the grant to ensure the HAF advisor and local authority are kept up to date with any changes to the submitted application forms.



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Any questions? Email holidayfoodandactivities@middlesbrough.gov.uk



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