



# EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION

<b>REPORT OF:</b>	Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education
<b>LEAD OFFICERS:</b>	Acting Director Children's Services and Education
<b>DATE:</b>	Thursday, 12 January 2023

<b>PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:</b>	Children, Young People and Education
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	(All Wards);
<b>KEY DECISION:</b>	Y

**SUBJECT: HAF Grant allocation 2023/2024**

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 2018, the Department for Education has funded the holiday activities and food (HAF) programme which has provided support to children in receipt of free school meals through holiday periods. Following successful pilots between 2018 and 2020, the programme was rolled out to all upper tier local authorities in 2021.

Research has shown that the school holidays can be pressure points for some families. For some children this can lead to a holiday experience gap, with children from low-income households being:

- **less likely to access organised out-of-school activities**
- **more likely to experience 'unhealthy holidays' in terms of nutrition and physical health**
- **more likely to experience social isolation**

The HAF programme is a response to this issue, enabling free places at holiday clubs for children who are entitled to free school meals. These clubs provide physical activity, a hot meal and enrichment activities alongside education and support opportunities for parents and carers. Evidence shows that free holiday clubs can have a positive impact on children and young people, and that they work best when they:

- **provide consistent and easily accessible enrichment activities**
- **cover more than just breakfast or lunch**
- **involve children (and parents) in food preparation**
- **use local partnerships and connections, particularly with the voluntary and community organisation sector**

In Blackburn with Darwen, HAF programme alone has enabled us to support 86% of our FSM children and their families throughout the Easter, summer and Christmas school holidays over the past 3 years. In summer 2022, 640 meals were distributed to families. Partners shop locally and 11 local food providers supported the programme. Partnership is our strength and we have 12 partner organisations delivering activity at each holiday. This includes 4 specific SEND groups.

We have received notification from the DfE that the HAF funding will continue for 2023/24 and this paper sets out our intentions for this programme going forwards.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Executive Board:

### **Approve:**

- The Holiday and Food Activity Fund Spend for 2023/2024 allocation of £737, 760
- The Commission of a VCSF organisation to deliver the programme on the Local Authority behalf

## **3. BACKGROUND**

### **Aims and objectives of the Holiday Activity and Food programme**

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 in school holidays during 2023/2024.

This covers 1 week at Easter, four weeks in the summer and a week's worth of provision during Christmas. (The same for 2024/2025, this will be subject to DfE agreement and satisfactory performance).

The provision could be via existing holiday clubs that are supported to provide free places for eligible children and young people or it may fund new provision where there are gaps. Holiday clubs can also be made available to any children not eligible for and in receipt of free school meals, who can pay to attend.

The overarching aims of the programme are to enable 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.

We also want to ensure that the families who participate in this programme:

- develop their understanding of nutrition and food budgeting
- are signposted towards other information and support, for example, health, employment and education.

### **Expected Outcomes**

- To deliver an exciting programme of holiday activities for children and young people

- To ensure that children and families receive a nutritious food offer during the identified holiday periods

Children and families develop their understanding of nutrition and food budgeting as well as being sign posted towards other information and support e.g health, employment and education.

### **Evidence Base**

Evidence suggests that free holiday clubs can have a positive impact on children and young people. It also shows 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.

In November 2020 the Department for Education announced a grant to Local Authorities to provide free places at holiday clubs for children who are entitled to free school meals. These clubs will provide physical activity, a hot meal and enrichment activities alongside education and support opportunities for parents and carers.

The current provider is Spring North and they have project managed this work since 2021. Last year Spring North continued to manage the project under a waiver. This was due to timelines and late notification of further funding.

## **4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS**

### **Service Description**

The provider will project manage and coordinate the delivery of Blackburn with Darwen's 2023-2024 of the Holiday activity and Food (HAF) programme in the first instance. Subject to funding and satisfactory performance will also deliver 2024-2025 programme. The provider will work closely with the Council's Childrens and Education Directorate to co-ordinate and manage a high quality, equitable and accessible offer across the borough.

### **Accessibility, fairness and equity of provision**

The HAF programme will comply with the Equality Act 2010 and will be non-stigmatising and non-discriminatory, providing fair and equitable access for all.

It will also work in a way that it does not discriminate against individuals on the grounds of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, sexual practices, gender reassignment, age, pregnancy or maternity, marriage/civil partnership or belief system and will ensure that all applicable legislation is adhered to.

### **Essential links to other services / care pathways**

The provider will work to ensure that it develops close links with local partners to ensure those most in need are targeted and supported. These partners include but are not limited to:

Children's Centres  
Schools  
Young People's Services  
0-19 Healthy Child Programme  
Social Workers  
Children in Our Care team  
Strategic Youth Alliance  
Public Health

## 5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no policy implications

## 6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The current contract will end March 2023. The current contract was an Invitation to Quote (ITQ) process as the service was only tendered for 1 year. It was then extended by waiver for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year due to Covid and the notification of extended funding from the Department for Education.

The Holiday and Food Activity Fund Spend for 2023/2024 allocation is £737, 760.

£55k of this will be awarded to a provider to project manage and coordinate the delivery of Blackburn with Darwen's 2023-2024 Holiday activity and Food (HAF) programme in the first instance. Subject to funding and satisfactory performance they will also deliver the 2024-2025 programme.

The provider will work closely with the Council's Childrens and Education Directorate to co-ordinate and manage a high quality, equitable and accessible offer across the borough. The rest of the funding will be given to delivery partners to provide the Holiday activity and Food (HAF) programme as per DfE guidelines.

As the DfE funding is for two years, the project management apportion of the funding (£55k per year) will exceed the £80K threshold for an ITQ process, it will now have to be re-procured through an Invitation to Tender process.

## 7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Tender will be in accordance with the Council's Contract Procurement Procedure Rules.

## 8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no resource implications.

## 9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

**Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.**

Option 1  Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2  In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3  In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

**10. CONSULTATIONS**

N/A

**11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE**

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

**12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published on the day following the meeting.

<b>VERSION:</b>	<b>1</b>
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<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>Maria Nugent, Charlotte Pickles</b>
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<b>DATE:</b>	14/12/2022
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<b>BACKGROUND PAPER:</b>	
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