

Holiday, Activities and Food Programme

The Holiday, Activities and Food (HAF) programme is funded by the Department for Education and delivered locally by London Borough of Hillingdon. This programme seeks to provide children in receipt of benefits-related free school meals (FSM) with free holiday provision, including healthy food and enriching activities.

Research has shown that the school holidays can be pressure points for some families. For some children that 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

A portion of the HAF funding is also used to support vulnerable children and families who are not in receipt of benefits-related FSM but would benefit from HAF. This includes children assessed by the local authority as being in need, at risk or vulnerable, young carers, looked-after children, children with an EHC (education, health and care) plan, children with SEND, refugees and asylum seekers.

Hillingdon offers a range of programmes across the Easter, Summer and Christmas holiday periods to school-aged children from reception to year 11 (inclusive). Through our programme of healthy food and fun activities, children and young people can develop new skills, take part in creative and physical activities, learn about food and nutrition, and enjoy a free nutritious meal each day.

We work with a range of providers who offer direct face-to-face activities for children and young people (and families, where appropriate) alongside a meal in a school or community setting. Providers that we have funded to deliver our HAF programme include community and voluntary organisations, not-for-profit companies, registered charities, community interest companies, schools and private companies operating in Hillingdon.

Activities delivered include:

- A selection of sports including rugby, cricket, football, netball, cycling
- Outdoor adventure activities such as watersports, climbing, orienteering
- Arts and crafts
- Music, drama and dance
- Cooking classes and activities
- STEM activities such as coding, RC workshops
- Support to parents/guardians around food and nutrition

- Specialist SEND provision

During 2022 Hillingdon's HAF programme offered over 35,800 sessional places to children across the Borough with between 1100 and 1750 unique children participating at each project (Easter, Summer and Winter).