

Derby Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme Easter 2026

Guidance Notes



Funded by



Department
for Education

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1 Overview

The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme aims to provide enriching activities and a healthy meal for school aged children who receive benefits-related free school meals (FSM) during the Easter, Summer and Winter school holidays. In Derby, the HAF programme is delivered by Derby City Council in partnership with Community Action.

School holidays can be 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. Children from disadvantaged families are:

- 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.

We know that returning to school in poor physical and mental condition can have a detrimental impact on children’s mental and physical wellbeing, as well as their educational attainment. The aim of this funding is to provide one nutritious meal each day and to make holiday clubs available to eligible children for four hours a day, for four days a week as follows:

- for one week of the Easter school holidays,
- for four weeks of the summer school holiday period and
- for one week of the winter school holidays.

The Department for Education has given local authorities the discretion to deliver additional HAF provision during half term holidays if there is likely to be a significant underspend following the main delivery periods. There will be a limited budget for this provision and would therefore be a smaller, targeted HAF provision. The decision to deliver during the half term holidays is at the discretion of Derby City Council and providers would be informed as soon as possible in the year if half term delivery is feasible. If we can offer half term provision, this would not be until at least October 2026 or February 2027. Further guidance on this will follow later in the year.

The HAF programme supports the Government’s commitment to increasing the availability of high quality and affordable, flexible childcare as part of its Best Start in Life strategy. For more information on the range of childcare available, [Best Start in Life - Best Start in Life](#).

2 Aims of the programme

There are many benefits for children who attend the HAF programme. We want to encourage all HAF providers to ensure a high-quality experience that will result in children:

- receiving healthy and nutritious meals.
- maintaining a healthy level of physical activity.
- being happy, having fun and meeting new friends.
- developing a greater understanding of food, nutrition and other health-related issues.

- taking part in fun and engaging activities that support their development.
- feeling safe and secure.
- getting access to the right support services.
- returning to school feeling engaged and ready to learn.

Families can also benefit when HAF providers include their needs in planning and delivering their programme. This could be through:

- providing opportunities to get involved in cookery classes.
- ensuring they are signposted towards other sources of information and support, such as health services or employment and education opportunities.

3 Who can apply to deliver HAF?

This fund is open to schools, the voluntary sector and private providers who can meet the objectives of the programme. We would welcome joint applications from organisations working in partnership to offer children and young people holiday club experiences, ensuring that the diverse needs of children in our city are taken into consideration.

For Easter 2026, we are particularly interested to receive applications from organisations who can deliver targeted holiday clubs for:

- Children who are in Reception and Year One in school - please note that this may require you to be part of Ofsted's Early Years register
- Older teenagers – we would be interested to receive applications for creative and flexible provision that would engage this age group
- Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, including those with complex needs
- Providers who can offer HAF funded and privately funded places
- Providers with the capacity to consider delivering year-round wraparound care to support Derby's wider childcare offer – for more information please see: [Wraparound childcare - Derby City Council](#)

4 Where will clubs be funded?

As the HAF programme is to support children who are eligible for FSM, the location of clubs is a very important factor in the allocation of funding. The distribution of children eligible for FSM across the city is not equal, with some areas having more FSM eligible children than others. We also know that these same areas often lack sufficient holiday activity opportunities. We will therefore prioritise resources in certain areas. Please highlight marginalised communities, or those lacking opportunities for holiday activities on your application. Organisations may choose to provide in one or more location, depending on their capacity and demand.

To see Derby's FSM data, please see Appendix 1. The FSM data is broken down by ward, but if you require FSM data for individual schools to help you to plan your provision, please contact derbyHAF@derby.gov.uk.

5 What must be included in provision?

The Department for Education has a Framework of Standards which all local authority areas assess their HAF provision against. Your HAF provision must include the following:

- Food provision – please see Appendix 2 for more detail
- Increasing awareness of healthy eating, healthy lifestyles, and positive behaviours
- Physical activities
- Enrichment activities
- Signposting and referrals and supporting families
- Policies and procedures

The full list of policies and procedures that are required is set out in Appendix 3.

In addition to the requirements above, the DfE also requires providers to work with the local authority to ensure that the following areas are reflected in their ethos, day-to-day operations and throughout the delivery of their HAF programmes:

- Accessibility and inclusiveness
- Environment and sustainability

Full details on the DfE Framework of Standards can be found here: [Holiday activities and food programme 2026 to 2027 - GOV.UK](#)

Signposting and referrals and supporting families

Organisations must be able to provide information, signposting or referrals to other services and support that will benefit the children who attend their provision and their families. Useful local information to support families with the cost of living can be found here: [Cost of Living Support | Community Action Derby](#)

Accessibility and inclusiveness

We want to ensure that Derby's HAF programme is as accessible and inclusive as possible, so that all children and young people can have a positive experience.

All providers in Derby are required to implement the below Inclusion Toolkit strategies to ensure accessibility and inclusivity within their settings:

- A welcome pack – introducing your setting, the venue, staff etc.
- A visual timetable / 'now & next' board
- A regulation space – a quiet space with sensory items to support a child's ability to regulate

- A system for ensuring that providers collect as much information as possible about children with additional needs, prior to them attending your HAF club, to ensure that their needs can be met.

The HAF team can provide templates and ideas to support implementation of the above if required. Additional support will be available if required to enhance your provision.

This Inclusion Toolkit may continue to be developed and co-produced for future HAF delivery.

6 How much funding can my organisation apply for?

The maximum amount your organisation can apply for will depend on the number of places your organisation has available per day and the kind of provision your organisation offers.

A 'place' is one four-hour session for one child. For example, if you can host 25 children per day at your Easter holiday club, you are offering 25 places per day. Over 4 days of Easter you can offer 100 places.

We ask providers to work to our guide price of £25 per child, per day for mainstream provision. Applications at a higher cost per place will be considered, but there must be a clear reason for the higher cost – for example, delivering a specialist skill / qualification. Your cost per head will be one of the factors taken into consideration during your application interview and by the decision-making panel.

To calculate your price per place, fully cost your provision and divide that by the total number of places you can provide over the period.

Your application should detail clearly how you have arrived at the price per place you have offered. This is to include a breakdown of your budget forecast. Your budget forecast should include all costs associated with the programme: venue hire or contribution to overheads, food and refreshments, staff and/or freelance workers, volunteer expenses, external activity providers / enrichment, local trips, consumables such as arts and craft materials or sports equipment and marketing and management costs. Note that this is not an exhaustive list.

Funding for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

Specialist provision for children with SEND

Organisations that can offer provision for children where specialist support is required, such as feeding, personal care, specialist therapeutic treatments or specialist equipment are asked to contact the HAF team at derbyHAF@derby.gov.uk for a conversation to discuss potential provision and funding before applying.

Places for children with SEND in mainstream clubs

We recognise that some mainstream providers can support children with SEND as part of their wider programme. If you can offer additional places, please include in your budget a breakdown

of any additional resources or staffing that are required to support the additional children and to ensure that they can fully access the provision. Before applying for these additional places, please consider carefully the qualifications, skills and experience of your staff and volunteers, as well as the suitability of your venue and programme, to ensure that this is a fully inclusive and welcoming environment for children with SEND.

When completing your budget breakdown please take the following into consideration:

- HAF provision is for four hours a day. We acknowledge that set up / pack away time is needed, so the maximum we will fund staff for is 5 hours per day.
- There can be some flexibility on delivery hours for children with SEND and for more flexible teenage offers.
- If there are exceptional circumstances where you need to deliver a different model, please contact the HAF team to discuss.
- Providers are strongly encouraged to offer privately paid for places at the holiday club. Note that if you are offering paid for and HAF places at the same club, there must be no difference in the provision received by the two different groups of children.
- The maximum food cost will be £6 per child per day, unless there are specialist circumstances which you must outline in your application.
- The maximum cost for leaflets / posters is £50.

Staffing ratios

- If your HAF provision is registered with OFSTED on the Early Years Register or Compulsory Childcare Register, you must adhere to the same staffing requirements (staff ratios, qualifications, and safe recruitment practices) as after-school clubs.
- If your HAF provision is exempt from OFSTED registration, then you must not exceed the non-statutory NSPCC recommended ratios below, unless there are exceptional circumstances, which must be discussed with the HAF team. It is essential that you have at least two staff or volunteers present, even with very small groups. Please note that in some circumstances these ratios may need to be higher, for example supporting children with SEND.
 - 4 - 8 years - one adult to six children
 - 9 - 12 years - one adult to eight children
 - 13 - 16 years - one adult to 10 children.

7 How will payments be administered?

Payments will be made to successful applicants in two instalments for each individual delivery period (Easter, summer and winter).

- Instalment 1 of 70% is paid prior to the provision. This payment will be made once all Due Diligence requirements outlined in Appendix 5 have been met by the provider and a signed Service Level Agreement has been received.
- Instalment 2 of up to 30% is paid following the delivery of provision, dependent on achieving the criteria below. This second payment will be made once all monitoring and quality assurance requirements have been met.

Attendance above 80%	Additional 10% of grant paid
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Fulfilling all criteria in Inclusion Toolkit	Additional 10% of grant paid
Successful QA visit with all areas of the DfE Framework of Standards delivered to a satisfactory level	Additional 5% of grant paid
All deadlines met, including submitting policies, signing and returning on SLA, uploading club details onto the system and returning monitoring information, approving pending bookings / cancelling places within 24 hours	Additional 5% of grant paid

For example, a provider has been offered a grant of £10,000 for their HAF delivery. The first 70% (£7000) is paid prior to delivery. The final 30% payment is dependent on meeting all the criteria above.

If the provider has achieved over 80% attendance and met all the other criteria outlined above, they will receive the full 30% (£3000).

If, for example, the provider has met all the above criteria but has not reached 80% attendance, they would have a reduction of £1000, which is 10% of their total grant.

The approach above reflects the DfE's requirement to assure value for money, quality provision and to reduce the number of unfilled places that are paid for.

8 Monitoring and reporting requirements

For 2026 we will continue to work with the Holiday Activities booking system. As well as producing eligibility codes and providing a booking system, the system will collect all the provider's attendance data which will be collated and reported to the DfE. Using the Holiday Activities booking system is mandatory for all successful applicants.

Providers that do not record attendance in 'real time', must add their attendance data within 72 hours of delivery.

In addition to the booking and attendance data, providers will be required to return qualitative information, including participants' feedback, parental feedback, self-assessment of key components of HAF delivery and case studies by the agreed deadline, generally within two weeks of the end of HAF delivery.

Providers will not be expected to return financial information. However, if Derby City Council or Community Action Derby has any grounds for suspecting financial irregularity in the use of any grant, an investigation will take place. For these purposes, 'financial irregularity' includes fraud or other impropriety, mismanagement and the use of grant for purposes other than those for which it was provided. Community Action reserves the right to request evidence of spend from HAF funding.

Providers must retain all receipts and records relating to their HAF provision, as Derby City Council or Community Action can request these at any time to complete a financial audit of the provision.

9 Quality assurance

Providers will be required to return a self-assessment focussing on the following areas:

- Provision of healthy food
- Nutritional education
- Physical activities
- Enrichment activities
- Safeguarding
- Policies and procedures
- Signposting and onward referrals
- Accessibility and inclusivity
- Environment and sustainability

Members of the HAF team may make unannounced Quality Assurance visits at any time during your HAF provision. They may arrive at any time and stay for as long as is required. They may request to speak to management, staff, volunteers, parents or carers and children. This will be followed by a feedback meeting with the provider's programme lead, giving the HAF team opportunity to carry out any checks and raise any issues arising from their visit.

10 Booking system and marketing

The Holiday Activities booking system has helped boost attendance numbers at HAF clubs significantly by ensuring we reach every family who receives benefit-related free school meals.

HAF providers are responsible for ensuring that their HAF provision is promoted locally, via schools, community venues and to all local contacts via websites and social media.

We recommend providers 'over-book' places by at least 10% - 20% to ensure all places are filled.

If a HAF club has less than 50% of places booked three weeks prior to delivery, a meeting will be held between the HAF Team and the provider to discuss what actions can be taken to improve attendance. If bookings remain under 50% two weeks prior to delivery, the HAF team reserves the right to cancel the provision or reduce number of places dependent on bookings.

11 What are the timescales for applying?

The key dates for Easter 2026 applications are set out below.

Easter 2026 applications open	Monday 5 January
Deadline for applications to be submitted	Monday 26 January at 8am
HAF Team interviews with providers	Tuesday 27 and Wednesday 28 January

Decision making panel	Tuesday 3 February
Applicants informed of outcome	Friday 6 February
All policies to be received by	Monday 16 February
Easter delivery begins	Monday 30 March 2026

12 Evaluation of applications

Derby City Council and Community Action will ensure that there is a transparent and fair process for assessing grant applications. The assessment will be made by a panel which has an overview of how the applications align with other services available in the city, how diversity issues are addressed, and the views of service users.

Factors that will be considered in the assessment of the application include:

- ability to meet the requirements of the DfE HAF criteria
- evidence of ability to provide / deliver the policies & procedures outlined in Appendix 3
- ensuring that levels of provision are proportionate to FSM levels in each ward
- ability to deliver value for money
- ability to deliver a creative and innovative programme
- priority will be given to providers who are based in Derby or have a strong track record of delivering similar provision in Derby

The funding decision is then ratified through Derby City Council's Local Area Governance arrangements.

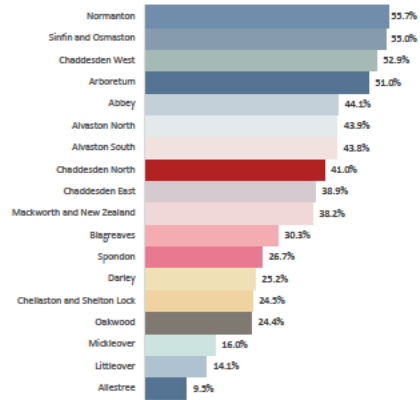
Appendix 1 – FSM Data by Ward

Eligible for free school meals (FSM) 2025 by ward



Statutory-aged pupils only - pupils in national curriculum year groups from reception to year 11

ward	number of current FSM pupils	current FSM pupils as a percentage of the school population in each ward
Abbey	975	44.1
Allestree	134	9.5
Alvaston North	1,120	43.9
Alvaston South	981	43.8
Arboretum	1,553	51.0
Blagreaves	660	30.3
Chaddesden East	529	38.9
Chaddesden North	626	41.0
Chaddesden West	812	52.9
Chellaston and Shelton Lock	549	24.5
Derley	340	25.2
Littleover	305	14.1
Mackworth and New Zealand	925	38.2
Mickleover	291	16.0
Normanton	2,544	55.7
Oakwood	321	24.4
Sirfin and Osmaston	1,734	56.0
Spondon	444	26.7
Derby ward total	14,852	38.3
pupils living outside Derby but attending Derby schools	704	22.4
invalid postcodes	17	37.0
Pupils attending Derby schools total	15,573	37.1



Source: spring school census

Policy and Insight Team

26/03/2025
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Appendix 2 - Food Provision

In addition to the main DfE guidance on food provision, we expect all organisations delivering HAF in Derby to ensure:

- Hot food is provided where possible – ‘packed lunch’ style food should be a last resort and used only in circumstances where hot food is not possible, for example, when out on a day trip
- Drinking water is available and easily accessible throughout every session
- No serving of fizzy drinks or those with added sugar
- Limited serving of fried foods (maximum of once a week)
- Meals and snacks meet at least 2 portions of a child’s 5 a-day of fruit and vegetables
- Excessive amounts of fat, salt & sugar are limited
- Attention to correct portion size is exercised
- Food and meals provided are ethnically sensitive and evidence cultural awareness
- All food provided as part of the programme complies with regulations on food preparation, including Natasha’s Law, and consider allergies, dietary requirements and preferences, as well as any religious or cultural requirements for food.

All HAF providers will be required to register as a Food Business. For more information, please see Appendix 5 below.

Appendix 3 – Policies and Procedures

Record keeping

Organisations must keep a record of staff and volunteers that includes the following details. Note that members of the HAF Team from Derby City Council or Community Action reserve the right to request any or all of these documents before, during or following provision taking place.

Disclosure and Barring Service information including: DBS certificate number, date certificate was issued, date of expiry, date of last online verification where this is available, confirmation checked against a form of official ID.

Safeguarding training information including: date of training, accrediting body, level of training.

First aid training including: date of certification, date of expiry, training / certification provider

Food Hygiene training including: date of certification, date of expiry, level of training.

Ofsted registration

- It is the responsibility of individual HAF providers to understand whether they are required by law to be Ofsted registered and to continue to review their status as and when the provision they are offering changes.
- Where provision includes children up to 8 years old venues must be OFSTED registered.
- Please see guidance on Ofsted registration here: [Childminders and childcare providers: register with Ofsted - Guidance - GOV.UK](#)
- Voluntary registration on the Ofsted register is encouraged for all providers. Voluntary registration offers several advantages including:
 - Enhanced Credibility: Registration demonstrates that your club meets Ofsted's standards, giving parents confidence that their children are in a safe and regulated environment.
 - Access to Government Subsidies: Once registered, your club qualifies as approved childcare, allowing parents to use government subsidies like childcare vouchers or Tax-Free Childcare to help pay for your services. Further information is available here: [Sign up to Tax-Free Childcare if you're a childcare provider - GOV.UK](#)

Health and safety

- A qualified First Aider must be on site throughout each HAF session.
- Risk assessments must be completed on the venue for the provision and any other venues visited during HAF delivery, including for trips

Food business registration

- All staff and volunteers handling food must be trained to Food Hygiene level 2. Free online Level 2 training is available, please contact DerbyHAF@derby.gov.uk for more information.
- All HAF providers will be required to register as a Food Business. This provides reassurance to all of those involved that food safety standards are being met. Guidance, support and advice will be given to HAF providers by the Derby City Council's Food Safety Team. Further information is available here: [Food advice for businesses - Derby City Council](#)
- All food provided as part of the programme must comply to regulations on food preparation, including Natasha's Law, and consider allergies, dietary requirements and preferences, as well as any religious or cultural requirements for food. Further information is available here: [Introduction to allergen labelling for PPDS food | Food Standards Agency](#)

Ensuring equality in the community

- Derby City Council and Community Action believe in equality of opportunity. We will make sure that all organisations have fair access to our grants. We also want organisations who receive grants from us to have a commitment to, and to actively promote equal opportunities.
- Think of what you can do to make sure you will not discriminate against any child or family because of their low-income background or any of the 9 protected characteristics. Work to foster good relations across all characteristics, between people who share a protected characteristic, and people who do not.

More information on the protected characteristics can be found here: [Discrimination: your rights: Types of discrimination \('protected characteristics'\) - GOV.UK](#)

Appendix 4 - Safeguarding

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is very important to us, and we want to ensure that funded organisations make appropriate arrangements to ensure that services and activities provided take due care to protect children and young people, staff and volunteers.

To provide reassurance to all on the safe delivery of the HAF programme, **we require that all providers read and implement all the guidance in the document below:**

[After-school clubs, community activities, and tuition - safeguarding guidance for providers](#)

Key points

- A Designated Safeguarding Lead must be available throughout each HAF session.
- All staff and volunteers involved with the children and young people must have safeguarding training. It is recommended that all staff and volunteers have accredited training to level 1 in Safeguarding as a minimum. Free safeguarding training is available at [Derby Safeguarding Children Partnership](#) or by contacting DerbyHAF@derby.gov.uk.
- All staff and volunteers involved with the children and young people must have been DBS checked at the appropriate level. Note the DfE's HAF guidance for 2026-2027 states that all staff employed by HAF-funded holiday club providers should be subject to an enhanced DBS check with barred list information.
- All staff must refresh their safeguarding training once a year.
- All HAF providers working in school settings should be familiar with part 1 of [Keeping children safe in education 2025](#)
- All HAF providers should follow a safer recruitment process. Part 3 of [Keeping children safe in education 2025](#) sets out a clear process for safe recruitment. We recommend that local authorities and holiday club providers follow this best practice when recruiting volunteers.

Appendix 5 - Due Diligence Requirements

Derby City Council and Community Action reserve the option to delay funding to successful applicants until due diligence checks have been undertaken.

You will need to have the following policies in place at least 6 weeks prior to HAF delivery. The documents listed below should be submitted to derbyHAF@derby.gov.uk. Please see page 8 for deadline dates for submitting the documents below.

- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Child Protection / Safeguarding Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Fire safety and evacuation plan for each setting
- Staff behaviour policy / code of conduct
- Complaints Policy
- GDPR / Data Protection policy
- Risk assessment for each venue being used

In addition to the policies listed above, each provider must submit the following by the same deadline:

- Constitution or other Governance document
- Registered charity or company number
- Public Liability Insurance with a minimum of £5,000,000 cover
- Most recent registered accounts (or budget forecast for newly established organisations)
- Ofsted registration details, where applicable
- Proof of Registered Food Business or in the process of registering
- Bank details to allow Community Action to make the grant payment.

If you need any support or advice on any of the above, please contact Community Action on 01332 346266 or at haf@communityactionderby.org.uk.