

**Activity and food events Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**  
**Updated Spring 2025**

Introduction:

This document provides information for organisations who would like to submit an expression of interest (EOI), to deliver the Holiday Activities and Food programme #HAF2025

Background:

The Council has been awarded grant funding, by the Department for Education (DfE), to coordinate free activities and food, **for children and young people in receipt of benefit related Free School Meals (FSM)**, during the Spring, Summer, and Spring school holidays in 2024.

We hope that by doing this that children and young people across Milton Keynes, will be supported to

- eat more healthily over the school holidays
- be more active during the school holidays
- take part in engaging and enriching activities
- be safe and not to be socially isolated
- have greater knowledge of health and nutrition; and
- be more engaged with school and other local services

## FAQs:

### 1. Activities

Question	Answer
Is there a minimum period of time the sessions need to be?	<p>For Spring, funding will be available for sessions that are 4 hours long, we do not fund any additional hours.</p> <p>The aim is for provision to be delivered face to face for up to 4 days, covering 4 hours each operating day.</p>
What venues or spaces can be used to deliver provision?	<p>We are not prescriptive on the space that should be used to deliver activities. This should be suitable for the type of activity taking place and have all appropriate risk assessments and insurances. This could include public and community spaces, such as schools, parks, libraries, community and leisure centres.</p> <p>We encourage providers to consider the FSM heatmap, to ensure provision is in an area where FSM children and young people live.</p>
Can events focus on a certain age group?	<p>In line with the DfE funding, sessions should be aimed at school aged children, 4-16-year olds.</p> <p>You can apply to run different projects for different age groups as we understand what will entertain and engage a 5-year-old will be different to a 16-year-old.</p>
Are the same children/young people expected to attend for the whole programme or can it be different children/young people attending every day?	<p>No, you can have different children attending everyday as we know not all children will require the provision for the whole time.</p> <p>Bookings will be made by the families through an online booking system, which providers will receive onboarding and support to use. This will allow for families to choose what days and sessions they book onto.</p>

Can the 4 hours be flexible on start times?	Yes, you can deliver the provision whatever time you would like, and we would encourage to strongly consider what times will best suit your target audience.
Are there any examples of what Enrichment activities are suitable?	The DfE guidance outlined that activities should support the development of resilience, character and wellbeing along with their wider educational attainment. Previous pilot projects from other Local Authority areas have shared some case studies here: <a href="#">HAF 2020 Case Studies</a>

## 2. Funding

Question	Answer
How much funding can my organisation apply for?	Costs will be determined by several different variables for each organisation. You will be required to provide a rationale and evidence to justify the costs you include and the funds you request through this process. To ensure that we best serve the residents of Milton Keynes we will be applying a value for money exercise.
What number of places can I offer?	Number of places is determined by the provider, however we use data to ensure that places are in line with the session delivery area to maximise the opportunity for Children to attend. Where data and evidence suggest that a provider is offering too many places, we will seek to negotiate the number of places to ensure that the provision is successful.
My costs are based on a price per child per day. What is the expected cost of this?	Expected costs per child per day vary depending on the type of session and the inclusion of food. We expect providers to be applying a value for money exercise when planning activities and food.
Do we still get financial support if a child does not turn up?	If a child has booked a place, but does not turn up, this place will still be funded. In the event a child or young person does not attend the session, we would expect that the family would be contacted to ensure

	<p>that the child is safe and to identify if the family needs any additional support.</p> <p>We hope to engage providers who are confident they will attract and engage children and young people to attend their provision, through working closely with schools and local groups.</p> <p>Families will need to book places on activities, which will enable providers to be appropriately prepared.</p>
<p>How does non-attendance affect future funding requests?</p>	<p>We review past provider attendance data to support our decision making to ensure that funding is best utilised to support the residents of Milton Keynes.</p> <p>This is then reflected in the scoring matrix.</p>
<p>What organisations can apply for the funding?</p>	<p>Funding requests are open to the voluntary, public and private sector, provided your organisation can meet the objectives of the programme and have the appropriate policies in place as detailed in the EOI.</p>
<p>Do providers need to be Ofsted registered?</p>	<p>Holiday clubs may need to register with Ofsted, or they may be exempt from registration.</p> <p>Both clubs and providers that would require registration with Ofsted, and those that are exempt, can participate in the holiday activities and food programme.</p> <p>Guidance on the exemptions to Ofsted registration are set out <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>Families may be eligible for tax free childcare or the childcare costs element of Universal Credit. Through this families may be able to claim back up to 85% of their childcare costs if they are attending and paying for extra childcare at Ofsted registered settings.</p> <p>We offer additional points on the scoring matrix for OFSTED registered providers.</p>

### 3. Food

Question	Answer
What are the expectations around the food offer?	<p>The DfE grant requirements set out that food should meet the <a href="#">school food standards</a>, ensuring all children and young people receive a healthy, balanced meal.</p> <p>Our expectation is providers serve hot food and offer a good variety of healthy foods that children and young people can choose from</p> <p>We acknowledge that there will be occasional days when hot food is not possible and that a cold alternative should be used</p> <p>The food should be provided free at point of access. Food options can include, cooking on site, hot food delivery, cook, share, and eat, or a combination of these. Packed lunches will only be accepted as part of a trip where hot food cannot be organised</p>

	<p><b>From 1 October 2021</b>, changes to the Food Information Regulations 2014 came into effect, adding new labelling requirements for food that is pre-packed for direct sale (PPDS).</p> <p>We expect providers to read the <a href="#">guidance on the Food Standards Agency website</a> and ensure that all food provision for the HAF programme meets these requirements and is compliant with food handling.</p>
<p>Can I still apply if I am unable to provide food alongside an activity?</p>	<p>It is part of the HAF core offer to supply a healthy meal and funding will not be offered without a meal option</p> <p>We would encourage all providers to think about how they can provide healthy meals alongside their provision and consider local food distributors to support with the meal.</p> <p>Local businesses and organisations may be keen to help you, it is always worth asking.</p>
<p>Do we have to use a certain food supplier for the project?</p>	<p>No, you can use your own ways of providing food for the project, but it must meet <a href="#">school food standards</a>.</p> <p><b>From 1 October 2021</b>, changes to the Food Information Regulations 2014 came into effect, adding new labelling requirements for food that is pre-packed for direct sale (PPDS).</p> <p>We expect providers to read the <a href="#">guidance on the Food Standards Agency website</a> and ensure that all food provision for the HAF programme meets these requirements.</p>
<p>Do I need to be registered as a Food Provider?</p>	<p>Yes, if you run a food business and store, prepare, distribute or sell food from any premises then by law you must register with the local authority.</p> <p>Further information is available on <a href="#">food business registration</a>.</p>
<p>Will it need to be a hot meal, or would a lunchbox style meal be adequate?</p>	<p>The focus is on providing healthy hot food alongside an activity, and only in</p>

	exceptional circumstances this main meal should be supplied cold. There are a range of ways to provide this healthy food, and we are keen to use your knowledge and skills to identify the most appropriate way to deliver this food.
What times do the meals need to be provided?	Our focus is ensuring young people can access at least one healthy meal each day that meets the <a href="#">school food standards</a> that fit in with the times of the provision – there is no set time for meals and providers may wish to offer snacks and additional food above the main hot meal.

#### 4. Booking and data

Question	Answer
How do children, young people and their family's book onto events?	<p>From 2023, the council implemented an online booking platform.</p> <p>Eligible families will be distributed codes, through an evoucher if they are in receipt of benefit related Free School Meals.</p> <p>Families will then be able to create an online account and book onto sessions.</p> <p>Providers will have access to the online booking system and once set up with an account, will manage all their own listings, bookings, and registers online.</p> <p>Onboarding and support will be available to providers, and it is their responsibility to manage their bookings.</p>
Will I have to keep an attendance log?	<p>Yes, organisations will be expected to complete daily registers to provide information on attendance via the online booking system registers.</p> <p>Evaluation and funding reports will also need to be completed following the programme.</p>

	This is to ensure compliance with the DfE funding.
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## 5. Targeting Support

Question	Answer
Is there any additional funding available for supporting children with SEND?	We recognise that additional costs will be associated to offer more specialist and one-to-one support for children with additional needs. Details of these costs should be included in your expression of interest.
As a provider how do we get in touch with children who get free school lunches?	We would encourage you to make links with local schools, communities, and other providers. MKCC will be promoting the programme through the usual channels e.g. via website, as well as directly via communications through schools and the issuing of Evouchers directly to eligible families.
Will there be a focus on primary aged children, or will there be equal consideration for all age groups up to 16?	Every child who is eligible for free school meals is included in this programme, between the school ages of 4 and 16yrs.
Where are the highest number of Free School Meal children in Milton Keynes?	There is an FSM map available on our website, which shows were families who are eligible and in receipt of FSMs live.