



Ingredients to ensure the success of an Active Holiday Programme

The government's Holiday Activities with Food programme (HAF) has been piloted across the country over the last two years, in response to a growing body of research on the triple inequalities of holiday hunger, isolation, and inactivity amongst young people from low-income backgrounds during school holiday periods. The Kellogg's 'Isolation & Hunger' report (2015)¹ found that six out of ten families on less than £25,000 per annum admitted to having difficulty affording the food bills outside term time. Whilst analysis of data from the 'Living Costs and Food Survey'² reveals that households with the 20% lowest income spend on average just £3.21 per week on active sport. The impact of the pandemic has also been significant for children's mental health. Sport and physical activity is proven to positively impact on mental wellbeing, a critical factor in preparing children to be ready for school after the holidays.

The scale of the campaign spearheaded by Marcus Rashford during 2020 to ensure that children and young people in the poorest households have access to food, physical activity and opportunities to develop their character, resilience and overall wellbeing during school holiday periods, has led to the significant growth in the HAF programme for 2021.

The Department for Education specification for HAF includes an expectation that local authorities will ensure that children and young people eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) have access to daily opportunities to be active within their HAF provision.

The Chief Medical Officer guideline for physical activity for children is a minimum of 60 minutes a day where they are moving enough to be slightly out of breath. Only 44.9% of children and young people currently do this³. Increasing physical activity levels and reducing feelings of isolation are central parts of this programme – physical activity and moving more is the best way to achieve both of these objectives.

This document aims to set out some simple steps that will enable local authorities to meet the 'activity' requirements of your local programme through fun and engaging physical activity.

If you are not a sport and physical activity expert and feel daunted by how to include opportunities to be active within your provision, then the contents of this document should provide support. The document contains:

- A summary that will help you to plan and deliver sport and physical activity successfully
- A link to a website with resources from across the sport and physical activity sector – the organisations included in this resource are keen to help you make a positive difference to the lives of children and young people through physical activity across the HAF programme.

Supporting your local HAF deliverers to plan for success:

Activity should be open to all – target the right communities and you will reach those on Free School Meals and others living in low-income families. Encourage children and young people to bring their friends, in case communications to parents hasn't reached or persuaded them to help their children attend. This approach allows for those families in need to self-identify and choose to take part. Make communication straight forward and clear so parents know exactly where and when the offer is being delivered and what their children will be doing.

Plan for physical activity to be central to your offer from the outset. Then ensure you review what is working or not throughout. Plan, test and review are the most effective ways to ensure you meet the needs of the children and young people you want to reach. **Fun activities** will be one of the reasons children and young people turn up – done well, it is likely to be the main reason they keep coming back.

¹ https://www.kelloggs.co.uk/content/dam/europe/kelloggs_gb/pdf/HOLIDAY+HUNGER+REPORT.pdf

² <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/personalandhouseholdfinances/incomeandwealth/methodologies/livingcostsandfoodsurvey>

³ <https://www.sportengland.org/news/childrens-activity-levels-down-many-embrace-new-opportunities>



Have a **workforce that are able and confident to deliver physical activity** and adapt games. This is about being broader than traditional sport. If you simply provide a football, then you will exclude many from being active. Variety of activity is key to inclusion. Evidence shows that children and young people vary greatly in their confidence in sport and that active games and sessions that offer more than one activity to try have most success in engaging those less confident. Ensure you have a workforce who can deliver this style of activity or provide training (lots available) for them in preparation.

Ask and re-ask your participants how they want to be active and what motivates them. This will help you shape what you offer to suit the needs of those coming along. **Consultation isn't a one off – it's ongoing.** This will allow for people to try something new and enjoy it as well as encourage children and young people to be inventive. They might even introduce a new game to the leaders.

Seek out support –

- Know where to find free resources e.g. Change4Life where you can register for free for top tips to help with delivery - <https://www.nhs.uk/change4life>
- Find out what is already happening locally – you will have sport and youth providers doing excellent work which you could draw on

Think about **timings and be as flexible** as possible -

- If your target audience is teenagers, then don't plan for 9am starts. If you are reaching a wide age group could you look to stagger provision so times work for children, families and provide a good experience of age appropriate mixing and activities? 7-year olds will struggle to play games with 13-year olds safely and get the same levels of enjoyment
- Understand parent schedules. Are you able to offer a flexible or all day programme? Do you know when the pinch points are for parents locally – are there days of the week or times where more support is needed? Think about the impact of multiple shift patterns or jobs which may not have regular hours on consecutive days. Think about how your workforce can support this – how do you balance a programme that supports as many families as possible?

Keep it simple - Keep kit or specialist clothing requests to a minimum. If you have some at your facilities or can get some through grants – great. Children and young people should be able to come and take part in what you have planned in their everyday clothes. This may be jeans or school uniform – some families will send children in their best clothes as they are the only smart thing they have. Ensure this isn't a big deal and help them feel comfortable.

Think about where you deliver the activity – is it a **safe space**? Physical and emotional safety needs considering. Have you picked a venue which feels safe to enter and leave? Have you thought about whether you are expecting young people to cross gang boundaries or simply to travel too far? Young people typically travel no more than a mile for youth provision – exceptionally they will travel up to 3 if it is to meet friends at a centre. Think about where is considered safe or neutral locally. Provide safe spaces within your venue with areas for young people to socialise, think about making the sessions feel safe and welcoming for those not confident in 'joining in'.

Food needs to be as **nutritional** as possible – improving the relationship children and young people have with food is important. Consider which local food providers could play a key role in providing a well-balanced food offer and which partners could help provide age-appropriate nutritional resources for HAF programmes.

This should be the start not the end of engagement with the children and young people you have inspired to get active. Ensure that your delivery sessions have local information about clubs, centres and other **opportunities for children, young people and families to get active in the future.** Using local coaches and volunteers will help make these connections. Where possible get local activity providers to send leaflets or drop in to visit and promote their offers – in particular focus on those who provide free and cheap activity so that families find things that are affordable for them in the long run.

You will find more information and resources to help at: www.HAFActive.co.uk