

# NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## EXECUTIVE

9<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2021

### HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND FOOD PROGRAMME

#### Report of the Corporate Director for Children & Young People's Service

#### 1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To outline the funding allocation for North Yorkshire County Council and the conditions of grant relating to the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme.
- 1.2 To set out, and seek approval for, the proposals for the approach to deploy the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme grant funding allocation to support eligible children in the period Easter 2021 through to Christmas 2021.

#### 2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 From December 2020 through to March 2021, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) have operated a Covid Winter Grant Scheme, providing funding for local authorities to flexibly operate a local eligibility framework and approach to support vulnerable individuals and families. The scheme ends on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 and is replaced by a Department for Education (DfE) scheme – the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme.
- 2.2 The Holiday Activities and Food programme (HAF) is intended to provide healthy food and enriching activities to disadvantaged children. Pilot schemes have operated in England since 2018, but has not previously been rolled out to North Yorkshire. The programme is intended to cover a minimum of one week at Easter, four weeks over the Summer and one week at Christmas.
- 2.3 The rationale behind the scheme is that families may experience increased pressure points in holiday periods because of increased costs – such as food or childcare – and reduced incomes. This potentially leads to holiday experience gaps with children from disadvantaged families less likely to access organised out-of-school activities, more likely to experience ‘unhealthy holidays’ in terms of nutrition and physical health, and more likely to experience social isolation.
- 2.4 The programme, therefore, seeks to provide consistent and accessible enrichment activities that involve children, and parents, in food preparation. Local authorities are expected to co-ordinate free holiday provision for all children who receive benefits-related free school meals. Not all eligible children are expected to participate.
- 2.5 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, six weeks of the year. Local authorities – and partners – will have flexibility to determine how to deliver this level of provision to serve the needs of children and families in their area.
- 2.6 The DfE have stated that the local authority's co-ordinating role includes:
  - a) mapping the holiday provision in North Yorkshire in order to ensure that holiday provision exists and is supporting the areas of greatest need;

- b) establishing a steering group to support implementation and delivery and that should include representatives from a wide range of local bodies including local police and other uniform services, local public health officials, school leaders, youth services, social services, charities and the voluntary sector;
- c) drawing in wider support to enhance the local programme e.g. bringing in funding from philanthropists, sponsors, food providers, supermarkets and local business;
- d) developing a local plan for provision in the area, based on an understanding of local supply and demand;
- e) ensuring that sufficient, adequate provision is available across the area for children with SEND/ additional needs;
- f) awarding funding to holiday club providers in order to ensure there is enough provision to meet demand;
- g) supporting all providers to meet the framework of minimum standards (including safeguarding requirements and meals that meet school food standards) and to improve the quality of their provision;
- h) working with families to reduce dependency by providing nutritional education for children and educating families around purchasing and preparing healthy meals on a sustainable basis;
- i) promoting and advertising provision, including working with local schools and other agencies to encourage the most at need children to attend;
- j) working with other local services or agencies to ensure a joined-up and efficient approach, and;
- k) building local partnerships and sharing learning and good practice among local partners.

2.7 The DfE's stated objectives are that children who attend the provision will:

- i. eat more healthily over the school holidays
- ii. be more active during the school holidays
- iii. take part in engaging and enriching activities which support the development of resilience, character and wellbeing along with their wider educational attainment
- iv. be safe and not be socially isolated
- v. have greater knowledge and health and nutrition
- vi. be more engaged with school and other local services.

2.8 The DfE have acknowledged that they do not know when schools will fully re-open again and, therefore, when it will be safe to run HAF clubs face-to-face. As a result, the DfE have accepted that provision over the Easter holidays may include limited outside activities or home activity packs.

2.9 North Yorkshire County Council has received an indicative allocation of £1,319,400 (£132,680 relating to 2020/21 and £1,186,720 relating to 2021/22).

### **3.0 Local Approach**

3.1 A steering group has been established comprising a range of NYCC services including Stronger Communities, Libraries, Education & Skills, Finance, Public Health, Projects, Procurement, Communications, Early Help and SEND. Community and voluntary sector partners are key steering group members including North Yorkshire Youth, North Yorkshire Sport, Rural Arts, Two Ridings Community Foundation and North Yorkshire Police. The North Yorkshire Youth Council have also been included in the Steering Group to provide a clear voice for children and young people.

- 3.2 Whilst the local authority will exercise a co-ordinating role, NYCC will work with a lead provider to undertake some functions including:
- working with a range of local voluntary and community service organisations to build capacity with local groups and clubs and develop new groups, if required, to meet gaps in provision;
  - mapping provision;
  - award funding to local holiday club providers;
  - support providers and help promote provision;
  - help develop sustainable approaches;
  - support and evaluate the community grant programme.
- 3.3 The local approach includes:
- North Yorkshire Youth, North Yorkshire Sport and Rural Arts will act as a consortia in the 'lead provider' role;
  - Community grant allocations (primarily for Summer 2021) will be determined by the 'lead provider' role but awarded directly by North Yorkshire County Council;
  - A digital website offer of resources including cooking tutorials, walking routes, holiday activity information, signposting to holiday clubs etc;
  - some face-to-face sports and arts activities;
  - holiday activity packs (primarily targeted at Easter) including ideas for enriching activities, nutritional advice and recipe cards;
  - financial modelling of options to ensure allocations by area target funding to need (i.e. funding will be linked to statutory school-age FSM numbers in a locality);
  - working with Two Ridings Foundation to attract external support and investment, particularly in relation to philanthropic giving and commercial donations. The approach will focus on additionality rather than core elements of the programme;
  - A local brand of North Yorkshire FEAST (Food, Entertainment, Arts and Sport Together) has been developed in conjunction with the North Yorkshire Youth Council.
- 3.4 Delivery of the programme at Easter will be impacted by Covid-19. The steering group have concluded that face-to-face delivery of holiday clubs will not be possible. Delivery of the programme will need to be operated flexibly to ensure impact and reach to eligible children. The approach for Easter includes:
- holiday activity packs for all statutory school-age children entitled to receive free school meals. The packs will include a range of sport and arts equipment and materials, an activity booklet with ideas for enriching activities and nutritional advice and recipes.
  - website resources including cooking tutorials, additional activity ideas and recipes. Given the timeline, this offer is likely to be more limited for Easter but we expect this to expand and evolve over the course of the year. It is likely that these resources will continue to be available for communities beyond the current grant-funding period.
- 3.5 The approach for Summer and Christmas has yet to be fully developed but it is anticipated that this will include face-to-face activities across the county depending on the successful lifting of covid-19 restrictions, including social distancing measures. A range of community partners will deliver these activities and the offer will be localised and open to all children; however, community groups will only be funded for eligible children.
- 3.6 Where providers are funded through the HAF programme to deliver holiday clubs and activities, they will be required to meet the DfE framework of standards including:

- **Food** – providers must meet school food standards complying with regulations on food preparation taking into account allergies and dietary requirements and preferences, as well as any religious or cultural requirements for food.
- **Enriching activities** – holiday clubs must provide fun and enriching activities that provide children with opportunities to develop new skills or knowledge, to consolidate existing skills and knowledge, or to try out new experiences.
- **Physical Activities** – must meet Physical Activity guidelines.
- **Nutritional Education** – clubs must include an element of nutritional education each day aimed at improving the knowledge and awareness of healthy eating for children (e.g. getting children involved in food preparation and cooking, growing fruit and vegetables).
- **Food education for families and carers** – clubs must include training and advice sessions for parents, carers or other family members on how to source, prepare and cook nutritious and low-cost food.
- **Signposting and referrals** – clubs must be able to provide information, signposting or referrals to other services and support that would benefit the children who attend their provision.
- **Policies and procedures** – clubs must have relevant and appropriate policies and procedures in place in relation to safeguarding, health and safety, insurance, accessibility and inclusiveness and, where appropriate, clubs must be compliant with the Ofsted requirements for working with children.

3.7 As this scheme is still to be finalised, this paper recommends that the Corporate Director – Children and Young People is authorised to further plan and develop the approach for the remainder of the programme consistent with the details described in section 3.1 to section 3.6 and to meet the stated objectives described at section 2.7.

#### 4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 The Holiday Activities and Food Programme is funded by a ring-fenced section 31 grant from the Department for Education. The local authority has received a funding allocation of £1,319,400. Of this, the DfE have indicated that £132,680 relates to financial year 2020-21 and £1,186,720 relates to financial year 2021-22.

4.2 Local authorities are permitted to spend up to 10% of the funding allocation on “administration costs for the local co-ordination of the Programme”.

4.3 Payments from the DfE will be made at the following milestones:

- In March 2021, £132,680 will be paid upon satisfactory submission of a deliver plan by each LA setting out the intended scale and reach of the programme for Easter 2021;
- In June 2021, up to 50% of the 2021-22 allocation (i.e. up to £593,360) will be paid upon satisfactory submission of a report by 14 May 2021 detailing the delivery of the Easter programme and a delivery plan for Summer 2021
- In November 2021, up to 30% of the 2021-22 allocation (i.e. up to £356,016) will be paid upon satisfactory submission of a report by 15 October 2021 detailing the delivery of the Summer programme along with a delivery plan for Christmas 2021
- In February 2022, up to 20% of the 2021-22 allocation (i.e. up to £237,344) upon satisfactory submission of a report by 29 January 2022 detailing the delivery of the programme for Christmas 2021 along with a final report for the whole 2021 programme and a certificate of expenditure.

4.4 It is likely that, in reality, expenditure will be more front-loaded than the payment arrangements outlined by the DfE.

- 4.5 Some of the programme funding (c. £200k) will be invested in the consortia 'lead provider' role to map provision, stimulate demand, promote and co-ordinate holiday club activities and evaluate the scheme. The scheme at Easter (c.£150k) will involve purchase of activity pack equipment and resources (including nutritional advice and recipes), handling and distribution costs. As the scheme over the Summer period will involve more face-to-face activities, financial modelling of eligible free school meal numbers by area (rather than school) will be required to ensure that funding is distributed broadly in proportion to likely demand. Consideration will also be given to how the scheme over the Summer period interacts, if at all, with the recent announcement of funded summer schools.
- 4.6 The total amount of funding may depend on philanthropic contributions. However, it is likely that voluntary contributions from philanthropists, businesses, supermarkets or other organisations will focus on additionality rather than the core purpose of the scheme. It is possible that some philanthropic contributions will relate to local clubs.
- 4.7 Funding can be used to purchase equipment for the programme (e.g. catering or sports equipment at an individual club) but must be limited to 2% of the overall programme expenditure (i.e. £26,388).
- 4.8 Funding will be used to support a community-based, inclusive and accessible offer. Provision will be made for specialist SEND holiday activities where demand is identified as part of the mapping exercise.
- 4.9 The DfE have established a HAF LA Implementation team to support LAs to deliver the programme. The DfE team will assist with queries, facilitating group meetings, regular communication, sharing of resources and best practice. The DfE are also procuring a national support contract which they hope to be in place by April 2021. This contract will seek to provide support, advice and performance monitoring services to assist local authorities ensure holiday provision for statutory school-age children.

## **5.0 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 There are no legal implications identified in this report.

## **6.0 Equalities Implications**

- 6.1 For the local implementation of the scheme in North Yorkshire, an initial Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) form has been undertaken and can be found at **Appendix 1**. This will be reviewed throughout the development of the scheme.

## **7.0 Communication Implications**

- 7.1 The North Yorkshire scheme has been branded as FEAST (Food, Entertainment, Arts and Sport Together) and will be used in scheme publicity alongside branding from North Yorkshire County Council, the Department for Education and partner organisations.
- 7.2 Details of scheme requirements will be shared with all participating organisations.
- 7.3 In addition to NYCC press releases, details of the scheme will be communicated through social media including: LinkedIn, Twitter as well as the North Yorkshire Together website ([www.northyorkshiretogether.co.uk](http://www.northyorkshiretogether.co.uk)). Feedback from children and young people, parents and carers will be encouraged through hashtags #NorthYorkshireTogether and #FEASTNY, through email or voicemail.

7.4 The scheme arrangements for Summer 2021 will be discussed with locality boards of school leaders. Arrangements for the scheme will also be discussed at the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## **8.0 Risk Management Implications**

8.1 Details and advice from Department for Education on the operation of the scheme including grant determination letters were published in January/early February resulting in a truncated planning period for Easter. The impact of covid-19 through the January 2021 onwards national lockdown has meant that planning for Easter has relied on a tight turnaround to provide a flexible offer of activity packs and some digital resources through the website.

8.2 The funding allocation is unlikely to be sufficient to provide a full offer for all eligible children. The allocation approximates to £1.25 per hour for c.11,000 eligible child/young person. Requirements to provide enriching activities and nutritional advice (including hot meals when face-to-face activities are permissible) whilst meeting food standards and physical activity standards will be challenging. Pragmatically, it is unlikely that all eligible children and young people will elect to access the full offer (and that has been the experience of some of the early pilots). Philanthropic and voluntary contributions may help broaden the offer but this is likely to be focussed on additionality rather than the core offer.

8.3 The North Yorkshire scheme for Summer 2021 will focus on community-based clubs reflecting the local circumstances of available holiday clubs. The offer will not be a uniform offer designed services but will reflect existing and expanded offers; working with the 'lead provider' consortia, additional provision will be stimulated where mapping reveals geographic and functional gaps.

8.4 A full risk log will be developed as part of the planning for post-Easter arrangements and mitigating actions will be developed to reduce any risk to successful delivery of the programme.

## **9.0 Recommendation**

9.1 It is recommended that the Executive:

- (i) endorse the approach to the local implementation of the Holiday Activities and Food programme in North Yorkshire for Easter 2021;
- (ii) delegate authority for the Corporate Director – Children & Young People's Service to develop the framework and approach for planning and organising activities for Summer 2021 and Christmas 2021 consistent with the scheme aims and objective.

**STUART CARLTON**

**Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Services**

*Report Prepared by Howard Emmett, Assistant Director – Strategic Resources*