

Summer Holiday Food and Childcare Programme – Guidance for Local Authorities

Purpose

£10 million in additional funding has been allocated to Local Authorities for the targeted provision of a summer 2022 holiday programme offering coordinated access to activities, childcare and food for children age 5-14 from low income families.

The purpose of this guidance is to help Local Authorities and any commissioned partners understand how this funding can be used, expected outcomes, and high-level expectations for reporting.

Any further questions, please contact holidayfoodandchildcare@gov.scot.

Why the funding has been provided

Transforming the system of school age childcare and expanding provision of meals to include the school holidays are key ministerial priorities set out in the Programme for Government and Covid Recovery Strategy.

Ministers have committed to: ***make holiday childcare provision available to all children from low-income families by 2023, starting with delivery of a summer 2022 offer to provide coordinated access to food, childcare and activities during the school holidays.***

Local Authorities across Scotland have been allocated funding to augment existing summer holiday provision within their area, or where there is no existing provision, to initiate the creation of services. These services should enhance equity by widening opportunities for children from low income families to play, socialise, get active and access a range of activities that broaden their experiences, supplement their learning and deliver positive outcomes, integrating food provision wherever possible.

The expectation is that within each local authority area there will be a mix of holiday provision making best use of existing cross-sectoral capacity, including regulated and unregulated childcare services that offer flexibility and choice to families and respond to their needs. Services will vary across and within authorities, with an expected focus on coordinated services in areas with higher SIMD ratings.

Childcare and activities provision may incorporate partners from across a range of sectors, whether regulated or unregulated by the Care Inspectorate, such as local authority providers, Out of School care providers; youth work; third sector organisations and activity-based clubs providing activities in the school holidays (whose primary function is not childcare). Local Authorities should make best use of existing provision and capacity within their area, working in partnership across sectors where practicable to plan, coordinate and deliver innovative models of holiday provision.

The aim is to deliver integrated, flexible and accessible services that meet the needs of children age 5-14 from low income families, removing barriers to access which are context-specific, and shaped by issues such as geographical location, income level, family support, access to transport and the additional support needs of children. Childcare or activities should also be integrated with food and wider family support where possible for households particularly adversely impacted by poverty, as defined by this guidance.

Summer programmes should also be rights-based and reflect the diverse needs and aspirations of children and their families. Activities and childcare provision can be delivered through various language mediums and should reflect participants' needs, this includes offering sessions in Gaelic medium or other widely-spoken minority languages where appropriate. Improving the physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing of children and young people is key, as is making sure children and young people's views are listened to and actively inform the planning and delivery of the holiday programme as well as future policy.

Who the funding is intended to reach

This investment aligns with the national mission to tackle child poverty. It also complements wider investment in school aged childcare and free school meal replacements for eligible families based on low income, and wider investment in education recovery.

The funding is aimed at school age children age 5-14 from low income households. Around 9 in 10 children living in poverty are from households with one or more of the priority family characteristics identified in the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, therefore 85% of this funding is intended to be targeted at children and young people from the priority family groups below:

- Children from lone parent families
- Children from ethnic minority families
- Children from families with a disabled adult or child
- Children from families with a young mother (under 25)
- Children from families with a child under 1 year old
- Children from larger families (3+ children)

Children from these family types are most likely to experience continued poverty-related and other structural disadvantage. Consideration should be given to how the offer can be designed and delivered in such a way that these households are able to benefit from provision on offer – for example by ensuring provision is accessible to disabled parents and children. The remaining 15% of the funding can be used flexibly to reach other children, including under-fives and older children, who would benefit from access to free holiday childcare, food and activities and will be determined at local level. Local discretion could include, but is not limited to:

- Children from other low income families
- Care experienced children and young people
- Young carers

- Children in need of protection
- Children supported by a child's plan
- Children with ASN
- Children who have undergone significant transitions, for example, starting in ELC, primary or secondary school

The needs of these target groups, their views and priorities, should be considered when planning and delivering summer holiday provision to ensure services are inclusive, accessible and responsive to local needs across different language mediums, in collaboration with Local Child Poverty leads where practicable to align strategic approaches.

Partners should also work together to agree how activities and services can be delivered in remote or rural areas, where the range of existing provision might be more limited and geographic barriers to access services may be considerable.

Underpinning principles

The driver diagram included at **Annex A** illustrates intended programme aims and outcomes. It is designed to help guide partners through design and delivery of services in order to identify what specific local action can be taken to help maximise the impact of this funding and improve the wellbeing of eligible children and young people.

The 2022 Summer Holiday Programme should be viewed as a bridge between the 2021 Get Into Summer offer and future holiday provision, aligned with wider school age childcare expansion. It should retain what worked well last year while beginning to embed new practices to test the changes required to aid development of a year-round system of School Age Childcare and meals provision by the end of this parliament.

Emphasis is on a rights based, stigma-free approach, shaped by what children, young people and their families tell us, aligned with GIRFEC. This should build on what currently exists - enhancing and co-ordinating services and assets locally and nationally - in partnership.

Local authorities should ensure the organisations they work with have appropriate processes for safeguarding, child protection and data protection in relation to employees, volunteers and the people they are supporting. Where there are new pilots, work should start quickly to ensure staff and volunteers undergo disclosure checks, child protection and children's rights training

Focus for summer 2022 should be on:

- **Establishing effective local partnerships** that work across all sectors to plan and deliver a holiday programme that coordinates and integrates childcare, activities and food. That promotes inclusion and aims to remove barriers to participation and is responsive to the needs of eligible children and families, making best use of existing provision at local level.

- **Developing effective and non-stigmatising approaches to targeting.** Examples include ensuring language used in communications is inclusive; forging relationships with trusted community/faith leaders to promote maximum engagement, reach, and uptake amongst eligible groups; engaging trusted referral partners such as schools and relevant professionals to identify eligible children and families and communicate the offer to them; or offering funded places for eligible children and young people alongside paid-for places available to all to eliminate stigma.
- **Communication and promotion** of the summer offer should be coordinated locally in order to maximise engagement among target groups. The Scottish Government is committed to inclusive, non-stigmatising communication - language, cultural differences and levels of digital literacy should all be considered.
- **Overcoming barriers to participation** - consideration should be given to how to meet wider family needs and lower costs of participating in the programme, including through transport, food provision, financial inclusion, family support and referral on to wider services where needed. Principles of dignity and human rights should be applied, promoting non-stigmatising provision of services, and supporting inclusive service delivery, for example through cultural or linguistic inclusivity. Local authorities should be responsive to the particular needs of their communities, for instance by offering sessions in Gaelic medium or other widely-spoken minority languages as well as English where appropriate.
- **Taking a place-based approach to delivery that targets areas of multiple deprivation within each local authority area.** This is to concentrate funding in areas that have the highest rates of poverty and begin to embed tests of change that will generate the learning required to develop holiday provision for low-income families from 2023 onwards
- **Integrating food** provision alongside childcare and activities. Consideration should be given to tackling food insecurity and promoting healthy relationships with food through incorporation of dignified, nutritious and economical food preparation and provision where possible. The food on offer should be culturally appropriate, helping to demonstrate inclusion and to reduce barriers to participation. Working closely with local food suppliers should be encouraged to support local economies and reduce food miles. This aspect of the programme, which overlaps with nutritional education and food education, can be challenging and we encourage local authorities to plan and prepare for this as best they can, including engaging with experts and partners as appropriate.

More detail on approaches local authorities and delivery partners may find useful can be found in the supporting materials section – Annex B

The guiding principles to underpin this approach are:

- **Partnership Working, building on existing services, assets and knowledge**

It is expected that existing and new local partnerships will play a key role in ensuring the coordination and reach of provision, including both the regulated and unregulated sectors, to ensure a joined up whole system approach to its development and delivery. Working with the existing childcare sector (ELC and

school age childcare), outdoor education providers, activity providers (including sports clubs) and the youth work and CLD sectors will ensure a broad range of interests can be supported. Holiday activities and childcare may already be in place at a local level delivered by a range of partners, and plans may already be underway for summer 2022 provision. **The aim of this investment is to enhance any such existing work, building on and learning from existing good practice. Where holiday provision does not exist in any form, funding could be used to establish pilot scheme/s, or if more appropriate to channel all funding to partners to deliver, beginning to test the guiding principles and form the basis of future holiday provision.** It is anticipated that this funding will support improved coordination of existing provision, fill gaps and create new opportunities, led by local knowledge and experience.

- **Co-creation of services with children, young people and families**

It is important that, as far as possible, any local offers are shaped around what children and young people of all ages say/have said that they want and need. The priorities of those in the target groups outlined above should help shape delivery plans to ensure that support reaches those who would most benefit. Provision should be child-centric, providing opportunities to connect with friends, peers, wider community and the outdoors and to learn new skills. Activities should be as wide ranging and inclusive as possible aiming to cover a wide range of interests, backgrounds and circumstances and be shaped around a theme of fun and play with a view to providing positive experiences. Activities may include: sports; expressive arts; crafts; outdoor learning; outdoor play; trips and visits. Early engagement with children and young people from eligible groups will improve the design and delivery of services and encourage uptake.

- **Moving towards a coordinated, integrated programme of childcare, activities and food, that promotes inclusion and aims to remove barriers to participation**

The aim is that within local authority areas there is a variety of provision that offers flexibility and choice to families and responds to their needs. Services will vary across and within authorities, with an expected place-based focus on coordinated services in areas with higher SIMD ratings. Where possible, financial inclusion should be integrated, offering access to holistic support for the wider family to help tackle hardship, for example, by signposting families to suitable partners for advice, or by hosting information sessions via services. The integration of services that offer longer sessions and allows parents to leave their children should be considered, allowing parents and carers more flexibility to work, train or study. Physical food provision, that compliments the free school meal alternative offer, should be integrated where possible, recognising the impact that food can have on children's ability to participate in any activity.

Use of the funding

Funding should be flexible and responsive to the needs of eligible children and families, as defined by this guidance. In order to meet local needs, partnerships should be developed to plan and coordinate the most effective use of this funding to

achieve policy objectives. This includes making best use of existing services and capacity across sectors (such as the out of school care sector, youth work or children's services) to provide a broad and flexible programme, utilising the expertise of trusted partners to target provision most effectively.

It is expected that the majority of spend will be on financing the cross-sectoral delivery of a coordinated programme of activities, childcare and food for school age children across each local authority area, with a particular focus on SIMD areas where practicable. This can include running bespoke programmes for eligible families or funding spaces for eligible children within existing local services alongside paid-for provision to eliminate stigma. Funding can be spread across varied providers who specialise in offering activities, childcare and food, including both regulated and unregulated providers.

Consideration should also be given to:

- Who is best placed to deliver services that meet the needs of eligible families and ensuring that potential partners are kept informed of ways they can bid in for funding.
- Exploring alternative funding streams to supplement Scottish Government and Local Authority sources in order to create more sustainable holiday provision, e.g. through local sponsorship deals or entering partnerships with local businesses to provide services in kind.
- Using funding for areas identified for improvement in the evaluation of the Summer 2021 offer, e.g. addressing barriers to participation, for example additional discretionary spend to mitigate against transportation costs; ensure staffing is in place at appropriate ratios and with the necessary training and experience to include children with Additional Support Needs.
- Capital costs, such as the purchase of play equipment, or improvement to services that promote sustainability and quality experiences.
- Paying for staff and volunteer training.
- Food provision, ensuring food is varied, nutritious, and culturally appropriate.

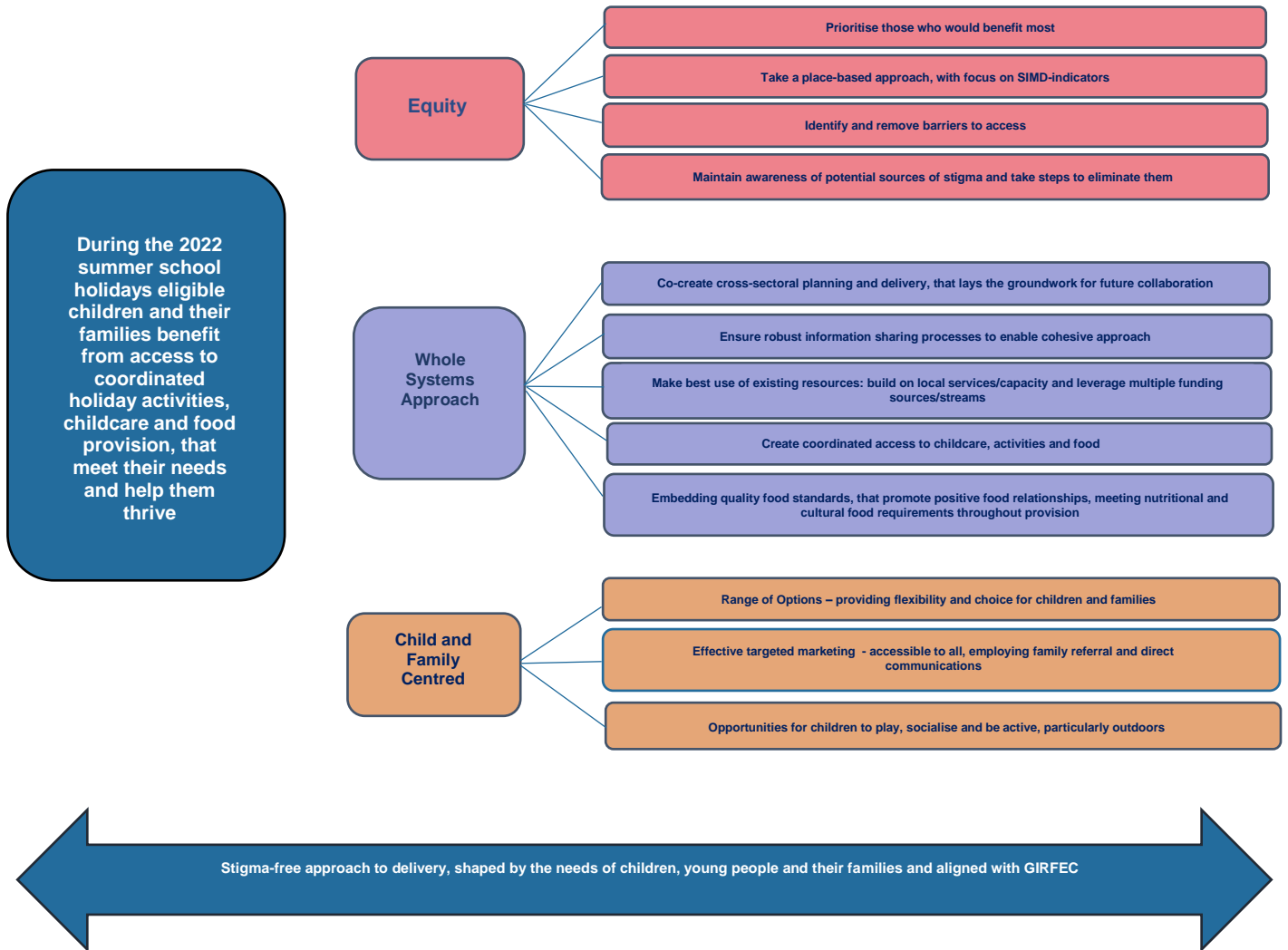
Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation

The £10 million funding is being paid to Local Authorities through the General Revenue Grant. Whilst this funding is not ring-fenced it is vital that the impact and learning of the programme be evidenced through proportionate reporting and evaluation mechanisms.

There will be no interim reporting, the intention is that light touch reporting will be supplemented by participant evaluation workshops that will generate key learning required to inform future policy and practice and scale up holiday provision over the course of this parliament. Further information will be provided separately.

Scottish Government commissioned engagement with participating children and young people will also help to understand whether the programme met their needs and feedback will shape future delivery.

Summer 2022 Drivers Diagram



Supporting Materials

Food Offer, Food Standards and Safety

All food provided as part of the programme must:

- comply with regulations on food preparation:
- take into account allergies and dietary requirements (see the allergy guidance for schools)
- take into account any religious or cultural requirements for food

There is flexibility in the design of the food provision which should be tailored to ensure that all food meets the dietary needs of the children and families who attend. The food served should also be appropriate for the nature of the session, for example, offering cold packed lunches for parks or outdoor venues or for day trips. While there can be benefits to using a central food service to provide meals to services, we expect local authorities to carefully consider whether using a central food service is the right approach for providing high quality, attractive and tailored food for those attending the programme.

Providing food on site can provide an opportunity to engage children and families in food preparation and nutrition. Providers have reported that when children are involved in designing menus and the preparation of food, they are more engaged and more willing to try new and healthier food.

We recommend that local authorities consider the provision of the food element of the programme, in particular, that providers and children are offered the opportunity to be involved in the planning and preparation of food. Such a developmental approach is key to effecting long-term change in engagement with food and nutrition.

There are also environmental factors to consider when planning the food provision and local authorities should consider whether clubs preparing food on their own premises would produce less food and packaging waste and result in fewer food-miles than off-site, centralised provision.

Food Standards & Safety:

- See [further information and guidance](#) from Food Standards Scotland on safe preparation and handling of food in the context of the pandemic.
- Nutrition
 - Many of the standards in the [Nutritional Requirements for Food and Drink in Schools \(Scotland\) Regulations 2020](#) will apply to holiday provision on school premises. In general, all of the Regulations that apply to food and drink provided on school premises will also apply to third party providers. It is recommended to engage with local authority catering leads who will be aware of what applies, to whom and when.
 - Further detail can also be found in the [Healthy Eating in Schools 2020 guidance](#) which is statutory guidance designed to support

implementation of the Regulations. Even where the Regulations do not apply, it would be good practice to consider this guidance for holiday provision particularly where meals such as breakfasts and lunches are being provided.

- General nutrition advice can be found [here](#).
- Allergies
 - Model policy [for allergy management in schools](#)
 - [AllergyUK](#) has useful factsheets on managing allergies
 - Advice from [Food Standards Scotland](#)

Food information regulations - Natasha's Law:

From 1 October 2021, changes to the Food Information Regulations 2014 came into effect, adding new labelling requirements for food that is pre-packed for direct sale (PPDS).

Local authorities should take the time to read the guidance on the [Food Standards Agency](#) website and ensure that all food provision for the summer programme meets these requirements.

Public Health Advice and Resources

For the most up to date health advice please visit [NHS Inform](#). [Further guidance](#) is available from Public Health Scotland.

- Safe delivery of activities and services for children and young people
 - Guidance for organised unregulated activities for children and young people under 18: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): organised activities for children - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#).
 - Guidance for regulated childcare settings including [school age childcare, early learning childcare, and childminding services](#).
 - Guidance on [supporting children with additional support needs during the pandemic](#).
 - Guidance on [trips and visits](#).
- Public Health Scotland and Scottish Community Development Centre have produced [guidance on supporting communities safely](#). This includes information on social and physical distancing, hand hygiene, and preparing, handling and delivering food. The information is updated regularly.

Staff, Volunteer and Service User Safety

- Local authorities should ensure the organisations they work with have appropriate processes for safeguarding, child protection and data protection in relation to employees, volunteers and the people they are supporting.
- Where there are new pilots, work should start quickly to ensure staff and volunteers undergo disclosure checks, child protection and children's rights training, some useful links below:
- [The Scottish Social Services Council](#)

- [Disclosure Scotland](#)
- [The Care Inspectorate](#)
- National guidance for [child protection in Scotland](#)
- Statutory guidance on [children's services planning](#)
- Extra child protection resources can be found at [NSPCC Learning](#)

Working with Children with Additional Support Needs

Some of the key points for local authorities and partners to consider when designing and implementing provision for children with ASN include:

- Identifying the most vulnerable children, young people and families;
- Making decisions and, where appropriate, delegate responsibility for decision making to different levels of the system to enable responsive support;
- Speaking to families regularly to understand how their needs may have changed and may have continued to change;
- Being flexible in supporting families;
- Ensure staff are trained, supported and provided with appropriate equipment in order to provide flexible and responsive care in line with government guidance
- Maintaining a positive level of trust in staff from a parent perspective and ensuring staff receive the right level of training from a provider perspective

Risk assessments are an important part of this provision and should be used as an enabler to providing support rather than a barrier. A good risk assessment which supports effective risk management and creative thinking will lead to different approaches to face-to-face support rather than support being withdrawn particularly for children, young people and families who are particularly vulnerable or at high risk.

There are many local and national organisations including special schools with expertise in working with children with ASN and we recommend that local authorities engage with them.

- Education Scotland has produced [a helpful document](#) signposting to different areas of support for ASN specific needs in relation to the pandemic

Signposting and Referrals

Providers should be able to provide information, signposting or referrals to other services and support that would benefit the children who attend their provision and their families. This could include sessions provided by:

- [Citizen's Advice Scotland](#)
- school nurses, dentists or other healthcare practitioners
- family support services or children's services
- housing support officers
- [Jobcentre Plus](#)
- organisations providing financial education
- early years and childcare, including help to pay for childcare (e.g. Tax Free Childcare)

- [Parent Club](#)
- [ParentZone Scotland](#)
- [Young Scot](#)
- [Ask CPAG](#)

Environment and sustainable delivery

Local authorities and other partners are encouraged to consider how sustainable development can be reflected in their ethos, day-to-day operations and throughout the delivery of their programmes.

Some practices that local authorities may wish to consider are:

- Minimising the use of single-use plastics
- Where possible using locally sourced food and ingredients
- Making use of food surplus organisations
- Ensuring there is a wide range of recycling and compost facilities for waste
- Growing fruit and vegetables and showing how they can be used and cooked.
- Encouraging uniform banks/exchange schemes
- Encouraging active travel and use of public transport, promoting the [young person's free bus travel scheme](#).
- Encouraging children to engage with environmental issues and take a leading role in sustainable practices.

This list is not exhaustive and local authorities are invited to reflect on their settings and consider ways that their programmes can be more environmentally friendly and sustainable.

Useful reports and project examples:

- The Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit (SPIRU) has produced a tool to support local mapping of out of school holiday provision. This may be useful for local authorities and other partners looking to better understand current provision in their areas: <https://www.gcu.ac.uk/gsb/research/spiru/publications>
- Young Scot's #YSAttain project provides access to leisure activities, food and travel for young people through the National Entitlement Card. More information and local authority case studies available here: <https://youngscot.net/attainment>
- YouthLink - link to latest youth work delivery guidance is here: [Face-to-face Youth Work | Frequently Asked Questions \(youthlinkscotland.org\)](#)

An independent evaluation of six youth work-led projects in different local authority areas in summer 2020, includes examples of activities successfully delivered remotely and digitally in the context of pandemic restrictions: [food-insecurity-report_proofed.pdf \(youthlinkscotland.org\)](#)

- International Public Policy Observatory reports on how to best support children's emotional recovery from the pandemic and how to promote wellbeing:

- [‘The Great Summer Reset’: An IPPO policy note on how best to support children's emotional recovery | IPPO \(covidandsociety.com\)](#)
- [Wellbeing recovery: what should summer support programmes look like for schoolchildren this year? - IPPO \(covidandsociety.com\)](#)
- The Scottish Government [School Age Childcare Progress Report](#) which details school age childcare policy development as well including detailed case studies of services operating across Scotland specifically targeted towards families on low incomes.
- Shared Care Scotland report - [Holidays or Isolation: Research into holiday activity provision for disabled children and young people in Scotland](#)
- See our case study pack for further examples from Summer 2021s – this will be provided shortly.