

# Expression of interest

# Title: Evaluation of 2019 Holiday Activities and Food Programme

**Project reference: DFERPPU/2018068**

**Deadline for expressions of interest: 16.00 on Friday 18th January 2019**

## Summary

Expressions of interest are sought for an evaluation of the Department for Education’s 2019 Holiday Activities and Food Programme. The department will issue up to nine lots of grant funding to establish local Holiday Activity and Food coordinators in up to nine local authority areas across England for the summer of 2019. These local coordinators will oversee and commission free holiday activities and food (HAF) provision for children eligible for free school meals. The evaluation should investigate the process, outcomes, and if possible, the impact of the intervention, including the impact of individual HAF projects on outcomes such as healthy eating, physical activity and wellbeing. We are not specifying a methodology for the evaluation.

## Background

In response to the introduction of a Private Member’s Bill in Parliament in September 2017, the government announced that it would undertake a programme of work to explore ways of supporting disadvantaged children to access free food and enriching activities during the school holidays. This included research, stakeholder engagement, initial projects in 2018 and this 2019 programme. The department is currently running a competitive grant process to establish up to nine local HAF coordinators tasked with ensuring there is enough good quality free provision in their area for the 2019 summer holidays. Their role will include developing a local plan for provision in their area, funding provision that meets a new set of minimum standards, working with providers to drive up quality, promoting and advertising provision, and ensuring a joined-up, efficientand sustainable approach. More information on the grant funding, including the specification of requirements, can be found here: <https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/1283df8a-1bac-4644-bd27-8027ce2bd867>

The grants will form the budget for each local coordinator to use in their area to commission or fund provision that meets the department’s evidence-based minimum standards. The minimum standards expected for 2019 providers are:

* **Food**: clubs must provide at least one meal a day (breakfast, lunch or tea) and **all** food provided at the club (including snacks) must meet the [School food Standards](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/actions/school-food-standards/).
* **Nutritional education**: clubs must include an element of nutritional education each day aimed at improving children’s knowledge and awareness of healthy eating. These do not need to be formal learning activities and could for example include activities such as getting children involved in food preparation and cooking; growing fruit and vegetables, and taste tests
* **Enriching activities**: 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. This could include physical activities such as football, table tennis, cricket etc; creative activities such as putting on a play, junk modelling, drumming workshops; or experiences such as a nature walk, visiting a city farm etc. Bidders should set out how they can support providers to deliver a rich and varied mix of fun and enriching activities which are age-appropriate. We welcome bids that have also considered how they might encourage the continued use of fine motor skills over the summer
* **Physical activities**: clubs must provide activities which meet the [Physical Activity guidelines](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/213739/dh_128144.pdf) on a daily basis[[1]](#footnote-1).
* **Policies and procedures[[2]](#footnote-2)**: clubs must be able to demonstrate and explain their safeguarding arrangements and have relevant and appropriate policies and procedures in place in relation to:
  + - Safeguarding
    - Health and safety
    - Insurance
    - Accessibility and inclusiveness

Where appropriate, clubs must also be compliant with Ofsted requirements when working with children.

As a result of the HAF programme, we would like:

* children to eat more healthily over the summer holidays
* children to be more active over the summer holidays
* children to take part in engaging and enriching activities which support the development of resilience, character and wellbeing and other skills
* children to be safe and not to be socially isolated
* children, and their parents, to have greater knowledge of health and nutrition
* children and parents to be more engaged with schools and other local services and to have greater knowledge and awareness of local free holiday provision.

The HAF programme was designed following workshops and stakeholder discussions with holiday scheme providers, local authorities and school leaders. In these discussions, there was a strong desire for increased coordination to:

* improve referral systems
* develop better links between activity and food providers
* signpost users to other services, and
* to map local provision, identifying and filling ‘cold spots’.

This perspective was supported by a review of published literature that found that provision is currently ad hoc and disjointed, as well as by what we learned from the summer 2018 HAF programme. Our analysis of management information and deep dive visits to projects found that clubs often struggle to provide a varied menu of healthy and nutritious meals across the summer holidays and quality varied substantially.

## Evaluation aims

The department would like the evaluation to focus on both the local coordinators and the commissioned and funded programmes. As well as examining intervention implementation through process evaluation and examining attendee outcomes, the department is interested in the feasibility of an impact evaluation, including, where possible, the impact of individual projects on several key domains – healthy eating, physical activity, and access to enriching activities that support development of character, resilience and wellbeing. We are also interested in the potential for looking at other impacts, for example, what analysis of absence rates could tell us about pupil engagement in school, the potential impact on fine motor skills, as well as any unintended consequences of the programme(s).

We have developed the following non-exhaustive list of research questions:

* Process
  + Are programmes being implemented as intended and in accordance with our specified criteria?
  + What are the characteristics of the children attending provision, why are they attending, and for how long?
  + What is the level of demand for HAF provision within coordinated areas? Are clubs significantly over or under subscribed, and how does this relate to promotional activity and local context?
  + What are the perceived barriers and enablers to effective provision at a) local coordinator level and b) programme level?
  + What plans have local coordinators and programmes put in place for sustainability?
* Outcomes/Impact
  + To what extent are local coordinators and the programmes they commissioned achieving their intended outcomes? Have any unintended outcomes been identified?
  + What impact has the programme had on children and young people’s physical activity, nutritional awareness and eating behaviour, and wellbeing?
* Overarching
  + What are the key lessons learnt by local coordinators and programme leaders, and what examples are there of promising practice?

The successful contractor will develop these research questions further as part of project setup. The contractor will work closely with the department’s project manager to develop a full evaluation framework for the project.

## Methodology

The department is not specifying a methodology for this evaluation. However, the evaluation must include a process evaluation and must involve analysis of management information from projects to show attendance and pupil outcomes. Delivery bodies will be required to collect management data at project level – this will include attendance registers with sufficient detail to permit matching to the National Pupil Database, and may include other data from other measures, such as pupil physical activity, if confirmed with the department.

Rigorous impact evaluation with controls would be preferable, however, we recognise the challenge of developing a rigorous counterfactual for this project and are open to non-controlled methods such as theory-based evaluation or complex methods. **Responses to this call for EOIs will be assessed, in part, on bidders’ stated consideration of evaluation design issues for this project and the rationale behind the suggested outline.**

The department has a budget of approximately £100,000 (excl. VAT) for this evaluation in the 2019-20 financial year. We may consider a higher budget if required to enable a controlled impact evaluation, as evidence from impact evaluations represents greater value for money to the department.

**Given the budget available, we are open to bids that focus on a sample of local coordination areas and projects rather than requiring the same full evaluation of all areas. However, analysis of management information (eg attendance data) is required for all funded projects.**

## Timing

The department intends for grant funding agreements to be finalised in April 2019 following the expression of interest and bidding rounds beginning in December 2018. Successful bidders will begin their roles as local coordinators from April 2019 and will continue until the end of October 2019 unless otherwise specified. We propose to appoint an evaluation contractor by March 2019 who can work with local coordinators as they begin planning and setup for their summer activities. Please find a provisional timetable below:

* Deadline for EOIs – 4pm, Friday 18 January 2019
* Invitations to tender issued – 01 February 2019
* Deadline for ITT submission – 4pm, 22 February 2019
* Tender panel interviews, if required – w/c 04 March 2019
* Contract awarded – By 11 March 2019
* Set up meeting – w/c 11 March 2019
* HAF project grants awarded – 25 March 2019
* Interim report –September/October 2019
* Final report agreed – January 2020

## Assessment criteria

Expressions of interest will be assessed against the following criteria (weighting in brackets):

* **Understanding the evaluation requirements and context (35%)**
  + An outline evaluation proposal that is analytically robust and feasible to deliver.
  + Clear rationale for the selected evaluation approach, including the pros and cons of different evaluation approaches
  + Clear consideration of the challenges and risks posed by the design choice
* **Experience and expertise on relevant methods and fields (35%)**
  + Demonstrable experience and knowledge on research into key domains e.g healthy eating, physical activity, school food, wellbeing
  + Knowledge, understanding and experience of proposed research tools and methods
  + Experience working with a range of education settings, vulnerable pupils, parents/carers and local authorities
* **Project management, capacity and risk management (30%)** 
  + Organisational capacity to meet timescales and quality requirements in a project of this size and scope.
  + Clear team structure with allocated responsibilities.
  + Clear risk register with contingency planning.

We will be seeking more detailed information on the proposed methodology from those invited to tender, but we expect responses to this call for EOIs to include a summary of the suggested evaluation approach.

Expressions of interest should be a maximum of 2,500 words. We will not consider attachments or follow hyperlinks within proposals.

| **Closing date for EOIs: 16.00 on Friday 18th January 2019**  **Send your EOI form to:** [mihiri.seneviratne@education.gov.uk](mailto:mihiri.seneviratne@education.gov.uk) |
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## How to submit an expression of interest

You must submit an expression of interest (EOI) in order to be considered to be invited to tender. To do so, please complete the NEW EOI Form which can be found under attachments. A submission of an EOI does not guarantee an invitation to tender and the Department does not routinely advise organisations that they have not been successful in being invited to tender. Feedback is however available on request.

All contracts are let on the basis of the [Department’s Terms and Conditions](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eoi-guide). You are encouraged to check these before submitting your expression of interest, as these form part of your contractual obligations.

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1. The current guidelines state that children should engage in moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity for at least 60 minutes a day. We understand that these guidelines will be revised in 2019. We will discuss any necessary changes to the minimum standards resulting from this with successful bidders. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Where required, clubs must register with Ofsted, and we would expect coordinators to advise and support clubs with this. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)