



Summer 2023 HAF (Holiday Activities & Food)

Who can access the Programme?

Core Eligibility:

There are free places available on the HAF programme for children and young people aged 4 (reception class age)* to 16, who:

- Receive benefits-related free school meals
- Ukrainian guests staying in Shropshire

Wider Eligibility:

Local authorities have discretion to use some of their funding to provide free or subsidised holiday club places for children and young people who are not in receipt of benefits related free school meals.

In Shropshire this includes:

- Children and young people who live in areas of high deprivation and/or from low-income households who are not in receipt of benefits related free school meals

There are a limited number of free places available for children and young people who meet the wider eligibility criteria of living in areas of high deprivation and/or from low-income households on the Shropshire HAF Summer programme 2023.

Referrals for Additional Eligibility:

Children and young people who meet the additional eligibility above can be referred onto the programme by a professional they are working with. E.g., school staff, social worker, early help officer, youth worker.

Referrals unfortunately can't be made direct by a family/carer.

Referral forms are available on the Shropshire HAF webpages –
[**www.shropshire.gov.uk/HAF**](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/HAF)

For more information about referrals please email
[**HAF.programme@shropshire.gov.uk**](mailto:HAF.programme@shropshire.gov.uk)

Please note, these referred places are limited and will be allocated on a first come first served basis by the Shropshire HAF Co-Ordinators.

If a referral has been approved and place/s allocated on the Summer HAF Programme, the person requesting the referral will be sent a unique code and details of how to make a booking.

Shropshire Council makes the final decision on which children and young people should benefit from the flexible funding element of the HAF programme.

Rationale Behind Additional Eligibility:

HAF is a national programme, funded by the DfE (Department for Education). The aim of HAF is to support children and young people in receipt of benefits related free school meals during the three main school holidays.

Research shows that the school holidays can be difficult for some low-income families. For some children and young people this can lead to a holiday experience gap. These children and young people are 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.

The HAF programme is a response to this issue, with evidence showing that free holiday clubs can have a positive impact on children and young people.

Benefits of the HAF programme include:

- Reduced holiday food insecurity
- Improved diets on days children attend clubs
- Provision of childcare to enable parents to enter work or stay in work during the holidays
- Enhanced learning experiences, preparedness for returning to school and children being supported in not falling behind over the holidays.

Shropshire HAF 2023:

Over the last 2 years, the number of children and young people eligible for benefits related free school meals in Shropshire has risen by 35%. There is currently more demand for places on the Shropshire HAF programme from children and young people who meet the core eligibility criteria than ever before.

To meet this demand and provide places for core eligible children and young people, the additional HAF eligibility criteria has been reduced since 2022. We appreciate this is disappointing. Please see below for other useful resources and additional programmes happening in the county for families.

Where there are limited spaces available for referral onto the Shropshire HAF programme for non-FSM children and young people, the priority for 2023 is to support those living in areas of high deprivation and/or from low-income households who are not in receipt of free school meals.

New data from the Department for Education shows that despite an increase in the numbers of children and young people being eligible for Free School Meals over the last 2 years, large numbers are still in need and are missing out on support.

Currently there are very tight eligibility criteria to have the opportunity to benefit from FSMs in England: children must be in families on qualifying benefits and earning less than £7,400 after benefits and tax. This incredibly low-income threshold means that there are substantial numbers of children who are living in poverty and households that don't have sufficient

income to buy food alongside other essentials, and yet do not fall within the criteria to receive FSMs.

This clearly illustrates there are large numbers of children in need of FSMs who are missing out and who the HAF programme in Shropshire aims to support.

4- and 5-Year-Olds:

* Children who are aged 4, who attend a nursery or pre-school are NOT eligible for the HAF programme, unfortunately the programme activities are not suitable. Eligible children aged 4+, must be in full time education and have started school in Reception Class (or equivalent).

Where organisations are running HAF holiday clubs who are not Ofsted registered:

- 5-year-olds in Year 1 at school, can attend activity for four hours or more.
- 4- and 5-year-olds currently in reception class at school, can only attend activity for two hours.
- 4-year-olds in Nursey or preschool are not eligible for the HAF programme.

Useful Information / Additional Support and Programmes for families:

Actio Consortium – ‘All In Short Breaks’: Shropshire HAF are working in partnership with the Actio Consortium. Actio are responsible for commissioning, promoting, and monitoring Shropshire Councils ‘All In Short Breaks’ – a menu of accessible and unique activities for children and young people with SEND.

To find out more about Actio and the ‘All In Short Breaks’ programme, please visit their website at www.actio.org.uk

The SEND Local Offer: More information and support is available at <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/the-send-local-offer/family-support/information-advice-and-support-service-iass/> and email local.offer@shropshire.gov.uk

Shropshire Family Information Service: provides detailed information, advice and support on all aspects of family life for parents and carers of children and young people. <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/early-help/practitioners/the-early-help-offer-provision-of-early-help-services/family-information-service/>

Cost of Living: Information has been brought together by Shropshire Council with its partners to support residents at this challenging and worrying time. [Cost of living help | Shropshire Council](#)

Contact Details:

Email HAF.programme@shropshire.gov.uk

Visit: www.shropshire.gov.uk/HAF