

## **Holiday Activities and Food Programme, cost of living and Household Support Fund payments**

The Council, alongside Edsential and a range of community partners, are running a wide range of fantastic activities for the Winter Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) that will run throughout the school winter holiday. The HAF Programme is funded nationally and provides funding for local organisations to provide activities for children and young people during the holidays, helping them to access healthy food and take part in fun activities over the school holidays.

Over the winter there will be a wide range of HAF programmes delivered across the borough by our local partners.

### **Edsential**

Community interest company, Edsential, is working with 24 organisations, including schools, community, voluntary and faith sector organisations, to organise 32 holiday activity clubs throughout the borough this winter period. The holiday clubs will provide local children and families with the following.

- Good quality healthy meals and snacks, with some family cooking sessions plus food and nutritional education.
- A variety of directly delivered physical activities such as, climbing, swimming, yoga, golf, judo, skateboarding, dance and drama workshops.
- Diverse enrichment activities, including arts and crafts, musical theatre, carol singing, archery, street dance, mindfulness, forest school, trips to Chester Zoo and local Pantos.

These sessions can be booked via the Edsential website <https://edsential.com/haf2022/>

### **Youth Zones for 11-16 year olds (up to 25 for our SEND children and young people)**

Youth Zones, operated by the Council's Youth Service, will be providing eligible children and young people across the borough with a winter offer.

Youth Zones will be open across the borough and all families of children and young people who are eligible for free school meals will be able to register to attend our winter fun activity programme. All children and young people will be offered a healthy balanced hot meal.

Our winter programme will include a Christmas party, including arts and crafts, games and sports and a trip out.

If you would like more information, please email: [EHPChesterandRural@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:EHPChesterandRural@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk).

### **Provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)**

A number of organisations have been funded to deliver SEND specific HAF provision across the borough, the varied offer will include sessions for children and young people with an identified need, some sessions will also offer places to their siblings these include ten pin bowling, trampolining, simple cycling and a wide variety of other sessions such as sensory play, festive fun and crafts and disco along with the opportunity to attend the theatre to see a pantomime, food workshops, community cookery, swim sessions and lots lot's more

A healthy meal will be provided at every session for the children and young people in attendance.

For more information, please email: [AimingHighForDisabledChildren@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:AimingHighForDisabledChildren@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk).

Please help us to continue to promote the HAF programme to children, young people, parents and carers who may be interested. We want to ensure that all children and young people entitled to access HAF provision are aware of the programme and are supported to take part.

### **Criteria/eligibility for the programme**

This holiday provision is for school aged children from reception to year 11 (inclusive) who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals.

Benefits-related free school meals (FSM) are available to pupils if their parents are in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits, and have a claim verified by their school or local authority.

- [Further information on eligibility for free school meals](#)

The Council wants to ensure that the offer of free holiday club provision is available for all children who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals in the area, though this does not mean we expect all to attend as the provision is voluntary.

Further information on the HAF Programme can be found on Live Well Cheshire West.

- [Live Well Cheshire West](#)

If you have any questions regarding the HAF programme, please email [haf@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:haf@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk).

### **Cost of living support**

It is currently a really challenging time for a number of families across west Cheshire. Families may be worried about the rising cost of energy bills, food, and transport. The cost of living is rising, and this could have an impact on all aspects of finances.

Families may want help accessing welfare rights, benefits and debt advice, support getting all the money they're entitled to, or simply want to know more about national recent support measures.

Whatever their money worries may be, the Council has put together some useful information to help.

The page includes a wealth of information including the Household Support Fund, the Council's HELP Scheme, Warm Welcoming Spaces and much more.

- Visit: [Cost of living support](#)

### **Household Support Fund payments for children in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM)**

Payments for households in receipt of FSM will be made to schools week commencing 5 December. Each eligible family will receive £20 per week, per child, so in total £40 per pupil for the two-week Winter holiday period.