

Boost in activities and food pledged to support children

Supermarkets and sport groups are today showcasing the valuable support they give to disadvantaged children and families in their communities, including through the government's Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme.

Meeting with representatives from UK businesses and the Cost of Living Business Tsar David Buttress today (Tuesday 14 June), Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi encouraged organisations to boost their support for the holiday scheme, which supported thousands of children last summer after it was expanded to run nationally.

The call to arms for more support comes as the government announced it will also increase the per-pupil funding rate for universal infant free school meals. Approximately £18 million of new funding for universal infant free school meals will help schools provide for the 1.25 million children in reception, Year 1 and Year 2 with a free, healthy and nutritious lunch, in recognition of the rising cost of living.

Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi said:

We are increasing our funding for universal infant free school meals because we know that more can be done in the face of rising costs.

Today I chaired a hugely productive roundtable with representatives from supermarkets and sport organisations, because Government cannot act alone in how we support the most vulnerable.

I've seen some incredible support from organisations across the country for our Holiday Activities and Food programme, and I wanted to celebrate the action they are already taking in local communities to support disadvantaged children and their families. Together I have no doubt that we can do more.

The meeting celebrated the successes of the [Holiday Activities and Food](#) programme since its expansion in last year's spending review and the way in which organisations are already providing community support and facilitating partnerships.

Examples of contributions so far include:

- Organisers behind **UEFA Women's EURO 2022** have been working with charitable partners, including HAF, on a Women's EURO ticketing invitation to ensure everyone gets a chance to be part of the biggest women's sporting event in European history this summer. They have gifted tickets to selected children and families to attend games as part of

their pledge to make this tournament the most accessible and inclusive football tournament to date;

- The **John Lewis Partnership** (including Waitrose and John Lewis) has committed £1 million to support local good causes helping children and families over the summer. The shops are linking in to the Holiday Activities and Food Programme in areas across the UK providing funding for food, places at activity camps and trips plus equipment for fun activities;
- **Morrisons** who have been supporting families on the programme in a range of areas, including food donations to holiday clubs in Northumberland, and food parcels for families in areas including Bexley, Birmingham, Somerset and Hertfordshire; and
- **Co-op** supporting holiday clubs through providing recipe boxes in Walsall, ingredients and recipe boxes in Dudley, 2,800 meals via food boxes to vulnerable families in Shropshire and more.

The roundtable discussion also covered wider possibilities for how costs for families can be reduced, including on school uniform. New government statutory guidance published last year requires schools to make sure families get value for money on school uniform and PE kit, including by limiting branded items – which can be more expensive – and allowing families to buy most items from high street retail options, including from supermarkets.

Support from external organisations builds on Government investment in the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme, which is backed by over £200 million each year to 2025, to support disadvantaged children in every area across the country in major school holidays.

Over 600,000 children attended HAF clubs last summer, benefitting from nutritious meals and enriching activities, which are targeted towards those who are eligible for free school meals.

The roundtable, chaired by the Education Secretary, included representatives from the Department for Education, Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, and Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. Other attendees included the Government's new Cost of Living Business Tsar David Buttress, and representatives from Morrisons, Co-Op, the John Lewis Partnership (including Waitrose and John Lewis), M&S, the English Football League Trust, Daily Mile, Swim England, Dallaglio Rugby Works, Lawn Tennis Association, Sport England, StreetGames, and Football Association.

Schools will receive the uplifted universal infant free school meals funding, backdated to 1 April 2022. This will raise the rate per meal to £2.41. Full allocations will be published later this month.