

News story: Boost to support disadvantaged families during the holidays

New funding for organisations to research ways of supporting disadvantaged families during the school holidays has been launched by the Education Minister Nadhim Zahawi today (28 March).

The £2 million investment will go towards exploring how best to help the most disadvantaged children to benefit from healthy meals and enriching activities.

Organisations across the country are being invited to apply for a share of the funding pot and will be encouraged to work across a number of regions, or in partnership with other experts.

Education Minister Nadhim Zahawi said:

I encourage charities and expert organisations across the country to apply to take part in this exciting programme to help us better understand children's current access to healthy meals and enriching activity during the school holidays.

We want every child to reach their potential and healthy meals and activities can contribute to their development and improved attainment.

Academic standards are rising and there are now 1.9 million more children in schools rated good or outstanding than in 2010. We are building on this success by supporting the country's most disadvantaged children, including through free school meals and the up to £26million investment I announced last week to kick-start or improve breakfast clubs in at least 1,700 schools.

Evidence suggests that attending out-of-school activities can have a positive impact on children's educational, health and well-being outcomes.

The Holiday Activities and Food Research Fund announced today will help to ensure that every child, whatever their background or wherever they are growing up, has the opportunity to reach their potential. It follows the announcement in January that the government would undertake initial research in 2018 followed by a targeted pilot programme in the 2019 Easter and summer holidays.

This work aims to support children's education by:

- testing the effectiveness of interventions;
- looking at take-up of provision;
- identifying the costs involved; and
- considering whether there are particular areas where this kind of programme would be most effective.

It continues support for the most disadvantaged families provided by the government, including the provision of free school meals to 1.1 million of the most disadvantaged children, and the £2.5 billion funding given to schools through the Pupil Premium to support their education. Last week, the Department for Education also announced up to £26 million to kick start and improve breakfast clubs across the country.

Academic standards are rising in primary and secondary schools thanks to government reforms and the hard work of teachers. Most importantly, the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their more affluent peers has already shrunk by 10% at GCSE and 10.5% at KS2 since 2011.

To ensure this work is implemented effectively, ministers will work closely with Frank Field MP and expert stakeholders, as it develops.

The bid round will be open from 28 March 2018 and will close on Wednesday 18 April 2018. There will be a separate bidding process for participation in the 2019 Easter and Summer pilots. Organisations can bid for the funding on [Contracts Finder](#)