

## News story: Free holiday activities and meals for disadvantaged families

A series of projects, backed by £2million of government funding, will be run across the country including the North East, Birmingham and London, providing activities such as free football classes, play sessions and cooking classes.

These projects, running across the summer, will also provide free meals for the most disadvantaged families who may rely on the Free School Meals they receive during term time.

Children and Families Minister Nadhim Zahawi said:

For most pupils, the end of the school summer term signals the start of holidays, days out and a chance to make memories with friends and family. Other families, who might rely on the support provided by schools, are not so lucky.

These projects will provide a range of support for families during the summer break. They will also give children access to experiences that won't just create great memories but will help broaden their horizons and build the confidence they need to succeed in whatever path they choose to follow.

Academic standards are rising across the country and there are now 1.9 million more children in schools rated good or outstanding than in 2010. 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.

Today's announcement is the latest in a series of government backed schemes to help disadvantaged children. These include the £2.25billion Pupil Premium, Free School Meals and most recently a £26million investment to kick-start or improve breakfast clubs in at least 1,700 schools.

Commenting on the announcement, Lindsay Graham, independent policy advisor who has campaigned on this issue in the past, said:

The school holidays can be a challenging and costly time for families, particularly for those on a limited income or whose children are reliant on term time free school meals.

The need for community led enrichment opportunities for children, young people and their families is paramount for helping the most disadvantaged in our society. Early research in the UK is telling us that these types of projects can make a difference.

Evidence suggests that attending out-of-school activities can have a positive impact on children's educational, health and well-being outcomes. The projects announced today will be run by Children North East, Family Action, Feeding Britain, Birmingham Holiday Kitchen, Onside Youth Zones, Street Games and TLG (Transforming Lives for Good).

This funding comes after the government announced that it would run 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
- considering whether there are particular areas where this kind of programme would be most effective

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