



Hillingdon

Holiday Activities and

Food Programme

Supporting Information for providers
2026/27

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Background

School holidays can be pressure points for some families because of increased costs (such as food and childcare) and reduced incomes. For some children, this can lead to a holiday experience gap, with children from low-income households:

- less likely to access organised out-of-school activities
- more likely to experience 'unhealthy holidays' in terms of nutrition and physical health
- more likely to experience social isolation.

Free holiday clubs are a response to this issue, and evidence suggests that they can have a positive impact on children and young people. Considering this evidence, the Department for Education has funded the HAF programme.

There are many benefits for children who attend the HAF programme. We want to encourage all HAF providers to ensure a high-quality experience that will result in children:

- receiving healthy and nutritious meals
- maintaining a healthy level of physical activity
- being happy, having fun and meeting new friends
- developing a greater understanding of food, nutrition and other health-related issues
- taking part in fun and engaging activities that support their development
- feeling safe and secure
- getting access to the right support services
- returning to school feeling engaged and ready to learn

Families can also benefit when HAF providers include their needs in planning and delivering their programme. This could be through:

- providing opportunities to get involved in cookery classes
- ensuring they are signposted towards other sources of information and support, such as health services or employment and education opportunities

Since 2018, the HAF programme has provided support to children in receipt of free school meals throughout holiday periods. Following successful pilots between 2018 and 2020, the programme was rolled out to all upper tier local authorities in 2021.

Who is this programme for?

Children from reception to year 11 (inclusive) aged 5-16 years (including 4-year-olds if in Reception) who are eligible for and receive **benefit related** free school meals (FSM), and their families. The age for children with special educational needs and disability (SEND) is extended to 18 years.

Extended Eligibility Criteria

As a local authority, we can choose to use up to 15% of our funding towards providing free or subsidized holiday club places for other vulnerable children who are not in receipt of benefits-related Free School Meals in alignment with our local priorities.

This may include:

- children assessed by the local authority as being in need, at risk or vulnerable (for example, children on a Child Protection Plan, Children in Need or on an Early Help plan)
- young carers
- looked-after children or previously looked after children
- children with an EHC (education, health and care) plan and financial challenges
- children who have low attendance rates at school or who are at risk of exclusion
- children living in areas of high deprivation or from low-income households who are not in receipt of free school meals
- children who are refugees or asylum seekers.

We are asking providers to submit applications for funding that meet at least one of the following groups:

1. Primary age group: those in reception to year 6 (aged 4/5 to 11/12 years)
2. Secondary age group: those in year 6 to year 11 (aged 11/12 – 16 years)
3. Young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) up to age 18 years
4. Parents/Guardians: support, information, advice and signposting around food and nutrition, programmes that engage parents with their children such as cookery classes
5. Vulnerable children and families who are not in receipt of benefits-related FSM but would benefit from HAF:
This may include children assessed by the local authority as being in need, at risk or vulnerable, young carers, looked-after children or previously looked after children, children with an EHC (education, health and care) plan, children who are refugees or asylum seekers.

To better ensure that the provision both meets the needs of our FSM families and is accessible for them, it is proposed that holiday places align as much as possible with FSM distribution by ward and age. For this reason, the decision-making board will consider where the programme is being delivered and how much money has already been granted to that part of the borough or age group.

Please see the Appendix for more information on FSM distribution in Hillingdon along with FSM data maps.

How much funding is available?

The council's aim is to reach as many benefits-related FSM eligible children as possible over the course of the programme. Hillingdon is making approximately £951,000 available for activities delivered as part of the Summer, Easter and Winter programmes (dependent on Government funding for the year).

Programmes can subsidise places on existing holiday provision as well as commission new activities. In accordance with DfE guidance, applications are welcomed from organisations which can draw upon other sources of funding to support HAF activities.

The council recognises that different types of provision will have different costs, and so applications will be assessed for value and compared with similar provisions as detailed in the grant application process.

There is no cap on the amount of funding that can be applied for; however, this is a competitive process, and the Council reserves the right to limit the grant awarded to an individual activity provider/organization. Organisations applying must

make clear within their submitted budgets how they will spend the funds, deliver against outcomes, and must evidence value for money.

Outlined below are example costs for a child's place per session (4-hour day), this is calculated by dividing the complete funding amount requested by a provider by the number of sessions being delivered and then by the number of children's places per session. E.g. request for £1500 funding / 4 days delivery / 15 children per day = £25 per child per day.

Type of delivery:	Cost per child per session
Universal; standard group activities	Maximum £20 - 30
Specialist; groups where specialist trained staff or equipment is needed i.e. coding, music, rock climbing etc.	Maximum £20 - 35
SEND specific; specialist groups catering to children with moderate to complex needs where specialist support is required i.e. providing medication, lifting, etc. this is expected to be no more than £40 per child with moderate support needs and £100 for a child with complex needs	Maximum £40 - 100

Additional funding may be available to support providers to offer places to children with moderate to high support needs on universal or specialist sessions. Please contact the HAF coordinator for further details.

Providers will receive 80% of the funding for the agreed number of places to be provided. The remaining payment of 20% will be paid following the timely return of attendance records, case studies, evaluation & feedback, and where a provider achieves at least 70% attendance. Poor attendance, below 70%, may reduce the final payment made.

We expect organisations to engage with our communications and promotion strategy, be proactive in advertising their provision and manage waiting lists so that the provision will be promoted effectively with the aim of ensuring that all available places are booked and attended. Poor levels of bookings and attendance may impact future applications for HAF funding.

What activities are eligible for funding, and who can get involved?

The council wants to work with those who can offer direct face-to-face activities for children and young people (and families, where appropriate) alongside a meal in a school or community setting. Providers can apply to offer places in existing holiday provision or set-up specific provision during the holidays, but provision must meet the HAF standards framework. The funded places must be free to eligible participants, though wider provision can seek paying families.

The standard delivery format for activities is 4 hours per day for 4 days per week. However, consideration will be given to alternative formats to meet the needs of specific groups such as older children, or those with SEND. For example, during the summer you may wish to deliver shorter sessions spread over multiple weeks.

There are lots of different activities that are eligible for funding. For example:

- A selection of sports (rugby, football, netball, cycling)
- Forest school/outdoor activities such as den building, cooking on an open fire, Orienteering and out-ward bound activities
- Arts and crafts

- Music, drama and dance
- Cooking classes and activities
- STEM activities (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math)
- Support to parents/guardians around food and nutrition

Similarly, a range of providers can sign up to deliver these activities, including community and voluntary organisations, not-for-profit companies, registered charities, social enterprises, schools and private companies operating in Hillingdon. The following are some examples of the types of providers that can get involved with the HAF programme:

- schools
- colleges
- nurseries
- private providers
- charities
- youth clubs
- community groups

As part of the application process, and to confirm your eligibility to receive public money, you will be required to submit copies of:

- Accessibility and Inclusiveness policy and procedures
- Safeguarding policy and procedures
- Public Liability and Employers' Liability Insurance
- Accounting or financial information to evidence solvency

Equality, diversity and inclusion

We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity, celebrating and valuing diversity, and eliminating unlawful discrimination. We expect applicants to comply with the Equality Act 2010 which simplifies and strengthens the law around tackling discrimination and inequality. The public sector equality duty, which is part of the Equality Act 2010, ensures that all public bodies play their part in making society fairer by tackling discrimination and providing equality of opportunity for all.

Some groups and communities in the borough may require additional support and resources to participate. Applications should include how you will meet the needs of diverse groups such as children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Guidance on Hillingdon's policies can be found [here](#).

Ofsted Registration

Holiday clubs may need to legally register with Ofsted depending on the provision they offer, they may also be eligible to register with Ofsted on the voluntary register, or they may be [exempt from registration](#) entirely. Both clubs and providers that would require registration with Ofsted, and those that are exempt, can participate in the HAF programme.

To support the raising of quality and to better meet the safeguarding needs of children and young people, certain providers can choose to [register with Ofsted](#) even if they do not have to.

It is the responsibility of individual HAF providers to understand whether they are required by law to be Ofsted registered and to continue to review their status as and when the provision they are offering changes.

HAF standards framework

All funding applications must outline how they will meet the standards noted below.

Food provision

Providers must provide at least one meal a day (breakfast, lunch or dinner) and all food provided at the holiday club (including snacks) must meet [school food standards](#). Our expectation is that the majority of food served by providers will be hot. However, we acknowledge that there will be occasions when this is not possible, and a cold alternative may be used with prior agreement where appropriate.

To ensure that all children receive a high quality and stigma free experience, if a provider is open to both HAF-funded and non-HAF-funded places, it is vital that all of the children attending are provided with an identical food offer and that HAF funded children are treated equally.

If children in non-HAF-funded places are given the option to bring a packed lunch, then we expect the provider to work with us to ensure that children attending HAF funded places have a similar experience. This could be fulfilled through the provider making arrangements to provide packed lunches for HAF children. ***All packed lunches must meet the school food standards.***

Alternatively, for providers who provide meals on-site, you could consider making the same healthy food available to all children, but with an additional charge for those non-HAF funded places.

All food provided as part of the programme must:

- comply with regulations on food preparation
- take into account allergies and dietary requirements (see the [allergy guidance for schools](#))
- take into account any religious or cultural requirements for food
- meet [school food standards](#)

Food information regulations - Natasha's Law

From 1 October 2021, changes to the Food Information Regulations 2014 came into effect, adding new labelling requirements for food that is pre-packed for direct sale (PPDS).

Providers should take the time to read the [guidance on the Food Standards Agency website](#) and ensure that all food provision for the HAF programme meets these requirements.

Enriching activities

Holiday clubs must provide fun and enriching activities that provide children with opportunities to:

- develop new skills or knowledge
- consolidate existing skills and knowledge
- try out new experiences
- have fun and socialise

This could include:

- physical activities, for example, football, table tennis or cricket

- creative activities, for example, putting on a play, junk modelling or drumming workshops
- experiences, for example, a nature walk or visiting a farm
- free play, for example fun and freedom to relax and enjoy themselves

Hillingdon Council will support providers to deliver a rich and varied mix of fun and enriching activities that are age appropriate. For providers whose primary focus is set around a specific activity or sport, we expect them to ensure that children attending their provision benefit from a holistic and varied experience.

Physical Activities

Holiday clubs must provide activities that meet the [physical activity guidelines](#) daily.

In line with those guidelines, we expect:

- all children and young people participating in the HAF programme should engage in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity for an average of at least 60 minutes per day - this does not have to be in the form of a structured activity session, but can include active travel, free play and sports
- children and young people participating in the HAF programme should engage in a variety of types and intensities of physical activity to develop movement skills, muscular fitness and bone strength
- children and young people should aim to minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary, and when physically possible should break up long periods of not moving with at least light physical activity

Increasing awareness of healthy eating, healthy lifestyles, and positive behaviours

We expect providers to incorporate helping children to understand more about the benefits of healthy eating and nutrition into their programme. These do not need to be formal learning activities and could for example include activities such as:

- getting children involved in food preparation and cooking
- growing fruit and vegetables
- taste tests
- discussing food and nutrition
- including food and nutrition in other activities

Offering positive learning and development through HAF activities creates stigma-free opportunities to support children and young people in learning about healthy lifestyles and exercise. This could cover, for example, the use of vapes, cigarettes, drugs, and how this can lead to issues including:

- economic
- social
- personal safety
- exploitation
- criminality

Signposting and referrals

HAF providers should be able to provide information, signposting or referrals to other services and support that would benefit the children who attend their provision and their families.

Other services and support could include:

- Citizen's Advice
- school nurses, dentists or other healthcare practitioners
- family support services or children's services
- housing support officers
- Jobcentre Plus
- organisations providing financial education
- early years and childcare, including help to pay for childcare (such as Tax-Free Childcare)

There are many ways that providers can meet this element of the programme, for example, through trained and knowledgeable staff engaging with families during drop-off and pick-up times.

We know that many HAF providers have worked to provide training and advice sessions for parents, carers or other family members. We encourage providers who want to do so to continue to offer those sessions.

These sessions could provide advice on how to source, prepare and cook nutritious and low-cost food. This could be combined with the increasing awareness and understanding of healthy eating aspect of the programme, for example, by inviting children and their families to prepare and eat a meal together at a HAF session.

There are alternative ways of delivering this, for example, by providing participating children with ingredients and recipes to take away and try at home with their families.

Policies and procedures

There will be a wide variety of organisations and individuals involved in the delivery of the HAF programme. All these groups must be able to demonstrate that they have in place relevant and appropriate policies and procedures for:

- safeguarding, including the recruitment of staff and volunteers; be familiar with the [working together to safeguard children](#) guidance and familiar with part 1 of [keeping children safe in education](#) if in a school setting
- health and safety
- relevant insurance policies
- accessibility and inclusiveness

Where appropriate, holiday clubs must also be compliant with the [Ofsted requirements](#) for working with children.

[Full guidance is available on the government website.](#)

How to register your interest

Applications for HAF funding are made for Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays individually, as per dates below:

HAF Programme	Delivery Period	Applications Open	Applications Close
Easter	30 th March to 10 th April 2026	8 th December 2025	2 nd January 2026
Summer	27 th July to 28 th August 2026	23 rd March 2026	17 th April 2026
Christmas / Winter	21 st December 2026 to 1 st January 2027	24 th August 2026	11 th September 2026

If you have any queries or would like to request a meeting please email HAFprogramme@hillingdon.gov.uk or call to speak to the HAF coordinator 01895 277881

Grant Application Process

Applications are made by completing our Grant Application Form.

We would like programmes to provide a wide range of opportunities for eligible children and young people. Applications must provide programmes for at least one of the groups below, providers are permitted to apply for multiple LOTs:

- LOT 1: Primary age group: those in reception to year 6 (aged 4/5 to 11/12 years)
- LOT 2: Secondary age group: those in year 6 to year 11 (aged 11/12 – 16 years)
- LOT 3: Young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) up to age 18 years
- LOT 4: Parents/Guardians: support, information, advice and signposting around food and nutrition, programmes that engage parents with their children such as cookery classes
- LOT 5: Vulnerable children and families who are not in receipt of benefits-related FSM but would benefit from HAF: This may include children assessed by the local authority as being in need, at risk or vulnerable, young carers, looked-after children or previously looked after children, children with an EHC (education, health and care) plan.

Grant Application Selection Process

Applications will be scored using the system below and based on the criteria outlined in this section. To “Pass” an application must achieve a “3” score or higher. A straightforward pass or fail score not weighted may apply for some criteria if so; a score is N/A. Comments will be added to explain why a pass/fail is given and what achieves a 4 if scored.

Performance	Judgement	Score
Meets the standard in all aspects and is likely to deliver improvement either through innovation or added value	Excellent	5
Meets the standard in all aspects but does not exceed it	Good	4
Meets the standard in majority of aspects but fails in some	Satisfactory	3
Fails to meet the standards in the majority of aspects but meets in some	Unsatisfactory	2
Significantly fails to meet the standard	Poor	1
Completely fails to meet the standard	Failed	0

Criteria

Programme Outline	Score	Pass	Not met the criteria	Comments
Targets one of the 5 key groups				To “Pass” providers are required to target at least one of the 5 key groups.

Food Element	Score	Pass	Not met the criteria	Comments
Question excludes LOT 4 Includes at least one meal a day (breakfast, lunch or dinner) and all food provided at the holiday club meets school food standards				A “Good” score is awarded to providers where a healthy meal is provided which meets the school food standards; various options are available, and dietary or cultural requirements are catered for. A “satisfactory” score is where a healthy meal is provided which meets the school food standards.
Provides food that complies with regulations on food preparation, takes into account allergies and dietary requirements (see the allergy guidance for schools) and any religious or cultural requirements				To “Pass” providers must comply with the regulations.
Question excludes LOT 4 Has provided example menu that meets standards				To “Pass” providers must include an example menu.

Programme Content	Score	Pass	Not met the	Comments
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			crite ria	
Question excludes LOT 4 Provides fun and enriching activities that provide children with opportunities to develop new skills or knowledge, consolidate existing skills and knowledge, try out new experiences, have fun and socialise				“Good” the provider can demonstrate successful full engagement with children; providing led activities outlined in a detailed breakdown of the programme offer. “Satisfactory” the provider has a range of activities however the provider has not included programme detail.
Question excludes LOT 4 Provides activities that meet the physical activity guidelines on a daily basis. Including moderate-to-vigorous physical activity for an average of at least 60 minutes per day				“Good” describes at least 60 minutes per day, which is clearly physical.
Includes an element of educational content each day aimed at increasing awareness of healthy eating, healthy lifestyles, and positive behaviours.				“Good” clear example of an interactive element which includes educational content on healthy eating, healthy lifestyles, and positive behaviours.
Demonstrates that they can provide information, signposting or referrals to other services and support that would benefit the children who attend their provision and their families.				“Pass” is examples of how the provider incorporates this into services.

Policies and Procedures and Insurance cover	Score	Pass	Not met the crite ria	Comments

Able to demonstrate that they have in place relevant and appropriate policies and procedures for: • Safeguarding, including the recruitment of staff and volunteers helpful link Home - Hillingdon Safeguarding Children Partnership Arrangements (Hillingdon LSCB) (hillingdonsafeguardingpartnership.org.uk) • Health and Safety • Mitigation of risk of Covid19 • Relevant insurance policies. Evidence of public liability and employer liability insurance is required. The certificate or schedule to be shared should evidence that each is set at a minimum of £10M cover and that the policies expire post-delivery. • Accessibility and Inclusiveness • Staff & Volunteer DBS checks				A "Pass" is confirmation these are in place
Able to demonstrate that the programme is inclusive and accessible for children.				"Pass" the provider shares the policy link or policy attachment.

Company/Provider Reputation	Score	Pass	Not met the criteria	Comments
Able to demonstrate the organisation's purpose, experience, and track record of providing similar provision(s).				A "Pass" provides some evidence
Known to LBH or another local authority or recognized charity and have a positive track record of delivering work – can provide at least one reference incl. Contact details				A "Pass" provides at least one reference

Cost / Value for Money	Score	Pass	Not met	Comments
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			the crite ria	Rounded financial assessment based on value for money comparisons across the same LOT applications. As part of this assessment the Council may ask clarification questions / to negotiate / request provider to adjust.
Total cost of programme inc; staffing, venues, resources, equipment, administration				Providers are required to break down the costs.
Average cost per child				Providers are required to clarify the cost per child.
Able to demonstrate the organization's track record of achieving intended outcomes, including strong participant engagement and attendance rates in previous HAF or similar programmes.				Providers are required to show clear, verifiable evidence of their past performance.

Awarding funds

We will review applications and will notify successful applicants with a confirmation letter which will be followed by the issue of a service level agreement. The agreement will set out the terms and conditions on which the grant is made by the Council to the recipient.

If your programme is awarded HAF grant funding, then delivery planning for the programme must start, ready for activity delivery in the holiday period. Any unspent grant funding will be required to be returned to Hillingdon Council within 30 days of the end of the grant period or sooner where required.

How the HAF grant funding will be paid

The Council's intention is to pay 80% of the HAF grant funding after the provider has returned their completed and signed service level agreement, and within 30 days of receipt of the invoice.

The remaining payment of 20% will be paid following the timely return of attendance records, case studies, evaluation & feedback, and where a provider achieves at least 70% attendance. Poor attendance, below 70%, may reduce the final payment made.

If this arrangement causes difficulties in planning the programme, please contact the HAF coordinator to discuss it further.

Monitoring the funds

If we fund a programme, after the delivery period we will require reporting on the progress of the programme delivery, how the funds were spent and the outcomes and impacts that the programme achieved. We reserve the right to request invoices or receipts to evidence that HAF grant funding has been spent for the purposes intended. For the same reason, we reserve the right to audit programme delivery.

Unsuccessful applications

We will inform you if your application is not successful. We anticipate funding many organisations across Hillingdon and therefore formal feedback may not be possible for all unsuccessful applications. There are no appeals processes for unsuccessful applications.

Data Protection

As a public body, we must adhere to Data Protection Legislation. As part of the terms of any grants awarded, organisations will be asked to sign a data sharing agreement. Data will be shared with Hillingdon Council, the DfE and other organisations, as required and by exception, to facilitate collaborative delivery between activity providers/organisations.

Booking System

The London Borough of Hillingdon HAF programme is partnering with EEQU to manage bookings for all Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) provision. Using the EEQU booking platform will make it easier for families to browse activities, check their eligibility, and book places quickly and securely. It also helps us meet our responsibilities under the national HAF funding guidance.

All providers will be expected to upload their programme information to EEQU before the programme 'Go Live' date.

Support is available to help you use the EEQU system, and detailed guidance materials will be provided. If you require additional assistance, please contact the HAF team.

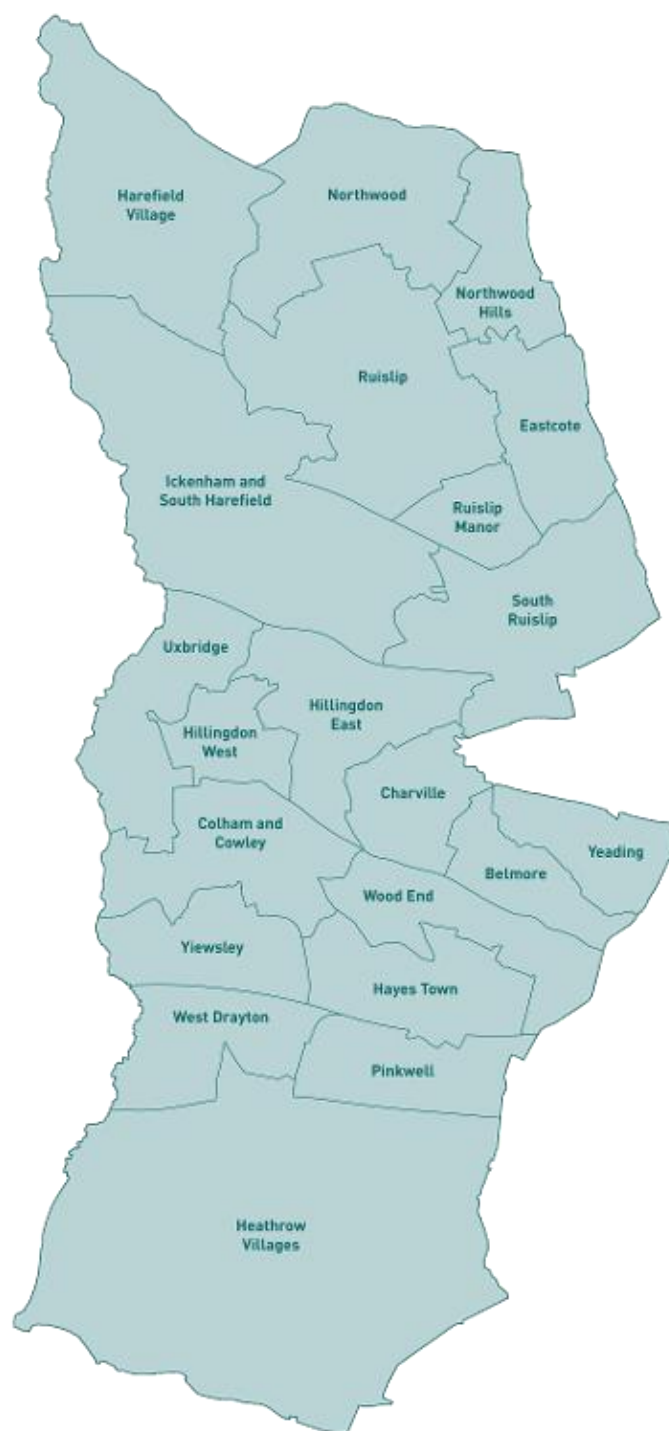
Reporting

After programmes have been delivered, all attendance data must be recorded directly in the EEQU booking platform. EEQU automatically collates booking, attendance, and demographic information, which will be used to support programme monitoring and reporting requirements.

Data captured through EEQU will be used by the London Borough of Hillingdon for programme oversight and evaluation, and anonymised data will be shared with the Department for Education as part of our statutory HAF reporting obligations.

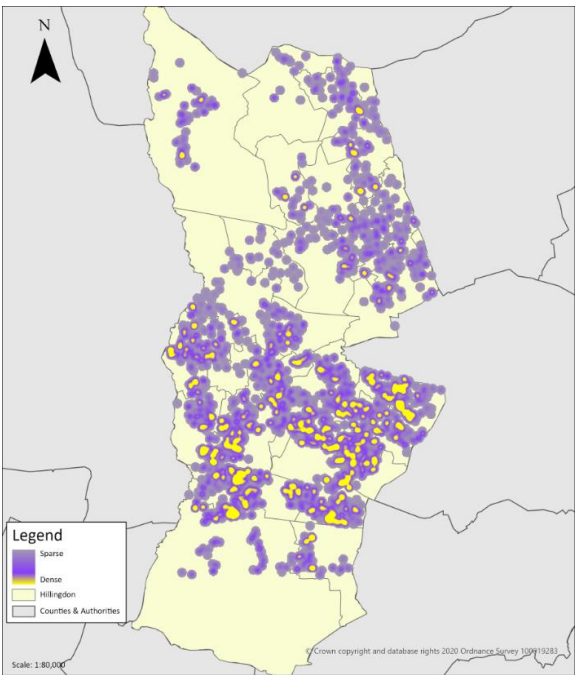
Appendices

Appendix 1: Hillingdon ward map

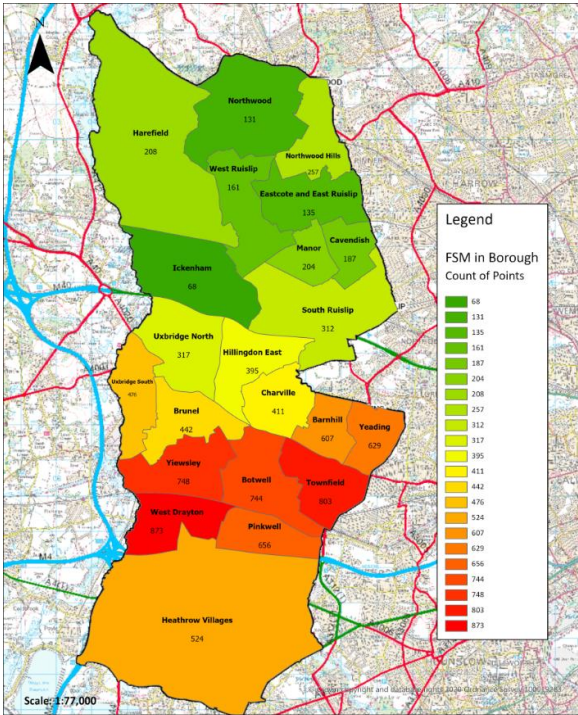


Appendix 2: FSM children in Hillingdon by Ward

All FSM eligible children in Hillingdon:

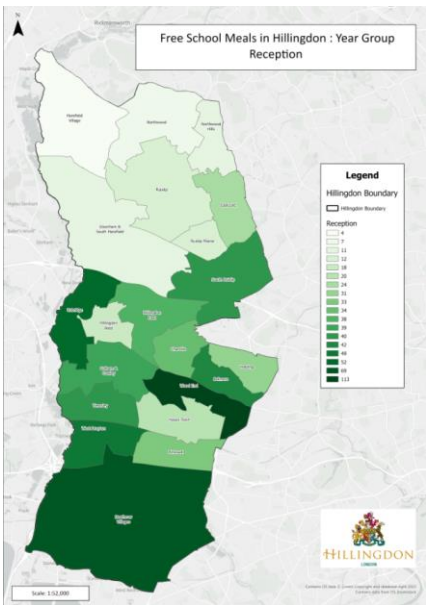


PROVISION OF FREE SCHOOL MEALS FROM
LONDON BOROUGH OF HILLINGDON - LOCAL
FEBRUARY 2022

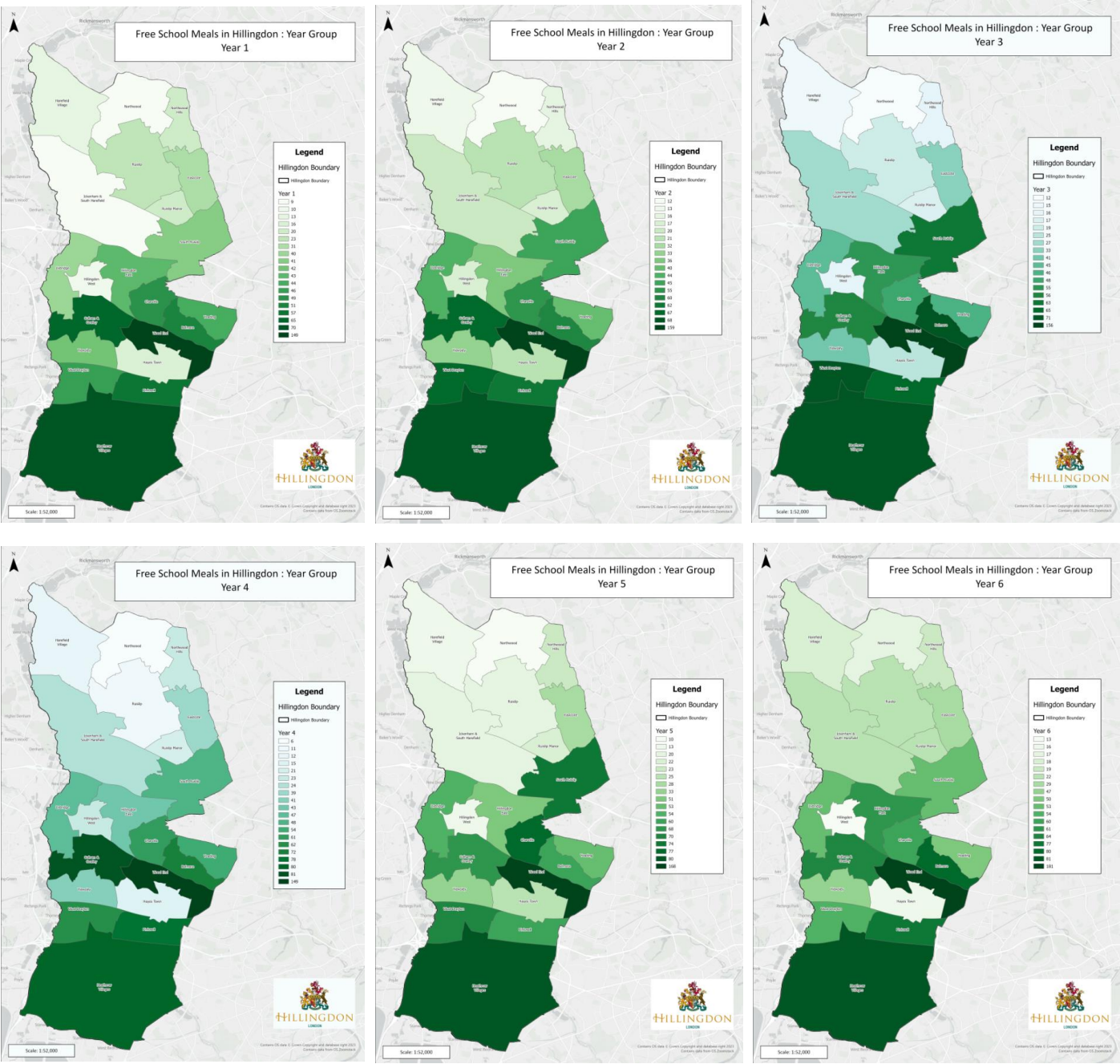


PROVISION OF FREE SCHOOL MEALS FROM
LONDON BOROUGH OF HILLINGDON - BY WARD
FEBRUARY 2022

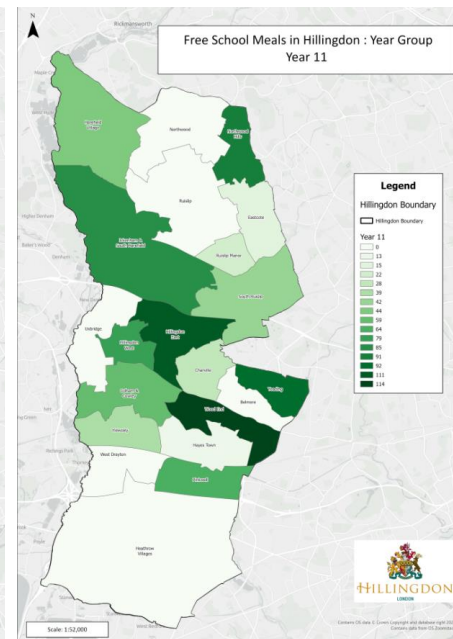
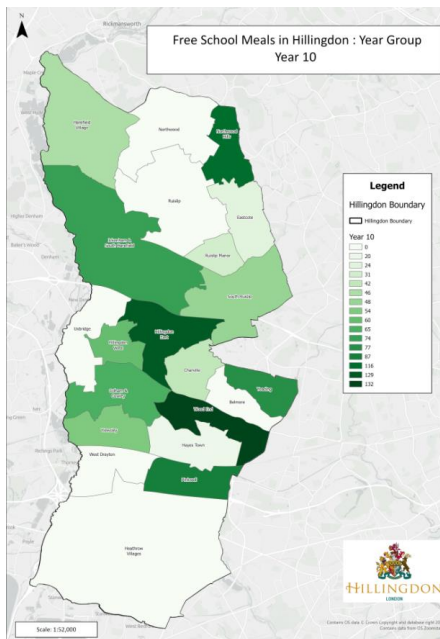
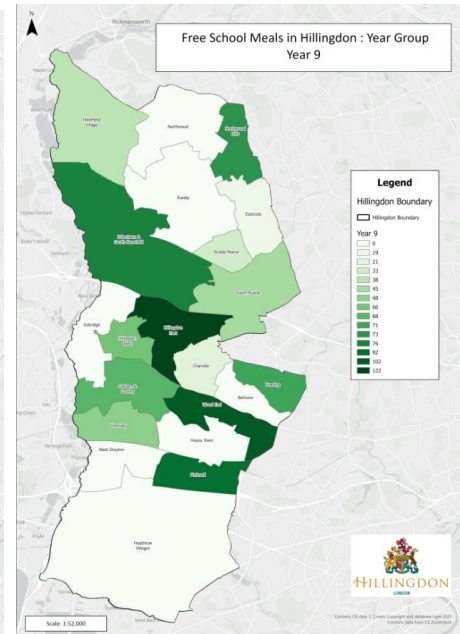
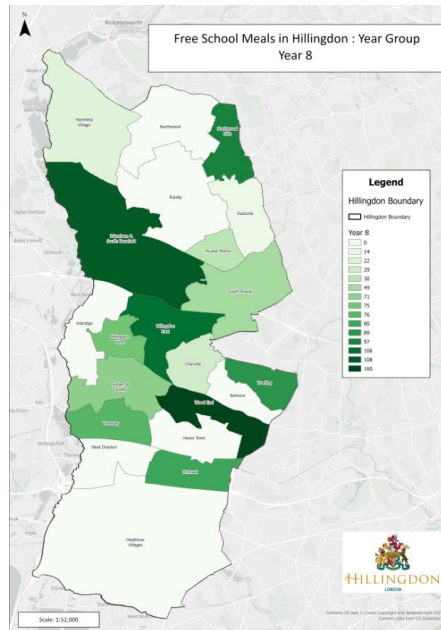
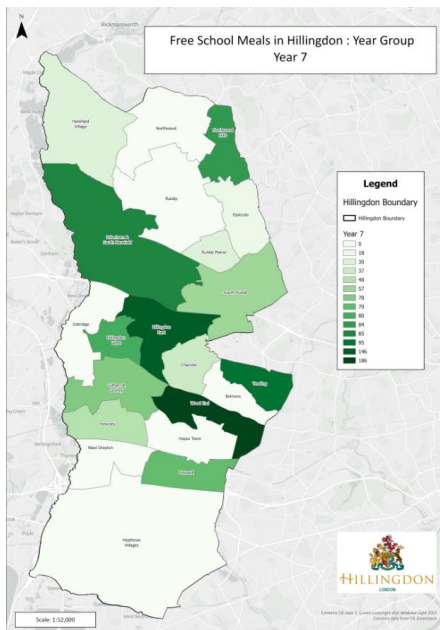
Reception aged children:



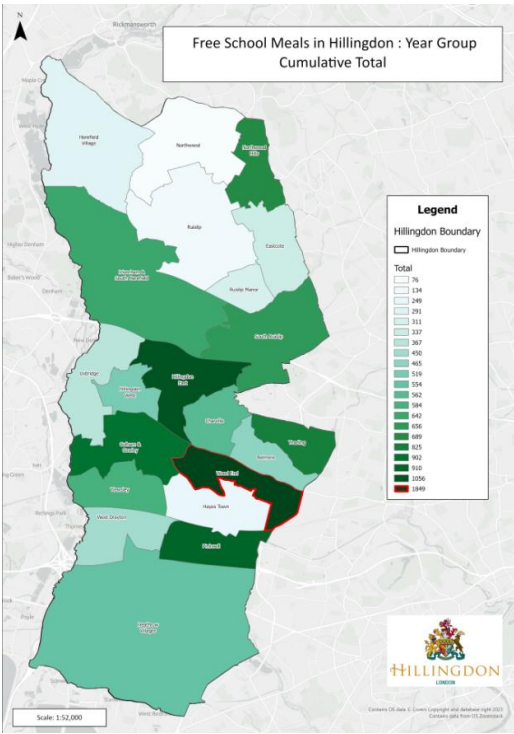
Primary aged children:



Secondary age children:



Year groups cumulative total from nursery to Year 14:



Appendix 3: Demographics of FSM eligible children in Hillingdon

Total FSM eligible children in Hillingdon: **12,041**

Total currently 'in receipt' of FSM: 9,189

Schools:

- 5,977 are attending a primary school
- 5,501 are attending a secondary school
- 516 are attending a state funded special school
- 28 are attending a non-maintained special school
- 19 are attending a state funded AP school

SEN Support:

- 2,208 eligible children are in receipt of SEN support – 18.3% of cohort
- 1,063 have an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) - 8.8% of cohort
- Severe or Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulty: 96
- Moderate Learning Difficulty: 245
- Physical Disability: 65

Most common types of need recorded are:

- Speech, Language and Communications needs: 893
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder: 857
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health: 509

**Publications: [Schools, pupils and their characteristics Academic Year 2024/25](#), [Special educational needs in England, Academic year 2024/25](#)*