

Comic Relief x Sainsbury's Summer Holiday Activity and Food Programme

Programme guidelines
February 2026

Programme guidelines

About the Programme

Sainsbury's, in partnership with Comic Relief, aims to tackle food poverty by helping people access the balanced, nutritional, and sustainable food they need, right now and in the future.

The Department for Education currently provides support to children (reception to year 11) who receive benefits-related free school meals through their Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme. The programme is delivered through local councils to children who receive free school meals (FSM) if their parents receive a qualifying benefit. There is evidence that some children who need support are missing out, and the scheme does not cover the whole summer – often 4 weeks of a 6-week holiday.

Sainsbury's and Comic Relief can see the limitations of the current scheme and are keen to deliver a programme with the aim of:

- Providing food to children experiencing food poverty which will, in turn, increase their health and well-being.
- Addressing gaps in the current provision and reviewing the impact of this programme.
- Raising awareness of child food poverty through storytelling and publicity, in turn generating further funds towards activity tackling food poverty.
- Showcasing how summer holiday childhood food poverty can be tackled differently to potentially develop a larger scale programme in the future.

Comic Relief has also identified a specific gap in supporting children and young people with a disability with food and activities during the summer and this fund is interested in supporting organisations that can support increased and/or improved access to schemes for children and young people with disabilities.

Programme aims

The aim of the programme is to provide school children (up to Year 11) **with improved access to summer holiday activity and food schemes**. The programme will support organisations who already provide food and holiday activities to increase access and reach. It will also support organisations that currently do not provide such activities but feel well-placed to deliver a summer food and activity scheme.

Geographical area

Applications to The London Community Foundation are welcome from organisations based in any London borough delivering projects and services to children and young people living in London.

Grant size and duration

- Organisations can apply for grants of up to £10,000.
- You can begin allocating funding to your project from Monday 29th June 2026 for any preparation work required for delivery.
- However, ALL project delivery must take place during the 2026 school summer holidays for your borough, no delivery should take place outside of the school summer holidays.
- Projects should be completed, with time for wrapping up and completion of monitoring, by Friday 11th September 2026.

You can apply for any costs towards your project, including e.g. staff/sessional staff costs associated with delivering the project, volunteer expenses, venue hire, materials and small equipment, equipment and other costs associated with making your project more special educational needs and disability (SEND) accessible and insurance.

We encourage applicants to follow the principles of 'full cost recovery' and include core costs within the budget, i.e. including an appropriate portion of the organisation's rent, administrative costs and utility bills. For further information please see: www.culturehive.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Full-cost-recovery.pdf.

Flexible grants: Although your application needs to explain how you expect to spend the grant and grants will be restricted to supporting children experiencing food poverty and increasing the reach of holiday activity and food programmes, you can change plans and redirect funding as needed. This is to ensure that you can respond to the needs of the children and young people you support. You can do this without formally requesting changes to your delivery or waiting for approvals. As long as any change to activity remains focused on the programme's aims, we trust you to make any changes you need.

Programme priorities

The programme will first prioritise applications from organisations looking to:

- Increase/improve access to holiday food and activity schemes for children with disabilities.
- Increase/improve access to holiday food and activity schemes for children experiencing food poverty.
- Increase the delivery period of their programme to include more hours per day, days per week and/or more weeks of the school summer holidays.

If we have a high volume of applications, we will further prioritise a geographic spread of organisations and those that operate in areas with high levels of deprivation.

Examples of projects that might be funded include:

- Expansion of an existing summer holiday food and activity programme, enabling more children to attend.
- Expansion of an existing summer holiday food and activity programme to more hours per day, more days per week or more weeks of the summer holiday.
- A new food and activity scheme where an organisation is well placed to engage children and have the programme up and running in time for the start of the 2026 summer holidays.
- New ways to support children with disabilities to attend a holiday food and activity programme.

Eligibility criteria – Who can apply and what for?

Programme specific criteria:

We will fund organisations with a total annual income of up to £500,000 in their previous financial year. Organisations who had an annual income over £500,000 in the previous financial year **will not** be eligible for funding.

All posts (including staff members, sessional workers, part-time or full-time posts and freelance workers) funded by these grants must be paid at or above the London Living Wage (currently £14.80 per hour).

Organisations must be based and delivering in London to children and young people living in London.

LCF's core eligibility criteria:

- **Eligible Legal Structures:**

- Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).
- Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG) - may also be registered as a Charity or a Community Interest Company Limited by Guarantee (CICLG).
- Trust.
- Unincorporated Association.
- Community Benefit Societies (CBS). Ideally, the CBS will also be registered as charitable with HMRC, however this is not essential.

There must be a governing document in place appropriate to the legal structure which includes an asset lock (or equivalent clause), and the purpose of all funded activities must be charitable (not for profit):

- **Governance:** You must have at least three unrelated members legally responsible for the governance of the organisation; Trustees/Directors/Management Committee as appropriate to your structure. Please note that this refers to the highest level of governance, a Management Committee that sits below a board of Trustees (e.g. charities, CIOs) or Directors (CLG or CICLG) does not count towards this.
- **Finances:** You must have a bank account in the same name as the organisation you are applying for, with a minimum of two unrelated signatories.

When you apply for funding from The London Community Foundation, you will be required to submit accounts from the last completed financial year. If these accounts were submitted to Charity Commission/Companies House more than 18 months ago, then we require management or draft accounts for the most current year.

New organisations that do not have accounts for the last completed financial year are required to provide an income and expenditure forecast for the current year and include a note as to why accounts are not available for previous years.

The following template can be used if you do not have your own: [IE Forecast template](#)

- **Safeguarding:** You must have a safeguarding policy in place that has been reviewed in the last 12 months and meets the requirements listed in our [Safeguarding checklist](#).

Additionally, you must submit a safeguarding policy that has been reviewed within the last year and is reviewed annually (this needs to be in writing on the safeguarding policy). If your safeguarding policy has not been reviewed annually, please provide a rationale for this and outline when it will be next reviewed.

- **Previous LCF funding:** All conditions from any previous London Community Foundation grants must be met and there must be no outstanding monitoring at the time of application.
- **Registration:** If the organisation's income is over £5,000 at the time of application, the organisation must be registered with The Charity Commission or the relevant regulator (e.g. Companies House, CIC regulator or Financial Conduct Authority) or be in the process of registration. Evidence of this must be submitted with your application. If it is not, your application will not be considered for funding. Please visit [this website](#) for guidance on setting up a charity, including information on legal structures.
- **Supporting Documents:** Please make sure you have submitted all three of the required supporting documents:
 - **A copy of your organisation's governing document.**
 - **A safeguarding policy that is dated, has been reviewed within the last 12 months and meets the requirements listed in our safeguarding checklist.**
 - **Annual accounts for the last completed financial year or an income and expenditure forecast template if your organisation is less than one year old.**

Please note that organisations that do not meet the above programme and core eligibility criteria, or do not submit the required documents at the time of application, will not be considered for this fund.

Due to the popularity of this fund, we will not be able to follow up with organisations about information that has not been provided with applications. If you have any issues uploading documents or submitting your application, please email applications@londoncf.org.uk **before the deadline**.

Shortlisted organisations will undergo social media and Google checks in line with the London Community Foundation [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion statement](#).

Who and what isn't eligible:

- The following types of organisation are not eligible:
 - Companies limited by Shares (including CIC limited by shares).
 - Statutory organisations, such as schools.
 - NHS bodies.
 - Co-operative Societies.
- The grant funds cannot be used for:
 - Activities that promote religious or political views.
 - Purely commercial ventures (for profit).
 - Spending that has already taken place (i.e. retrospective funding).
 - Individual sponsorship or redistribution of a grant to individuals or other organisations.
 - Activities where people are excluded because of religion, sexual orientation, gender or ethnicity (unless the issue is group-specific).

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- There must be no [personal benefit](#) attached to the grant.
 - The organisation must not have two years of late submissions to the Charity Commission/Companies House within the last two completed financial years.
 - The organisation must not have two years of net current liabilities within the two most recent completed financial years.
 - Organisations where Trustees are paid are not eligible unless evidence of approval is provided from the Charity Commission and/or this arrangement is referenced in the governing document.

Monitoring and evaluating your work

We aim to keep reporting requirements to a minimum. However, we also need to understand the impact of the programme so that what we can use this information to demonstrate the fund's impact, learn, improve our future programmes and provide information to Comic Relief and Sainsbury's. We are interested in knowing:

- How the grant was spent.
- The number of children and young people directly benefitting from your school holidays activities and food programme.
- The number of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) taking part in your holiday programme.
- The number of meals provided through your school holiday programme.
- The total number of places provided at your programme for children and young people over the duration of the school holidays.

We are interested in hearing children's and young people's voices and therefore, you are welcome to submit videos or written testimonies from children and young people as part of your reporting.

London Community Foundation and Comic Relief would like to visit funded projects over the summer holidays. The application form will ask whether your organisation is able to host a visit. **Inability to host a visit will not affect the outcome of your application.**

How to apply

We are hosting three online information sessions where we'll share an overview of the grants programme and London Community Foundation's eligibility criteria, give you an insight into some of the key application form questions and be available to answer your questions. These sessions are being held on the following dates and can be accessed via the link, please only attend one session:

1. Monday 23rd March 1-2pm [Information Session Monday 23rd March 1pm](#)
2. Tuesday 24th March 6-7pm [Information Session Tuesday 24th March 6pm](#)
3. Thursday 26th March 10-11am [Information Session Thursday 26th March 10am](#)

Before applying you will be asked to complete our eligibility check to make sure that your organisation is eligible to apply for a grant from this fund: [Check eligibility and apply](#)

Once you have completed the eligibility check, and if you are eligible to apply for a grant, you will be directed to the application form to start your full application.

Application deadlines

Programme Timeline	
Open for applications	Monday 16 th March 2026, 10am
Application deadline	Wednesday 22 nd April 2026, 12 noon
All grant decisions communicated by	Friday 12 th June 2026

Some top tips for top applications:

- Draft responses before completing the online form and save them in a Word document.
- Make sure that every question has been answered in full.
- Ensure your budget section has a clear breakdown of all the costs associated with your project.
- Ask somebody to read through the application before sending, preferably someone who knows nothing about the project. This is a great way to pick up on any mistakes or lack of information and rectify it before submitting.

Please note we are unable to consider applications that are submitted after the deadline or those that do not have the supporting documents included (see Supporting Documents above for what we need you to include with your application).

Living Wage Funder

The London Community Foundation is a Living Wage Funder. This scheme, run by the Living Wage Foundation means that The London Community Foundation will actively encourage and support applications from organisations willing to pay staff the real Living Wage (currently £14.80 in London), or higher.

If you are applying for funding of any staff costs (this could include existing staff members, sessional workers, part-time or full-time posts and freelance workers) you should budget these at the Living Wage or above. We are sensitive to circumstances where applicants feel that taking up the Living Wage could cause difficulties, in these instances, please explain the circumstances in the Living Wage section of the application form. This does not require employers to pay the Living Wage to apprentices or interns, although we recommend it as best practice for employers who can afford to do so.

You can learn more about The Living Wage Funder Scheme at <https://www.livingwage.org.uk/living-wage-funders>.

What happens next?

We may contact organisations to discuss their applications in more detail or request additional information. A grants panel of representatives from London Community Foundation will then discuss the applications and decide which projects to fund within the budget available. All applicants will receive a decision letter attached to an e-mail by Friday 12th June 2026.

If your application is successful, you will be required to:

- Credit support from The London Community Foundation (LCF) on materials related to the funded work using the correct logos (available on request and from our website).
- Complete spending by 4th September 2026.
- Complete a monitoring form about the project by 11th September 2026.
- Maintain financial records for all grant spending and submit requested information to LCF.

Further Information

Please contact Leigh Ogden, Grant Programmes Lead on leigh.ogden@londoncf.org.uk or call us on 020 7582 5117 if you have any questions about the programme.

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