

Partner Brief: Development of Birmingham Holiday Activities and Food programme Communications and Stakeholder Management Plan

Background

StreetGames, acting as the Programme Management Organisation for Birmingham City Council's (BCC) Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme, is seeking a partner to support the development of a HAF Communications and Stakeholder Management Plan linked to changes to Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility from September 2026.

National changes will expand eligibility for FSM to children and families in receipt of Universal Credit. However, current indications suggest that whilst FSM eligibility may expand, this will not automatically extend to HAF eligibility criteria, alongside the removal of transitional protections currently in place.

This is likely to create significant confusion and challenge across the system, particularly for:

- Schools and education settings directing families into HAF
- Parents and carers
- Community providers and delivery partners
- Elected members and wider stakeholders

There is also potential reputational and engagement risk associated with:

- Perceived inconsistencies between FSM and HAF eligibility
- Concerns regarding inclusion and fairness
- Public and political scrutiny around children and families potentially being excluded from support

Whilst BCC and StreetGames will follow all Department for Education (DfE) guidance and statutory requirements, we are seeking support to proactively plan for and manage the communications, stakeholder engagement and potential reputational implications associated with these changes.

The intention is to develop a clear, practical and responsive communications approach that BCC can adopt strategically and StreetGames can operationally implement across the HAF network.

Scope of Work

We are seeking proposals that outline how the partner would support the development of a HAF Communications and Stakeholder Management Plan and what approaches, tools and supporting resources may be required.

Areas we would expect the work to consider include:

- Interpretation of likely communication implications linked to FSM/HAF eligibility changes
- Stakeholder mapping and audience identification
- Communications planning across schools, providers, families and wider stakeholders
- Development of clear and accessible messaging
- Management of misinformation, confusion and public concern
- Crisis communications and reputational risk planning
- Political and stakeholder sensitivity management
- Approaches to supporting provider and school confidence in communicating eligibility
- Escalation and response planning for negative media, stakeholder or community reactions
- Internal and external communications alignment between BCC and StreetGames
- Considerations relating to inclusion, language, stigma and accessibility

We are particularly interested in approaches that:

- Are proportionate and deliverable within a local authority/community programme context
- Recognise the operational realities of HAF delivery
- Support clear, consistent and confident communication across the system
- Provide practical implementation tools rather than purely strategic recommendations
- Balance proactive communications planning with reactive crisis management capability

The brief is intentionally non-prescriptive and we welcome proposals that recommend:

- The most appropriate communications planning approach
- Practical tools, templates or messaging frameworks
- Stakeholder engagement methodologies
- Opportunities for scenario planning and simulation activity where appropriate

Intended Outcomes

The work should:

- Support BCC and StreetGames to communicate changes clearly and consistently
- Reduce confusion and misinformation relating to HAF eligibility
- Support schools, providers and partners to confidently communicate with families
- Strengthen preparedness for potential public, political or stakeholder concern
- Provide clear crisis management and escalation approaches
- Support continued trust, engagement and confidence in Birmingham HAF delivery
- Minimise reputational risk associated with eligibility changes and perceived exclusion

Deliverables

We are open to proposals regarding format and delivery approach, but anticipated outputs may include:

- A Birmingham HAF Communications and Stakeholder Management Plan
- Stakeholder mapping and communications framework
- Key messaging guidance and FAQs
- Crisis communications protocols and escalation guidance
- Template communications for schools, providers and families
- Political and stakeholder briefing materials
- Optional workshop/facilitation support if achievable within budget
- Optional retained support arrangement to provide responsive communications and stakeholder management advice should significant or live issues arise beyond the scope of the initial preparatory and planning phase.

Budget and Timescales

Indicative budget available: approximately £5000-£8000.

We are therefore seeking proportionate and practical proposals that maximise impact within this budget envelope.

Given the timing of eligibility changes and the potential impact on Christmas 2026 HAF delivery, the intention is for this work to commence rapidly from September 2026, with an initial communications and stakeholder management approach, key messaging and supporting resources developed during Autumn 2026.

This initial phase will utilise DfE guidance and national communications materials where appropriate, whilst supporting BCC and StreetGames to respond consistently and confidently during the first delivery period affected by the changes.

The intention would then be to further refine and strengthen the approach through Winter 2026/27, with a fully embedded communications, stakeholder engagement and crisis management approach in place ahead of Easter 2027 HAF mobilisation and delivery.

Proposal Request

Interested partners are invited to provide:

- A short overview of their proposed approach
- Outline scope/content recommendations
- Proposed methodology and engagement approach
- Indicative timescales
- Indicative costs
- Relevant experience and examples of similar work