

We are delighted to announce that the [Comic Relief and Sainsbury's Holiday Activity and Food Programme](#) will OPEN for applications from Community Groups across Greater Manchester on Thursday the 9th of April 2026.

This programme aims to tackle food poverty by helping people access the balanced, nutritional, and sustainable food they need, right now and in the future. The aim of the Fund is to provide school children (up to Year 11) with improved access to summer holiday activity and food schemes.

The Comic Relief and Sainsbury's Holiday Activity and Food Programme is offering awards of up to £15,000 in the Greater Manchester area.

We will close for applications at **midday on Thursday 23rd April 2025.**

Please read these guidelines and the supporting links in full before applying. Due to the timeline of the programme and the limited number of grants available, we will not be able to request further information from applicants if the required details and appropriate supporting documents are not supplied at the time of submission. Unfortunately, any applications submitted without the required information and supporting documents will not be taken forward for consideration.

Fund Criteria

The aim of the Fund 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 services but feel well-placed to deliver a summer food and activity scheme.

We are hosting two informal online information sessions about this programme via Zoom.

You can join us to hear more about information about the type of groups we can fund, the application process and all supporting documentation required.

Wednesday 8th April 2026: 6pm – 7pm

Wednesday 15th April 2026: 9.30am – 10.30am

If you require any access support to attend these sessions, please contact our Awards Team at awardseforevermanchester.com. Please see the main webpage to sign up for the drop ins.

Who can apply?

Comic Relief and Sainsbury's Holiday Activity and Food Programme welcomes applications from Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector community groups based in any of the ten boroughs of Greater Manchester.

Please note, for this programme, only formally registered organisations can apply. Due to the level of funding available, constituted community groups who are not registered as a recognised not-for-profit organisation such as a Charity/CIO/CIC Ltd by Guarantee etc., are not eligible. We have lots of other funding programmes that run throughout the year, so please make sure you are signed up to our newsletter to hear when these open.

Applicant organisations must be based in one of the ten boroughs in Greater Manchester and have an annual income of less than **£500,000**. Due to an expected high volume of applications, we will further prioritise those organisations with lower incomes and aim to achieve a broad geographical spread against areas of need.

How much can you apply for?

Organisations can apply for grants up to £15,000. 10% of this can be allocated towards core organisational costs such as, but not limited to, rent, bills and staff costs.

When is the activity expected to take place?

Projects must begin delivery in line with the start of the **2026 school summer holidays for your borough and be completed by 11th September 2026**. This allows some time to wrap up delivery.

You can begin allocating funding to your project from 1st July 2026 for any preparation work required for delivery.

What can you apply for?

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**.
- Deliver across the full **six-weeks of summer school holidays**.

The following are just some examples of the type of project the Fund may support:

- Expansion of an existing summer holiday food and activity programme, enabling more children to attend or for it to run for a longer period.
- 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 holidays.
- New ways to support children with disabilities to attend a holiday food and activity programme.

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, you can change plans and redirect funding as needed. This is to ensure that you are able to 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.

Is there anything you can't apply for?

Unfortunately, there are a few things that can't be funded, such as activities that have already taken place or been paid for, contributions to major appeals, activities promoting political or religious beliefs and activity which should be provided by statutory services. **10% of funding awarded can be allocated towards core organisational costs such as, but not limited to, rent, bills and staff costs.** Applicant organisations must be up to date with relevant Charity Commission/Companies House etc. returns.

If you're not sure if we could consider your application for funding, please contact a member of the Forever Manchester Communities Team, email awards@forevermanchester.com and we'll be happy to help.

Supporting Documents

Please ensure you have submitted all three of the required supporting documents.

- A copy of your organisation's governing document.
- The names and addresses of your Management Committee/Board of Directors.

- A safeguarding policy that is dated and has been reviewed within the last year.
- Annual Accounts or equivalent for the last completed financial year.
- A recent bank statement with the groups' name, address and transactions visible.

For help and guidance on your groups' supporting document and to see what we require from a Governing Document and other submitted information, please refer to our guidance which you can find here.

Due to the timeline of this programme, we will not be able to follow up with organisations about information that has not been provided with applications. Please note that organisations that do not meet the above programme or core eligibility criteria, or do not submit the required documents at the time of the application, will not be considered for this fund.

Deadline for Applications

We will close for applications at midday on **Thursday 23rd April 2026**. Any applications received after this time will not be considered.

Please head to the main web page to access the application form.

How long will a decision take?

We aim to let you know the outcome of your application by early June 2026. Please do not plan to start any activity until after you hear if your application has been successful. If you have any questions or have trouble completing your application, please contact us at awards@forevermanchester.com or phone 0161 214 0940.

*Due to the level of funding available, constituted community groups who are not registered as a recognised not-for-profit organisation such as a Charity/CIO/CIC ltd by Guarantee etc., are not eligible. We have lots of other funding programmes that run throughout the year, so please make sure you are signed up to our newsletter to hear when these open.

Further fund background

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 one of the qualifying benefits. 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.

Comic Relief and Sainsbury's are committed to supporting children and young people, especially those who experience food poverty. They can see the limitations of the current scheme and are keen to pilot a programme with the aim of:

- Providing food to children experiencing food poverty which will, in turn, increase their health and well-being.
- Developing a programme that addresses gaps in the current provision and reviewing the impact.
- Raising awareness of food poverty amongst children through storytelling and publicity to raise further funds.
- Showcasing how food poverty for children during the summer could be addressed 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 particularly interested in supporting organisations that can support increased and/or improved access to such schemes for children and young people with a disability.