

Bookings open for Hampshire's Holiday Activities and Food summer programme

Hampshire County Council's popular Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme is back for the 2025 summer holidays – and eligible families can now browse and book free places for their children at local schemes across the county



"I don't know what I would do without HAF for my two sons. The HAF camp is the first time my sons have had their needs met and not been turned away. I can continue to work in the holidays now I have a childcare option." – Hampshire parent feedback

One of the largest in the UK, Hampshire's summer HAF programme is set to offer a wide range of enriching activities and nutritious meals through 70 providers delivering 180 schemes in communities countywide, with around 7,000 children taking part.

Launched nationally in 2018 by the Government, HAF was developed in response to the challenges faced by low-income families during school holidays – particularly around social isolation, poor nutrition, and lack of physical activity. While the programme is primarily aimed at children eligible for benefit-related free school meals, up to 15 per cent of places are also available for other children who could benefit from HAF support. These can include children with Education, Health and Care Plans, or those referred by social services or their school.

Families can find out more and register to access HAF bookings through the [Family Information and Services Hub](#).

Family and child poverty remain significant concerns both locally and nationally. Over the past year in Hampshire alone, more than 2,200 additional children became eligible for free school meals, bringing the total to nearly 38,000. This rise reflects the increasing pressure on families due to the cost-of-living crisis, including rising housing, food, and utility costs.

Update from Hampshire County Council – July 2025

In addition to HAF, Hampshire County Council continues to support families through a range of services, including the [Household Support Fund](#) as well as [expanded childcare](#) and [wraparound school provision](#). These initiatives work together to tackle food insecurity, housing challenges, and access to affordable childcare for working families.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20250609HAFsummer>

Hampshire County Council to confirm appointment of new Chief Executive

Hampshire County Council is set to confirm the appointment of its next Chief Executive at a meeting of the Full Council on 17 July

Following a national recruitment process, the cross-party Member Appointment Panel, which met on 26 June, has recommended Gary Westbrook for the role. Gary is currently the County Council's Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Hampshire 2050.

Subject to formal approval by Full Council on 17 July, Gary will take on the role as Acting Chief Executive from 19 July before officially taking on the role as Head of Paid Service on 4 August, following the retirement of current Chief Executive, Carolyn Williamson.

Carolyn Williamson announced her retirement from Hampshire County Council, on 21 March 2025, following four years in the post as the Authority's first female Chief Executive. Mrs Williamson has spent 15 years at Hampshire County Council, as part of a total career in public service of over 40 years.

Hampshire County Council is one of the largest local authorities in the country delivering services to 1.4 million residents across the county. As Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service, the postholder is responsible, through the Council Leader, for managing an annual budget of approximately £3.1 billion, and leading a workforce of nearly 10,000 employees directly and many more indirectly, including via hundreds of Hampshire schools.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20250630ChiefExecutiveannouncement>

Hampshire County Council announces £12.5 million support package for vulnerable households

Vulnerable Hampshire households struggling with rising costs can access a range of support thanks to a comprehensive £12.5 million package unveiled by Hampshire County Council

Funded through the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) Household Support Fund (HSF), the initiative will run until March 2026 and is part of the County Council's wider [connect4communities programme](#), which supports low-income households with necessities like food and fuel. The funding will be used to provide both [immediate crisis support, and longer-term preventative measures](#) to households in need, including families with children, unpaid carers, care leavers, people with disabilities, pensioners, and those facing unexpected financial shocks.

Hampshire's network of community pantries – member-based alternatives to supermarkets that provide cheap essentials and reduce food waste – will receive more than £1 million.

Update from Hampshire County Council – July 2025

The County Council will also work closely with schools, borough and district councils and voluntary organisations to deliver the support. Additionally, a portion of the funding will be available through an application-based scheme, ensuring residents can come forward to request help.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20250625HSF>

Go-ahead given for introduction of Hampshire-wide food waste recycling

Plans to enable Hampshire residents to recycle household food waste from April 2026 have been confirmed. Hampshire County Council has agreed to progress with arrangements that will see an estimated 30,000 to 50,000 tonnes of food waste from Hampshire households recycled through anaerobic digestion – a process where bacteria breaks down organic matter producing valuable by-products such as renewable gas and organic fertilizer

The County Council's Cabinet Lead Member for Universal Services, Councillor Kirsty North, said: "I'm pleased to confirm arrangements to support the expansion of a kerbside food waste service which will play an important role in boosting our county's overall recycling rates. This follows my approval of plans to build a £50m facility in Eastleigh to enable residents to recycle a much wider range of plastics, including pots, tubs, trays, cartons, and soft plastic film for the first time, as we overhaul our approach to waste in Hampshire.

"The introduction of separate food waste collections from every Hampshire household will ensure that food waste can be sent to anaerobic digestion facilities and used to create new products rather than lost to disposal. It will also help keep contamination of dry waste materials down."

Currently, food waste collections are operated by Eastleigh Borough Council, Rushmoor Borough Council, and Portsmouth City Council, with New Forest District Council currently phasing in this new service. All other Hampshire Waste Collection Authorities will be introducing food waste collections between now and April next year.

The plans support the Government's [Simpler Recycling](#) guidance that requires all Waste Collection Authorities – which in Hampshire comprises district and borough councils, as well as the unitary authorities of Portsmouth and Southampton – to provide weekly kerbside food waste collections by April 2026 as part of a wider package of changes to deliver a more consistent and streamlined approach to recycling in England.

Taking steps to prevent food waste in the first place delivers greater environmental impacts than recycling. It is estimated, on average, a quarter of the waste put in household bins is food that could have been eaten. Residents can visit Hampshire County Council's [Smart Living](#) and [Kitchen Food Heroes](#) webpages for practical tips and advice to help use more of the food they buy.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20250623Foodwasterecycling>

Hampshire County Council to consider ‘lane rental’ proposals to minimise roadworks disruption

Proposals that could lead to the introduction of a new lane rental scheme aimed at reducing roadworks delays on over 550 miles of Hampshire’s busiest roads during peak times, are set to be considered by Hampshire County Council later this month

On Monday 23 June, the County Council’s Cabinet Member for Highways and Passenger Transport, Councillor Lulu Bowerman, will review detailed proposals for the introduction of lane rental scheme which would charge a daily fee for the duration of roadworks, including any delay, on more than 550 miles of road – or roughly 10 per cent - of Hampshire’s roads. If approved by the Department for Transport, the scheme could be introduced in spring 2026.

The County Council agreed in January to progress plans for a lane rental scheme, which would complement the existing road permitting system. Detailed proposals have now been set out which include which roads are considered to be the most strategically important or where roadworks and/or streetworks are likely to cause significant delays and disruption to traffic flow. If the proposal is approved, the County Council will undertake a consultation with relevant stakeholders, including utility companies, over the summer. Final recommendations will then be developed before formal approval is sought from the Department for Transport. The aim is for the scheme to become operational in Spring 2026.

Charges would vary depending on the type and level of disruption caused by the works. Any surplus revenue generated - beyond the basic operational costs - would be ringfenced to fund innovative projects aimed at reducing the impact of street and roadworks. Subject to new national legislation expected later this year, up to 50% of the income generated could also be reinvested into routine highway maintenance, including day-to-day repairs such as pothole fixes.

Lane rental schemes are already in place in several parts of the UK and they must comply with national legislation. Charges can only be applied to the most congested and strategically important local roads managed by the highway authority and under current legislation, the County Council would be permitted to charge up to £2,500 per day - the maximum allowed.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20250613LaneRentalProposals>

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