



# **Communities Together Durham**

**Holiday Clubs  
'How to Guide'**

**2025**

## **Contents:**

- 3 Why run a holiday club?
- 4 Safeguarding
- 5 Funding
- 7 Timing
- 8 Venue
- 9 Food Provision
- 10-11 The team and their responsibilities
- 12-13 The Programme
- 14 Governance & legalities
- 15 During the club
- 16 After the club
- 17 Religious Resources Centre
- 18 Useful Contacts
- 19 Potential Funders

## Why run a holiday club?

At Communities Together Durham (CTD) we resource churches to serve their communities, bring hope in practical ways and challenge poverty. We serve others as a core part of our Christian faith and discipleship, recognising that churches are in a unique position in our communities.

More than 1 in 5 children live in deep poverty in the North East. 67% of children in poverty are now from working families. At CTD we partner with churches who want to bring hope, to write another story for these families.

This booklet is here to empower and equip you to plan and think through all the things that you need to consider to run a successful holiday club. We see the missional opportunity that churches across our region have to connect with our communities and serve over school holidays when food insecurity is particularly high.

A good starting point for your planning is to ask the question, 'Why do we want to do this?' This will help shape the activities, the location and the plan for the club. It may be, of course, that the vision is quite vague, and your first planning task will therefore be to 'firm it up' and make sure the aims are clear.

"Why do we  
want a holiday  
club?"

The second question we would ask is, who shares your vision?

Are there other organisations in your community, other churches or your local authority who might partner with you?

As well as an outreach opportunity, holiday clubs can reduce pressure on family budgets, improve healthy eating and physical activity, combat social isolation for both children and adults, build confidence, skills and employability through volunteering opportunities.

This year, CTD are delighted to be working again alongside Durham Diocese to support churches who want to connect with their community and challenge poverty where they are. We would love to have a conversation about how we can help you and your church.

**Alexander Jones**

CEO  
Communities Together Durham

**Janet Dodson**

Development Team  
Communities Together Durham



## Safeguarding

From the outset it is essential that your planning includes best practice on safeguarding. We are always looking to create a culture where children, families and volunteers can flourish in a safe and welcoming environment.

It is crucial to bring your church Safeguarding Officer into the conversation from the beginning to get their input. You will particularly need to pay attention to:

- Recruitment of volunteers - Safer Recruitment processes including role descriptions must be in place.
- DBS Checks - volunteers who are interacting with children, young people or vulnerable adults will need a DBS check. Your safeguarding officer can advise on this.
- Training - volunteers and leaders will need to complete training. Speak to your safeguarding officer about the level of training needed.
- Environment - in your planning, team meetings and preparation it is important to keep asking the question, 'is this a safe environment?' Safeguarding should appear on the agenda for every team meeting.

**If you have any questions or concerns about Safeguarding, you should get in touch with the Durham Diocese Safeguarding Team.**

<https://durhamdiocese.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-contacts/>



**Beth Miller - Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser**

Advice and support on safeguarding concerns where you are concerned that a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm, or you want to report abuse whether it is currently happening or happened some time ago

Email: [Beth.miller@durham.anglican.org](mailto:Beth.miller@durham.anglican.org)

Phone: 07968 034075



**Wendy Hopkins Safeguarding Support Officer**

Parish Safeguarding Dashboard and general queries on safeguarding administration, including Parish Safeguarding Officer meetings and induction.

Email: [wendy.hopkins@durham.anglican.org](mailto:wendy.hopkins@durham.anglican.org)

Phone: 07570 851951



## Funding

You don't need a huge budget to run a simple holiday club, and it might be that you can raise enough funds through donations or contributions from organisational funds – but chances are if your church is in an area where people are struggling, you will need some outside funding to make sure you can offer healthy food, and trips and activities will need to be subsidised. Most local councils have funding for holiday provision, but their requirements can be hard to fulfil, so make sure you have the capacity to offer what they require before spending time seeking funding.

Some things to consider when looking at funders:

- How much is available?
- How complicated is their application process, and how long does it take?
- How much information do they want in evaluation after the event?
- Do they have requirements around catering, number of sessions offered, and qualifications of people leading the groups?

Other possible sources of funding include: Local community foundations (County Durham Community Foundation, Tees Valley Community Foundation, Community Foundation Tyne and Wear), Greggs and the National Lottery small community grants, and other local funders will often support holiday activities. Local supermarkets and shops may also help with donations of food, so it is worth approaching them too.

CTD offers a small grants scheme to help holiday clubs in Durham Diocese. Contact Janet to receive the application form.

Another thing to consider is whether you are going to ask for a contribution from families who attend. A small suggested donation of 50p-£1 can help people to feel they are giving something back, value the activity more, and often stops people from signing up and then not coming along – your context (and funders' requirements) will determine if that's appropriate, but don't underestimate the value of what you are doing – it can help families at a really difficult time, and many will want to be able to give something towards that. If you would like help with any of this, contact us for individual support and signposting to relevant funders.

## Timing

Some points to consider:

- How many sessions do you want to run – how long will they be and how frequent? Availability of your proposed leaders and the venue will be important factors to take into consideration
- Do the proposed dates clash with any other events in the community or your church?
- Do you want to coordinate with any other events – eg a special service in church to round the club off or a community fair?
- Do the length and number of your sessions require you to inform OFSTED of your activities (see 'legalities' section).

Don't overcommit, but do build on what you already do or are good at. For example, if you hold a weekly Messy Church consider continuing it through the holidays, invite a wider group and include a light lunch. Be realistic about what you plan and how long the sessions are. They can be exhausting so try to keep the sessions to 4 hours or less. It's far better to start small and succeed, building up slowly as capacity and demand align, than going large and burning out.

You can be creative with what you offer, for example, a once a week holiday club during the holidays, or a holiday from home pack whereby families take activity packs home and then gather together at the end of the holidays. Be creative with what best suits your team's availability; matches their skill sets; works with your venue (or lack of) and resources... the possibilities are limitless.

## Venue

Where will the Club be held? Are there a variety of options in your community which will allow a choice to meet the needs of your planned club – or is there only one possibility, which will therefore determine the nature of your activities and the numbers you can accommodate? Here are some factors to take into consideration with regard to the venue:

- It must be suitable for the kinds of activities proposed, and the number of children you hope to attract (as a rule of thumb, a minimum of 25 square feet per child is recommended for 5 – 8 year-olds and ideally one toilet and hand basin per 10 children)
- Consider the accessibility of the venue for volunteers and for those attending.
- Catering facilities must meet legal requirements (NB no children should have unsupervised access to the kitchen)
- Will you be able to have access before and after the sessions to prepare and tidy up, and will you be able to leave things out from one session to the next?
- Is it available for the dates you require? Don't make assumptions! Check availability as soon as you can and make a booking as soon as you are sure you want to use the venue.
- How much does it cost? Is it within budget?



## Food provision

We are aware of the significant level of need food insecurity brings to families in this region. In all 7 local authority areas within Durham Diocese more than 28% of children are growing up in poverty. We strongly recommend including food provision within your holiday club plan. (This is essential for clubs receiving CTD funding).

Consider whether you will buy in ready-made food or will be able to prepare fresh, 'home-cooked' meals.

Providing simple healthy food and snacks should be the aim. The quality and freshness of the food is more important than whether it is a hot meal. It is worth approaching local businesses and other community organisations to ask if they will partner with you.

Ensure dietary requirements are included on the consent forms. You do not need a food hygiene certificate to make and sell food for charity events. Make sure you include allergens within your risk assessment and clearly label food. Avoid cross contamination of food. For example, not using the same chopping board to butter both gluten bread and gluten free bread at the same time. However, you need to make sure that you handle food safely. It is best practice to have at least one person on the catering team hold a Level 2 Food Hygiene Certificate.

See more information on food hygiene:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/providing-food-at-community-and-charity-events>

It is not only children, but whole families who struggle with food insecurity. Consider offering food to parents too as they often miss more meals than their children. Please consider doing this in a culturally sensitive way, parents do not want to feel like they are receiving 'charity' or 'pity' so it is important to provide this in an affirming way, and mitigating a narrative of 'us and them' but enable them to retain a sense of dignity. For example, pull up a chair and say to parents, 'fancy joining me for a sandwich'. This example will also help develop relationships and community.

## The team and their responsibilities

A holiday club is a great opportunity for team work, but you need to be sure you have a full team before you kick off! All who are going to be adult leaders need to be appointed according to the policy of your parish and in accordance with the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy, using the practice of Safer Recruitment.

See page 4 for more information about Safeguarding.

You need sufficient adult leaders for the number of children you have participating in activities (remember 'adult' means over 18 – under 18s can assist adults but must be counted as children in calculating the adult: child ratio, and they must not take any leadership responsibilities).

There is no specific guidance about supervision ratios for organisations that are not in the education or early years sectors. The NSPCC has put together some best practice guidance to help other organisations work out how many adults are needed to supervise children safely.

### NSPCC current ratios:

NSPCC recommend having at least two adults present when working with or supervising children and young people. NSPCC recommend the following adult to child ratios as the minimum numbers to help keep children safe:

under 2 years - one adult to three children

2 - 3 years - one adult to four children

4 - 8 years - one adult to six children

9 - 12 years - one adult to eight children

13 - 18 years - one adult to ten children

Depending on the needs and abilities of the children, and the nature of the activity, you may need to have more adults than the minimum.

We recommend having at least two adults present, even with smaller groups.

There should always be more than one leader for any group and if possible have at least one male and one female leader if the group is mixed. Have some 'reserves' lined up in case a leader falls ill or is unavoidably prevented from taking part for some other reason.

It is important that everyone knows their own, and other people's duties and responsibilities within the team. You will need people who will take on the following roles:

## **1. Registration**

No child can be admitted to activities who has not produced a consent form signed by a parent, or an adult with parental responsibility. If adults are staying with their children, then different consent forms will be needed. Consent forms may need to be adjusted to be more accessible to parents. Consider different approaches for example a coffee and cake holiday club information session i.e. a drop in session to go through consent forms with parents in an empowering way, helping to reach parents who may, for example, be illiterate.

It is a good idea to have these forms completed and returned before the club starts so that you can avoid over-subscription. (Remember, the venue, number of leaders, proposed activities and overall aims will have an effect on the numbers and ages of the children you can welcome into the club).

Prior registration will help you inform the caterers of any food allergies (watch out for nuts, especially) or dietary requirements and the first aider of any special medical information. It will also enable you to group the children before the club starts – you need to decide whether the groups will be divided by age or some other criterion, what to call them, and how to distinguish them. Badges are helpful, and the registration person or team could give these out on the first day. All adults involved in the club should be identifiable by the children - with badges, lanyards or bright coloured t-shirts. Children should also receive a badge when they arrive. Any adult or child who is spotted on the premises who does not have a badge should be challenged.

General consent forms must be collected on the first day of the club, and at every subsequent session a register of those present must be taken and any children who are collected early should be noted.

As you may well be dealing with children and families who are not well known to you, it might be helpful to have a 'receipt slip' system for picking children up. When a child arrives, the accompanying adult is issued with a receipt slip which they must present in order to collect the child at the end of the session. If another adult is to pick the child up, the slip should be passed on to them by the delivering adult as proof of their authority to pick up the child. If a parent wants their child to go home unaccompanied, this should be written on the back of the slip, which is then given to the child's group leader. If an adult asks to collect a child and claims the slip has been lost, the Club Coordinator should decide whether the child can be safely collected by the adult in question.

## **2. Group Leaders and Helpers**

Have someone to 'front' the proceedings, introduce different items of the programme, lead any 'plenary' parts of the sessions, and most importantly to keep an eye on the time and keep things moving on according to schedule.



Each activity should have a clear leader who should be assisted by a helper to take care of any practicalities. These adults will be the main relationship focus for the children and should provide good role models in terms of joining in activities and having fun!

### **3. Specialist Roles**

You will need people who can cover the following areas: food preparation and serving; publicity; administration; first aid; cleaning and possibly some other areas.

All team members must be recruited in line with Safer Recruitment, but those not in direct contact with children may not need a DBS. If you are at all unsure, contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team for support in making these decisions – there are rules around unnecessary checking, as well as who does need to have them, so don't just automatically assume everyone will need a full disclosure.

Durham Diocese Safeguarding team contacts can be found here:

<https://durhamdiocese.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-contacts/>

### **4. Meetings**

You will need some planning meetings at which you can come to decisions on the issues outlined above: aims, timing, venue and team members. You will also have to make decisions on the following:

- Numbers and ages of participants
- Budget: how much will you spend on the venue, materials, catering, photocopying and printing, equipment and resources, other expenditure specific to your plans. How you will cover your costs – perhaps an entrance fee, a fundraising event or a request to PCC for subsidy if wanting to be accessible to all.
- Publicity: this should clearly be targeted according to the children you wish to attract. Posters might be displayed in significant places in the community, particularly in schools, and information could be posted on the parish website, distributed at local events, shown on a banner outside the church, or sent to last year's participants if you ran activities last year. (NB if children's details are to be entered on a database, or be contacted for future events, this must be made clear on the registration form, and the option given not to have the details used in this way).

## The programme

Holiday clubs can take many different forms. Scripture Union uses a framework of Connect, Explore, Respond and Grow to show different stages in a faith journey. The framework explores pathways to meet the 95% of children not engaged with any form of church. We expect most holiday clubs will take one of these four approaches.

### The four stages of the faith journey



#### Connect

**A relational opportunity with a Christian identity and increasingly deeper explicit Christian content.**

Our research has shown that for children and young people to engage with faith and allow it to shape them and the world around them, they need to see how Jesus connects with their world. This stage is relatively light-touch – an opportunity to build relationship with the 95 and to start to introduce the Christian faith. It's a chance to meet the 95 with activities of common interest, to engage with their world in a relevant and reliable way.



#### Explore

**Time to uncover greater understanding from the Bible about Jesus, the Bible itself and the Christian faith.**

As the relationship forms between the Faith Guide and the 95, and they begin to show more interest in the Christian faith, this stage is about offering opportunities to learn more together through engaging with the Bible in a place where it's safe to question, reflect and discover. We'll be providing resources that help children and young people engage from wherever their start-point is, whether they know the Bible well or have never seen it before.



## Respond

**Further exploration of the Christian faith and a clear invitation to respond to Jesus.**

As a result of the exploration, it's our hope and prayer that the 95 will choose to respond positively to the Jesus they are discovering, whether through a single moment of clarity or, as is more likely for these generations, a gradual realisation over time. This stage offers clear, tangible opportunities for children and young people to respond personally to what they are learning.



## Grow

**A culturally appropriate worshipping community that enables the faith of the 95 to flourish.**

Once *the 95* have responded in this way, or while they are seriously considering it, they need a time and space, within a supportive Christian community, to grow in their faith and to express it in worship: an environment where the children and young people themselves can be part of determining what worship might look like and what other aspects of community life will help them grow strong as Christians, within a local church context and accountable to its leadership.

More information on the Revealing Jesus framework can be found at:

<https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/revealingjesus>

Most holiday clubs in Durham Diocese are likely to be focussed on connecting with the community. The Religious Resources Centre (RRC) based at Cuthbert House, Durham and Church House, North Shields has resources that can help you plan a programme. The first step is to identify who you will reach through the club, and what form of programme will be most relevant to them.

The Growing Younger team at Durham Diocese are able to help with planning a holiday club (and ongoing work in your community). You can contact them:



Christine Muneza

Growing Mission Enabler - Children

[christine.muneza@durham.anglican.org](mailto:christine.muneza@durham.anglican.org)



## Governance and legalities

For parish churches, the PCC will have ultimate legal responsibility for your holiday club, so they must approve it and will need an outline of the proposal – they may want to know dates, times, venue, leadership, numbers, aims, material/theme, and of course the financial implications! PCC approval should be sought in principle at the earliest possible point.

Other legal matters include:

- Insurance – check that your parish policy covers the club as a whole and any specific activities that you plan to include in it.
- OFSTED – you will need to register with OFSTED if your Club entails all three of the following:
  - it includes under 8s;
  - it runs for more than five days in the year;
  - the sessions last for 2 hours or more.

If you think this is relevant to you, visit the Out of School Alliance for further details: <https://outofschoolalliance.co.uk/ofsted> or ring the OFSTED helpline 0300 123 1231

- Outings need separate parental consent, or a separate section on the general consent form. Check your parish insurance cover for any outings and the legalities of your transport arrangements (you need to display a permit if you are taking a group of children in a mini-bus).

The Church of England offers free templates for risk assessments and registration forms online. See:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/policy-practice-guidance/templates-and-resources>

## During the club

With good planning the club will be ready to go off without a problem. Here are just a few things to keep in mind as you approach the day:

- Be 'faith-filled!' Whatever the level of your programme, you are getting ready to love and serve your community as part of the church. You are participating in the mission of God. Encourage the team and pray together as you start. Ask God to work through you.
- Remind the team of safeguarding procedures.
- Make sure the rooms you are going to use are safe and set out as you want them
- Make sure all those with a job to do are there well in advance of the start time and that they have a number they can ring to give good warning if they are going to be late or unable to attend (this should only happen in an absolute emergency!)
- Have the building well sign-posted: drop off and pick up point(s), toilets, areas for activities, emergency exits, areas which are 'off-limits' to children
- Make sure you have an accident book and access to a telephone, and that all adults know where these are to be found
- Have all materials to hand and make sure everyone knows where everything is. Always have a few extra of any prepared materials
- Follow your agreed registration procedures carefully

## After the club

Holiday clubs are a wonderful opportunity to serve the community for a week... perhaps there are other ways to stay connected through the year.

What could come next?

1. **Celebrate!** Celebrate the stories of what God has done through your club. Share these with your church to encourage them and build faith in what God will do in the future. You may want to organise a follow up event for children and families to celebrate together.
2. **Reflect.** Hold a de-briefing session to reflect on the club as a whole. Perhaps a report/presentation could be prepared for the PCC or wider church community which will also be very helpful when planning future events. Gather the stories of the impact the club has had on individuals, families, the church etc.
3. **Ask.** What's next? When it's all over – that's not the end of the story. Your original aims should have placed this holiday club in the context of the ongoing work and mission of your church, so the question is what and where next?

If you would like support in exploring how a holiday club could be part of a wider strategic plan for children's ministry in your parish then do get in touch with Christine Muneza (Durham Diocese Growing Mission Enabler for Children ministry) who would be delighted to discuss this further with you.

### **I don't think we are quite ready for this...**

If that's you don't worry. The Growing Younger Team at Durham Diocese would love to support you, and discern the next steps with you. Perhaps you feel you and/or your team need some training we would be happy to explore possibilities with you, or perhaps support as you share your vision with your church.

The CTD team are also here to support you and your church. Get in touch if we can help.

### **Ready and raring to go...**

This is great! There are so many opportunities. If you are considering starting a new mission initiative but need financial support, consider applying for a Micro Mission Grant from the diocese to help get you started. Contact Christine Muneza for more information.



## Religious Resources Centre (RRC)



Are you looking for new ideas and resources for Children's Ministry? The Religious Resources Centre (RRC) is the largest RE Centre in the country and holds a wealth of resources for holiday clubs and children's ministry, including books, DVD's, posters, banners, puppets, costumes, instruments, Godly Play, Eggsplorers, topic boxes and bags and more.

The RRC is based on two sites:

Church House, St John's Terrace, Percy Main, NE29 6HS

Cuthbert House, Stonebridge Lane, Stonebridge, Durham, DH1 3RY

The centre is open Monday to Friday 10:00-12:30 and 1:30-5:30

Everyone is welcome to visit and anyone can join!

Individual membership costs just £28.50 (Concessions £16.50) and every member can borrow up to 10 resources at a time, including 3 boxes or bags. Clergy can get free membership.

To find out more:

[www.resourcescentreonline.co.uk](http://www.resourcescentreonline.co.uk)

Contact the RRC via:: [enquiries@resourcescentreonline.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@resourcescentreonline.co.uk) or 0191 375 0586

## Useful contacts

Beth Miller	Durham Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser <a href="mailto:beth@bethmillerisw.co.uk">beth@bethmillerisw.co.uk</a> 07968034075
Janet Dodson	Development Worker at CTD <a href="mailto:janet.dodson@communitiestogetherdurham.org.uk">janet.dodson@communitiestogetherdurham.org.uk</a> 07883 780624
Kathryn Belmont	Growing Younger Strategic Lead at Durham Diocese <a href="mailto:kathryn.belmont@durham.anglican.org">kathryn.belmont@durham.anglican.org</a>
Christine Muneza	Growing Mission Enabler - Children at Durham Diocese <a href="mailto:christine.muneza@durham.anglican.org">christine.muneza@durham.anglican.org</a>
Catherine Simpson	School Chaplaincy Development and Growing Faith Adviser at Durham Diocese <a href="mailto:catherine.simpson@durham.anglican.org">catherine.simpson@durham.anglican.org</a>

## Links for potential funders

Communities Together Durham:

<https://communitiestogetherdurham.org.uk/>

Contact: [janet.dodson@communitiestogetherdurham.org.uk](mailto:janet.dodson@communitiestogetherdurham.org.uk)

Greggs Foundation:

<https://www.greggsfoundation.org.uk/grants>

The National Lottery Community Fund:

<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/>