

## Electronic Referral data to foodbanks in The Trussell Trust’s network

April 2018 marks the first time The Trussell Trust has been able to drill down further into primary reasons for referral to foodbanks in the network, and compare trends over time using additional data gathered mostly from electronic foodbank referrals since April 2016.

Electronic referrals are completed by referral agencies in the same way as traditional paper vouchers, and can gather more detailed information about the reason behind referral.

### Sample size

Not every referral to a foodbank in the network is made using an electronic referral, but the sample sizes for electronic referral data are significant.

Of referrals made in 2017-18 across the UK due to

- A benefit change: additional data is available for 25,034 referrals, 23% of all referrals due to a benefit change.
- A benefit delay: additional data is available for 29,833 referrals, 21% of all referrals due to a benefit delay
- Low income: additional data is available for 27,614 referrals, 16% of all referrals due to low income
- Debt: additional data is available for 9,849 referrals, 19% of all referrals due to debt

### Key Findings

#### Low income:

An indicative sample of referrals due to low income in 2017-18 shows 85% of households were solely in receipt of benefits and not earning. A comparison of trends over time, comparing six month intervals from April 2016, shows referrals for this group as a proportion of ‘low income’ are continually increasing, as are absolute values:

Time	Percentage of ‘low income’ electronic referrals			Number of ‘low income’ electronic referrals		
	Earning, no benefits	Earning and benefits	Benefits, not earning	Earning, no benefits	Earning and benefits	Benefits, not earning
April - Sept 2016	13.33	9.14	77.54	1272	872	7401
Oct 16 - March 17	8.54	8.67	82.78	1021	1037	9896
April - Sept 2017	8.52	8.01	83.47	952	895	9328
Oct 17 - March 18	6.79	7.46	84.74	1117	1227	14095

### Debt:

A comparison of trends over time in the types of debt driving foodbank referral in an indicative sample since April 2016 shows the proportion of referrals due to housing and utility bill debt have increased substantially:

Percentage of 'debt' electronic referrals						
	Mortgage/rent	Council tax	Utility bills	Funeral costs	Retailer	Other
April - Sept 2016	19.59	6.99	17.63	1.43	3.11	51.26
Oct 16 - March 17	21.88	8.22	25.18	1.39	2.29	41.03
April - Sept 2017	27.29	9.46	22.5	1.12	3.23	36.4
Oct 17 - March 18	26.07	9.09	23.22	1.06	2.82	37.74

### Benefit Change:

A comparison of trends over time in the types of benefit change behind foodbank referral in an indicative sample since April 2016 shows the proportion of referrals due to 'benefit sanction' have declined over the last two years, whilst those due to 'reduction in benefit value' have the fastest growth rate of all referrals made due to a benefit change and those due to 'moving to a different benefit' have also grown significantly.

Percentage of 'benefit change' electronic referrals				
	Sanction	Moving to a different benefit	Reduction in benefit value	Deduction to repay DWP loan
April-Sept 2016	32.99	52.21	13.22	1.58
Oct 16 - March 17	35.14	46.86	15.64	2.35
April - Sept 2017	33.09	49.27	15.77	1.86
Oct 17 - March 18	25.78	54.91	17.38	1.93

### Scotland:

Of referrals made across Scotland in 2017-18 due to

- A benefit change: additional data is available for 4,633 referrals, 30% of all referrals due to a benefit change.
- A benefit delay: additional data is available for 5,334 referrals, 28% of all referrals due to a benefit delay

- Low income: additional data is available for 5,330 referrals, 22% of all referrals due to low income
- Debt: additional data is available for 2,336 referrals, 34% of all referrals due to debt

All data below refers to Scottish electronic referrals. For UK-wide data, please contact The Trussell Trust press office.

Low income:

An indicative sample of Scottish foodbank referrals due to low income in 2017-18 shows 90% of households were solely in receipt of benefits and not earning. A comparison of trends over time, comparing six month intervals from April 2016, shows referrals for this group as a proportion of ‘low income’ are continually increasing, as are absolute values:

Time	Percentage of ‘low income’ electronic referrals			Number of ‘low income’ electronic referrals		
	Earning, no benefits	Earning and benefits	Benefits, not earning	Earning, no benefits	Earning and benefits	Benefits, not earning
April - Sept 2016	9.04	7.36	83.60	156	127	1443
Oct 16 - March 17	6.23	6.15	87.62	157	155	2208
April - Sept 2017	5.69	5.20	89.12	128	117	2006
Oct 17 - March 18	5.03	3.80	91.17	155	117	2807

Debt:

A comparison of trends over time in the types of debt driving Scottish foodbank referral in an indicative sample since April 2016 shows the proportion of referrals due to housing and utility bill debt have increased substantially:

Percentage of ‘debt’ electronic referrals						
	Mortgage/rent	Council tax	Utility bills	Funeral costs	Retailer	Other
April - Sept 2016	21.17	2.92	21.03	1.53	1.53	51.81
Oct 16 - March 17	16.41	4.49	39.86	1.73	1.94	35.57
April - Sept 2017	26.90	4.78	27.68	2.05	3.70	34.89
Oct 17 - March 18	28.47	5.04	26.72	1.37	3.21	35.19

Benefit Change:

A comparison of trends over time in the types of benefit change behind Scottish foodbank referral in an indicative sample since April 2016 shows the proportion of referrals due to ‘benefit sanction’ have

declined over the last two years, whilst those due to 'reduction in benefit value' have the fastest growth rate of all referrals made due to a benefit change and those due to 'moving to a different benefit' have also grown significantly.

Percentage of 'benefit change' electronic referrals				
	Sanction	Moving to a different benefit	Reduction in benefit value	Deduction to repay DWP loan
April-Sept 2016	34.63	49.79	13.46	2.13
Oct 16 - March 17	41.81	42.78	13.86	1.55
April - Sept 2017	38.45	42.95	16.76	1.84
Oct 17 - March 18	31.03	48.40	18.36	2.20

**Wales:**

**Low income:**

An indicative sample of referrals due to low income in 2017-18 shows over 85% of households in Wales were solely in receipt of benefits and not earning. A comparison of trends over time, comparing six month intervals from April 2016, shows referrals for this group as a proportion of 'low income' are continually increasing, as are absolute values:

Time	Percentage of 'low income' electronic referrals			Number of 'low income' electronic referrals		
	Earning, no benefits	Earning and benefits	Benefits, not earning	Earning, no benefits	Earning and benefits	Benefits, not earning
April - Sept 2016	13.23%	9.04%	77.73%	98	67	576
Oct 16 - March 17	5.70%	8.47%	85.83%	68	101	1024
April - Sept 2017	4.99%	6.18%	88.83%	50	62	891
Oct 17 - March 18	5.37%	7.57%	87.06%	73	103	1184

**Benefit Delay:**

A comparison of trends over time in the types of benefit change behind foodbank referral in an indicative sample since April 2016 shows the proportion of referrals due to 'interrupted payments' have declined over the last two years, whilst those due to 'awaiting first payment' and 'new claim not yet awarded' are increasing.

**Percentage of 'benefit delay' electronic referrals**

	New claim not yet awarded	Awaiting first payment	Interrupted payments
April-Sept 2016	30.29%	22.92%	46.79%
Oct 16 - March 17	28.56%	28.02%	43.42%
April - Sept 2017	31.74%	25.78%	42.48%
Oct 17 - March 18	36.56%	31.60%	31.84%

**Northern Ireland:**

Low income:

An indicative sample of referrals in Northern Ireland due to low income in 2017-18 shows 90% of households were solely in receipt of benefits and not earning. A comparison of trends over time, comparing six month intervals from April 2016, shows referrals for this group as a proportion of 'low income' are continually increasing:

Time	Percentage of 'low income' electronic referrals			Number of 'low income' electronic referrals		
	Earning, no benefits	Earning and benefits	Benefits, not earning	Earning, no benefits	Earning and benefits	Benefits, not earning
April - Sept 2016	12.70%	4.17%	83.12%	70	23	458
Oct 16 - March 17	3.74%	1.68%	94.59%	29	13	734
April - Sept 2017	4.86%	2.30%	92.84%	19	9	363
Oct 17 - March 18	5.08%	4.75%	90.17%	15	14	266

**London:**

Low income:

An indicative sample of referrals due to low income in 2017-18 shows that, in London, over 80% of households were solely in receipt of benefits and not earning. A comparison of trends over time, comparing six month intervals from April 2016, shows referrals for this group as a proportion of 'low income' are continually increasing, as are absolute values:

Time	Percentage of 'low income' electronic referrals			Number of 'low income' electronic referrals		
	Earning, no	Earning and	Benefits, not	Earning, no benefits	Earning and	Benefits, not earning

	benefits	benefits	earning		benefits	
April - Sept 2016	15.55%	7.49%	76.96%	135	65	668
Oct 16 - March 17	11.93%	11.50%	76.57%	112	108	719
April - Sept 2017	11.40%	8.94%	79.66%	134	105	936
Oct 17 - March 18	6.81%	7.81%	85.37%	129	148	1617

Benefit Change:

A comparison of trends over time in the types of benefit change behind foodbank referral in an indicative sample since April 2016 shows the proportion of referrals due to 'benefit sanction' have declined over the last two years, whilst those due to 'reduction in benefit value' have increased significantly.

<b>Percentage of 'benefit change' electronic referrals</b>				
	Sanction	Moving to a different benefit	Reduction in benefit value	Deduction to repay DWP loan
April-Sept 2016	32.91%	49.87%	15.70%	1.52%
Oct 16 - March 17	35.18%	47.72%	16.37%	0.74%
April - Sept 2017	27.87%	47.91%	22.62%	1.60%
Oct 17 - March 18	29.68%	45.42%	24.04%	0.86%

Benefit change:

A comparison of trends over time in the types of benefit delay behind foodbank referral in an indicative sample since April 2016 shows the proportion of referrals due to 'awaiting first payment' have increased.

<b>Percentage of 'benefit delay' electronic referrals</b>			
	New claim not yet awarded	Awaiting first payment	Interrupted payments

April-Sept 2016	31.95%	18.79%	49.26%
Oct 16 - March 17	31.58%	23.85%	44.57%
April - Sept 2017	30.10%	23.14%	46.77%
Oct 17 - March 18	33.11%	24.93%	41.95%