

Trussell Trust survey of people that need support from food banks



Topline results.

Technical Details

I-SPHERE at Heriot-Watt University have conducted two surveys on behalf of the Trussell Trust in 2020.

Early 2020: 716 adults aged 18+ that needed to use a food bank completed a survey questionnaire between mid-January 2020 and early March 2020.

The survey questionnaire was administered on tablets at 43 food banks across the United Kingdom, selected using stratified random sampling. The number of food banks per region was assigned to be proportional of the share of food parcels distributed by the Trussell Trust. Further detail on sampling is available here:

<https://www.trusselltrust.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/11/Technical-Summary.pdf>.

Data are weighted by the household composition and number of visits in the past 12 months to match the profile of all people who visited all Trussell Trust food banks during the survey period.

Mid 2020: 435 adults aged 18+ that needed to use a food bank across the United Kingdom completed a survey questionnaire between 22nd June 2020 to 31st July 2020.

Due to social distancing requirements survey invitations were inserted into food parcels at random to be distributed, at the same 43 food banks selected for early 2020. Respondents had a choice of completing the survey online or over the phone.

Data are weighted by the household composition, region and whether the household ever used a food bank before March, to match the profile of all people who visited all Trussell Trust food banks during the survey period.

UK comparisons: UK comparisons are from I-SPHERE's analysis of the Labour Force Survey Q4 2019 household dataset, unless a different source is stated.

Percentages are rounded to the nearest percent. Where variables are derived this is indicated by Q.Der.

Q1. Which of the following best describes where you are living at the moment?

Base: All (Early 2020 N= 716, Mid-2020 N=435)

	Early 2020	Mid-2020
A flat, room or house (I or my partner) rent from a private landlord	27	30
A flat or house (I or my partner) rent from a local council or housing association	47	41
A temporary flat or house provided by the local council	7	8
A flat or house owned by (I or my partner) (with mortgage or owned outright)	3	4
Staying at a family member's or friend's house	3	4
A hostel, hotel, refuge, B&B or night shelter	7	6
Sleeping rough	3	0
Other	3	6

Q2. How old are you?

Base: All (Early 2020 N= 716, Mid-2020 N=435)

	Early 2020	Mid 2020	UK
18-24	10	7	11
25-34	24	27	17
35-44	29	35	16
35-54	24	22	17
55-64	12	5	16
65+	1	4	24

Household composition and demographics

Q4. And how would you describe your ethnicity?

Base: All Mid-2020 (N=435)

	Mid-2020	UK
White British	71	79
White Other	5	8
Black or Black British	9	3
Asian or Asian British	10	7
Mixed	3	1
Other	2	2

Note: UK population age data was derived from population projections data for 2020 available on the NOMIS website:

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?mode=construct&version=0&dataset=2009>

Note: UK population refers to households where respondent to the Labour Force Survey was aged 16-64

Use of food bank

Q5. Which of these statements best reflects your situation?

Base: All (N=431)

	Mid-2020
The main reason why I needed to use the food bank this time was because of the coronavirus crisis	35
I would still need to use the food bank this time, regardless of the coronavirus crisis	57
I'm not sure	8

Q3. Can you tell me where you were born?

Base: All (Early 2020 N= 716, Mid-2020 N=434)

	Early 2020	Mid 2020	UK
United Kingdom	91	79	82
Europe	3	3	8
Outside Europe	7	18	10

Q6. How did you or someone in your household obtain the most recent food parcel?

Base: All (N=435)

	Mid-2020
I or my partner collected the food parcel from the food bank	57
The food was delivered to my home	39
Other	4

Q7. To what extent is the following statement true for you?

I needed to use the food bank because the support I used to have, from family, friends or local organisation, was more limited during the lockdown’.

Base: All (N=431)

	Mid-2020
Very true for me	45
Somewhat true for me	30
Not relevant to me	25

Health / disability

Q8. Do you or anyone in your household have any of the following health problems or disabilities?

Base: All (Early 2020 N= 716, Mid-2020 N=435)

	Early 2020	Mid-2020
Physical disability	18	21
Long-term physical condition or illness	23	28
Poor mental health (including stress, depression or anxiety)	51	72
Learning disability	13	13
None of the above	29	17

Employment and income

Q9. Which of the following describes your employment status before March?

And which of the following describes your employment status at the moment?

Base: All (Early 2020 N= 716, Mid-2020 N=435)

	Mid-2020		Early 2020
	Before March	At the moment	At the moment
Furlough	0	4	-
working full-time	10	3	6
working part-time	8	4	6
self-employed	4	2	0
unemployed and seeking work	18	32	40
in education or training	4	3	1
at home caring for family members	11	9	9
unable to work because of disability or illness	34	30	32
retired from paid work	3	3	1
not in paid work for some other reason	8	10	4

QDer. Employment status of the household in February and at time of the survey

Base: All

	Mid-2020	
	Before March	At the moment
Someone working	25	16

No-one working	72	81
Retired household	3	3

QDer. Whether respondent or partner worked on a temporary / zero-hours / no contract before March

Base: All respondents who said they or partner had a job before March (n=87)

	Mid-2020
No	57
Yes	43

Q10. From this list, please indicate all of you and your partners current sources of income?

Base: All (Early 2020 N= 716, Mid-2020 N=435)

	Early 2020	Mid-2020
Income from benefits	86	89
Earnings from employment or self-employment	13	13
Help with rent or bills from family/friends not living with me	5	4
Income from pensions	1	3
Other	4	2
No source of income	4	1

Benefits

Q11. Which benefits do you or your partner receive?

Base: All who said that they or their partner have income from benefits (Early 2020 N=618, Mid-2020 N=355)

	Early 2020	Mid-2020
Universal Credit	66	68
Housing Benefit (Local Housing Allowance)	38	41
Child Benefit	25	23
Employment and Support Allowance	18	18
Child Tax Credit	14	9
Personal Independence Payment	11	18
Council Tax Reduction / Council Tax Support	10	19
Disability Living Allowance	7	5
Jobseeker's Allowance	4	2
Income Support	4	3
Other benefit not listed here	2	2

Q12. Are you affected by the 'benefit cap'?

The benefit cap is a limit on the total amount of benefit you can get.

	Mid-2020	
<i>Base</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>All in receipt of benefits</i>
<i>N</i>	425	346
No	29	36

Yes	18	22
Don't know	34	41
Not relevant	19	-

Changes to household income

Q13. Have you experienced a drop in household income since early March?

Have you experienced a drop in {household} income within the last three months? (Early-2020)

Base: All who responded to the question (note for early 2020 this included a don't know option, this has been removed and responses rebased for comparability, Early 2020 N=669, Mid-2020 N=429)

	Early 2020	Mid-2020
No	45	44
Yes	55	56

Q14. What was/were the reason/s for this drop in household income since early March?

Base: All who indicated a recent income drop (Early 2020 N=374, Mid-2020 N=235)

	Early 2020	Mid-2020
Less income from benefits	53	46
Less income from work	36	40
Other	16	24

Q15. And was that recent drop in income from work due to...

Base: All (N=436) and all those that had experienced a drop in income from work (n=94)

	Mid-2020	
	All	All that had experienced a drop in income from work
Being made redundant	3	14
Working fewer hours (but still some)	4	18
Work drying up completely	5	21
Being furloughed	5	24
Becoming unable to work	6	25
Other	3	12

Wait for benefits and advance payments

Q16. Are you or your partner currently waiting for a decision on any benefit application, or the first payment?

Base: All who answered the question (Early 2020 N=699, Mid-2020 N=432)

	Early 2020	Mid-2020
No	69	78
Yes	31	22

Q17. How long have you been waiting for the first Universal Credit payment since you or your partner made the application? Do not count Advance Payment if you received it

Base: All who were waiting for UC decision (but not an additional UC decision), or the first payment (n=96)

Less than 3 weeks	62
3-5 weeks	16
6-8 weeks	15
9 weeks or longer	5
Don't know / can't remember	3

Q18. Is part of your or your partners benefit income currently being deducted to repay Universal Credit Advance Payments?

	Early 2020		Mid-2020	
	All	All on UC	All	All on UC
Base:				
N:	716	411	435	259
No	70	49	59	27
Yes	30	51	41	73

Debt

QDER. Count of household's arrears on bills – cumulative percentage.

Base: All (Early 2020 N= 716, Mid-2020 N=435)

	Early 2020	Mid-2020
0	26	27
1+	74	73
2+	41	48
3+	22	32

Poverty and destitution

QDER. Proportion of households in relative poverty AHC.

Base: All that provided information about income and housing costs (Early 2020 N=614, Mid-2020 N= 355).

	Early 2020	Mid-2020
No	4	5
Yes	96	95

Q19. In the last month have you had more than one day when you didn't eat at all, or had only one meal, because you couldn't afford to buy enough food?

Base: All in Mid-2020 (N=425); a random half of all respondents in Early 2020 (n=397)

	Early 2020	Mid-2020
No	23	28
Yes	77	72

QDER. Whether respondent is destitute on the 'clothes and shoes suitable for the weather' criterion

Base: All in Mid-2020 (N=425); a random half of all respondents in Early 2020 (n=397)

	Early 2020	Mid-2020
No	48	51

Yes	52	49
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QDER. Whether household is destitute on the 'minimum income' criterion

Base: All who provided information about income and housing costs (Early 2020 n=614, Mid-2020 n=367)

	Early 2020	Mid-2020
No	28	31
Yes	72	69