

# **Citizens Advice South Warwickshire Food Bank Report On Stratford District 2017/18**

Analysis of the profile  
and circumstances of  
the clients we gave  
food vouchers to  
between January and  
December 2017

By Mike Slater



# Research and Campaigns Team Food Bank Report

## 2017

This is the first full year analysis for Citizens Advice South Warwickshire Stratford District. We have compiled a list of the clients to whom we gave food bank vouchers over a 12-month period in Stratford district.

We have looked at their case records, analysed their profiles and looked into the circumstances that led to them to require a food voucher from us.

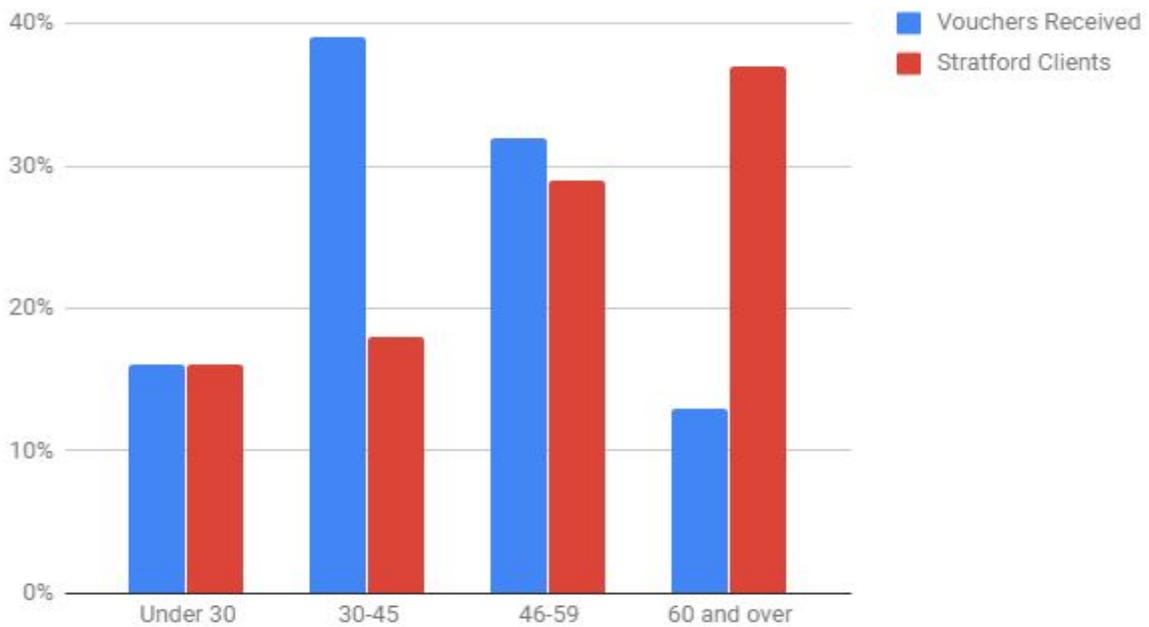
As this is the first annual report we have no comparison with the previous year. Stratford District Citizens Advice issued 301 vouchers to 200 individuals or families during 2017. This is slightly higher than the number of vouchers issued by Warwick District on a twelve month basis.

### **Food voucher recipients by age**

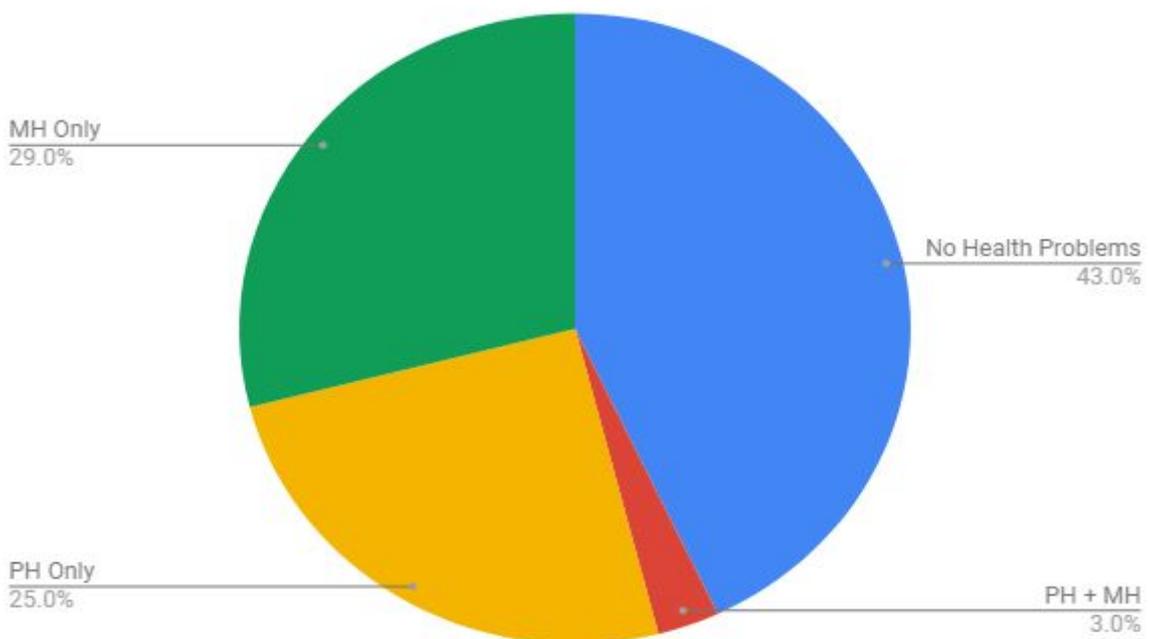
Clients who received food vouchers from us were of all ages between 19 and 75.

The largest age group was 30-45 accounting for 39% of claimants and younger than the age of the average Stratford client. Food vouchers are rarely given to clients over 60.

The gender split was 76% female and 24% male. This varied in comparison with Leamington Spa where the split was 53% female and 47% male.



The majority of food voucher claimants were female (76%) with men at 24%. There was a strong, and concerning, trend in that the majority of clients requiring food vouchers (53%) reported having a disability or long-term health problem. This compares with only 21% of the England and Wales population.



As we would anticipate, being based in Stratford, most of our food voucher recipients (80%) came from Stratford (CV37 and B50). 20% came from surrounding villages. 7% were homeless, which is low compared with the national CA profile.

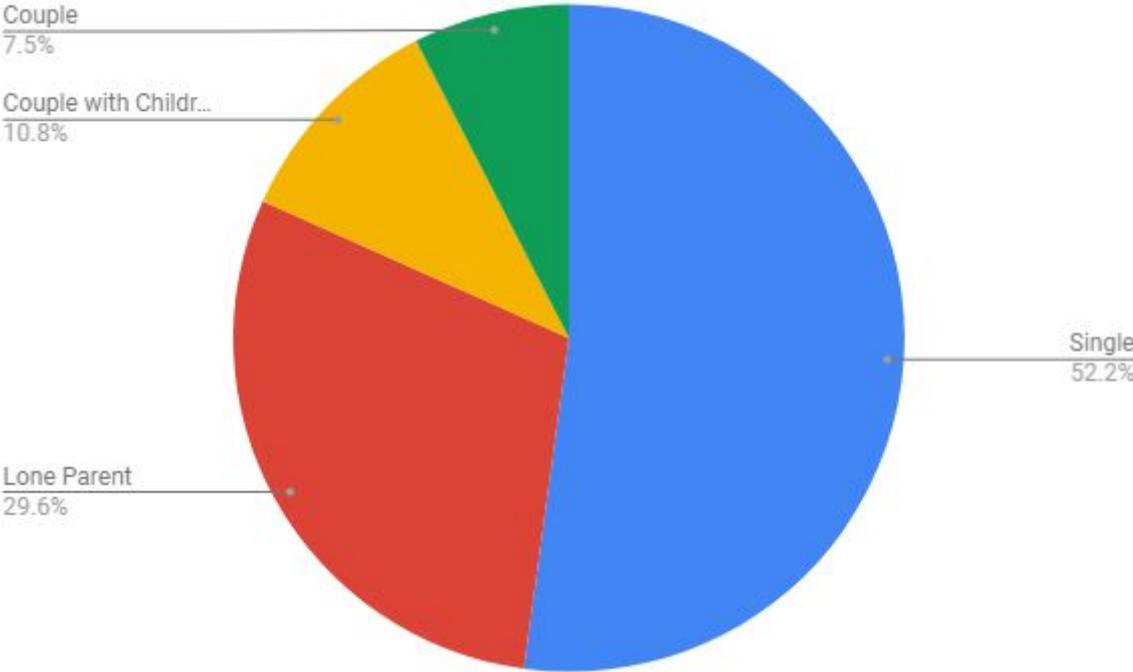
There were no significant Stratford District wards showing any high level of social and financial exclusion.

<b>Stratford District Ward</b>	<b>No of recipients</b>
Hathaway	19
Bidford	16
Bishopton	11
Wellesbourne	11
Shipton	11
Guildhall	9
Henley	9
Quinton	5
Wootton Wawen	5
Shottery	5
Other Districts	28

The majority of food vouchers were issued to single women which accounted for 50% of the total. This compares with the Stratford client profile of 62%

The next group by size are adults with children. 65 families with children were fed using food vouchers during the year.

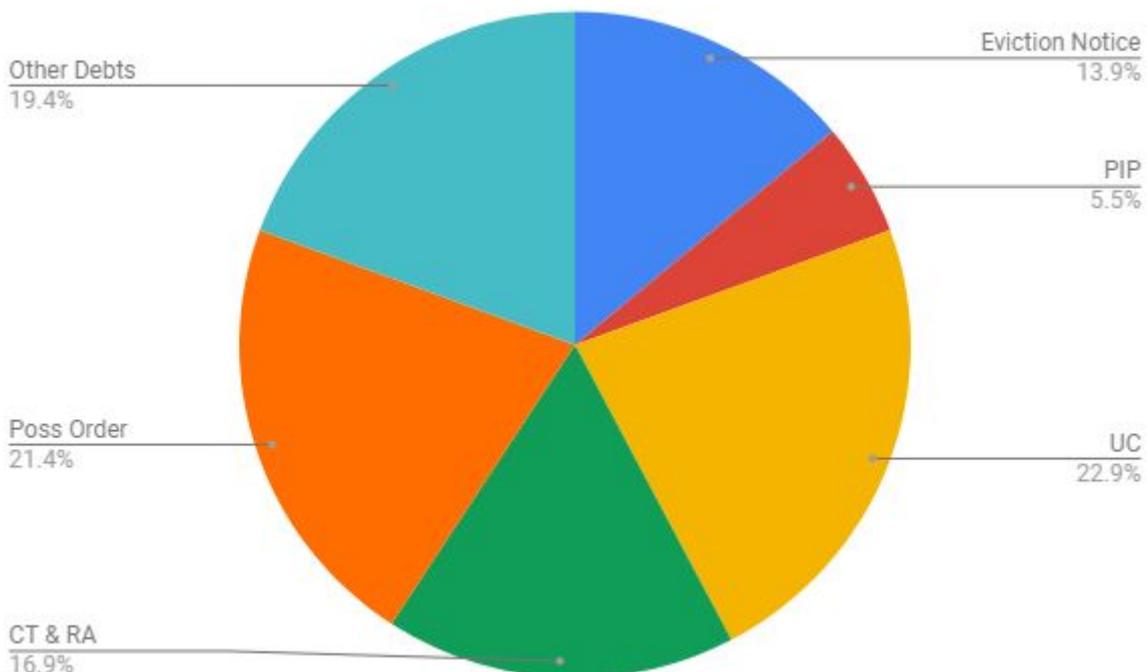
### Stratford FV clients 2017 by household type



## Client circumstances

There were often various factors contributing to the need for a food voucher. Here are the trends we identified which is in much greater detail.

- 22.9% of food voucher recipients were claiming or trying to claim or challenging a decision on Universal Credit.
- 36.3% of cases involved difficulties paying their debts these include Rent Arrears and Council Tax arrears which are priority debts and were leaving the claimant without enough money to pay for essentials such as food.
- 13.9% of families were served with a Eviction Notice with problems including relationship breakdown loss of earnings and benefit delays.
- 5.5% of food voucher recipients were experiencing delays in their claiming P.I.P. payments.
- 15% of recipients were served with Possession Orders and sited employment problems (delayed or unpaid wages, zero hours contracts, low pay, hours of work reduced) as being a key factor contributing to their financial difficulties.



## **Case Study 1**

The client is a single woman with no children living in a housing association property. She has outstanding council tax arrears which is currently in the hands of a debt recovery agency.

She is unable to meet the payments required and has applied for U.C. which she has been told will take 44 days to claim.

## **Case Study 2**

Client has split up with his partner. Many of his children and grandchildren live around Stratford upon Avon. He is an alcoholic, on income-based ESA and has not worked since 2006. The couple lived in an Orbit property and he is still on the tenancy agreement jointly with his ex-partner at Glebe Road in Stratford upon Avon where he contributes £31.60 every two weeks towards the Council Tax and for the storage of his belongings but nothing towards the rent. He has no savings or any debt but spends all his money on alcohol. He does not want his name removed from the joint tenancy at present as his possessions are still there and he wants to find his own accommodation before he gives up his tenancy to his ex-partner. Client is currently of no fixed abode and is 'sofa surfing' and has no money for food.

## **Case Study 3**

Client advised that she lost her job 23/3/2017 due to long term health problems as follows: a heart problem which the client has had for the last 10 years (on 21/4/2017 Warwick hospital fitted her with a heart monitor), high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, stress, depression and anxiety. Client has had her Universal Credit application approved and she is due to receive a payment on 15th May 2017 (8 weeks after leaving her job). However rental payments to Orbit have not been paid since February 2017 and she now has arrears of approximately £2,500. She is worried about eviction and has possible Council Tax arrears as well. She has a son living with her but is subject to the "bedroom tax", which explains some of the rent arrears.

## Universal Credit

UC was introduced in the Stratford District in December 2016 for all claimants of working age.

We have had applications from 21 UC claimants (51% of our clients) between May and July 2017.

Several of these claimants so far have required two or more food vouchers (one needed 6). In many cases this was to cover the initial 5-7 week delay in receiving the first payment – in 14 cases it was due to debt repayments

We will continue to monitor this as the roll-out of Universal Credit is progressed.

Report created by Mike Slater 15/01/2019

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