

Please sir, I want some more: An exploration of repeat foodbank use

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Study motivation

- Headline figures from the Trussell Trust suggest widespread foodbank use
- No distinction between single and repeat visits
- Prevalence of foodbank use is therefore unknown
- Characteristics of single and repeat users are also not known
- Evidence from Wandsworth foodbank: on average, households made 1.8 visits each year
- Here providing the first estimate of the proportion of people in the UK using foodbanks

Background to the topic

- Number of food supplies distributed by the Trussell Trust reached one million in 2014-15
- 1.2 million food supplies distributed in 2016-17
- 2016 Food and You survey: 21 per cent of people in England experienced food insecurity
- Rapid growth in research and policy interest in food insecurity over recent years

Research questions

- What is the prevalence of repeat visits?
- What proportion of adults and children receiving emergency food from foodbanks?
- How are emergency food parcels distributed by single and repeat users?
- What are the characteristics of repeat users?

Methods: Data

- Referral data from West Cheshire Foodbank in England
- 7,769 foodbank referrals between 2013 and 2015
- *Repeat visit*: receiving emergency food from West Cheshire Foodbank more than once in the calendar year

Methods: Identification of repeat visits

- Unique individuals identified using name and address information:
 - Same name, same address = same person (repeat visit)
 - Same name, different address = same person (repeat visit)
 - Same surname, same address = same household (repeat visit)
 - Change in household size and/or composition = same household (repeat visit)
 - Different name, same address = different person (unique visit)

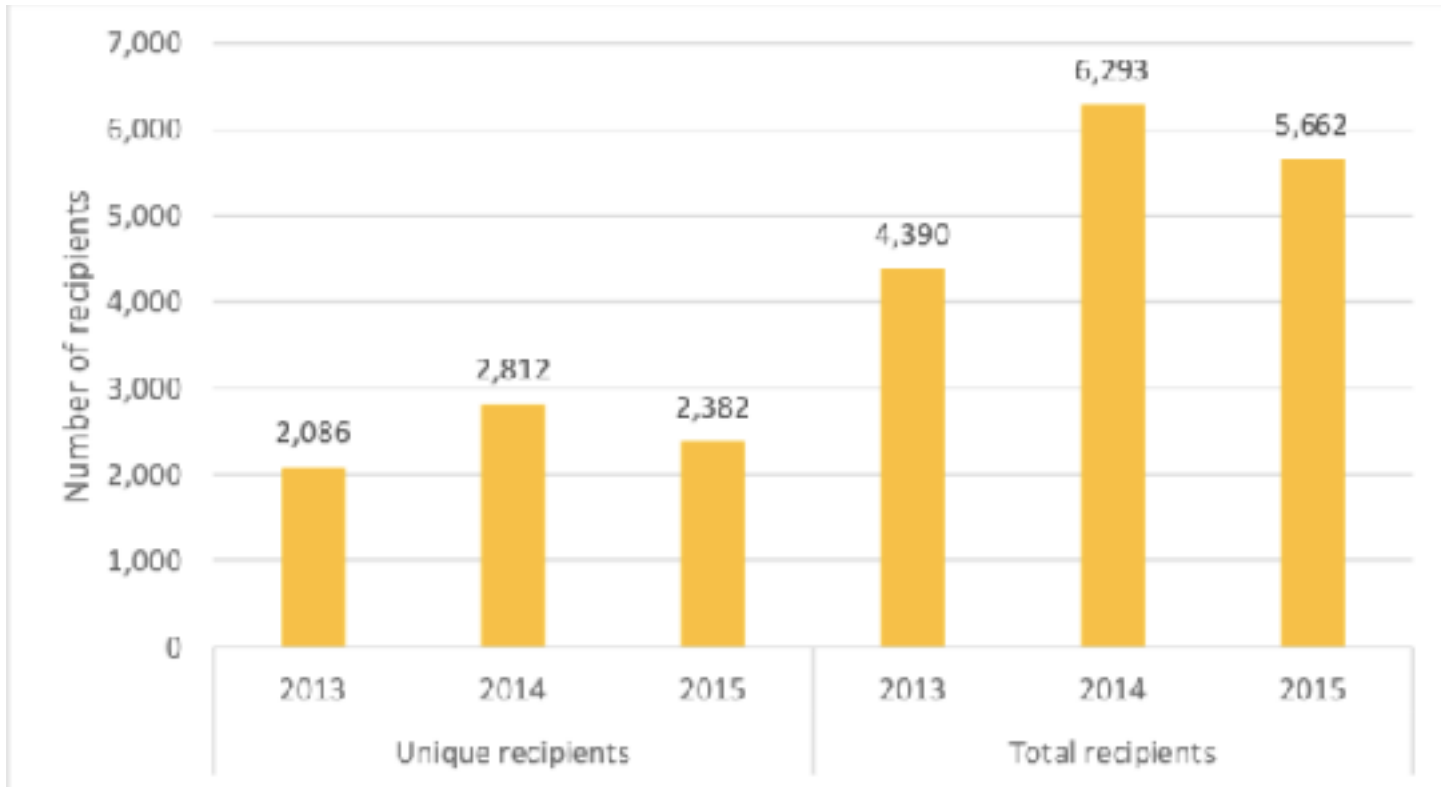
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Methods: Further details

- Analyses restricted to 34 wards within the catchment of West Cheshire Foodbank
- Rooflessness: Provided no address on any occasion during the year
- Postcode data georeferenced to the 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) to supply contextual information on (a) multiple and (b) income deprivation
 - Roofless households assigned the most deprived quintile

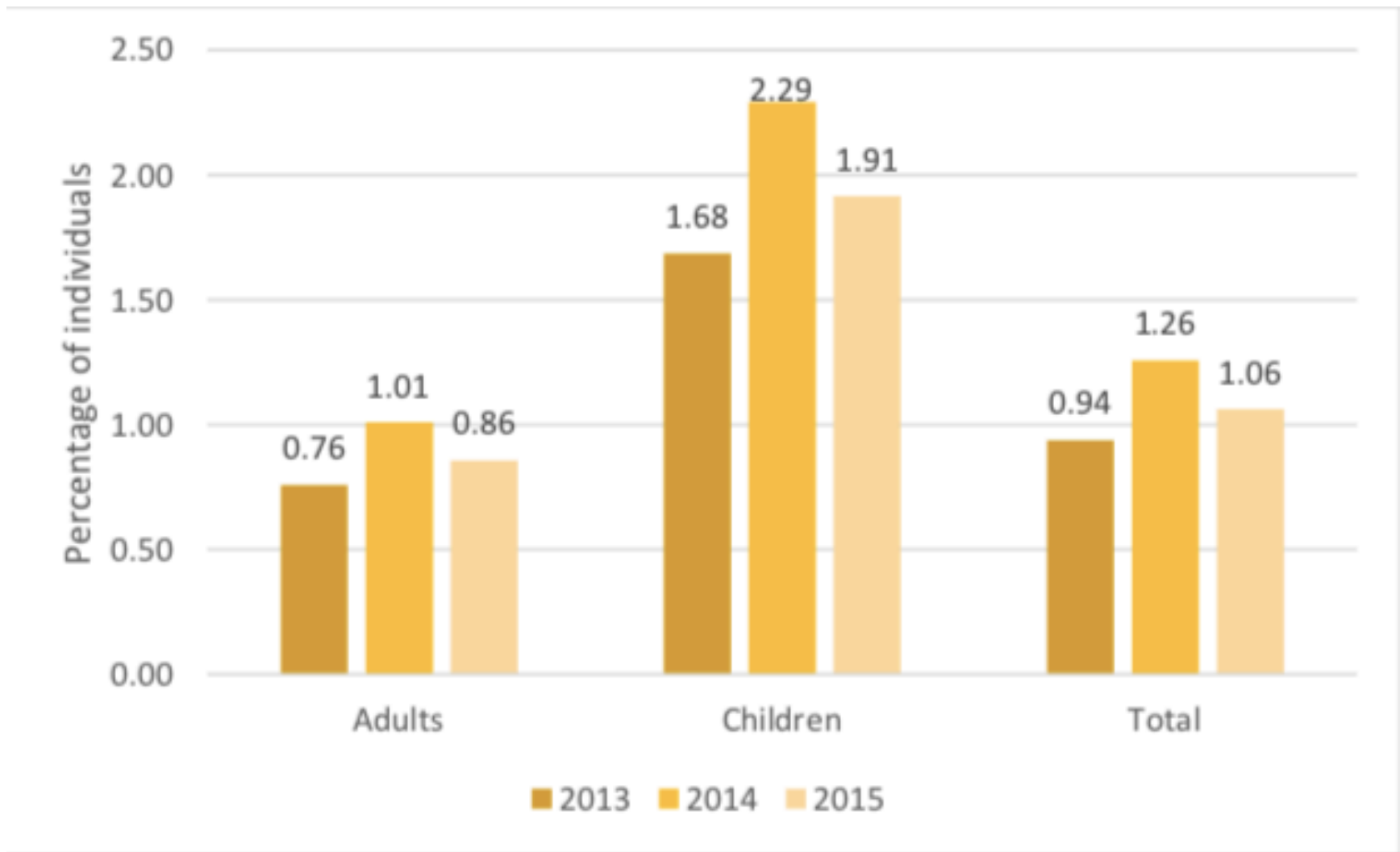
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Results (1): Prevalence of repeat visits

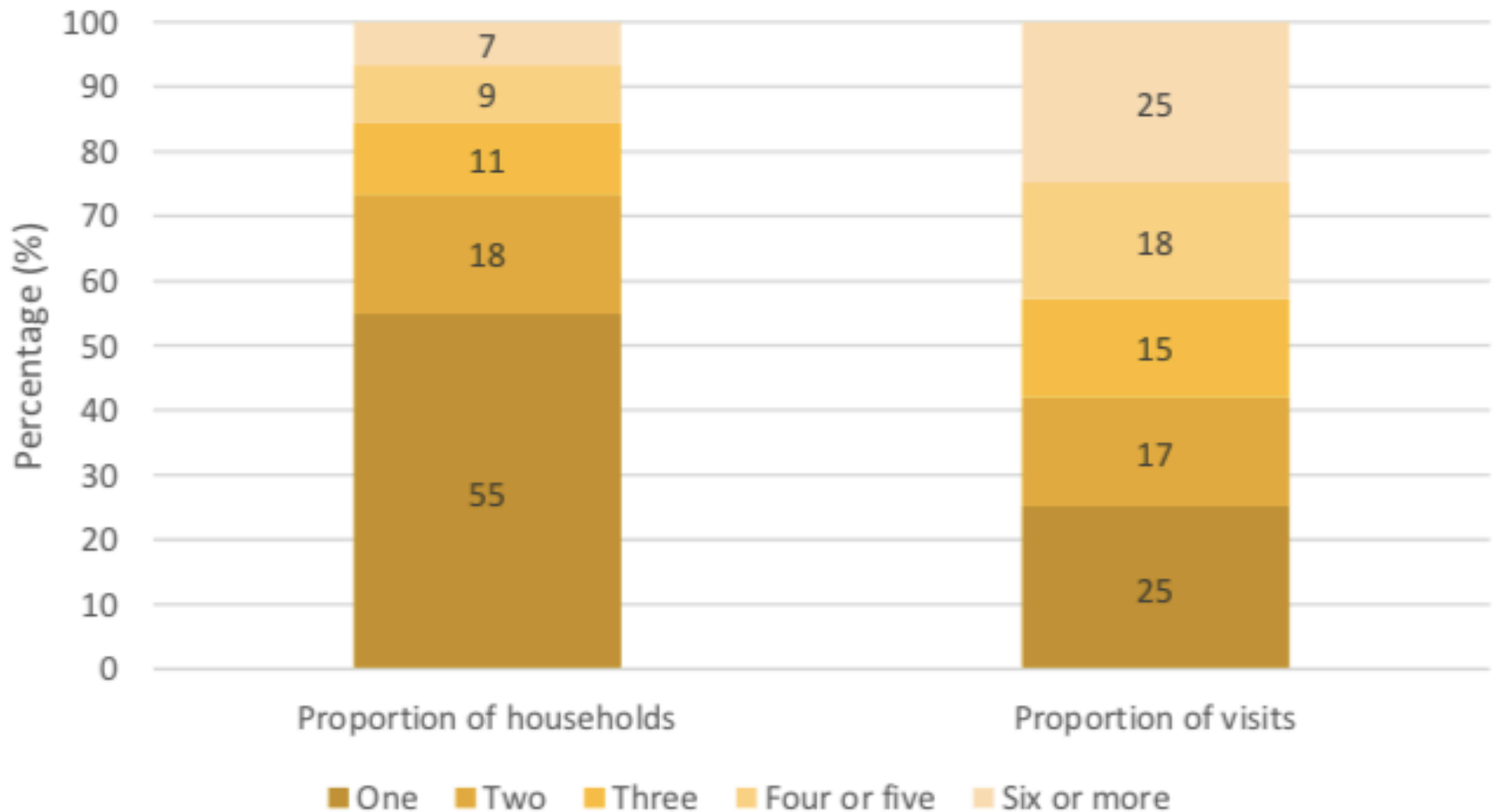


Year	2013	2014	2015
Mean visits	2.1	2.2	2.3

Results (2): Proportion of people using foodbanks



Results (3): Distributions of single and repeat use



Results (4): Characteristics of repeat users

More visits	Fewer visits	No significant association
In 2015	Referrals due to unemployment	Referrals due to benefit change or delay
One-person households	Referrals due to domestic abuse	Experiences of rooflessness
	17-24 year-olds	Children in the household
	Over 65s	

So what?

- Growth in the distribution of emergency food was inflated by a rise in repeat visits
- Headline Trussell Trust figures overstate the scale of foodbank use in Britain
- But, the number of unique recipients did rise between 2013 and 2015
- Some evidence for entrenchment of foodbank use
- Worrying implications for dietary quality and nutrition-related health

Study limitations

- Case study location: West Cheshire is slightly more affluent than Britain overall, so prevalence of foodbank use are probably under-estimates
- Only covers Trussell Trust foodbanks

What next?

- Need a national estimate of the proportion of people receiving emergency food, and of food insecurity more generally
- Explore repeat foodbank visits in relation to wider characteristics (ethnicity, employment status, mental health)
- Consider the underlying reasons for repeat use

Any questions or comments?

Thank you for listening!

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