

School Holiday Voucher Scheme – Summer Holiday 2020

Introduction

The School Holiday Voucher Scheme was introduced during the COVID19 outbreak on the Isle of Man in spring 2020 to support parents and guardians of children both in primary and secondary schools. The scheme was extended during the summer holidays in 2020 and we asked you some questions as part of an anonymous survey on the voucher scheme to help us to understand the challenges faced by parents and carers during school holiday periods.

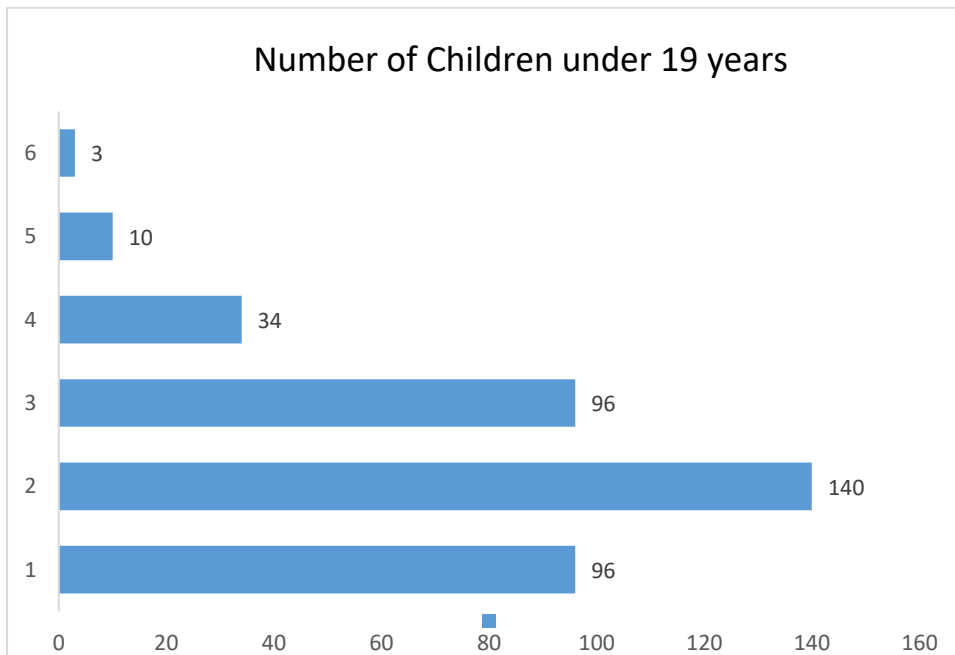
We are grateful to the 381 respondents who took the time to take part in the survey. The results have been collated and are provided below:

What You Told Us

A total of 381 responses were received (87% of which were in receipt of holiday food shopping vouchers).

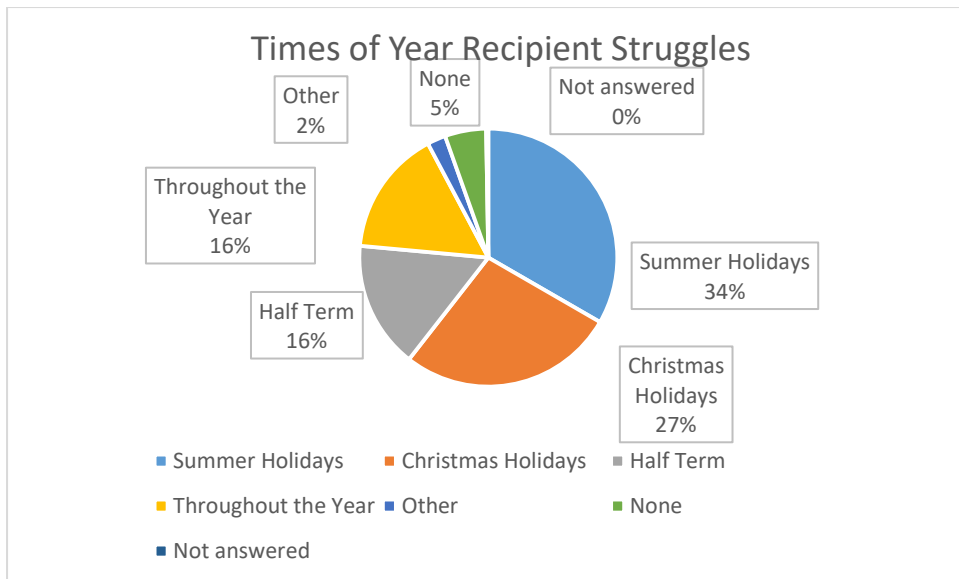
Number of children in household:

The chart below shows that the average number of children in households of those who responded was 3.5 (a total of 293 listed in primary school and 206 in high school):



Times of year:

Respondents were asked to think about whether there were specific times of year that they struggled financially. The two top answers were Summer Holidays (34%) and Christmas Holidays (27%). 10% of respondents advised that they do not experience specific periods where they struggle financially.

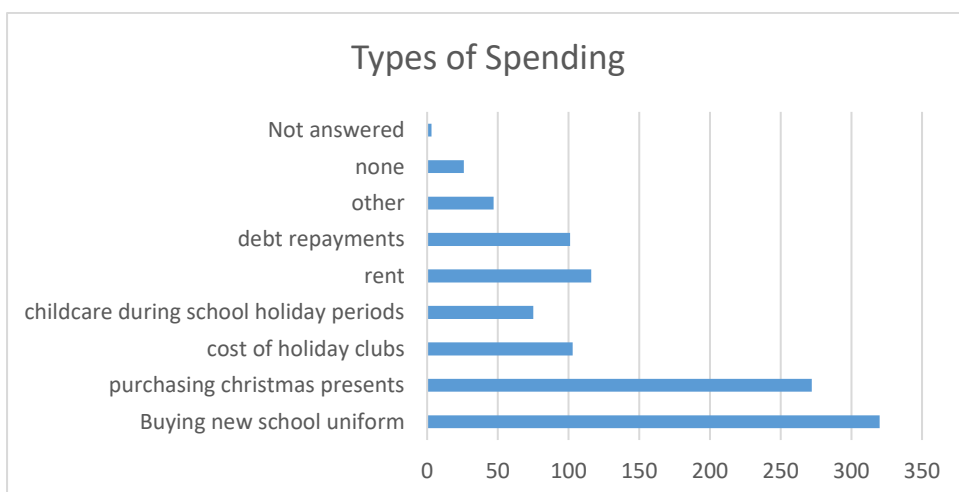


Types of Spending:

We then asked what types of spending parents have to consider that may make it difficult to afford food and the top answers were buying new school uniform (320 responses) and Christmas presents (272 responses).

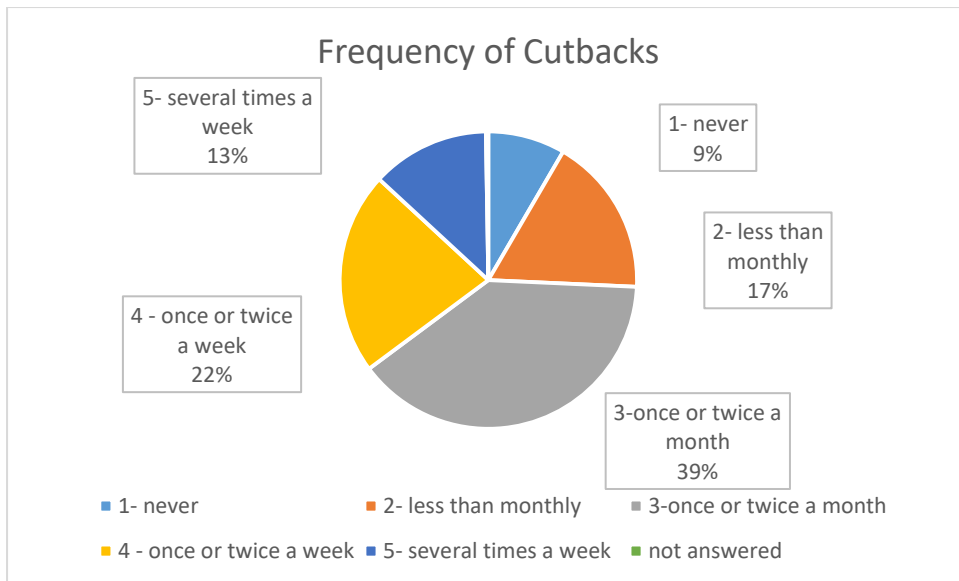
17 respondents ticked "other" and were asked to provide more information. The most common responses were:

- Household Bills – 21 mentions
- School holidays (including activities) – 12 mentions
- Clothing – 10 mentions
- Vehicle/Travel – 5 mentions
- Unexpected expenses/emergencies – 4 mentions



Frequency:

When asked how frequently respondents have to cut back spending, 39% answered once or twice a month (149 responses) with 22% responding once or twice a week (84 responses). 9% answered never (32 responses).



Usefulness of Vouchers:

When asked how useful respondents found the voucher scheme 58% (222 responses) stated that they found them extremely useful and that they had provided significant support. 31 respondents confirmed they had not used the vouchers (8%)

Additional Support:

We asked you if there was any other support that would be useful during the school holidays the key themes identified were:

- Childcare (more affordable options)
- Financial contributions towards, or free activities
- Other vouchers to supplement Travel, Food, Uniform, Holiday Clubs and Activities
- Increased benefits
- More support for those with additional/complex needs

The questions contained within the shopping voucher survey that required qualitative information are listed below:

- Where respondents had marked "other" for the question "Other times of year you find it difficult to buy food" the key themes were:
 - a. Other or all school holiday periods
 - b. Financial planning and other cost considerations
 - c. COVID

- d. Convenience
 - e. Illness
 - f. Special Occasions
-
- Where respondents had marked "other" for the question "What other types of spending makes it difficult to afford food?" the key themes were:
 - Household/Utility Bills/Cost of Living
 - Illness
 - Childcare and Holiday Club Costs
 - Transport Costs
 - Unexpected costs

 - When respondents were asked to provide details of cutbacks they have to make the key themes were:
 - Childcare/School Clubs
 - Car maintenance/Transport
 - Activities for Children
 - General (e.g haircuts, clothing and technology)
 - Additional debt

 - When respondents had marked "other" for the question "What other challenges in providing food do you face during the school holidays?" the key themes were:
 - Affordability/Convenience (e.g transport, cost of healthy foods, local shops being more expensive than supermarkets)
 - Lack of options with the vouchers (e.g including Tesco as well as Shoprite)
 - Children's food preferences
 - Illness/Special Dietary Requirements