

05 January 2022

## **Subject: Patients referral to a foodbank**

Thank you for submitting your query regarding access to foodbanks. The Connected Community Care service within Adult, Community and Older People's Division in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust supports people with their holistic needs including access to items such as food. We accept referrals for anyone over the age of 18. We aim to find alternatives to food banks and would only discuss them with service users as a last resort or at the request of the individual. Just to note, we would not consider connecting someone to a foodbank mostly available through local churches as a formal referral but as a navigation support to existing services.

As per your request,

### **Question 1:**

- **How many times between 1 January 2020 – 1 January 2021 and 1 January 2021 – present, a primary care provider at the Belfast Trust provided a patient with referral to a foodbank**

01/01/2020 – 31/12/20 -Total: 7

01/01/21 – 31/12/21 - Total: 15

It is important to note that in 2020, there was the food parcel scheme available through the Department for Communities from March which we would have utilised during this period. Additionally in 2021 there was the implementation of the food voucher scheme available at the end of the year provided by the Belfast City Council.

### **Question 2:**

- **If it doesn't incur any extra expenses, I would also like to see the data broken down into the age, gender and ethnic background of patients being referred, and the equivalent data for the period 1 January 2019-1 January 2020.**

Unfortunately we have only developed a system in January 2020 to collate a record of the services identified through navigation, therefore would not have the available data you have requested for 2019, nor would we be able to break the referrals down by age, gender or ethnic background. We also navigate to specific support and advice organisations in the local community whereby individuals could access a foodbank at the suggestion of these providers.

I hope you found this information helpful, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further queries.