



CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Deferred Entry to Primary School Statistics, 2018

Contents

Introduction	2
Funded Early Learning and Childcare Eligibility	2
School Deferral and Early Learning and Childcare Eligibility	2
Background	3
Methods and Quality	3
Estimated rates of deferred entry to primary school	4
Rate of deferral over time	5
Sex.....	5
Additional Support Needs (ASN)	6
Disability.....	7
SIMD	7
Ethnicity.....	8
Local authority.....	9
Characteristics of children who deferred entry to primary school	11
Sex.....	11
Additional Support Needs	12
Disability.....	12
Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)	13
Ethnicity.....	14

Introduction

Funded Early Learning and Childcare Eligibility

In Scotland, all 3 and 4 year olds, from the relevant start date, and eligible 2 year olds are entitled to funded early learning and childcare (ELC) of up to 600 hours per year. The Scottish Government and local authorities committed to increase the entitlement to up to 1,140 hours per year from August 2020. The impacts of coronavirus pandemic necessitated a delay¹ to the full roll-out of the statutory duty to provide 1,140 hours of funded ELC, so the Scottish Government and local authorities can't guarantee the expanded funded ELC hours will be available everywhere from August 2020. The full expansion will happen at a later date.

Arrangements for when children are eligible for funded ELC are set out under the Provision of Early Learning and Childcare (Specified Children) (Scotland) Order 2014 (the 2014 Order). Eligibility for funded ELC starts from the term after a child's third birthday. The eligibility criteria also prioritises those children who stand to benefit the most in the first instance, through statutory eligibility criteria enabling earlier access to funded ELC for some 2 year olds.

School Deferral and Early Learning and Childcare Eligibility

In Scotland, the school year starts in August with any single school year group usually consisting of children born between the beginning of March in one year and the end of February the following year. Children are typically aged between 4.5 and 5.5 years old when they start school. Under the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 (the 1980 Act), all children who are still four when they are due to start their first year of school (P1) can be deferred and start the following year. The option to defer is a matter of parental choice.

If a parent chooses to defer their child's entry to P1, legislation determines whether they qualify for an additional year of funded ELC automatically, or at the local authority's discretion. The eligibility criteria set out in the 2014 Order means that the youngest children, those born in January or February, are able to access an additional year of funded early learning and childcare when they are four, if the parent chooses to defer the child's entry to primary school.

For children who turn five after the school commencement date in August to the end of December, parents can still defer their entry to P1 for a year but local authorities decide whether additional funded ELC will be made available using their discretionary powers under section 1(1C) of the 1980 Act.

On 2 October 2019, the Minister for Children and Young People committed to bring forward legislation to extend the automatic funding of an additional year of ELC in a deferred year to children born after the school commencement date in August to

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/letter-to-directors-of-education-elc-la-leads/>

the end of December. This means that all children who defer entry to primary school will be automatically entitled to an additional year of funded ELC.

Background

This publication presents analysis which was conducted by Scottish Government in order to inform the understanding of trends and variations in deferral rates, and the characteristics of pupils identified as having deferred entry to primary school. Analysis of the following characteristics is included: sex, Additional Support Needs (ASN) status, disability status, ethnicity, SIMD of the pupil's home postcode, and local authority of the children to have deferred entry to primary school.

Methods and Quality

The statistics presented in this document are derived from National Statistics data collected in the School Pupils Census. This publication is an ad-hoc release and is not published as Official or National Statistics. Information on data quality is published in the latest release of Summary Statistics for Schools in Scotland².

The age and stage of children in the Scottish Government pupil census was used in order to identify pupils who deferred entry to primary school. These pupils are referred to as 'deferred pupils' in this document. Pupils who were in P1, and were aged five and a half to six years old at the start of the August they began school, were identified in this group in the pupil census.

² <https://www.gov.scot/collections/school-education-statistics/#summarystatisticsforschoolsinscotland>

Estimated rates of deferred entry to primary school

Rates of deferred entry to primary school have been estimated by comparing the number of pupils born in the same month and year in P1 over two years.

For example, to estimate the rate of deferral for February in 2018, the number of pupils born in February 2013 and in P1 in 2018 was taken as the number of deferred pupils. The number of pupils born in February 2013 and in P1 in 2017 was taken as the number of pupils who did not defer. The deferral rate was then calculated as the number of deferred pupils divided by the total number of deferred and non-deferred pupils combined.

This method does not account for migration or deaths occurring between the two years, so it only provides an estimate of the rate of deferral.

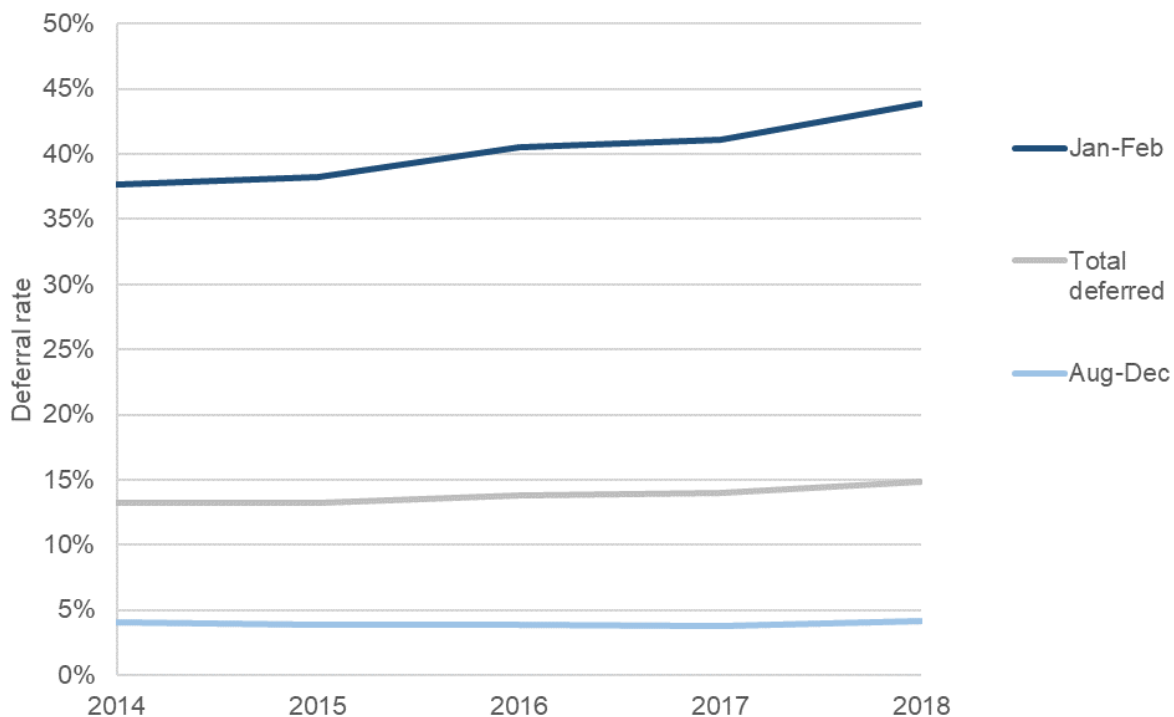
A much higher rate of deferral for those born in January and February is expected due to children born in those months being the youngest in their stage if they don't defer. The statutory entitlement to an additional year of funded ELC for children who defer and are born in January and February might also affect the decision on whether to defer.

Rate of deferral over time

Figure 1 shows the estimated rate of deferred entry to primary school has increased over the last five years. In 2018 the total estimated rate of deferral was 15%, up from 13% in 2017.

This increase has been driven by deferrals in the January and February age group, for which the estimated rate increased from 38% in 2014 to 44% in 2018. The deferral rate for those born from August to December remained broadly stable at around 4% over the period.

Figure 1: Estimated deferral rate by age category, 2014-2018



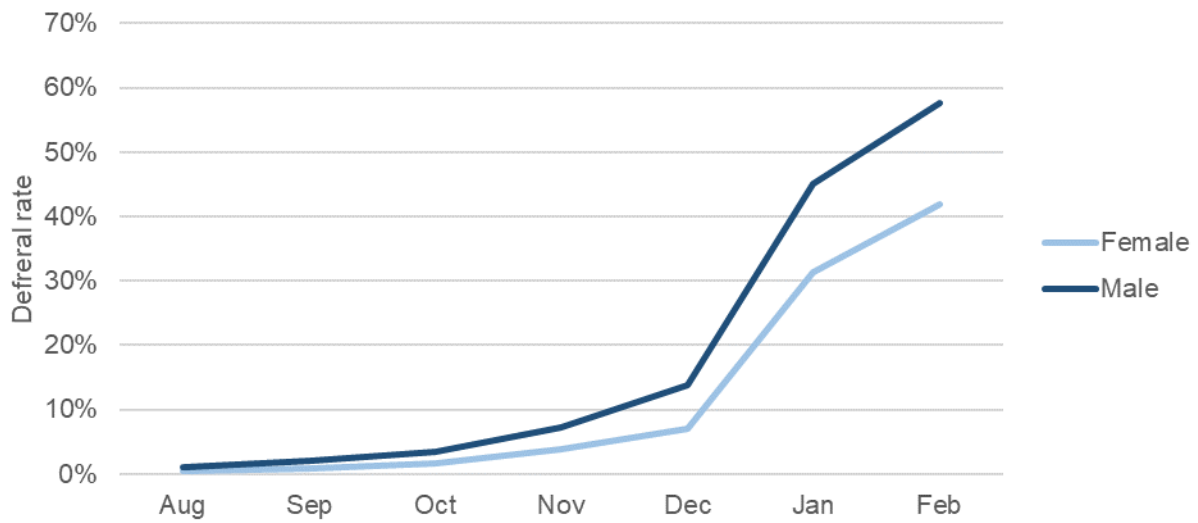
Sex

Figure 2 shows that male pupils had a higher estimated rate of deferred entry to primary school than females across all eligible months of birth in 2018.

For males, the deferral rate increases from 1% for those born in August to 14% for December births, before increasing to 45% and 58% for those born in January and February respectively.

For females, the rate of deferral follows a similar pattern by month of birth, but always at a lower rate than for males. 0% of females born in August defer, increasing to 7% for those born in December, 31% for January and 42% for February.

Figure 2: Estimated deferral rate by sex and month of birth, 2018

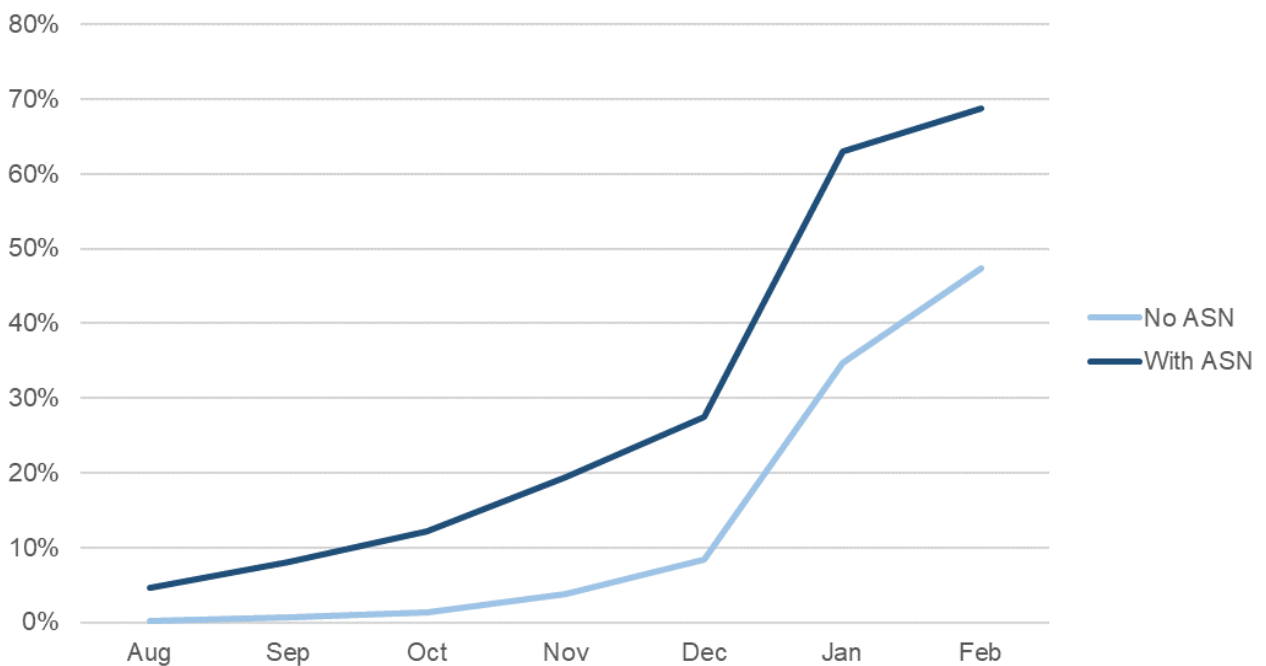


Additional Support Needs (ASN)

The rate of deferral for pupils with an ASN recorded was much higher than for pupils without an ASN in 2018 (Figure 3).

The largest gap in the rate of deferral between pupils with and without an ASN was for those born in January. The rate of deferral for those born in this month with an ASN was 63%, compared with 35% for pupils without an ASN, a gap of 28 percentage points.

Figure 3: Estimated deferral rate by ASN status and month of birth, 2018



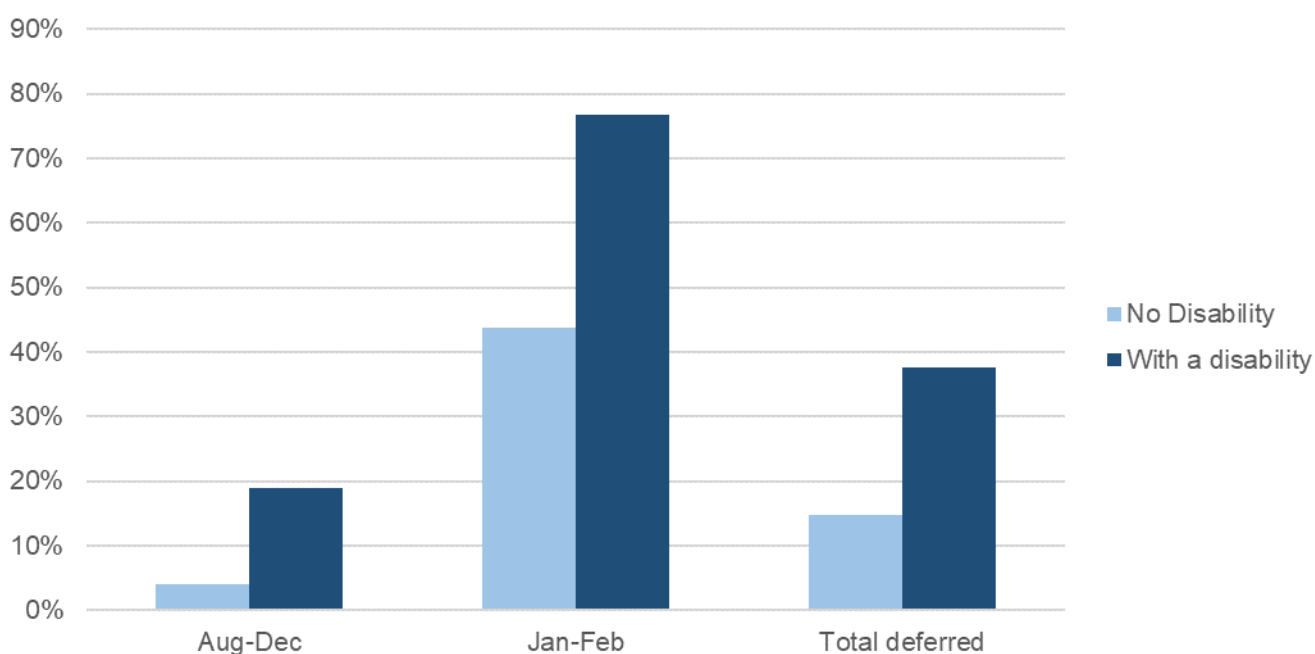
Disability

The estimated rate of deferral for pupils is around two and a half times as high among pupils with a declared or assessed disability compared to pupils without a disability (Figure 4). For all pupils eligible to defer entry to primary school, 38% of those with a recorded disability deferred in 2018, compared with 15% without a recorded disability.

For pupils born from August to December, the estimated rate of deferral was 19% for pupils with a disability recorded compared with only 4% for pupils with no recorded disability.

Pupils born in January and February with a recorded disability have an estimated deferral rate of 77%. This compares with a deferral rate of 44% for pupils with no recorded disability.

Figure 4: Estimated deferral rate by disability status and age category, 2018

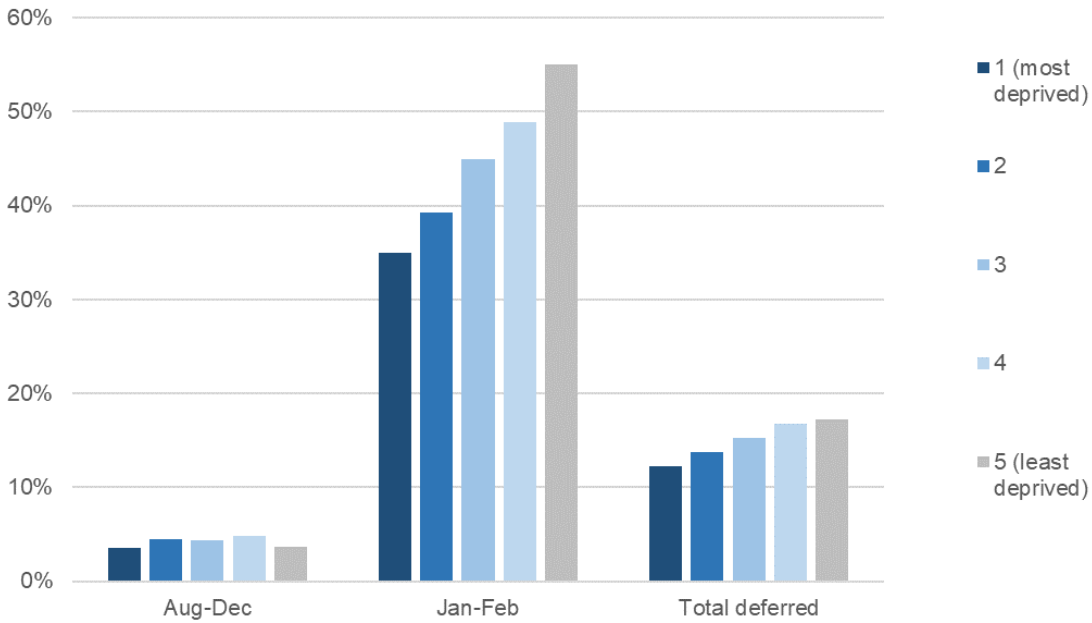


SIMD

Figure 5 shows that the estimated rate of deferred entry to primary school increases as the area deprivation of a pupil's home postcode decreases for those born in January and February. 35% of pupils born in January and February living in SIMD quintile 1 (the 20% most deprived areas of Scotland) deferred entry to primary school, compared with 55% of those living in SIMD quintile 5 (the 20% least deprived areas).

For pupils born from August to December, the estimated rate of deferral is much more consistent, varying slightly from a low of 4% for pupils from SIMD quintile 1 to a high of 5% for those living in SIMD quintile 4 (the 21% to 40% least deprived areas in Scotland), decreasing again to 4% for pupils in SIMD quintile 5.

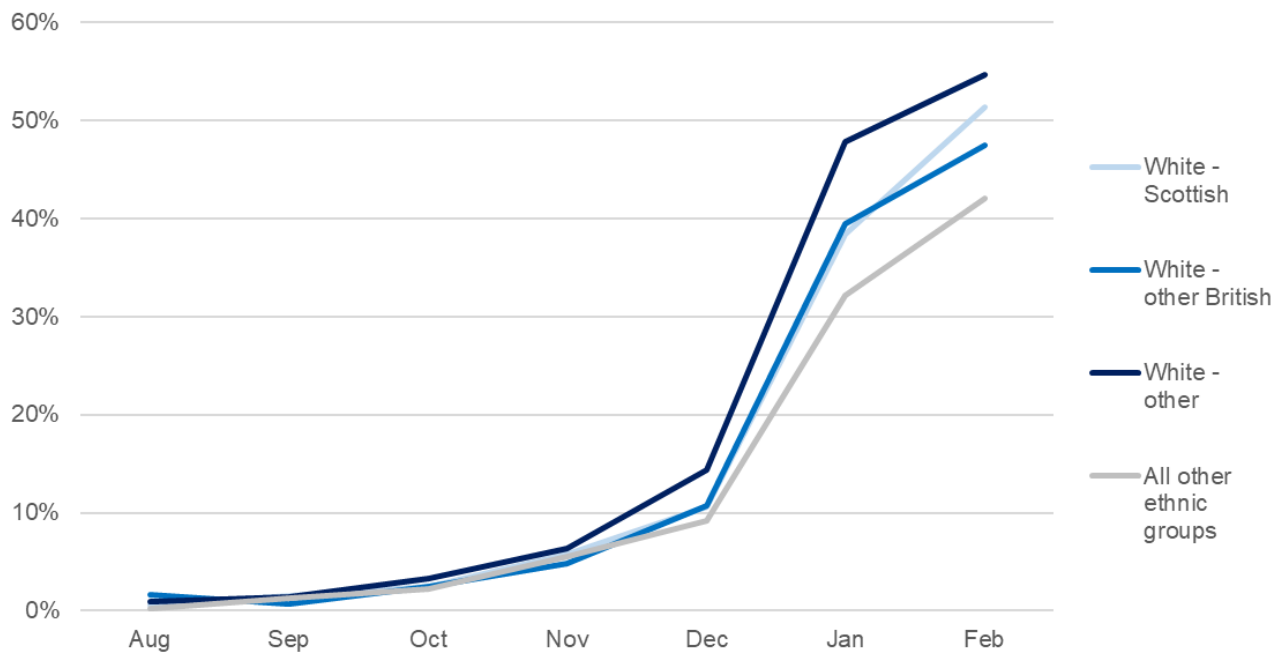
Figure 5: Estimated deferral rate by SIMD quintile and age category, 2018



Ethnicity

The estimated overall rate of deferral for P1 pupils is equal (14.9%) among White-Scottish and White-other British pupils (Figure 6), and followed a similar pattern by month of birth across each ethnicity grouping.

Figure 6: Estimated deferral rate by ethnicity and month of birth, 2018



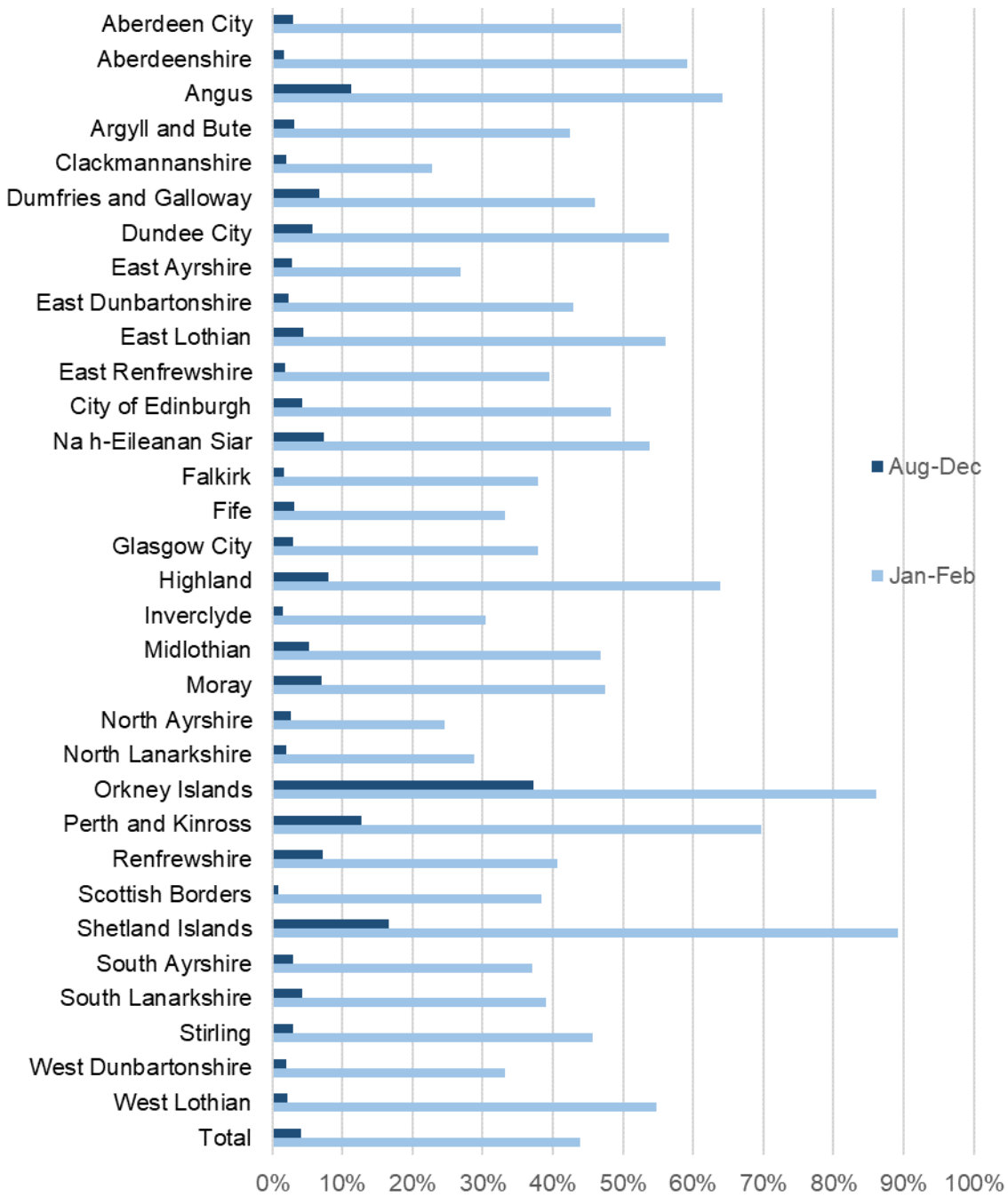
Local authority

The estimated rate of deferred entry to primary school for pupils born in the August to December, and January and February age groups are shown in Figure 7. There is considerable variation in the rate of deferral across local authorities

For pupils born in January and February, by far the highest deferral rates were found in Shetland Islands (89%), and Orkney Islands (86%). Perth and Kinross (70%), Angus (64%), and Highland (64%) also have relatively high rates of deferral for this age group in 2018. The lowest rates of deferral for pupils born in January and February were found in Clackmannanshire (23%), North Ayrshire (25%), and East Ayrshire (27%).

For pupils born from August to December, the highest deferral rates were found in Orkney Islands (37%), Shetland Islands (17%), and Perth and Kinross (13%), the same authorities that had the highest rates for January and February birthdays. The lowest rates of deferral for pupils born from August to December were in Scottish Borders, (1%), Inverclyde (1%), and Aberdeenshire (2%).

Figure 7: Estimated deferral rate by local authority and age category, 2018



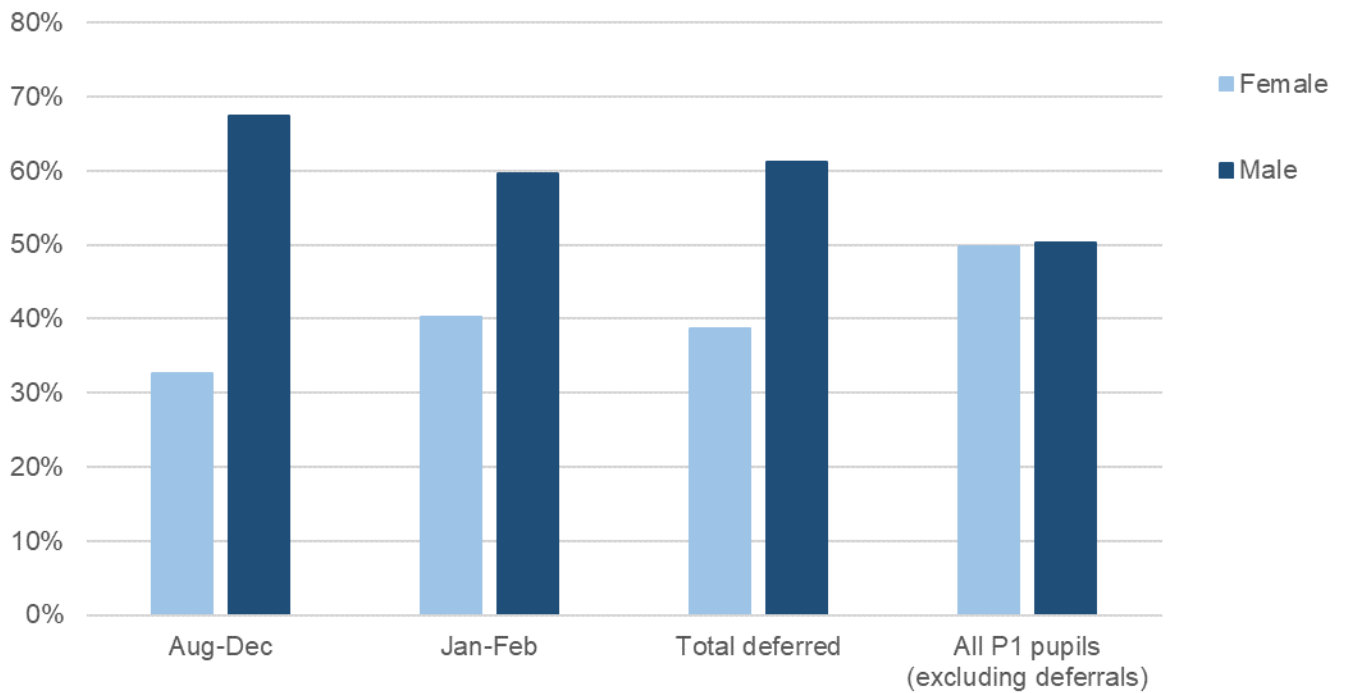
Characteristics of children who deferred entry to primary school

Sex

Figure 8 shows that P1 pupils who deferred entry to primary school were more likely than other P1 pupils to be male.

In 2018, 61% of deferred pupils were male, compared with 50% of all P1 pupils excluding deferrals. A higher proportion of pupils who were born from August to December and who deferred were male (67%) than those born in January and February (60%).

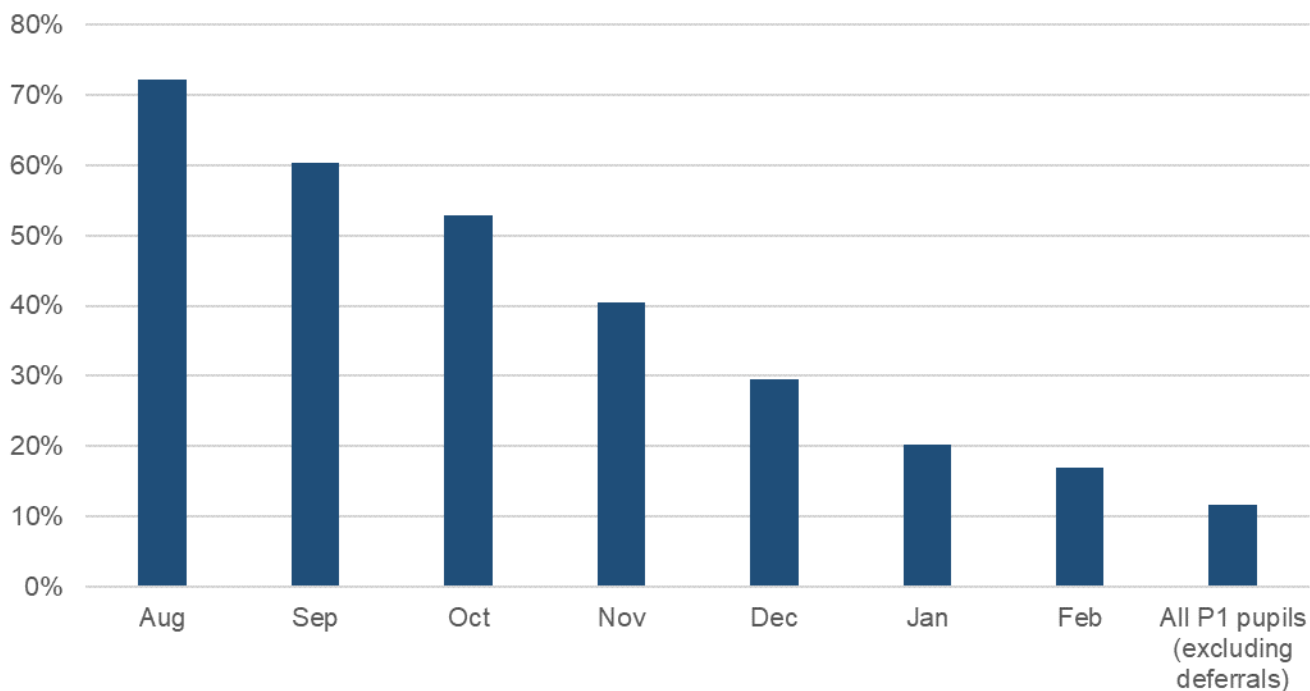
Figure 8: Percentage of P1 pupils who deferred entry to primary school, by sex and age group, 2018



Additional Support Needs

The proportion of P1 pupils with ASN is higher for deferred pupils than other P1 pupils (Figure 9). The rate of pupils with ASN varies from 72% for the oldest deferred pupils born in August, decreasing for each month of birth to 17% for deferred pupils born in February. This compares with 12% of all P1 pupils excluding deferrals.

Figure 9: Percentage of P1 pupils who deferred entry to primary school, with ASN by month of birth, 2018



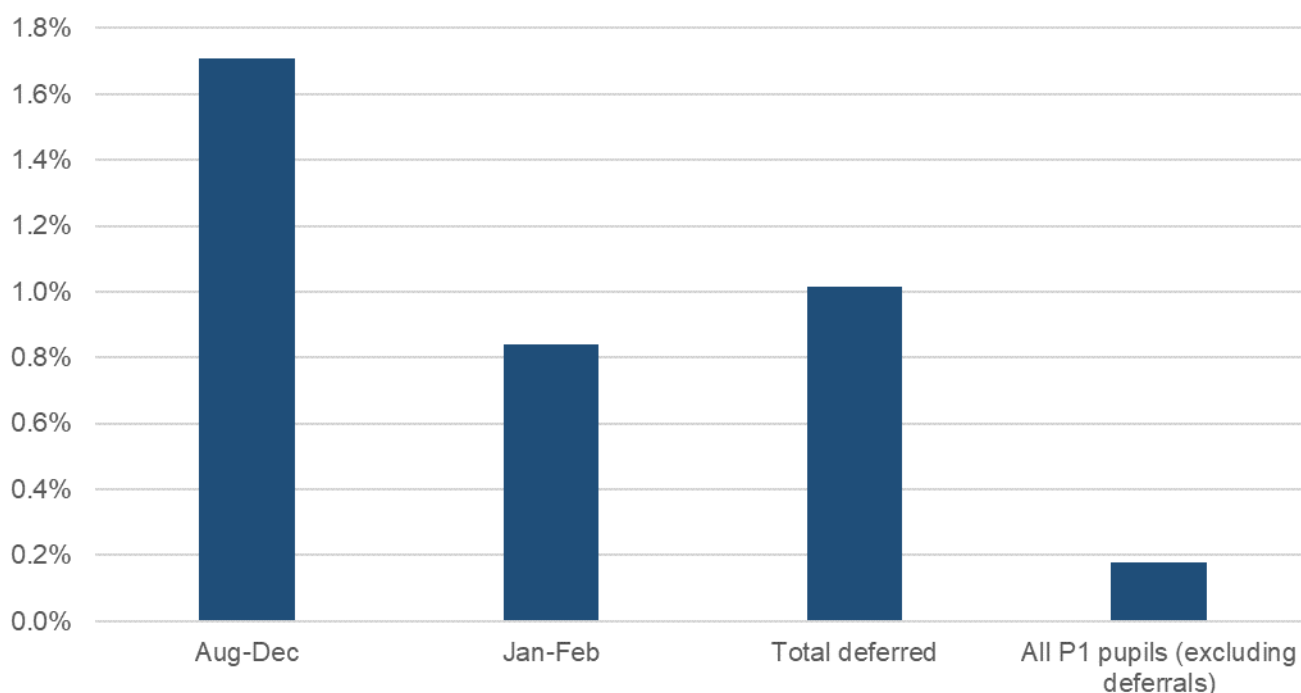
Disability

Deferred pupils are more likely to have a disability than other P1 pupils. 1.0% of all deferred pupils in P1 have a disability (Figure 10). The rate of disability in this group is around six times as high compared to all P1 pupils excluding deferrals, of whom 0.2% have a disability.

Among deferred pupils born in January and February, 0.8% have a disability. While for those born from August to December, 1.7% have a disability.

The number of P1 pupils with a disability is relatively small, so the figures have not been broken down by month of birth.

Figure 10: Percentage of P1 pupils who deferred entry to primary school with a disability, by age category, 2018

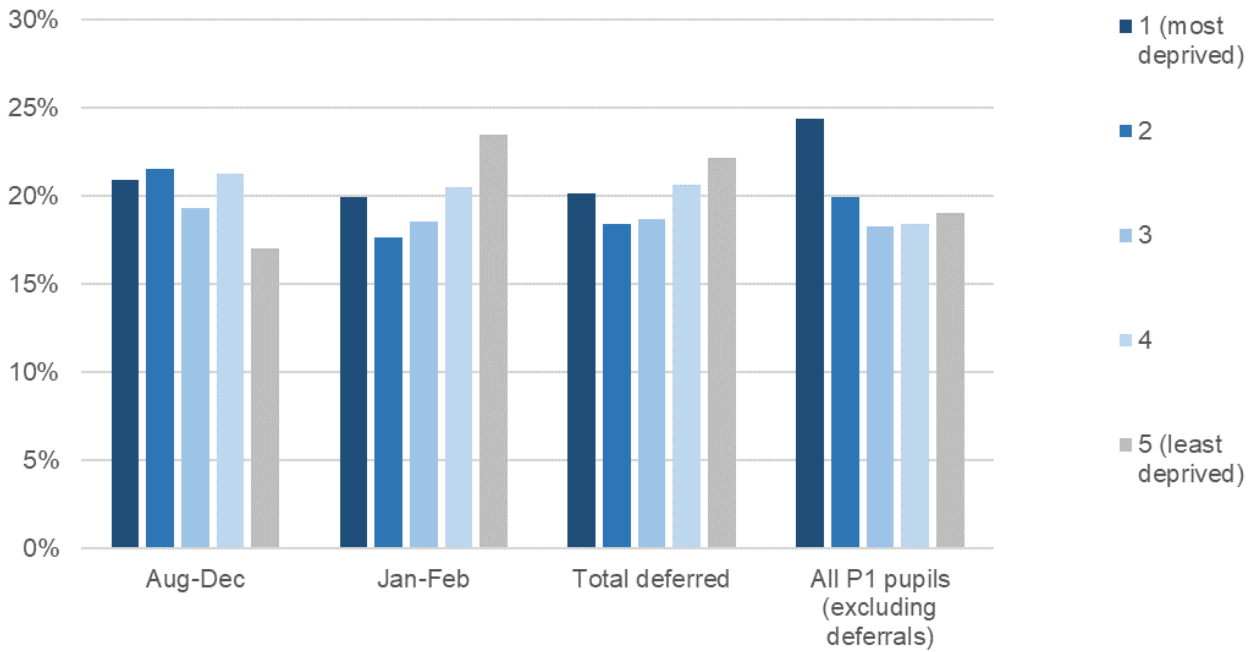


Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)

Figure 11 shows 20% of deferred pupils are from the 20% most deprived areas of Scotland. This is lower than the 24% of all P1 pupils excluding deferrals from the 20% most deprived areas. There was a similar proportion of P1 pupils to have deferred from the 20% most deprived areas born in January and February (20%) and August to December (21%).

This is in contrast to pupils from the 20% least deprived areas of Scotland. A higher proportion of deferred pupils were from the 20% least deprived areas (22%) than for all P1 pupils excluding deferrals (19%).

Figure 11: Percentage of P1 pupils who deferred entry to primary school, by SIMD quintile and age category, 2018

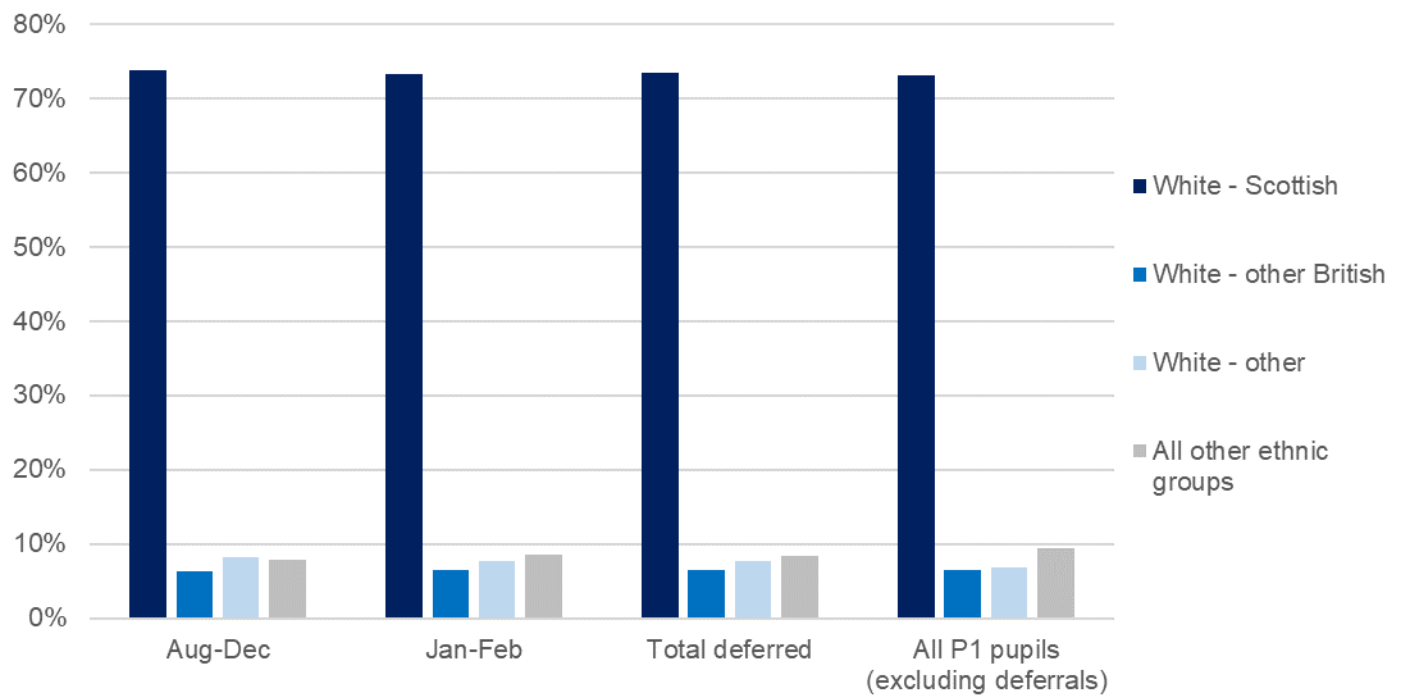


Ethnicity

The same proportion (73%) of deferred pupils and all pupils excluding deferrals were recorded as White-Scottish ethnicity in 2018 (Figure 12).

The proportion is also very similar by age group for deferred pupils; 74% of those born from August to December and 73% of those born in January and February were White-Scottish.

Figure 12: Percentage of P1 pupils who deferred entry to primary school, by ethnicity and age category, 2018



How to access background or source data:

The data collected for this statistical bulletin:

- are available in more detail through statistics.gov.scot
- are available via an alternative route
- may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact childrens.statistics@gov.scot for further information.
- cannot be made available by Scottish Government for further analysis as Scottish Government is not the data controller.

ISBN 978-1-80004-230-8 (web only)

Crown Copyright

You may use or re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. See: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/