

CPP COVID-19 Dataset

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to present the latest data within the CPP COVID-19 sentinel dataset, for information.

2. Recommendations

The Board is asked to note the dataset.

3. Discussion

The CPP has developed a sentinel dataset, identifying a handful of indicators in order to track the impact of COVID-19 on communities. The dataset is updated monthly and provides an early indication of changes to West Lothian society. The indicators are listed below:

- Claimant Count
- Furloughed jobs data
- Key business status
- Food parcel distribution
- Scottish Welfare Fund grants
- Education Maintenance Allowance
- Free School Meals and Free Clothing Grant
- Rent Arrears
- Council Tax Arrears

Appendix 1 provides the latest data for each of these indicators. Appendix 2 provides further contextual information.

Work is ongoing to review the indicators within the dataset to ensure that wider societal harms of COVID-19 are included. An update on this work will be provided at the next CPP Board meeting.

4. Summary of Implications

Relevant LOIP outcome (s)	ALL
Relevant LOIP performance indicator (s)	ALL
Resources	N/A

Link to prevention/community engagement	The dataset will help the CPP to shape future activity which will have a focus on prevention
Impact on inequalities	The dataset will help the CPP identify areas of inequality in relation to the indicators that are included.
Key risks	

5. Consultations

The CPP Board were consulted in the development of the dataset. Partners are involved in discussions around potential additional indicators for inclusion.

6. Conclusions

The COVID-19 dataset has been updated to reflect current data. Work is ongoing to ensure that wider societal harms are incorporated into the dataset. The Board are asked to note the updated dataset.

Report written by/contact details/date

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References N/A

Appendices

Appendix 1: COVID-19 Dataset – Latest Data

Appendix 2: COVID-19 Dataset Narrative

COVID-19 Sentinel Data Set

May 2021

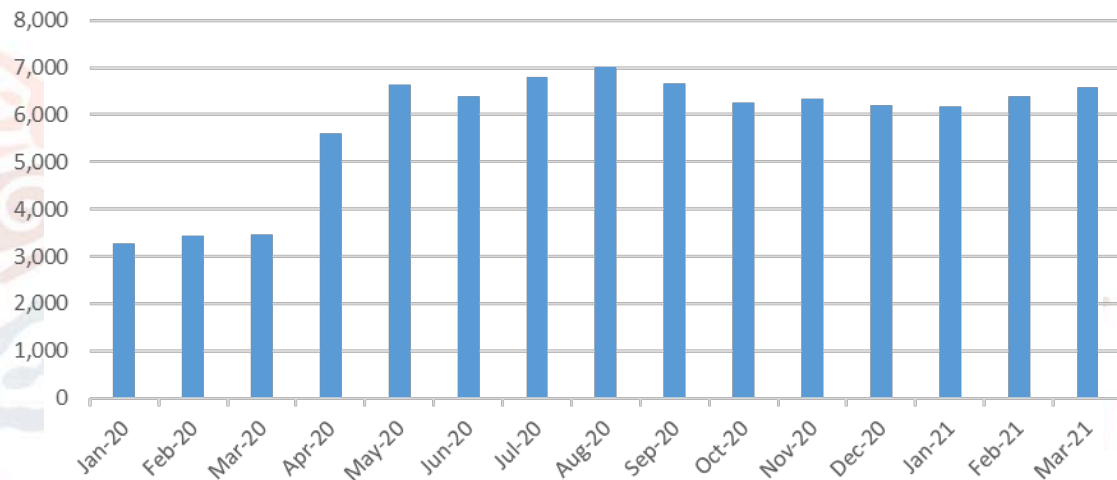


West Lothian
COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

Claimant Count

	West Lothian claimant count	West Lothian Claimant Rate	Scotland claimant rate
Jan-20	3,260	2.8	3.2
Feb-20	3,425	2.9	3.3
Mar-20	3,450	3.0	3.3
Apr-20	5,600	4.8	5.4
May-20	6,645	5.7	6.1
Jun-20	6,405	5.5	6.1
Jul-20	6,800	5.8	6.3
Aug-20	7,005	6.0	6.4
Sep-20	6,675	5.7	6.2
Oct-20	6,255	5.3	5.9
Nov-20	6,325	5.4	6.0
Dec-20	6,200	5.3	5.9
Jan-21	6,175	5.3	5.9
Feb-21	6,385	5.4	6.1
Mar-21	6,570	5.6	6.1

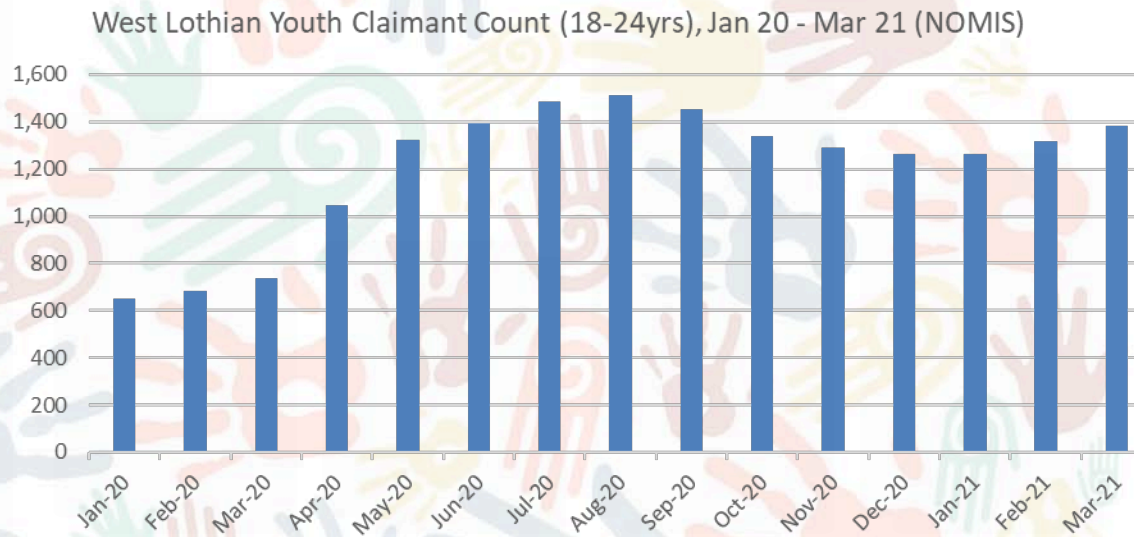
West Lothian Claimant Count, Jan 20 - Mar 21 (NOMIS)



Youth Unemployment

Youth Claimant Count (18-24)	West Lothian claimant count	West Lothian claimant rate	Scotland
Jan-20	650	4.6	4.3
Feb-20	685	4.9	4.5
Mar-20	735	5.2	4.6
Apr-20	1,045	7.4	7.1
May-20	1,325	9.4	8.4
Jun-20	1,395	9.9	9.1
Jul-20	1,485	10.6	9.7
Aug-20	1,510	10.7	9.6
Sep-20	1,455	10.3	9.1
Oct-20	1,340	9.5	8.6
Nov-20	1,290	9.2	8.4
Dec-20	1,265	9.0	8.3
Jan-21	1,265	9.0	8.2
Feb-21	1,315	9.4	8.4
Mar-21	1,385	9.8	8.6

Number of claimants aged 18 -24 in West Lothian



Furlough Scheme

Job Retention – Furlough Scheme

Month	Total number of employments furloughed	Eligible employments	Take up Rate
June*	21,700	88,400	25%
July	26,000	88,400	29%
August	27,600	88,400	31%
September	6,800	88,400	8%
October	5,900	88,400	7%
November	7,700	88,400	9%
December	9,100	88,400	10%
January	12,400	88,000	14%
February	12,100	88,000	14%

**Note: breakdown by LA only began in June. Figures for June report include from the start of the scheme (20 April) up to 30 June 2020.*



West Lothian
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SEISS

WL SEISS 1 Claims to 31 Oct

Month	Total no. of claims made	Total potentially eligible population	Average value of claims	Take up Rate
June	4,400	6,000	2,800	73%
July	4,600	6,000	2,800	76%
August	4,600	6,000	2,800	76%
September	3,800	6,000	2,500	64%
October	4,100	6,000	2,500	69%
November	4,600	6,000	2,800	77%

WL SEISS Claims for 2nd Grant extension (3 mth extension period Nov - Jan)

Month	Total no. of claims made	Total potentially eligible population	Average value of claims	Take up Rate
Published November 2020*	4,200	6,000	2,500	71%

WL SEISS Claims for 3rd Grant extension (3 mth period Feb - April)

Month	Total no. of claims made	Total potentially eligible population	Average value of claims	Take up Rate
Published February 2021*	4,000	6,000	2,800	67%

*Note: Claims received up to 31 January

Food Support

Month - weekly	Food parcels
May	3,830
June	4,137
July	4,097
August	3,516
September	3,021
October	3,759
November	4,044
December	4,828
January	4,620
February	4,553
March	4,374



Scottish Welfare Fund

Scottish Welfare Fund

	Crisis Grants		Community Care Grants	
01 March – 31 December 2020	10297	778,499.78	2348	830,742.04
01 January-31 March 2021	3605	371,431.43	732	312,963.81



West Lothian
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Self Isolation

Self Isolation Support Grant

Date	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March
Self Isolation Applications	265	273	167	205	219	280
Granted	41	54	35	36	107	124
Refused	204	197	118	169	105	147
Outstanding	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reconsideration	20	22	14	11	7	9
Awarded	3	2	1	0	0	0
Refused	17	20	13	11	7	9
Applied for a Crisis Grant	71	39	32	45	20	34
Awarded a Crisis	57	24	19	24	13	
Refused a crisis	14	15	13	21	7	10
Awaiting Decision	0	0	0	0	0	



Schools Support

Education Maintenance Allowance

Academic year	EMA payments
2019/20	701
2020/21	685

Clothing Grants

Academic year	Children
2019/20	7035
2020/21	7921

Free School Meals

Academic year	Children
2019/20	5637
2020/21	6373 (FSM only)

if you add in those we pay in P1 to P3 on SCG 6843

Council Tax

Comparative cumulative percentage collection rates of the total amount due for the year at the end of each month.

	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March
2019/20 Cumulative Collection Rate	36.99%	45.60%	54.58%	63.37%	72.08%	80.70%	88.51%	92.91%	95.90%
2020/21 Cumulative Collection Rate	36.35%	44.84%	53.87%	62.51%	71.13%	79.59%	87.36%	92.07%	95.26%
Movement in 2020/21 to 2019/20	-0.64%	-0.76%	-0.71%	-0.86%	-0.95%	-1.11%	-1.15%	-0.84%	-0.64%

	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March
2019/20 Council Tax Reduction Caseload	14645	14659	14596	14551	14457	14558	14,493	14,566	14,499
2020/21 Council Tax Reduction Caseload	15533	15496	15411	15416	15420	15321	15,199	15,173	15,117
Movement in caseload	888	837	815	865	963	763	706	607	618

Rent Arrears

Current Arrears Overall (Mainstream + Temporary Accommodation)

	Total
April	£3,085,347
May	£3,382,486
June	£3,682,518
July	£3,930,730
August	£3,559,775
September	£3,716,171
October	£3,928,936
November	£3,988,322
December	£3,300,988
January	£3,516,718
February	£3,677,837
March	£2,978,530



West Lothian COVID-19 sentinel dataset commentary

May 2021

Key Messages

- Claimant count has risen slightly to 5.6%. This could be attributed to seasonal work decreasing.
- Youth unemployment continues to be above Scotland and UK rates.
- There is uncertainty about the impact on the economy of the potential withdrawal of furlough and SEISS.
- There is concern about the proposed withdrawal of increased Universal Credit payments on the most vulnerable citizens in West Lothian.
- The majority of West Lothian residents' claims for COVID self-isolation support grants continue to be rejected, although the number of grant requests received is decreasing.
- Scottish Welfare Payments have surpassed all previous levels.

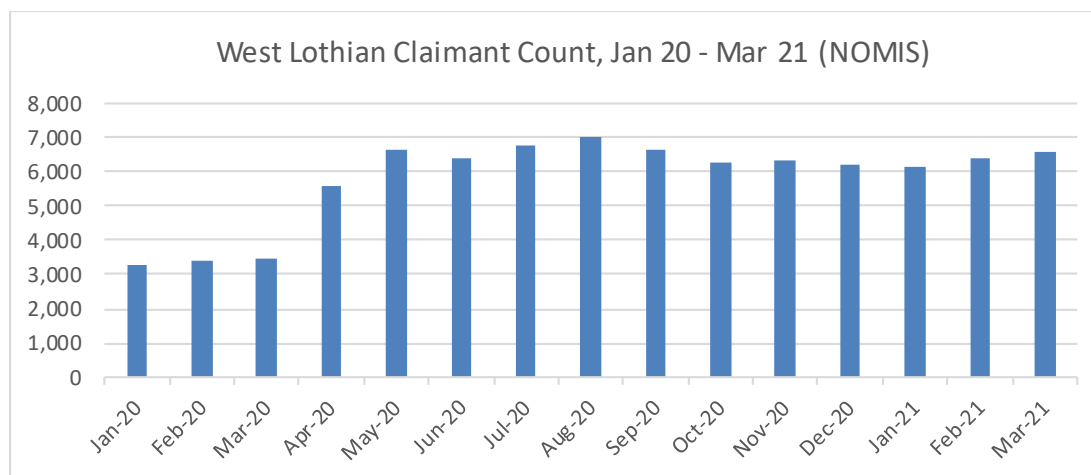
Claimant Count

Since September 2019, unemployment claims have doubled in West Lothian. This upward trend started in April 2020. There were almost 7,000 people claiming unemployment related benefits by September. There was a levelling off of claimants rate over the November to February period, most likely due to an increase in the availability of seasonal work during this period, and continued furlough support through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) / Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS). There has been a slight increase in numbers at the end of March to 6,570.

The end (and restart) of furlough may have had some impact on September and October numbers; there is also an annual reduction in unemployment claims as universities and colleges returned in September. As of end March 2021, 21% of the Scottish workforce were still furloughed. The CJRS has been extended until the end of September 2021. The scheme will continue in its present form until the end of June 2021 with a phased reduction in the level of funding from 1 July 2021. There is still an expectation that claimant figures will rise, but the continued support of CJRS and SEISS is having a 'cushioning' effect.

One notable pattern that is emerging relates to in-work vs out of work claimants; The most significant percentage increase has been for those that are in-work and claiming Universal Credit. For West Lothian, in February 2020 there were 2,809 claimants in this category, and by January 2021 this had more than doubled to 5,995 (110% increase). There was a slight fall between January 2021 and February 2021, but at the same time as the in-work and claiming participants fell, the not-in-work claimants increased (up 2.5%). This may indicate that individuals who had been in work had lost their employment at the start of the year and moved across from in-work and claiming, to out-of-work and claiming.

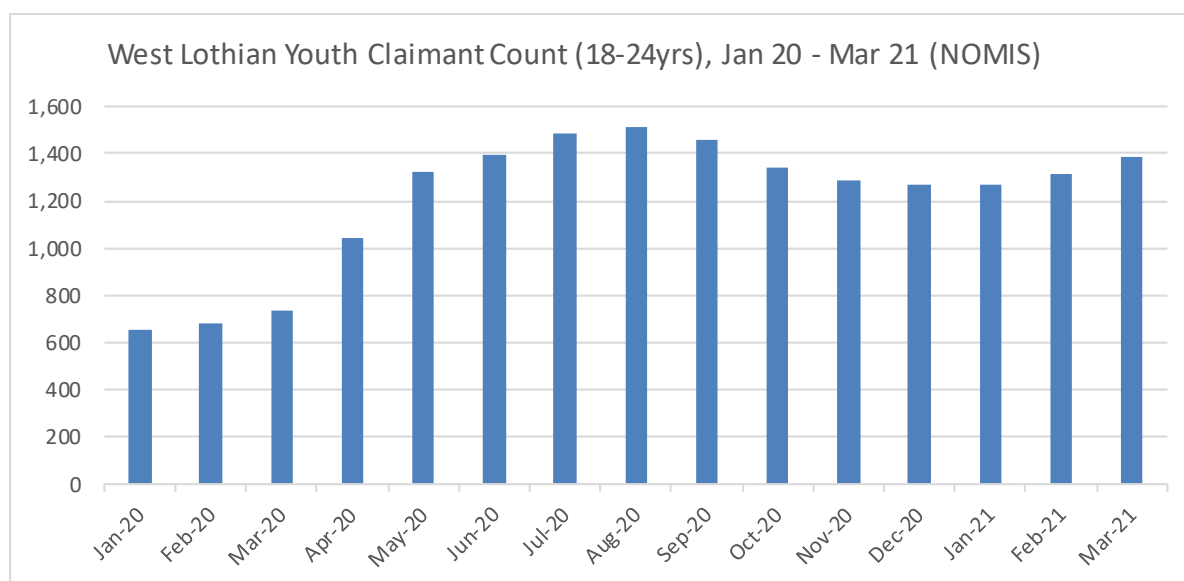
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The 18-24 age group has been particularly affected by the COVID-19 economic downturn. Since September 2019, unemployment claims in this age group have also doubled. This upward trend started in March 2020, decreased slightly from November and increase slightly again in 2021. There are now just over 1,300 young people claiming unemployment related benefits. At 9.8%, the West Lothian unemployment claimant rate is higher than Scotland (8.6%) and UK (9.1%).

Claimant figures plateaued over the November to February period, most likely due to an increase in the availability of seasonal work during this period. The latest increase is attributable to the ending of the seasonal period. Young people have continued to bear the brunt of the crisis, amid large-scale job losses in sectors such as hospitality and retail. Across the UK, people under 25 accounted for more than half of the payroll jobs lost in the year to March (53.7%).

Many young people have been employed in sectors such as the hospitality and the retail sectors, which have both been hard hit by the lockdown. It is expected that the end of furlough support will also have an impact on youth unemployment. It is also worth noting that West Lothian has a pre-existing high proportion of young people compared to the rest of Scotland which also affects the figures.



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Claimant count data has been analysed at ward and regeneration area level. In the latest figures for March 2021, most of the regeneration areas are seeing higher levels of uptake of Universal Credit than the West Lothian average.

We are also currently exploring which claimant count data can be analysed by gender and age. Rates for young people are generally higher across most of the regeneration areas. The most significant rates among young people appear to be in Bridgend, Blackburn, Craigshill, Ladywell and Armadale. It should be taken into account that higher rates may not be entirely attributable to disadvantage within these areas as there may also be a higher proportion of younger aged people within the local population. Anecdotal information suggests that women with families in part-time, low paid employment are being significantly affected. Only two areas have shown a higher rate of claims among women - in Bridgend and Ladywell. Generally, across the areas take-up rate among females has been lower than the West Lothian average.

It should be noted that many West Lothian residents work in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Job cuts in Edinburgh may have impacted the West Lothian claimant count numbers.

Job Retention Furlough Scheme and Self-Employment Income Support

By August 2020, 27,600 West Lothian jobs had been protected by the furlough scheme. But gradual withdrawal of support meant that the number of jobs protected dropped significantly to 6,800 in September, and also potentially due to a number of people going back to work as lockdown restrictions eased. The drop in figures in September and October from the peak in July and August is attributable to the reduced percentage of CJRS payment support and expectation of furlough support ending 31 October. Take up increased from November 2020 (7,700) to 12,400 in January 2021 with a slight decrease in February (12,100).

The Self-Employment Income Support Grant Scheme began on 13 May 2020 and has provided support to the self-employed in West Lothian. Take up rate has been substantial, with 73% initial take up to June (4,400), peaking in July and August at 76% (4,600). The average value of grant claims increased from £2,500 in October back up to £2,800 in November. SEISS was extended in the form of two further grants, each available for 3-month periods covering November 2020 to January 2021 and February 2021 to April 2021. There was a 71% take up rate for the second grant extension (with an average claim of £2,500) and 67% take up rate for the third grant extension (with an average claim of £2,800).

Total Employment

The economic development team has been monitoring key employers in West Lothian. These 207 businesses employ almost 21,000 people in the area. 103 companies provide no cause for concern; 66 businesses are at amber status and 28 businesses are showing cause for concern. There is no information on the other 10 companies. There has not been much change in the status of these companies over the last few months.

There are signs of business growth in the pharmaceuticals and life sciences sector.

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PACE data

The PACE scheme means that Skills Development Scotland works with local economic development teams to support employees who face redundancy in companies with any number of employees. It is, however, difficult to monitor the economic wellbeing of smaller businesses as there is no system to identify their difficulties. It is possible that companies make redundancies below a level that instigates support so therefore not visible within PACE statistics. The West Lothian Business Gateway support team has identified some smaller companies that have made redundancies and is providing support to staff in these organisations. In addition, a local employability helpline via West Lothian Council's contact centre has been introduced. We are not seeing as many redundancies as other areas; however as noted above, job losses in surrounding areas may impact on job losses in West Lothian. There is now a local PACE contact in place and work is being carried out to review relevant redundancies in surrounding areas to report to the weekly economic recovery group.

Food Support

Between food support starting in mid-May 2020 until the end of December, 124,148 food parcels were delivered in West Lothian. It is worth noting that the 'nature' of the need relating to food has changed. During lockdown (April to June) the need arose from the fact that people could not access food. In recent months, the need has been due to people having less money and unable to afford food. Food support is now measured weekly, with 4,374 parcels weekly delivered in March 2021.

Scottish Welfare Fund

There has been a significant increase in the amount of Scottish Welfare Funding disbursed in West Lothian. Almost £2.3million has been granted between late March 2020 and March 2021, with a significant increase in the crisis grants awarded and, as the 2020-21 financial year has progressed and there has been movement in rented housing stock, a steady rise in community care grants. In the first full week in January, the service received 372 applications for Crisis Grants, the highest amount for a week in the whole Covid period, and £40,155 was awarded. This is a 60% increase on the same week in the previous year. Grant requests appear to be declining but are still very high. Awards through Community Care Grants continue to be high with the average spend being over £1100.

People can apply for grants if they are advised to self-isolate by Test and Protect. But successful applicants are low – around 25% – mostly due to challenges in meeting all the Scottish Government's eligibility criteria, even though these have been expanded. The number of self-isolation grants being received has significantly reduced in-line with the reduction in infection.

Schools: Education Maintenance Allowance, Free School Meals and Clothing Grants

The vast majority of those eligible for Education Maintenance Allowance have now applied. 685 payments have been made. There has been an increase in the total number of children eating free school meals in this academic year. The council is paying children who are in receipt of free school meals and who are asked to self-isolate, £3 per day for the self-isolation period to cover meals. The council will also pay all eligible children £15 per week for school meals during the summer holidays.

The eligibility criteria for clothing grants have been extended to include those receiving council tax reduction so that more children can receive this grant. This may have contributed to the increased

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uptake of over 10% year-on-year for this grant; 7,921 children in West Lothian have benefitted from this award. Families have received many ad hoc payments from West Lothian Council and the Scottish Government and many will be benefitting from the uplift in Universal Credit. There will be a huge impact on families if the uplift is not continued. There is already an increasing number of people coming to the Advice Shop due to (low level) debt that they have no way of paying back.

Summer and Winter Pandemic payments (£100 per eligible child) and £130 for those who are in receipt or exempt from Council Tax will be paid out to just over 16,000 households before the end of October.

Rent and Council Tax Arrears

Housing continues to maintain a high collection rate for rent, with the collection rate at 98%. Income management is being monitored continuously and corrective actions taken as needed. Income so far this year has been higher from customers and the average transaction value has increased. Both of these increases are over and above the previous year even after adjusting for the rent increase applied in April 2020.

Rent arrears increased from March, peaked in November and were lower in December/January, due to the first set of non-collection weeks. Rent arrears are currently within the forecast projections and the trend is stable. A very small percentage of customers are in high-end debt.

The largest real debt driver is the transition of customers from legacy Housing Benefit onto Universal Credit due to the break in benefits during the initial Universal Credit assessment period. Maximum debt on accounts has increased largely due to the removal of eviction actions while court processes are suspended.

Housing has met its end of year current arrears target by a significant margin of £597,950. The end of year target was set at £3,576,480 and we closed at £2,978,530. This performance is due to continuous performance monitoring, responsive arrears processes and the continued work of many officers within the service working with and supporting customers through the challenging times of the pandemic.

Most wards are within target with only one ward, Breich Valley, underperforming at this stage. There are historical debt issues with this area so this underperformance cannot be attributed to the pandemic pressures.

There has been an increase in council tax arrears which is complemented by an increase in the council tax reduction caseload. The council's Revenues team is projecting a loss on council tax receipts due to COVID-19.

Ongoing Work on the Dataset

Work is being carried out to ensure the dataset captures the wide range of societal harms of the pandemic. Any approved additional indicators will be incorporated into the dataset and will be measured and reported to the CPP going forward.