

Cheshire & Warrington

Infrastructure Partnership

Owned by and supporting the voluntary,
community and social enterprise sector

AUG 2021

For Cheshire & Warrington LEP

Cumulative Report July

We are pleased to report the following data for July 2021.

This is the fifth month of this survey and some trends that we thought were emerging are not as strong in emergence as was thought last month.

(Source data available in appendix*).

Number of volunteer opportunities posted by Voluntary & Community Sector Infrastructure Organisations

Whilst volunteer opportunities have increased by more than 25% month on month they show a reduction in July. They are still almost double than that seen in March. They are yet to return to pre-pandemic levels. Trends since March on can be seen in the graph below:



**From June
to July
-13.90%**

We have used the same format of reporting as previously. Despite this, three volunteer operations across the county reported different experiences. These range from having not enough opportunities to not having enough volunteers. The suggestion is that the new equilibrium is still being tested – with some long standing volunteers standing down for a variety of reasons. The relatively high rate of employment may also be a factor.

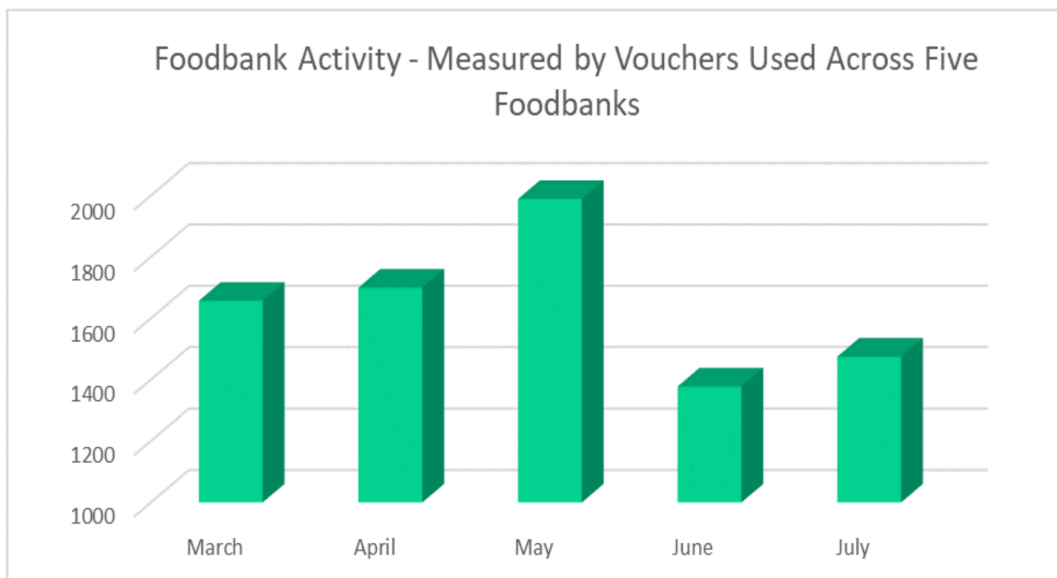
During the first week of August 2021, NFP synergy published a report titled [Ten facts from our new report on the impact of Covid on charities and their work](#) which you can find in full [here](#). The report explores various matters that have affected charities during the pandemic in the UK. Pages 9 and 10 explore volunteering patterns and some suggested reasons for this that may be at play in the data reported in Cheshire & Warrington.



Foodbank activity (number of vouchers)

*May data contained an element of extrapolation. Demand, for June is clearly down, with July showing an increase. We are collecting data from five foodbanks only. There are numerous others operating.

Last month we said, “July and August data will be particularly interesting due to school holidays”. The July figures do include an element of vouchers that were issued, by schools, to families where pupil premium applies.



During July Sheffield University published a paper which explored food insecurity. One of the features that this contains is a map detailing food insecurity across the country. This attracted the attention of a home counties MP (Steve Baker, High Wycombe) and, through an article he produced for Conservative Home, he achieved a reasonable amount of publicity in the national press. The paper can be found here: [New map shows where millions of UK residents struggle to access food | News | The University of Sheffield](#) with the map being located at: [UK local food insecurity of Adults Jan 2021 \(arcgis.com\)](#).

This does show that the picture, in the area covered by the LEP, is not as bad as other areas of the country. There is a degree of hunger, struggle and worry about food and this is at a higher level than many other places. We recommend both the report and the map.

Also, since the last report was submitted, we have become aware of an “app” called Olio. This is a food sharing app and is supported by Tesco who make out of date food available for sharing via the network of users. There are almost 15,700 users across Cheshire and, of these, more than 7,000 have opened the app at least once since 01.01.20. Some of these will be “sharers” and some will be “sharees”. This network is another strand of support beyond the foodbanks which provide us data. In many ways it is a digital development of Mutual Aid Groups which arose at the beginning of the pandemic. The app does not work for those who are digitally excluded. Olio are also building a food insecurity amp with N Lab – part of the University of Nottingham. This will use “live” data extracted from app usage. They will require a fee to access this data. We continue discussions and will report further next month.

Finally, a report, exploring food issues in the North of England has been published by East Riding Voluntary Action Services, Selby District AVS and Cheshire West Voluntary Action. This can be found [here](#).

Citizen Advice Activity

Total percentage changes between consecutive months

From May to
June

From June
to July



Number of clients
receiving debt
advice



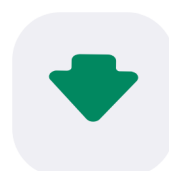
+0.74%



-2.57%



Number of clients
receiving housing
advice



-1.27%



+6.01%



Number of clients
receiving advice in
respect of
eviction/repossession



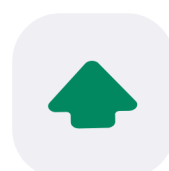
+4.16%



-32.00%



Number of clients
receiving
employment advice



12.34%



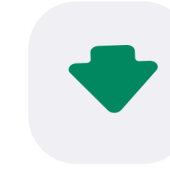
-6.94%



Number of clients
receiving advice on
Universal Credit



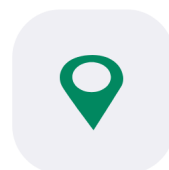
+9.97%



-23.62%

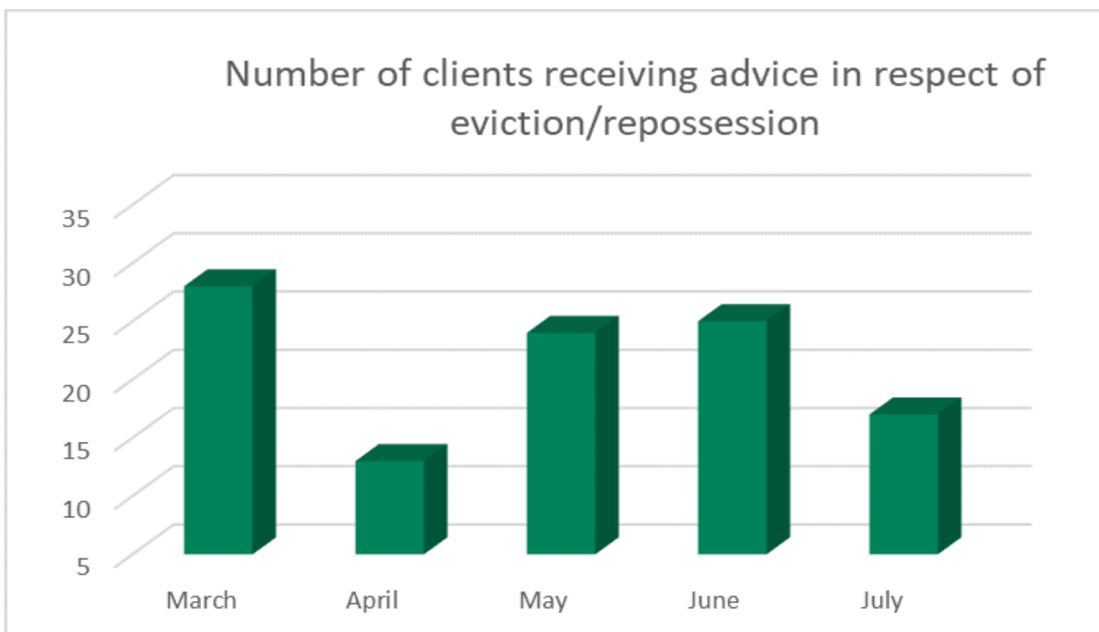
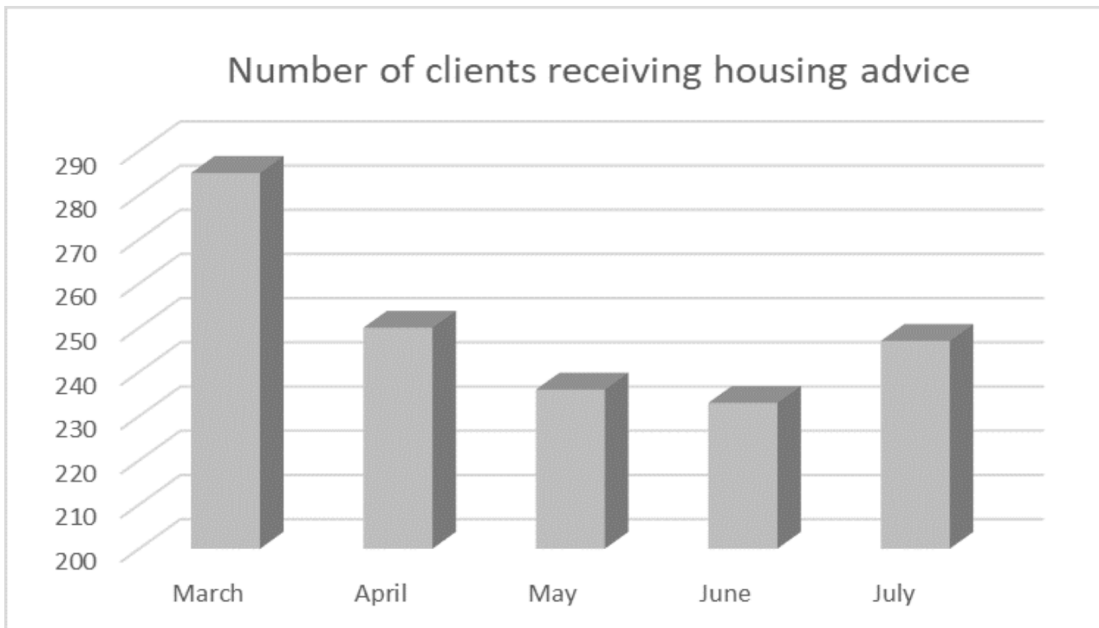
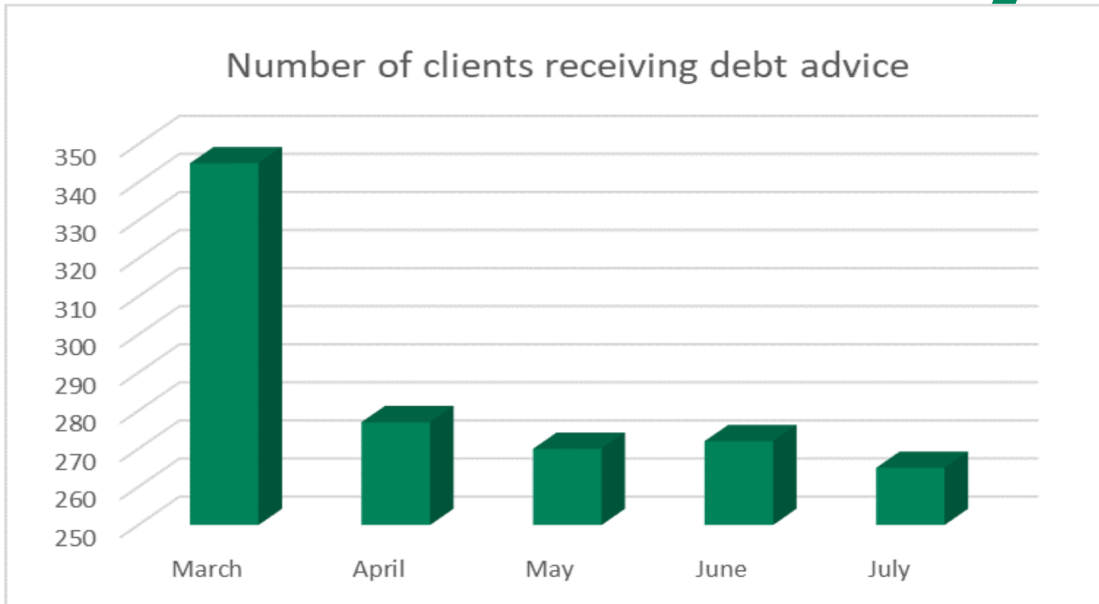


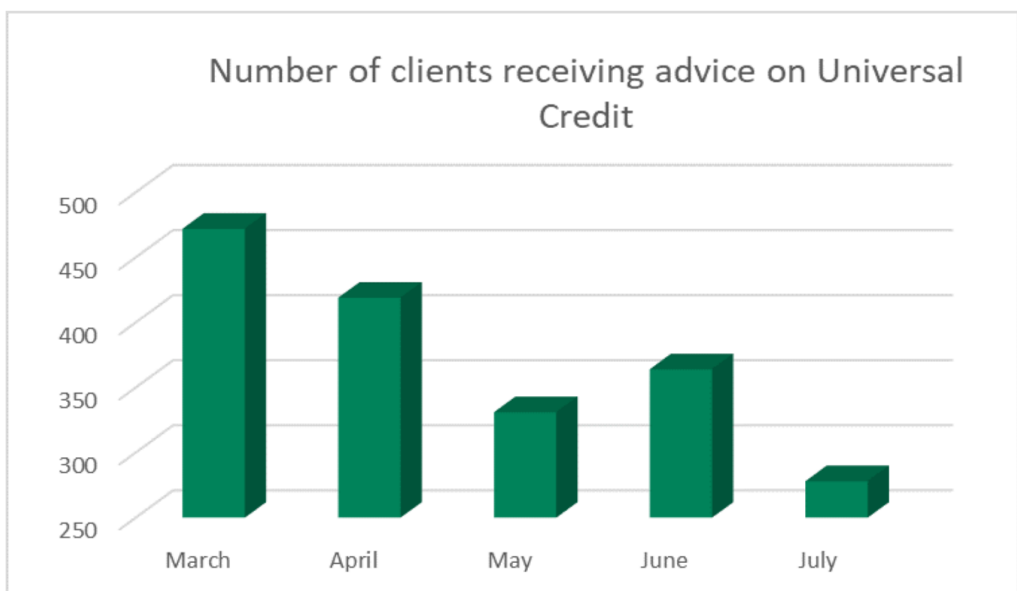
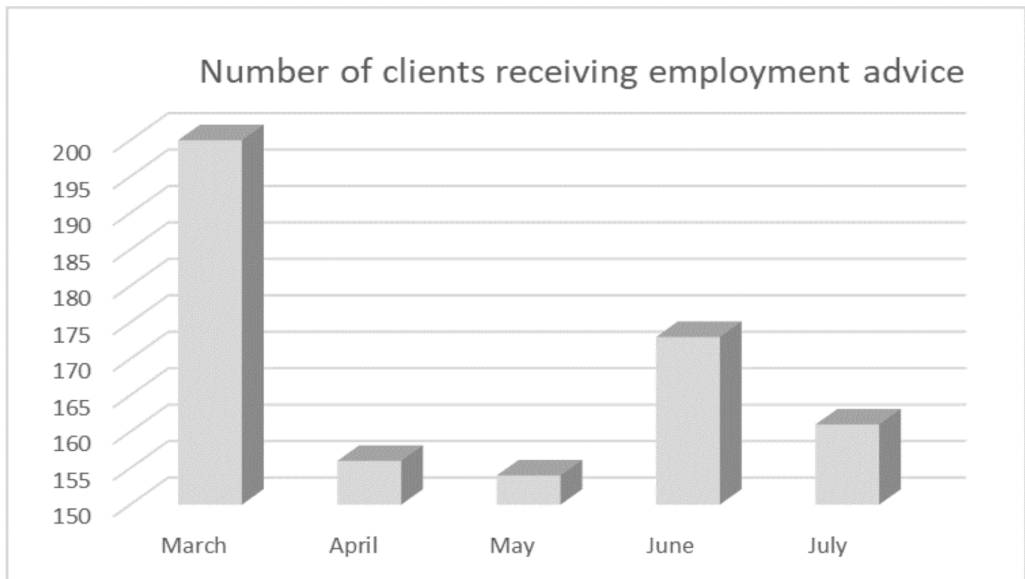
Number of areas
responding



4

Graphs showing Citizen Advice Activity month on month





Citizen Advice Activity

Client numbers for debt and housing advice have begun to settle down at a consistent level. The expected uptick in housing numbers has yet to manifest itself across the county. Employment levels are higher than anticipated which may be a reason for this.

Universal credit is also an in work benefit. The removal of the £20 uplift may not be as critical for those who are working. It is interesting to note that the architect of the scheme, and five of his successors, have argued for the retention of the uplift to enable people to “live with dignity”. (The Telegraph 4th July 2021 – paywalled). The Legatum Institute has calculated that 700,000 people have been kept out of poverty by the uplift: [Government benefit changes protecting 700,000 people from poverty during Covid crisis | Legatum Institute \(li.com\)](#). We will monitor this, both in terms of Universal Credit advice and debt advice. Universal Credit does appear to work reasonably well once the system has been accessed. There is an expectation that information regarding sanctions applied in the first half of 2021 will be released during August 2021. Data for Feb 2020 – Jan 2021 can be accessed here [Benefit sanctions statistics to January 2021 \(experimental\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). We will explore these in more detail when the latest data is published – scheduled at the end of August 2021.

About CWIP



Cheshire & Warrington Infrastructure Partnership (CWIP) is a collective of organisations working across the region to coordinate support for the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector. They do this through sharing best-practice and resources, assisting with the continuing efforts to tackle Covid-19, helping Cheshire & Warrington's communities and charitable organisations recover. The partnership currently consists of the following organisations:

- Cheshire Community Action
- Cheshire West Voluntary Action
- CVS Cheshire East
- Halton & St Helens Voluntary and Community Action
- Warrington Voluntary Action

Secretariat and administration support for the Partnership is provided by Voluntary Sector North West, the regional voluntary sector network for the North West of England.



A Note of Thanks

Cheshire & Warrington Infrastructure Partnership would like to thank the organisations that contributed data, making this report possible:

Mid Cheshire Food Bank	Cheshire East CA (Crewe/Congleton)	Community and Voluntary Services Cheshire East
Salvation Army Food Bank – Crewe	Cheshire North CA (Macclesfield)	Cheshire West Voluntary Action
Skillife – Macclesfield	Cheshire West CA	Warrington CVS
Warrington Food Bank	Warrington Voluntary Action	
West Cheshire Food Bank		

Report produced by Voluntary Sector North West on behalf of CWIP. For queries please email andrew.rainsford@vsnw.org.uk and warren.escadale@vsnw.org.uk

WWW.VSNW.ORG.UK

*Appendix

(NB source data from the following areas: Warrington, Cheshire West & Cheshire East)

Number of volunteer opportunities posted by CVS.

Total March 134
Total April 170
Total May 235
Total June 295
Total July 254

Number of clients receiving debt advice

Total March 345
Total April 277
Total May 270
Total June 272
Total July 265

Number of clients receiving housing advice

Total March 285
Total April 250
Total May 236
Total June 233
Total July 247

Number of clients receiving advice on Universal Credit

Total March 472
Total April 419
Total May 331
Total June 364
Total July 278

Foodbank activity

Total March 1510
Total April 1560
Total May 1989*
Total June 1378
Total July 1475

Number of clients receiving advice in respect of eviction/repossession

Total March 28
Total April 13
Total May 24
Total June 25
Total July 17

Number of clients receiving employment advice

Total March 205
Total April 156
Total May 154
Total June 173
Total July 161

Number of CA areas responding

Total March 4
Total April 4
Total May 4
Total June 4
Total July 4

* Data for May never completed therefore number could be higher