

Who Are You?

Annual snapshot report of clients attending
Citizens Advice Bureaux in Scotland

May 2017



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2016 Annual Snapshot of Citizens Advice Bureaux clients

Citizens Advice Bureaux deliver frontline advice services through almost 300 service points across Scotland, ranging from city centres to small island communities. All the advice they provide is free, independent, confidential, impartial and available to all.

In 2015/16, the Citizens Advice service in Scotland helped over 310,000 people deal with over 910,000 advice issues.

Each year Citizens Advice Scotland, the umbrella body for bureaux in Scotland, runs a client profile exercise to gather information about the range and type of clients who approach bureaux for advice. It is important for the whole Citizens Advice service in Scotland to understand who uses bureaux services so we can do our best to reach as much of Scotland's diverse population as possible.

In this fifth edition of the 'Who Are You?' series we take a look at those who came to Citizens Advice Bureaux service points during November 2016.

During the 2016 client profile exercise information was collected on over 22,000 individual clients, an increase of 10% in reporting from the data collection in 2015¹. The client profile captured a little over 78% of all clients seen during the collection period, this being a 6% increase of the proportion of clients profiled during the 2015 exercise.

As with all surveys of this type not all clients wished to answer all questions; it is also not always appropriate to ask for such information. Because of this, it is not possible to report on every category but our analysis shows that comparison with the client profile data from the previous two years is consistent and the data collected is robust enough to compare

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation ('SIMD') is the Scottish Government's official tool for identifying those places in Scotland experiencing deprivation².

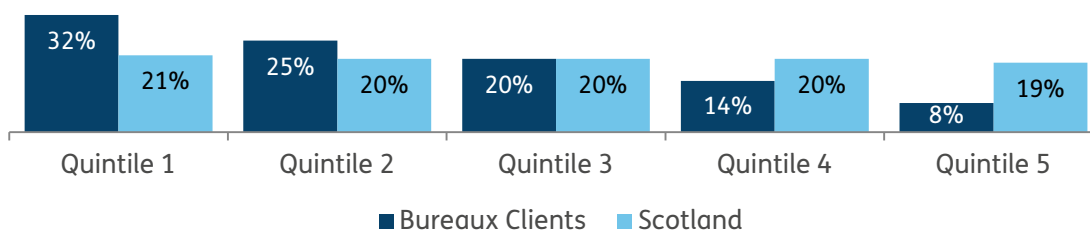
Although the terms 'poverty' and 'deprivation' are sometimes used interchangeably, in this context deprivation is defined more widely as the range of problems that arise due to lack of resources or opportunities covering health; safety; education; employment; housing; access to services; and financial aspects.

The SIMD divides Scotland into a number of small areas, or 'datazones', which can be ranked from the most to least deprived in relation to these multiple factors.

In considering SIMD it is useful to form the datazones into larger categories, with one of the most commonly used being the 'quintile'; this splits Scotland into five equal groups with Quintile 1 ('Q1') containing the 20% most deprived datazones through to Q5 with the 20% least deprived datazones.

As can be seen below, bureaux clients from November 2016 ranged from being over represented in the lower quintiles to being under represented in the top quintile.

Bureaux clients reporting their ethnicity as 'white/Scottish' appeared least likely to live in areas included in Quintile 5, while the likelihood of living in a deprived area appeared to decrease as age increased.



¹ This takes in to account the fact that CAD were not included in the 2015 client profile (due to a change in the case management system that year), but are included in the 2016 client profile.

² Further information can be found on the Scottish Government website at: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SIMD>

³ A little under 5,000 clients chose not to respond to this question so the actual percentages may be higher.



Male and Female Mix

A little over half of bureaux clients during November 2016 (54%) were female, which is comparable to the mid-2015 population estimate (52%). While few differences between the sexes were evident, a higher proportion of females (18%) than males (6%) reported being in part-time employment; this is broadly comparable to the data from the 2011 Census.

Male clients were almost twice as likely to be homeless or living in temporary accommodation (4%) than female clients (2%).



Disability

Due to category differences and varying definitions it is not possible to compare bureaux data on disability to the information gathered by the census. It is therefore unclear if the 54% of bureaux clients describing themselves as having some form of disability is representative of the population as a whole, although this proportion across the whole of Scotland would seem unlikely.



Employment Status

The largest proportion of bureaux clients during November 2016 were in full- or part-time employment (33%), although this is considerably lower than the 2011 Census figure (53%). A higher proportion of bureaux clients were unemployed (16%) than was recorded in the census (5%). The figures for retirees and those looking after home or family were the same in both cases (15% and 4% respectively).



Housing Tenure

The proportion of bureaux clients during November 2016 who lived in council-rented properties (28%) was more than twice the figure reported in the 2011 Census (13%); a higher proportion were also in privately-let accommodation (16%) than for all Scotland (11%). In contrast, the proportion of bureaux clients in owner-occupied properties (29%) was less than half of the 62% reported in the census.



Relationship Status

Over one-third of bureaux clients in November 2016 (38%) were married or cohabiting, this being considerably lower than the figure reported in the 2011 Census (56%). The proportion of bureaux clients who had never been married (32%) was higher than the comparable census figure (28%), while that for clients separated or divorced from their partners (19%) was almost twice that for Scotland as a whole (10%).



Caring Responsibility

At least 36% of bureaux clients³ reported having some form of caring responsibility, the majority of which (28% of the entire sample overall) were caring for children. Although the categories are not mutually exclusive, at least 7% of bureaux clients also reported caring for someone with a disability.

18-60+

Client Age

One-third of bureaux clients during November 2016 were aged between 44 and 59 years (33%), a higher proportion than the 26% of the population in this age range reported in the mid-2015 population estimates for Scotland. Those aged between 25 and 44 years accounted for 35% of CAB clients during the same period which is, again, higher than the proportion of this age group in Scotland overall (31%).



Family Composition

Almost one-third of clients visiting CAB during November 2016 were part of families with one or more children (30%), including single-parent families, a larger proportion than reported in the 2011 Census (19%). Single people of non-pensionable age were also over-represented (31%) in comparison to the Census figures (22%).



Ethnicity

The majority of bureaux clients during November 2016 described themselves as white Scottish (80%); this is consistent with the figure recorded in the 2011 Census (84%). It is also of interest to note that the proportions of those describing themselves as 'white/other (non-UK)'; Pakistani; or of other/mixed race backgrounds were consistent with census data.

In the 2015 client profile it was noted that the only ethnic group that appeared to be under-represented amongst bureaux clients were those describing themselves as 'white/other UK' (i.e. not Scottish); this is no longer the case, with 9% of bureaux clients describing themselves as such in comparison to 8% in the census.



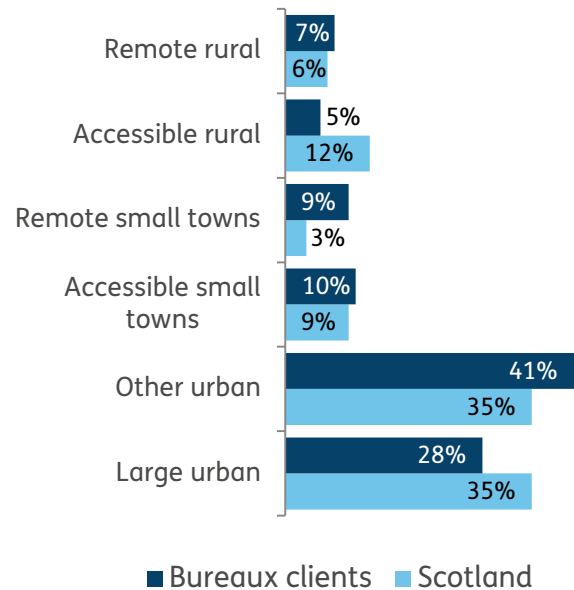
Urban Rural Classification

The Scottish Government employs standard definitions in order to define the rurality of an area and some comparisons have been drawn between this information for Scotland as a whole and that relating to bureaux clients during November 2016.

The client profile data quite closely matches that of all Scotland, with the majority of bureaux clients (69%) residing in urban areas as does the majority of the Scottish population (70%). For bureaux clients, it would seem that the likelihood of living in a rural area increases with age with, for example, 23% of the bureaux clients living in remote rural areas being aged 65 or over.

Those bureaux clients who reported their ethnicity as 'white/other UK' were much more likely to be living in a remote rural area (17%) than anywhere else, with this being much higher than for any other ethnic group.

Further information about how the Government define urban and rural areas can be found on the Scottish Government website at: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/About/Methodology/UrbanRuralClassification>



Summary

This 2016 snapshot clearly shows that bureaux continue to serve a considerable proportion of Scotland's diverse population.

The quality of data returned this year showed an improvement on previous years, with a lower number of clients either not responding to questions or selecting 'prefer not to answer', which increases the efficacy of findings.

While there are some small variations in numbers between 2016 and earlier client profile data, it is reassuring to note that proportions remain broadly consistent and also comparable with the census in general.

www.cas.org.uk

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