



# Impact of COVID-19 on the advice sought from the Scottish Citizens Advice network – April 2021

This is the monthly summary of data from the Citizens Advice network in Scotland since the COVID-19 outbreak and covers April 2021. It shows data from the 59 Citizens Advice Bureaux in Scotland and our online advice site.

## Key points

- > In April Citizens Advice Bureaux issued **81,861** pieces of advice.
- > In April pages on the website were viewed a total of **334,381** times.
- > There were **204,471** website users in April 2021, **82%** of these being new users.

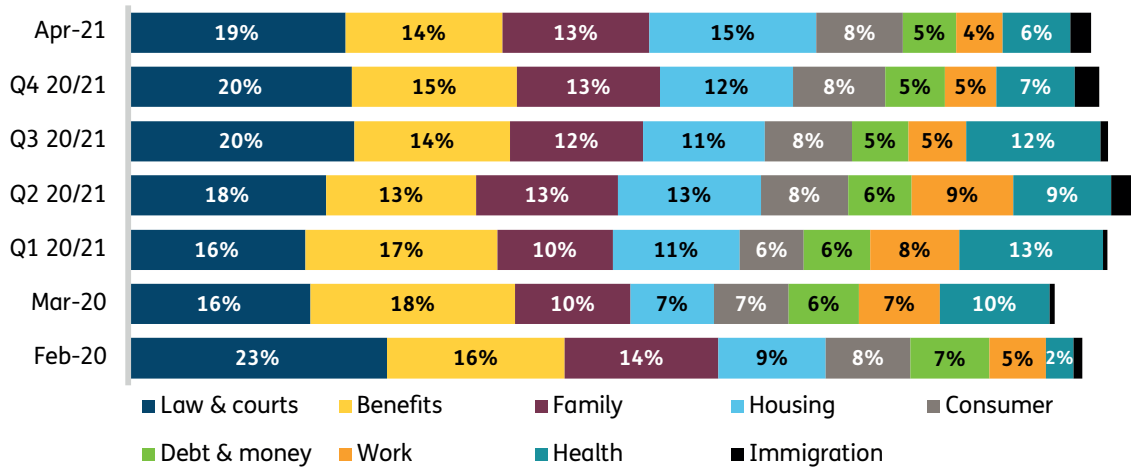
## Web pages: April 2021

Number of unique page views (UPV) in April: **334,381**

Number of website users in April: **204,471**. **82%** of these being new users.

Trend data for visits to the Advice for Scotland website, as a proportion of all unique page views on the site, show the greatest variation in relation to housing and health.

Advice sought from the 'Advice for Scotland' website, as a proportion of all advice



April 2021 saw an increase in visits to the 'housing' and 'consumer' advice pages, with advice on reporting scams showing the largest rise of **34%**.

### Increase in unique page views: consumer issues, March to April 2021



**34%**

Reporting Scams



**20%**

Identifying Common Scams

### Increase in unique page views: neighbourhood issues, March to April 2020



**14%**

Boundary / Garden Disputes



**4%**

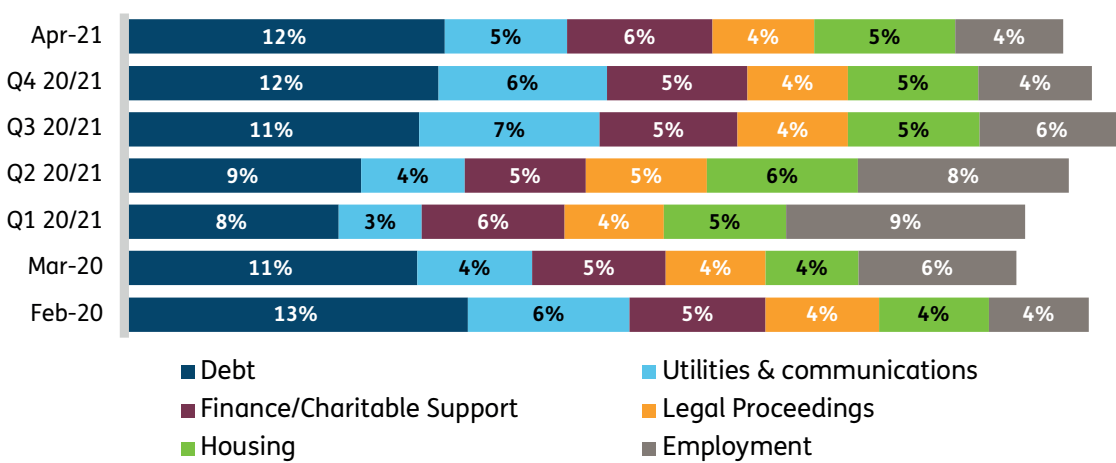
Noise / Abusive Behaviour

## Citizens Advice Bureaux

- > **19,464** clients
- > **81,861** pieces of advice

Trend data shows that the need for benefits advice peaked in March 2020 at **51%** of all advice provided but otherwise remained broadly constant at around **47%** of all advice provided. Variation in the other top advice areas was greater, particularly in regard to debt and employment.

Top advice areas, as a proportion of all advice (excluding benefits)



Of the top 5 advice needs seen at Citizens Advice Bureaux during April 2021, increases were evident in relation to both finance/charitable support (up **6%**) and housing (up **5%**). The increase in housing page views appears to have been driven by a rise in need for advice around neighbourhood issues (up **14%**) and local authority housing (up **12%**).

As face-to-face advice in bureaux slowly increases, advice sought in relation to housing (**59%**) and benefits (up **15%**) was higher for this contact method during April 2021 than it was in March. Similarly, contacts made through Scotland's Citizens Advice Helpline (SCAH) saw an increase in housing advice (up **31%**) being sought from March.



Advice most commonly sought via **SCAH**:



Consumer



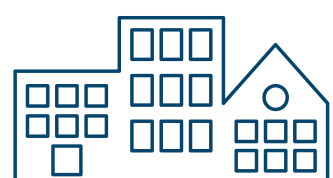
Relationships



Employment



**Housing related issues made up more than half of all face-to-face advice in April**



Advice most commonly sought **face to face**:



Benefits



Debt & Finances



Travel/Transport

## Month in focus: Here comes the sun



Better weather during April and increasing freedom of movement is likely to have resulted in more people spending time outdoors. This may have contributed to the rise in advice need around neighbourhood issues, both online and in bureaux, as well as for building/home improvements. Both the sunshine and continuing uncertainty around travel outside of the UK may also have driven some of the increase seen in advice sought online regarding holiday cancellation and compensation.