

This is the latest monthly summary of data from the Citizens Advice network in Scotland since the COVID-19 outbreak and covers May 2022. It shows data from the 59 Citizens Advice Bureaux in Scotland and our online advice site.

Month in focus:

Client numbers across the CAB network continued to grow compared to the same point last year given the end of social distancing regulations, with client numbers up **14%** compared to May 2021.

Comparing May 2021 to May 2022 shows a growth of **47%** for online advice and information relating to work, which can likely be attributed to the end of furlough in autumn 2021 and people having to engage with their employers more significantly.

In advice areas not related to the cost of living, April to May saw a **39%** increase in demand for online advice around delayed or cancelled flights. There was also a **25%** increase in page views from April to May around how to report animal cruelty, which is part of long term trend of increasing views on this topic.

Across the CAB network the impact of the cost of living crisis was clear, with advice in relation to Utilities and Communications, predominately energy, up by **61%** from May 2021, and Finance and Charitable Support up by **21%**.

The data suggests that while in some aspects the legacy of the pandemic is fading in terms of people coming to CABs, people have gone almost straight from the disruption and challenges of the pandemic into a cost of living crisis which is putting huge challenges on people's living standards.

Key points

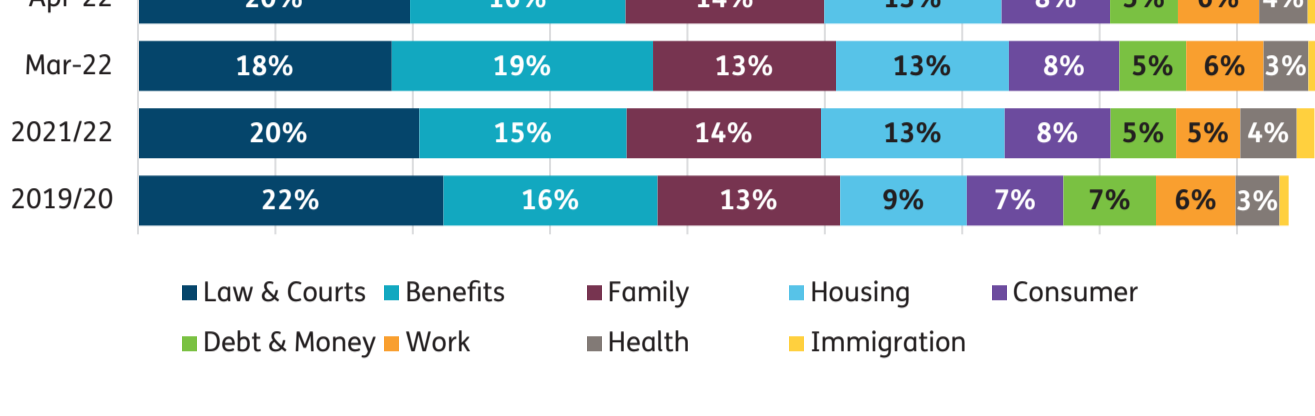
- > In May 2022 the Citizens Advice network in Scotland gave **88,815** pieces of advice to **22,102** clients.
- > On the advice for Scotland website **222,513** users accessed the site for **366,102** unique page views

Webpages

- > **366,102 unique page views**
- > **222,513 users, 76% new**

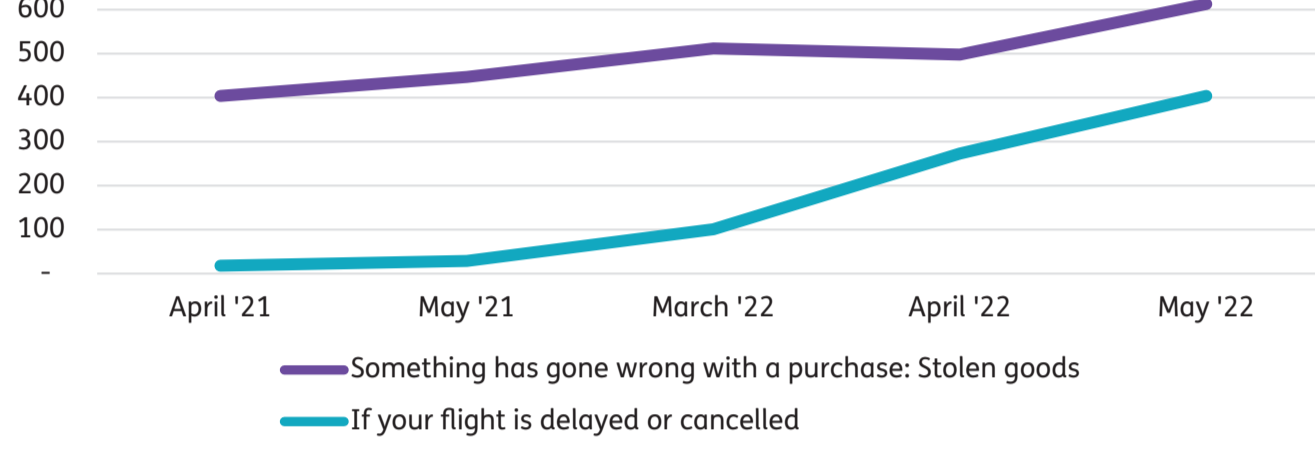
Although unique page views increased by **6%** from April to May 2022, there was little change in the types of advice being sought other than small decreases in benefits and consumer advice (down by **5%** and **7%** respectively). In comparing the figures for May 2022 to those for May 2021 the mark of the pandemic can still be seen in the **25%** decrease in health-related advice, while the drive for settled status is visible in the **45%** decrease in immigration advice. In contrast, between May 2021 and May 2022 work-related advice increased by **47%**.

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



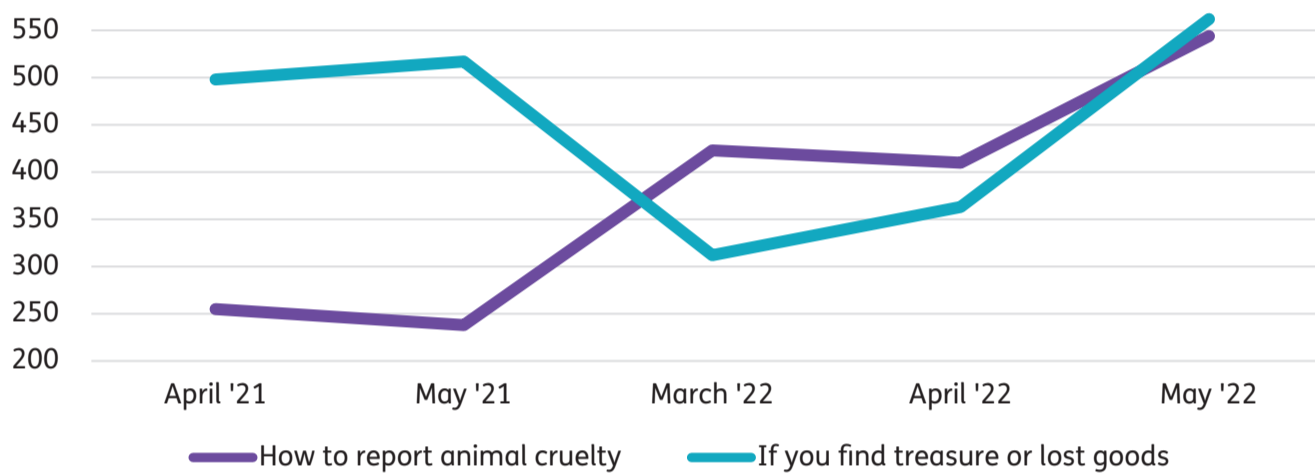
Given the recent disruption seen at UK airports it is not unexpected to see that advice in relation to delayed or cancelled flights has increased, having gone up by **39%** between April and May 2022. There would also appear to be increased concern around purchasing goods which turn out to legally belong to another party, with this type of advice having increased by **16%** from April to May 2022.

Consumer issues



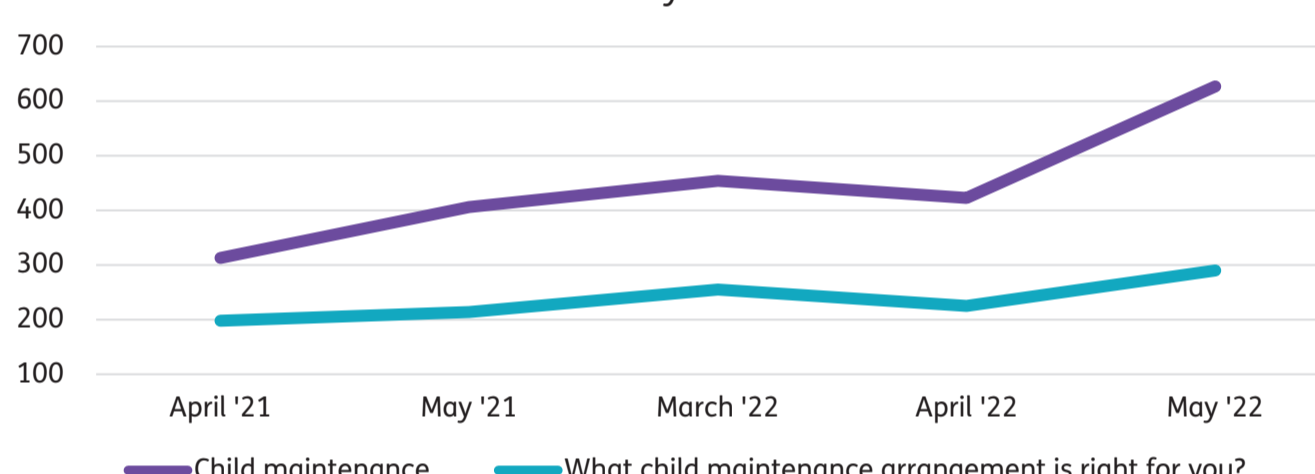
Advice in relation to what action need to be taken if you find treasure, or lost goods, has been increasing recently, with a rise of **46%** between April and May 2022 taking the unique page views of this page to **27%** higher than they were during 2019/20 as a whole. Sadly, a long-term increase in advice relating to how to report animal cruelty can also be seen, having increased between April and May 2022 alone by **25%**.

Law and courts



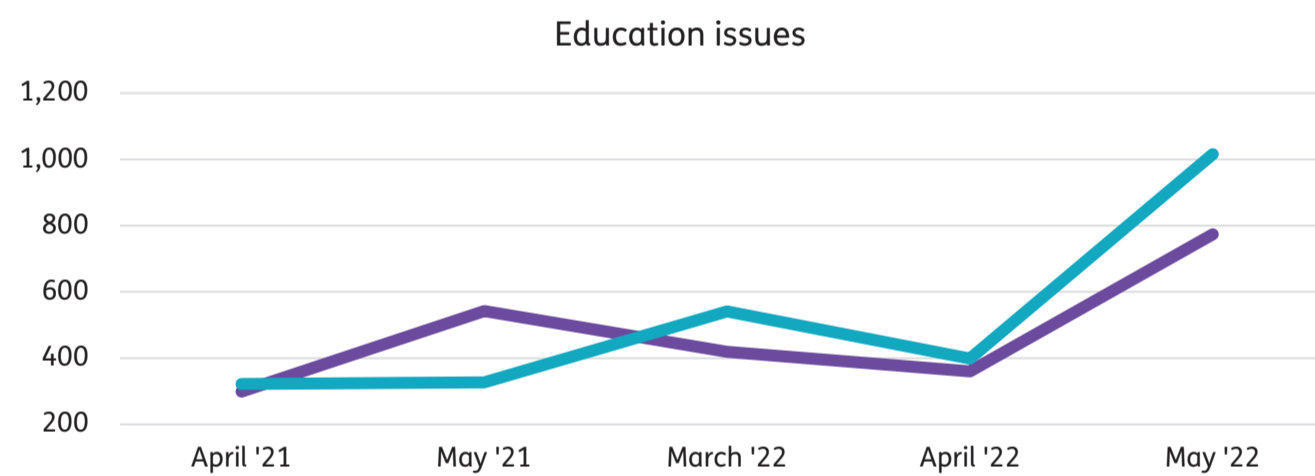
Increases in page views relating to child maintenance are also evident between April and May 2022, with a rise of **40%** seen in the relevant landing page and **21%** in relation to finding the right child maintenance arrangement. Figures for May 2022 are similarly higher than for those recorded in May 2021 (up by **47%** and **25%** respectively).

Family issues



Seeking advice in relation to help with certain education costs also demonstrated an increase between April and May 2022, with pages relating to the Best Start Grant: school age payment and getting help with school costs having risen by **103%** and **140%** respectively. Although an increase between April and May 2021 can also be seen, the magnitude of the increase in 2022 is higher (**20%** and **17%** respectively).

Education issues

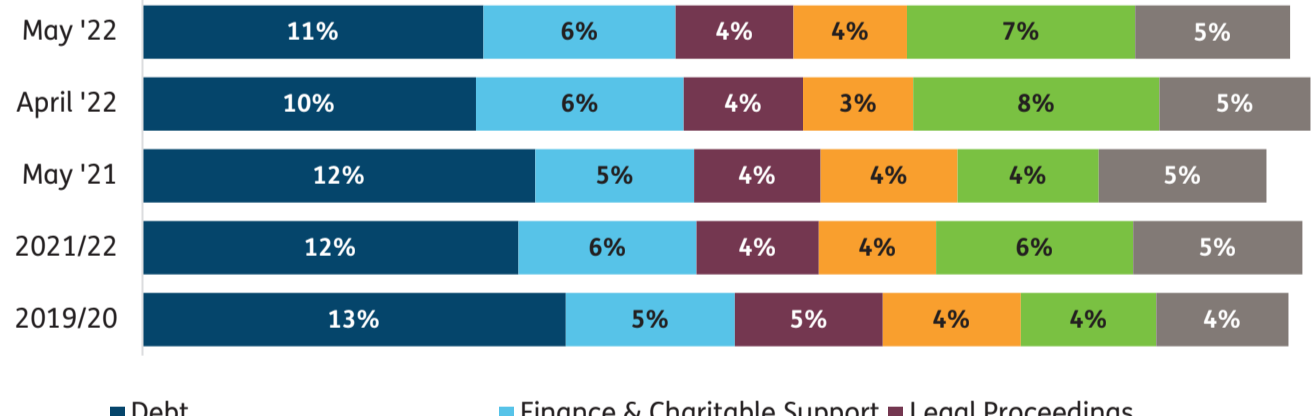


Citizens Advice Bureaux

- > **88,815 pieces of advice**
- > **22,102 clients (up 14% from May 2021)**

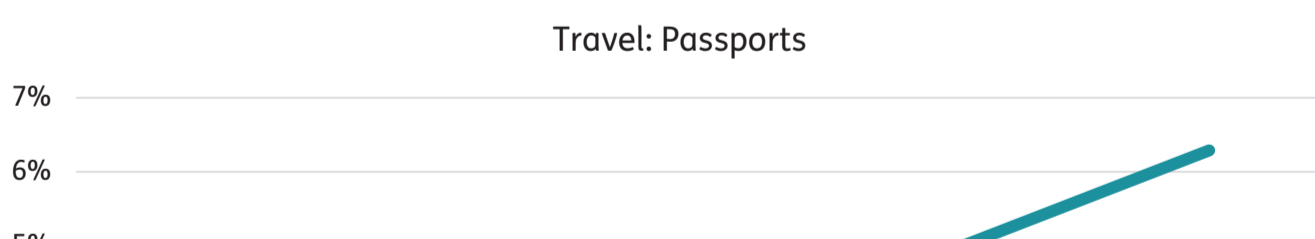
Benefits remained the top advice area in April 2022 at **50%** of all advice. Small increases were seen in relation to Debt and Employment advice. However, advice in relation to Utilities and Communications was up by **61%** from May 2021, and Finance and Charitable Support up by **21%**. Outside of the top areas, Education advice increased by **33%** from April to May 2022, as was up by **13%** from May 2021. Advice relating to Travel, Transport, and Holidays also saw a small increase of **6%** from April to May 2022.

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



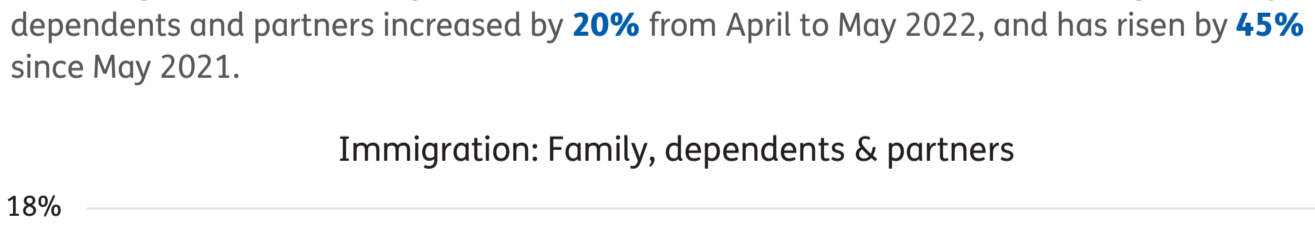
There has been much publicity recently around difficulties in obtaining and updating passports. As with the online advice data relating to flight delays and cancellation, it is not surprising to report that advice in relation to passports has increased by **27%** from April to May 2022, and has risen by **65%** since May 2021.

Travel: Passports



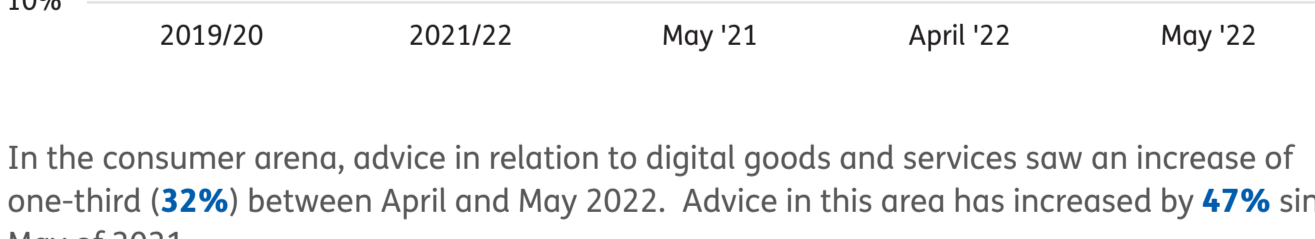
Although little movement has been seen in relation to Immigration in recent months, certain sub-categories within Immigration continue to show increases. Advice relating to family, dependents and partners increased by **20%** from April to May 2022, and has risen by **45%** since May 2021.

Immigration: Family, dependents & partners



In the consumer arena, advice in relation to digital goods and services saw an increase of one-third (**32%**) between April and May 2022. Advice in this area has increased by **47%** since May of 2021.

Consumer: Digital goods & services



Although the pattern here is marginally less clear, given the increase in page views around child maintenance reported above, it is of interest to note that while advice provided in CAB on child maintenance in relation to non-resident parents/family has shown a decrease **19%** from April to May 2022 (down by **8%** from May 2021), the same advice for resident parents/family has increased by **11%** from April to May 2022 (up **46%** from May 2021).

Relationships: Child Maintenance

