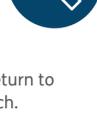


This is the latest monthly summary of data from the Citizens Advice network in Scotland and covers April 2023. It shows data from the 59 Citizens Advice Bureaux in Scotland and our online advice site.



Month in focus:

April 2023 saw a small increase in CAB client numbers compared to April 2022, and a return to expected client numbers and advice demand following record breaking demand in March. The month also saw uprating to social security payments based on October 2022's inflation rate come into effect, and cost of living payments of around £300 to low-income households towards the end of the month.

There were several notable increases in demand for advice from April 2022 to April 2023. This includes Utilities advice which increased by **13%**, Finance and Charitable Support advice, up **16%**, and housing advice, up by **11%**. There was also an **11%** increase in foodbank advice.

Several housing-related advice areas have increased from April 2022 to April 2023. Advice on local authority rent arrears increased by **56%** and social housing rent arrears by **46%**, suggesting an increase in need for advice around certain types of debt. Advice on access to/provision of accommodation increased by **20%**.

The need for advice in relation to Summary Cause proceedings in the Sheriff Court increased by **272%** between April 2022 and April 2023. Similarly, advice in relation to Ordinary Cause proceedings increased by **96%**.

Across our webpages, there were 206,230 users, **77%** of which were new. From April 2022 to April 2023 there was an **18%** increase in views of debt and money advice pages, and a **15%** increase in benefits page views.

Key points

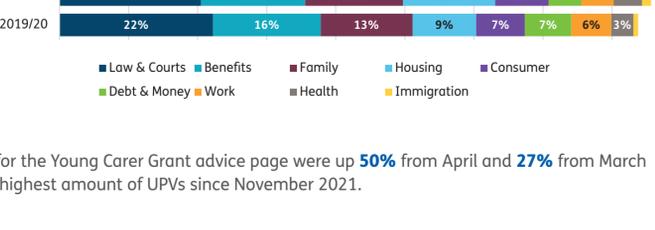
- > In April 2023 the CAB network gave **79,734** pieces of advice to **20,873** clients
- > Meanwhile, there were over **333,558** views of the Advice for Scotland website from **206,230** users

Online advice pages

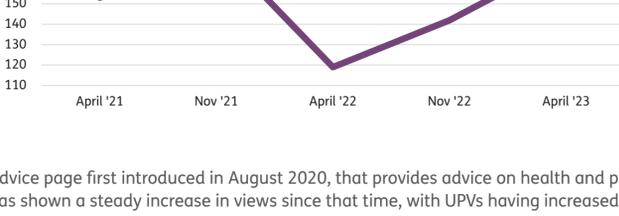
- > **333,558 unique page views (UPVs)**
- > **206,230 users, 77% new**

Some small changes were seen from March to April 2023, including a **7%** increase in views of the housing advice pages and a **5%** increase in health page views. Differences in page views from April 2022 to April 2023 were more evident, including an **18%** increase in views of debt and money advice pages, and a **15%** increase in benefits page views. In addition, a **44%** decrease in views of employment advice pages was seen, with this change no doubt being connected to the previous increase in need for employment-related advice during the COVID-19 pandemic. A decrease in page views relating to consumer advice (down **38%**) as also seen from April 2022 to April 2023.

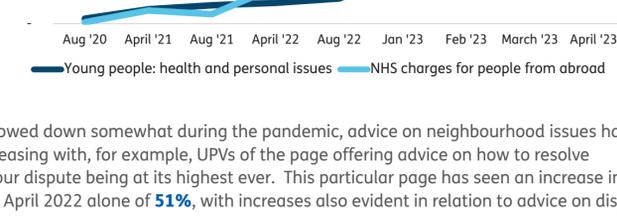
Advice sought on the 'Advice for Scotland' website, as a proportion of all advice



UPVs for the Young Carer Grant advice page were up **50%** from April and **27%** from March – the highest amount of UPVs since November 2021.



A new advice page first introduced in August 2020, that provides advice on health and person issues has shown a steady increase in views since that time, with UPVs having increased by **121%** between April 2022 and April 2023, as well as increasing by **13%** from March to April 2023. Also in health, the views of advice pages relating to NHS charges for people from abroad were at their highest ever level in April 2023, having increased by **32%** from March 2023 and by **247%** from April 2022.



Having slowed down somewhat during the pandemic, advice on neighbourhood issues has been increasing with, for example, UPVs of the page offering advice on how to resolve a neighbour dispute being at its highest ever. This particular page has seen an increase in UPV from April 2022 alone of **51%**, with increases also evident in relation to advice on disputes about damages/repairs (up **32%**) and noise/abusive behaviour (up **24%**).



The need for advice in relation to what other concessions may be available when a person has a disability 'Blue Badge' rose considerably during 2022/23, with its highest ever UPVs being seen in March 2023, and its third highest in April 2023 (up **43%** from April 2022). As can be seen below, this is reflected in bureaux data also.



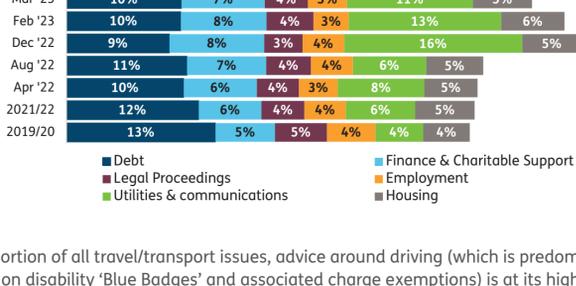
CAB network statistics

- > **79,734 pieces of advice**
- > **20,873 clients**

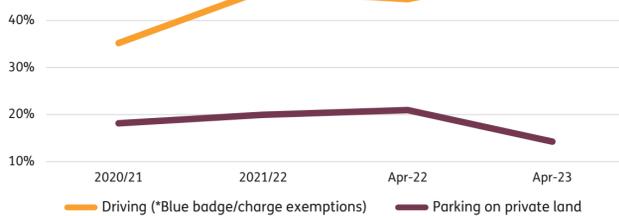
April is one of the quieter months at CAB, with figures for April 2023 similar to those seen in April 2022.

| | April 2022 | April 2023 | Change from 22 -23 |
|-------------------|------------|------------|--------------------|
| Number of clients | 20,360 | 20,873 | Up 2.5% |
| Pieces of advice | 79,784 | 79,734 | Down 0.1% |

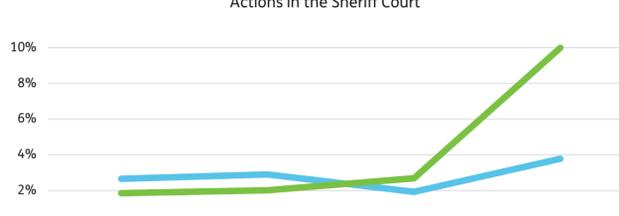
As is usual, Benefits was the top advice area accounting for **47%** of all advice. The only notable change from March to April 2023 in the other top advice areas was in relation to Utilities advice, which decreased by **23%** during that period. However, Utilities advice was also up by **13%** from April 2022, in that same time frame. Housing advice also increased by **11%** from April 2022 to April 2023.



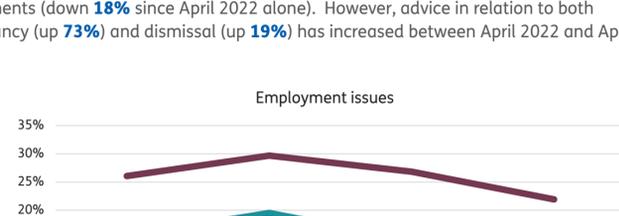
As a proportion of all travel/transport issues, advice around driving (which is predominantly focussed on disability 'Blue Badges' and associated charge exemptions) is at its highest ever level having increased by **14%** since April 2022. In contrast, advice in relation to parking on private land has decreased by **32%** across the same period.



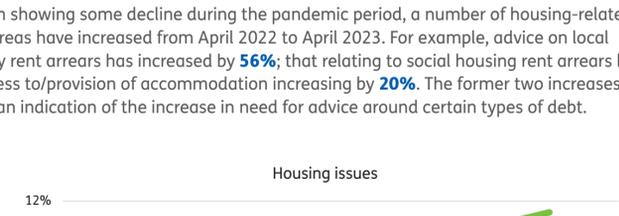
The need for advice in relation to Summary Cause proceedings in the Sheriff Court has increased significantly between April 2022 and April 2023, having almost tripled during that period (up **272%**). Similarly, albeit with a less dramatic rise (up **96%**), advice in relation to Ordinary Cause proceedings almost doubled during that time.



There has been a general decrease in employment related advice, as compared to levels seen during the pandemic, with this being especially evident in relation to advice on pay and entitlements (down **18%** since April 2022 alone). However, advice in relation to both redundancy (up **73%**) and dismissal (up **19%**) has increased between April 2022 and April 2023.



Although showing some decline during the pandemic period, a number of housing-related advice areas have increased from April 2022 to April 2023. For example, advice on local authority rent arrears has increased by **56%**, that relating to social housing rent arrears by **46%**; and access to/provision of accommodation increasing by **20%**. The former two increases also provide an indication of the increase in need for advice around certain types of debt.



Finally, having been steadily increasing since 2021/22, advice in relation to foodbanks rose by **11%** from April 2022 to April 2023.

