

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

Month in focus:



In May 2023 CABs helped **22,840** people nearly **90,000** times, while online advice pages received more than **350,000** views from over **214,000** people.

Housing made up a significant portion of online advice, accounting for **15%** of all page views. This advice area has grown considerably since before the pandemic with an increase of **63%** since 2019/20.

The number of Unique Page Views of our online mortgage calculator is at its highest level ever and has increased more than 20-fold since May 2022.

Meanwhile, pages providing guidance for people facing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness, have been viewed more than ever before, with a **30%** increase compared with the May 2022 figures.

Finally, in May 2023 online advice for those who are facing eviction because their home is being repossessed saw its third-highest level of unique page views since the page was created in May 2021. Views have increased by **341%** since May 2022.

Key points

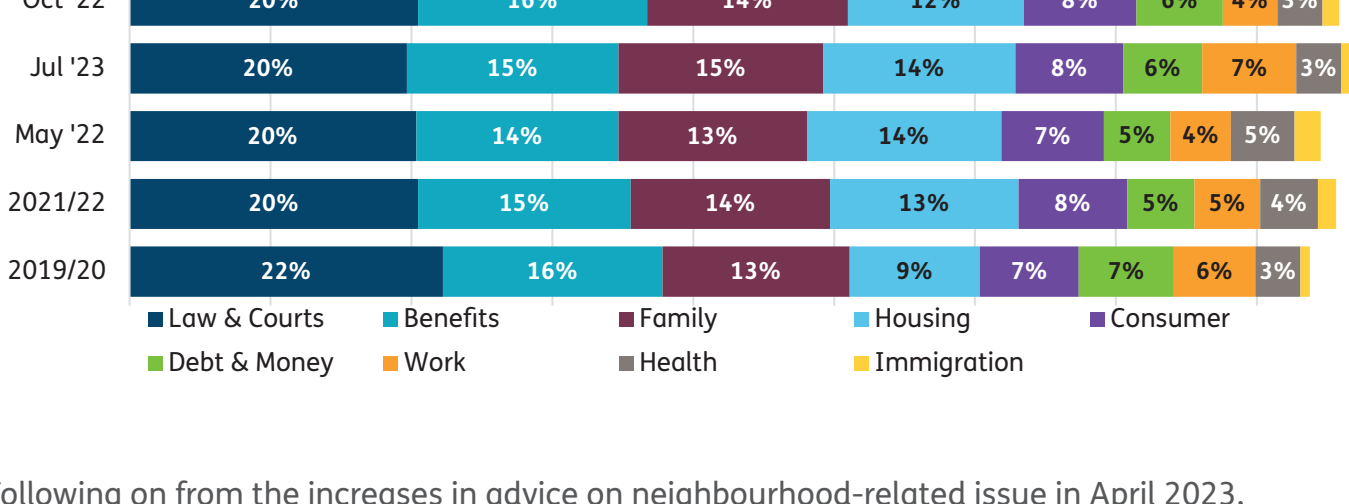
- > In May 2023 the CAB network gave **88,975** pieces of advice to **22,840** clients
- > Meanwhile there were over **354,402** views of the Advice for Scotland website from **214,674** users

Online advice pages

- > **354,402 unique page views**
- > **214,674 users, 77% new**

Unique page views of benefits advice pages remained the same as April 2023, though they had increased by more than one fifth (up **22%**) since May 2022. Benefits advice page views are also currently **13%** higher than they were prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. Although there was little change in unique page views from April to May 2023 for other advice types, views of pages providing housing advice rose by **8%** and immigration by **9%**. With regard to housing, currently accounting for **15%** of all page views this advice area has grown considerably since before the pandemic with an increase of **63%** since 2019/20. An increase in immigration related page views is also evident, with a rise of **47%** since 2019/20.

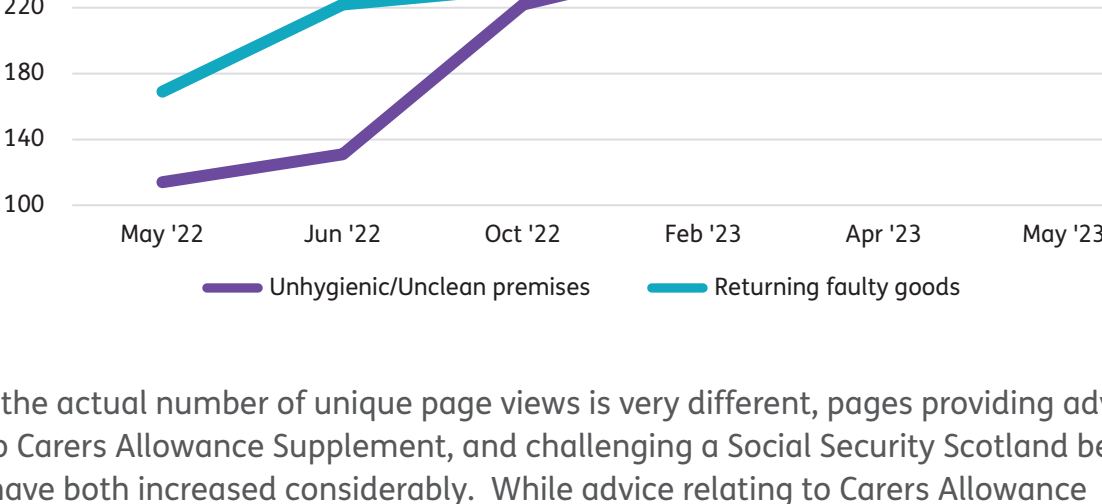
Advice sought on the 'Advice for Scotland' website, as a proportion of all advice



Following on from the increases in advice on neighbourhood-related issue in April 2023, unique page views relating to advice on a neighbours' trees/bushes blocking the light coming into a property rose by **95%** from April to May 2023, and increased by **38%** from May 2022. The May UPV figure is at its highest level since July 2021.

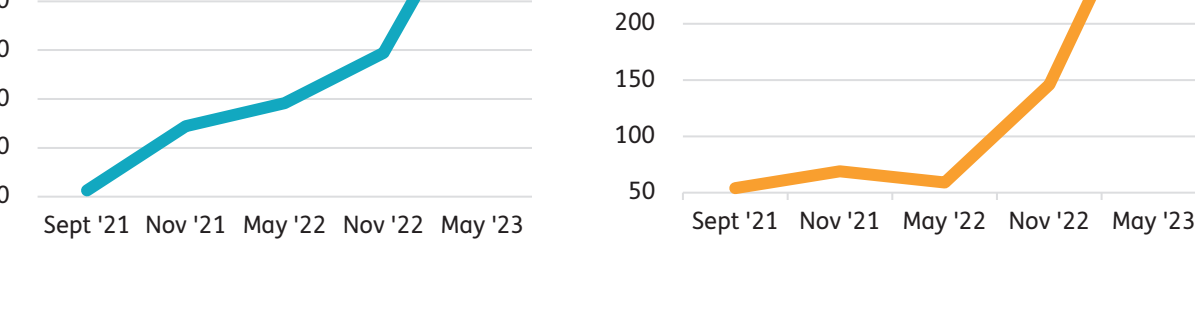


Although the number of unique page views is relatively low, advice relating to some consumer issues is also at higher levels than before the pandemic. For example, page views relating to returning faulty goods increased by **40%** from May 2022 and are at their highest ever level, while concern regarding unhygienic/unclean premises increased by **138%** over the same period.



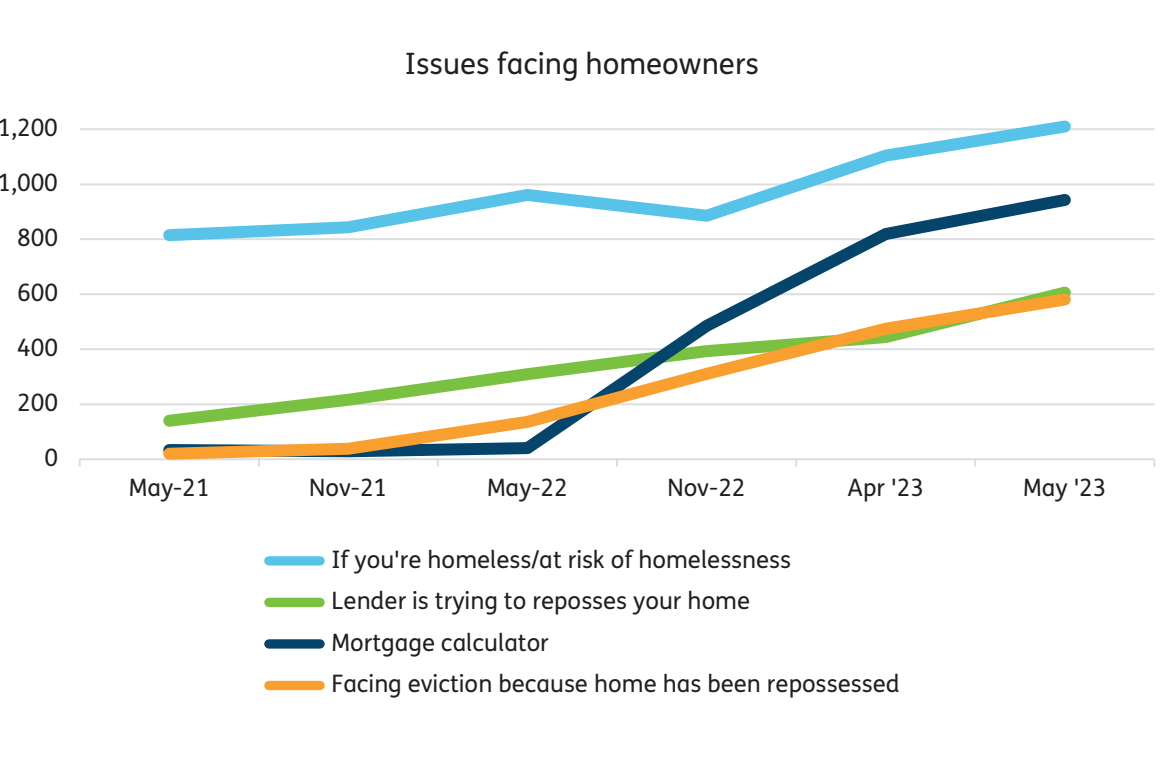
Although the actual number of unique page views is very different, pages providing advice in relation to Carers Allowance Supplement, and challenging a Social Security Scotland benefits decision have both increased considerably. While advice relating to Carers Allowance Supplement generally peaks around this time of year, due to the payment schedule for this benefit, it is nevertheless at its highest ever level at close to three times the UPVs seen in May 2022.

Pages providing advice in relation to challenging a Social Security Scotland benefits decision, although only included on the advice website from September 2021, are also at their highest level with unique pages views being more than five times higher than they were in May 2022.



The challenges facing homeowners are once again very evident with, for example, unique page views of the mortgage calculator page at their highest ever level and having increased more than 20-fold since May 2022. Pages providing advice for those who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness (a page created in May 2020) also attracted its highest ever number of views in May 2023, and was up by **30%** from May 2022). The same was true of the page relating to a lender trying to repossess a home, which is at its highest UPVs since the page was created in May 2021 and up by **103%** since May 2022.

Finally here, the page providing advice for those who are facing eviction because their home is being repossessed saw its third-highest level of unique page views since the page was created in May 2021, with views having increased by **341%** since May 2022.

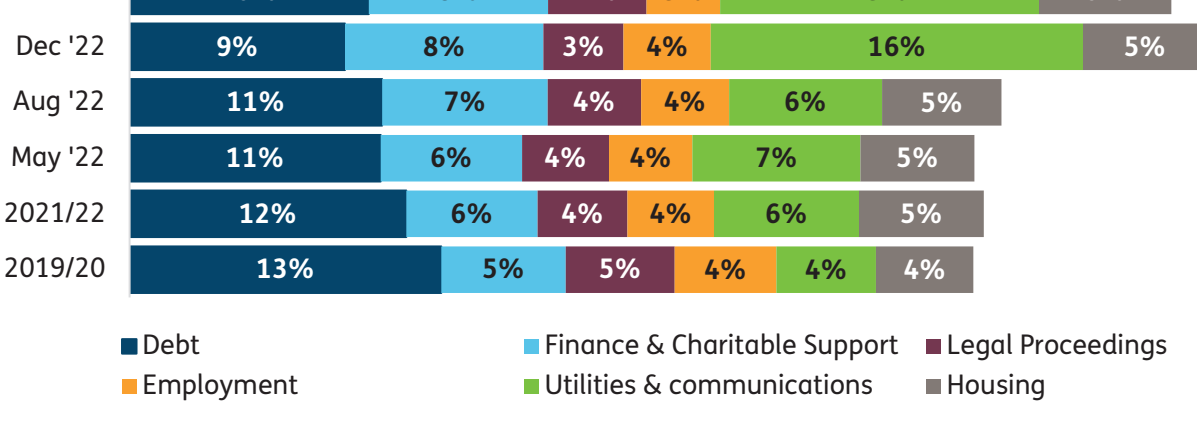


CAB network statistics

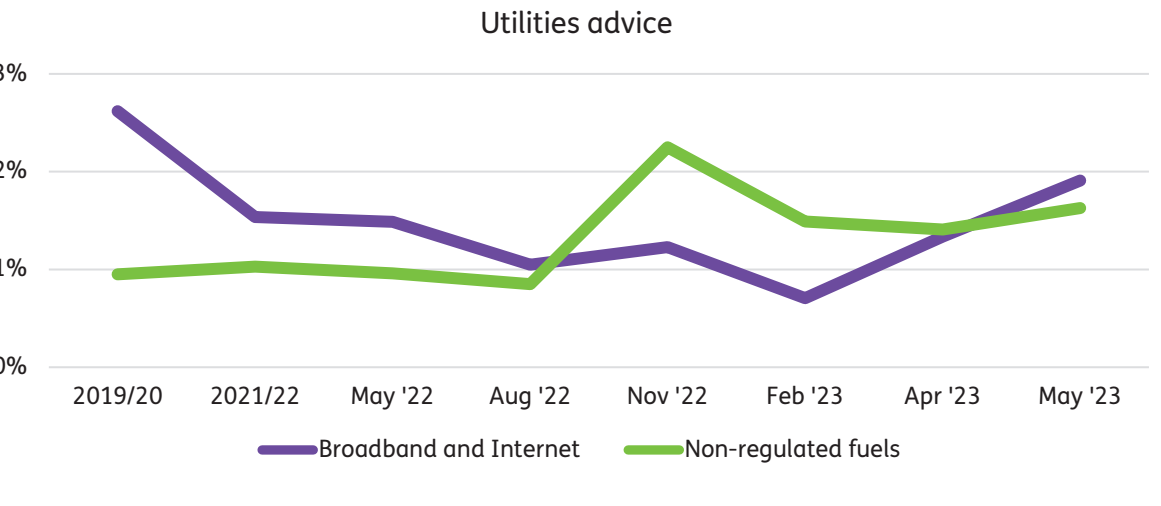
- > **88,975 pieces of advice**
- > **22,840 clients**

Benefits maintained its position as the top advice level in May 2023, remaining stable at **47%** of all advice provided. In the top advice areas only Employment saw a notable increase between April and May 2023, increasing by **14%**. However, advice relating to Finance and Charitable Support was up **21%** from May 2022; Utilities advice up **13%**; and Housing advice up **11%** across this period also. Outside of these, advice on Relationship issues increased by **15%** from April to May 2022 and Consumer advice by **105%** during the same period.

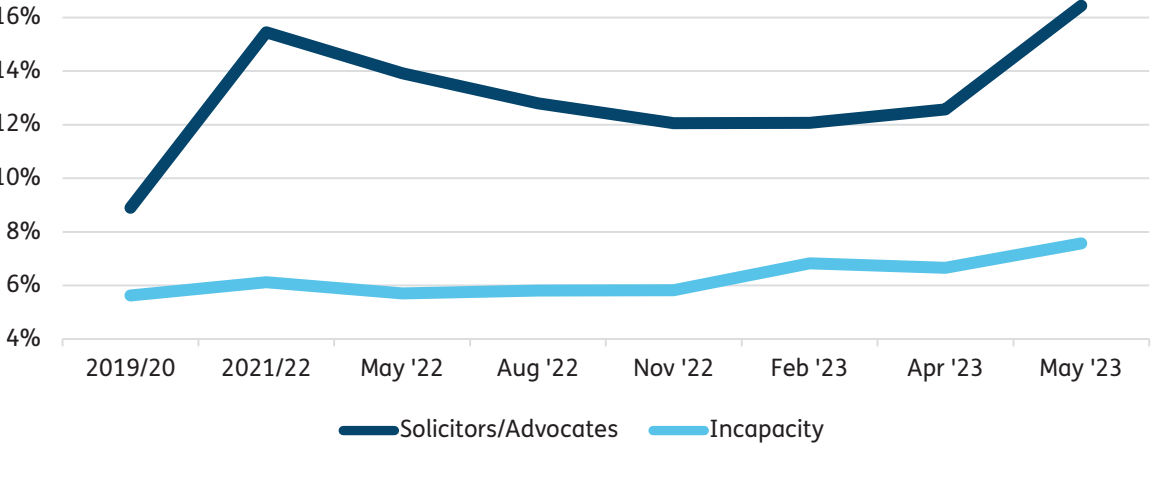
Top advice areas, as a proportion of all advice (excluding benefits)



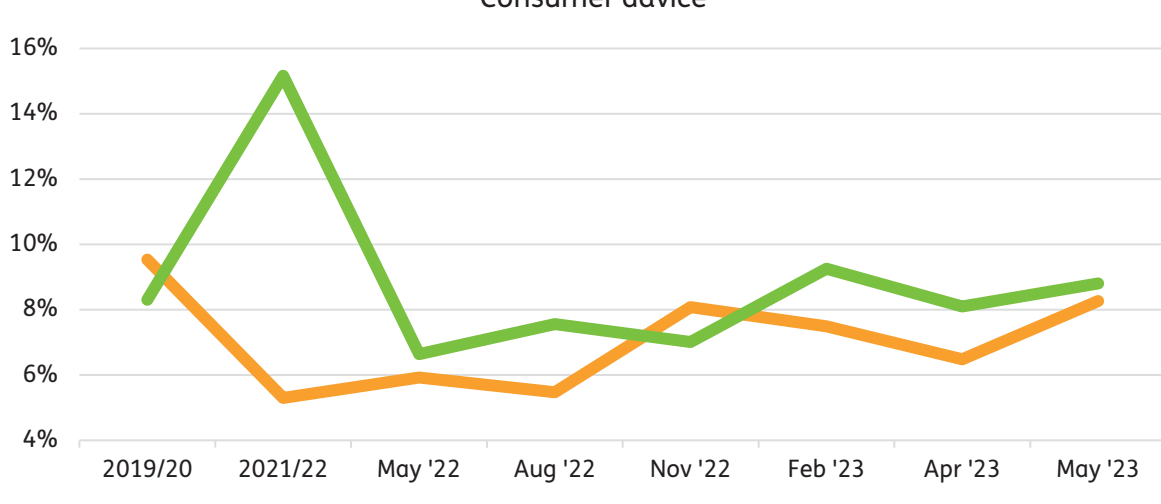
Although the numbers are low, advice relating to both broadband and internet (up **43%**) as well as non-regulated fuels (up **15%**) increased from April to May 2023; the latter also increased by **70%** from May 2022. This increase in advice relating to non-regulated fuels reflects the less commonly discussed cost of living issues facing households not connected to the electricity and/or gas grids.



Advice on the Legal Proceedings areas of Incapacity (up **31%**) and Solicitors/Advocates (up **14%**) both increased from April to May 2023, as well as from May 2022 (up **18%** and **33%** respectively). Both of these advice areas are currently at their highest ever levels.



In consumer issues, having reduced somewhat towards the end of the pandemic advice relating to scams and fraud has been slowly increasing, with this up by **33%** from May 2022. Scams and fraud-related advice is now marginally higher than it was prior to the pandemic. Similarly, though with a less dramatic drop, advice relating to vehicle repairs/servicing has also been rising with an increase of **40%** from May 2022 to May 2023.



Advice relating to Pension Credits is also showing higher levels than prior to the pandemic, with the increase here being much more notable. From May 2022 to May 2023 alone, advice on pension credits rose by **61%**. Housing Benefit advice increased by **26%** between April and May 2023, and by **37%** from May 2022, and has almost returned to pre-pandemic levels.

