

**Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS), our 59-member Citizen Advice Bureaux (CAB) and the Extra Help Unit (EHU), form Scotland's largest independent advice network. Scotland's Citizens Advice Network is an essential community service that empowers people through our local bureaux and national services by providing free, confidential and independent advice.**

**We use people's real-life experiences to influence policy and drive positive change. We are on the side of people in Scotland who need help and we change lives for the better. During 2022-23, the Citizens Advice network provided advice and assistance to over 187,000 people. The network putting over £142 million back into people's pockets during this time, with every £1 invested in core advice funding returning £14 in gains for people.**

**This is the latest monthly summary of data from the Citizens Advice network in Scotland and covers February 2024. It shows data from the 59 Citizens Advice Bureaux in Scotland and our online advice site.**

### **Month in Focus**

In February 2024, CABs helped over 24,000 people, giving over 98,000 pieces of advice, an increase of 11% from February 2023. Meanwhile, online advice pages received over 357,000 unique page views (UPVs).

Online, compared to February 2023, there was an alarming 63% increase in page views relating to finding a place to live for those who were at risk of homelessness.

Concerns around finances remain evident. There was an 87% increase in page views around borrowing from January to February 2024 and an increase of 442% from February 2023.

Meanwhile, page views for help to make mortgage payments increased 51% from February 2023.

Across the CAB network, demand for advice on two consumer issues were at their highest levels. Advice on used cars rose by 22% from February 2023, and advice on digital goods and services rose by 19%. One of the main drivers of this increase was advice relating to compensation and redress.

The year-on-year increases in client and advice numbers show CABs across Scotland are facing increasing demand, and often with complex cases from clients in distress.



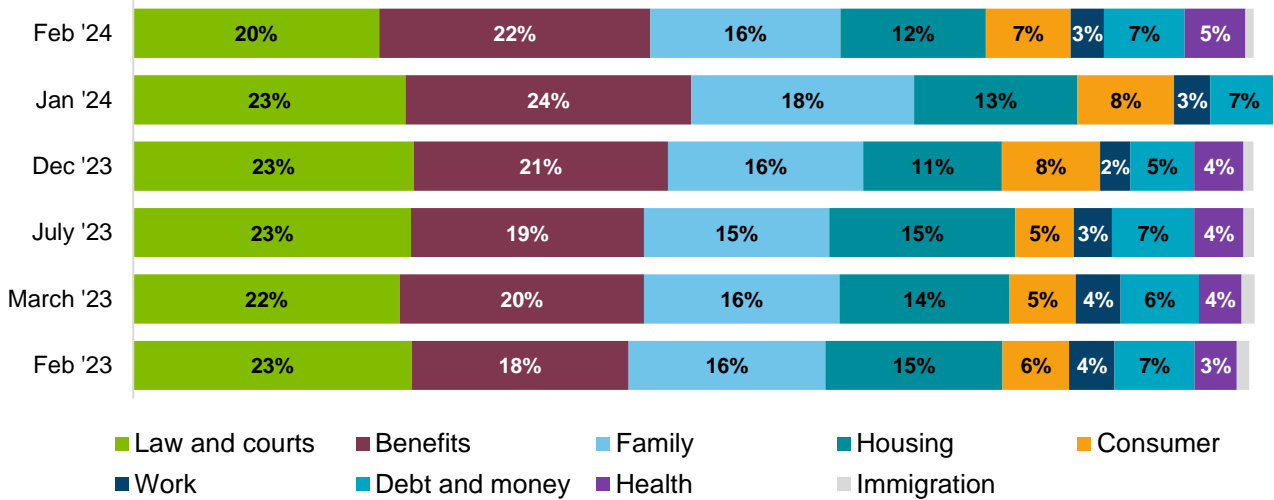
**Webpages**

**357,975** views (no change from February 2023)

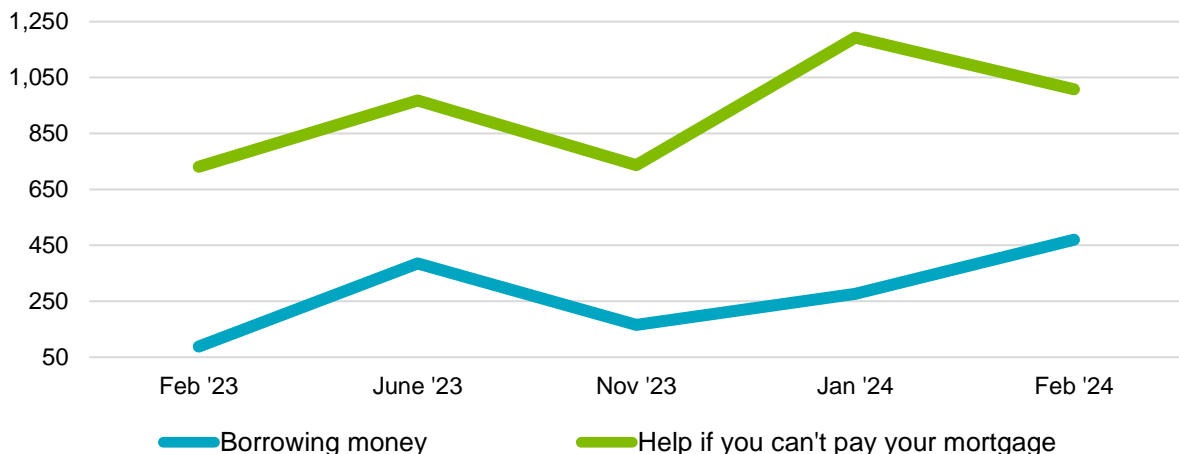
From January to February 2024, only views in relation to pages on health-related issues showed an increase (up 83%). A longer-term view also shows an increase, with views of health pages rising by 43% from February 2023. The largest decreases in page views from January to February 2024 could be seen in relation to immigration advice (down 27%) and family issues (down 15%).

While views of consumer-related pages saw a decrease of 12% from January to February 2024, they rose by 27% from February 2023. Views of benefits-related pages also saw a longer-term increase, rising by 25%.

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

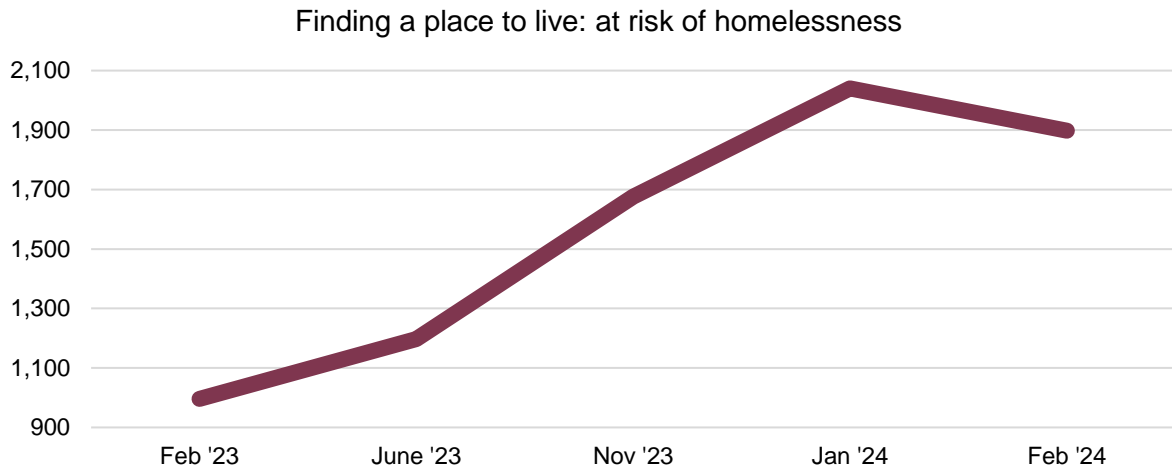


Concerns around finances remain evident in the advice site views, with an 87% increase around borrowing from January to February 2024. Although the number of page views is relatively small in comparison to others, this advice area has also seen a significant increase of 442% from February 2023. While help to make mortgage payments remained broadly stable from January to February 2024, an increase of 51% was evident from February 2023.

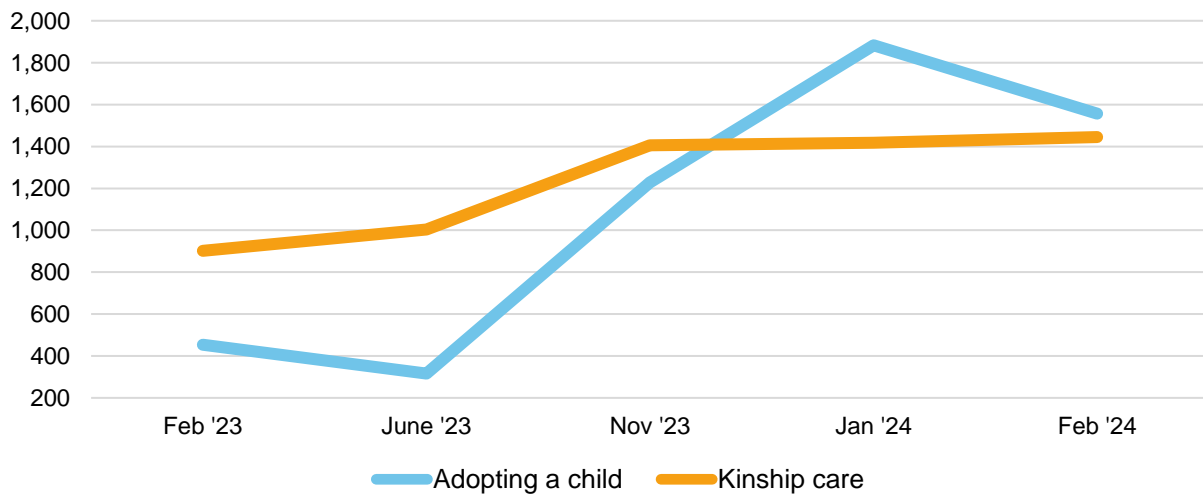




While there was little change from January to February 2024, from February 2023 there was a 63% increase in page views relating to finding a place to live for those who were at risk of homelessness.

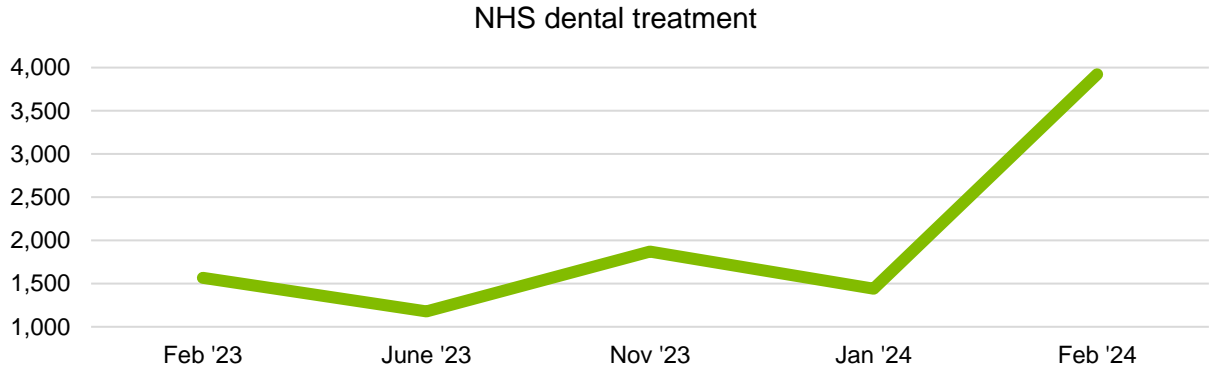


Advice relating to children and young people saw an increase in page views of 46% from February 2023. The largest relevant increase in views was associated with pages providing advice on adopting a child (up 149%). Advice on relation to kinship care also increased by 15% from January to February 2024, and by 16% from February 2023.





Views of ages relating to NHS health care rose by 25% from January to February 2024, and by 23% from February 2023. A notable element in this change was advice relating to NHS dental treatment, with a 45% rise from February 2023.

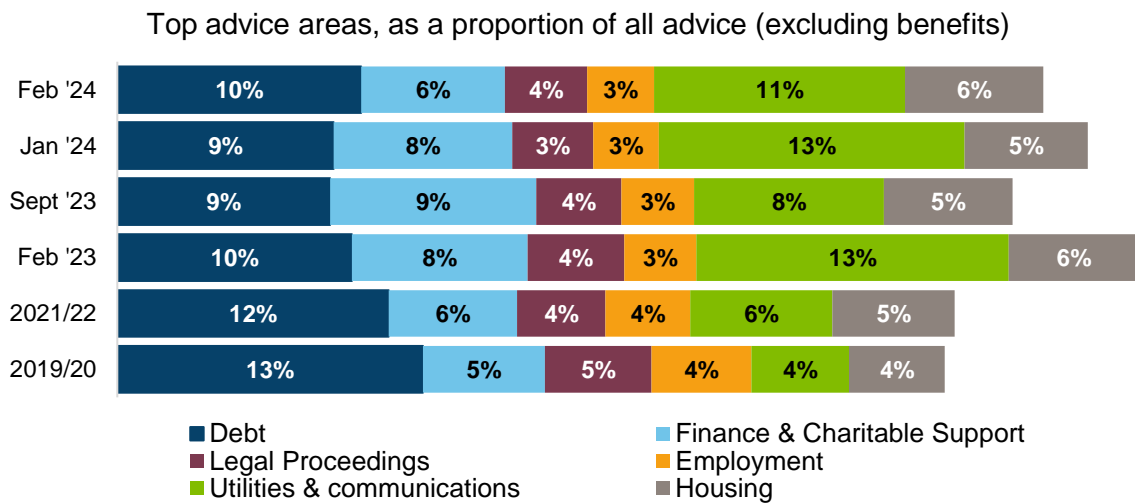


**CAB network statistics**

**98,938** pieces of advice (up 11% from February 2023)  
**24,447** clients (up 11% from February 2023)

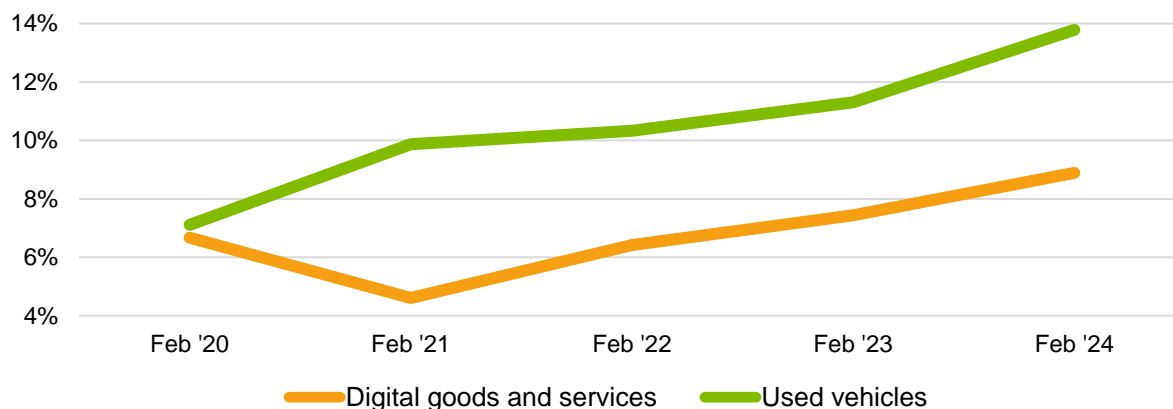
The top advice area in February 2024 continued to be benefits, remaining broadly stable at 46% of all advice provided; this is a small increase of 7% from February 2023. Advice on both debt (up 13%) and housing (up 12%) increased from January to February 2024, while advice on both finance/charitable support (down 20%) and utilities/communications (down 18%) decreased.

Outside of the top advice areas, increases in advice around health/community care (up 17%) and travel/transport (up 12%) could be seen between February 2023 and February 2024. Advice in relation immigration decreased by 12% in the same period.



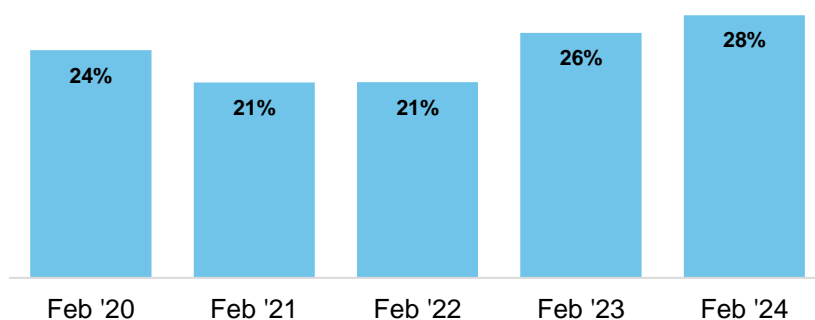


February 2024 saw advice on two consumer issues at their highest levels. Advice in relation to used car rose by 22% from February 2023, and by 94% from February 2020. Similarly, advice on digital goods and services rose by 19% from February 2023 and 33% from 2020. One of the main drivers of this increase was advice relating to compensation and redress.

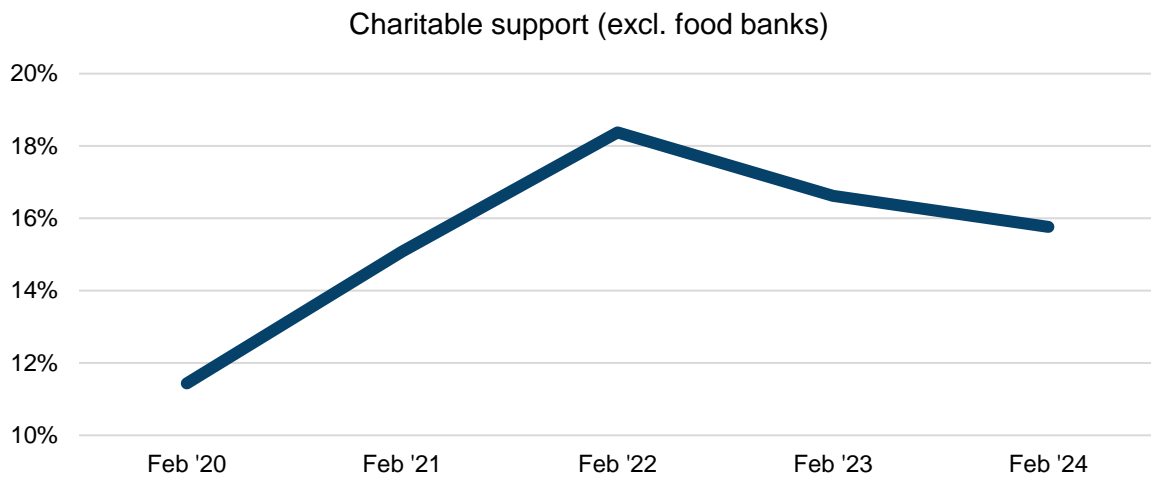


Looking at all types of consumer advice as a whole, that relating to compensation and redress increased by 15% from February 2020.

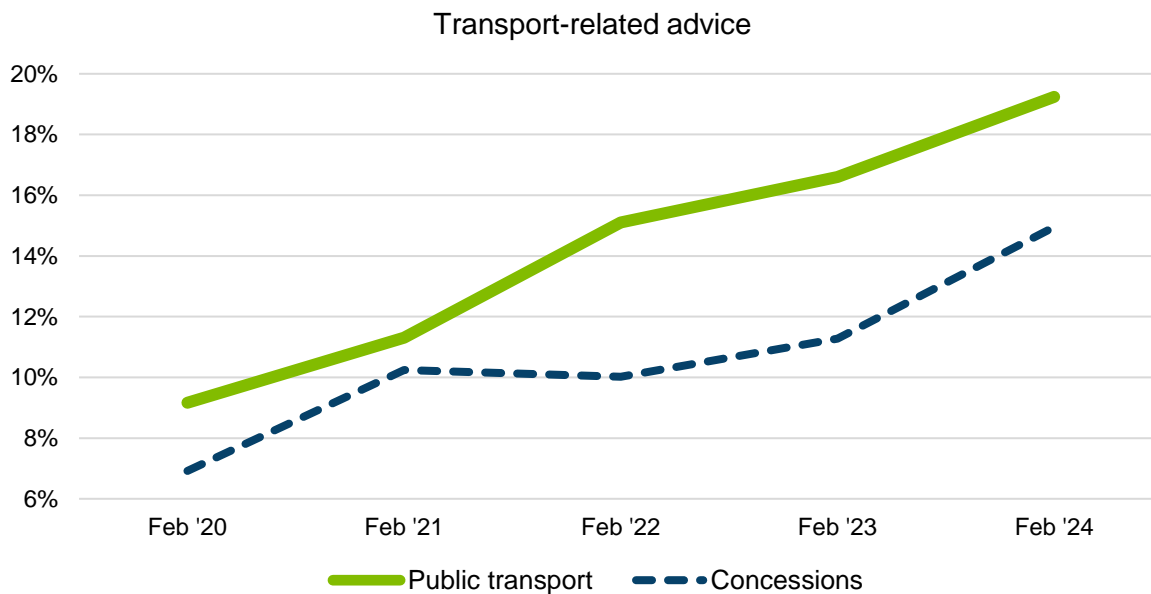
Consumer advice: Complaints and redress



While advice in relation to non foodbank-related charitable support declined slightly (down 5%) from February 2023, looking over the longer term an increase of 38% can be seen since February 2020. This type of advice includes access to grants/support for those with no recourse to public funds and support 'in kind', such as school uniforms and furniture.



Advice in relation to public transport saw a 16% increase from February 2023, and has more than doubled (up 110%) since February 2020. The main reason for this increase was advice being sought on travel concessions; as a proportion of all consumer-related advice that relating to concessions increased by 33% from February 2023 and, as with public transport itself, more than doubled since February 2020 (up 116%).



[www.cas.org.uk](http://www.cas.org.uk)

The Scottish Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux - Citizens Advice Scotland. Scottish charity (SC016637) and company limited by guarantee (89892)