

**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 September 2023. It shows data from the 59 Citizens Advice Bureaux in Scotland and our online advice site.**

### **Month in Focus**

In October 2023, CABs helped over 23,000 people, giving over 96,000 pieces of advice. This is a 8% increase in client numbers compared to October 2022. Meanwhile, online advice pages received over 378,000 unique page views (UPVs) from over 300,000 people.

There continues to be high levels of demand for online housing advice, with views of the page '[get help with private renting costs](#)' having increased by over 400% from October 2022 to October 2023. Views of the page '[if you're facing eviction because your home has been repossessed](#)' increased by 214%.

As we move into the winter months there was a sharp increase in demand for online advice on paying energy bills, with views 15% higher than they were at this same time last year.

Finally, the impact of energy costs on clients could be seen across the CAB network, with demand for Utilities and Communications advice rising by 38% from September 2023 and by 37% from October 2022. This was almost entirely due to increases in energy-related advice.



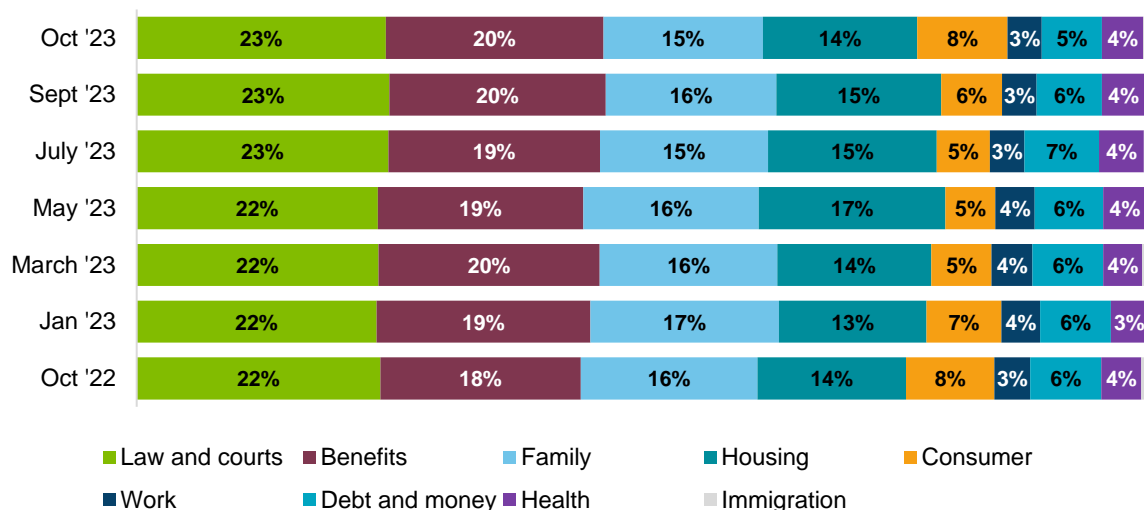
## Webpages

**378,401** views (up 10% from September)

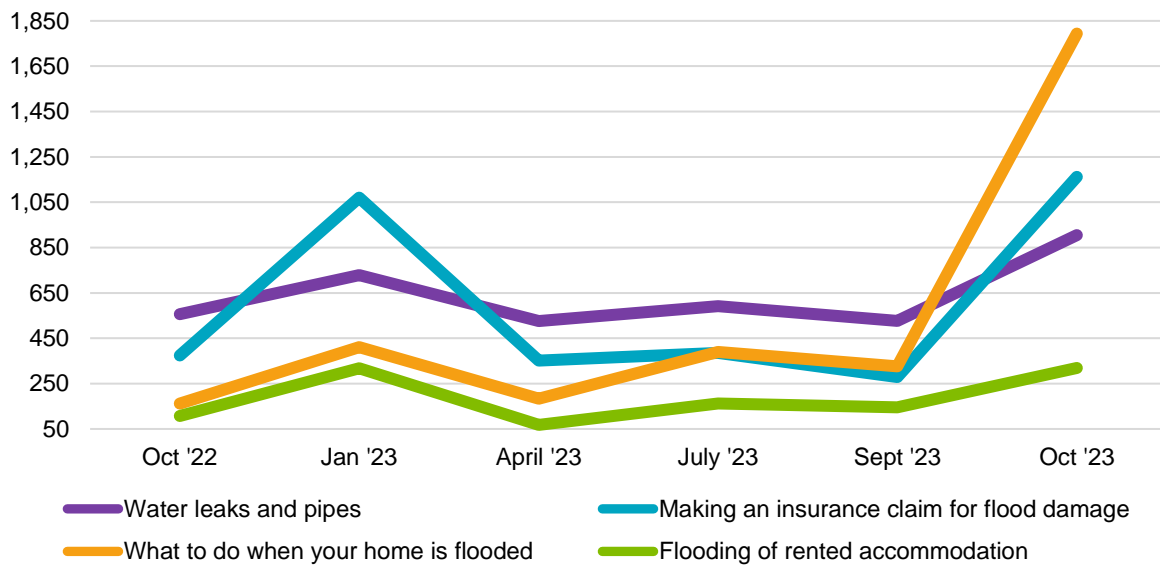
Over **300,000** users

From September to October 2023 the only notable change in views was, again, in relation to pages providing advice on consumer issues which increased by 49%. The only notable longer-term change was a 9% increase in views of pages providing advice in relation to benefits issues from October 2022 to October 2023. Page views of advice relating to immigration showed the largest decrease once more, 39% from October 2022.

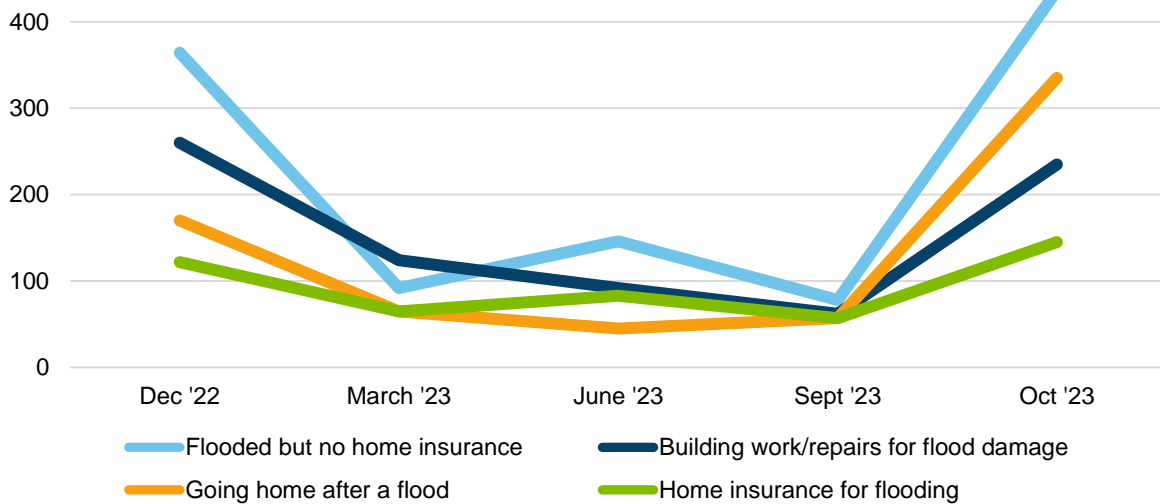
Advice sought on the 'Advice for Scotland' website, as a proportion of all advice



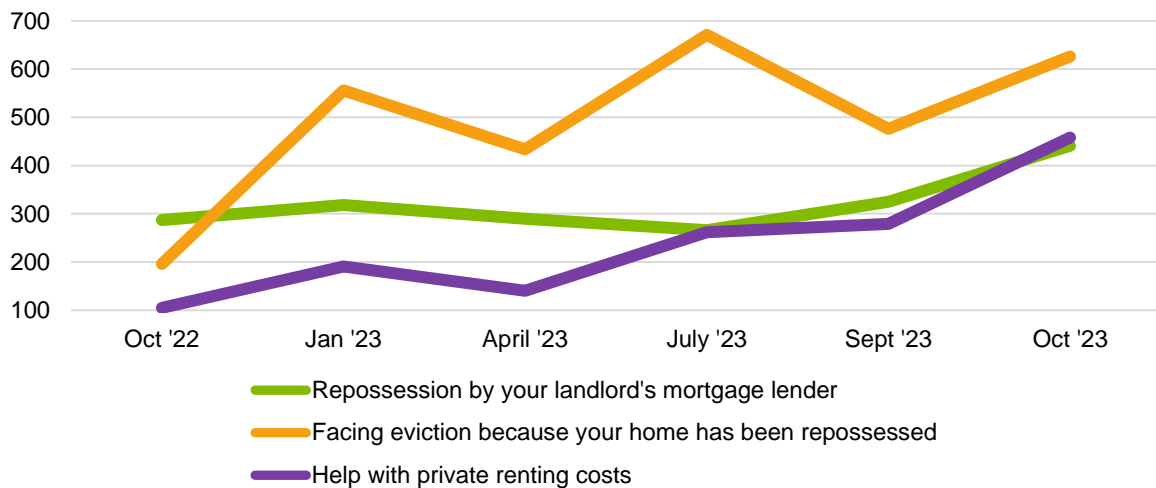
Given the extreme weather conditions experienced in Scotland during October, it comes as no surprise that pages providing advice on issues around flooding showed significant increases during this period. For example, the page providing advice on what to do when your home is flooded saw an increase in views from October 2022 to October 2023 of 988%, and 400% from September to October. Advice on making an insurance claim for flood damage rose by 278% from September to October, while the page providing advice on flooding of rented accommodation saw a 100% increase in views.



Additional increases were evident in relation to newer issues added to the website advice pages, with increases of over 400% from September to October 2023 for advice relating to both having no flood-related home insurance and going home after a flood. Views of the page providing advice on building work/repairs for flood damage also increased by 244% during the same period.

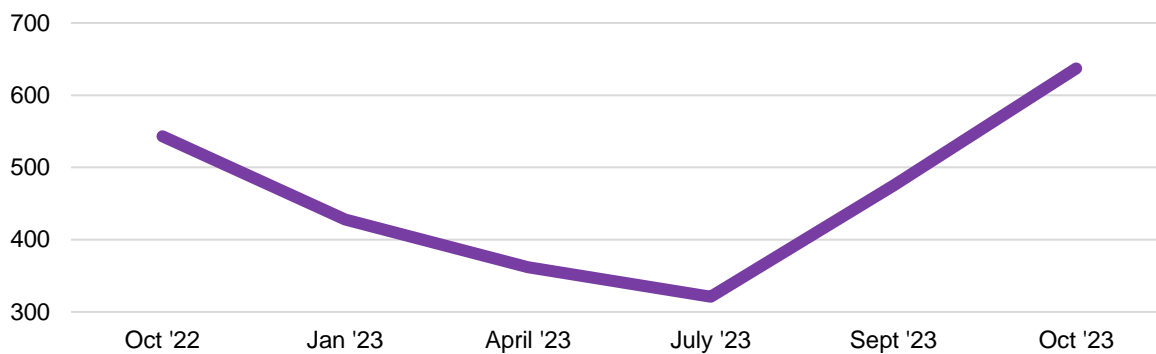


Housing remains a notable issue, with views of the page offering advice on help with private rental costs having increased by over 400% from October 2022 to October 2023; advice on what to do if your home is being repossessed by your landlord’s mortgage provider also increased by 51% during the same period. Views of the page providing advice on what to do if your *own* home is being repossessed increased by 214%.



Finally here, as we move into the winter months a sharp increase has been seen in relation to advice on paying energy bills, with views 15% higher than they were at this same time last year.

Struggling to pay your energy bills



**CAB network statistics**

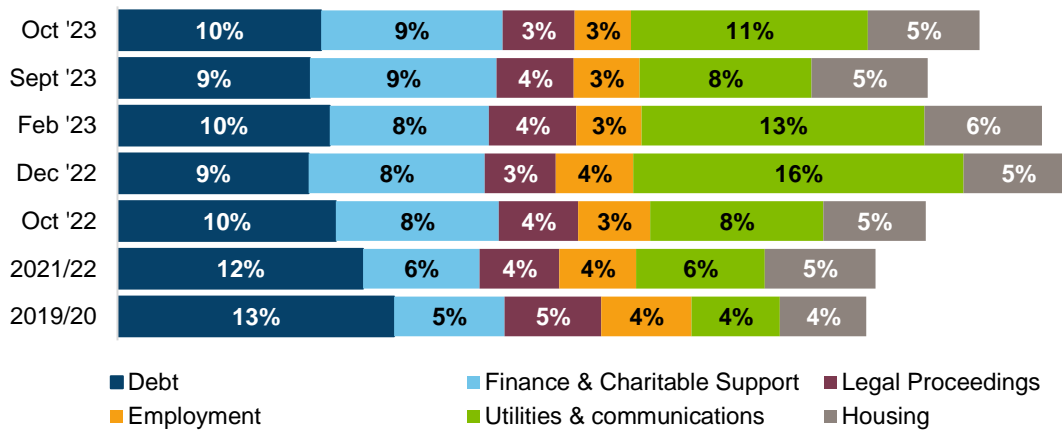
**96,756** pieces of advice (up 14% from October 2022)

**23,486** clients (up 8% from October 2022)

The top advice area in October 2023 continued to be benefits, albeit slightly decreased at 45% of all advice provided. An increase in advice on Utilities and Communications was again evident, having increased by 38% from September 2023 and by 37% from October 2022; this was almost entirely as a result in an increase in energy-related advice. The only other notable increase in the top advice areas was a rise from October 2022 of 11% in relation to Finance/Charitable Support. Employment-related advice showed the largest decrease, having dropped by 14% from September to October 2023 and by 22% from October 2022.

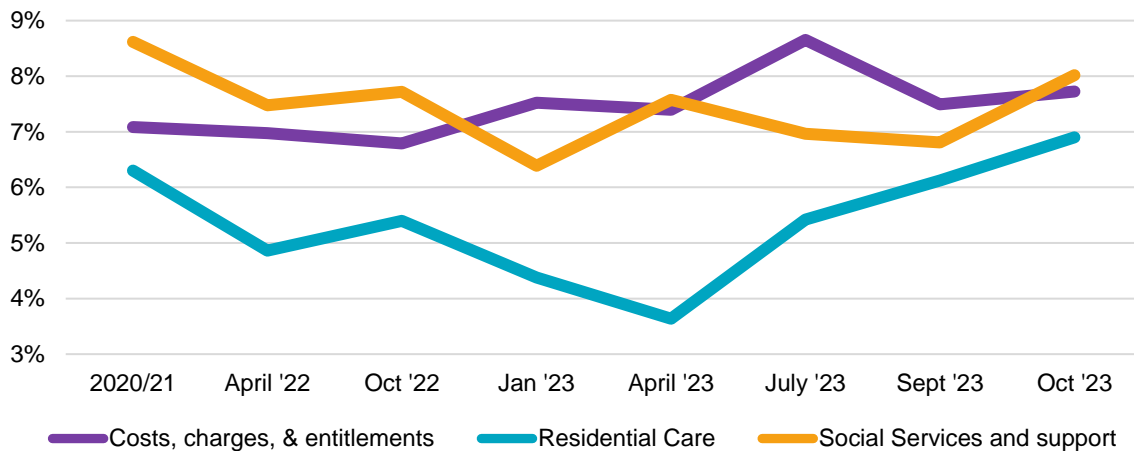


Top advice areas, as a proportion of all advice (excluding benefits)

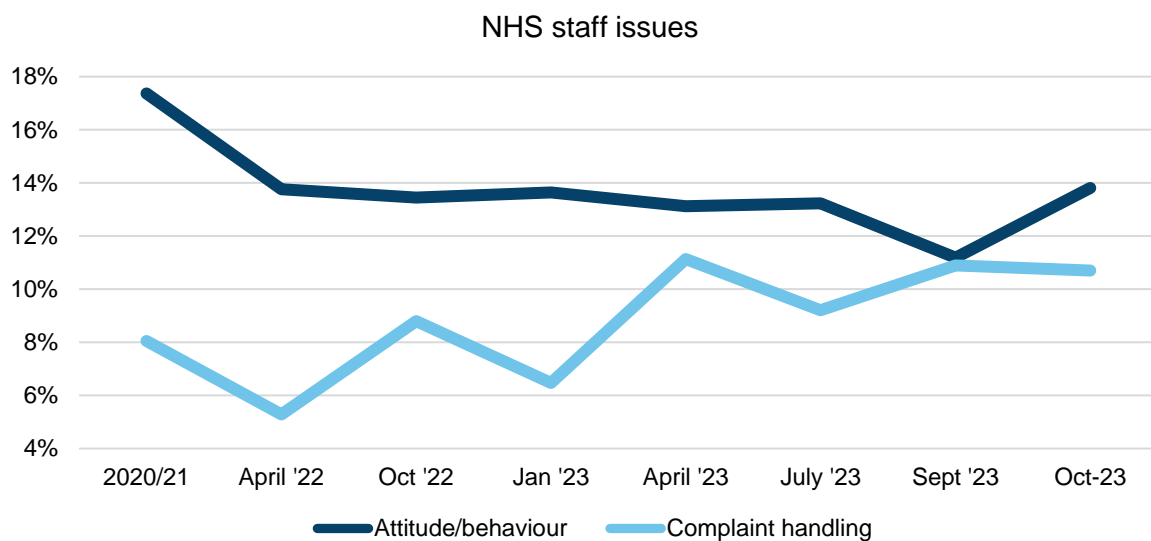


Increases in advice around a number of Health and Community Care issues were evident, with a rise of 18% in relation to Social Services and support from September to October 2023, and of 14% in relation to costs/charges/entitlements from October 2022. Advice in relation to residential care has been increasing since April 2023, having risen by 28% from October 2022.

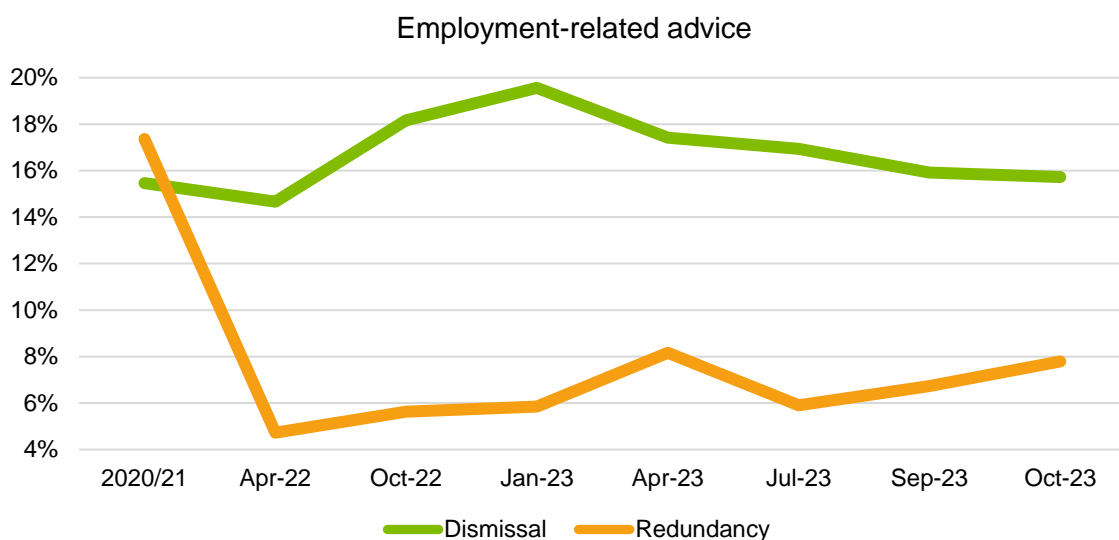
Health and Community Care advice



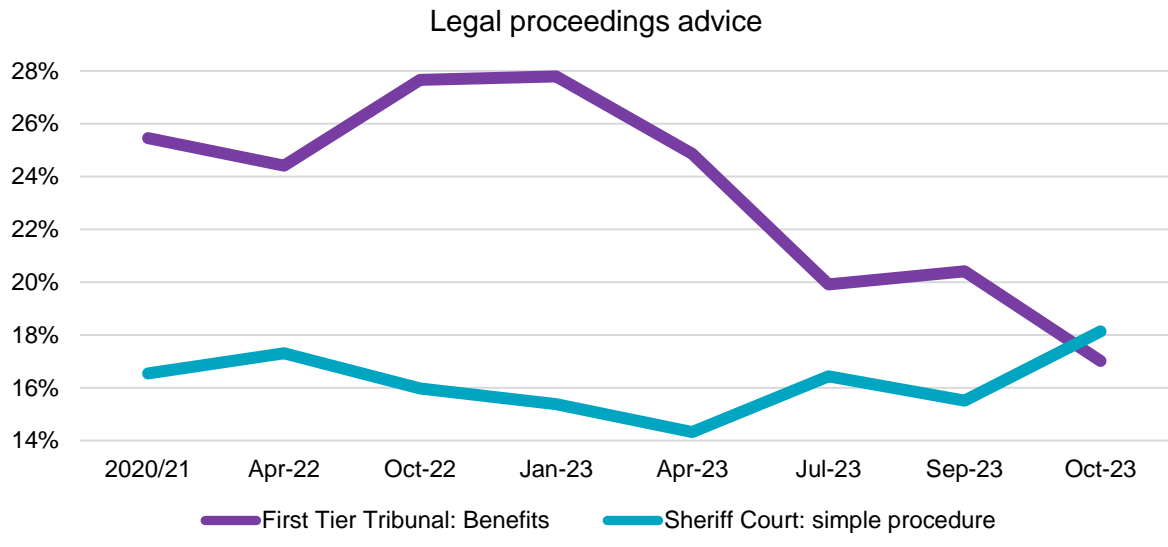
Also in the health sphere, October 2023 saw a 23% increase in advice on issues relating to NHS staff attitude and behaviour, though this level was broadly similar to that seen in October 2022. In contrast, a longer-term increase in advice around NHS staff complaint handling was evident with a rise of 22% from October 2022.



The overall decrease in Employment-related advice is evidenced by the 13% reduction in advice on dismissal from October 2022. Despite this, however, there was an increase in redundancy-related advice of 16% from September to October 2023, and of 38% from October 2022 can be seen.



Advice in relation to Simple Procedure is currently at its highest ever level, having increased by 14% from October 2022 to October 2023. In contrast, advice on First Tier Benefits Tribunals is at its lowest level, having decreased by 38% across the same time period.



[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)