

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 187,00 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 September, there was a sharp increase in online demand for advice on scams. Webpage views for ['check if you can get your money back after a scam'](#) increased **85%** and ['check to see if something might be a scam'](#) increased **105%** from August to September 2023.

Meanwhile, a number of pages on parking tickets also saw increases from September 2022 to September 2023. For example, views for ['parking tickets on private land'](#) increased by **51%**, ['parking tickets issued by the police'](#) increased by **59%** and ['appealing against a parking ticket when someone else was driving'](#) increased **251%**.

Across the CAB network, demand for advice relating to Finance and Charitable Support was **20%** higher than in September 2022.

Demand for advice on both homelessness and rent arrears continued to soar, with an increase of **14%** and **37%** respectively from September 2022 to September 2023.

Finally, demand for domestic abuse advice peaked with a sharp increase of **40%** from August to September 2023.



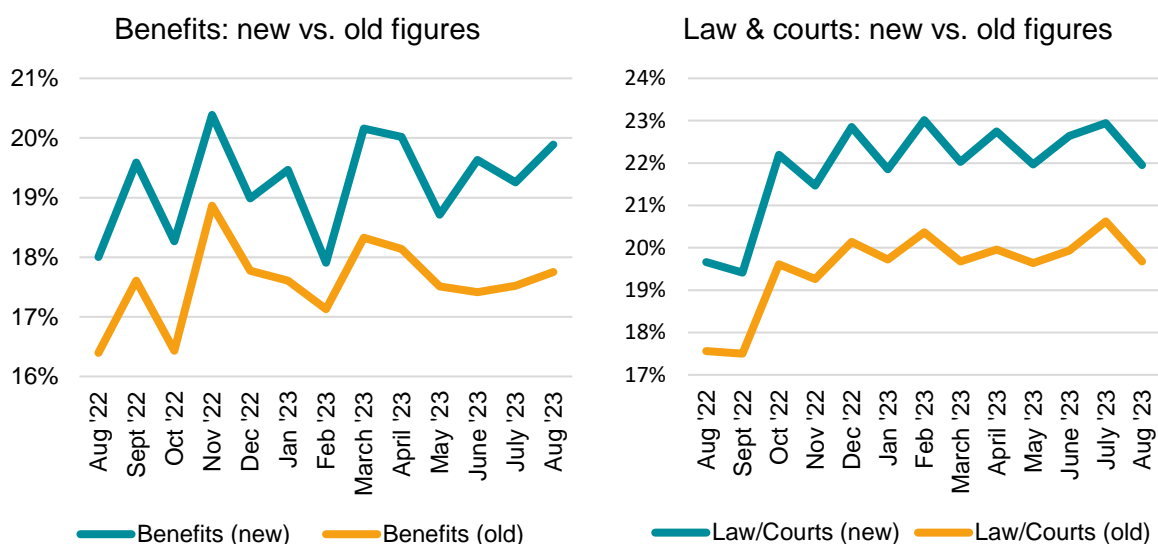
Webpages

343,738 views
 Over **275,000**

From 1 September 2023 a new tool is being used to extract information in relation to our advice webpages. While this tool has its advantages, it no longer allows us to measure unique page views or provide exact user figures. We will continue to publish estimated monthly figures.

In addition, the tool only provides data for the previous 14 months, so long-term comparisons are not possible.

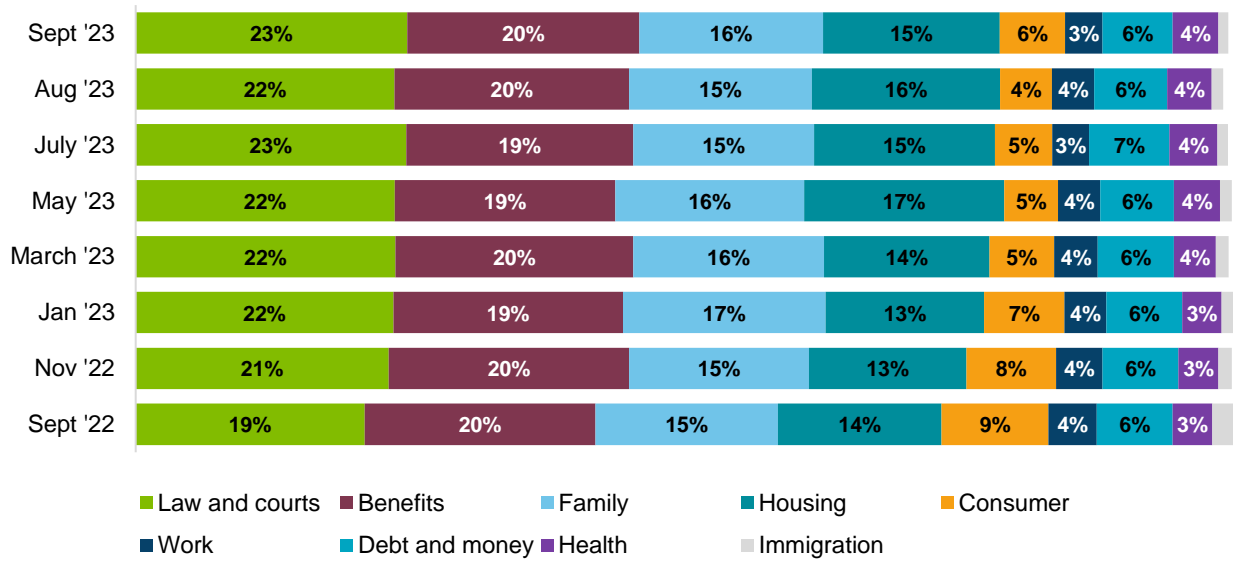
We are, however, confident that the new data follows the same 'pattern' as that seen previously, as is evident in the two charts below.



From August to September 2023 the only notable increase in views was in relation to pages providing advice on consumer issues; however, these same views decreased by 36% from September 2022 to September 2023. Across this longer time period however, an increase in views of pages providing advice on law and courts (up 19%) and health (up 16%) was evident. Page views of advice relating to immigration showed the biggest decreases, down 12% from August to September 2023 and down 52% from September 2022.

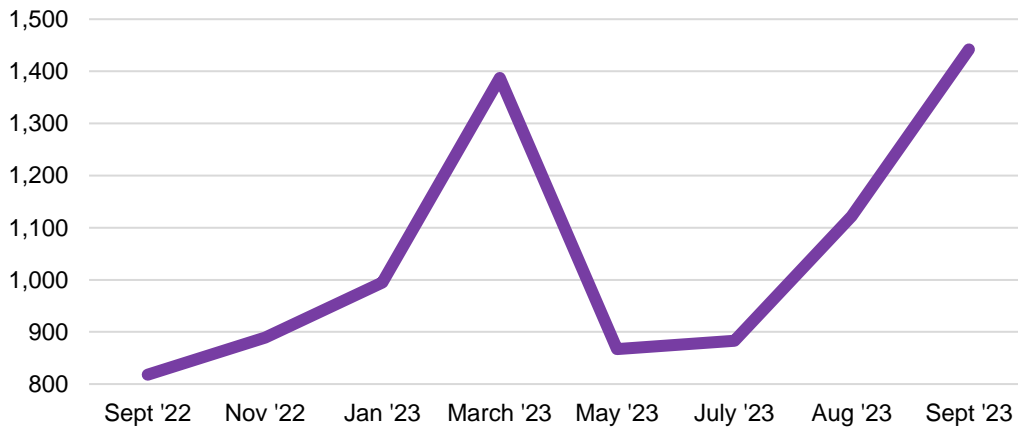


Advice sought on the 'Advice for Scotland' website, as a proportion of all advice

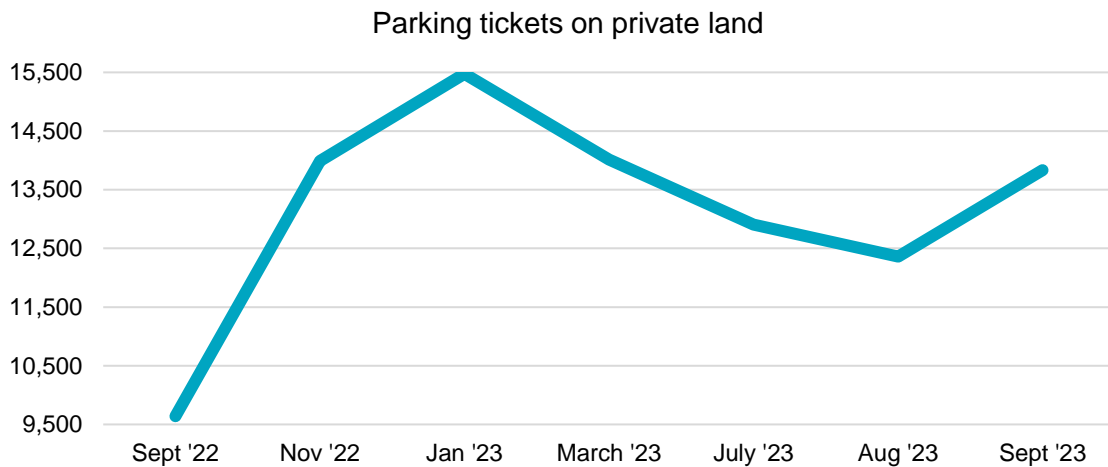


The page offering advice in relation to kinship care has seen an upturn in views, having increased by 38% from August to September 2023; the views for this page are also up by 85% from September 2022 to September 2023.

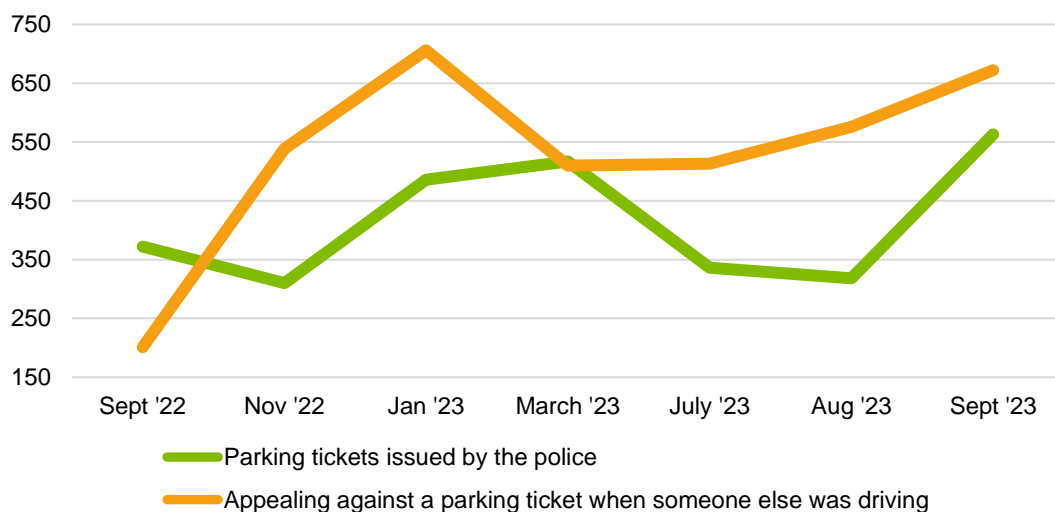
Kinship Care advice



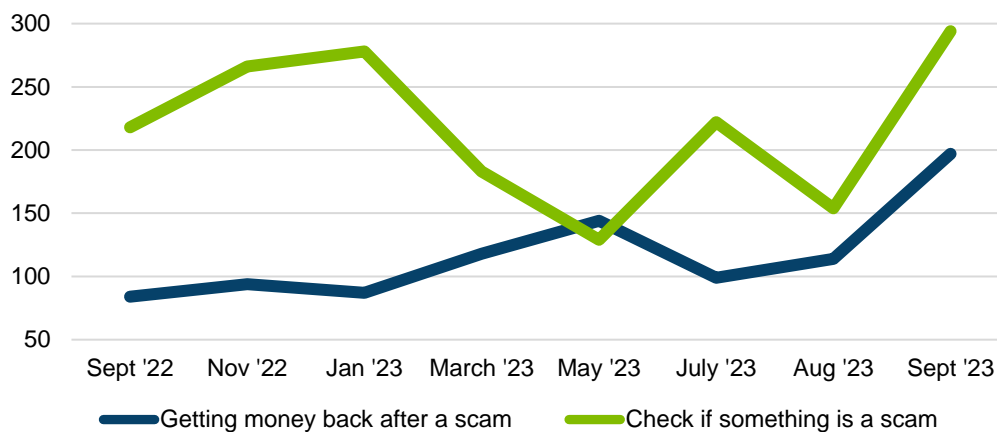
There has been a notable increase in advice being sought in relation to parking tickets over the past 12 months, an issue that CAS has campaigned on in the past. For example, views of pages providing advice on receiving parking tickets while on private land have increased by 51% from September 2022 to September 2023.



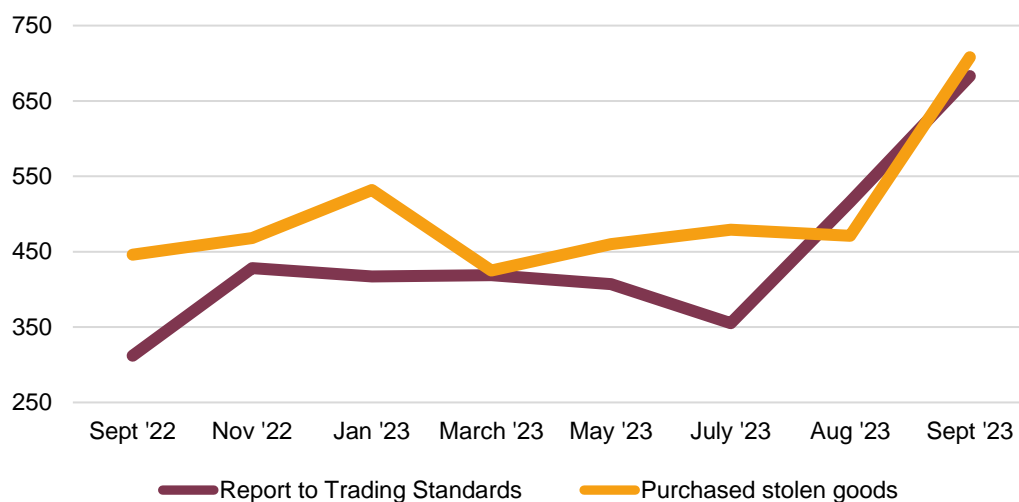
Similarly, views of the page providing advice around parking tickets issued by the police increased by 59% from September 2022 to September 2023, while views of advice on appealing a parking ticket when someone else was driving more than doubled (up 251%).



A number of consumer issues have also seen a general upward trend over the past 12 months. For example, pages offering advice on getting money back after a scam and checking to see if something *is* a scam have seen sharp increases in views from August to September 2023 (up 85% and 105% respectively).



A similar pattern can be seen in relation to views of advice pages on making a report to Trading Standards, which increased by 42% from August to September 2023 and by 130% from September 2022. Advice on what to do if purchased goods are found to be stolen property increased by 67% from September 2022 to September 2023.





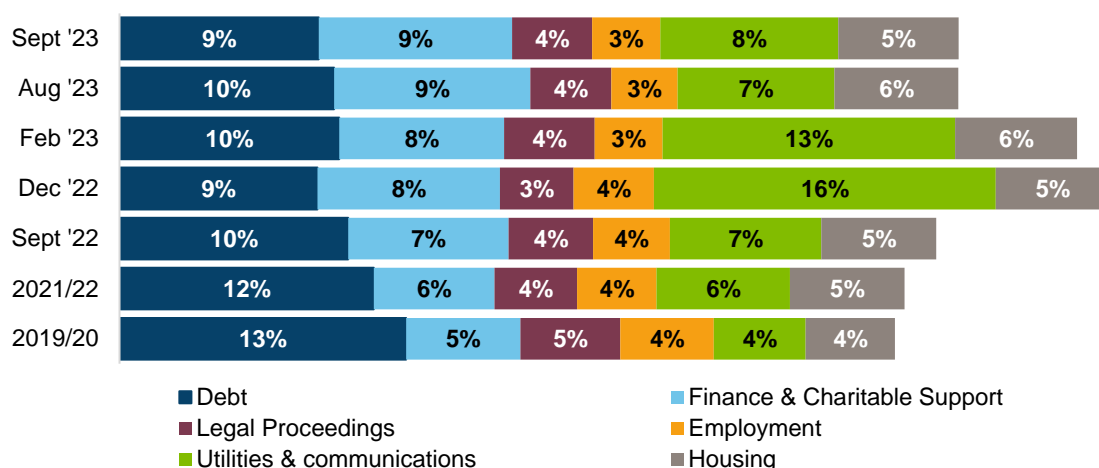
CAB network statistics

85,483 pieces of advice

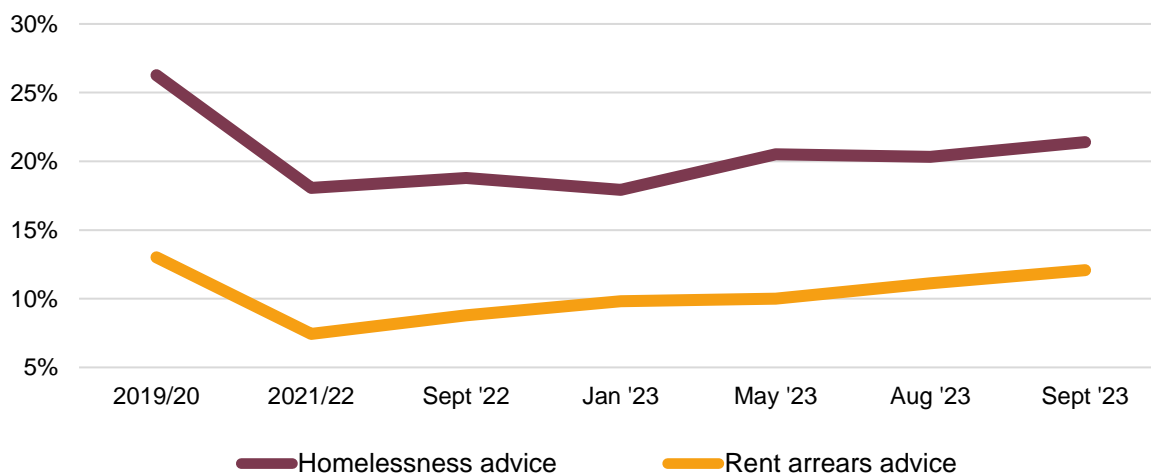
21,849 clients

The top advice area in August 2023 continued to be benefits, remaining stable at 47% of all advice provided. Of the other top advice areas, Utilities and Communications advice increased by 13% from August to September 2023, and was up by 17% from September 2022. Also, while advice relating to Finance and Charitable Support remained stable from August to September 2023, it was nevertheless 20% higher than in September 2022. Outside of the top advice areas, that relating to Health and Community Care rose by 10% from August to September 2023 and by 17% from September 2022. The most notable decrease was with regard to Debt-related advice, down 13% from September 2022 to September 2023.

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

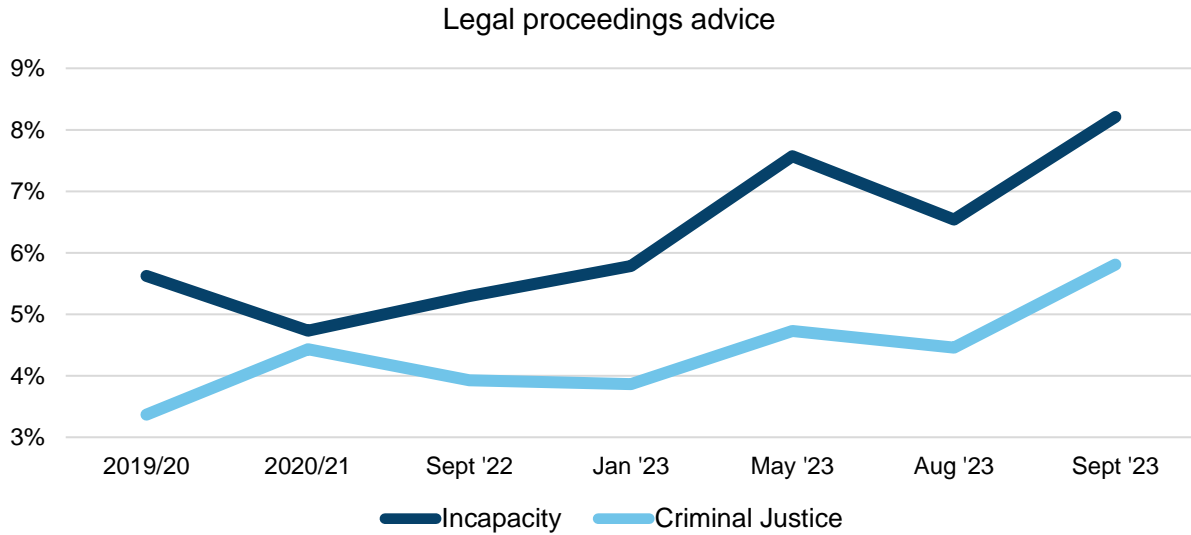


Following on from last month, looking at all relevant advice codes together it is evident that advice in relation to both homelessness and rent arrears is still increasing and has been since 2021/22. Although not yet at pre-pandemic levels, from September 2022 to September 2023 advice on homelessness has increased by 14%, and that related to rent arrears by 37%.

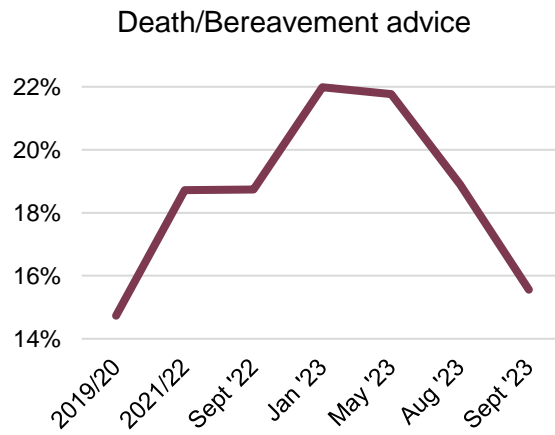
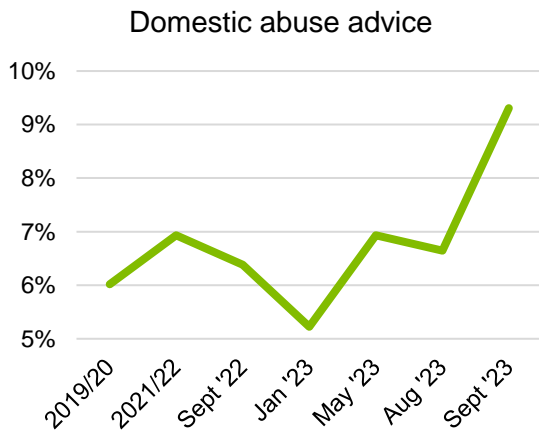




Although both very different from each other, under legal proceedings the advice areas of criminal justice, and incapacity, increased by 30% and 25% respectively in the last month alone. Criminal justice-related advice also increased by 55% from September 2022 and September 2023, while incapacity-related advice increased by 48% over the same period.

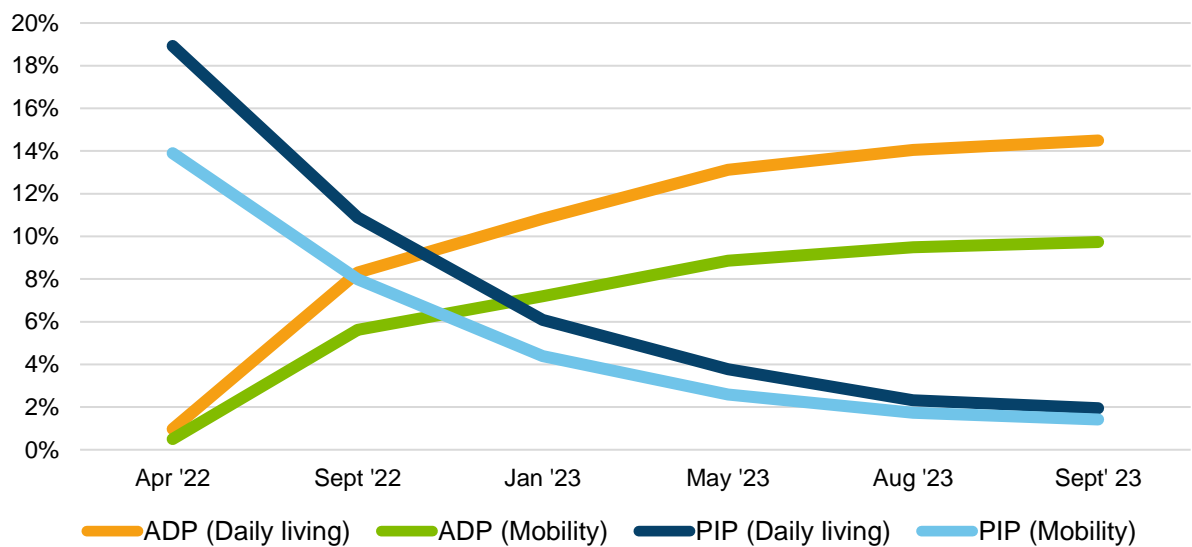


A sharp increase in advice relating to domestic abuse is evident, having risen by 40% from August to September 2023 to its highest ever level. In contrast, and also in the 'relationship' category, advice on death and bereavement decreased by 17% across the same time period, and by 18% from September 2022.





Finally here, a good example of how advice patterns change can be seen in considering Adult Disability Payment ('ADP'), which opened for applications in Scottish pilot areas during March 2022 and is replacing Personal Independence Payment ('PIP'). The increase in ADP advice has been matched by contemporaneous decrease in PIP-related advice; it is expected that the former will continue to increase for some time, with the expectation that all claimants will be switched from PIP to ADP by the end of 2025.



www.cas.org.uk

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