

Impact of COVID-19 on advice sought from the Scottish Citizens Advice Network

Data to 17.05.20



Introduction

This is a weekly report that tracks changes in the type of advice people are seeking from the Citizens Advice network in Scotland. It includes data from Citizens Advice Bureaux and from our public advice site.

As with every week since lockdown began, employment advice continues to be more sought after than debt advice. In terms of our public advice site the main coronavirus [‘Coronavirus: what it means for you’](#) page remains the most popular page. However, in the last week a spike can be seen in views of the pages about benefits eligibility and self-employment.

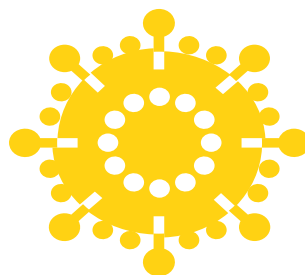
This report covers the 8-week period to 17 May 2020.

Employment advice

continues to be more sought after than **debt advice**



Public advice site **‘Coronavirus: what it means for you’** page is most popular



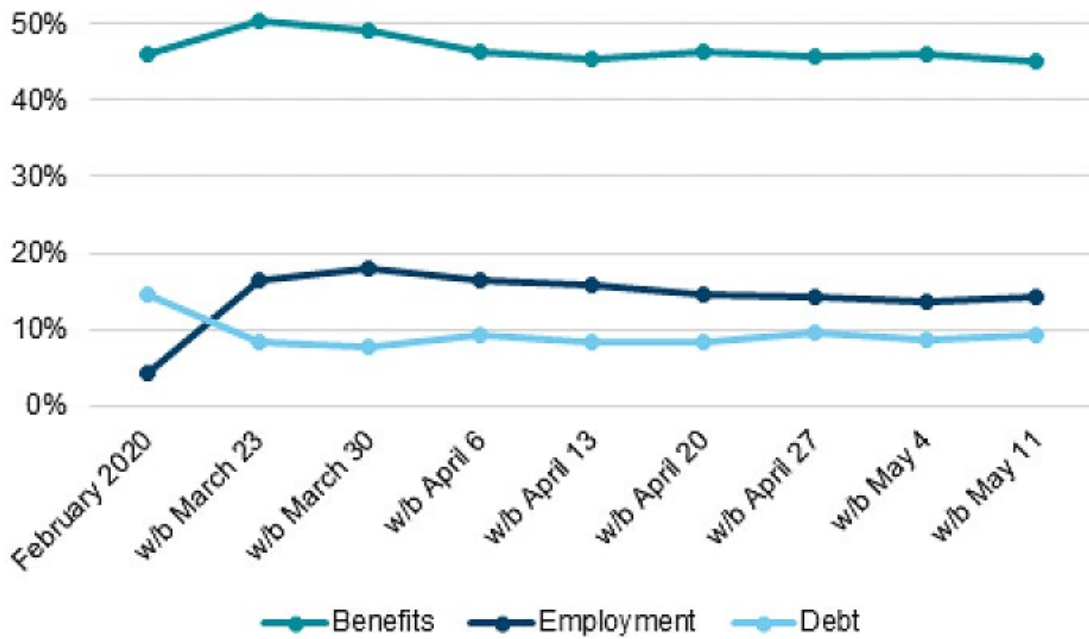
Spike in page views on **benefits eligibility and self-employment**



Advice from Citizens Advice Bureaux

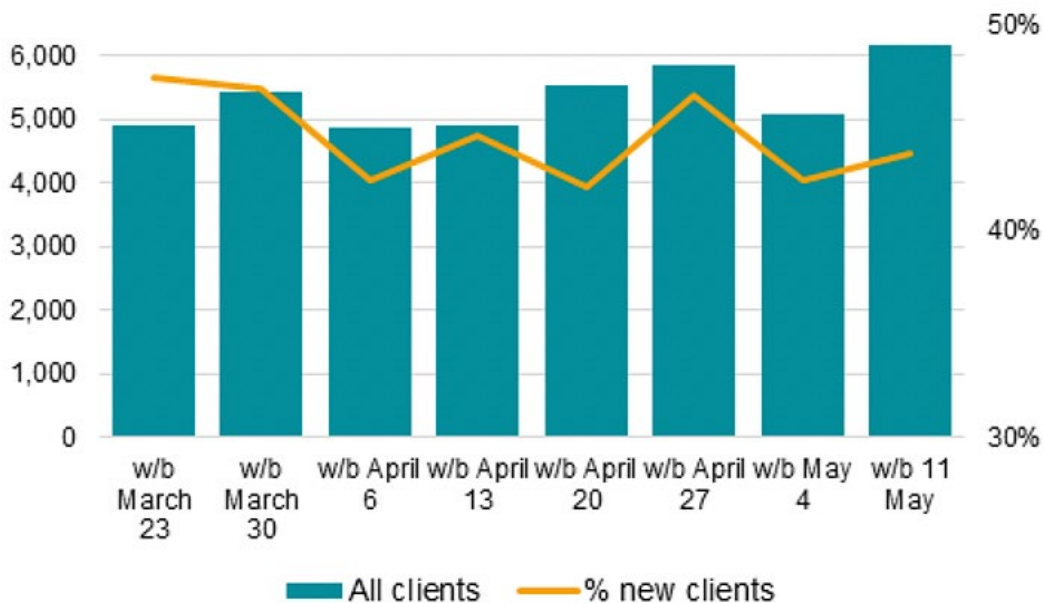
The top three advice areas remain the same with a small decline in benefits advice and equally small increases in relation to both employment and debt-related advice during the week beginning 11 May, in comparison to the previous week.

Chart 1: Top three advice areas (as a proportion of all advice)



There was a small increase in the proportion of new clients in the week beginning 11 May with a 3% rise on the previous week.

Chart 2: Weekly client numbers



Online advice

The week commencing 11 May saw a rise in the number of unique page views on the public advice website. This spike appears to be driven by increased views of the work (in particular, self-employment) and benefits (in particular, checking benefit eligibility) pages. This is the same week that the Prime Minister announced some lockdown restrictions were due to ease in England and the Chancellor confirmed an extension to the Job Retention Scheme.

Chart 3: Unique page views per day

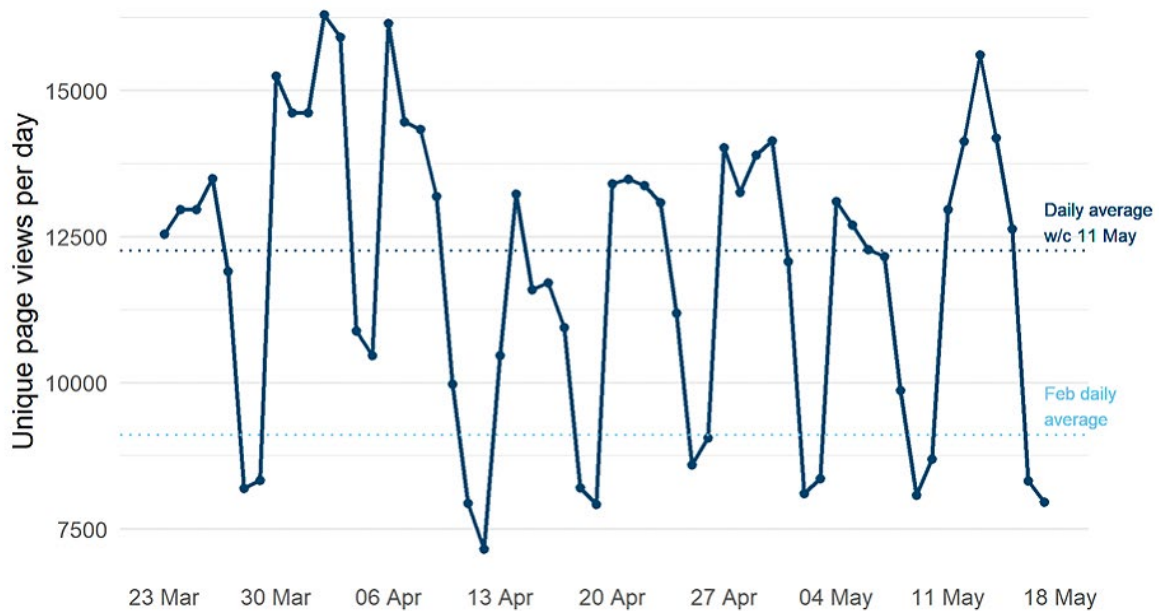
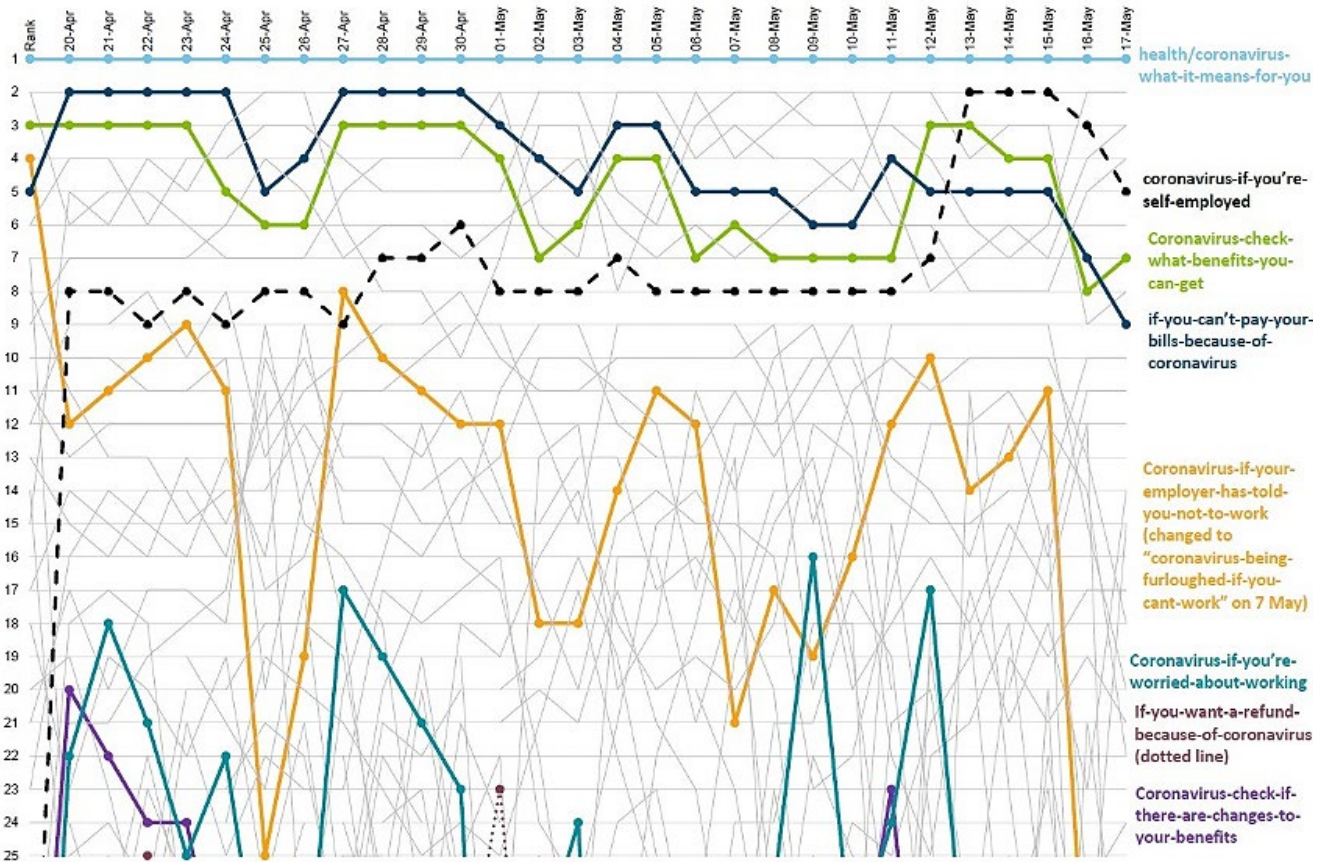
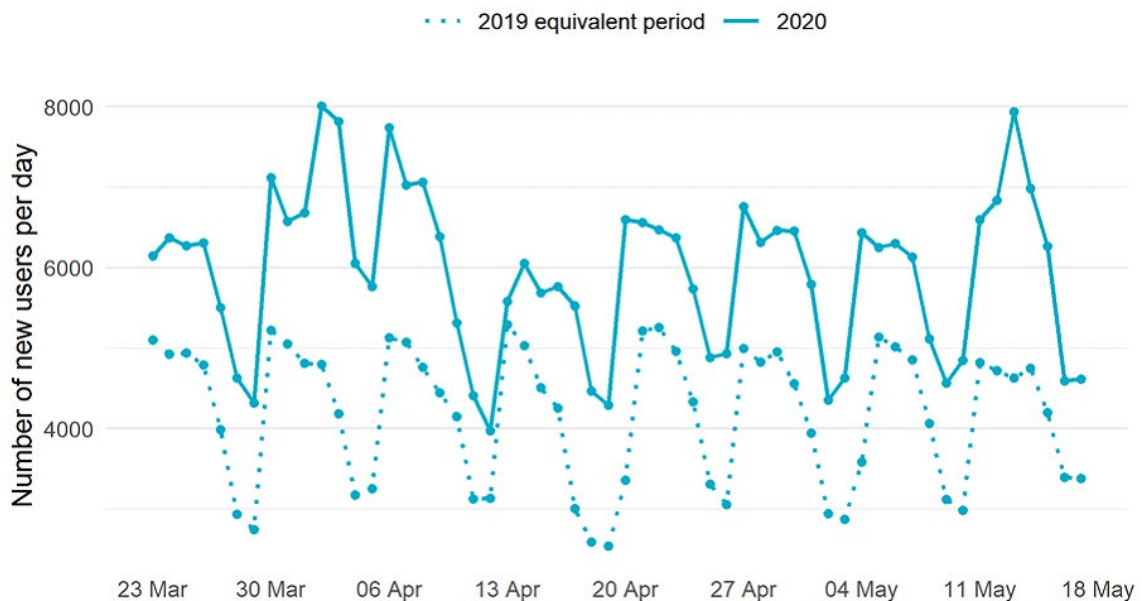


Chart 4: Overall top 25 ranked page (by unique views)



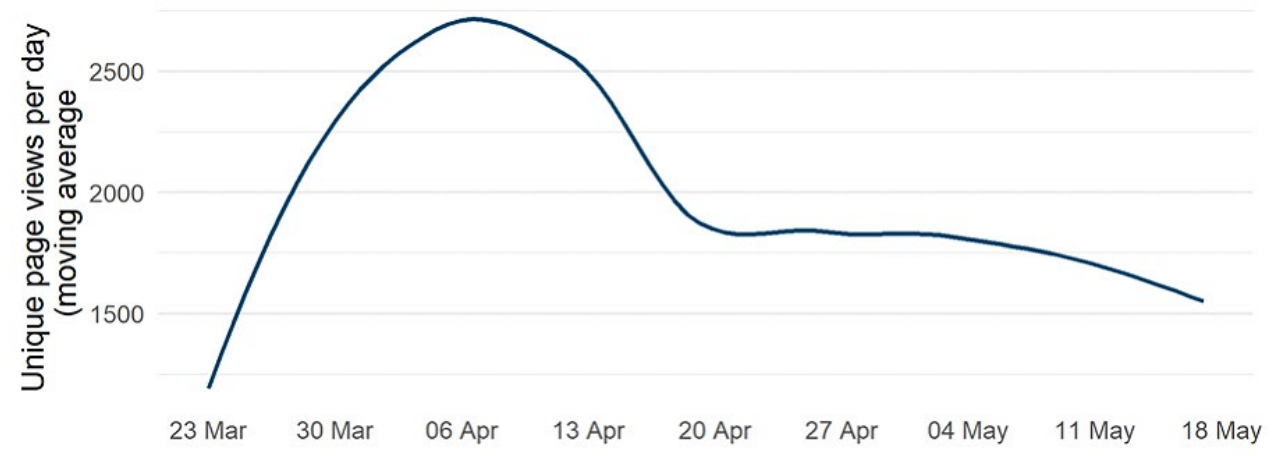
The number of new users of the website continues to be above the norm, with the week commencing 11 May seeing some of the highest numbers of users in recent weeks (chart 5).

Chart 5: New website users per day



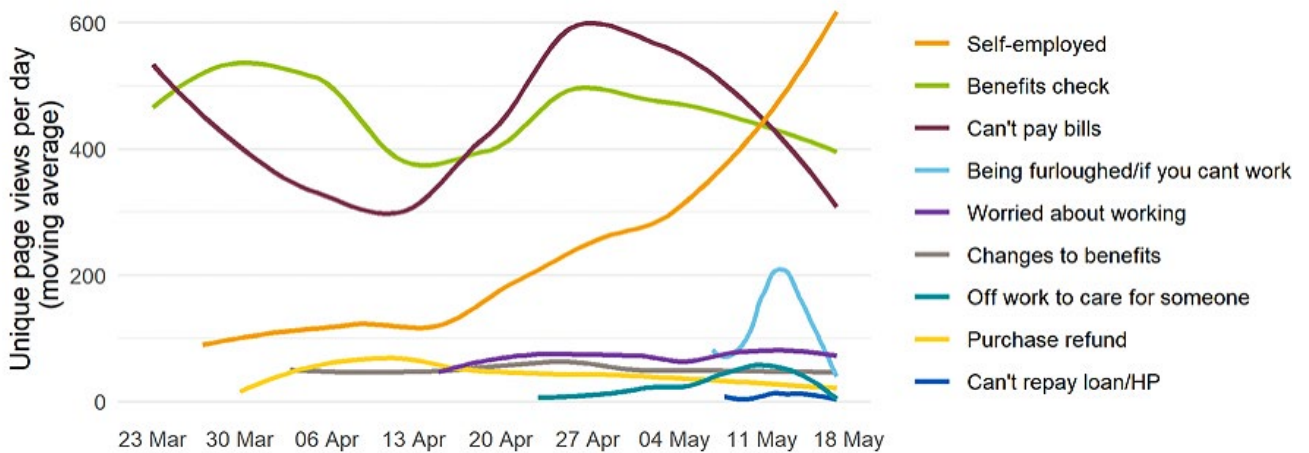
The number of views of the main coronavirus page is trending downwards after peaking in early April. However this remains by far the most viewed page on the site.

Chart 6: Page view trend for the main coronavirus page: [‘Coronavirus: what it means for you’](#)



The page on self-employment issues is now the second most viewed coronavirus-related page, with a spike in views relating to furloughed workers evident in the week beginning 11 May. The number of views of the pages on difficulty paying bills and benefits eligibility are trending down

Chart 7: Page view trends for the other coronavirus-specific pages



The recent increase in benefits eligibility and self-employment page views is evident in Chart 8, which tracks daily page views for the broader categories of social security, work and debt and money. Views of the debt and money pages appear to be closer to pre-COVID-19 levels recently, while in the last week social security and work pages have seen more than double the views of an average day in February.

Chart 8: Daily page views for pages related to social security, debt and money, and work

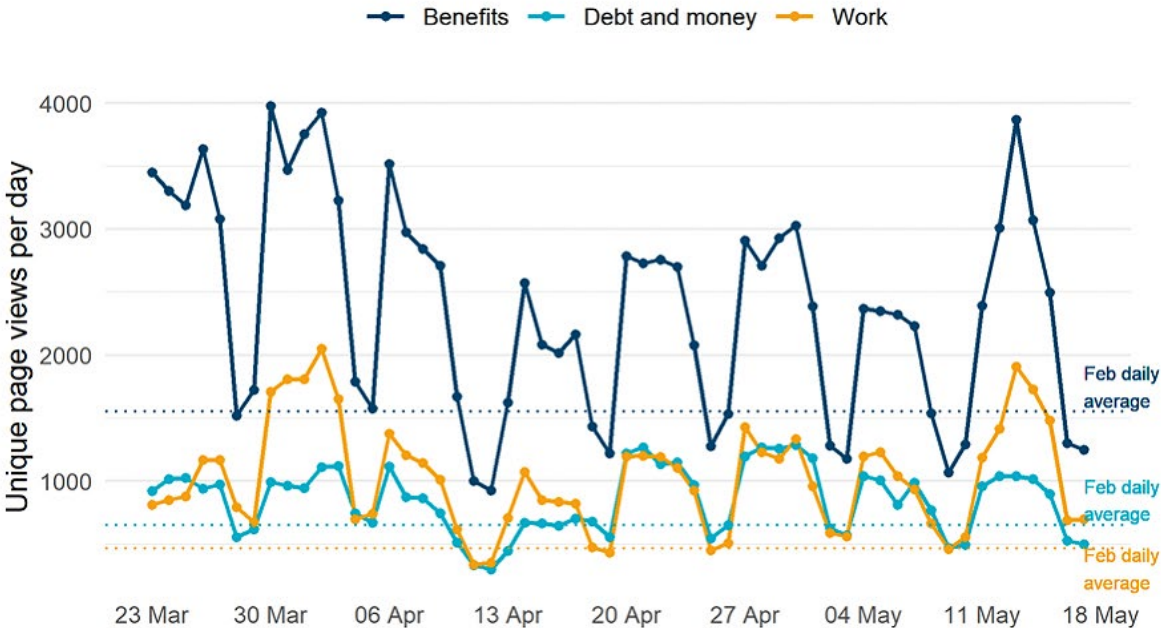
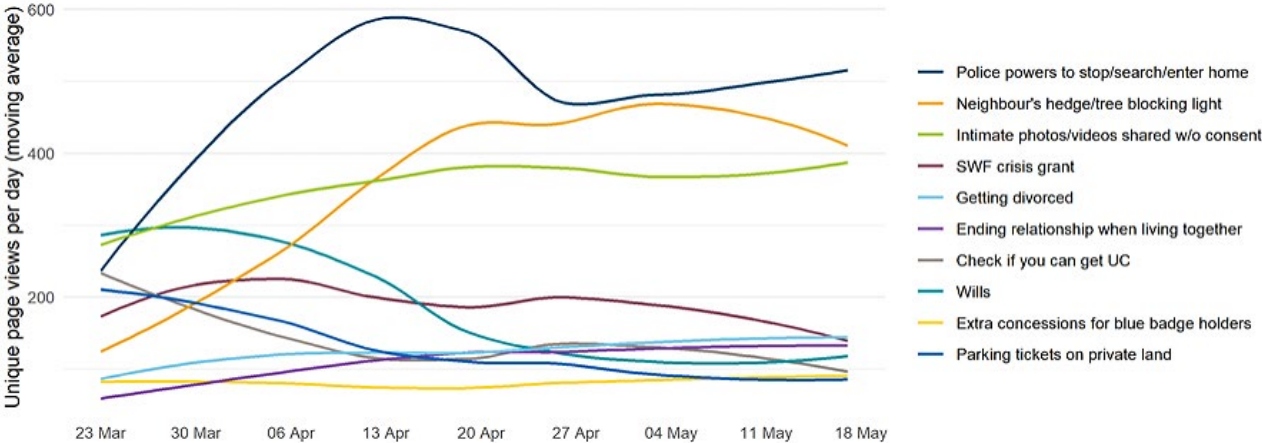


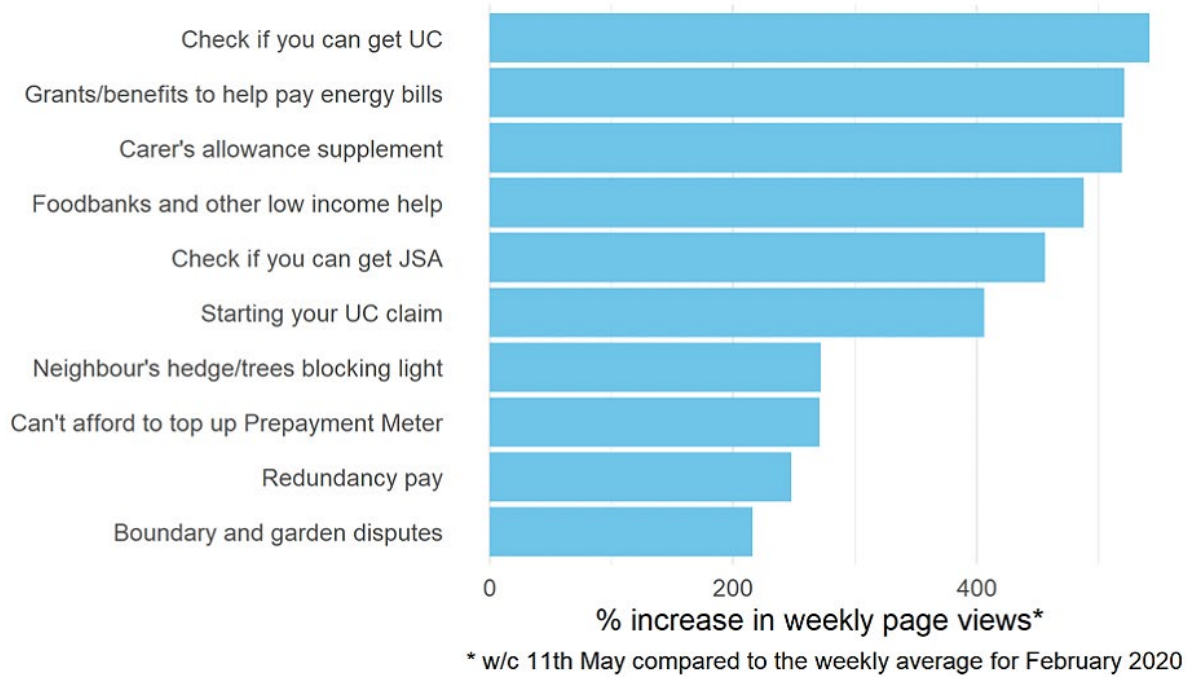
Chart 9 shows the ten most popular non-COVID-19 pages during the week commencing 11 May, with their trends over the last eight weeks.

Chart 9: Page view trends for the top 10 non-COVID-19 pages (during w/c 11 May)



Pages that, during the week commencing 11 May, were unusually popular compared to February levels, are shown in Chart 10. Most of these pages are linked to financial hardship.

Chart 10: Pages that are notably more popular than usual



Contact method

All three primary contact methods demonstrated an increase during the week beginning 11 May, with 'email to individual CAB' showing the largest increase at 8% on the previous week.

Chart 11: Method of contact with the Citizens Advice network

