

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

Data to 31.05.20



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 (CAB) and from our public advice site.

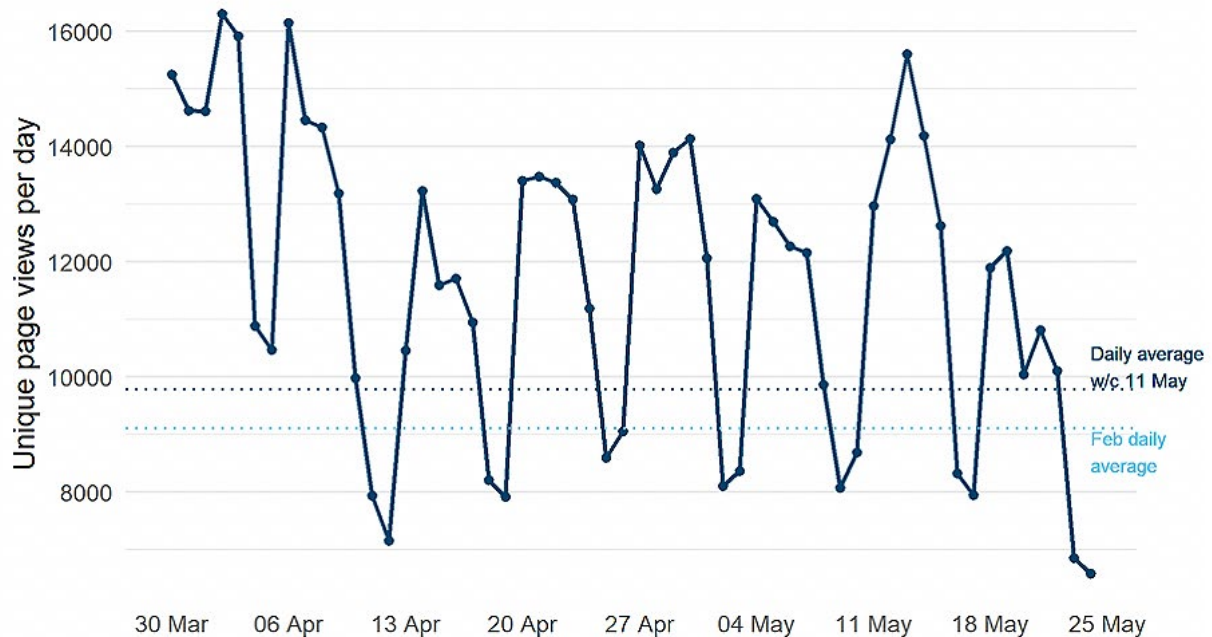
Advice relating to employment, social security, and debt continues to be most sought after in line with previous weeks and direct phone contact with local CAB remains the most popular contact method.

Since lockdown measures were put in place in mid-March the public advice website has seen a higher level of traffic than usual. However, the last week has seen some changes to levels of traffic and the specific pages viewed on the site more frequently.

Online advice

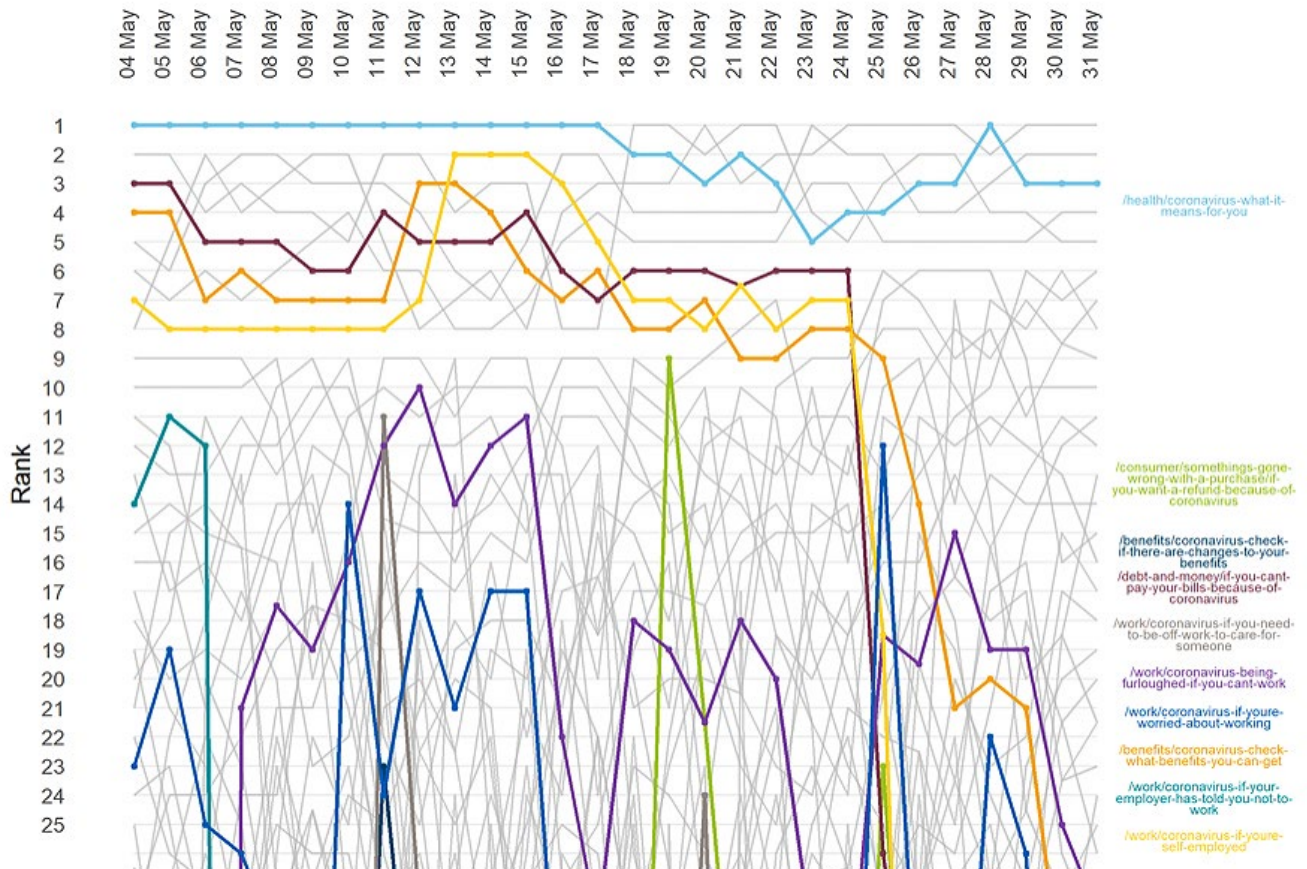
Since mid-March the public advice website has seen a higher level of traffic than usual, especially at the end of March and beginning of April. While the last week saw a lower level of traffic than pre-COVID-19 levels, it should be borne in mind that the end of the week beginning 25th May saw relaxation of some lockdown measures coinciding with spells of good weather

Chart 1: Unique page views per day



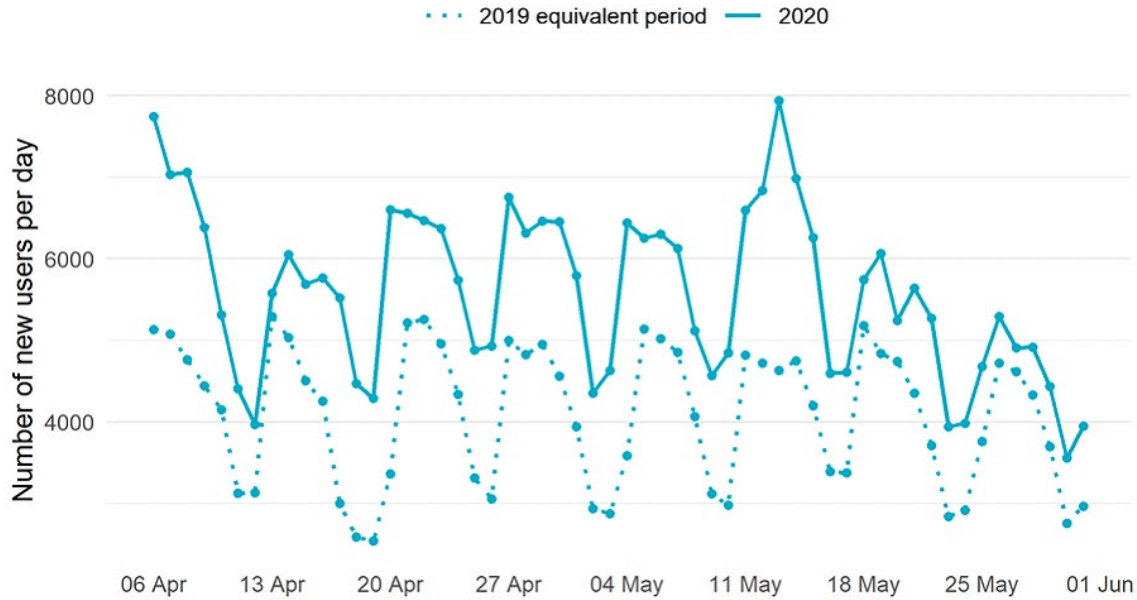
While the main [coronavirus advice page](#) remains one of the most viewed pages on the public advice website, by the end of May the other coronavirus pages were no longer consistently among the 25 most viewed pages.

Chart 2: Overall top 25 ranked page (by unique views)



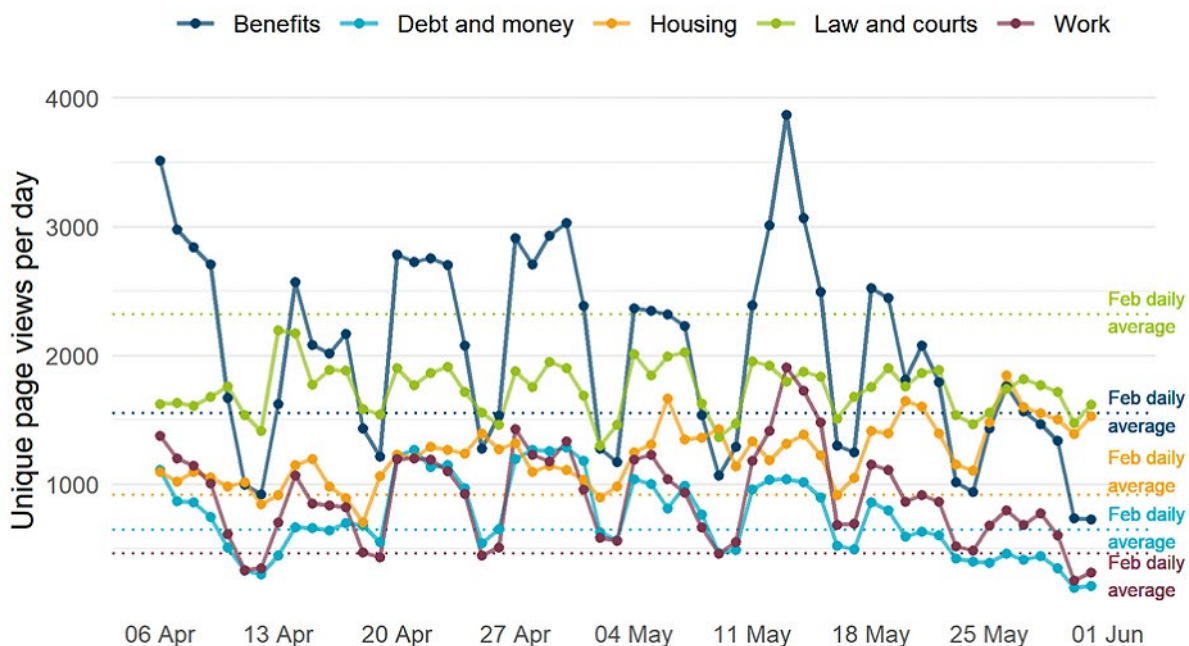
Similarly the number of website users has been returning towards a normal level. Although the number of new users is above that seen for the comparable period last year, that is in line with longer-term growth in website users.

Chart 3: New website users per day



Throughout lockdown the social security pages have been the most viewed category of pages on the public advice website. However, in the last week the Law and Courts category and the Housing category have had more page views, in each case because of particular pages that are attracting a high level of traffic.

Chart 4: Daily page views for social security, debt and money, and work categories



As chart 5 highlights, advice related to disputes with neighbours attracted a lot of traffic during the week beginning 25 May, as did pages in the Law and Courts category related to police powers and sharing of intimate photos or videos without consent. This suggests that some of those using the public advice site after a prolonged period of lockdown are seeking advice on issues related to their surroundings and personal lives.

Chart 5: Page view trends for the top 10 non-COVID-19 pages (during w/c 18 May)

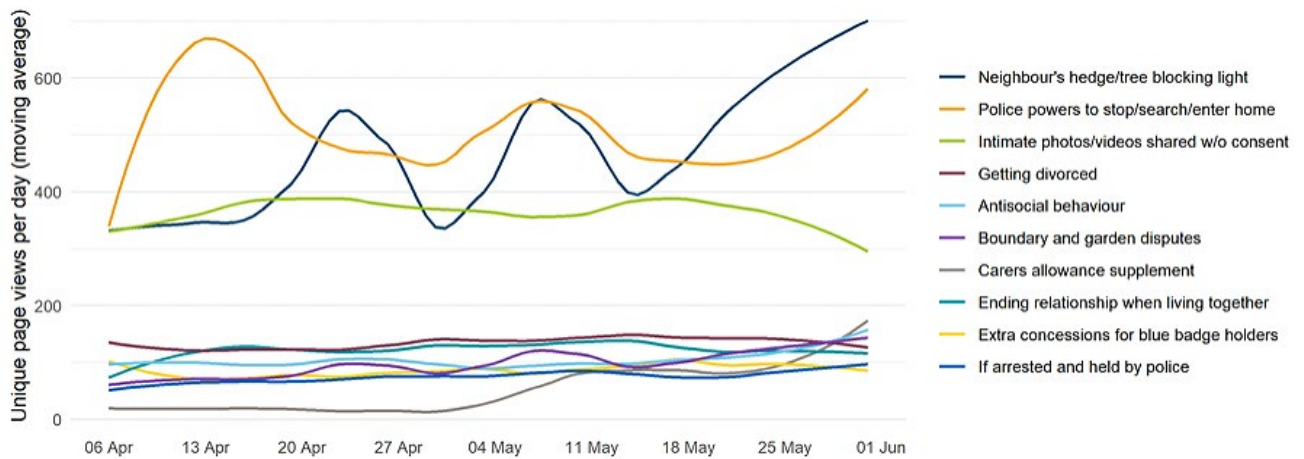
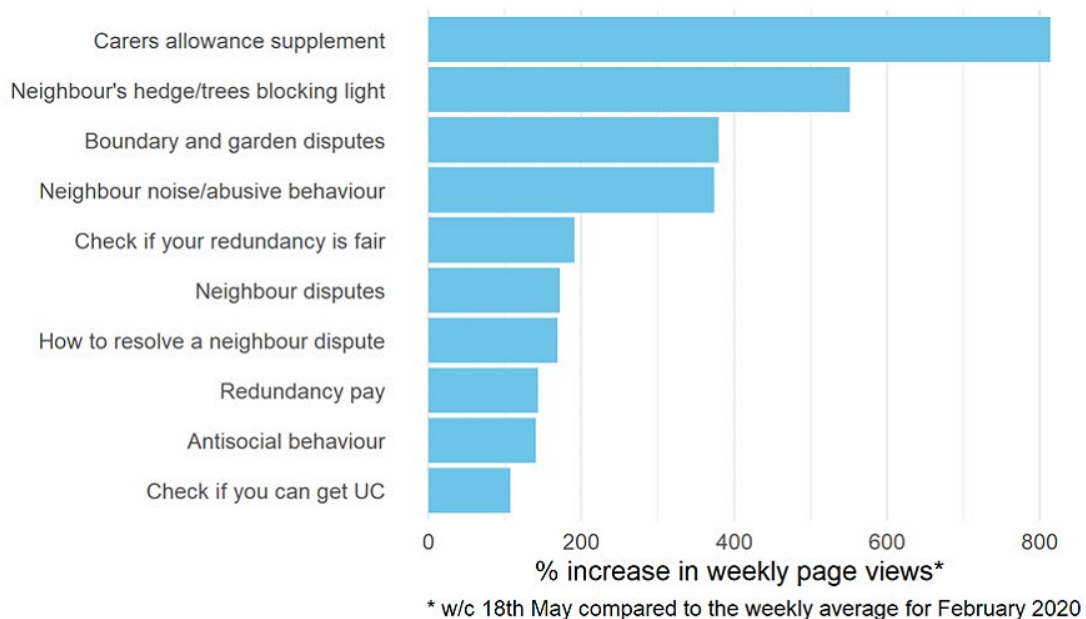


Chart 6 shows the pages for which traffic is most above the level seen pre-COVID -19. Again, many of these relate to disputes between neighbours, but views of pages about the Carer's Allowance Supplement, redundancy, and Universal Credit are also elevated.

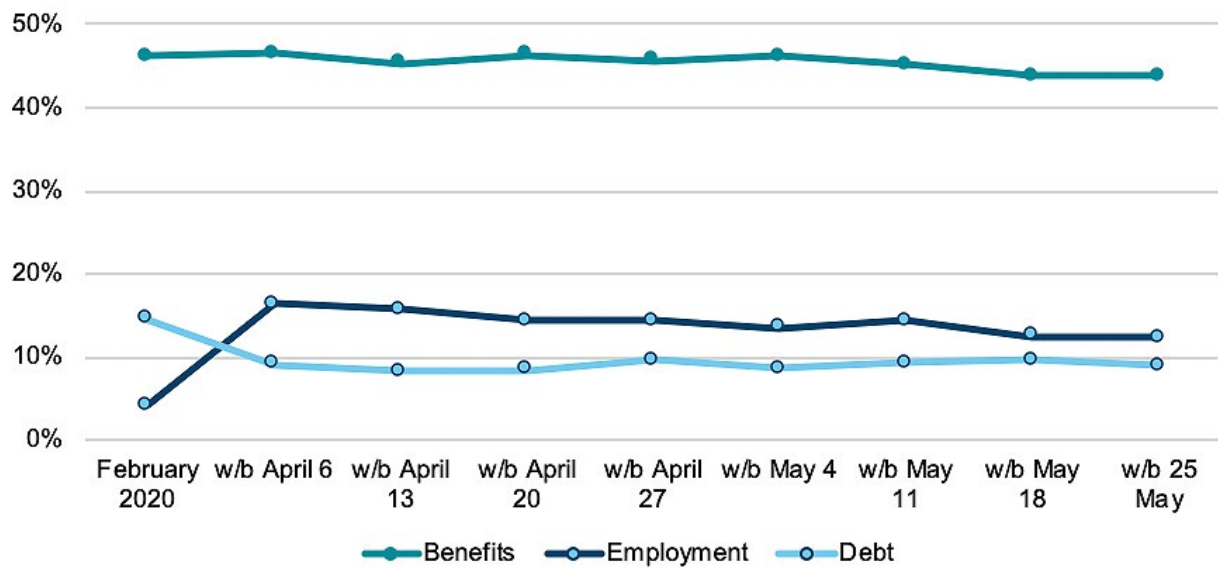
Chart 6: Pages that are notably more popular than usual



Advice from Citizens Advice Bureaux

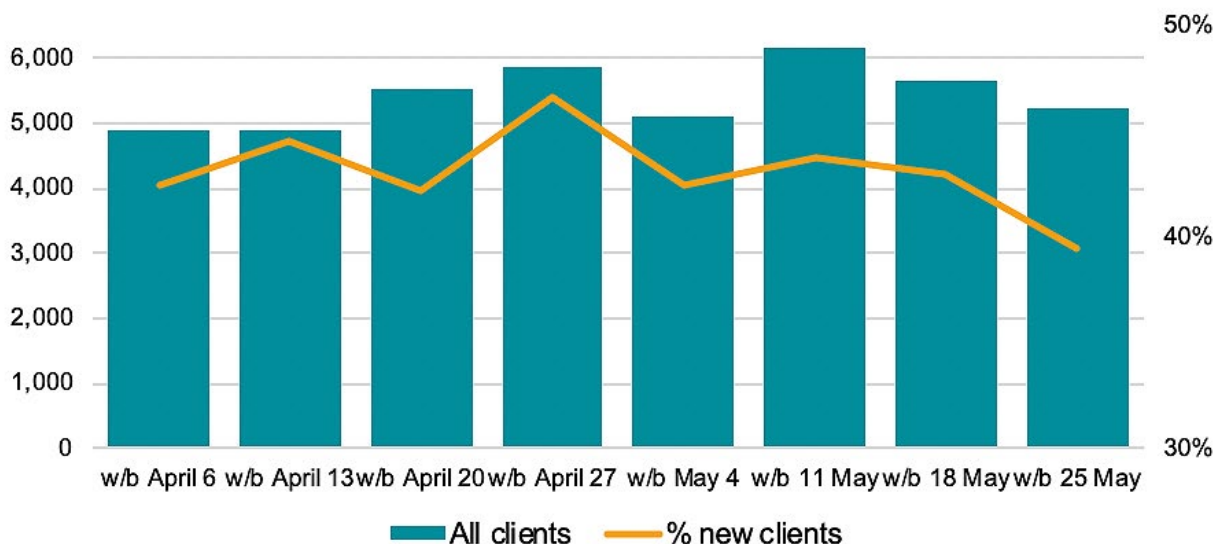
Benefits, employment and debt advice have consistently been the most common areas for advice over the last few weeks. Between last week and the previous there has been no notable change.

Chart 7: Top three advice areas (as a proportion of all advice)



The percentage of clients who are new to the CAB network decreased from 43% to 39% during the week beginning 25th May. Before the coronavirus pandemic around a third of clients seen by bureaux were new clients. This suggests a move towards pre-COVID-19 levels of new clients.

Chart 8: Weekly client numbers



There has been little change to the way clients contact advisers in the last week. Direct telephone contact with local CAB remains the most common, with around 1 in 5 contacts coming by email and just over 1 in 10 through the National Helpline.

Chart 9: Contact method

