

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

04.05.20

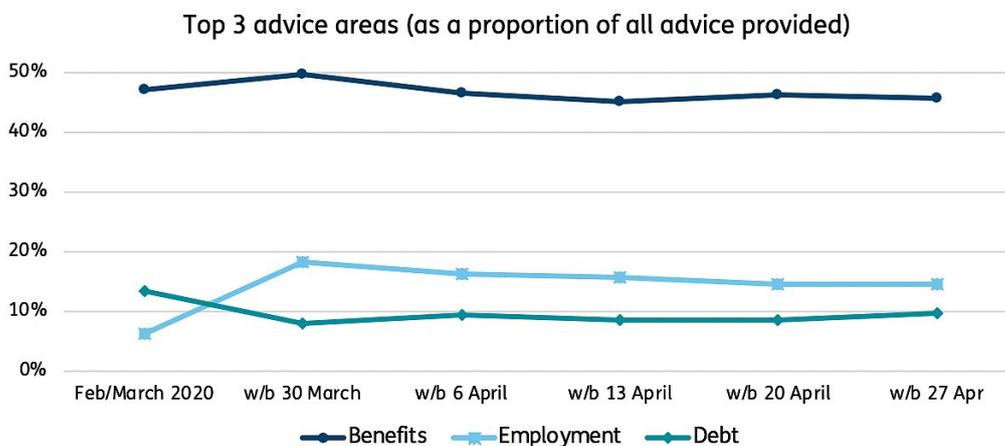


## Introduction

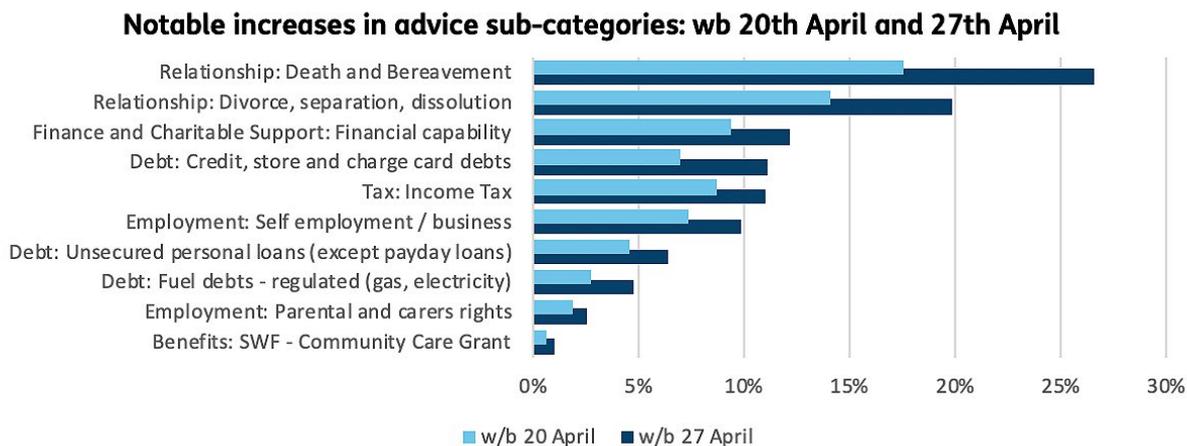
This is a weekly report that tracks changes in the type of advice people are seeking from the Scottish Citizens Advice Network. It includes data from Citizens Advice Bureaux and from our public advice site. Employment-related advice remains more sought after than debt-related advice, a change from pre-COVID-19 trends. On our public advice site unique views of pages - “If you can’t pay your bills because of coronavirus” and “Coronavirus check what benefits you can get” - remained similar to the previous week. In terms of week-on-week percentage increases, views notably increased for pages relating to: Coronavirus and time off work to care for someone; insurance; scams; and borrowing money.

## Advice from Citizens Advice Bureaux

The proportion of advice given on social security has been broadly constant in recent weeks, but employment-related advice has overtaken debt-related advice as the second most common advice area.

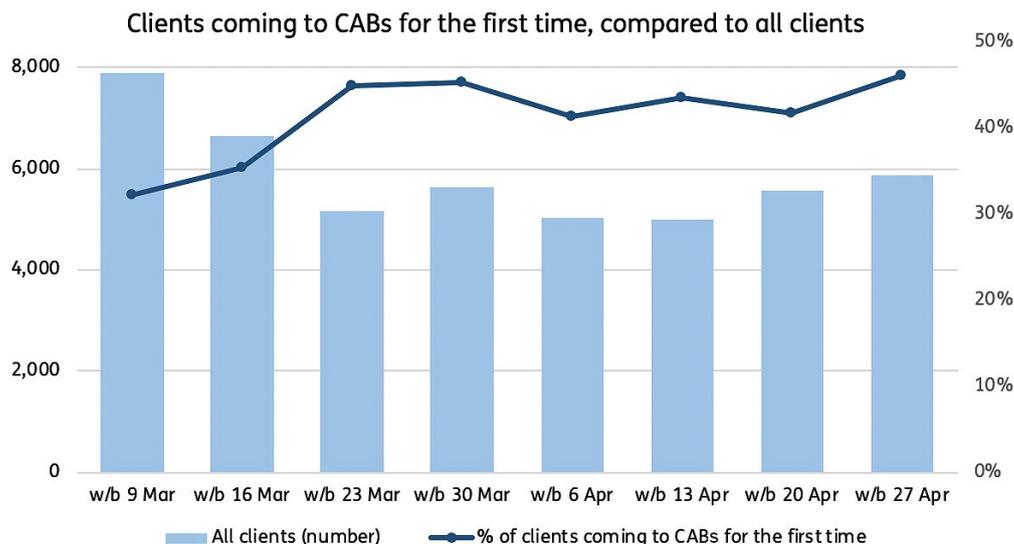


For the most part, the proportion of advice given in these general top-level areas appears to be returning to pre-COVID 19 levels. However, there are increases in specific kinds of advice within some top-level areas. The most notable are within the areas of Relationships, Finance, Debt, Tax and Employment, as can be seen below.



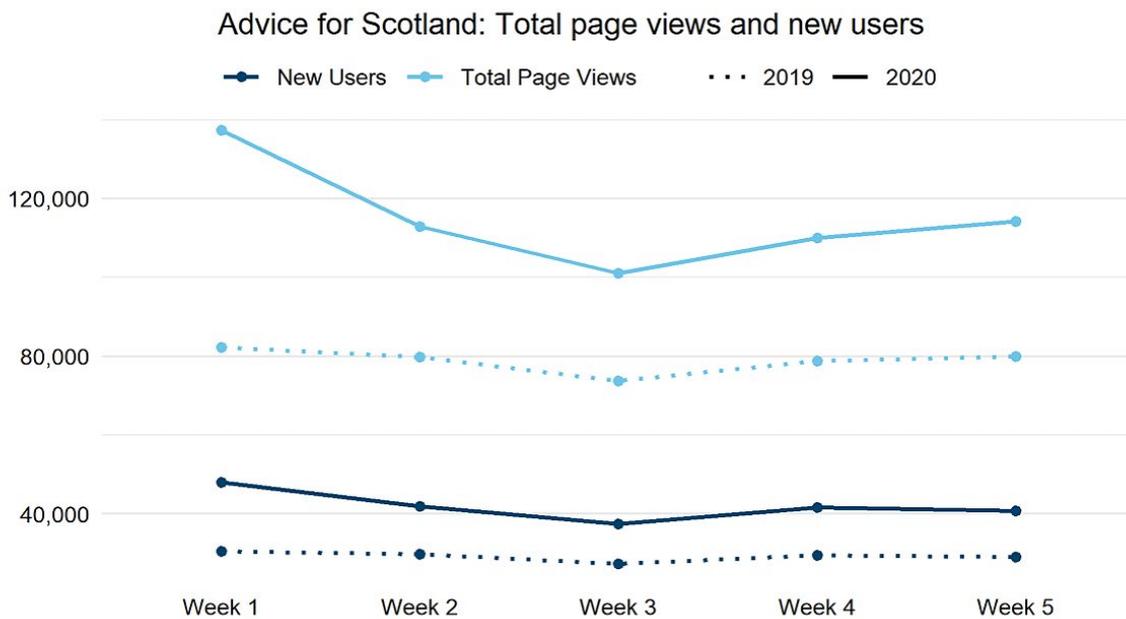
Note: Chart shows the ten advice sub-categories (e.g. ‘death and bereavement’, ‘income tax’) that have grown most as a proportion of their associated main advice category (e.g. ‘Relationship’, ‘Tax’). Advice sub-categories recorded less than 40 in the week beginning 27th April.

The number of clients has increased in each of the last two weeks, and an increase in the proportion of clients coming to bureaux for advice for the first time continues.

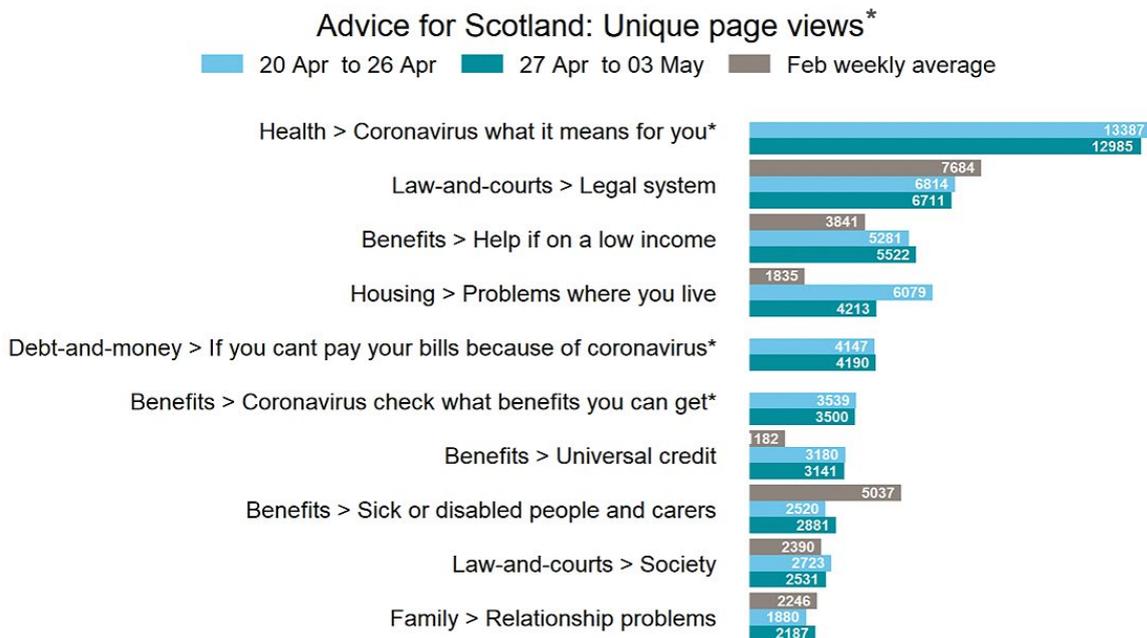


## Online advice

On the public advice website, total page views and the number of new users on the site remain well above the comparable period in 2019. After very high traffic to the website in March, traffic fell during April but appears to be rising again.



The recently added Coronavirus information pages continue to receive a high number of views. Views of the Universal Credit pages remain high compared to February, as do some other pages related to social security. However when comparing this week to the previous week, page views have remained relatively consistent, with the exception of housing-related problems. These are still well above pre-Covid-19 levels, but have dropped in the past week.



\*Coronavirus pages new in March, so no February weekly average available

## Contact method

Beyond the website, telephone calls and emails to individual Citizens Advice Bureau have increased a lot over the past four weeks, as the network has moved away from face-to-face advice. Calls to the new national Helpline, which began operation on 14 April, are also slowing increasing.

