

Who are you?

Annual snapshot of Citizens
Advice Bureaux clients

May 2018



ISSN 2398-4775



2017 Annual Snapshot of Citizens Advice Bureaux clients

Citizens Advice Bureaux deliver frontline advice services through over 275 service points across Scotland, ranging from city centres to small island communities.

All the advice they provide is free, independent, confidential, impartial and available to all. In 2016/17, the Citizens Advice Service in Scotland helped almost 310,000 people deal with over 1 million issues.

Each year Citizens Advice Scotland, the umbrella body for bureaux in Scotland, runs a client profile exercise to gather information about the range and type of clients who approach bureaux for advice. It is important for the whole Citizens Advice Service in Scotland to understand who uses bureaux services

so we can do our best to reach as much of Scotland's diverse population as possible.

In this sixth edition of the "Who Are You?" series we take a look at those who came to Citizens Advice Bureaux service points during November 2017. During that time, data was collected on almost 22,000 individuals.

As with all surveys of this type not all clients wished to answer all questions; it is also not always appropriate to ask for such information. Because of this, it is not possible to report on every category but our analysis shows that comparison with the client profile data from the previous three years is consistent and the data collected is robust enough to compare to Scottish population data.

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

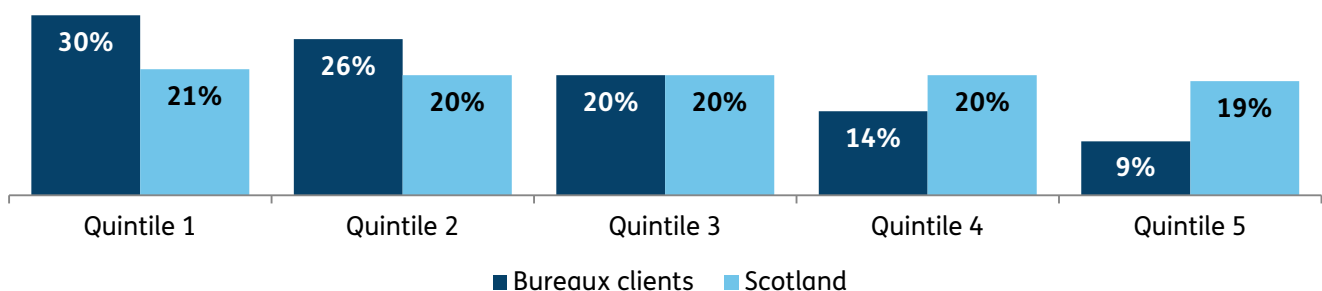
The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation ('SIMD') is the Scottish Government's official tool for identifying those places within Scotland experiencing deprivation.

Although the terms 'poverty' and 'deprivation' are sometimes used interchangeably, in this context deprivation is defined more widely as the range of problems that arise due to lack of resources or opportunities in relation to health; safety; education; employment; housing; access to services; and financial aspects. The SIMD divides Scotland into a number of small areas, or 'datazones', which can be ranked from the most to least deprived in relation to these multiple factors.

In considering SIMD it is useful to form the datazones into larger categories, with one of the most commonly used being the 'quintile'; this divides Scotland into five equal groups with

Quintile 1 ('Q1') containing the 20% most deprived datazones through to Q5, with the 20% least deprived data zones. As can be seen below, bureaux clients from November 2017 ranged from being over represented in the lower quintiles to being under represented in the top quintile.

It was further noted that client age increased slightly as deprivation decreased, as did the likelihood of a client being married/cohabitating. The likelihood of being an owner-occupier, or in full-time employment, also increased as deprivation decreased. In contrast, the likelihood of a client living in social or council rented accommodation decreased along with deprivation, as did the number of respondents identifying as being 'unable to work due to ill health/disability' (with the latter decreasing substantially).





Male and female mix

Just over half of bureaux clients during November 2017 (55%) were female, which is comparable to the mid-2016 population estimate for Scotland (51%). While few differences between the sexes were evident, a higher proportion of females (18%) than males (6%) reported being in part-time employment; females were more likely to be in employment (34%) than males (25%) in general. In addition, females were more likely to have caring responsibilities (45%) than males (27%), and for those responsibilities to be for children (35% v. 17%).



Housing tenure

The proportion of bureaux clients during November 2017 who lived in council-rented accommodation (29%) was more than twice the proportion reported in the 2011 Census (13%). A higher proportion was also in privately-let accommodation (15%) than for all Scotland (11%). In contrast, the proportion of bureaux clients who were owner-occupiers (28%) was less than half of the 62% reported in the Census.

Over two-thirds of those reporting living with friends or family (72%) had never been married and were most likely to be male (56%). There was a similar picture for those reporting as being homeless or in temporary accommodation, with 65% never having married and 62% being male. Almost one-in-five of those reporting as homeless or in temporary accommodation (17%) were in employment.

18-60+ Client age

One-third of bureaux clients during November 2017 were aged between 44 and 59 years (33%), a higher proportion than the 23% of the population in this age range reported for Scotland in 2016. Those aged between 25 and 44 years accounted for 35% of bureaux clients which, again, is higher than the proportion for this age group in Scotland overall (26%).



Relationship status

One-third of bureaux clients in November 2017 (37%) were married or cohabiting, this being considerably lower than the figure reported in the 2011 Census (56%). The proportion of bureaux clients who had never been married (38%) was higher than the comparable Census figure (28%). Clients reporting as divorced or in dissolved civil partnerships were most likely to be aged between 45 and 59 years (48%) and live in council-rented accommodation (36%), while widowed clients were most likely to be female (71%).



Ethnicity

The majority of bureaux clients during November 2017 identified themselves as white Scottish (82%); this is consistent with the 2011 Census figures (84%). It is also of interest to note that the proportions of those describing themselves as 'white/other (non-UK); Pakistani; or of other/mixed race backgrounds were consistent with the Census data.

For the first time we have also been recording an individual's nationality should they be willing to share it. Again, the majority of those responding (62%) identified as Scottish, with the next most common response being British (27%). Other EU nationals (i.e. not from the UK) accounted for 6% of clients. Other EU nationals were more likely to be in employment (54%) than those identifying as Scottish (26%), and almost three times as likely (31% v. 11%) to live in private rented accommodation.



Family Composition

Almost one-third of clients visiting bureaux during November 2017 were part of families with one or more children (30%), including single-parent families, which is a larger proportion than that reported in the Census (19%). Single people of non-pensionable age were also over-represented (31%) in comparison to the Census figures (22%).



Employment status

The largest proportion of bureaux clients during November 2017 were in full- or part-time employment (30%), although this is considerably lower than the 2011 Census figure (53%). In contrast, a higher proportion of bureaux clients were unemployed (14%) than was recorded in the Census (5%).

The figure for retirees and those looking after home/family were almost the same in both cases (16% and 4% respectively). Those in part-time employment were far more likely to be female (81%) than male (19%), as were those who reported that they were looking after home/family (89% v. 11%).



Caring Responsibilities

At least one-third of bureaux clients¹ (37%) reported having some form of caring responsibility, the majority of which (23% of the entire sample overall) were caring for children. Although the categories are not mutually exclusive, at least 7% of bureaux clients also reported caring for someone with a disability. Clients looking after children with no disability were most likely to be in some form of employment (48%), while the largest proportion of those responsible for disabled children was looking after home/family (23%).

¹ A little over 6,200 clients chose not to respond to this question so the actual percentages may be higher

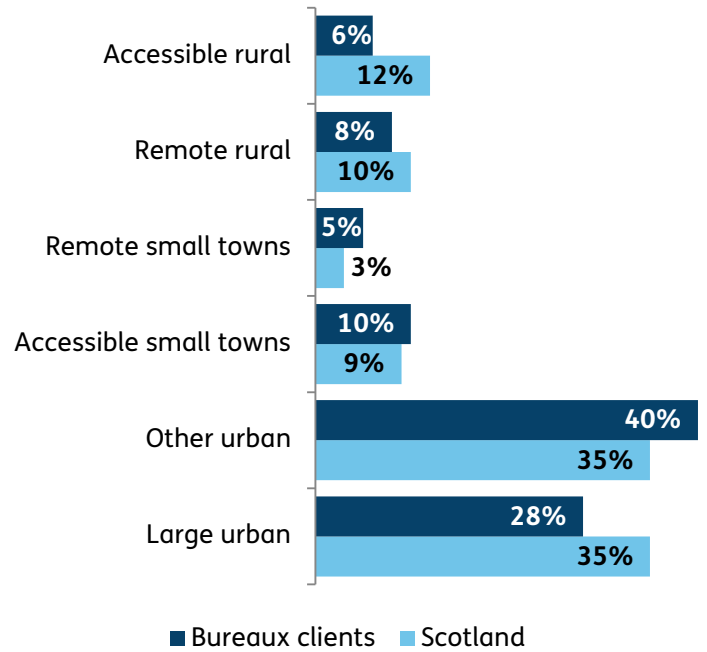


Urban / rural classification

The Scottish Government employs a standard framework in order to define the rurality of an area, and some comparisons have been drawn between this information for Scotland as a whole and that relating to bureaux clients during November 2017.

The client profile data quite closely matches that of all Scotland with the majority of bureaux clients (68%) residing in urban areas, as does the majority of the Scottish population (70%). For bureaux clients it would seem that the likelihood of living in a rural area increases with age with, for example, 21% of the bureaux clients living in remote rural areas being aged 65 or older.

Families with children were the least likely to be living in remote rural areas (26%). Those reporting their nationality as Scottish were most often living in other urban areas (66%) and least often in remote rural areas (56%).



Disability

Due to category differences and varying definitions it is not possible to compare bureaux data on disability to the information gathered by the Census. It is therefore unclear if the 55% of bureaux clients describing themselves as having some form of disability is representative of the population as a whole, although this proportion across the whole of Scotland would seem unlikely. Of those describing themselves as disabled, 35% reported that this limited their daily activities 'a little' while 62% reported they were limited 'a lot'.

Summary

This 2017 snapshot clearly shows that bureaux continue to serve a considerable proportion of Scotland's diverse population. While there are small variations in numbers between 2017 and earlier client profile data, it is reassuring to note that proportions remain broadly consistent and also comparable with the Census in general.