

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

Data to 10.05.20



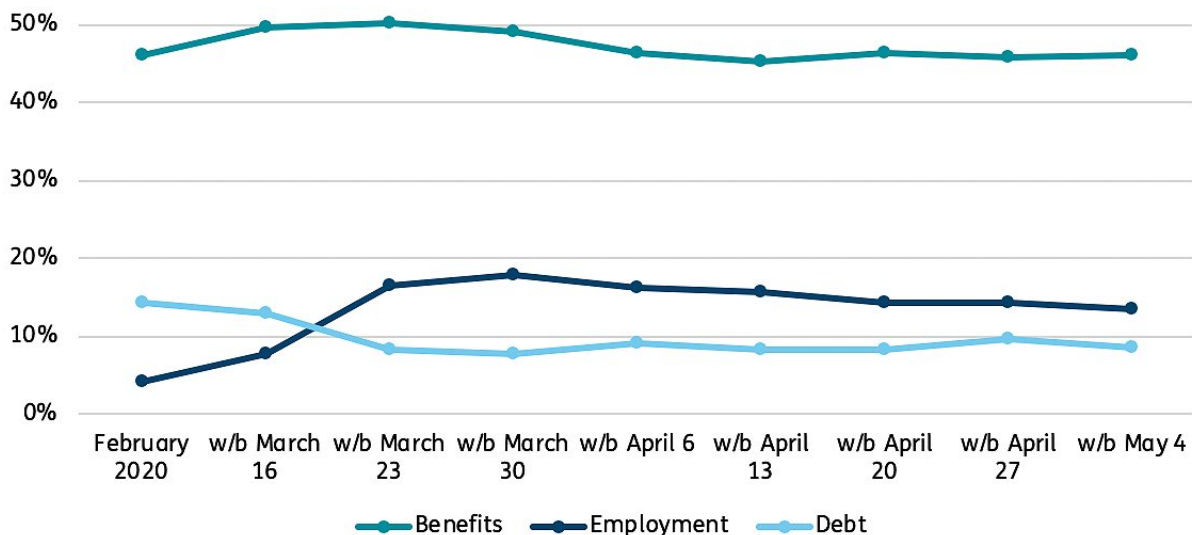
Introduction

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. As with last week, 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 terms of specific coronavirus pages views, those about paying bills and self-employment have increased over the period. This report covers the 8-week period to 10 May 2020.

Advice from Citizens Advice Bureaux

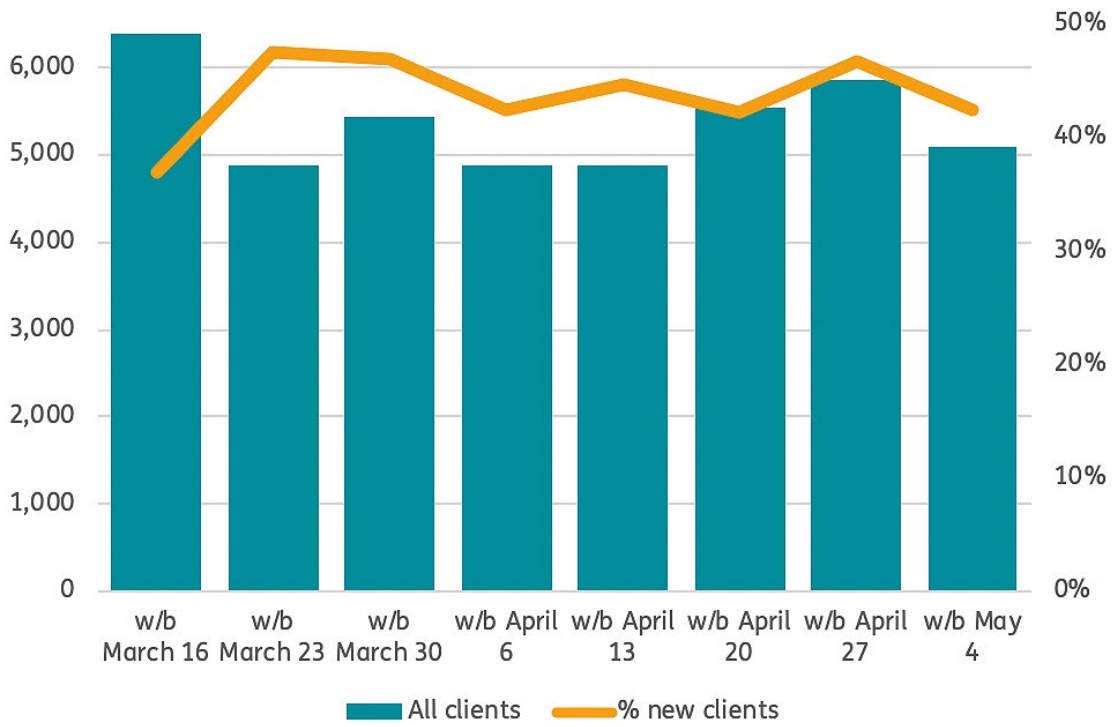
Social security advice remains the most common, while employment advice continues to show an increased demand in recent weeks. There are some early indications that advice in relation to debt is slowly increasing to pre COVID-19 levels.

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



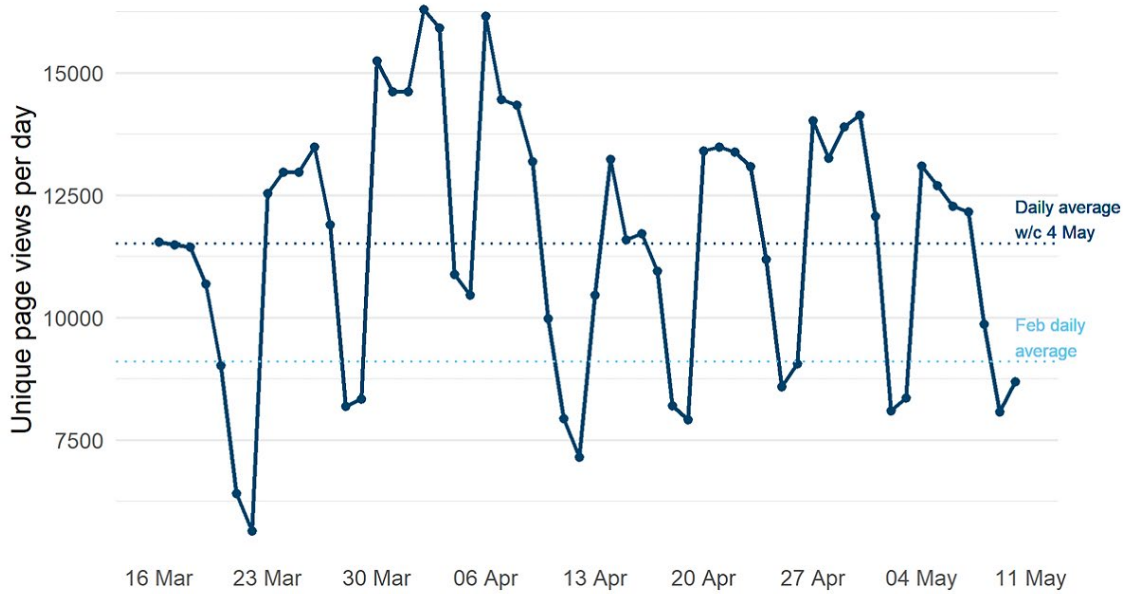
The proportion of new clients seeking advice continues to exceed pre COVID-19 levels, which may suggest an increased need for advice in general.

Chart 2: Weekly client numbers



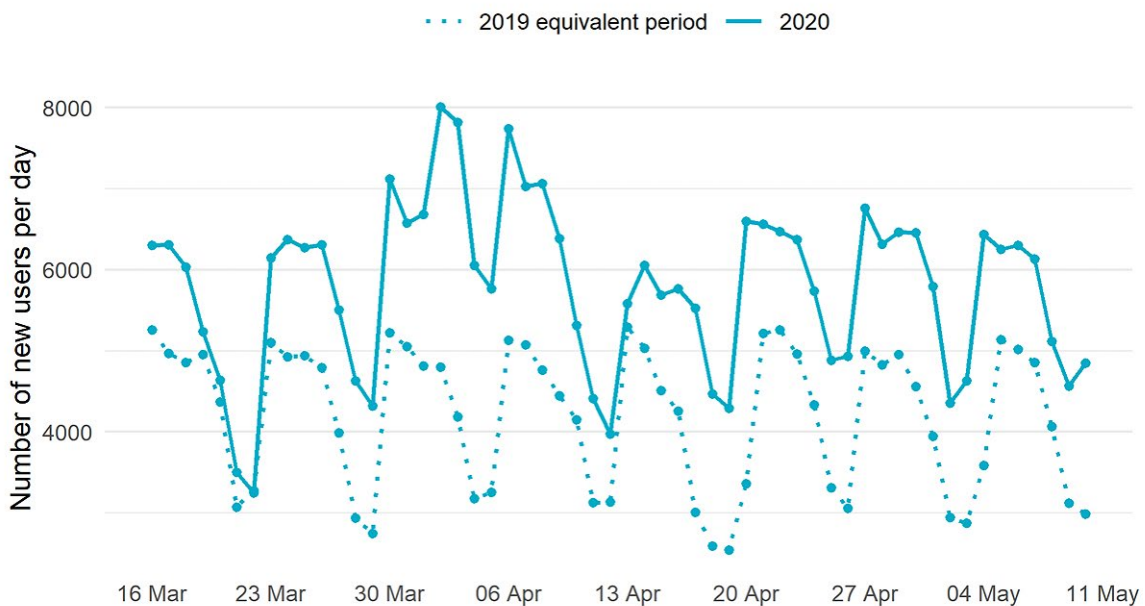
In the week beginning 4 May, there was a daily average of 10,985 unique page views on the public advice site, compared with an average of 9,109 in the period of 3 February to 1 March 2020 (chart 4).

Chart 4: Unique page views per day



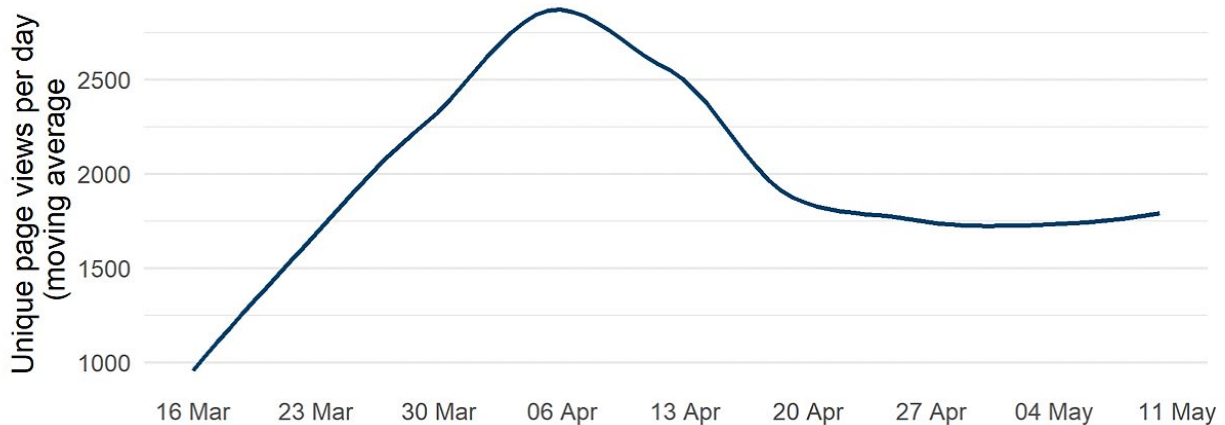
In the eight weeks between 16 March and 10 May, an average of 7,926 people used the public advice site each day, of whom 72% were new users. This is substantially higher than during the same period last year (chart 5).

Chart 5: New website users per day



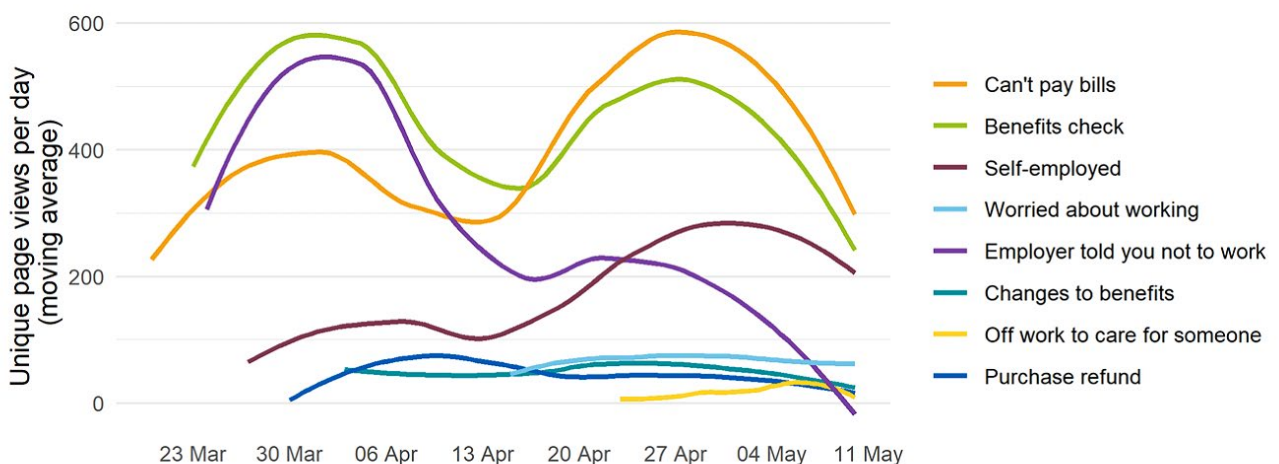
The most popular page on the public advice site remains the main [‘Coronavirus: what it means for you’](#) page. Views of this page increased steadily in the four weeks from mid-March to early April and have since dropped to a level of around 1,750 page views per day.

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



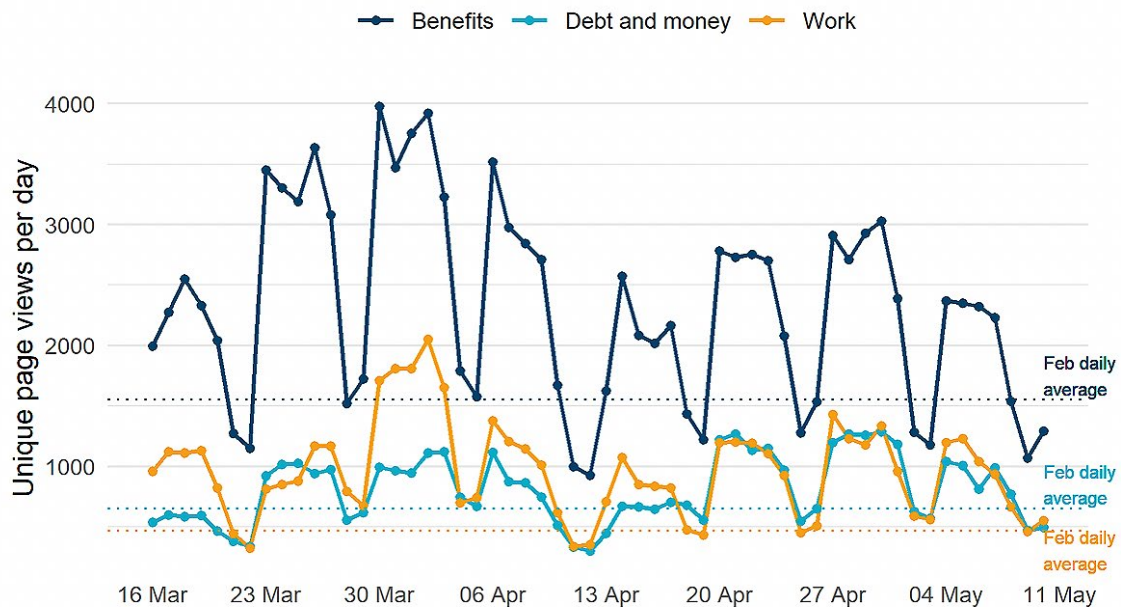
A clear pattern of increased views of coronavirus-specific pages around the end of the month is visible in chart 7. Over the same time views increased for pages giving advice to those who cannot pay their bills because of coronavirus and for those who are self-employed and views decreased for the page for those who have been told not to work by their employer.

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



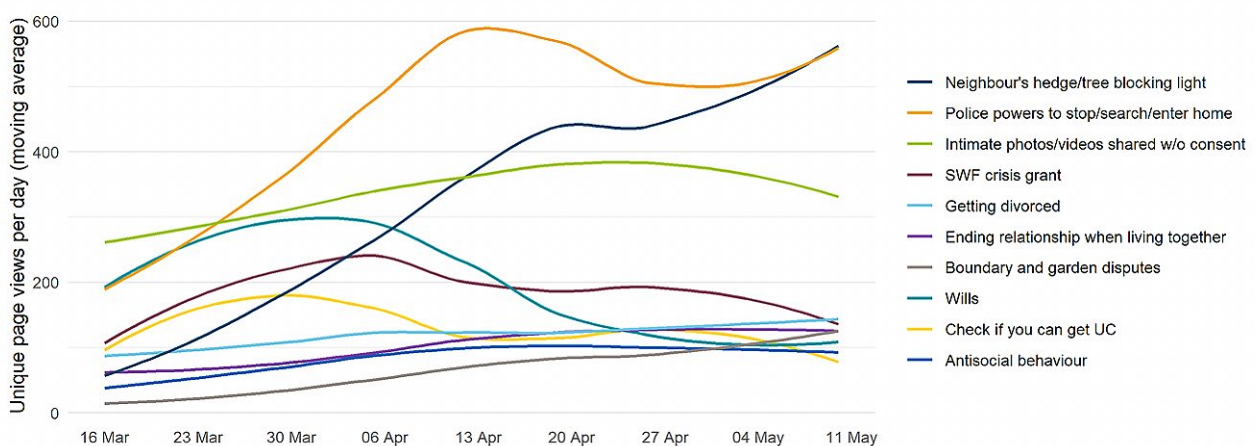
Views of the pages related to social security, debt and money, and work have increased since the lockdown measures began. Chart 8 shows the daily views of pages in these categories. For the social security and work categories, the high point was in early April but for the debt and money pages, views were highest in late April.

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



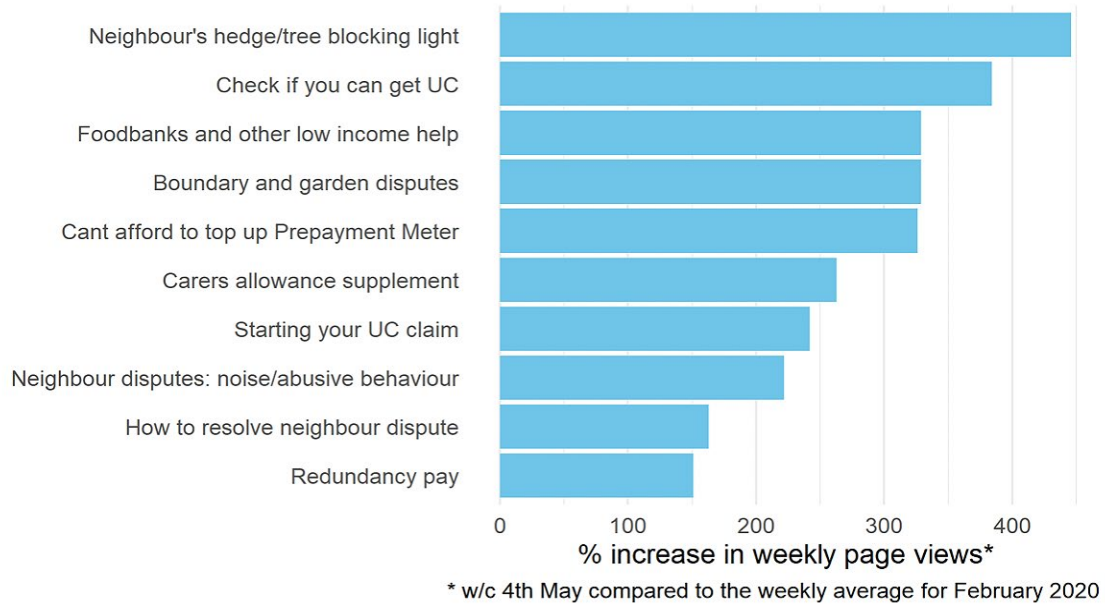
The ten most viewed pages unrelated to COVID-19 in the week beginning 4 May are shown in Chart 9 alongside the eight-week trend in daily page views. The rise in views of pages related to neighbour disputes - especially around hedges or trees blocking light - is unusual and may be related to increased time spent at home during lockdown. Also of note are increased views of pages related to police powers.

Chart 9: Page view trends for the top 10 non-COVID-19 pages (during w/c 4th May)



The pages with the greatest increase in views compared with pre COVID-19 levels are shown in chart 10. These pages are almost all either related to social security, financial hardship or neighbour disputes.

Chart 10: Pages that are notably more popular than usual



Contact method

Telephone contact with individual Citizens Advice bureaux remains the most common method of client contact. A steady increase in calls to the national helpline is also evident.

Chart 11: Method of contact with the Citizens Advice network

