

5 Broken Housing Benefit claims

5.1 Introduction and summary

The aim of this short section of the survey was to find out about the incidence of broken Housing Benefit (HB) claims. The first question was aimed at finding out if local authorities (LAs) had seen cases where a claimant who had been moved from Incapacity Benefit (IB) to the Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) had moved to the new Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rules because there had been a broken claim. The second question assessed the incidence of existing claimants, who were subject to transitional protection for up to nine months, breaking their HB claim for a week then reclaiming prior to the end of March in order to maximise their transitional protection.

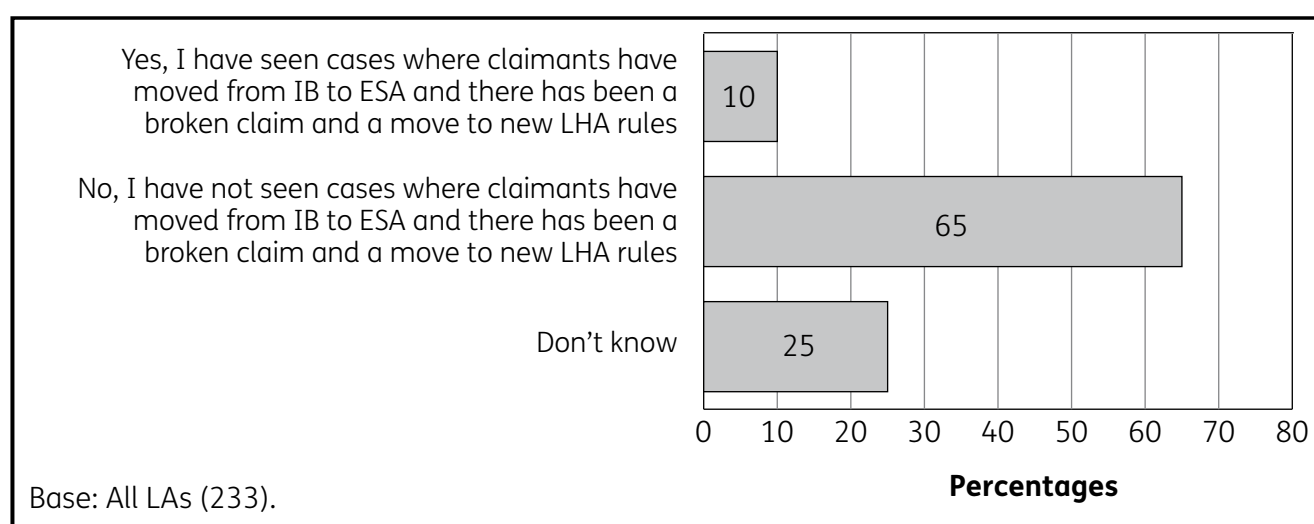
The key findings based on all LAs answering are summarised in this section. These are followed by the main findings, which include charts plus commentary highlighting the key sub-group differences. It is important to note that LAs were told to answer questions in this section based on their general perception if they did not keep records of the information required. The result of this is that some findings may be based on anecdotal evidence.

- Just one in ten LAs had seen cases where claimants had moved from IB to ESA and there had been a broken claim and a move to the new LHA rules, although this increases to 26% of Scottish LAs.
- Around three in ten LAs (31 per cent) said that before April 2011 they had claimants who broke their HB claim for a week then reclaimed prior to the end of March in order to maximise their transitional protection. This figure increases significantly, however, among London Boroughs (75 per cent), LAs with a high caseload (47 per cent) and those in the North West (50 per cent).

5.2 Main findings

The following details the main findings and includes charts for all questions plus commentary highlighting the key sub-group differences.

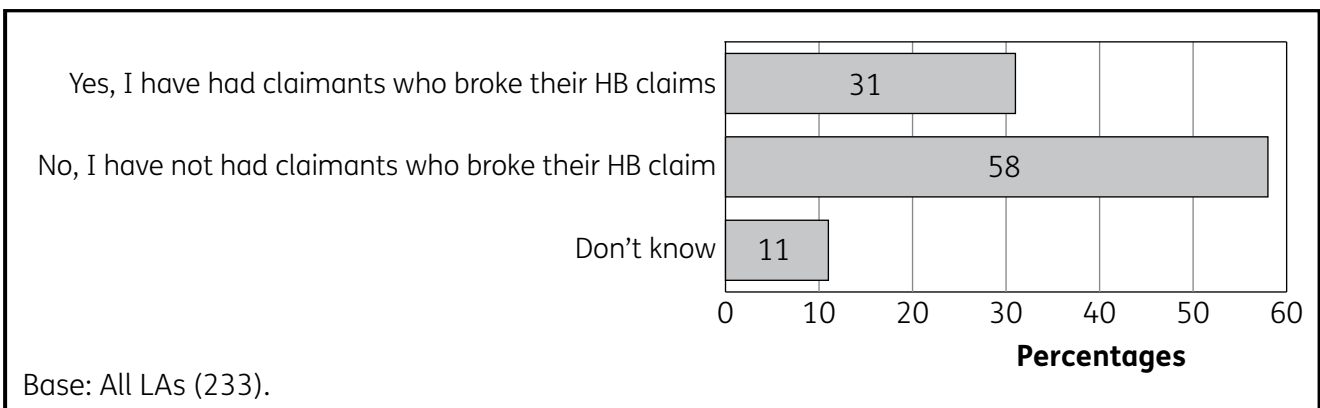
Figure 5.1 Has your LA seen any cases where a claimant has been moved from Incapacity Benefit to the Employment and Support Allowance, and there has been a broken claim and a move to the new LHA rules?



A majority of LAs (65 per cent) had not seen cases where claimants had moved from IB to ESA and there had been a broken claim and a move to the new LHA rules.

Just 10 per cent of LAs had seen these types of cases, although this increases to 26 per cent of Scottish LAs. It is also worth noting, however, that a quarter of LAs did not know whether or not this had occurred, rising to 37 per cent of high caseload authorities.

Figure 5.2 Thinking back to before April 2011, did your LA have any claimants who broke their HB claim for a week then reclaimed prior to the end of March in order to maximise their transitional protection?



Around three in ten LAs (31 per cent) said that before April 2011 they had claimants who broke their HB claim for a week then reclaimed prior to the end of March in order to maximise their transitional protection. This figure increases significantly, however, among London Boroughs (75 per cent), LAs with a high caseload (47 per cent) and those in the North West (50 per cent).

On the other hand, 58 per cent of LAs had not had experience of these claimants and 11 per cent did not know.