

7 Supported ‘exempt’ accommodation

7.1 Introduction and summary

The following section reports on questions asked about supported ‘exempt’ accommodation. This refers to supported housing **but only** as defined in legislation: either a resettlement place or accommodation provided by a county council, housing association (be it unregistered or a registered housing association/not-for-profit private registered provider of social housing/registered social landlord), registered charity or voluntary organisation where that body or person acting on their behalf provides the claimant with care, support or supervision.

Such accommodation includes group homes, hostels, refuges, sheltered housing, supported living complexes, extra care housing and adapted housing for the disabled provided by housing associations (see above), registered charities, voluntary organisations and county councils. Housing Benefit (HB) recognises the often higher costs of providing such accommodation.

Following a Department for Work and Pensions consultation in 2011 on reforming this area of support for housing costs, this section of the survey sought to update information on caseloads and expenditure in this area to inform further development of the reforms.

The key findings based on all local authorities (LAs) answering are summarised in this section. These are followed by the main findings, which include charts plus commentary highlighting the key statistically significant sub-group differences. We have not commented on differences that are not significant. Where percentages do not sum to 100, this may be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of ‘don’t know’ or ‘other’ categories, or multiple answers.

The average (mean score) number of cases in supported housing that met the definition of 'Exempt Accommodation' where the landlord was a county council or housing association across all LAs interviewed was 385. Where the landlord was a registered charity or voluntary organisation, the average number (mean score) of cases of this kind across all LAs was 124.

Where LAs had HB cases in supported 'exempt' accommodation (where the landlord was a county council or housing association) and such cases were not referred, the most common reason given by LAs for not referring them, selected by three quarters (77 per cent), was that the LA judged the rent reasonable compared to social sector rents for similar accommodation.

The responses of LAs to the question about what percentage of cases in supported 'exempt' accommodation were living in each of the following types of accommodation: purpose built; hostels; adapted from mainstream social sector housing stock; foyer or other specialist provision; refuges; sheltered housing; extra care housing; group homes and other shared housing were affected by two thirds (65 per cent) of LAs being unable to provide any indication of an answer to this question.

Similarly when LAs were asked to state the percentage of cases in supported 'exempt' accommodation living in each of the following types of accommodation – communal/shared units or self-contained units – 61 per cent of LAs could not give an answer.

LAs were asked to state the average weekly amount of eligible rent, including eligible service charges, used for their caseload in supported 'exempt' accommodation where the landlord was a county council or housing association. Approximately two in five (41 per cent) of LAs could not provide an answer to this question, despite the question stating that estimates were acceptable. The averages, where LAs were able to provide an answer, (123 LAs in total answered with amounts) were recorded in greatest concentrations in the range between £101 and £200 (mean score £154). Responses to the same question, but applied to situations where a registered charity or voluntary organisation were the landlord, were recorded in the greatest concentrations in the range between £151 and £200 (mean score £170).

7.2 Main findings

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

Figure 7.1 How many cases do you currently have in supported housing that meet the above definition of ‘Exempt’ Accommodation where the landlord is a county council or housing association¹⁹

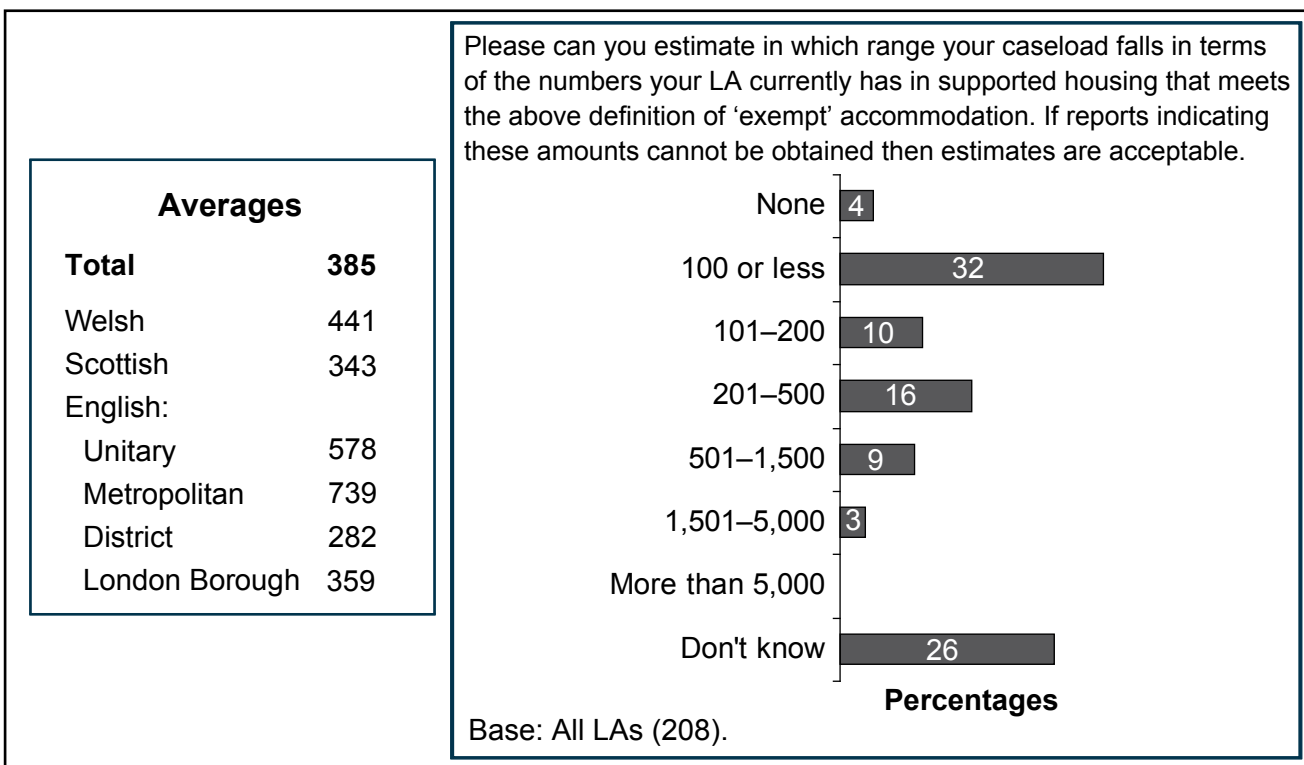
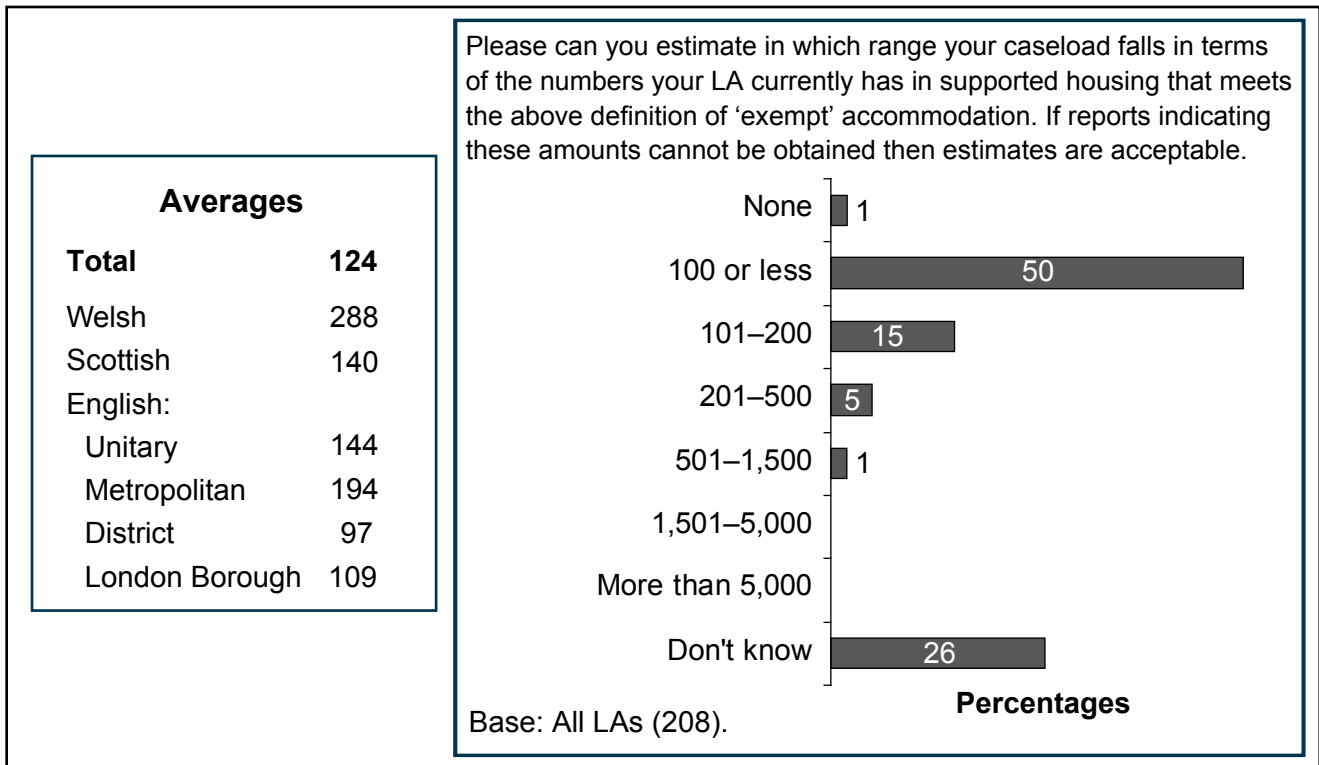


Figure 7.1 illustrates that where the landlord was a county council or housing association, the majority (58 per cent) of LAs had between one and five hundred cases in supported ‘exempt’ accommodation, 32 per cent had one hundred or less, and four per cent had none. Twelve per cent had between 501 and 5,000 cases. Approximately a quarter (26 per cent) of LAs could not answer this question in either the unprompted form or when asked to select a band from a range.

The average (mean score) number of cases of this kind across all LAs was 385. There were variations in the mean scores by LA type; English Unitary authorities at 578 had a higher incidence of these cases, as did English Metropolitan Districts at 739, in comparison to English Districts at 282.

¹⁹ LAs were strongly encouraged to run reports indicating these amounts where possible. Where a report was not possible, estimates were also accepted.’

Figure 7.2 How many cases do you currently have in supported housing that meet the above definition of ‘Exempt’ Accommodation where the landlord is a registered charity or voluntary organisation²⁰

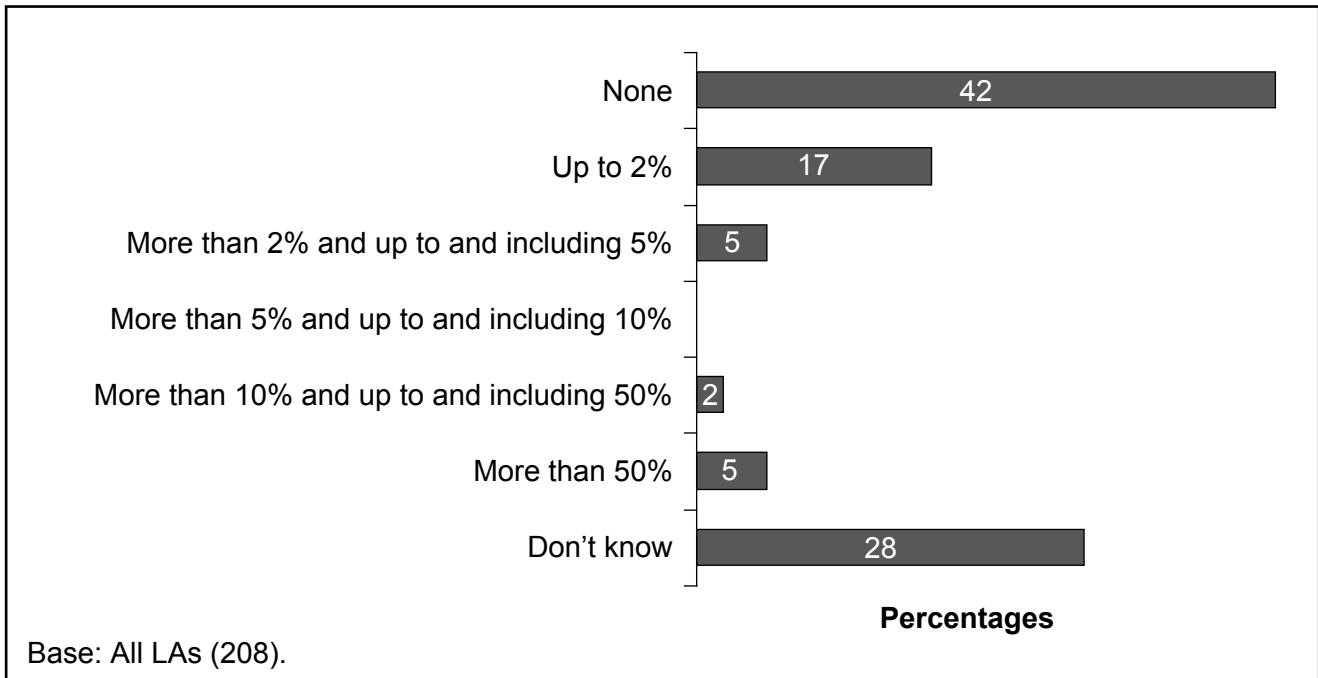


Where the landlord was a registered charity or voluntary organisation, the majority (70 per cent) of LAs had between one and five hundred cases in supported housing that met the definition of ‘Exempt Accommodation’, a half (50 per cent) had 100 or less, one per cent said they had none. Just two per cent had between 501 and 1,500 cases in this category; none of the LAs said there were more than 1,500 cases in this category.

The average number (mean score) of cases of this kind across all LAs was 124. There were variations by LA type which were reflected in the mean scores for this measure. Welsh LAs had a higher incidence of these cases, with a mean score at 288, as did English Metropolitan Districts with a mean score of 194, in contrast to English Districts at 97.

²⁰ LAs were strongly encouraged to run reports where possible.

Figure 7.3 For HB cases in Supported ‘Exempt’ Accommodation where the landlord is a county council or housing association, what proportion of cases are referred to a rent officer?²¹

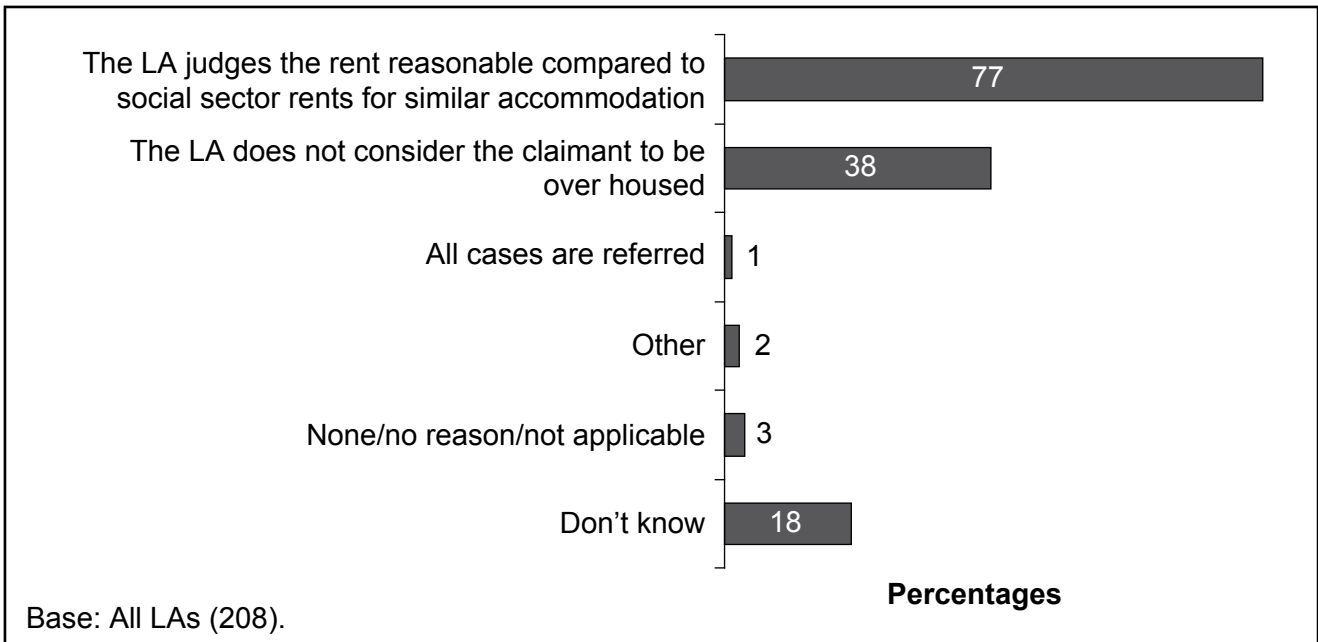


Approximately two in five (42 per cent) of LAs said none of the HB cases in supported ‘exempt’ accommodation, where the landlord was the county council or housing association, were referred to a rent officer. The proportion reporting no referrals of this type was significantly higher among LAs with low caseloads (49 per cent) compared with LAs with high caseloads (34 per cent).

Seventeen per cent of all LAs said up to two per cent of cases of this kind were referred, five per cent said it was between two and five per cent. Two per cent said that more than ten per cent and up to and including 50 per cent were referred, and five per cent said more than 50 per cent were.

²¹ LAs were strongly encouraged to run reports.

Figure 7.4 Thinking of HB cases in Supported ‘Exempt’ Accommodation where the landlord is a county council or housing association, that are not referred to a rent officer, what are the reasons for not referring?



Where LAs had HB cases in supported ‘exempt’ accommodation (where the landlord was a county council or housing association) and such cases were not referred, the most common reason given by LAs for not referring them, mentioned by three quarters (77 per cent) was that the LA judged the rent reasonable compared to social sector rents for similar accommodation. The proportions of LAs responding with this reason was significantly higher among English Metropolitan Districts (86 per cent), English Districts (81 per cent) and English Unitary Authorities (81 per cent), compared to, for example, Scottish LAs (53 per cent).

Approximately two in five of all LAs (38 per cent) said the reason for not referring was that the LA did not consider the claimant to be over housed. The number of LAs citing this reason was significantly higher among LAs that had not contracted-out administration (41 per cent) compared to those that had contracted-out administration (22 per cent).

Table 7.1 Please write in what percentage of cases in supported ‘exempt’ accommodation are living in each of the following types of accommodation?²²

	Purpose built (%)	Hostels (%)	Adapted from mainstream social sector housing stock (%)	Foyer or other specialist provision (%)	Refuges (%)	Sheltered Housing (%)	Extra care housing (%)	Group homes (%)	Other shared houses (%)
None	14	14	17	25	18	14	23	24	20
Under 10 %	9	8	7	6	13	6	6	7	7
11–24 %	6	3	5	2	1	1	3	2	3
25–49%	3	4	2	2	1	7	1	1	*
50–74%	1	4	2	–	1	4	1	–	2
75–99%	–	1	–	–	–	2	–	–	2
100%	1	1	1	–	*	–	–	*	*
Don't know	65	65	65	65	65	65	65	65	65

Base: All LAs (208). Note: * indicates a value of less than 0.5%.

²² The total for all percentages should not exceed 100 per cent. If reports indicating these amounts cannot be obtained then estimates are acceptable, but we would strongly encourage the running of reports where possible

Table 7.1 details the responses of LAs to the question about what percentage of cases in supported ‘exempt’ accommodation were living in each of the following types of accommodation: purpose built; hostels; adapted from mainstream social sector housing stock; foyer or other specialist provision; refuges; sheltered housing; extra care housing; group homes and other shared housing.

LAs were encouraged to run reports where possible to attain this data but the question also stated that estimated answers would be acceptable. Despite the stated allowance of estimated responses, approximately two thirds (65 per cent) of LAs could not give an answer to this question about the breakdown of types of accommodation for cases in supported ‘exempt’ accommodation. London Boroughs were significantly more likely to have said don’t know to this question (86 per cent of London Boroughs compared to 64 per cent of English Districts, 62 per cent of English Metropolitan authorities, and 53 per cent of Scottish authorities).

Where LAs could give a definitive answer for the percentage of cases in supported ‘exempt’ accommodation by type of accommodation, Table 7.1 illustrates that sheltered housing and hostels made up slightly greater proportions of supported ‘exempt’ accommodation than Foyer or other specialist provision and refuges.

Table 7.2 Percentage of cases in supported exempt accommodation in communal/shared units and self-contained units²³

	Communal/shared units (%)	Self-contained units (%)
None	1	4
Under 10 %	5	3
11–24 %	4	3
25–49%	6	6
50–74%	11	10
75–99%	8	11
100%	4	1
Don’t know	61	61

Base: All LAs (208).

Table 7.2 illustrates the responses of LAs to the question about what percentage of cases in supported ‘exempt’ accommodation were living in each of the following types of accommodation: communal/shared units or self-contained units.

LAs were encouraged to run reports where possible to attain this data but the question also stated that estimated answers would be acceptable. Despite the stated allowance of estimated responses, approximately three in five (61 per cent) of LAs could not give an answer to this question about the breakdown between these two categories of accommodation for cases in supported ‘exempt’ accommodation.

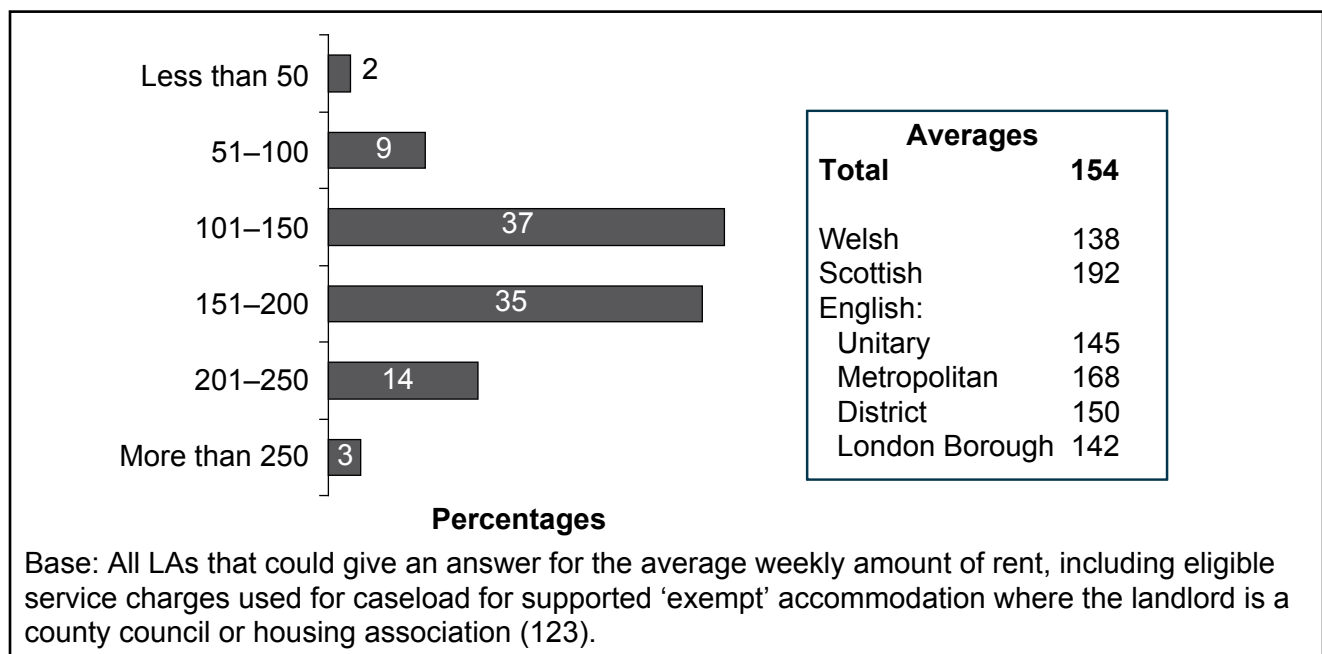
²³ Estimates were acceptable, however, LAs were strongly encouraged to run reports where possible in order to obtain precise figures.

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Where LAs could give a definitive answer to this question, Table 7.2 shows that the patterns of proportions of these two types of accommodation were relatively similar. For example, 12 per cent of LAs said they had between 75-100 per cent of their cases of supported ‘exempt’ accommodation in communal/shared units and the same proportion (12 per cent) said they had that number of cases within self-contained units.

However, there were significant differences for the responses to this question by LA type. Scottish LAs (12 per cent) and London Boroughs (five per cent) were significantly more likely to have said that 100 per cent of their cases in supported ‘exempt’ accommodation were living in self-contained units.

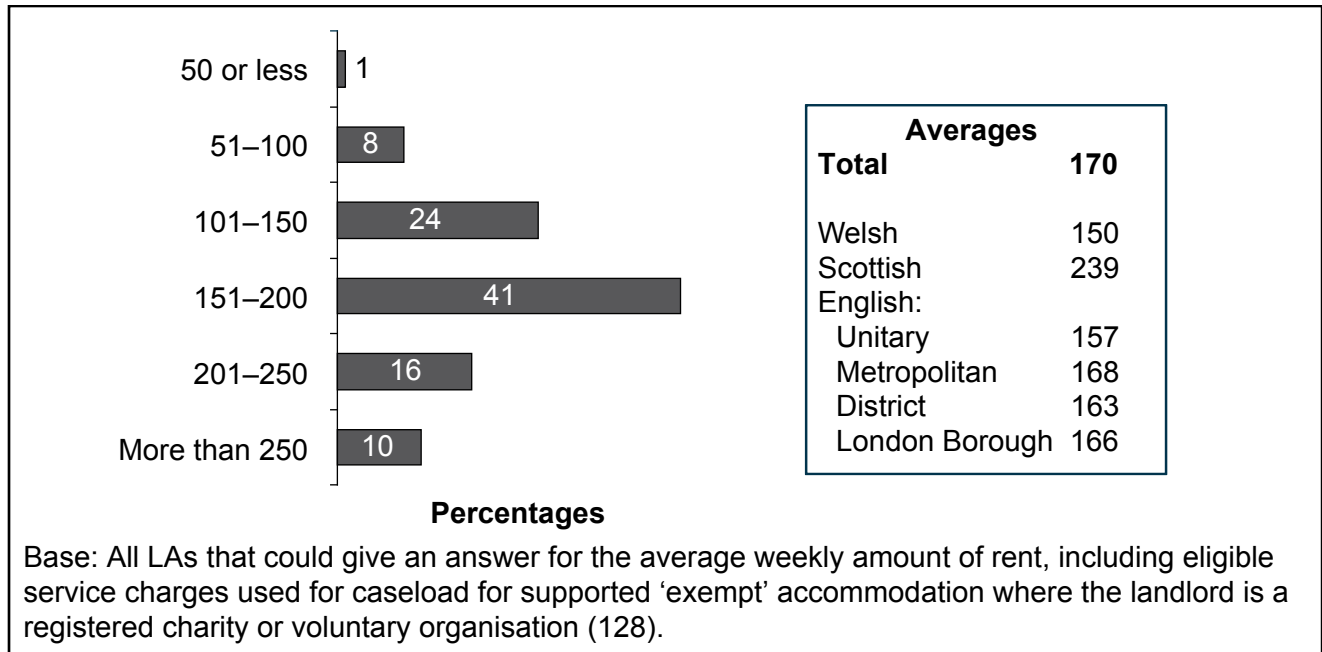
Figure 7.5 Average weekly amount of eligible rent, including eligible service charges, used for caseload in Supported ‘Exempt’ Accommodation where the landlord is a county council or housing association²⁴



LAs were asked to state the average weekly amount of eligible rent, including eligible service charges, used for their caseload in supported ‘exempt’ accommodation where the landlord was a county council or housing association. Approximately two in five (41 per cent) of LAs could not provide an answer to this question, despite the question stating that estimates were acceptable. The averages, where LAs were able to provide an answer, (123 LAs in total answered with amounts) were recorded in greatest concentrations in the range between £101 and £200 (mean score £154). Looking at the mean scores for type of authority, the amount was significantly higher in Scottish LAs (£192) compared to, for example Welsh LAs (mean score £138).

²⁴ Estimates were acceptable, however, LAs were strongly encouraged to run reports in order to obtain precise figures.

Figure 7.6 Average weekly amount of eligible rent, including eligible service charges, used for caseloads in Supported ‘Exempt’ Accommodation, where the landlord is a registered charity or voluntary organisation²⁵



LAs were asked to state the average weekly amount of eligible rent, including eligible service charges, used for their caseload in supported ‘exempt’ accommodation where the landlord was a registered charity or voluntary organisation. Approximately two in five (39 per cent) of LAs could not provide an answer to this question, despite the question stating that estimates were acceptable. The averages, where LAs were able to provide an answer, were recorded in the greatest concentration in the range between £151 and £200 (mean score £170). Looking at the mean scores for type of authority, the amount was significantly higher in Scottish LAs (£239) compared to, for example Welsh LAs (mean score £150).

²⁵ If reports indicating these amounts could not be obtained then estimates were also accepted.