

Housing Allowances Survey: 2015/16 Findings

Prepared by: Information and Analysis Directorate,
VOA



Valuation Office
Agency

Main Findings

Perceptions of the service received on Housing Benefit (HB) referrals:

- Eighty-nine per cent of respondents agreed that the VOA provides a good overall service on Housing Benefit referrals.
- Ninety per cent of respondents agreed that VOA staff had the required knowledge and expertise to assist their organisation.
- Eighty-eight per cent of respondents agreed that the VOA Rent Officers delivered Housing Benefit referrals within an appropriate timeframe.
- Eighty-six per cent of respondents agreed that the VOA provides their organisation with appropriate support on Housing Benefit referrals.
- Seventy-one per cent of respondents agreed that the VOA was responsive to changes in their organisation's needs.

Perceptions of the VOA's Contact Centre (the Network Support Office (NSO)):

- Seventy-nine per cent of respondents agreed that the NSO call centre provides a good overall service.
- Eighty-two per cent of respondents agreed that the NSO call centre delivered work within an appropriate timeframe.
- Seventy per cent of respondents agreed that the NSO contact centre staff have the required knowledge and expertise.

Perceptions of the VOA's Local Housing Allowances (LHA) Helpdesk:

- Seventy-three per cent of respondents who used the LHA Helpdesk agreed that the LHA helpdesk provides a good overall service.
- Seventy-three per cent of respondents who used the LHA Helpdesk agreed that the LHA helpdesk and its staff deliver work within an appropriate timeframe.
- Seventy per cent of respondents who used the LHA Helpdesk agreed that the LHA Helpdesk and its staff have the required knowledge and expertise to assist their organisation.

About this report:

This survey was conducted to understand the quality of the service provided by the VOA to Housing Benefit Officers.

Housing Benefit Officers in 290 Local Authorities in England were invited to participate in an online survey that was open from December 2015 to January 2016. The response rate was 34 per cent.

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Methodology and caveats

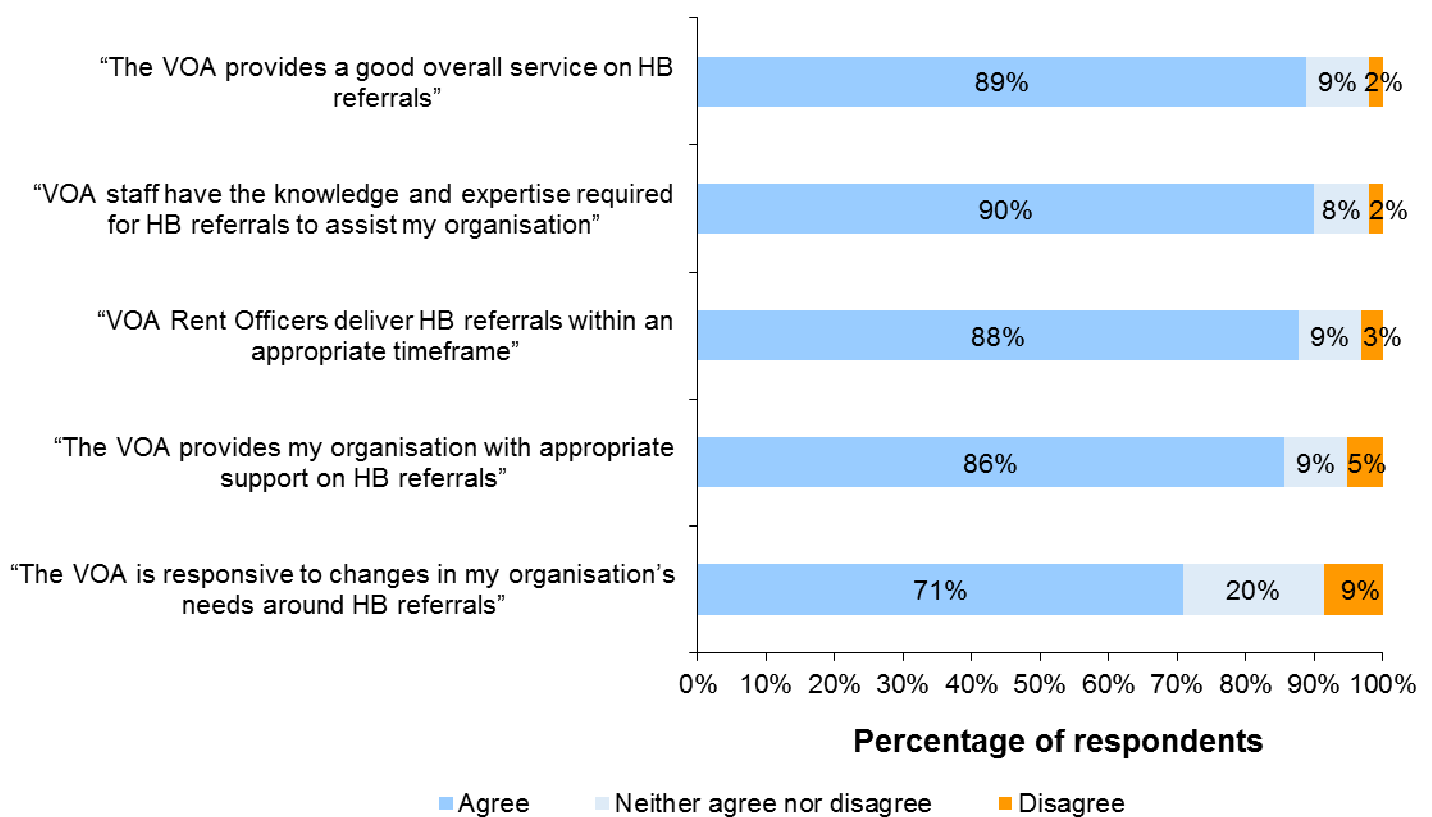
The 2015-16 Housing Allowances survey was sent out to 290 Local Authorities in England to be completed by the Housing Benefit Officer and received a response rate of 34 per cent. The responses were collected using an online survey between December 2015 and January 2016.

The response rate was broadly in line with the level expected for this type of online survey however the results should be considered indicative of the wider population rather than fully representative. Caution should therefore be taken when making inferences from these results for the whole population.

Perceptions of the service received on Housing Benefit (HB) Referrals

Respondents were asked about their perceptions on a range of factors relating to Housing Benefit (HB) referrals. As shown by Figure 1, overall 89 per cent of respondents agreed that the VOA provides a good service on HB referrals. Ninety per cent agreed that staff at the VOA had the required knowledge and expertise. Eighty-eight per cent of respondents agreed that the VOA delivered HB referrals in a timely manner and 86 per cent agreed that they received the right level of support from the VOA. Seventy-one per cent of respondents agreed that the VOA was responsive to changes in their organisation's needs.

Figure 1: Perceptions of the service received on Housing Benefit Referrals

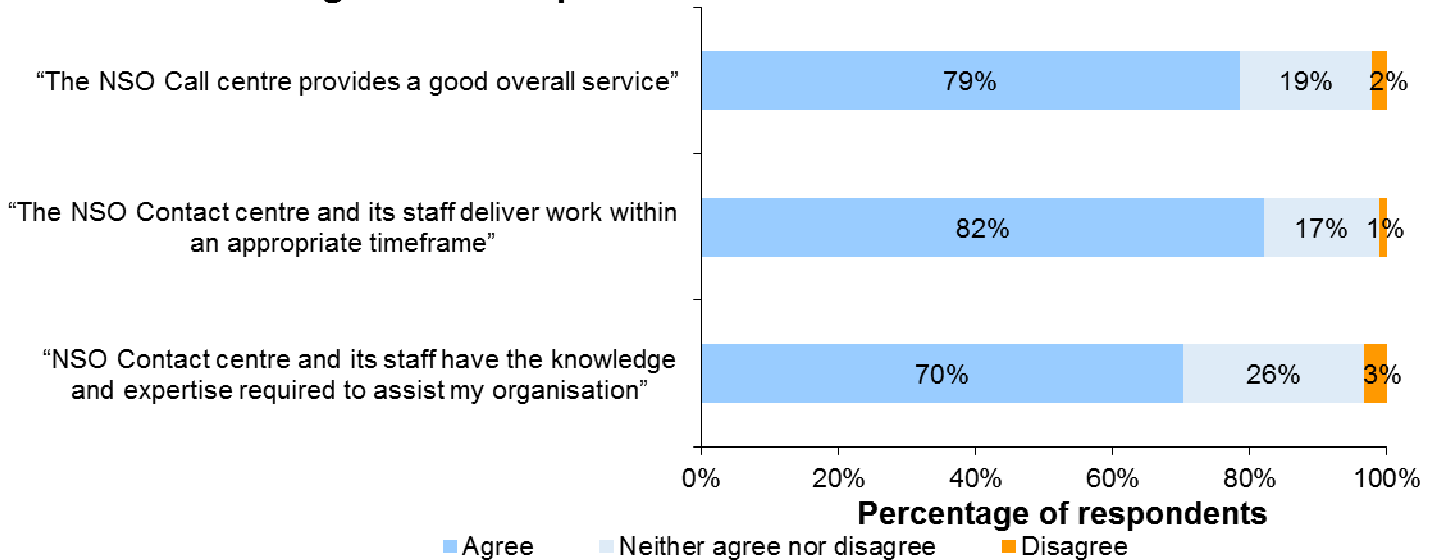


Rounded base size: 100 Housing Benefit Officers

Perceptions of the VOA's Contact Centre (the Network Support Office (NSO))

Respondents were asked about their experience with the VOA's Contact Centre (called the Network Support Office (NSO)) in Durham with respect to Housing Benefit work. Seventy-nine per cent of respondents agreed that the NSO Contact Centre provided a good overall service. Eighty-two per cent agreed that work was delivered by the NSO Contact Centre in an appropriate timeframe. Seventy per cent of respondents agreed that the NSO Contact Centre staff had the right level of knowledge and expertise.

Figure 2: Perceptions of the NSO Contact Centre

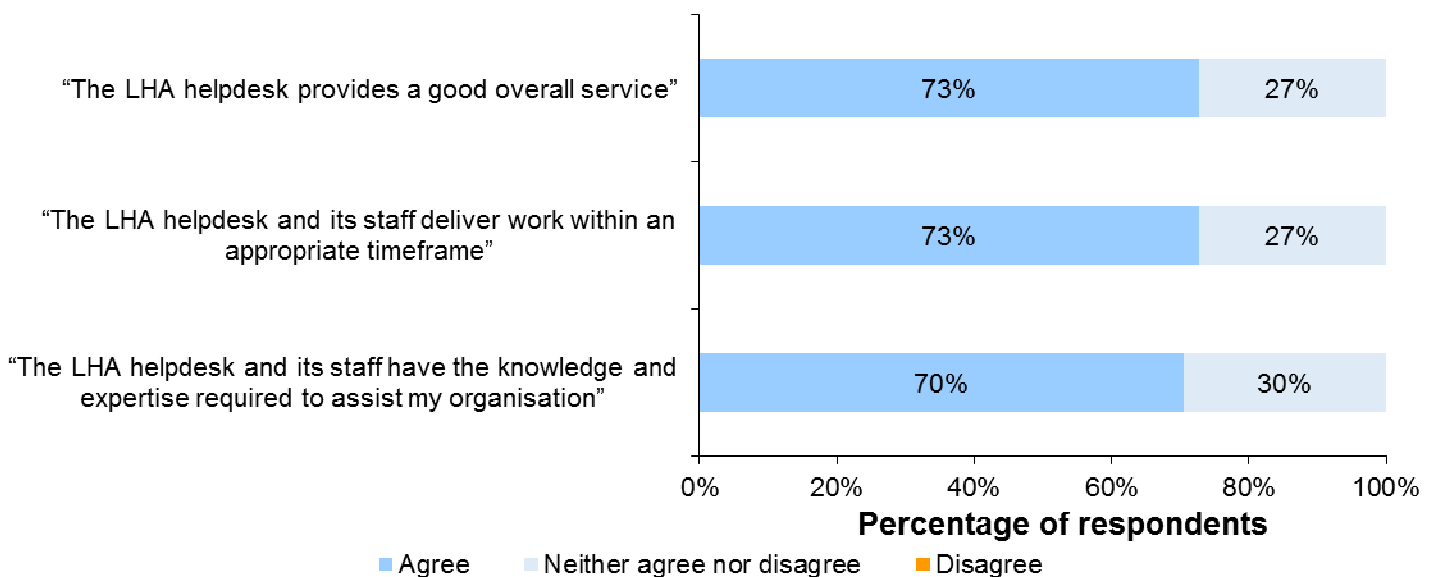


Rounded base size: 90 Housing Benefit Officers who used the NSO contact centre.

Perceptions of the VOA's Local Housing Allowances (LHA) Helpdesk

Respondents who had used the VOA's LHA Helpdesk were asked about their perception of the service provided. Seventy-three per cent of these respondents agreed that the LHA helpdesk provided a good overall service and 73 per cent agreed that work was delivered within an appropriate timeframe. Seventy per cent of respondents agreed that LHA Helpdesk staff had the knowledge and expertise required to assist their organisation. No respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with any of the three statements.

Figure 3: Perceptions of the LHA Helpdesk



Rounded base size: 40 Housing Benefit Officers who used the LHA Helpdesk

Appendix A: Data Tables

Table 1: Perceptions of the service received on Housing Benefit Referrals			
	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
"The VOA provides a good overall service on HB referrals"	89%	9%	2%
"VOA staff have the knowledge and expertise required for HB referrals to assist my organisation"	90%	8%	2%
"VOA Rent Officers deliver HB referrals within an appropriate timeframe"	88%	9%	3%
"The VOA provides my organisation with appropriate support on HB referrals"	86%	9%	5%
"The VOA is responsive to changes in my organisation's needs around HB referrals"	71%	20%	9%

Rounded base size: 100 Housing Benefit Officers

Table 2: Perceptions of the Network Support Office (NSO) Contact Centre			
	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
"The NSO Call centre provides a good overall service"	79%	19%	2%
"The NSO Contact centre and its staff deliver work within an appropriate timeframe"	82%	17%	1%
"NSO Contact centre and its staff have the knowledge and expertise required to assist my organisation"	70%	26%	3%

Rounded base size: 90 Housing Benefit Officers who used the NSO contact centre.

Table 3: Perceptions of the Local Housing Allowances (LHA) Helpdesk			
	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
"The LHA helpdesk provides a good overall service"	73%	27%	0%
"The LHA helpdesk and its staff deliver work within an appropriate timeframe"	73%	27%	0%
"The LHA helpdesk and its staff have the knowledge and expertise required to assist my organisation"	70%	30%	0%

Rounded base size: 40 Housing Benefit Officers who used the LHA Helpdesk

Background Notes

The Valuation Office Agency (VOA) is an executive Agency of HMRC. Its strategic function is to provide the valuations and property advice required to support taxation and benefits in England and Wales. Information and Analysis is a Directorate within the Strategy Group of the VOA.

Use Made of the Data

This publication is being released as part of a general drive towards making VOA data more accessible. The report will support the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in carrying out its duties and the data will also be used to inform government policy, respond to Freedom of Information requests and to parliamentary questions as well as to conduct operational analyses to support the VOA.

Further Information

The 2015/16 Housing Allowances Survey report is available at the following location:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/research-at-voa>