



# National Audit Office

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Comptroller and Auditor General  
Gareth Davies

Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms MP  
Chair  
Work and Pensions Committee  
House of Commons,  
London, SW1A 0AA

Ref GF 1490 22  
Date 13 October 2022

Dear Sir Stephen

## EXEMPT ACCOMMODATION

Thank you for your letter of 28 September registering your committee's interest in the regulatory framework for exempt accommodation and the implications for the value for money of the use of Housing Benefit.

It is clear from the work my team have done that this is a poorly understood sector, with clear challenges and unintended outcomes, often for very vulnerable people. My team are currently considering how best to take forward work on the subject, most probably with a report to Parliament in due course.

I have already been in touch with the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee Chair, Mr Clive Betts MP, whose committee is undertaking its own inquiry on the issue. I am keen to take account of the outcome of its inquiry to scope our work so that we can add maximum value.

I would be very happy to update you on the scope and timing of our work as soon as I have agreed it with the team and notified the relevant Departments. I would also be very happy to meet with you to discuss the issues if you would find that helpful and my team will keep you informed of our progress through our regular engagement with your clerks.

Yours sincerely

**GARETH DAVIES**



# Work and Pensions Committee

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

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Gareth Davies  
Comptroller and Auditor General  
National Audit Office  
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London  
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28 September 2022

Dear Comptroller and Auditor General

## **Exempt accommodation**

I have received reports that some landlords may be changing their accommodation status to supported housing in order to benefit from higher rents, without providing the quality of accommodation and support required for people with care and support needs. This has been raised with me in relation to exempt accommodation in Birmingham but I note that the [Local Government Association](#) has informed the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee of similar concerns in other areas.<sup>1</sup>

These reports raise questions about the regulatory framework for exempt accommodation and the value for money for the taxpayer. My Committee is particularly interested in the issue in respect of Housing Benefit.

I understand that you have been monitoring this issue and I would support an investigation by the National Audit Office into the provision of exempt accommodation. Should you decide to look into the issue I would be very grateful for information from you about the nature and timing of the investigation, and for progress updates in due course.

Yours sincerely

Rt. Hon. Sir Stephen Timms  
Chair  
Work and Pensions Committee

Cc Clive Betts MP, LUHC

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<sup>1</sup> [Written evidence](#) from the Local Government Association to the LUHC Committee inquiry into *Exempt Accommodation*