



Regional Representation in the House of Lords

Summary

This House of Lords Library briefing presents data on the regional background of the House of Lords within the context of continued interest in the composition of the House of Lords. An elected upper chamber featured as a commitment in several political party manifestos at the 2019 general election. For example, the Labour Party said it would replace the Lords with an elected senate of the nations and regions and the Conservative Party's manifesto said it would establish a constitution, democracy and rights commission to examine a range of issues, including the role of the House of Lords. This commission may suggest further Lords reform. This briefing updates the previous edition with data from June 2019. Primarily, it presents information on the regions of Members' registered addresses, as recorded in the expenses system. It provides a comparison with data for 2011, 2013 and 2016 to give an indication of trends in regional representation. It also looks at regions represented by former MPs and MEPs, members of the devolved legislatures and local councillors.

Of those Members who elected to have the broad location of their registered addresses (county or equivalent) included in the expenses claims data published on Parliament's website for June 2019:

- 43.6 percent were in London or the South East of England
- 9.0 percent were in Scotland
- 3.8 percent were in Wales
- 2.3 percent were in Northern Ireland
- Of the remaining English regions percentages were as follows:
 - East of England, 10.9 percent
 - South West, 9.4 percent
 - Yorkshire and the Humber, 6.1 percent
 - North West, 4.6 percent
 - West Midlands, 3.6 percent
 - North East, 3.3 percent
 - East Midlands, 2.7 percent
- 0.8 percent were overseas

Charley Coleman | 8 January 2020

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I. Does the House of Lords Represent the Regions and Nations of the UK?

The last major attempt to reform the composition of the Lords was put forward in 2012. Principally, this sought to introduce elections to the House of Lords based on regional seats. The Coalition Government introduced the [House of Lords Reform Bill](#) (Bill 52 of session 2012–13) in the House of Commons. The bill received its second reading by a large margin—462 votes to 124¹—but it made no further progress and was withdrawn. In September 2012, Nick Clegg, the then Deputy Prime Minister, announced to MPs that the Government had decided “not to proceed with the House of Lords Reform Bill during this Parliament”. This was in response to suggestions that the Government would be unable to secure enough support for its programme motion, which would set out the timetable for the bill’s progress through the Commons.² Since 2012 there have been a number of attempts at smaller scale reform of the House. Some were successful in reaching royal assent. For example, the House of Lords Reform Act 2014 introduced a statutory provision to enable Members to retire.³

An elected upper chamber featured as a commitment in several political party manifestos at the 2019 general election. These presented varying proposals for an elected upper house based around regions. The Labour Party’s 2019 general election manifesto stated that it was committed to ending the hereditary principal in the Lords, and introducing elections to the second chamber by replacing the House of Lords with “an elected Senate of the Nations and Regions”.⁴ The Liberal Democrat’s manifesto stated that the party would seek to “reform the House of Lords with a proper democratic mandate”.⁵ The Conservative Party’s manifesto stated that following the UK’s withdrawal from the EU it would establish a constitution, democracy and rights commission to examine a range of issues, including the role of the House of Lords.⁶ This commission may suggest further Lords reform.

Unlike the House of Commons where MPs represent a distinct constituency, membership of the House of Lords brings with it no official links to any particular region of the UK. However, there are sources of data available that provide an indicative picture of where Members might view themselves as having a connection with. This briefing explains these sources but focuses primarily on data drawn from House of Lords expenses. Data is also presented on the regions represented by those Members of the House who have been MPs, MEPs or local councillors.

Although Members of the House are not appointed on the basis of representing regions or countries, some may choose to do so. They may also have a particular interest in a country or region of the UK for a variety of reasons. Meg Russell and Meghan Benton have also stressed a further consideration. They wrote that “many Members have a London home, but this does not in itself indicate that the House is ‘London centric’”. They thought it “sensible for most Members who are active to maintain a base in the capital, particularly if they can afford to maintain more than one home”.⁷

¹ [HC Hansard, 10 July 2012, col 274.](#)

² [HC Hansard, 3 September 2012, cols 35–7.](#)

³ For further details please see: House of Lords Library, [Retirement from the House of Lords](#), 13 February 2015. Details of the House of Lords reform proposals, and enacted changes, for the period 2010–15 can be found in the House of Lords Library briefing [House of Lords Reform 2010–15](#) (25 March 2015).

⁴ Labour Party, [Labour Party Manifesto 2019](#), November 2019, p 81.

⁵ Liberal Democrats, [Liberal Democrat Manifesto 2019](#), November 2019, p 81.

⁶ Conservative Party, [Conservative Party Manifesto 2019](#), November 2019, p 48.

⁷ Meg Russell and Meghan Benton, [Analysis of Existing Data on the Breadth of Expertise and Experience in the House of Lords: Report to the House of Lords Appointments Commission](#), March 2010, p 49.

2. Where Are Members From?

2.1 Members Expenses Data (June 2019)

Members of the House of Lords may choose to have the broad location of their registered addresses (county or equivalent) included in the claims data published on Parliament's website.⁸ This data is provided by Members for the purposes of claiming allowances and expenses. In June 2019, of those eligible to sit, approximately two-thirds chose to include a location for their registered address. The expenses data provides the main source of information in this Library briefing and in its previous editions.⁹

Tables 1 and 2 set out the number of Members of the House of Lords recording a location of their registered address in each nation and region of the UK. The data is collated from the [location of registered addresses](#) (as at June 2019) provided for the purpose of claiming allowances. Charts 1 and 2 then present this information in the form of pie charts. Chart 3 draws on data from both tables 1 and 2 to present information by region and party/group.

The data presented does not include Members who have chosen not to publicly disclose their main residence (and some do not claim expenses but may provide a residency location). Therefore, when reading these tables, it is important to note it does not represent the total membership of the House of Lords. The data is based on expenses claims from June 2019 and includes any Member eligible to sit for any point during that month who was included in the published data.¹⁰ As such, the data should be seen as indicative. Of the 777 Members included in the June 2019 claims data and eligible to sit, 523 chose to include a broad location for their main residence, 254 did not.

The data includes bishops because whilst they normally live in their respective diocese, and are ex-officio Members of the House, they have a specific regional link to their diocese. Consistent with other data in this briefing, region data for bishops is drawn from the location of the registered address recorded in expenses returns and not from their diocese. In June 2019, four bishops had not registered a location.

⁸ House of Lords, '[House of Lords Expenses—Claims from April 2019](#)', accessed 11 December 2019.

⁹ House of Lords Library, [Regional Representation in the House of Lords](#), 14 July 2016; [Regional Representation in the House of Lords](#), 10 February 2014; and [Regional Representation in the House of Lords](#), 6 March 2012.

¹⁰ House of Lords, '[House of Lords Expenses—Claims from April 2019](#)', accessed 11 December 2019.

Chart 1: UK Region of Members' Registered Addresses, June 2019 (Percentage of Total Declaring an Address Location)

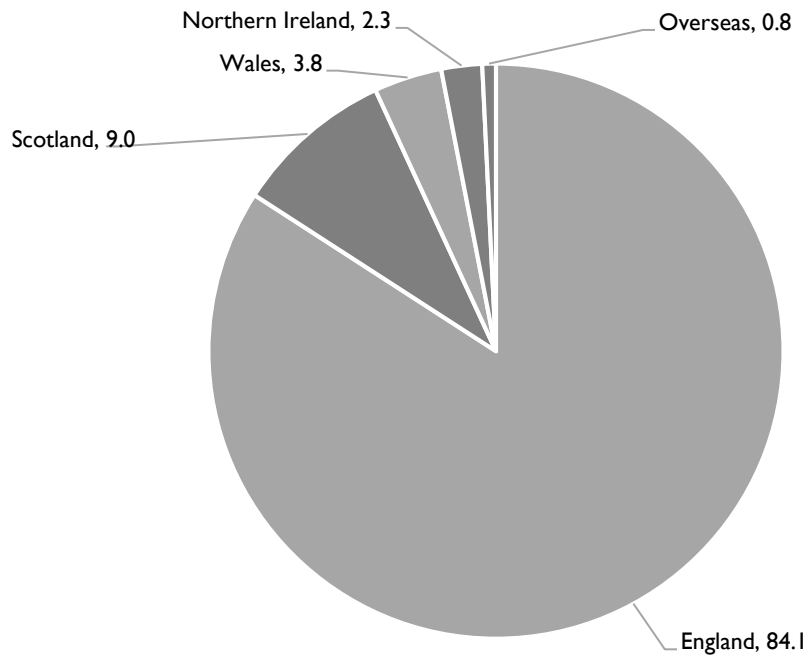
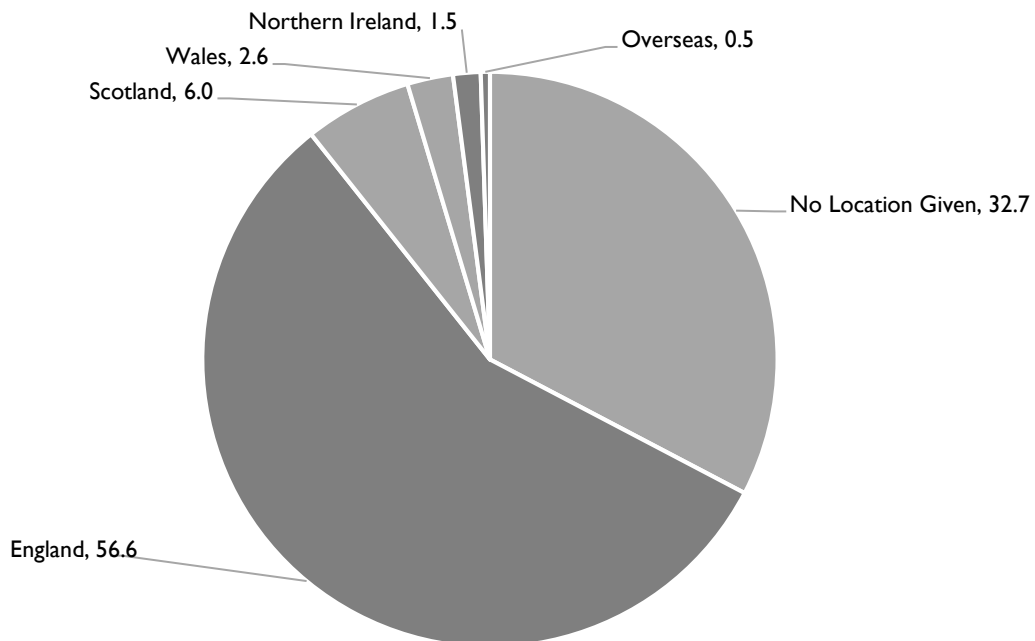


Chart 2: UK Region of Members' Registered Addresses, June 2019 (Percentage of Total, Including No Location Given)



(Sources: House of Lords, ['Expenses: June 2019'](#) [Excel File])

Chart 3: UK and English Region of Members' Registered Address, June 2019 (Percentage of Total Declaring an Address Location)

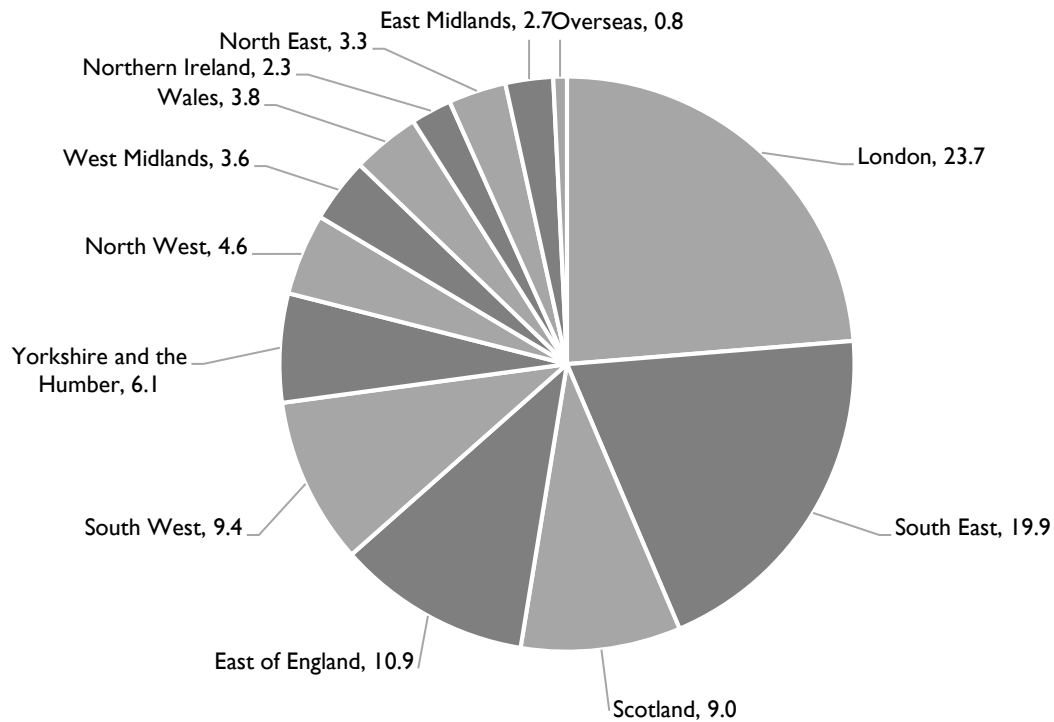
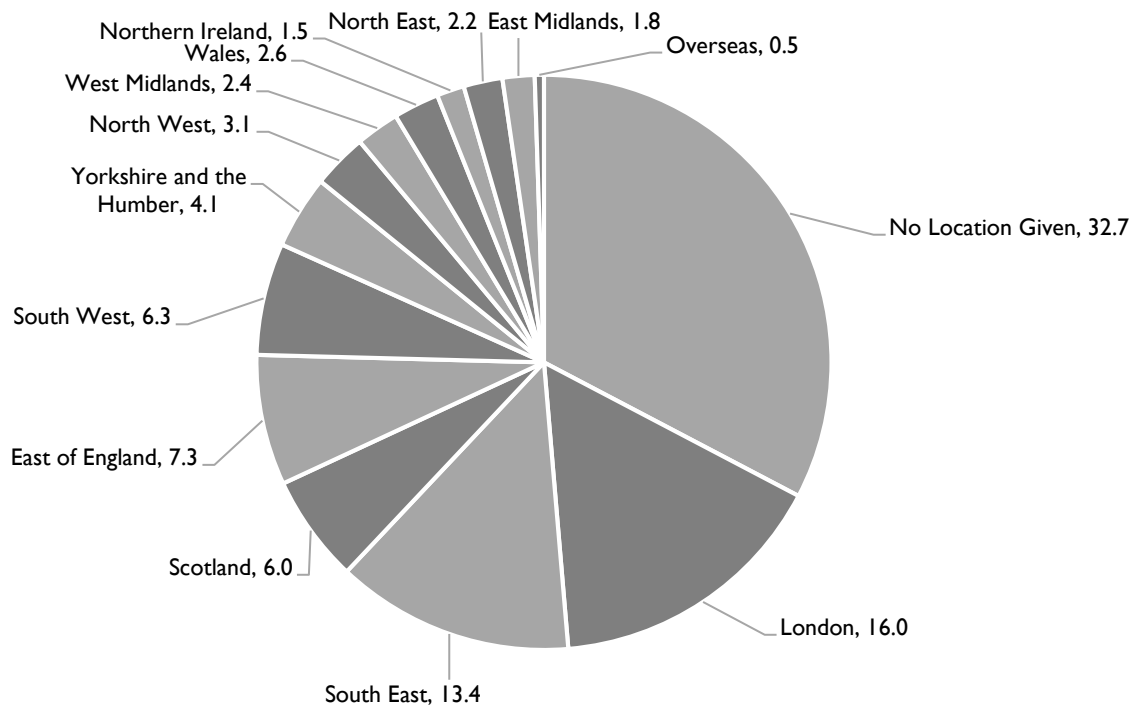


Chart 4: UK and English Regions of Members' Registered Addresses, June 2019 (Percentage of Total, Including No Location Given)



(Sources: House of Lords, ['Expenses: June 2019'](#) [Excel File])

Table 1: Number of Members by Affiliation and UK Nation of Main Residence, June 2019

	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland	Overseas
Conservative	126	12	1	2	2
Crossbench	95	8	2	5	1
Labour	111	15	9	0	1
Liberal Democrat	57	8	6	0	0
Other Affiliations/Parties:					
Conservative Independent	1	0	0	0	0
Democratic Unionist Party	0	0	0	2	0
Green Party	1	0	0	0	0
Independent Labour	2	0	0	0	0
Independent Social Democrat	1	0	0	0	0
Independent Ulster Unionist	0	0	0	1	0
Labour Independent	1	0	0	0	0
Plaid Cymru	0	0	1	0	0
Ulster Unionist Party	0	0	0	2	0
Bishops	21	0	0	0	0
Non-affiliated*	24	4	1	0	0
Total	440	47	20	12	4

*Includes Lords office holders and those Members unaffiliated to a party/party whip.

(Source: House of Lords, '[Expenses: June 2019](#)' [Excel File])

Table 2: Number of Members by Affiliation and English Region of Main Residence, June 2019

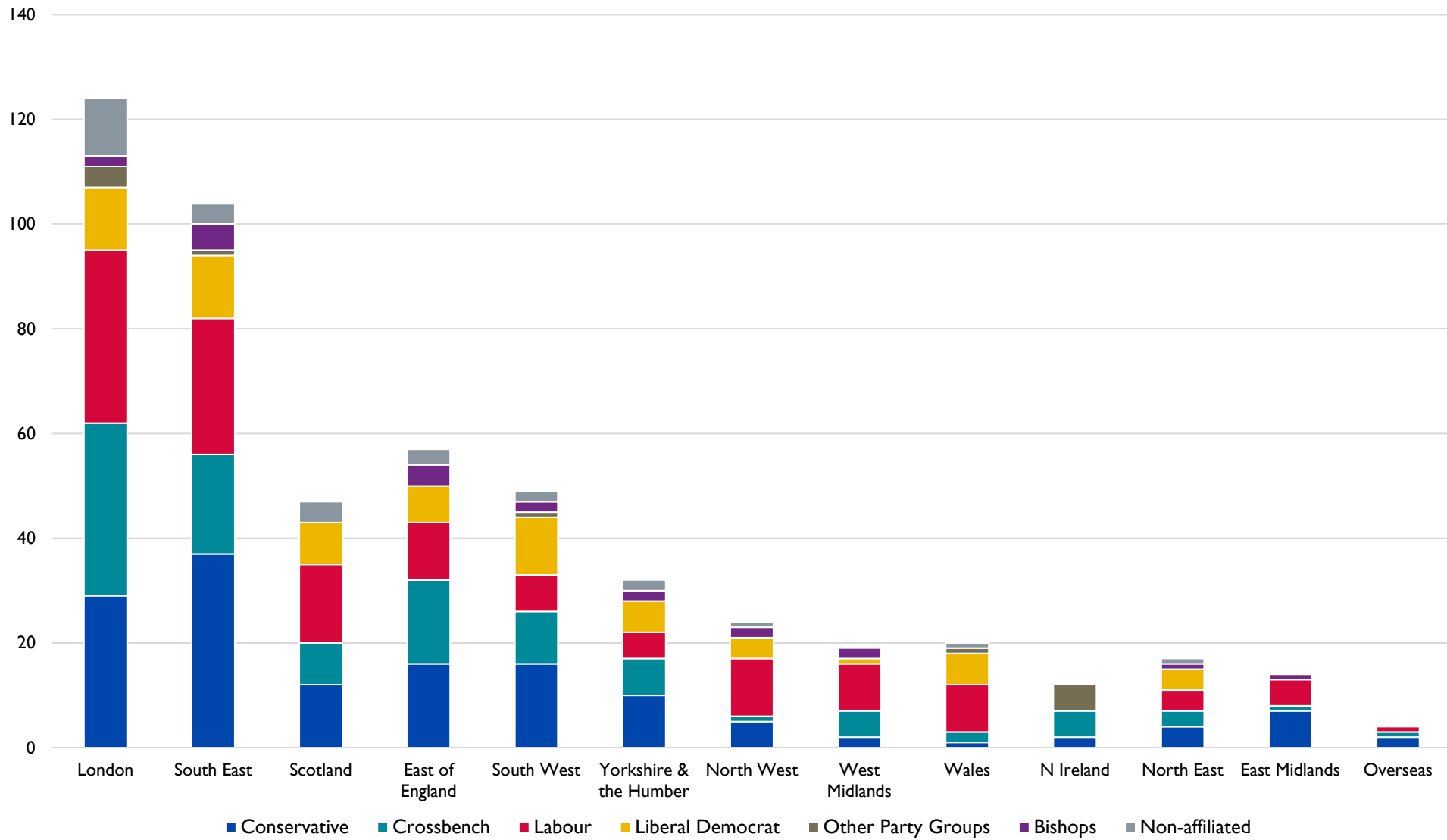
	East of England	East Midlands ⁺	London	North East	North West	South East	South West	West Midlands	Yorkshire and the Humber
Conservative	16	7	29	4	5	37	16	2	10
Crossbench	16	1	33	3	1	19	10	5	7
Labour	11	5	33	4	11	26	7	9	5
Liberal Democrat	7	0	12	4	4	12	11	1	6
Other Affiliations/Parties:									
Conservative Independent	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Green Party	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Independent Labour	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Independent Social Democrat	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Labour Independent	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bishops	4	1	2	1	2	5	2	2	2
Non-affiliated*	3	0	11	1	1	4	2	0	2
Total	57	14	124	17	24	104	49	19	32

*Includes Lords office holders and those Members unaffiliated to a party/party whip.

+ Regions have been assigned under the [Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics 2016 \(NUTS\)](#). Under NUTS, Lincolnshire is placed under the East Midlands. North and North East Lincolnshire are placed under Yorkshire and the Humber. Seven Members gave “Lincolnshire” as their registered address. These were assigned to the East Midlands but it is not possible to know where in Lincolnshire the address was located.

(Source: House of Lords, [‘Expenses: June 2019’](#) [Excel File])

Chart 5: UK and English Regions of Members' Registered Address Locations, June 2019 (Number of Members by Party/Group)



(Source: House of Lords, ['Expenses: June 2019'](#) [Excel File])

2.2 Historical Data Compared: 2012, 2013, 2016 and 2019

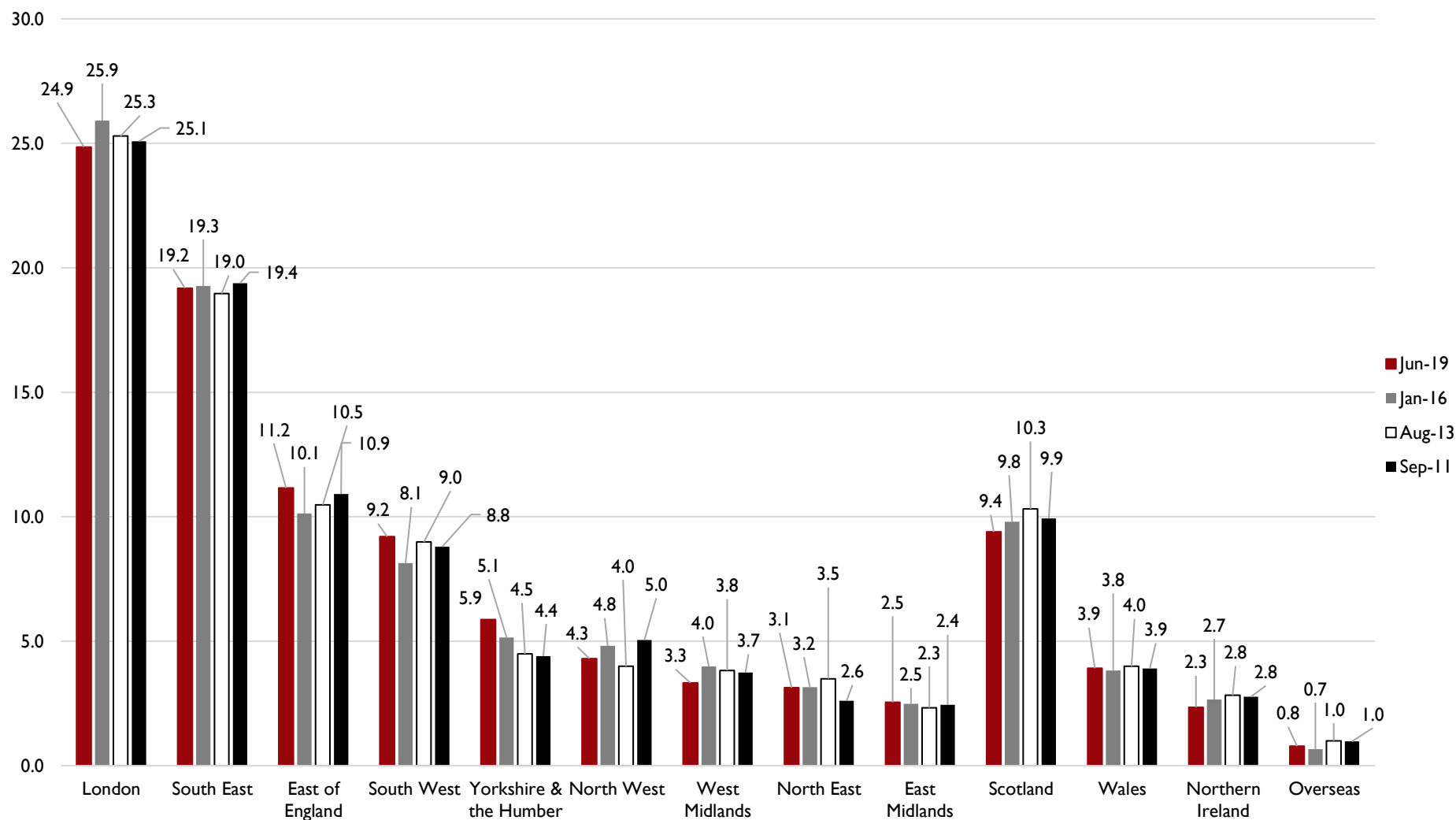
This section presents data drawn from the previous editions of this briefing and presents these alongside the most recent data from June 2019. Unlike the data used in the previous section, these data exclude bishops but include Members on leave of absence, disqualified from sitting and Members suspended from the service of the House. The percentages are also of those Members who gave a location, therefore the percentages are not directly comparable with those from charts 1 to 4.

Overall changes in the location of Member's registered addresses have been moderate but:

- Comparing January 2013 and June 2019 only three regions changed by 1.0 percentage point or more: London decreased by 1.1 percentage points, the East of England increased by 1.0 percentage point and the South West increased by 1.1 percentage points.
- Comparing September 2011 and June 2019 only Yorkshire and the Humber changed by more than 1.0 percentage point or more, increasing by 1.5 percentage points.

Changes in percentages between years should be interpreted with caution. The number of Members opting to include a location for their address varies each year. Therefore, a change in the percentage can occur even if the number of Members in a region remains the same.

Chart 6: UK and English Regions of Members' Registered Addresses, 2011, 2013, 2016 and 2019 (Percentage of Total Who Gave a Registered Address)



(Sources: House of Lords, [‘Expenses: June 2019’](#) [Excel File], House of Lords, [‘Expenses: January 2016’](#) [Excel File]; House of Lords Library, [Regional Representation in the House of Lords](#), 10 February 2014 and [Regional Representation in the House of Lords](#), 6 March 2012)

2.3 Writs of Summons Data (May 2016)

On 11 May 2016, Lord Faulks, Minister of State for Justice, answered a written question asking which regions writs of summons were sent out to at the dissolution of Parliament on 30 March 2015.¹¹

These data show a similar pattern to data drawn from expenses:

- The largest proportion of writs were sent to London, followed by the South East.
- England as a whole was the destination country for 87.8 percent of writs.
- Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland were the destination countries for 12.2 percent of writs.

These data relate to writs “sent to life and hereditary peers across the regions of England and the counties of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland”.¹² Therefore these data provides a region/nation for every Member of the House in March 2015. Unlike the claims data, which records details of Members’ main residence, no information is available on the reasons why Members may have given a particular address for their writ to be sent to.

Table 3: Regions of the UK and England to Which Writs of Summons Were Sent, March 2015

Region or Nation	Number	Percentage
London (Central or Greater)	385	47.6
South East	108	13.4
East of England	61	7.5
Scotland	61	7.5
South West	49	6.1
Yorkshire and the Humber	27	3.3
North West	26	3.2
Northern Ireland	20	2.5
North East	19	2.4
West Midlands	19	2.4
Wales	18	2.2
East Midlands	15	1.9
Total	808	100.0

Notes: Percentage data calculated by House of Lords Library.

(Source: House of Lords, [‘Written Question: Peers: Writs of Summons’](#), 11 May 2016, HL8080)

¹¹ House of Lords, [‘Written Question: Peers: Writs of Summons’](#), 11 May 2016, HL8080.

¹² *ibid.*

In June 2019 the Government said that the Crown Office was no longer holding data on the number of writs issued by region.¹³ It stated that writs were issued to preferred contact addresses provided by Members to the House of Lords.

2.4 Constitution Unit, University College London (2010)

In 2010, Meg Russell and Meghan Benton produced a paper commissioned by the House of Lords Appointments Commission.¹⁴ The authors invited Members to indicate in a questionnaire the region of their primary (and secondary, if applicable) residence, in order to give a fuller idea of where Members lived. The picture produced by this sample of 455 Members, the authors thought, was that:

Excluding London (which is clearly a special case), the only regions which appear somewhat overrepresented are the Eastern region, South East and South West. This may also be explained to some extent by commuting distances, as there are clearly a large number of Members who do not have a home base in London [...] The regions which are most evidently underrepresented are the North West, Yorkshire and the Humber, the East Midlands and the North East. In comparison representation of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland seems relatively good.¹⁵

¹³ House of Lords, '[Written Question: Peers: Writs of Summons](#)', 28 June 2019, HL1637.

¹⁴ Meg Russell and Meghan Benton, [Analysis of Existing Data on the Breadth of Expertise and Experience in the House of Lords: Report to the House of Lords Appointments Commission](#), March 2010, pp 49–53.

¹⁵ *ibid*, p 49.

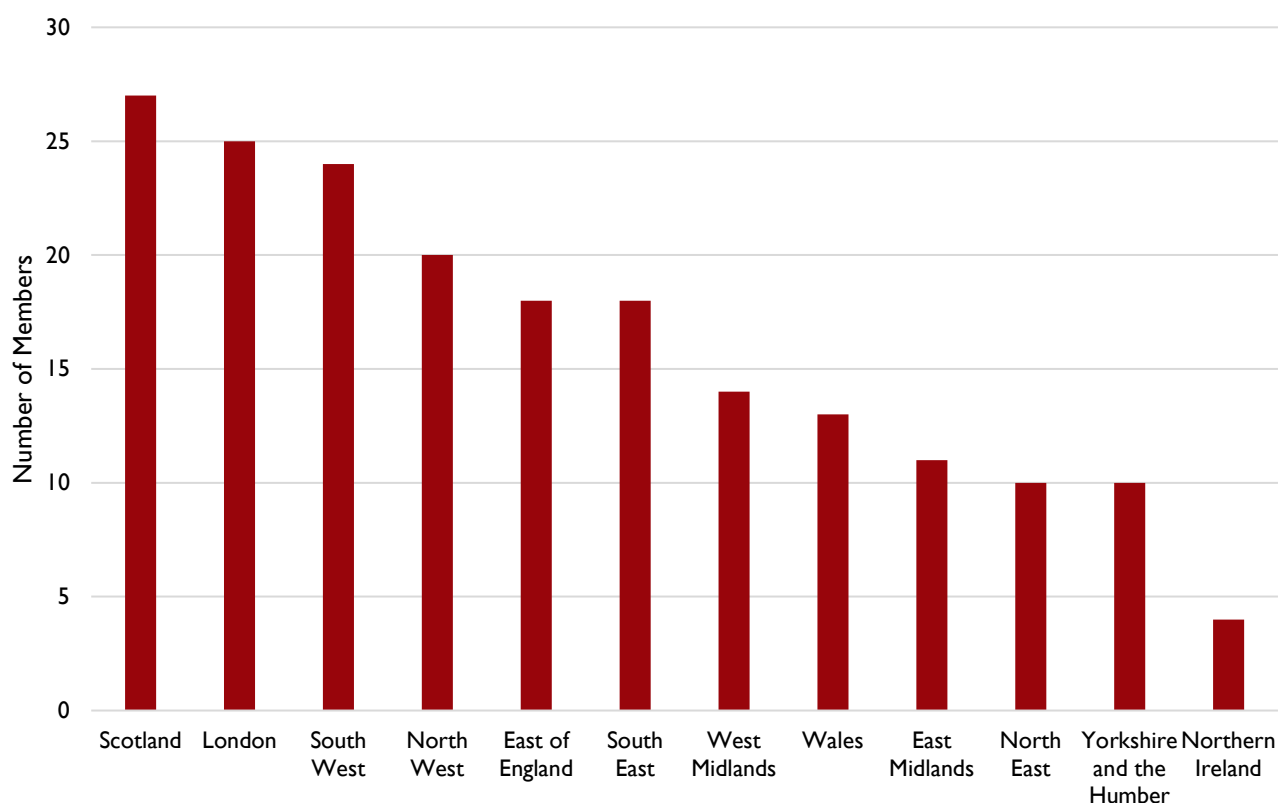
3. Regions Represented by Members as Holders of Selected Public Office

The information in this section of the briefing has been collected from a variety of sources, such as *Dods Parliamentary Companion* and the House of Lords Library briefing [House of Lords: Backgrounds in Public Life—April 2019](#) (12 April 2019).

3.1 Former Members of Parliament (MPs)

Chart 7 shows the nations and regions previously represented by the 178 former MPs who now sit in the House of Lords.¹⁶ The total count exceeds the number of former MPs, as some Members represented more than one seat in their Commons career. Those which were in different regions have been counted separately.

Chart 7: Regions Formerly Represented by Current Members as MPs, as at 5 April 2019

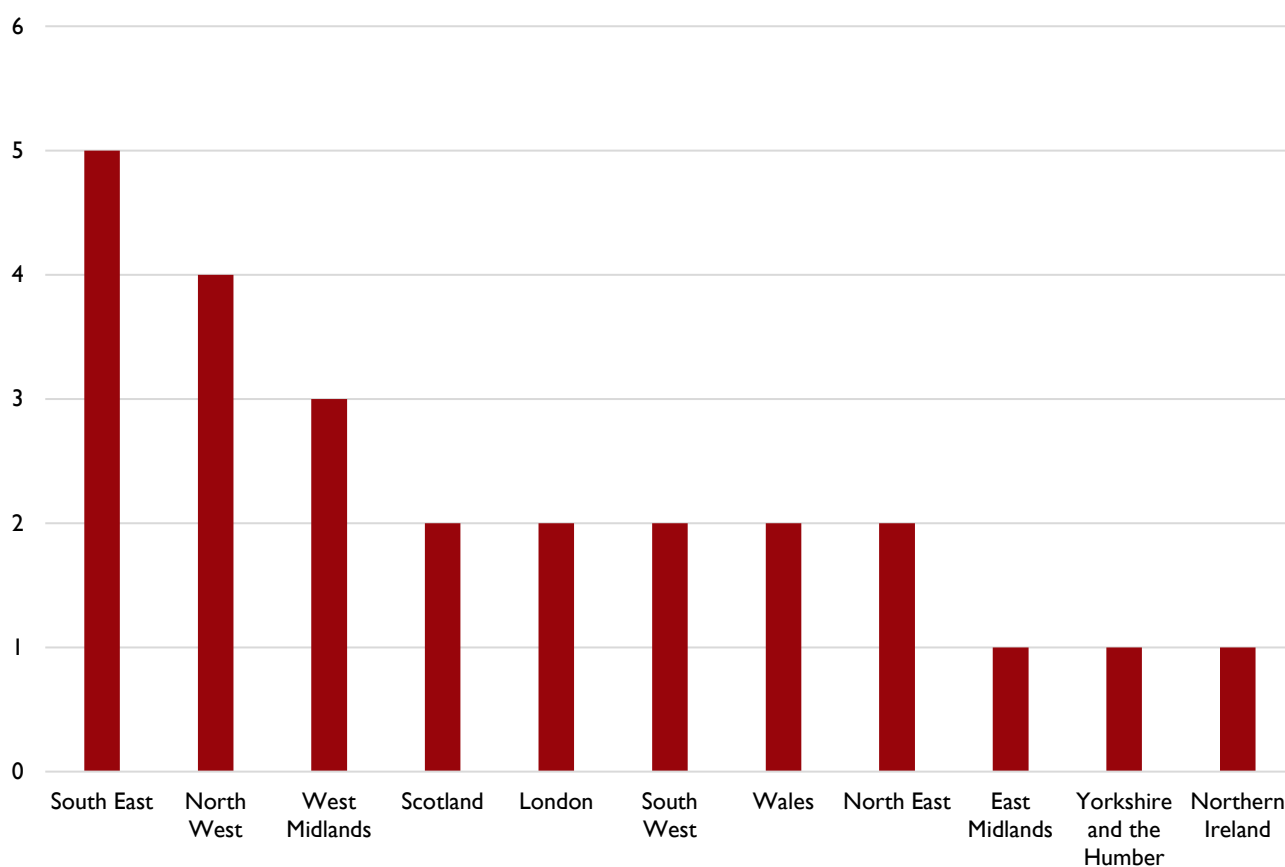


¹⁶ House of Lords Library, [House of Lords: Backgrounds in Public Life—April 2019](#), 12 April 2019, pp 13–22.

3.2 Former Members of the European Parliament (MEPs)

Chart 8 shows the nations and regions represented by those Members who have been Members of the European Parliament.¹⁷ The numbers exclude those Members who were MEPs before direct elections were introduced in 1979. It includes those Members on leave of absence or disqualified from sitting.

Chart 8: Regions Represented by Members as MEPs (Number of Members)

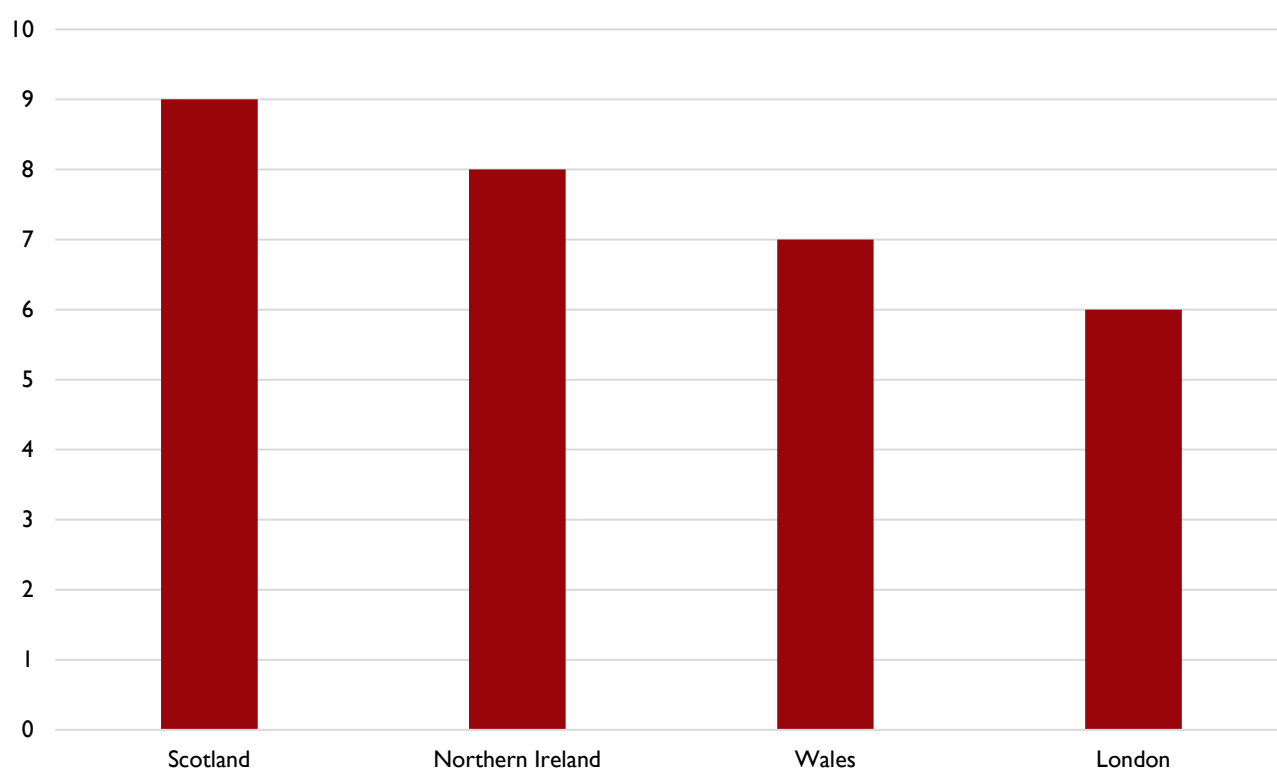


¹⁷ House of Lords Library, [House of Lords: Backgrounds in Public Life—April 2019](#), 12 April 2019, pp 22–3.

3.3 Devolved Legislatures and the Greater London Authority

There have been devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales since 1999, in Northern Ireland since 1998 and in London (the Greater London Authority (GLA)) since 2000. Chart 9 shows the number of Members who have held seats in these bodies.¹⁸ It includes those Members on leave of absence or disqualified from sitting.

Chart 9: Regions Represented by Members as Members of the Devolved Legislatures and the GLA (Number of Members)

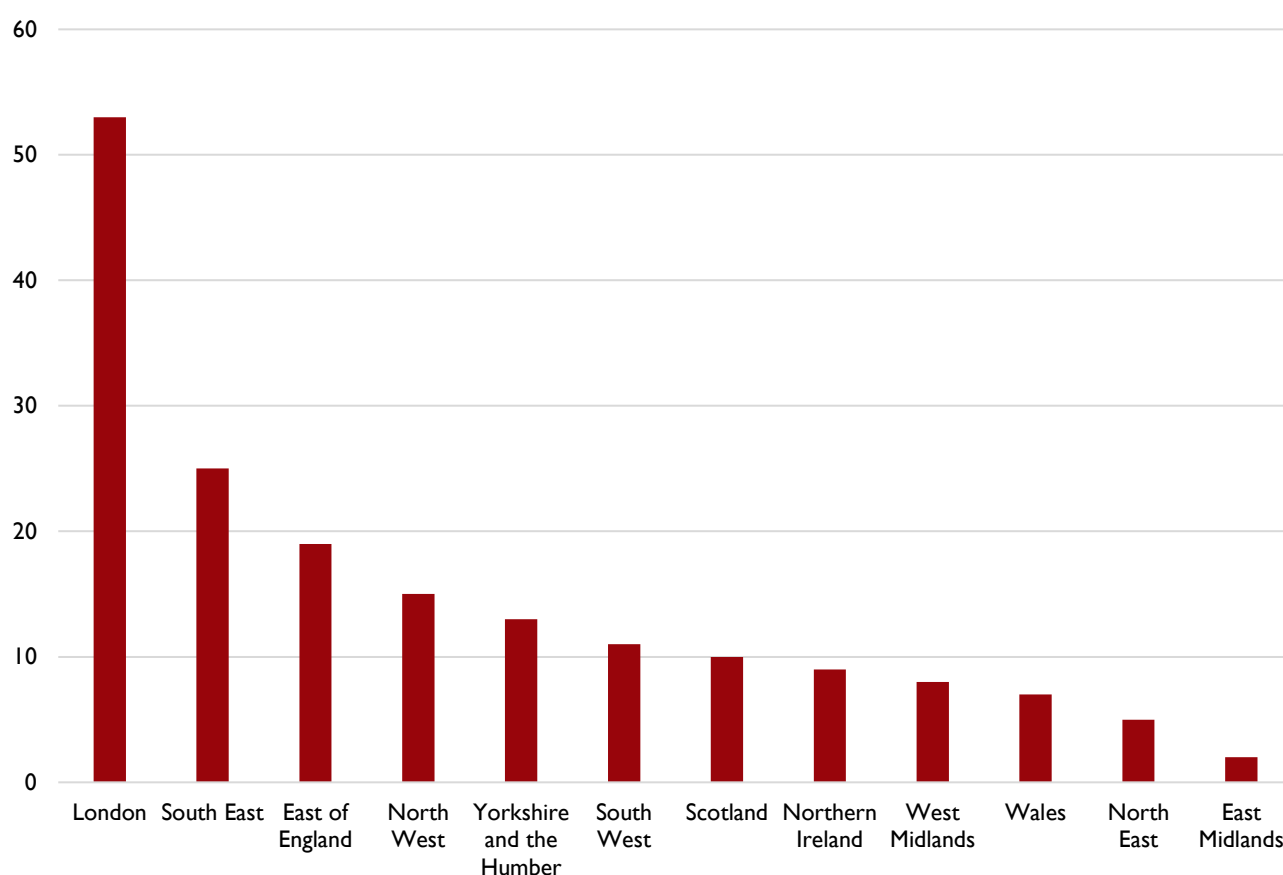


¹⁸ House of Lords Library, [House of Lords: Backgrounds in Public Life—April 2019](#), 12 April 2019, pp 23–4.

3.4 Local Government: Councillors

Chart 10 presents the nations and regions represented by the 172 Members who are former/current local councillors.¹⁹ Some Members may have been a councillor in more than one region, so the figures represent the count of nations and regions represented, rather than the number of Members who have been councillors. It includes those Members on leave of absence or disqualified from sitting.

Chart 10: Regions Represented by Members as Local Government Councillors (Number of Members)



¹⁹ As at 10 December 2019, data extracted from *Dods Parliamentary Companion* online advanced search function (“political career” contains “councils, public bodies” “councilor”).

4. Other Elements of Representation

This briefing only looks at regional representation in the House of Lords. However, there are other elements to representation. The libraries of both Houses have published the following briefings which may be of interest to readers in this context.

- House of Lords Library, [Ethnic and Religious Diversity in the House of Lords](#), 5 November 2019
- House of Commons, [Women in Parliament and Government](#), 25 September 2019
- House of Lords Library, [Lords Membership: Lists of Current and Former Female Peers](#), 18 June 2019
- House of Commons Library, [Ethnic Diversity In Politics and Public Life](#), 30 May 2019
- House of Lords Library, [House of Lords: Backgrounds in Public Life—April 2019](#), 12 April 2019
- House of Lords Library, [House of Lords: Party and Group Strengths and Voting](#), 15 March 2017
- House of Lords Library, [House of Lords: Statistical Profile of Membership—January 2017](#), 6 February 2017
- House of Lords Library, [Women in the House of Lords](#), 30 June 2015

Appendix: June 2019 Expenses Data, Regional Breakdown by Party/Group

This appendix displays data, through additional charts, on those Members who elected to include a location for their address for the purposes of claiming expenses (in the data published on Parliament's website). It includes bishops and excludes those Members on leave of absence, disqualified from sitting and Members currently suspended from the service of the House. It includes all Members included in the June 2019 data release who were able to sit for any point during June 2016, including those who may have subsequently left the service of the House.

The data presented does not include Members who have chosen not to publicly disclose their main residence (and some do not claim expenses but may provide a residency location). Therefore, when reading these charts, it is important to note it does not represent the total membership of the House of Lords. Of the 777 Members included in the January 2016 claims data and eligible to sit, 523 elected to include a region for their main residence, 254 did not.

United Kingdom

Chart 11: UK and English Region of Members' Registered Address (Percentage of Total Declaring an Address Location)

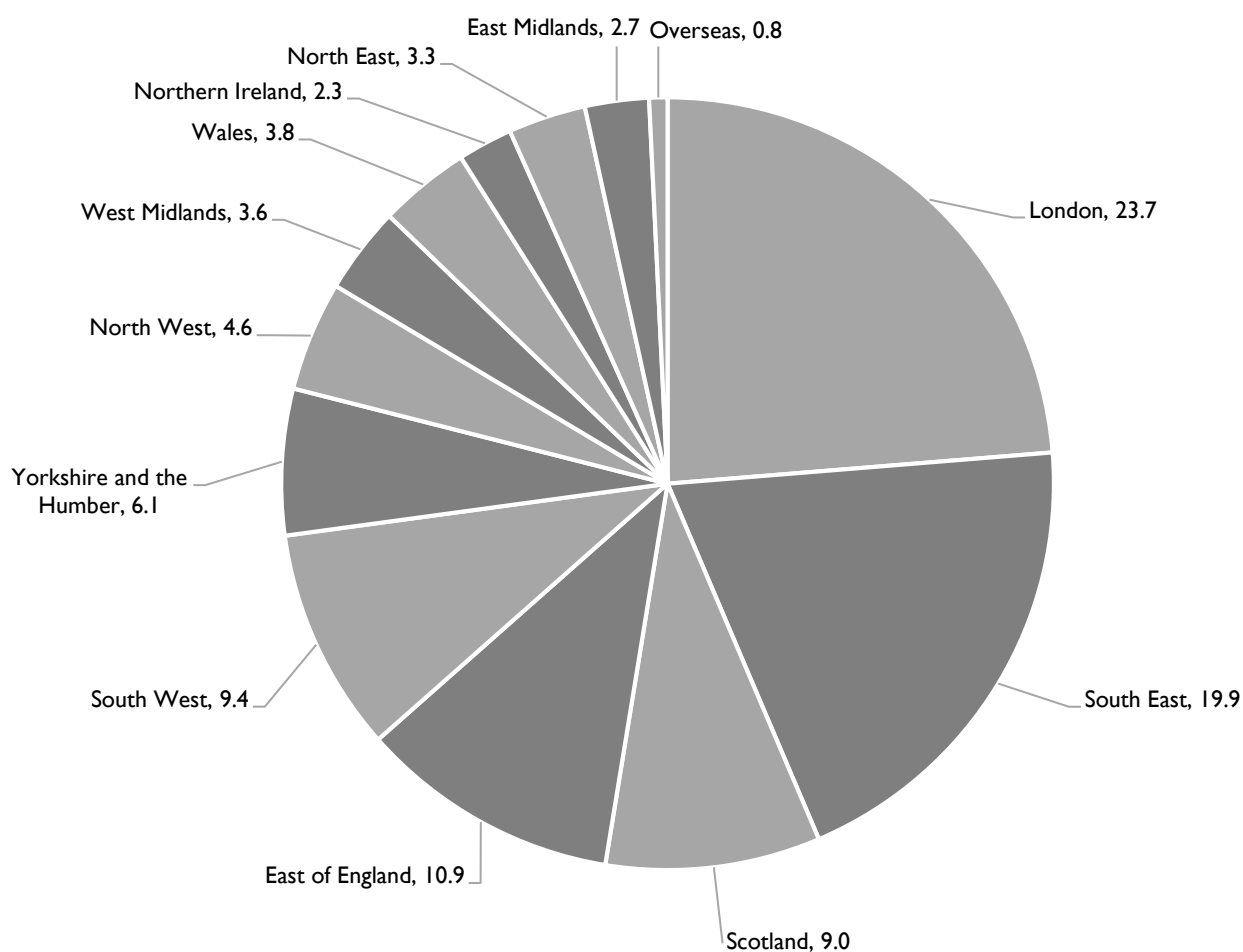
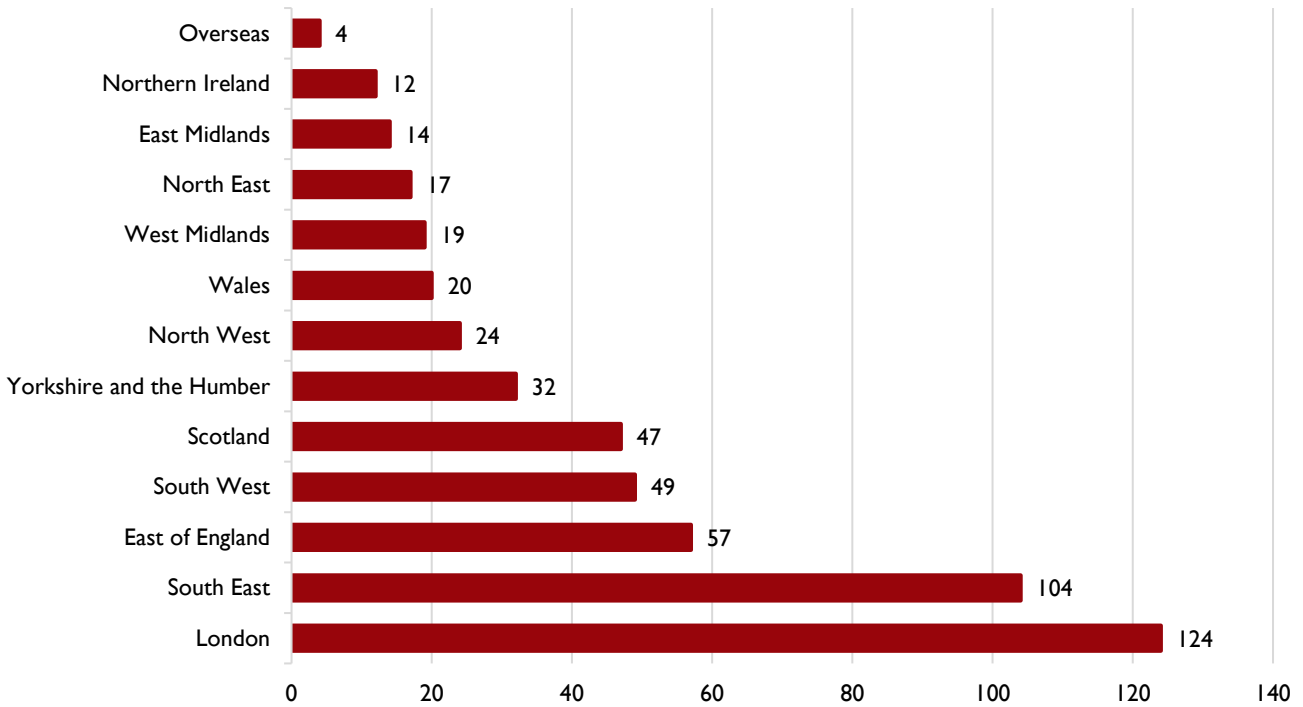


Chart 12: UK Region of Members' Registered Address (Number of Members)



England

Chart 13: Members by Party/Groups Registering Address within England (Percentage of Total)

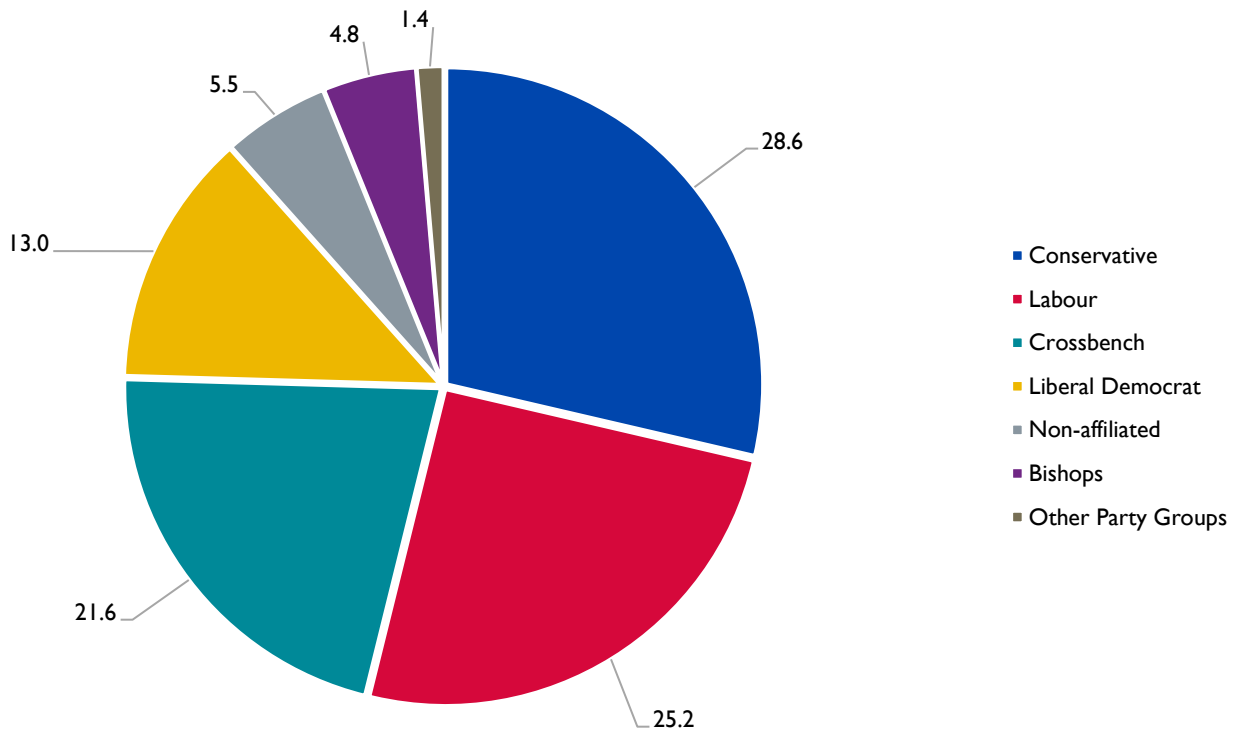
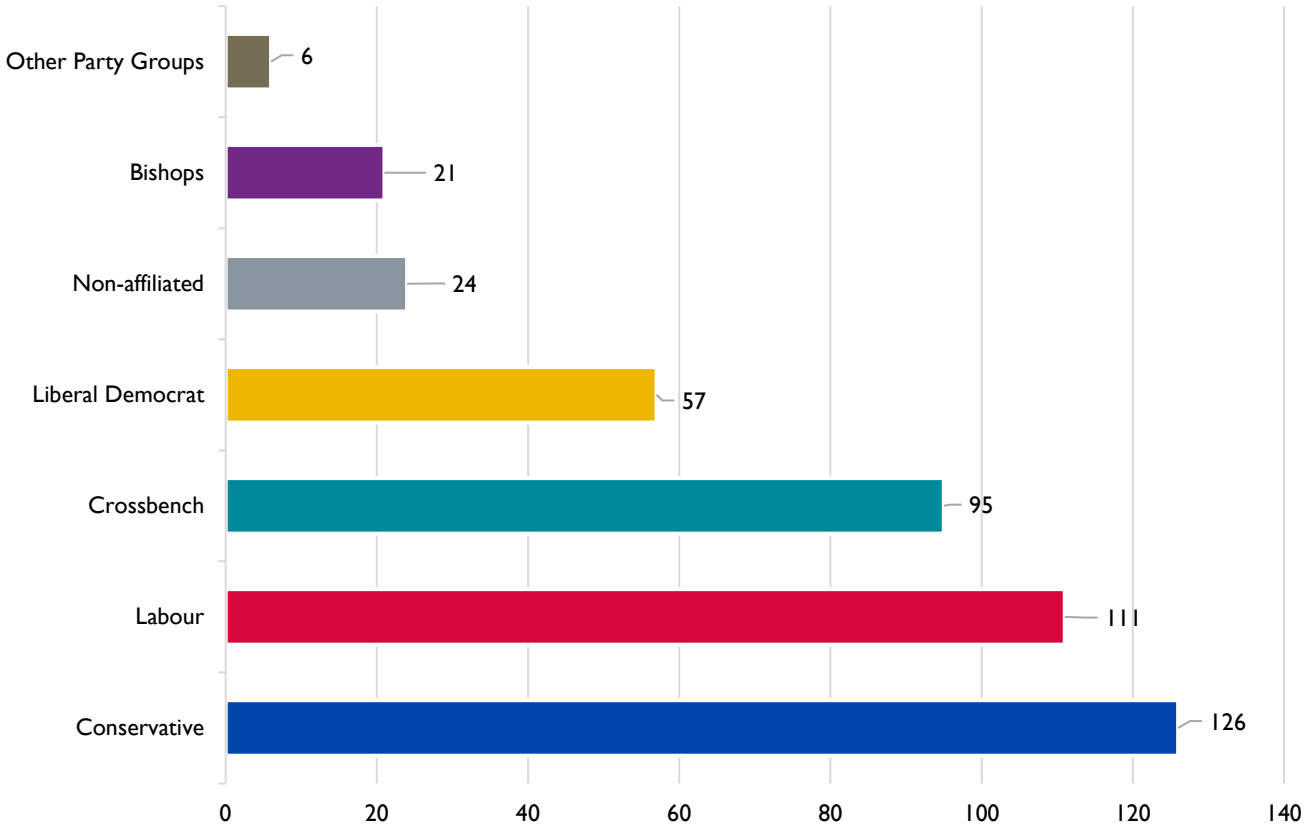
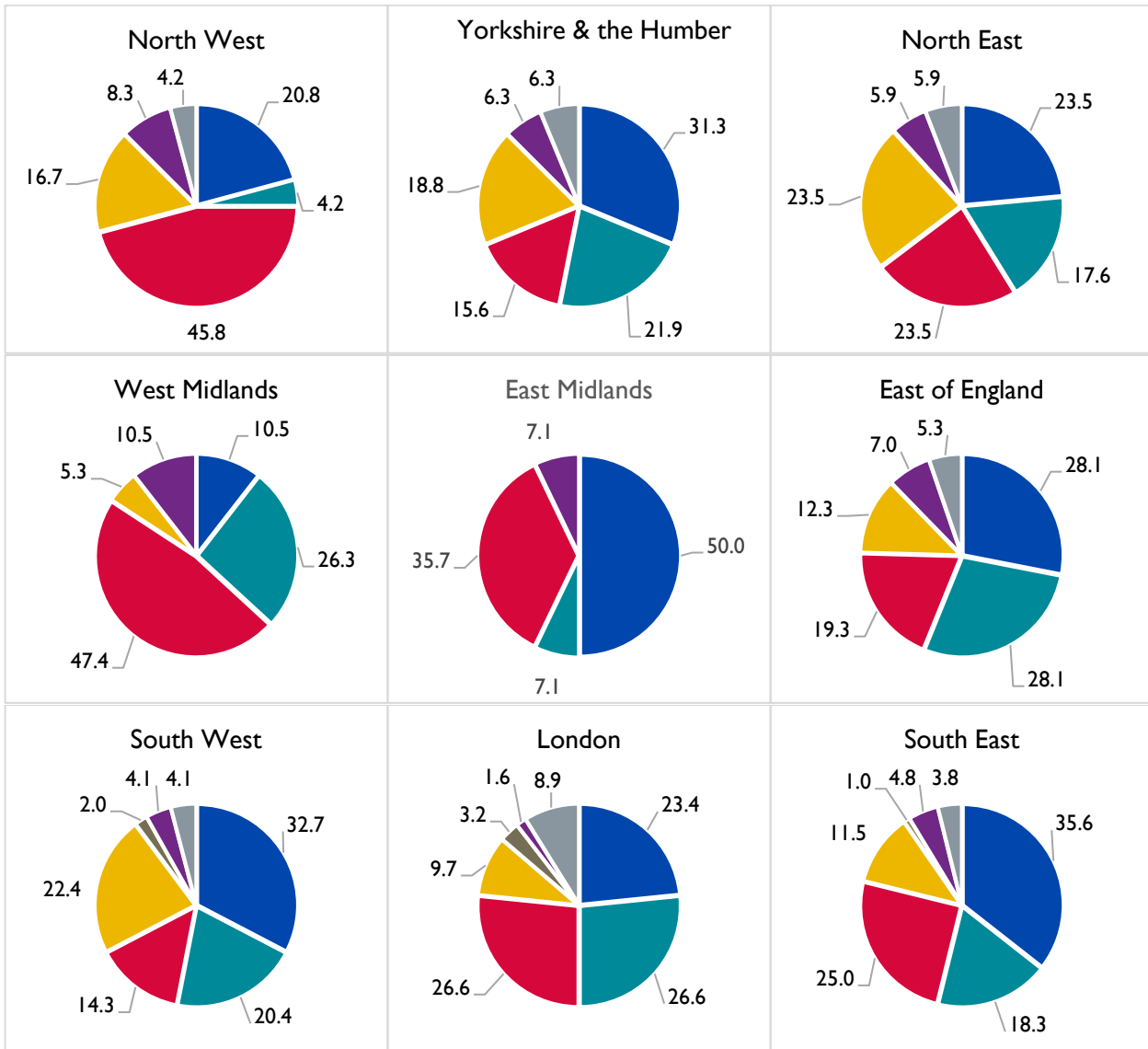


Chart 14: Members By Party/Groups Registering Address Within England (Number of Members)



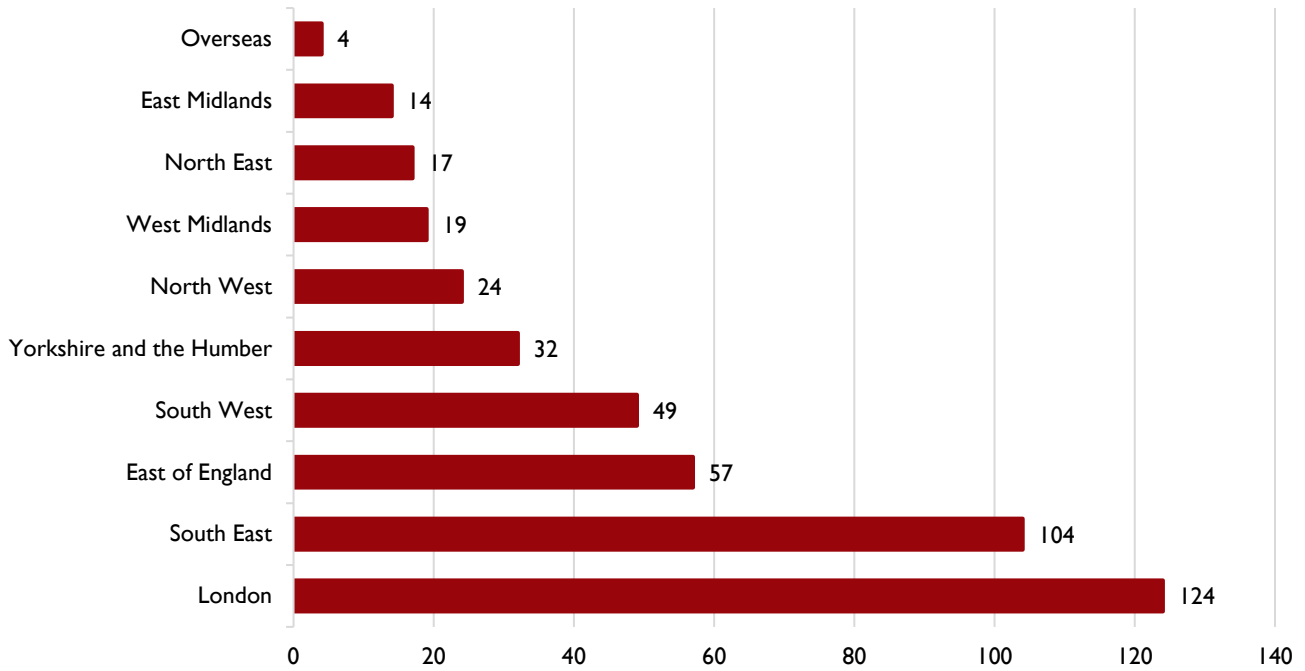
English Regions

Chart 15: Members By Party/Groups Registering Address within Regions of England (Percentage of Total)



■ Conservative
 ■ Crossbench
 ■ Labour
 ■ Liberal Democrat
 ■ Other Party Groups
 ■ Bishops
 ■ Non-affiliated

Chart 16: English Region of Members' Registered Address (Number of Members)



Scotland

Chart 17: Members By Party/Groups Registering Address within Scotland (Percentage of Total)

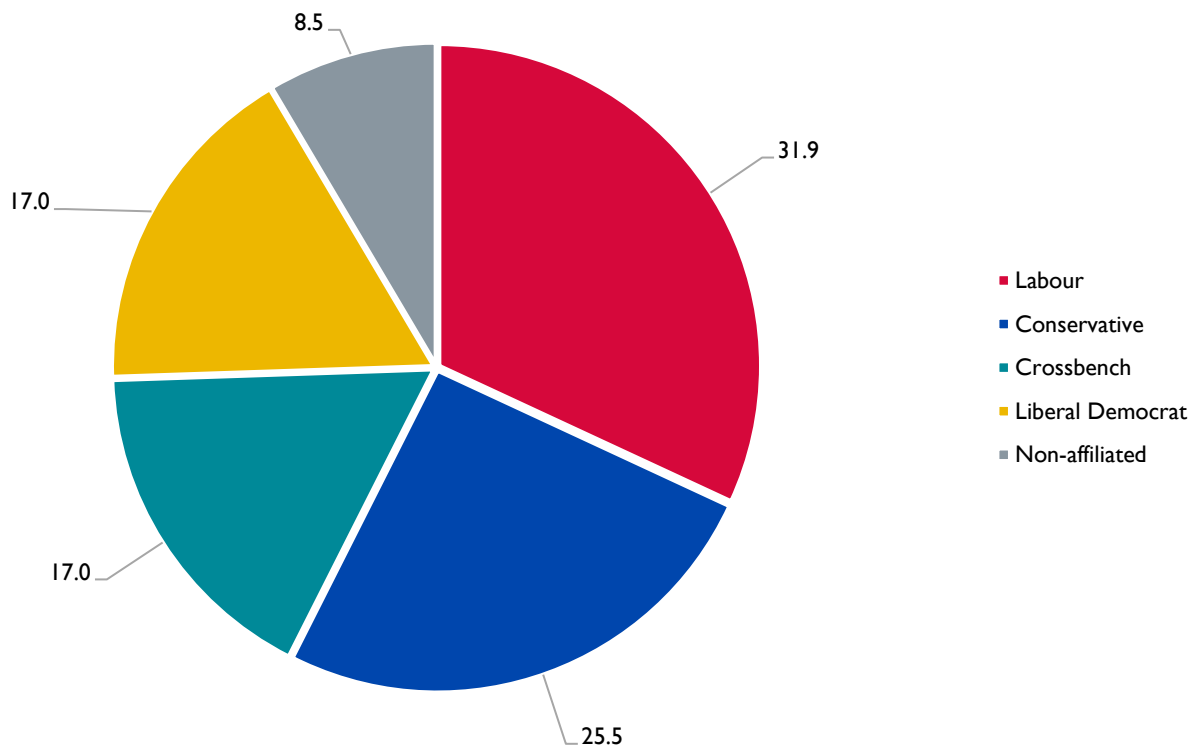
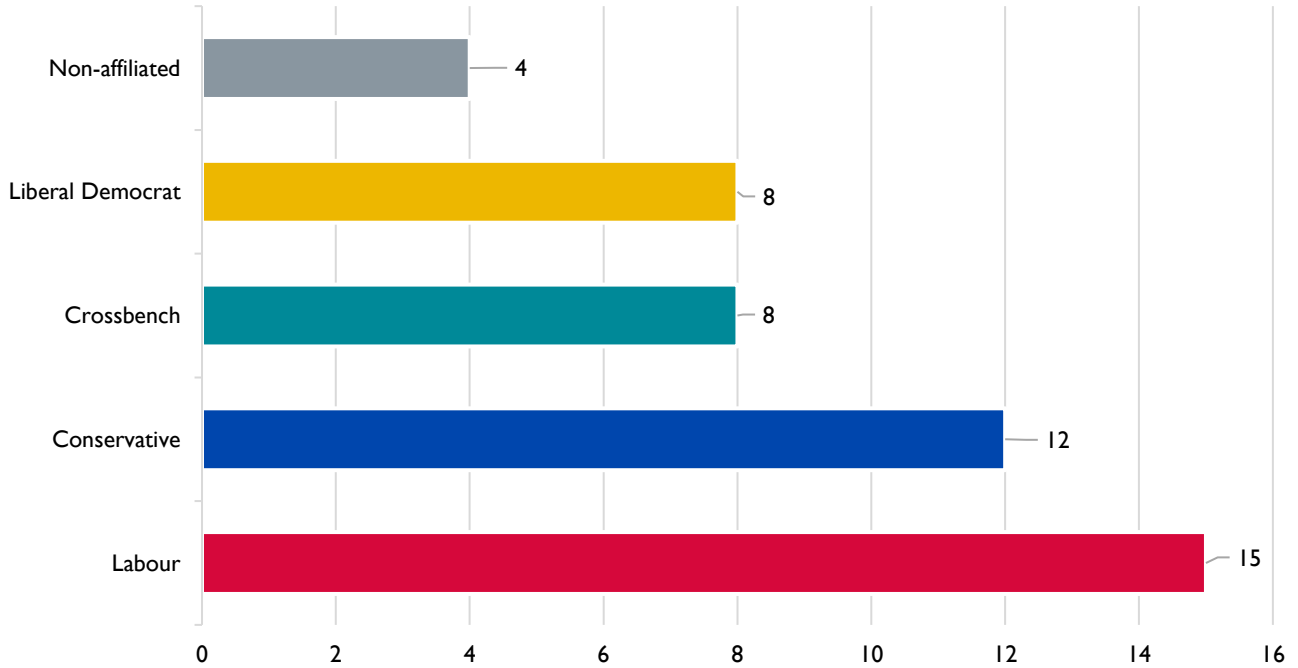


Chart 18: Members by Party/Groups Registering Main Residence within Scotland (Number of Members)



Wales

Chart 19: Members By Party/Groups Registering Address Within Wales (Percentage of Total)

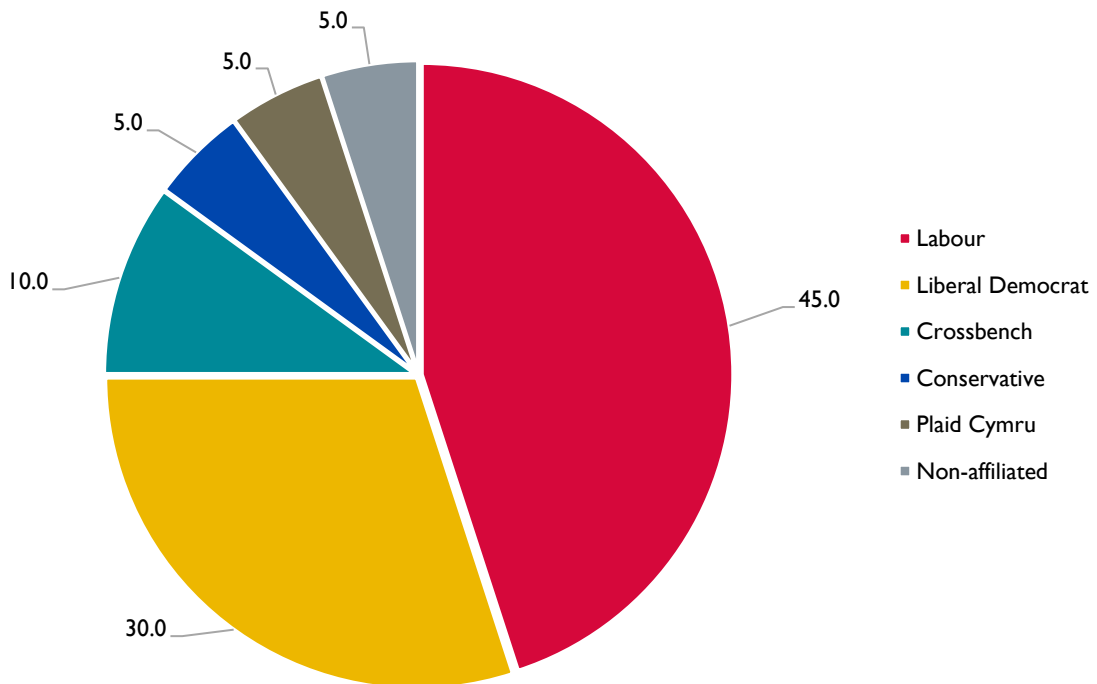
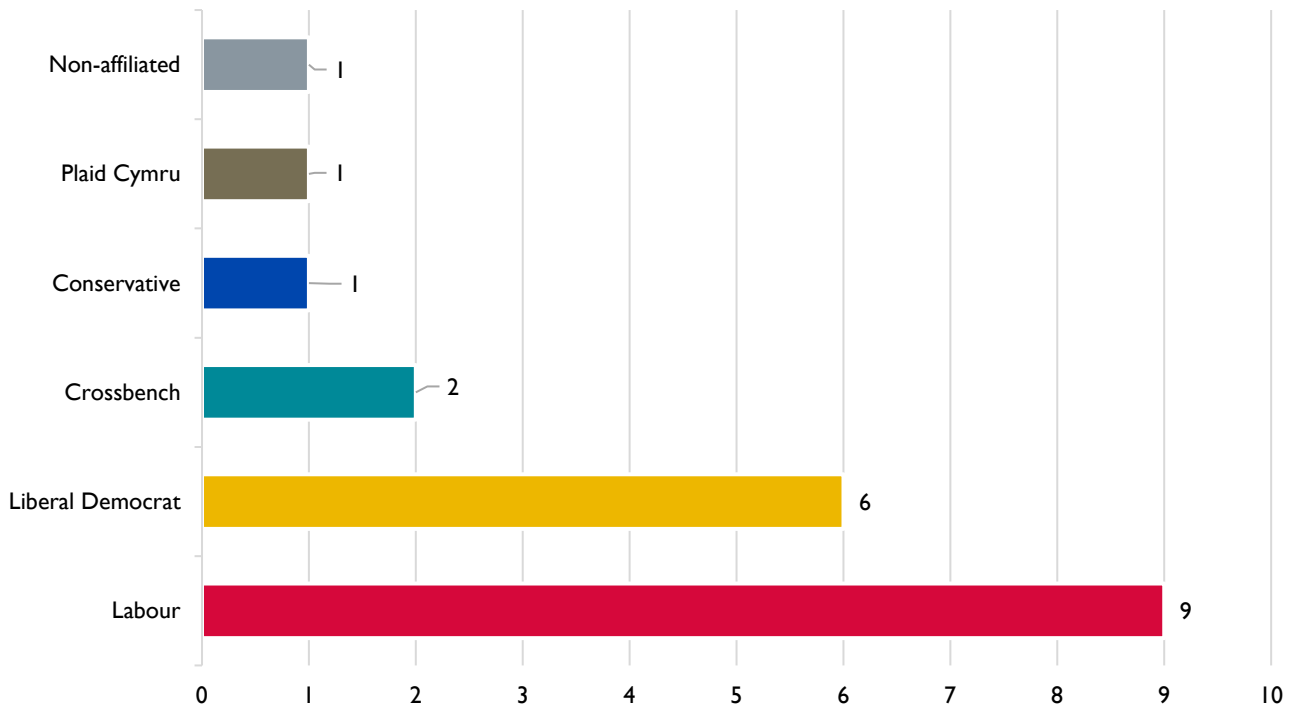


Chart 20: Members By Party/Groups Registering Address Within Wales (Number of Members)



Northern Ireland

Chart 21: Members By Party/Groups Registering Address Within Northern Ireland (Percentage of Total)

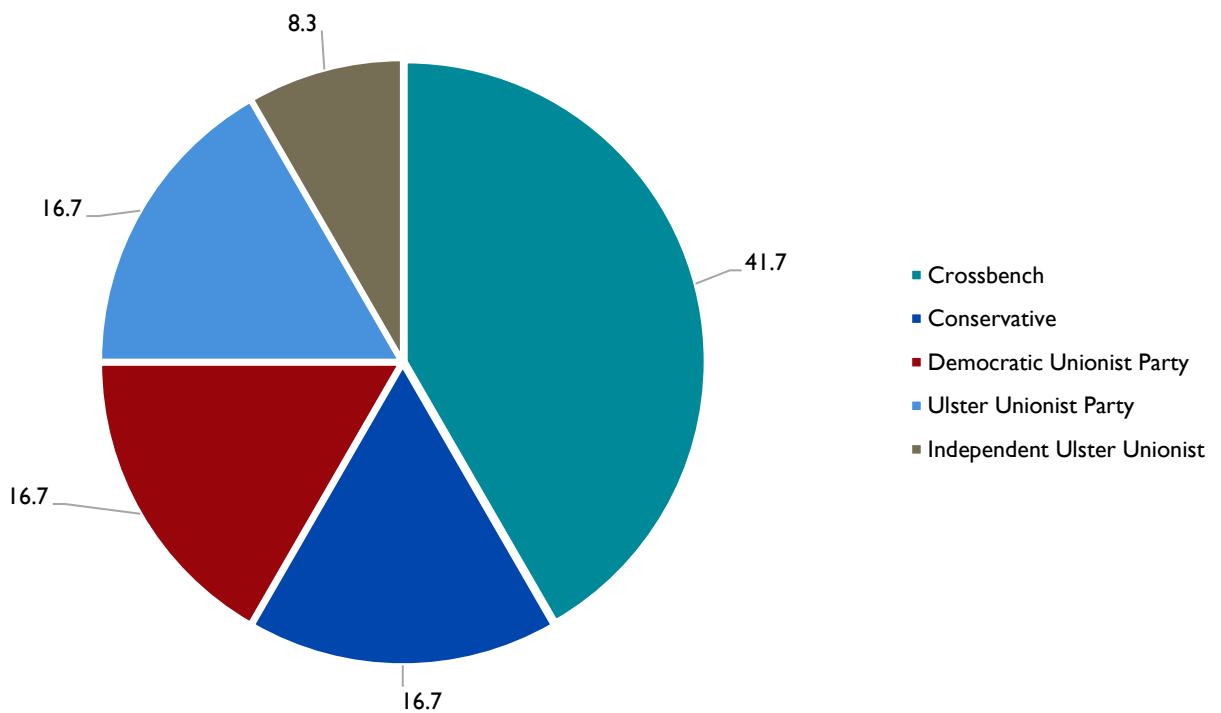


Chart 22: Members by Party/Groups Registering Address Within Northern Ireland (Number of Members)

