

Business Rates – Explanatory Notes 2021/22

Non-Domestic Rates

Non-Domestic Rates, or business rates, collected by local authorities are the way that those who occupy non-domestic property contribute towards the cost of local services. Under the business rates retention arrangements introduced from 1st April 2013, authorities keep a proportion of the business rates paid locally. The money, together with revenue from council tax payers, locally generated income and grants from central government, is used to pay for the services provided by local authorities in your area. Further information about the business rates system may be obtained at: www.gov.uk/introduction-to-business-rates

Business Rates Instalments

Payment of business rates bills is automatically set on a 10-monthly cycle. However, the Government has put in place regulations that allow ratepayers to require their local authority to enable payments to be made through 12 monthly instalments. If you wish to take up this offer, you should contact you're the business rates team as soon as possible at business.rates@eastriding.gov.uk.

National Non-Domestic Rating Multiplier

The local authority works out the business rates bill for a property by multiplying the rateable value of the property by the appropriate non-domestic multiplier. There are two multipliers: the standard non-domestic rating multiplier and the small business non-domestic rating multiplier. The Government sets the multipliers for each financial year, except in the City of London where special arrangements apply.

Ratepayers who occupy a property with a rateable value which does not exceed £50,999 (and who are neither entitled to certain other mandatory relief[s] nor liable for unoccupied property rates) will have their bills calculated using the lower small business non-domestic rating multiplier, rather than the standard non-domestic rating multiplier.

Both multipliers for this financial year are based on the previous year's multiplier adjusted to reflect the Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation figure for the September prior to the billing year. The current multipliers are shown on the front of your bill.

Rateable Value

Apart from properties that are exempt from business rates, each non-domestic property has a rateable value which is set by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA), an agency of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. They compile and maintain a full list of all rateable values, available at www.gov.uk/voa. The rateable value of your property is shown on the front of your bill. This broadly represents the yearly rent the property could have been let for on the open market on a particular date specified in legislation. For the current rating list, this date was set as 1st April 2015.

The VOA may alter the valuation if circumstances change. The ratepayer (and certain others who have an interest in the property) can also check and challenge the valuation shown in the list if they believe it is wrong.

Further information about the grounds on which challenges may be made and the process for doing so can be obtained by contacting the VOA, or by consulting the VOA website: www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-check-your-rateable-value-is-correct

Revaluations

All non-domestic property rateable values are reassessed at revaluations. The most recent revaluation took effect from 1st April 2017. Revaluations ensure that business rates bills are up-to-date and more accurately reflect current rental values and relative changes in rents. Frequent revaluations ensure the system continues to be responsive to changing economic conditions.

Business Rate Reliefs

Depending on individual circumstances, a ratepayer may be eligible for a rate relief (i.e. a reduction in their business rates bill). There are a range of available reliefs. Further details are provided below and at www.gov.uk/introduction-to-business-rates, at the website of your local authority which is normally shown on your rates bill, or by contacting your local authority.

Temporary Reliefs

Some of the permanent reliefs are set out below but temporary reliefs are often introduced by the Government at Budgets. Further detail on current temporary reliefs is available at www.gov.uk/apply-for-business-rate-relief. You should contact your local authority for details on the latest availability of business rates reliefs and advice on whether you may qualify.

Small Business Rates Relief

If a ratepayer's sole or main property has a rateable value which does not exceed a set threshold, the ratepayer may receive a percentage reduction in their rates bill for the property of up to a maximum of 100%. The level of reduction will depend on the rateable value of the property. For example eligible properties with a rateable value below a specified lower threshold will receive 100% relief. Eligible properties between that threshold and a specified upper threshold will receive partial tapered relief. The relevant thresholds for relief are set by the Government by order and can be obtained from your local authority or at www.gov.uk/introduction-to-business-rates.

Generally, these percentage reductions (reliefs) are only available to ratepayers who occupy either—

- (a) one property, or
- (b) one main property and other additional properties providing those additional properties each have a rateable value which does not exceed the limit set by order.

The aggregate rateable value of all the properties mentioned in (b), must also not exceed an amount set by order. For those businesses that take on an additional property which would normally have meant the loss of small business rate relief, they will be allowed to keep that relief for a fixed additional period. Full details on the relevant limits in relation to second properties and the current period for which a ratepayer may continue to receive relief after taking on an additional property can be obtained from your local authority or at www.gov.uk/introduction-to-business-rates.

Certain changes in circumstances will need to be notified to the local authority by the ratepayer who is in receipt of relief (other changes will be picked up by the local authority). The changes which should be notified are:

- (a) the property falling vacant,
- (b) the ratepayer taking up occupation of an additional property, or
- (c) an increase in the rateable value of a property occupied by the ratepayer in an area other than the area of the local authority which granted the relief.

Charity and Community Amateur Sports Club Relief

Charities and registered Community Amateur Sports Clubs are entitled to 80% relief where the property is occupied by the charity or the club and is wholly or mainly used for the charitable purposes of the charity (or of that and other charities), or for the purposes of the club (or of that and other clubs).

The local authority has discretion to give further relief on the remaining bill. Full details can be obtained from the local authority.

Transitional Rate Relief

At a revaluation, some ratepayers will see reductions or no change in their bill whereas some ratepayers will see increases. Transitional relief schemes are introduced at each revaluation to help those facing increases. Such relief schemes are funded by limiting the reduction in bills for those who have benefitted from the revaluation. Transitional relief is applied automatically to bills. Further information about transitional arrangements and other reliefs may be obtained from the local authority or the website www.gov.uk/introduction-to-business-rates.

Local Discounts and Hardship Relief Local authorities have a general power to grant discretionary local discounts and to give hardship relief in specific circumstances. Full details can be obtained from the local authority.

Budget 2021 business rates measures

At the Budget on 3 March 2021, the Chancellor announced that the Government would provide additional business rates support for eligible retail, hospitality, leisure, and nursery businesses in England occupying a qualifying property.

As temporary measure for 2021/22 he announced that:

- The Expanded Retail Discount (2020/21) will be extended for three months for eligible properties, at 100% relief, uncapped, for the period 1 April 2021 to 30 June 2021.
- From 1 July 2021 to 31 March 2022, the Expanded Retail Discount would apply at 66% relief for eligible properties in the scheme, with a cash cap of £2m for businesses that were required to close as at 5 January 2021, and up to £105,000 for business permitted to open at that date.
- The Nursery Discount 2021 would also be extended for three months, at 100%, uncapped, for the period 1 April 2021 to 30 June 2021.
- From 1 July 2021 to 31 March 2022 the Nursery Discount would apply at 66% relief for eligible properties, with a cash cap of £105,000.
- For the Expanded Retail Discount 2021/22 and Nursery Discount 2021/22, businesses may choose to opt out of support by providing billing authorities notification of their request to refuse support, per eligible hereditament.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has published updated guidance on the Expanded Retail Discount 2021/22 and Nursery Discount 2021/22 to assist billing authorities. This guidance is available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/business-rates-expanded-retail-discount-2021-to-2022-local-authority-guidance> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/business-rates-nursery-childcare-discount-2021-to-2022-local-authority-guidance>.

This includes details on the operation of the cash cap and opt out.