

Small Business Rate Relief

Ratepayers who are not entitled to other mandatory relief or are liable for unoccupied property rates and occupy a property with a rateable value which does not exceed £50,999 will - subject to a small number of exemptions - have their bills calculated using the lower small business non-domestic rating multiplier (0.466 for 2017/18 and 0.480 for 2018/19), rather than the national non-domestic rating multiplier (0.479 for 2017/18 and 0.493 for 2018/19).

In addition, generally if the sole or main property is shown on the rating list with a rateable value which does not exceed £15,000, the ratepayer will receive a percentage reduction in their rates bill for this property of up to a maximum of 50% for a property with a rateable value of not more than £12,000. The government has announced that the doubling of the usual level of relief - to a maximum of 100% - will continue indefinitely.

Generally, this percentage reduction (relief) is only available to ratepayers who occupy either:

- a) one property, or
- b) one main property and other additional properties providing these additional properties each have a rateable value which does not exceed £2,899.

The rateable value of the property in (a), or the aggregate rateable value of all the properties in (b) must not exceed £19,999 on each day for which relief is being sought. If the rateable value, or aggregate rateable value increased above those levels, relief will cease from the day of the increase.

The Government has introduced additional support to small businesses. For those businesses that take on an additional property which would normally have meant the loss of small business rate relief, the Government has confirmed that they will be allowed to keep that relief for a period of 12 months.

An application for small business rate relief is not required. Where a ratepayer meets the eligibility criteria and has not received the relief they should contact their local authority. Provided the ratepayer continues to satisfy the conditions for relief which apply at the relevant time as regards the property and the ratepayer, they will automatically continue to receive relief in each new valuation period.

Certain changes in circumstances will need to be notified to the local authority by a 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 ratepayer taking up occupation of an additional property, and
- b) 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.