



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Non-Domestic Rates
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Chief Finance Officers of English Billing Authorities

FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE BUSINESS RATES SECTION

Dear Chief Finance Officer

Business Rates Information Letter (5/2020): Coronavirus Response and Guidance

This is the fifth business rates information letter to be issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government this year. Previous letters are available on the internet at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/business-rates-information-letters>

or for archived letters:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120919132719/http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/localgovernmentfinance/businessrates/busratesinformationletters/>.

This letter covers:

- **Extension to the Expanded Retail Discount 2020/21: Coronavirus Response**
- **BEIS Grant Scheme**

Expanded Retail Discount 2020/21: Coronavirus Response

On 25 March the Government announced a further expansion to the Expanded Retail Discount to remove some of the previous exclusions from the relief. This is to ensure that some businesses that were previously excluded but are now required to close, such as estate agents, letting agents, betting shops and bingo halls, will be eligible for the relief.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has issued updated guidance to local authorities to reflect this expansion to the scheme. The guidance can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/business-rates-retail-discount-guidance>

Given the importance of this additional support for local businesses, we would encourage authorities to do all you can to ensure that revised bills are issued as quickly as possible to qualifying ratepayers and confirm that they will not need to pay any rates for this year.

Local authorities will be fully compensated for the loss of income associated with granting the expanded relief and the Government will meet the associated new burdens funding to cover the administrative costs of implementation. A supplementary data collection exercise to provide the necessary data to allow the Department to calculate the amounts of grant due is in progress.

BEIS Grant Schemes

At Budget, the Chancellor announced that all businesses eligible for Small Business Rates Relief and Rural Rates Relief would receive a grant of £3,000 each to help with the impact of Covid-19.

On 17 March, the Chancellor confirmed that the Government would increase the value of this to £10,000 per business.

On the 17 March the Government also announced that it would provide those businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors with an additional cash grant of up to £25,000 per business. Recipients will receive one grant per eligible property:

- For businesses in these sectors with a rateable value of under £15,000, they will receive a grant of £10,000
- For businesses in these sectors with a rateable value of between £15,000 and £51,000, they will receive a grant of £25,000

The grant scheme is being implemented by BEIS. Detailed guidance for local authorities was published on 24 March:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-business-support-grant-funding

Further questions on implementation on the scheme should be directed to: businessgrantfunds@beis.gov.uk

The scheme is being fully funded by the Government, and will be administered by local authorities. Section 31 grant payments will be made to local authorities on 1 April.