

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Key information about your Business Rates bill

This leaflet gives you general information about Business Rates. More detailed information is available on our website. www.scambs.gov.uk/business/business-rates

If you do not have access to the internet and would like a copy of this information, please contact us using the details on your bill

About Business Rates

Non-Domestic Rates, or Business Rates are collected by local authorities and the way that those who occupy non-domestic properties contribute towards the cost of local services. Authorities keep a proportion of the business rates paid locally. This money, together with revenue from council taxpayers, revenue support grants provided by the Government and certain other sums, is used to pay for the services provided by local authorities in your area. To find out more about how the money you pay is spent locally, please visit the following websites:

Cambridgeshire County Council <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/finance-and-budget/business-plans>

Cambridgeshire Fire Authority <https://www.cambsfire.gov.uk/media/3961/budget-book-202526.pdf>

South Cambridgeshire District Council: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/council-tax/financial-information>

Rateable Value

Apart from properties that are exempt from Business Rates, each non-domestic assessment has a rateable value which is set by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA), an Agency of HM Revenues & Customs. A full list of all rateable values is 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. For the current rating list, this date was set as 1 April 2021. The VOA may alter the value if circumstances change. The ratepayer and certain others who have an interest in the property, can also check and challenge the value 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 found on the VOA website:

www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-check-your-rateable-value-is-correct. We can only backdate any amendment from the date from which any change to the list is to have effect.

National Non-Domestic Rating Multiplier

The local authority works out the business rates bill by multiplying the rateable value of the property by the multiplier. There are two multipliers: the standard non-domestic rating multiplier and the small business non-domestic rating multiplier. The former is higher to pay for small business rate relief. The Government sets multipliers for each financial year, except in the City of London where special arrangements apply. Both multipliers for a 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, unless a lower multiplier is set by the Government. The current multipliers are shown on the front of your bill.

Revaluations

All non-domestic property rateable values are reassessed at revaluations. The most recent revaluation took effect from 1st April 2023. 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. The next revaluation is due 1st April 2026.

Transitional Rate Relief

At any revaluation, some ratepayers will see reductions or no change in their bills, whereas some ratepayers will see increases. Transitional relief schemes are introduced at each revaluation to help those facing increases. Transitional relief is applied automatically to bills.

Unoccupied Property Rates

Business rates are payable in respect of unoccupied non-domestic property. However, they are generally not payable for the first three months that a property is empty. This is extended to six months in the case of some industrial premises, whilst certain other properties such as vacant listed buildings are not liable for business rates until they are reoccupied. Full details on exemptions can be obtained on our website.

Business Rates Instalments

Payment of business rate bills is automatically set on a 10-monthly cycle. However, the Government has put in place regulations that allow businesses to require their local authority to enable payments to be made through 12 monthly instalments. If you wish to pay over 12 months, please visit: <https://openportal.scambs.gov.uk/scripts/OPENPortal-Live.wsc/ir/chgpaymethod.p>

Partly Occupied Property Relief

A ratepayer is liable for the full non-domestic rate whether a property is occupied or only partly occupied. Where a property is partly occupied for a brief period; the local authority has discretion in certain cases to award relief in respect of the unoccupied part. To apply please visit:

www.scambs.gov.uk/business/business-rates/business-rates-reliefs-and-exemptions

Business Rate Reliefs

Depending on individual circumstances, a ratepayer may be eligible for a rate relief (i.e. a reduction in your business rates bill). There are a range of available reliefs. Some of the permanent reliefs are set out below, but temporary reliefs are often introduced by the Government at Budgets. You should contact us for details on the latest availability of business rates reliefs and advice on whether you may qualify. Please visit our website.

Small Business Rate Relief

Ratepayers who occupy a property with a rateable value which does not exceed £50,999 will have their bills calculated using the lower small business non-domestic rating multiplier, rather than the national non-domestic rating multiplier. In addition, 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 100%. For a property with a rateable value of not more than £12,000, the ratepayer will receive a 100% reduction in their rates bill. 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 those additional properties each have a rateable value which does not exceed £2,899.

The total (or aggregated) rateable value of the property mentioned in (b), must not exceed £19,999 outside London or £27,999 in London on each day for which relief is sought. If the rateable value, or aggregate rateable value, increases above those levels, relief will cease from the day of the increase. 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. 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 financial year.

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 a local authority). The changes which should be notified are-

(i) The property falls vacant

(ii) The ratepayer taking up occupation of an additional property, or

(iii) 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

Charity 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). Your local authority has discretion to give further relief on the remaining bill. Full details can be obtained from our website.

At the Autumn 2024 budget, the Chancellor announced that it is expected from 1st April 2025, charitable relief will no longer be applicable to private schools. However, this is subject to the enactment of the legislation, we will update once the parliamentary process has concluded.

Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Relief 2025

At the Autumn Statement on 30th October 2024 the Government announced a new Retail Relief, which replaces the previous scheme has been extended for a sixth year into 2025-26 at a reduced rate. Qualifying Retail, Hospitality and Leisure hereditaments can receive a 40% discount of the chargeable amount, after other reliefs and exemptions are applied. This amount is capped at £110,000 per business. For further information on the scheme, please visit our website.

Local Discounts and Hardship Relief

Local authorities have a general power to grant discretionary local discounts and to give hardship relief in specific circumstances. For more information, please visit our website.

Rate Relief for Businesses in Rural Areas

Certain types of properties in a rural settlement with a population below 3,000 may be entitled to relief. The property must be the only general store, the only post office, or a food shop with a rateable value of less than £8,500 or the only public house or the only petrol station and have a rateable value of less than £12,500. The property must be occupied. An eligible ratepayer is entitled to relief at 100% of the full charge.

Subsidy Control

The new UK subsidy control regime commenced from 4th January 2023. The new regime enables public authorities, including devolved administrations and local authorities, to deliver subsidies that are tailored for local needs. Public Authorities giving subsidies must comply with the UK's international subsidy control commitments. The subsidy control legislation provides the framework for a new, UK-wide subsidy control regime. Further information about subsidy control can be found at

www.gov.uk/government/collections/subsidy-control-regime

Rating Advisers

Ratepayers do not have to be represented in discussions about their rateable value or their rates bill. However, ratepayers who do wish to be represented should be aware that members of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS – website www.rics.org) and the Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation (IRRV – website www.irrv.net) are qualified and are regulated by rules of professional conduct designed to protect the public from misconduct. Before you employ a rating advisor, you should check that they have the necessary knowledge and expertise, as well as appropriate indemnity insurance. Take great care and, if necessary, seek further advice before entering any contract.

For further information, please visit: www.scams.gov.uk/business/business-rates