

# COVID-19 & BUSINESS RATES – A SUMMARY OF THE CURRENT POSITION IN RELATION TO MITIGATION – 8 APRIL 2020

	RETAIL, LEISURE & HOSPITALITY SPECIFIC MEASURES	OTHER PROPERTIES AND GENERAL
<b>ENGLAND</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extension of the Retail Rate Relief Scheme announced in the 2020 Budget. Widened application to properties in retail, leisure and hospitality sectors as defined in *1 and with no RV limit.</li> <li>• Discretionary power for councils to award 100% rate relief for 2020/21 rate year – as the relief is fully funded by central government our expectation is that discretion will be exercised.</li> <li>• Properties must be occupied – temporary closure due to COVID 19 qualifies.</li> <li>• Scheme approved by EU for state aid purposes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unoccupied Properties – Mandatory Empty Rate Relief for 3 or 6 months – law unchanged. Property must be completely unoccupied by personnel and cleared of all stock in trade, chattels, raw materials, etc. although plant, machinery or equipment can be left in situ.</li> <li>• Partially Unoccupied Properties – Discretionary Empty Rate Relief – available to all properties for short periods (not defined). Considerations as to occupation as above apply. Relief applied in proportion to occupied and unoccupied parts.</li> <li>• Hardship – A measure that is called upon when a business in the local authority area is in extreme difficulty. The council must consider the interests of their council tax payers and historically it has been rarely granted.</li> <li>• Material Change of Circumstances (MCC) Appeals – Grounds are restricted and COVID19 in itself not considered sufficient, However the legal requirement to close pubs, bars, cafes, etc. announced 20 March 2020 is grounds as is the non-occupation of other properties in the locality. Where appropriate MCC appeals will be made.</li> </ul>
<b>SCOTLAND</b>	As for England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.6% rates relief for all properties across Scotland for 2020/21 effectively reversing the planned UBR increase.</li> <li>• Government has asked Billing Authorities to look favourably on requests from ratepayers to defer payments for a fixed period.</li> <li>• Material Change of Circumstance (MCC) appeals – MCC appeals permitted if rental value is impacted by the issues surrounding COVID19. Please note that the MCC provisions in Scotland are different to those in England and Wales.</li> </ul>
<b>WALES</b>	As for England, although Retail Rate Relief scheme applies to properties below RV £500,000.	As for England
<b>NORTHERN IRELAND</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On 17 March 2020 the NI Finance Minister announced a 3-month rates holiday for all businesses from April to June 2020.</li> <li>• Further announcements are expected in the coming days.</li> <li>• New rating lists comes into force from the 1 April 2020, appeals against the new values may be made from 1 April 2020.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On 17 March 2020 the NI Finance Minister announced a 3-month rates holiday for all businesses from April to June 2020.</li> <li>• Further announcements are expected in the coming days.</li> <li>• New rating lists comes into force from 1 April 2020, appeals against the new values may be made from 1 April 2020.</li> </ul>
<b>REPUBLIC OF IRELAND</b>	The Irish Government announced on 20 March 2020 that it had agreed with local authorities that they should agree to defer rates payments due from the most immediately impacted businesses - primarily in the retail, hospitality, leisure and childcare sectors, for three months, until end-May.	No ability to make MCC appeals

## NB

This document is a 'one page' summary of the current position and as such cannot catch all scenarios, but does deal with most, and will be updated as required.  
Bid Levy – relief does not apply.

## USEFUL LINKS:

[\\*1 – MHCLG – EXPANDED RETAIL RELIEF GUIDANCE ENGLAND](#)    [ROI](#)    [SCOTLAND](#)    [NORTHERN IRELAND](#)