

Coronavirus Advice for Businesses – 9 April 2020

SUPPORT FOR OR CERTAIN RETAIL, HOSPITALITY AND LEISURE BUSINESSES THAT PAY BUSINESS RATES

The Chancellor announced that all retail, hospitality and leisure businesses will not have to pay business rates for the tax year 2020/21. Businesses that received the retail discount in the 2019 to 2020 tax year will be rebilled by their local authority as soon as possible. Following the announcement on 23 March 2020 of further measures to limit the spread of coronavirus, the government confirmed that some of the exclusions for this relief, such as estate agents and letting agents, have been removed, so that retail, leisure, and hospitality properties that will have been forced to close as a result of the COVID-19 restriction measures will now be eligible for the relief. Guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/business-rates-retail-discount-guidance>

Shops, pubs, clubs, theatres, cinemas, music venues, restaurants and any other businesses in the hospitality, leisure and retail sectors (under the expanded list) with a rateable value of less than £51,000 will also receive a cash grant of up to £25,000 per business to help bridge through this period.

For businesses which do have a policy that covers pandemics, the government's action is sufficient and will allow businesses to make an insurance claim against their policy.

All enquiries on the eligibility for, or provision of, the reliefs should be directed to the relevant local authority. Please note reliefs are not currently the same for businesses in Scotland.

Guidance on the scheme is due to be published by 20 March and was not available as we went to press with this alert.