



Braintree District Council

Business Rates Guide

2011/12



www.braintree.gov.uk

Non-Domestic Rates

Non-Domestic Rates, or business rates, collected by local authorities are the way that those who occupy non-domestic property contribute towards the cost of local services. The rates are pooled by central government and redistributed to local authorities as part of the annual formula grant settlement. The money, together with revenue from Council Tax payers, revenue support grant provided by the Government and certain other sums, is used to pay for the services provided by your local authority and other local authorities in your area.

Rateable Value

Apart from properties that are exempt from Business Rates, each non-domestic property has a rateable value which is set by the valuation officers of the Valuation Office Agency (VOA), an agency of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. They draw up and maintain a full list of all rateable values, available on their website at www.voa.gov.uk. The rateable value of your property is shown on the front of the bill. This broadly represents the yearly rent the property could have been let for on the open market on a particular date. For the revaluation that comes into effect on 1st April 2010, this date was set as 1st April 2008.

The valuation officer may alter the value if circumstances change. The ratepayer (and certain others who have an interest in the property) can appeal against the value shown in the list if they believe it is wrong. Further information about the grounds on which appeals may be made and the process for doing so can be found on the VOA website

www.voa.gov.uk/2010 or call the national enquiry helpline on **08456022010** or from your local valuation office - 34 Southway, Colchester Essex CO2 7BB or call 01206 287100.

Successful appeals against values shown in the rating list that comes into force 1st April 2010 will normally be backdated to that date, although there are exceptions to this. Additional information may be obtained from the Valuation Tribunal Service on 03001232035 or website www.valuationtribunal.gov.uk

Further information and frequently asked questions can be obtained from www.businesslink.gov.uk

National Non-Domestic Rating Multiplier

Braintree District Council works out the business rates bill by multiplying the rateable value of the property by the appropriate 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 the multipliers for each financial year for the whole of England according to formulae set by legislation. Between revaluations the multipliers change each year in line with inflation and to take account of the cost of small business rate relief. In the year of revaluation the multipliers are rebased to account for overall changes to total rateable value and to ensure that the revaluation does not raise extra money for Government. The current multipliers are shown on the front of the bill. The Non-Domestic Multiplier for 2011/2012 for Small Businesses is **42.6p** per pound RV and the other multiplier is **43.3p**.

Revaluation 2010 and Transitional Arrangements

All rateable values are reassessed every five years at a general revaluation. The current rating list is based on the 2010 revaluation. Five-yearly revaluations make sure each ratepayer pays their fair contribution and no more, by ensuring that the share of the national rates bill paid by any one ratepayer reflects changes over time in the value of their property relative to others. Revaluation does not raise extra money for Government.

Whilst the 2010 revaluation does not increase the amount of rates collected nationally, within this overall picture, over a million properties will see their business rate liabilities reduced and some ratepayers will see increases.

For those that would otherwise see significant increases in their rates liability, the Government has put in place a £2 billion transitional relief scheme to limit and phase in changes in rate bills as a result of the 2010 revaluation. To help

pay for the limits on increases in bills, there also have to be limits on reductions in bills. Under the transition scheme, limits continue to apply to yearly increases and decreases until the full amount is due (rateable value times the appropriate multiplier). The scheme applies only to the bill based on a property at the time of the revaluation. If there are any changes to the property after 1st April 2010, transitional arrangements will not normally apply to the part of a bill that relates to any increase in rateable value due to those changes. Changes to your bill as a result of other reasons (such as changes to the amount of small business rate relief) are not covered by the transitional arrangements.

The transitional arrangements are applied automatically and are shown on the front of your bill. Further information about transitional arrangements and other forms of relief may be obtained from Braintree District Council or the website www.businesslink.gov.uk
More information on revaluation 2010 can be found at www.voa.gov.uk

Small Business Rate Relief

This relief is only available to ratepayers who apply to their local authority and 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 £2,599.

The rateable value of the property mentioned in (a), or the aggregate rateable value of all the properties mentioned in (b), must not exceed £17,999 on each day for which relief is being sought. If the rateable value, or aggregate rateable value, increases above those levels, relief will cease from the day of the increase.

Ratepayers who satisfy these conditions will have the bill for their sole or main property calculated using the lower small business non-domestic rating multiplier rather than the national non-domestic rating multiplier that is used to calculate the liability of other businesses.

In addition, if the sole or main property is shown on the rating list with a rateable value which does not exceed £12,000, 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 £6,000.

If an application for relief is granted, 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 not need to re-apply for relief in each new valuation period.

Certain changes in circumstances will need to be notified to the Council by the ratepayer (other changes will be picked up by the local authority). The changes which must be notified are (a) the ratepayer taking up occupation of a property they did not occupy at the time of making their application for relief, 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.

Notification of these changes must be given to the local authority within 4 weeks of the day after the day on which the change happened. If this happens, there will be no interruption to the ratepayer's entitlement to the relief. A notification that the ratepayer has taken up occupation of an additional property must be by way of a fresh application for relief; notice of an increase in rateable value must be given in writing.

A temporary increase in Small Business Rate Relief from October 1st 2010 to 30th September 2011 grants eligible ratepayers 100% relief upto a rateable value of £6000, with tapered relief between £6000 and below £12,000.

Full details on the eligibility criteria and on how to apply for this relief are available from the Revenues Section either in writing, by email or telephone on **01376 557755**.

Charity and Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC) Relief

Charities and registered CASCs are entitled to 80% relief where the property is occupied by the charity or the CASC, 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 CASC (or of that and other CASCs).

Braintree District Council has discretion to give further relief on the remaining bill. Full details can be obtained from the Revenues Section.

How are you handling your business waste?

Don't take chances with the law

Reliable local trade waste removal service from as little as £1.60 per week.

Did you know:

If your business generates waste you need to comply with various regulations. Your waste must be kept secure so it doesn't leak or blow away. It must also be disposed of and taken away by a licensed waste carrier.



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Non-Profit Making Organisation Relief

The Council has discretion to give relief to non-profit making organisations. Full details can be obtained from the Revenue Section.

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 and have 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 has to be occupied. An eligible ratepayer is entitled to mandatory relief at 50% of the full charge whilst the local authority also has discretion to give further relief on the remaining bill.

In addition, the local authority can give discretionary relief on certain other occupied property that the Council is satisfied benefit the local community and are in a rural settlement where the rateable value is less than £16,500. Full details can be obtained from the Braintree District Council.

Hardship Relief

The local authority has discretion to give relief in special circumstances. Full details can be obtained from the Revenues Section.

Deferred Payment of 2009/10 Rates Liabilities

Ratepayers in 2009/10 were able to defer payment of 3% of their 2009/10 rates bill and, where applicable, 60% of the increase in that bill due to the ending of the 2005 rating list transitional relief scheme. The right to apply for deferral has now ended. For those ratepayers who applied for this scheme, the deferred amount to be collected in 2011/12 will be included in the bills for that year.

Rating Advisers

Ratepayers do not have to be represented in discussions about their rateable value or their rates bill. Appeals against rateable values can be made free of charge. 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 and Revenues and Rating (IRRV – website www.irrv.org.uk) are qualified and are regulated by rules of professional conduct designed to protect the public from misconduct. Before you employ a rating adviser, 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 into any contract.

Unoccupied Property Rating

Business rates will not be payable in the first three months that a property is empty. This is extended to six months in the case of certain industrial properties. After this period rates are payable in full unless the unoccupied property rate has been reduced by the Government by order. In most cases the unoccupied property rate is zero for properties owned by charities and community amateur sports clubs. In addition, there are a number of exemptions from the unoccupied property rate. Full details of exemptions can be obtained from Braintree District Council. If the unoccupied property rate for the financial year has been reduced by order, it will be shown on the front of this bill.

Void properties with a rateable value less than £2,600 (from April 1st 2010) will be exempt from rates.

Partly Occupied Property Relief

A ratepayer is liable for the full non-domestic rate whether a property is wholly occupied or only partly occupied. Where a property is partly occupied for a short time, the local authority has discretion in certain cases to award relief in respect of the unoccupied part. Full details can be obtained from Braintree District Council quoting Section 44a relief.

The regulations are available at:

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si201029>

Please keep us informed

Please remember to inform the Revenue Office if you move or sell a property. It is important that you tell us straight away of any changes in your circumstances, particularly if you are claiming any type of relief to which you may no longer be entitled. We rely on accurate information from Business Rate payers to make the system work.

Electronic billing is now available.

Please email busrates@braintree.gov.uk for information. Please note that all joint and severally liable persons must agree. No paper bill will be issued in addition.

WARNING

It is your responsibility to advise us if you change your email address. If we send emails to the wrong address or payment is late, recovery action will be taken.

PLEASE REMEMBER

If you do not make payments by the due dates, the Council will issue a reminder notice.

The maximum number of reminders you may receive is 2, the minimum is 1, in any financial year. If the second reminder remains unpaid, a summons will be issued and cost incurred.

Problems Paying

Remember, we are here to help you. Please contact us if you cannot pay your Business Rates. Do not wait until you are in debt as this makes it more difficult to sort the problem out.

For further information contact the Recovery Section on 01376 557722

Data Matching

Braintree District Council has a duty to protect the public funds it administers, and to this end may use the information you provide for the prevention of fraud. Information may also be shared with other bodies responsible for auditing and administering public funds for these purposes.

For further information, see www.braintree.gov.uk/council and [democracy/Nation Fraud](http://www.braintree.gov.uk/council)

Collection Rate The Business Rate collection rate for 2009/10 in year was 98.4%. In monetary terms, the Council collected £37.51 million out of £38.12 million due under the precept. The Council will continue to collect outstanding sums owed until full collection has been achieved. At the time of going to press, the projected Business Collection Rate for 2010/11 will exceed 98.25%

Appeals against Business Rate Bills

If you disagree with the amount you are asked to pay because you are not the liable person, you feel that you are entitled to some type of relief, or that the property should be exempt, please write to the Revenues Section at Braintree District Council.

For appeals against your Rateable Value please contact the Valuation Office Agency.
National Helpline 0845 6022010 or (01206) 287100

You can check your Business Rates account balance on line at
www.braintree.gov.uk/misc/nndr_bals.aspx

Making Payments

Many people would like an easier way to pay their Business Rate bill. As these bills are payable monthly, businesses face recovery action when they have forgotten to pay. The easiest way to avoid these problems is to use **DIRECT DEBIT**.



Sign up for Direct Debit

TELEPHONE us on 01376 557755 to set up your Direct Debit by phone. Please have your sort code, bank account number and business rate reference number handy or visit www.braintree.gov.uk to set up your payment online. If you already pay by Direct Debit, it will carry over to the new year, or new property if you move. In the case of a company, please call to request a Direct Debit instruction or download from the Braintree District Council website - www.braintree.gov.uk



Pay online, or by Phone

- Go to website www.braintree.gov.uk to pay online
- Phone our automated 24-hour payment line on 01376 557894. Credit card payments incur a transaction fee.
- Through your bank if they offer the facility, please quote Sort Code 08-90-04, Account Number 61021251, Co-operative Bank, Chelmsford and your payment reference number.



By Post

Make your cheques payable to Braintree District Council and send to PO Box 207, Braintree, Essex CM7 9HB. Please write your reference number on the back of the Cheque.

Post-dated cheques will not be accepted and receipts are NOT given for cheque payments unless a S.A.E. is provided. Please do NOT send cash through the post.

Giro Bank Transfer

The Council's Giro account number is 305 1226. This must be quoted along with your payment reference number on an appropriate payment slip.



Payment Hours

Cheque and card payments only can be made at:

BRAINTREE, Causeway House

9.00am - 5.30pm Monday to Thursday

9.00am - 5.00pm Friday (subject to change)

HALSTEAD Library, Bridge Street

8.30am - 5.00pm Monday & Saturday

8.30am - 7.00pm Tuesday

9.00am - 5.00pm Wednesday

8.30am - 6.00pm Thursday/Friday

WITHAM Library, 18 Newland Street

9.00am - 7.00pm Monday to Friday

9.00am - 5.00pm Saturday

1.00am - 4.00pm Sunday

For further information contact:

Exchequer Services Causeway House, Braintree, Essex CM7 9HB

Direct Dial: Revenues: **01376 557755** Email: busrates@braintree.gov.uk

Direct Dial: Recovery: **01376 557722** Email: payadvice@braintree.gov.uk

Fax: **01376 552626**

www.braintree.gov.uk