

Cherwell District Council

Business Rates Relief for Local Newspapers

1. Introduction

The Government announced in the Budget on 16 March 2016 that it will provide relief of up to £1,500 to all office space occupied by local newspapers, up to a maximum of one discount per local newspaper title and per hereditament, and up to state aid limits, for 2 years from 1 April 2017.

This is a temporary measure to support local newspapers in adapting to technological changes within the industry. The relief is intended to be specifically for local newspapers.

2. Qualifying properties

The hereditament must be occupied by a local newspaper and be wholly or mainly used as office premises for journalists and reporters. The relief is specifically for local newspapers which are considered to be “a traditional local newspaper”. The relief will not be available to magazines.

3. Claiming business rate relief for local newspapers

Business Rates Relief for Local Newspapers can be claimed by completing the application form at www.cherwell.gov.uk.

4. State Aid

Awards such as Relief for Local Newspapers are required to comply with European Law on State Aid. State Aid law is the means by which the European Union regulates state funded support to businesses. Providing discretionary relief to ratepayers is likely to amount to State Aid. Local Newspaper Relief is, however, State Aid compliant where it is provided in accordance with the De Minimis Regulations. We have to establish the award will not result in you (“the undertaking”) having received more than €200,000 of De Minimis aid in a three year period and when applying for the relief you will also be required to complete a De Minimis Declaration form.

5. How much relief will be available?

The total amount of government-funded relief available under the scheme is £1,500 for 2017-18 and 2018-19. The relief will be applied to the bill after all other reliefs.

6. What if I occupy more than one property?

Ratepayers that occupy more than one property will be only be entitled to relief on one eligible property.

7. How payments will be made

Relief awarded will be credited against the Business Rates Bill.

8. Notification of decision

Cherwell District Council will notify the applicant of the decision in writing and where the relief is refused an explanation of the reasons why will be given.