

Rebecca Evans AC/AM
Y Gweinidog Cyllid a'r Trefnydd
Minister for Finance and Trefnydd



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Our ref RE/05313/19

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair – Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff
CF99 1NA
SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

24 July 2019

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter regarding non-domestic rates and the retail industry, sent on behalf of the Petitions Committee.

I understand the important social, economic and environmental benefits businesses deliver across Wales. For this reason, the Welsh Government has put in place a number of schemes to assist ratepayers with their non-domestic rates bills. In 2019-20 the Welsh Government is providing over £210 million of rates relief to support a wide range of businesses and other ratepayers. More than three quarters of ratepayers in Wales will benefit from these reliefs, with half paying nothing at all.

The Welsh Government is committed to supporting businesses and in December 2018 it was announced that an extra £23.6 million is being invested to extend and enhance our High Street Relief scheme for a further year into 2019-20. The enhanced scheme will go significantly further than in previous years, providing support to around 15,000 retailers in Wales with a rateable value up to £50,000. The restriction around properties seeing a reduction in rateable value following revaluation has been removed, meaning that, provided circumstances meet the criteria, ratepayers should be eligible for High Street Relief of up to £2,500 in 2019-20. The scheme is application based. For further information and how to apply, ratepayers should contact their local authority.

More information on the various available reliefs can be found on the following website:
<https://businesswales.gov.wales/business-rates-relief-in-wales>.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The Welsh Government also has a number of initiatives providing financial support for town centres. These include our £100m Targeted Regeneration Investment programme, our £54m Building for the Future regeneration programme, our £31.5m Town Centre Loans scheme and £262,000 for Business Improvement Districts.

In July 2018, the Welsh Government announced it would bring forward the revaluation for non-domestic rates in Wales from 2022 to 2021, providing certainty for ratepayers and ensuring the valuations which underpin the non-domestic rates system remain timely and accurate. No announcement has been made about the frequency of revaluations in Wales thereafter, as we are instead exploring alternative approaches to valuation and local taxes more broadly.

The petition from Your Pontypridd Business Improvement District raises some interesting points about the changing nature of retail and consumer spending. The District will be pleased to know I am examining options for longer term reform of local taxes including further developing our relief schemes to ensure they are targeted to best meet the needs of Wales. Our intention is to take a progressive, fair and transparent approach towards local taxation which continues to provide funding for vital local services. On 24 October 2018, the Welsh Government issued a progress update on this work which can be found here:

<https://gov.wales/reforming-local-government-finance-wales-2018-update>

A further update on this work will be published later this year.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Evans". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rebecca Evans AC/AM

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