

Guidance for the completion of rate relief applications under Section 49 Local Government Finance Act 1988 reduction/remission due to hardship

Vale of the White Horse District Council will consider applications from business ratepayers for a reduction in rates on the grounds of hardship in accordance with Section 49 of the Local Government Finance Act 1998. The cost of any relief granted is shared between the national exchequer (50%) and the local council taxpayers (50%).

Before approving any reductions Vale of the White Horse District Council must be satisfied that the provisions contained in the paragraphs 2(a) and 2(b) of Section 49 have been met. A set of criteria has been devised to assess the application against the provisions and this is shown below. Each application for relief will be considered on its merits in the light of the particular circumstances of the applicant and taking into account:

1. Section 49 2(a) – “The ratepayer would sustain hardship if the authority did not do so” [i.e. grant a reduction or remission].

- There must be evidence of hardship. Hardship is judged by Vale of the White Horse District Council, not the ratepayer.
- What is the incidence of hardship attributable to the rates and the relationship between rates, other costs, income, profits and reserves?
Audited and/or certified accounts will be a prerequisite.
- Would any reduction secure the future of the business?

2. Section 49 2(b) – “It is reasonable for the authority to do so [i.e. grant a reduction or remission] having regard to the interests of persons subject to its council taxes.”

- What would be the effect on the locality if the business ceased trading; would the loss of the business be detrimental to the provision of services and facilities, and would unemployment/employment prospects be substantially worsened?
- What would be the effect on the council taxpayers generally of increasing council tax bills to cover the costs of reduction?
- Are there alternative suppliers in the vicinity?

Please note that the Council may wish to publicise the awards of discretionary rate relief it grants which may involve naming the organisations that are in receipt of the relief.

Further Advice on Rate Relief

Further advice or information can be obtained from the Non-Domestic Rates Section on **0845 3002839**

Please return your completed application form to: **Non-Domestic Rates Section, Vale of White Horse District Council, PO Box 161, Erith, DA8 9DR.**

Alternative formats – standard text

'You can get our [document's name] in alternative formats, upon request. These include large print, Braille, audio cassette, computer disk and email.

Please contact the Non-Domestic Rate Service.



0845 300 2839



vowh.businessrates@secure.capita.co.uk