

Have your say on a new small business rates relief scheme for Wales

In 2017-18, the Welsh Government is providing more than £110 million of rates relief for small businesses. The new permanent scheme will maintain this level of investment.

A consultation opens today looking at whether the scheme could provide more support to the small businesses that need it the most.

This could involve redirecting relief from certain businesses, such as national chains which occupy multiple small premises across Wales, to support businesses which are more likely to benefit.

Funding would then be reinvested in making the scheme more generous for small businesses like local shops, cafes and restaurants which might only operate from one or two premises.

In considering how the scheme could be made more generous, the consultation also looks at whether the different thresholds for relief could be increased, how much this would cost and whether, as a result, more businesses would benefit.

The consultation also looks at whether any additional types of businesses should be excepted from the scheme. Current exceptions include non-domestic properties like car parks and phone masts, as well as those occupied by councils, police and crime commissioners or the Crown.

In addition to the above, the consultation asks how the permanent scheme could be used to support certain industries or sectors, such as childcare, should there be a robust evidence base to do so.

The Welsh Government is also asking for any other views from ratepayers about how the permanent SBRR scheme could continue to be developed in the future to ensure it is responsive to business needs. Questions include whether support should be permanent or time-limited and whether it should be focused on businesses that are in line with Welsh Government priorities – whether social, economic or environmental.

Launching the consultation today, Mark Drakeford said:

“We want to provide as much certainty and security for small businesses as we possibly can. One of the best ways we can do this is by confirming that we will be introducing a £110m permanent SBRR scheme in 2018 and, in doing so, extending a tax cut that will help boost long-term economic growth for Wales.

“Today marks the start of an extensive consultation with ratepayers, business representatives, other taxpayers and local

authorities. Their views are absolutely essential to making this scheme a success and we want to work with them closely, constructively and attentively. I urge everyone to have their say before the consultation closes on Friday 13th October.”

Purnima Tanuku OBE, Chief Executive of National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA) said:

“We wholly welcome this consultation. Relief on Business Rates would make a huge difference to a childcare sector beset by underfunding and rising costs. Nurseries are so important to the economy, employing many thousands of people and allowing parents to work. Business Rates have been increasing at a time when settings just cannot afford to pay more, impacting on fees to parents and relief would help to balance nursery books and keep costs to families affordable.”