

Covid-19: Estate agents, lettings agencies and bingo halls to pay no business rates this coming financial year

- local authorities will be fully compensated
- part of a business rates holiday introduced from 1 April 2020

Estate agents, lettings agencies and bingo halls that have closed as a result of Covid-19 measures to restrict the spread of the virus will be now be exempted from business rates in 2020-21.

This measure comes after the Chancellor announced in the Budget that, in response to Covid-19, the business rates retail discount would be increased to 100% next year and would be expanded to the hospitality and leisure sectors.

Today the government has announced that some of the exclusions for this relief have been removed, so that retail, leisure, and hospitality properties that have closed as a result of the Covid-19 restriction measures will now be eligible for the relief.

This will ensure that estate agents, lettings agencies and bingo halls that are required to close will not pay any business rates next year.

Rishi Sunak commented:

We are determined to do whatever it takes to support businesses during Covid-19, which is why we have extended business rates relief for the high street.

Today, I am removing some the exclusions for this relief, so that retail, leisure, and hospitality properties that have closed as a result of the measures announced by the Prime Minister in his statement on Monday will now be eligible for the relief.

This will ensure that estate agents, lettings agencies and bingo halls that are required to close will not pay any business rates next year.

Eligible businesses will be rebilled by their local authority and the new bill will give them the discount of 100%.

If businesses have made payments in the meantime, they will be refunded by their local authority. We are working with local authorities to ensure new bills are issued as soon as possible.

The Devolved Administrations will receive funding under the Barnett formula to support businesses in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Guidance for local authorities on the application of the holiday will be published by MHCLG shortly.

Notes

UK House Price Index for January 2020

The January data shows:

- on average, house prices have fallen by 1.1% since December 2019
- there has been an annual price rise of 1.3%, which makes the average property in the UK valued at £231,185

England

In England the January data shows, on average, house prices have fallen by 1.2% since December 2019. The annual price rise of 1.1% takes the average property value to £247,355.

The regional data for England indicates that:

- the West Midlands experienced the greatest monthly price rise, up by 0.4%
- the North East saw the most significant monthly price fall, down by 2.6%
- Yorkshire and the Humber experienced the greatest annual price rise, up by 3.1%
- the East of England saw the lowest annual price growth, down by 0.6%

Price change by region for England

Region	Average price January 2020	Monthly change % since December 2019
East Midlands	£195,707	-0.4
East of England	£286,999	-2.2
London	£476,588	-1.1
North East	£126,592	-2.6
North West	£164,769	-1.5
South East	£320,700	-1.2
South West	£254,320	-1.8
West Midlands	£200,628	0.4
Yorkshire and the Humber	£165,383	-0.9

Repossession sales by volume for England

The lowest number of repossession sales in November 2019 was in the East of England.

The highest number of repossession sales in November 2019 was in the North West.

Repossession sales	November 2019
East Midlands	45
East of England	15
London	53
North East	107
North West	135
South East	48
South West	53
West Midlands	58
Yorkshire and The Humber	89
England	603

Average price by property type for England

Property type	January 2020	January 2019	Difference %
Detached	£371,605	£374,559	-0.8
Semi-detached	£235,441	£229,019	2.8
Terraced	£201,669	£196,453	2.7
Flat/maisonette	£221,053	£223,908	-1.3
All	£247,355	£244,641	1.1

Funding and buyer status for England

Transaction type	Average price January 2020	Annual price change % since January 2019	Monthly price change % since December 2019
Cash	£231,059	0.3	-1.8
Mortgage	£255,474	1.5	-1.0
First-time buyer	£207,539	1.4	-1.3
Former owner occupier	£280,684	0.8	-1.1

Building status for England

Building status*	Average price November 2019	Annual price change % since November 2018	Monthly price change % since October 2019
New build	£296,789	0.0	-4.9
Existing resold property	£245,651	0.7	0.2

*Figures for the 2 most recent months are not being published because there

are not enough new build transactions to give a meaningful result.

London

London shows, on average, house prices have fallen by 1.1% since December 2019. An annual price rise of 1.4% takes the average property value to £476,588.

Average price by property type for London

Property type	January 2020	January 2019	Difference %
Detached	£880,878	£909,861	-3.2
Semi-detached	£584,072	£578,054	1.0
Terraced	£505,237	£488,264	3.5
Flat/maisonette	£414,346	£410,934	0.8
All	£476,588	£470,067	1.4

Funding and buyer status for London

Transaction type	Average price January 2020	Annual price change % since January 2019	Monthly price change % since December 2019
Cash	£497,529	1.0	-1.6
Mortgage	£470,075	1.5	-0.9
First-time buyer	£415,365	1.2	-1.4
Former owner occupier	£540,500	1.7	-0.6

Building status for London

Building status*	Average price November 2019	Annual price change % since November 2018	Monthly price change % since October 2019
New build	£464,031	-2.7	-6.3
Existing resold property	£471,185	-1.0	-0.3

*Figures for the 2 most recent months are not being published because there are not enough new build transactions to give a meaningful result.

Wales

Wales shows, on average, house prices have fallen by 2.9% since December 2019. An annual price rise of 2.0% takes the average property value to £161,719.

There were 58 repossession sales for Wales in November 2019.

Average price by property type for Wales

Property type	January 2020	January 2019	Difference %
Detached	£241,806	£240,917	0.4
Semi-detached	£159,209	£152,999	4.1
Terraced	£124,273	£121,828	2.0
Flat/maisonette	£114,031	£113,240	0.7
All	£161,719	£158,548	2.0

Funding and buyer status for Wales

Transaction type	Average price January 2020	Annual price change % since January 2019	Monthly price change % since December 2019
Cash	£156,396	1.3	-3.5
Mortgage	£164,837	2.4	-2.6
First-time buyer	£139,590	2.2	-3.2
Former owner occupier	£187,540	1.8	-2.6

Building status for Wales

Building status*	Average price November 2019	Annual price change % since November 2018	Monthly price change % since October 2019
New build	£217,500	4.8	-2.3
Existing resold property	£166,399	5.7	2.2

*Figures for the 2 most recent months are not being published because there are not enough new build transactions to give a meaningful result.

[Access the full UK HPI](#)

UK house prices

UK house prices increased by 1.3% in the year to January 2020, down from 1.7% in December 2019. On a non-seasonally adjusted basis, average house prices in the UK fell by 1.1% between December 2019 and January 2020, compared with a fall of 0.6% during the same period a year earlier (December 2018 and January 2019).

The [UK Property Transaction Statistics for January 2020](#) showed that on a seasonally adjusted basis, the estimated number of transactions on residential properties with a value of £40,000 or greater was 102,810. This is 5.2% higher than a year ago. Between December 2019 and January 2020, transactions increased by 4.1%.

House price growth was strongest in Northern Ireland where prices increased by 2.5% over the year to Quarter 4 (October to December) 2019. The lowest annual growth was in the East of England, where prices decreased by 0.6% over the year to January 2020, followed by the South East where prices fell by 0.5% over the year.

See the [economic statement](#).

Background

1. The UK House Price Index (HPI) is published on the second or third Wednesday of each month with Northern Ireland figures updated quarterly. The February 2020 UK HPI will be published at 9.30am on Wednesday 22 April 2020. See [calendar of release dates](#).
2. We have made some changes to improve the accuracy of the UK HPI. We are not publishing average price and percentage change for new builds and existing resold property as done previously because there are not currently enough new build transactions to provide a reliable result. This means that in this month's UK HPI reports, new builds and existing resold property are reported in line with the sales volumes currently available.
3. The UK HPI revision period has been extended to 13 months, following a review of the revision policy (see [calculating the UK HPI](#) section 4.4). This ensures the data used is more comprehensive.
4. Sales volume data is also available by property status (new build and existing property) and funding status (cash and mortgage) in our [downloadable data tables](#). Transactions involving the creation of a new register, such as new builds, are more complex and require more time to process. Read [revisions to the UK HPI data](#).
5. Revision tables have been introduced for England and Wales within the downloadable data. Tables will be available in csv format. See [about the UK HPI](#) for more information.
6. Data for the UK HPI is provided by HM Land Registry, Registers of Scotland, Land & Property Services/Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and the Valuation Office Agency.
7. The UK HPI is calculated by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and Land & Property Services/Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. It applies a hedonic regression model that uses the various sources of data on property price, in particular HM Land Registry's Price Paid Dataset, and attributes to produce estimates of the change in house prices each month. Find out more about the methodology used from the [ONS](#) and [Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency](#).
8. The [UK Property Transaction statistics](#) are taken from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) monthly estimates of the number of residential and non-

residential property transactions in the UK and its constituent countries. The number of property transactions in the UK is highly seasonal, with more activity in the summer months and less in the winter. This regular annual pattern can sometimes mask the underlying movements and trends in the data series so HMRC also presents the UK aggregate transaction figures on a seasonally adjusted basis. Adjustments are made for both the time of year and the construction of the calendar, including corrections for the position of Easter and the number of trading days in a particular month.

9. UK HPI seasonally adjusted series are calculated at regional and national levels only. See [data tables](#).
10. The first estimate for new build average price (April 2016 report) was based on a small sample which can cause volatility. A three-month moving average has been applied to the latest estimate to remove some of this volatility.
11. Work has been taking place since 2014 to develop a single, official HPI that reflects the final transaction price for sales of residential property in the UK. Using the geometric mean, it covers purchases at market value for owner-occupation and buy-to-let, excluding those purchases not at market value (such as re-mortgages), where the 'price' represents a valuation.
12. Information on residential property transactions for England and Wales, collected as part of the official registration process, is provided by HM Land Registry for properties that are sold for full market value.
13. The HM Land Registry dataset contains the sale price of the property, the date when the sale was completed, full address details, the type of property (detached, semi-detached, terraced or flat), if it is a newly built property or an established residential building and a variable to indicate if the property has been purchased as a financed transaction (using a mortgage) or as a non-financed transaction (cash purchase).
14. Repossession sales data is based on the number of transactions lodged with HM Land Registry by lenders exercising their power of sale.
15. For England, this is shown as volumes of repossession sales recorded by Government Office Region. For Wales, there is a headline figure for the number of repossession sales recorded in Wales.
16. The data can be downloaded as a CSV file. Repossession sales data prior to April 2016 is not available. Find out more information about

[repossession sales](#).

17. Background tables of the raw and cleansed aggregated data, in Excel and CSV formats, are also published monthly although Northern Ireland is on a quarterly basis. They are available for free use and re-use under the Open Government Licence.
18. HM Land Registry's mission is to guarantee and protect property rights in England and Wales.
19. HM Land Registry is a government department created in 1862. It operates as an executive agency and a trading fund and its running costs are covered by the fees paid by the users of its services. Its ambition is to become the world's leading land registry for speed, simplicity and an open approach to data.
20. HM Land Registry safeguards land and property ownership worth in excess of £7 trillion, including over £1 trillion of mortgages. The Land Register contains more than 25 million titles showing evidence of ownership for some 87% of the land mass of England and Wales.
21. For further information about HM Land Registry visit www.gov.uk/land-registry
22. Follow us on [Twitter](#), our [blog](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).

Covid 19 statement: 25 March

[unable to retrieve full-text content]The AAIB remains operational during these unprecedented times.

Vehicle owners to be granted MoT exemption in battle against

coronavirus

- cars, motorcycles and vans to be granted MoT exemption
- this will allow people to carry on with essential travel
- vehicles must be kept in roadworthy condition

Vehicle owners will be granted a 6-month exemption from MOT testing, enabling them to continue to travel to work where this absolutely cannot be done from home, or shop for necessities.

All cars, vans and motorcycles which usually would require an MOT test will be exempted from needing a test from 30 March 2020. Vehicles must be kept in a roadworthy condition, and garages will remain open for essential repair work. Drivers can be prosecuted if driving unsafe vehicles.

Read [advice on keeping a vehicle in a good condition](#).

People should stay at home and avoid travel. The only reasons people should leave their homes is set out in the [government guidance](#).

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

We must ensure those on the frontline of helping the nation combat COVID-19 are able to do so.

Allowing this temporary exemption from vehicle testing will enable vital services such as deliveries to continue, frontline workers to get to work, and people to get essential food and medicine.

Safety is key, which is why garages will remain open for essential repair work.

Legislation will be introduced on March 30 and will come into immediate effect for 12 months, following a short consultation with key organisations. Drivers will still need to get their vehicle tested until the new regulations come into place, if they need to use it.

If you cannot get an MOT that's due because you're in self-isolation, the Department for Transport is working with insurers and the police to ensure people are not unfairly penalised for things out of their control.

Practical driving tests and annual testing for lorries, buses and coaches have been suspended for up to 3 months.

[Joint letter to the UK banks from HM Treasury, the Bank of England, and the FCA](#)

[unable to retrieve full-text content]A letter from the Chancellor, the Governor of the Bank of England, and the CEO of the FCA to the CEOs of the UK Banks on the subject of COVID-19 and bank lending