

Appendix A

Covid19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF)

Guidance for applications to Horsham District Council

January 2022

Introduction

1. This guidance is intended for businesses liable for business rates in 2021/22 only applying to Horsham District Council (the Council) for a discount from their liability in accordance with the government's COVID19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF), announced on 15th December 2021. Only businesses occupying a property shown in the rating list and liable for business rates in 2021/22 are eligible to apply for the discount. It will be applied only to any liability for 2021/22 and any determination by the Council must be made by the 30th September 2022.
2. The Council has been allocated relatively limited funds from the government for this discount. It is expected therefore that most relief allocations to successful applicants will be limited to a certain percentage, which means that businesses who do qualify will still have business rates to pay. The application process is likely to be oversubscribed with many more relief applications compared to funds available. In order to ensure fairness of allocation, the Council will operate an application window and once closed, will determine the amount to be awarded in each case.
3. This guidance sets out the criteria under which businesses will qualify to make an application to the COVID19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF), and the evidence required to support an application, and is aligned with the government guidance issued on 15th December 2021 and any revisions, which can be found via this link:- [CARF Guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/103112/covid-19-additional-relief-fund-guidance.pdf)

Scope and Eligibility

4. The government has stated that Billing authorities will be responsible for designing the discretionary relief schemes that are to operate in their areas. However, in developing and implementing their schemes local authorities:
 - a. must not award relief to ratepayers who for the same period of the relief either are or would have been eligible for the Extended Retail Discount (covering Retail, Hospitality and Leisure), the Nursery Discount or the Airport and Ground Operations Support Scheme (AGOSS),
 - b. must not award relief to a hereditament for a period when it is unoccupied (other than hereditaments which have become unoccupied temporarily due to the government's advice on COVID-19), and
 - c. should direct their support towards ratepayers who have been adversely affected by the pandemic and have been unable to adequately adapt to that impact.

Grant Decisions Arising from the Covid-19 Emergency – APPENDIX A

5. In line with the legal restrictions in section 47(8A) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, billing authorities may not grant the discount to themselves, to a precepting authority, or to a functional body within the meaning of the Greater London Authority Act 1999.
6. To be eligible for relief the business must be a ratepayer liable and occupying the property for business rates in Horsham DC during the financial year 2021/22.
7. Businesses that are in administration, insolvent or where a striking-off notice has been made, are not eligible for this relief.
8. The relief will be awarded after all other discounts and reliefs and as such, if there is no business rates liability or other business rates relief already granted to the business during the relief period the business will not be eligible for this relief.
9. The Council will assess by way of application whether a ratepayer has been adversely affected by the pandemic and has been unable to adequately adapt to that impact.
10. Rateable properties which have become closed temporarily due to the government's advice on COVID-19, will be treated as occupied for the purposes of this relief.

Evidence Required for Discretionary Discount application

11. Applicants will need to provide:
 - Confirmation that the business has not received any relief or discount under the relief schemes mentioned in section 4a above.
 - Confirmation that they meet the eligibility criteria mentioned in section 4c above.
 - Confirmation of Subsidy Allowance compliance.

Subsidy Allowance

12. There is a requirement for all grants made under this Discretionary Grants fund to be subsidy allowance compliant. Please see further government guidance on this via this link (Section 19-29): [CARF Guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/90422/carf-guidance-19-29.pdf)

How relief will be provided

13. The Council will be responsible for evaluating COVID19 Additional Relief Fund applications, selecting the successful business applicants and then administering and delivering relief to those successful applicants.
14. The Council will endeavour, subject to due diligence checks, to make awards as quickly as possible to support successful business applicants, who are struggling financially.

How much funding will be provided to successful businesses?

15. Due to the limited level of funding available, the Council will operate an application window and once closed, will determine the amount to be awarded in each case.

Grant Decisions Arising from the Covid-19 Emergency – APPENDIX A

16. In order for the COVID19 Additional Relief Fund to benefit the maximum number of businesses, it is proposed to have 3 levels of relief awards, directly proportionate to the relative impact on the trading sector of the business due to the COVID19 crisis. The impact will be measured by using the change in Gross Value Added (GVA) as a proxy for the economic impacts of COVID-19 on each business sector as detailed in Annex A of the Government guidance [CARF Guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/104111/carf-guidance.pdf) .
17. The level of discount will be allocated proportionately based on low, medium and high impact as assessed by the Council. The specific level of relief that will be awarded to each category will be based on the quantity of applications and the funding available.
18. The level of funding for these discretionary reliefs will be decided by the Council within the above guidelines. There will be no review of this decision and no right to appeal.

The Application Process

19. The application process will be administered through the Council's website and portal.
20. Email or paper applications will not be accepted.
21. The electronic application process will allow the Council to evaluate the applications, undertake pre-award checks to confirm eligibility and to allow the Council to assess the level of relief for each case.
22. Applicants need to state when applying online that by accepting the relief payment, the business confirms that they are eligible for the relief scheme, including that any relief accepted will be in compliance with Subsidy Allowance requirements.
23. The application window will be open from 31/1/2022 to 13/3/2022. This will be followed by an assessment period that will be completed as soon as possible afterwards.
24. If further funding is provided by the Government or funding is unspent there will be further application rounds. Businesses that received relief funding previously in a previous round will be ineligible from any further relief application.
25. As a condition of relief being awarded we will expect the business applying to sign a declaration stating that they are not committing any fraud and that they are fully complying with any subsidy allowance limits, as well as giving the Council permission to share data to check such compliance and that these guidelines are complied with.

Award of Relief

26. All awards of this relief will be by a discount applied to the 2021/22 rates liability.
27. No cash payments will be made, except where the application of the discount to the rates liability results in an overpayment on the rate account. In these cases, refunds will be issued as soon as possible following the award.

Grant Decisions Arising from the Covid-19 Emergency – APPENDIX A

28. If any court or enforcement costs have been incurred during 2021/22, the relief will initially be taken to cover such costs

Managing the risk of fraud

29. The Council will not accept deliberate manipulation and fraud - and any business caught falsifying their records to gain relief awarded will face prosecution and any relief awarded will be removed from the account without reference to the ratepayer. This will then be subject to collection and enforcement activity as set down in legislation.
30. All information is subject to internal and external audit check, as well as Government body check.

Sharing Information

31. By applying for a COVID19 additional relief all applicants give authority to administering Local Authorities to share data for efficient system administration and to protect the Public Purse, subject to the GDPR. This will include sharing data with other Local Authorities.
32. The Council will be required to share data with Government Departments for monitoring and other reasons. By applying for a COVID19 additional relief all applicants give authority for this.

Other Information

33. The Councils do not accept any liability for any issues that may arise for businesses because of applying for, receiving, or not receiving relief awards under this scheme.