



Government action on Commercial Rates does not go far enough and more action may be required as crisis evolves, says Chambers Ireland

Earlier this week, Chambers Ireland and our nationwide network of chambers called on Government and all State bodies to be flexible and responsive to the needs of their business and economic partners, so that we may ensure business continuity through this crisis.

In particular, we called on Government to ensure that **businesses that are in sectors which have had to close entirely are not charged rates for the duration of these closures**. As this may create a funding issues for our Local Authorities throughout the country, we also called on **central Government to step in to support our local government by bridging the resulting gap in expected Rates returns**.

[Today's](#) announcement ([20 March 2020](#)) by the Government, offers some relief to businesses who have had to close in recent days but as this crisis evolves, an extension of this deferral will be required.

Speaking [today](#), Chambers Ireland Chief Executive Ian Talbot said, "The extent of the crisis we are facing is still uncertain. Businesses that closed over the weekend and since then, have no idea when normal trading conditions might resume. Recovering from this shock will be an enormous task and every assistance possible must be made.

Because of this, Government must commit to extending the Rates relief to correspond with the duration of the crisis. Government must also ensure that sufficient monies are made available to local authorities, as and when needed, so that essential local services can continue to be funded.

It is crucial that this announcement is implemented and communicated consistently and equitably across all local authorities and that there is a clear understanding amongst local officials as to how it will be applied. There must be a level playing field for all businesses across the country.

It is essential that all sectors that have been adversely impacted benefit from this deferral and will continue to benefit from flexible, sincere engagement from state officials.

As cash-flow will be critical to surviving the crisis, we reiterate our call to all Government Departments, agencies, Local Authorities, State and Semi-State bodies to pay invoices at the earliest opportunity. Government must take the lead on this and make a clear statement on the urgent necessity that all State bodies settle all outstanding bills promptly."

Ends