

News in brief



Kyle Hefford

Trainee solicitor

k.hefford@bateswells.co.uk

Support for tenants during Covid-19

The government has put in place a range of measures to provide extra support for tenants:

- The Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 made some temporary changes to insolvency law to provide support to those in financial difficulty. The temporary ban on presenting winding-up petitions based on statutory demands for unpaid rent (served on or after 27 April 2020) has now been extended to 31 March 2021.
- The protection from commercial rent arrear recovery (CRAR) has been extended until 31 March 2021. From 25 December 2020, the minimum net amount that must be outstanding before CRAR may be enforced is 366 days' rent.
- The protections from forfeiture for non-payment of rent for business tenancies have been extended to 31 March 2021.

Stamp Duty Land Tax on residential purchases

To boost the housing market following the pandemic, the SDLT nil rate band for residential property purchases increased from £125,000 to £500,000 for transactions with an effective date between 8 July 2020 and 31 March 2021. This change applies

whether or not a buyer has owned a home before.

Business rates

Businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors in England will not have to pay business rates for the 2020-2021 tax year, due to Covid-19.

Environment and Sustainability

Energy White Paper

On 14 December 2020 the government published the Energy White Paper, which sets out the government's ambitions for a clean energy system as the UK transitions to net zero carbon. The white paper targets emission-free electricity generation by 2050.

The white paper sets out the government's aims to support a green recovery from Covid-19, including supporting up to 220,000 jobs in the next 10 years.

The white paper also aims to keep consumer bills affordable by making the energy market truly competitive. This includes making it simpler to switch to a cheaper energy tariff and tackling loyalty penalties, by testing whether consumers could automatically be moved to cheaper contracts.

Net Zero Review (interim report)

A few days after the Energy White Paper, the Treasury published its interim Net Zero Review report, which informs the next steps in the UK's green transition. The report did not make any policy recommendations, but found that although the UK has made significant progress in decarbonising its economy it needs to go much further to achieve net zero. The final report will be published in spring 2021.

Environmental Bill 2019-21

This important Bill sets out the framework for all things environmental post Brexit and contains key environmental objectives across a wide range of issues, for example, air and water quality, waste and recycling. The Bill will now be carried over to the next Parliamentary session, with Royal Assent expected in the autumn.