

# Business Rates - Seeking Professional Advice

## Making an Appeal

If you decide to make an appeal, you might want to do it on your own, or you could employ the services of a Professional Rating Agent. This is entirely up to you, however, remember that if you have any queries you can deal directly with the Valuation Office Agency, and this is entirely free

## What to do when employing a Professional Agent

If you've definitely decided to employ an agent, there are a few things worth doing to check they are reputable

- Check they are a member of one of the three main representative bodies; the RICS, IRRV, or RSA
- Speak to other businesses in your area and see if they can recommend someone
- Ask for references or for examples of appeals for similar types of business, or businesses in your area
- Ask to be shown exactly what you will pay for. We would only recommend to do this on a 'no win no fee' basis
- Double check any contract, do not sign anything you do not feel comfortable with

## Advantages of using a Professional

If you do want to use a professional rating service to help appeal your rating, there are several advantages.

They can:

- Check the accuracy of your rates bill
- Help you understand your rateable value and check it is worth appealing
- Check the details of your new valuation and make sure you understand it properly
- Make sure it is comparable or not, with other similar businesses in your area
- Help assess and look for evidence to support your claim
- Help manage the appeal process

## Things to Look Out For

Like any business, there are rogue operators. Be aware of any of the following:

- 'Cold-callers'
- Being asked for payment up front
- Being asked for payment for lodging an appeal - **this is free to do**
- A promise to reduce your rateable value or rates bill without knowing the full details of your valuation
- Be wary of anyone who claims to be working on behalf of the VOA. All VOA staff carry official proof of identity and no one else is ever authorised to work on their behalf

**Remember, a reduction in rateable value does not automatically mean a reduction in your rates bill**

For further information, please contact:  
**Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)**  
[www.rics.org](http://www.rics.org) -020 7222 7000  
**Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation (IRRV)**  
[www.irrv.org.uk](http://www.irrv.org.uk) -020 7831 3505 •  
**The Rating Surveyors' Association (RSA)**  
[www.ratingsurveyorsassociation.org](http://www.ratingsurveyorsassociation.org) •  
**Valuation Office Agency (VOA)**  
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