

FOI REF:	16256
RESPONSE SENT:	18/11/2025

Request

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I am writing to request information relating to Hardship Relief awarded under Section 49 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 by Winchester City Council.

To understand your council's approach and decision-making framework, I would like to request the following information:

In the last three financial years (2022/23, 2023/24, and 2024/25): How many businesses in total — and within that total, how many hotels or hospitality businesses — have been awarded Hardship Relief on their business rates? How many applications were refused, and in each case, the primary reason for refusal (e.g., long-term hardship, market oversupply, financial resilience, etc.).

Of the approved cases, how many were granted to businesses that had been trading for less than two years at the time of application? For all approved cases, please provide: The type of business (e.g., hotel, retail, restaurant, etc.); The duration of relief granted (e.g., 6 months, 12 months, etc.); and Whether the relief was full (100 %) or partial (e.g., 50 %, 75 %).

Please share any internal policy, guideline, or assessment framework currently used by Winchester City Council for evaluating Hardship Relief applications — particularly any criteria that reference: Anticipated or known market conditions at the time of acquisition; The expected duration of hardship; The availability of similar businesses or amenities in the local area; and Any other criteria considered when assessing eligibility.

If any exemptions apply, please specify which exemptions are being relied upon and provide the non-exempt information where possible.

Response

1. How many businesses have received hardship relief – 1
2. How many are hotels or hospitality businesses – 0
3. How many applications were refused – 0
4. How many had been trading for less than 2 years – 0
5. Information relating to the application:
 - a. Type – Estate/Letting Agent
 - b. Duration – 2022/23 & 2023/24
 - c. % - 25% (2022/23) & 37.5% (2023/24)

