

## What has happened to CARF?

Monday 27 February, 2023

For so many, the Covid-19 Additional Relief Fund ([CARF](#)) was too little, too late. This relief was announced in March 2021; and was only put into effect almost twelve months after its initial reveal, and long after the first lockdown. The fund totalled £1.5 billion. Though many experts in the industry believed CARF should have been at least double, if not three times as much.

Local authorities were given the mandate to distribute the amount of relief that a commercial property could receive. They were also given leave to manage for how long CARF would be offered in the local authority area. In addition to this, they were responsible for the circulation of awareness of this business rates relief to local commercial property owners and tenants.

### Did you know that CARF was available in your area?

Reliefs are available to eligible commercial properties. It is the responsibility of the local authority to ensure that eligible properties are in receipt of the correct reliefs. In this instance, CARF was introduced as a stopgap measure for those who did not benefit from other covid reliefs.

To date, roughly £1.1 – 1.2 billion of this relief has been handed out. Leaving up to £400 million [unallocated](#). Many local authorities offered such short timelines to be awarded or apply, it is feared that tens of thousands of businesses throughout the country have missed out on this much needed, and backdated, support.

What happened to that money?

Well, the money that was allocated went to just 230,540 hereditaments (a physical property – in this case, commercial). It is estimated that as many as 50,000-60,000 commercial properties have missed out on receiving CARF.

### Is this the result of the government not allocating enough to help businesses, or a matter of local authorities not properly advertising and applying the relief?

Local authorities are notoriously overburdened and understaffed but given that these organisational bodies were responsible for identifying what businesses could be eligible for CARF, and allocating those funds accordingly, there appears to be a large amount of money left over.

“This is probably one of the biggest shocks for our clients.” Anthony Hughes, Managing Director of RVA Surveyors, said. “We all know that local authorities are overworked. CARF was just another thing they were expected to facilitate but were given no exacting guidelines for on how to proceed. However, some local authorities did give arbitrary and insufficient timelines. While we can recognise that some local authorities have done their best, others have not.”

Based in Manchester, [RVA Surveyors](#) are the business rates reduction specialist working across England and Wales. They are just one of the many firms working to help commercial property owners and tenants determine if they are eligible for a reduction and are in receipt of the correct reliefs.

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