

Annual fees for premises licences

Premises licences and club premises certificates

Under the Licensing Act 2003, the annual fee for licensed premises becomes payable each year on the anniversary of the date the licence was initially granted. The responsibility to pay the annual fee lies with the licence holder.

Reminder letters and invoices

Although there is no legal requirement for the council to notify premises licence holders when the fee is due, we do send out reminders and invoices prior to the due date to assist premises licence holders. The information we send out shows the amount due and the options for making payment.

FAQ - Annual fee and COVID-19 lockdown

Q. My annual fee was due when my premises were shut, can I re-open without paying it or pay a reduced fee to reflect the time my premises has been closed?

A. Whilst the government made a statement in relation to the payment of business rates, there has been no such statement or relief provided in relation to payment of annual fees due under the Licensing Act 2003. The annual fee must be paid to avoid the premises licence being suspended.

Licensing Authorities are required to give a notice to suspend the licence where the annual fee has not been paid. The notice specifies a date on which the suspension will take effect. The law allows us some discretion to specify a date in the near future allowing more time to pay the fee.

How to pay

The annual fee invoice can be paid by:

- Debit or credit card
- At banks and the post office
- BACS transfer

More information on how to pay is on the back of your invoice.

Cash payments cannot be taken and the fee cannot be paid in instalments.

Please note that you must:

- Allow time for your payment to clear (payments can take between two and five days to appear on our system, depending on how and where you pay)
- Make sure you pay against the invoice number or quote it if paying by BACS transfer

What happens if you don't pay your annual fee?

The licence will be suspended if the annual fee has not been paid when it becomes due.

The procedure is as follows:

- The invoice should be paid by or on the due date
- If the invoice has not been paid by the due date we will wait for a further seven days before taking any action. This is to allow for payments to be received by the council
- On the eighth day after payment was due, if the payment has still not been received, then the council will issue a notice of suspension letter to the licence holder
- If the payment is not received within a further two working days, the licence will be suspended on the eleventh day after the due date and we will inform the Police and other responsible authorities.

When a licence is suspended no licensable activities can take place. Carrying out unlicensed licensable activities whilst a licence is suspended is a criminal offence under Section 136 of the Licensing Act 2003 and carries an unlimited fine and up to six months imprisonment upon summary conviction.

Disputes

If there is a dispute regarding the amount of the fee, the liability for the fee or a genuine administrative error (made by the licence holder, the council or anyone else) there will be a 21 day grace period when the licence will not be suspended. If the dispute is not resolved by the end of the grace period and the fee is still not paid, then the licence will be suspended.

Transfer of the licence holder

If a premises licence holder leaves suddenly without paying the annual fee then the licence will be suspended. Where another proprietor wishes to take over a business and trade where there is an outstanding annual fee, then the outstanding fee must be paid to enable the suspension to be lifted. Then the licence can be transferred to the new licence holder.