

One in Nine Greater Manchester Area Businesses Overpaying Business Rate Tax by a Total of £44 Mln

The borough of Rochdale has the worst overpayment rate in England with one in seven overpaying

MANCHESTER, GREATER MANCHESTER, UNITED KINGDOM, August 24, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- One in nine small businesses in the Greater Manchester Area are paying too much business rate tax worth a combined £44 million pounds annually – representing about 5% of the total business rate tax take in the area, according to research by UK business rate intelligence platform [Businessratechecker.com](https://businessratechecker.com).

Of the almost 108,000 businesses in the ten borough region, some 11,800 are estimated to be overpaying their business rate bills by a typical (median) amount of £1,227 per year – with a range of hundreds to tens of thousands of pounds per property waiting to be claimed.

The borough of Rochdale is the region's and England's worst-performing council for overcharging business rates to the 8,607 commercial properties registered in the area with 15.2% of businesses, or one in seven, being overcharged.

Among other Greater Manchester boroughs, Salford overcharging rates came in at 13.5%, Wigan at 10.4%, Bolton 11.2%, Trafford at 11.0%, Bury at 10.3%, Oldham at 11.4%, Stockport at 10.4% and Tameside at 12.1%. Manchester was the best performer with only 8.7% of businesses – or one in eleven - potentially being overcharged on their business rates.

"Businesses in the Greater Manchester area are quietly overpaying thousands of pounds a year in business tax without realising it," said Rupert Spiegelberg, CEO of Businessratechecker.com.

Greater Manchester Borough Business Rate Overcharging Assessment

Ranked by percentage of properties flagged, not by cash total. Totals/averages row added at bottom.

AUTHORITY	PROPERTIES	NUMBER OVERPAYING	% OVERPAYING	MEDIAN CLAIM	POTENTIAL A YEAR
Rochdale	8,607	1,308	15.2%	£1,037	£2.9m
Salford	11,247	1,523	13.5%	£1,093	£5.1m
Tameside	7,284	884	12.1%	£1,188	£2.5m
Oldham	7,480	855	11.4%	£990	£1.9m
Bolton	10,562	1,181	11.2%	£1,185	£3.4m
Trafford	10,472	1,149	11.0%	£1,501	£4.2m
Stockport	10,868	1,139	10.5%	£1,264	£4.2m
Wigan	9,143	954	10.4%	£1,110	£3.0m
Bury	5,820	600	10.3%	£1,144	£1.4m
Manchester	26,044	2,272	8.7%	£1,754	£15.1m
All Boroughs	107,527 TOTAL	11,865 TOTAL	11.4% AVERAGE	£1,227 AVERAGE	£43.7m TOTAL

businessratechecker.com

Source: VOA / businessratechecker.com · 10 Aug 2026

Greater Manchester Business Rates Overpayment Assessment Table

"This money is sitting on the table and easily reclaimable so there is no excuse for company's not to reclaim it especially as the VOA itself says more than half of claims are awarded."

In Rochdale, some 1,308 commercial properties are being overcharged a combined £2.9 mln every year or an average of £2,217 annually per property by their council. This is about three times the rate of the best performing councils like Cheshire East, Barking & Dagenham and Stevenage where research shows only 5% of properties are being overcharged.

This research comes against a background of persistent rising business rates in England and Wales over the last 20 years culminating in one of the largest rises in April 2026 when the government updated commercial rental values upon which rateable values are calculated and introduced new multipliers and ended some reliefs. Rateable values rose on average by about 19% per square meter as a result with pubs and hospitality venues seeing average rates soar by 70%, according to data published by HMRC's Valuation Office Agency.

The business rate tax is particularly important for the Greater Manchester area as it collects about £1 billion a year from companies and is unusual in England in retaining all of that funding to spend on local services as part of a business rates retention pilot.

Across the UK, the government raises about £30 billion a year from business rates with half being kept by councils and half going in to a central pot for redistribution. We estimate about almost £1 billion of that number is being overcharged to businesses in England. Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales operate different valuation schemes for business rates, which we do not calculate. It is the sixth largest pool of government revenue in the UK after Council Tax, Corporation Tax, Value Added Tax, National Insurance and Income Tax.

At Businessratechecker.com, we calculate that there is a pot of almost £1bln per year in overpaid business rate taxes across England to be reclaimed from the government. This number will go a long way towards alleviating some of the pain small businesses are feeling right now.

It should be noted that overcharging should not be considered as done in bad faith by the council. It is to do with out of date records in terms of floor plans, commercial rental rates and other inputs including trading data when considering pubs and some leisure businesses and that it is incumbent on the business owner to ensure these details are correct and to challenge the council's assumptions to ensure they are paying the right amount of tax.

A full ranking of all boroughs, can be found at

<https://www.businessratechecker.com/intelligence/map>

How the ranking works

The ranking compares each property's rate per square metre and different zoning rates, published by the Valuation Office Agency, against genuine nearby comparables of the same use class and valuation scheme. Our AI-powered decision engine compares relevant properties in the same category and on the same parades and their comparable rateable values as well as checking floor areas and other measures to surface properties whose rateable values, the measure upon which Business Rate bills are calculated, are materially different from their peers.

We have included tolerance bands in our calculations so as not to include marginal cases. For more information, please see www.businessratechecker.com

About Businessratechecker.com

Businessratechecker.com has a simple aim: to help small businesses find out whether they are overpaying business rates — and, where there are, to help them claim that money back.

We monitor 1.9 mln commercial properties in 296 boroughs in England recording more than 250 million data points that are updated every week with the latest data. We source our information from the Valuation Office Agency as well as from a range of other government and non-government organisations to provide the most accurate assessment of business rate data in the UK.

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