

Non-domestic rating: challenges and changes England and Wales, September 2020



Valuation Office
Agency

Key findings

As at 30 September 2020, the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) had:

- Registered **342,760** checks under the Check, Challenge, Appeal (CCA) system. **38,960** of these were registered in the last quarter (1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020).
- Registered **67,890** challenges under the CCA system. **31,780** of these were in the last quarter.

In addition:

- **327,880** checks and **19,540** challenges have been resolved. **3,570** challenges have also been marked as incomplete.
- In the last quarter, **93,540** checks and **4,290** challenges have been resolved.
- **167,760** Interested Persons (IPs) and **14,030** agents had registered to use the check and challenge service.
- The VOA have approved **487,470** property claims by businesses.

While the statistics do not include the number of appeals made under CCA, as these are the responsibility of the independent Valuation Tribunal Service (VTS), the VTS publish their latest statistics [here](#).

For Wales, as at 30 September 2020 the VOA had:

- Received **2,340** challenges in the last quarter, with **1,130** challenges being resolved in the same period. **14,950** remain outstanding.

For the 2010 list, covering both England and Wales, the quarterly statistics also show that, as at 30 September 2020, there were around **43,230** appeals outstanding, down from **55,130** appeals three months previously. These include those awaiting listing, relisting or decisions from the Valuation Tribunal, which the VOA do not control, and also some highly complex cases relating to specialist properties where a longer timeframe is necessary to settle the appeals. The introduction of the Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018, which re-opened the list to appeals from affected ratepayers, closed except in specific circumstances on the 31 December 2019.

About this release:

This release includes statistics on challenges made by taxpayers (or their representatives) against the 2010 and 2017 local rating lists up to 30 September 2020. It also includes statistics on reviews of rating assessments (known as “reports”) that have either been initiated by the VOA or a billing authority, when new information becomes available.

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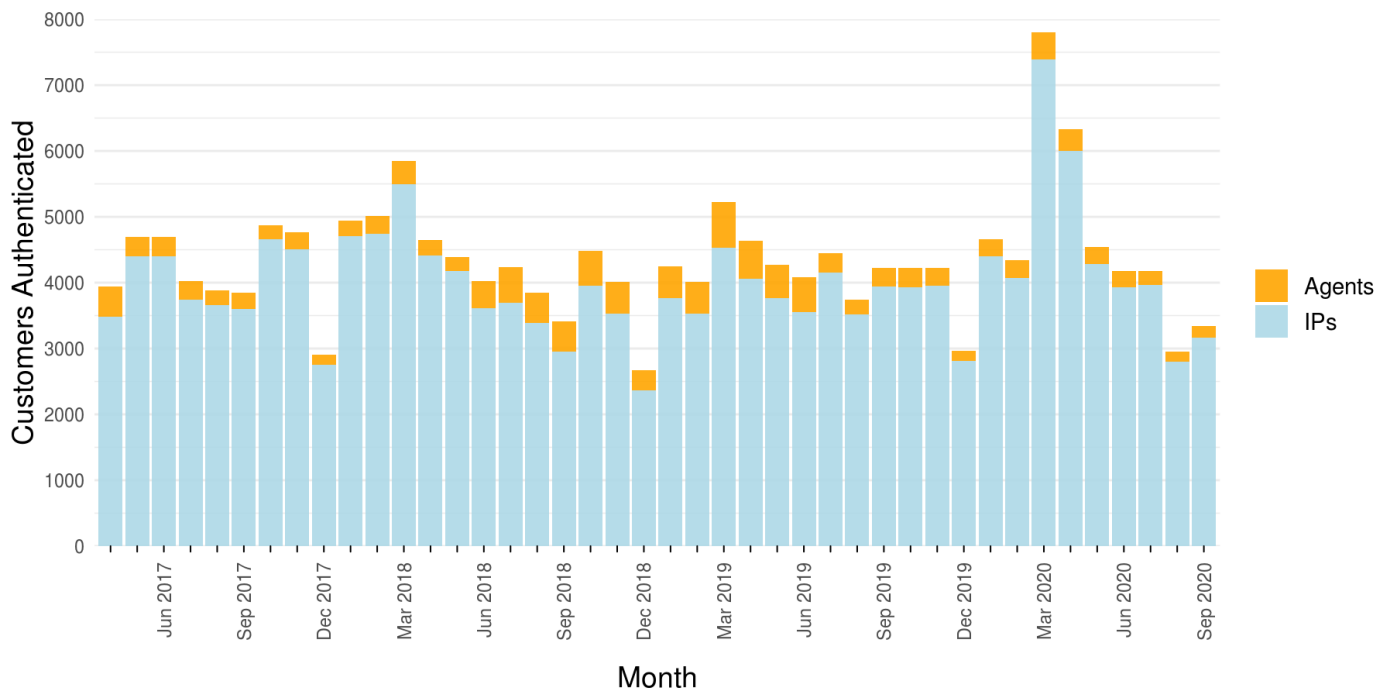
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Date of next publication:
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There has been an increase during the COVID-19 pandemic of interested persons using VOA services which is reflected in the statistics shown in this release.

Before anyone can access more detailed valuation data about a property, they must prove that they have a legal interest in the property under the non-domestic rating legislation, for example as an owner or occupier or both. To do this, they are required to register to use the system and then can ‘claim their property’ through the VOA’s online service by providing proof of their relationship to the property, such as a copy of a business rates or utility bill. Once the VOA confirm the interested person’s relationship to the property, the claim is approved and the interested person is able to view or request the detailed valuation for that property. The interested party can then start the CCA process. More information is available [here](#).

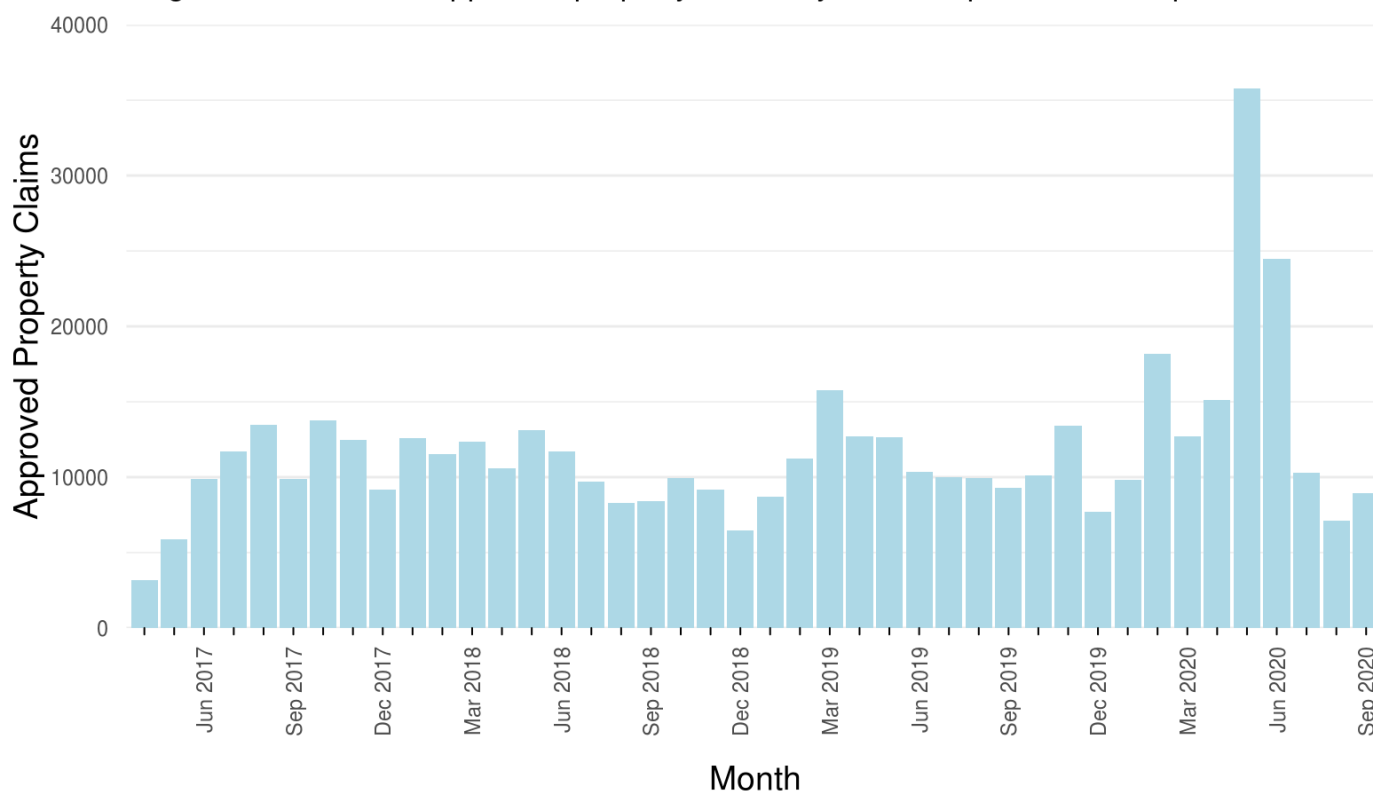
Figure 1: Number of customer registrations by customer type and month, April 2017 to September 2020



Source: Challenges and Changes against the 2017 local rating list, England, September 2020 (Table 1.2)

The number of interested persons (IPs) and agents registering for CCA each month is shown in Figure 1. More than 90% of registrations are from interested persons rather than agents. Increases seen in March and April 2020 is a spike attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic.

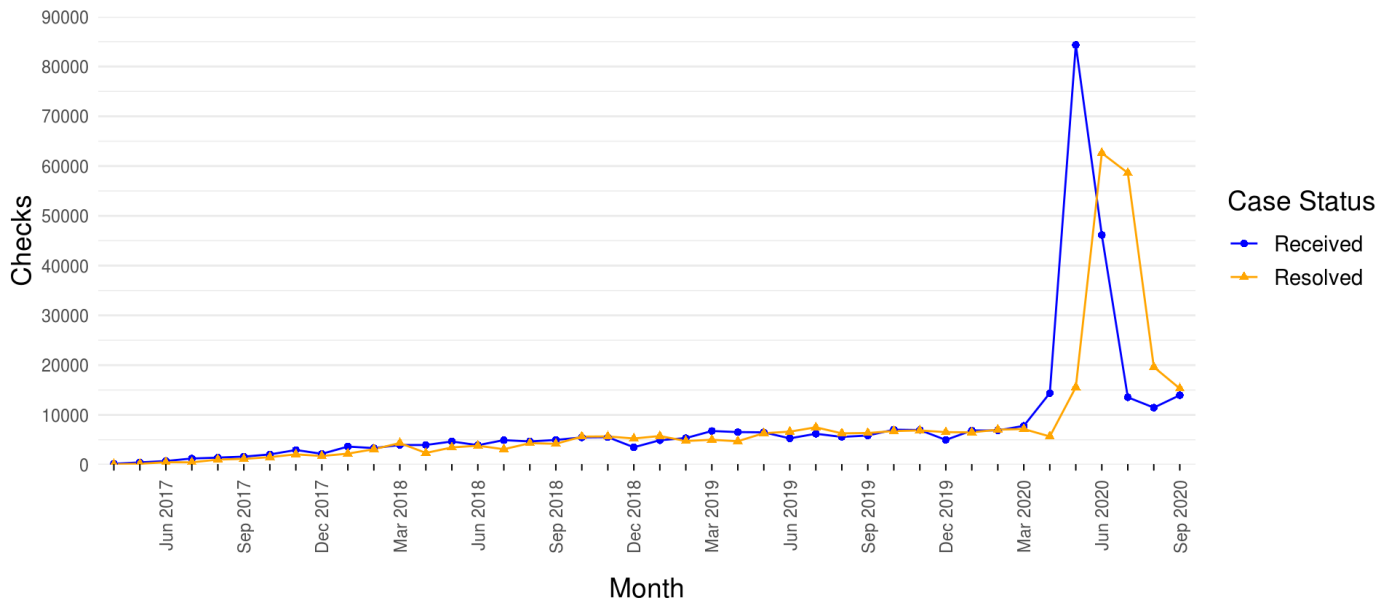
Figure 2: Number of approved property claims by month, April 2017 to September 2020



Source: Challenges and Changes against the 2017 local rating list, England, September 2020 (Table 1.3)

The number of approved property claims by month is shown in Figure 2. May and June 2020 are the months with the highest number of approved claims. The lag from the peak shown in Figure 1 reflects the time taken from a customer registering for CCA to then claiming a property and having their claim approved by a Valuation Officer.

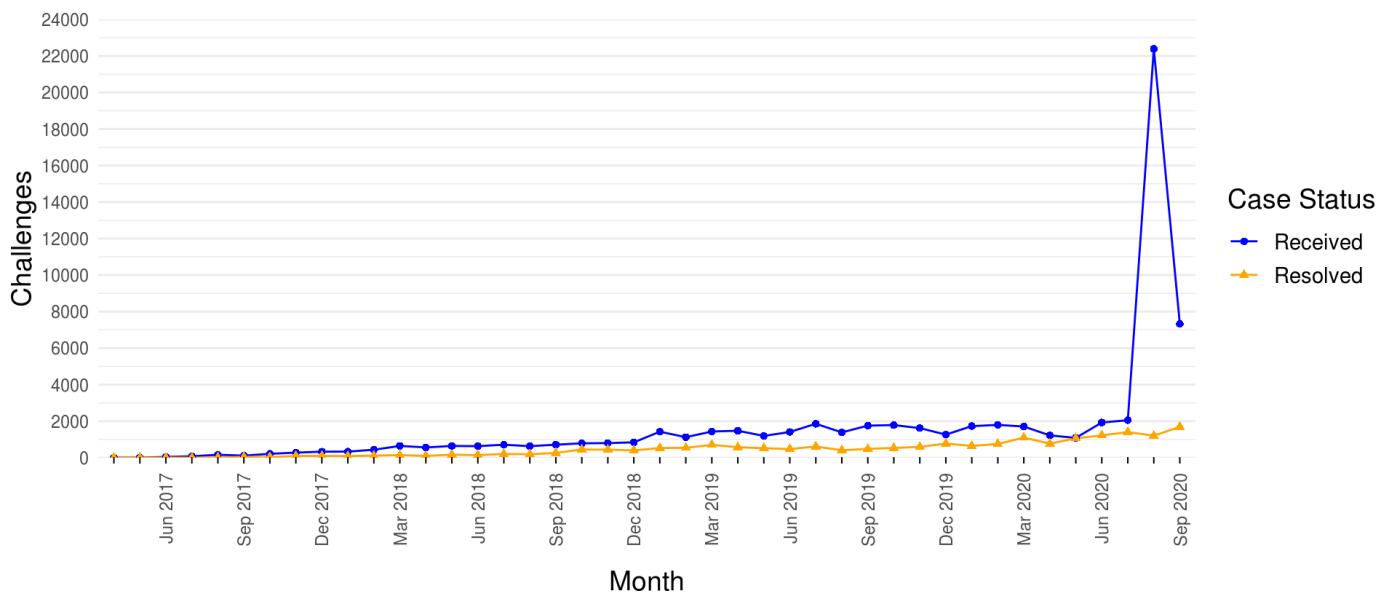
Figure 3: Number of Checks against the England 2017 Non-Domestic Rating List by case status and month, April 2017 to September 2020



Source: Challenges and Changes against the 2017 local rating list, England, September 2020 (Tables 2.1-2.2)

Figure 3 shows the number of CCA checks received by month and case status. The 38,960 checks received in the quarter to 30 September 2020 is 11% of the total received since the start of the list in April 2017. The increase in Checks is a spike attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic.

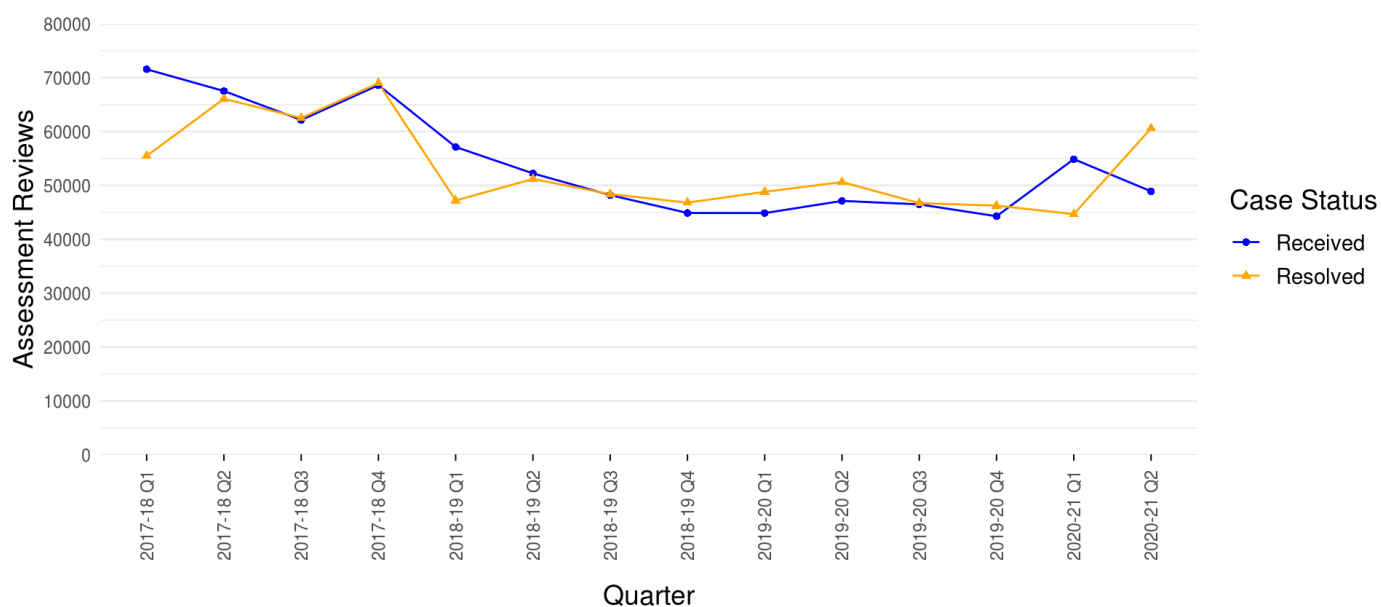
Figure 4: Number of Challenges against the England 2017 Non-Domestic Rating List by case status and month, April 2017 to September 2020



Source: Challenges and Changes against the 2017 local rating list, England, September 2020 (Tables 2.1-2.2)

As shown in Figure 4, the number of challenges received in the quarter to 30 September 2020 was the highest since the list began. The increase in Challenges is a consequence of the previous rise seen in Checks (figure 3) attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 5: Number of Assessment Reviews against the England 2017 Non-Domestic Rating List by case status and quarter, Q1 2017-18 to Q2 2020-21

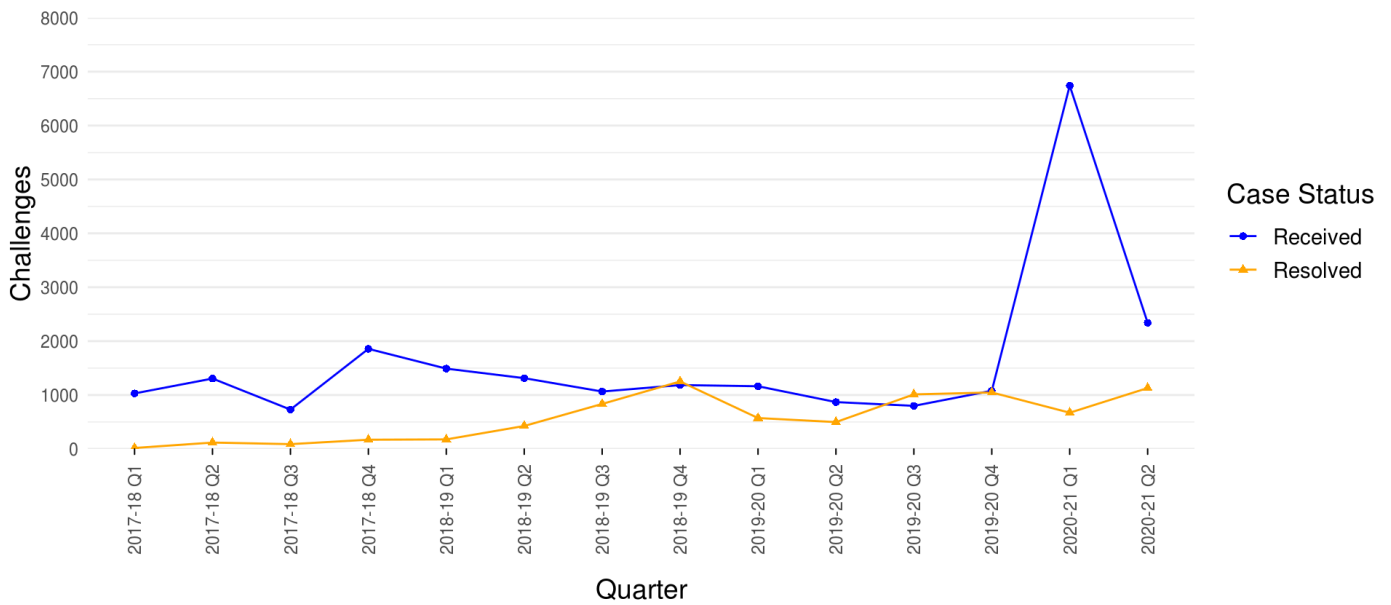


Source: Challenges and Changes against the 2017 local rating list, England, September 2020 (Tables 3.1-3.2)

Figure 5 shows that the number of assessment reviews received against the England 2017 list had a slight decrease in the quarter to 30 September 2020. Assessment reviews resolved however have increased.

Challenges and Changes against the Wales 2017 rating list

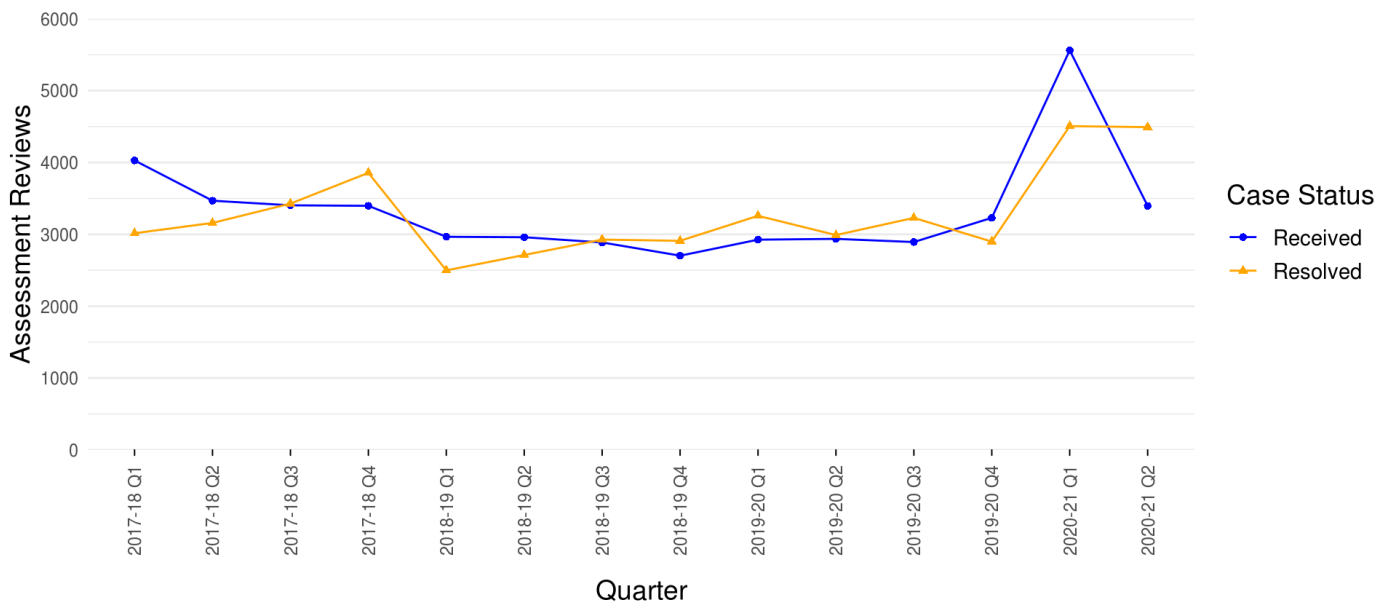
Figure 6: Number of Challenges against the Wales 2017 Non-Domestic Rating List by case status and quarter, Q1 2017-18 to Q2 2020-21



Source: Challenges and Changes against the 2017 local rating list, Wales, September 2020 (Tables 1.1-1.2)

Figure 6 shows that the number of challenges received against the Wales 2017 list decreased in the quarter to 30 September 2020 compared with the spike seen in the previous quarter.

Figure 7: Number of Assessment Reviews against the Wales 2017 Non-Domestic Rating List by case status and quarter, Q1 2017-18 to Q2 2020-21



Source: Challenges and Changes against the 2017 local rating list, Wales, September 2020 (Tables 3.1-3.2)

Figure 7 shows that the number of assessment reviews received against the Wales 2017 list decreased in the quarter to 30 September 2020 compared with the spike seen in the previous quarter.

Background notes

This release includes statistics on challenges made by taxpayers (or their representatives) against the 2010 and 2017 local rating lists. It also includes statistics on reviews of rating assessments (known as reports) that have either been initiated by the VOA or a billing authority, when new information becomes available.

Previous quarters' figures include retrospective changes so will not necessarily be the same as those from previous publications.

Figures in the release note may be rounded to a different level of accuracy from the figures in the MS Excel tables and should therefore be considered more definitive.

The statistics are derived from VOA's administrative database and are published at national, regional and billing authority level.

The VOA is required, by the Local Government Finance Act 1988, to compile and maintain accurate rating lists specifying a rateable value for all non-domestic rateable properties in England and Wales. These rateable values provide the basis for national non-domestic rates bills, which are issued by billing authorities. There is a local rating list for each billing authority. However, for simplicity, we have referred to these throughout this publication as one combined 'rating list' for those local lists effective from 1 April 2010, and, likewise, one combined 'rating list' for those local rating lists effective from 1 April 2017.

Ratepayers, owners, and in limited circumstances, relevant authorities and other persons (known formally as Interested Persons) can make a challenge to alter the rating list if they think an entry is incorrect. Challenges can also be made on behalf of interested persons by their professional representatives.

The process for challenging the rating list currently differs between England and Wales. In Wales a challenge, known as a proposal, is made to the Valuation Officer asking them to change the entry in the rating list. After a period of discussion if the Valuation Officer cannot reach agreement with the ratepayer the matter will then be referred to the Valuation Tribunal Service, at which stage it becomes an appeal. In England a new three stage appeals system was introduced in 2017, called Check, Challenge, Appeal (CCA).

More information about CCA can be found in the Background Information document.

Further information

More detailed information on the 2017 local rating list is available on the Agency's website at the following location: <https://www.gov.uk/correct-your-business-rates>

Further information on the area codes used in this release please refer to the ONS's website at the following location:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/geography/geographicalproducts/namescodesandlookups/namesandcodeslistings>