

14th June, 2007

Attention of Rt Hon Peter D Robinson

Dear Minister,

Congratulations on your appointment as Minister of Finance.

I am writing to express my very strong objection to the proposed introduction of changes to Domestic rates and water and sewerage charges in Northern Ireland.

My Husband John & I who are pensioners live in our house and there is a Bed & Breakfast at 108, which is also in our Terrace and the same type of house as ours. I think it is very unfair the same charge is imposed on us for Domestic rates and water charges, as we obviously are not profiting from living in our home.

In the current system as you are probably aware, there are only Domestic rates applied to bed & breakfast houses if they let out a maximum of 6 beds, will this be the same in your new system or will it be reviewed?

I think the current system is very unfair as the B&B are a business and can therefore profit from it. The increase for the rate charges recently was passed onto their guests whereas a family or pensioners like us do not have that option.

Also, why are students exempt from rates ? The student or his parents could own the home. The rich are the only ones who profit from this method. Housing Benefit should be the method for rate exemption or allowance towards housing.

Can you advise me if bed and breakfast properties and student lettings/owners are to be treated the same as a family home in your new proposal for Domestic rating?

I look forward with interest to your reply.