

Dear Mr. Robinson

You have a very difficult task in seeking to determine what would be a right and fair rating system and your proposal to debate this is extremely welcome. What is completely beyond any debate or dispute is that the present system is utterly and indefensibly wrong and unfair and must be scrapped.

I do not believe that anywhere in the past history of British taxation there can have been a precedent for sudden increases of two hundred, three hundred, four hundred percent as has happened here in the past year. This savage extortion has been inflicted on a large number of citizens most of whom would be extremely lucky if their income had gone up by even two per cent in the same period. No sane person could possibly believe that this is fair or reasonable.

I am not competent to suggest a solution - would that I could - but it would at least be a start to take whatever steps are necessary to recover the 40-plus million pounds still owing by people who claimed that they could not, or simply would not, pay any rates at all; rather than punishing those of us who have unfailingly paid our rates all our lives which, by the way, we were told included payment for water supply and sewerage.

Yours sincerely,

South Belfast Pensioner.