

## **Northern Ireland Fair Rates campaign**

The Fair Rates Campaign was launched by a group of homeowners from the Belfast area, incensed at the unfair rate increases planned for April 2007.

Due to the Government's rate reform, based on a single capital value system, large sections of Northern Ireland's homeowners are facing rates bills up 400% more than they are currently paying. These exorbitant increases are due to come into effect in April 2007 unless Northern Ireland is brought into line with England and Wales, where banding and capping prevent such large increases.

Domestic rate bills of £3000, £4000, £5000 etc... will become commonplace for many householders come April 2007 and, following the 2010 revaluation, could well become the norm.

The campaign organisers decided to take action by raising awareness among our own local politicians of the plight faced by those most vulnerable in our society. Some politicians are belatedly acknowledging the hardship that will be imposed on many pensioners, low earners, single householders and one-parent families, if this draconian wealth tax (disguised as a rate reform) becomes law.

**We call on all the people of Northern Ireland to join us in our fight to restore a fair and balanced system of calculating domestic rates, based on the householder's ability to pay.**

It should be noted that any meaningful rebate or relief schemes contained in the Rates Order 2006, are conditional on our politicians returning to a devolved Assembly by 24<sup>th</sup> November 2006. The direct rule ministers would have you believe that the vulnerable groups named above will be protected under the legislation as it stands, but nothing could be further from the truth.

We must impress on the Government that, in its current format, the rates reform

- **Is unfair in that it discriminates between the age, disabled, and dependants groups etc...**
- **Is conditional in its relief schemes for vulnerable groups**
- **Does not acknowledge that those homeowners currently occupying the more expensive houses are at present paying rates well in excess of the 2006 average**

We are now extending the campaign to all of Northern Ireland's 700,000 homeowners. Those of you that find the new rates bill attracting only a slight increase, no increase or indeed a reduction, must look forward to the next domestic property revaluation, due in three years time. Don't be fooled by the current temporary concessions. While house prices are likely to continue rising and the current percentage increases are maintained you will, by 2012, be guaranteed a well above average hike in your domestic rates bill. Add to this the proposed new water and sewage charges and you will realise the extent of this unfair rate reform.

The Northern Ireland Fair Rates Campaign represents all citizens of Northern Ireland and challenges the unfair rate charges levied against us by unaccountable direct rule ministers.

The petition and signature sheet may be downloaded from our Website at ([www.fairratescampaign.co.uk](http://www.fairratescampaign.co.uk)) and the completed "hard copies" should be returned to:

Northern Ireland Fair Rates Campaign  
The Old Transport Museum, Witham Street, Belfast BT4 1HP

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The Northern Ireland Fair Rates Campaign will use the signatures collected over the coming months to mount a protest against the proposed rates reform and the exorbitant domestic rates bills it will generate next April

If possible you should read the attached statement before completing the signature sheet.

Signatures collected prior to 15<sup>th</sup> September 2006 have been submitted to the Minister of Finance David Hanson in support of our detailed consultation paper lodged with the Rating Policy Division of the Department of Finance and Personnel, located at Rathgael House Ballo Road Bangor.

\*The Details of all persons on this sheet will only be used for the purpose of this exercise i.e. to help impress on the Government that the citizens of Northern Ireland do not expect to be treated differently to those in England, Scotland and Wales.

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