

## Rates Relief

- 1. Grateful if you could advise when NIHE took over from LPS with regarding to rates relief for pensioners who own their home and the home has never been a house executive house.**

*The Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) took over the administration of Housing Benefit (HB) and Low Income Rate Relief (LIRR) for owner-occupiers, from Land and Property Services (LPS) on the 1 June 2022.*

*If a property is owner occupied, the history (previously NIHE stock) is not relevant.*

- 2. Grateful if you could provide the policy of when you review rates relief for pensioners and if you feel they are not entitled to it will you enforce repayment.**

*Any customer in receipt of HB/LIRR, has a duty to notify the NIHE about any relevant changes of circumstances to ensure the correct award of HB/LIRR is made at all times.*

*All HB/LIRR claims are reviewed at the start of the financial year to address changes in rates liability. A further review would only be necessary when a change of circumstances occurs.*

*As all Owner Occupier HB/LIRR claims are paid in advance until the end of the financial year (31 March), any retrospective changes, which result in a lower HB/LIRR award, will always necessitate an adjustment to the LPS rates account to reflect that change.*

*This will appear as a debit on the LPS rate account for which the customer would be liable. LPS would be responsible for recovering that shortfall.*

**3. Grateful if you can advise how repayment for rates relief will be done. Can the pensioner advise on how much they can afford.**

*Where an LPS rates account has been adjusted to take account of a retrospective change that reduced the original HB/LIRR award:*

- *The NIHE will send the debit directly to LPS*
- *LPS will debit the customers rates account accordingly*
- *LPS will issue a revised rates notification advising the customer how much is outstanding*

*The revised rates notification will advise the customer to contact LPS regarding arrangements for repayments.*

*Customers can contact LPS by:*

- *Telephone: 0300 200 7801*
- *Text Relay: 18001 0300 200 7801*
- *Online: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/payrates>*

**4. If a pensioner has value over the required criteria for rates relief in their savings will this influence on the amount they are having to pay back relief provided before NIHE took over from LPS, even if this monies is/will be used for private health care or possibility of going into a nursing home.**

*In all cases where an overpayment of LIRR has occurred, the customer is advised to contact LPS regarding repayment arrangements where they can then provide details of any extenuating circumstances.*