

Freedom of Information request 2345/2013

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Information request

Pensions Minister Steve Webb claimed in the Telegraph that claimants of British pensions overseas based on a spouse's contributions include many foreign citizens who have "never set foot in Britain at all".

I would like to request any information the Department holds on:

1) Of the 220,000 claimants of category ABL or BL pensions who are categorised as "living abroad/unknown" in August 2012 (source), how many are "living abroad" and how many are "unknown"

2) Of the claimants of category ABL or BL pensions who are registered as "living abroad", any information the Department holds regarding whether they have ever "set foot" in Britain.

DWP response

Before I respond to your specific request, the Minister's Private Office has asked me to draw your attention to the words used by the Minister in the quotation you cited. The Minister did state that it was likely that the caseload of those receiving category ABL and BL pensions overseas would include those who had not previously visited Britain. However, he did not offer an assessment of the size of this cohort. The description of "many" foreign citizens is not a direct quotation from the Minister, and was added by the journalist.

All but around 1000 of these 220,000 claimants live abroad. A breakdown by country of residence can be obtained from the Tabulation Tool at http://83.244.183.180/100pc/sp/cccountry/cat/a_carate_r_cccountry_c_cat_aug12.html.

In response to your second question, the information requested is not held by the Department as we do not collect information on whether State Pension claimants who are not currently resident have ever visited the UK. State Pension is a contributory benefit, with eligibility determined by the National Insurance contributions that the claimant and or their spouse have made. Nationality and location are not qualifying factors.