

Freedom of Information request 4871/2012

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Information request

- a) Why does the UK Government require the SIN?
- b) Is the provision of the SIN optional?
- c) Is the DWP aware of the confidential nature of the SIN?
- d) What steps does the DWP take to safeguard the SIN if it is provided?
- e) What are the ramifications of not providing the SIN as requested?
- f) Does the Canadian Government provide the UK Government with information based on a person's SIN?

Your reply states "I should add that if the Life Certificate isn't returned, this can lead to the suspension or closure of a claim to UK State pension." Note, not of my questions advocates not returning the Life Certificate, it just asks questions about the Social Insurance Number requirement. Personally I don't have a problem with providing the SIN, but I know many people do, and I was trying to get the issue clarified.

DWP response

In response to the specific questions you have asked, please see below specific responses:

- a) The UK government asks for information including the Social Insurance Number as part of the Life Certification process – This process is used to confirm that the correct payment is being made to the correct person.
- b) No. If the information has been requested as part of the Life Certification process, there is clearly a requirement to provide the information that has been requested. If information isn't provided, then a person's claim to pension could be suspended or even closed.
- c) Yes. All material received from an individual in relation to a benefit claim is treated as confidential.
- d) All the information received is treated as confidential, it is only used within DWP to ensure that a claim and associated payment can be made.
- e) In the previous response, failure to respond or provide information for the Life Certificate can result in pensions payments being suspended or stopped entirely.
- f) The Life Certification request goes to the individual in receipt of UK State Pension. In the normal course of business, there is no reason for this information to be shared with the Canadian Government, however there maybe the odd occasion where we do need to share information with the Canadian government.