

Freedom of Information request 1211/2013

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Information request

Did the Department advise Her Majesty The Queen prior to her signing the Commonwealth Charter on 11th March 2013 that 554,000 of her citizens are discriminated against by virtue of their not receiving the same treatment as others?

The charter details 16 core beliefs, which include upholding democracy and opposing "all forms of discrimination." Saying that:-"We are implacably opposed to all forms of discrimination, whether rooted in gender, race, colour, creed, political belief or other grounds." "Our shared values of peace, democracy, development, justice and human rights - which are found in our new Commonwealth Charter - mean that we can place special emphasis on including everyone in this goal, especially those who are vulnerable."

On Monday the 11th. March Mr Steve Webb, Minister of State for Pensions told a Department of Works and Pensions Select Committee that there would be no change in the status of frozen pensioners. That state being that those pensioners will remain on the pension they received when they moved overseas.(including war time heroes that fought for the freedom of the country).

All State Pensioners wherever they now live paid in the same National Insurance contributions for their eventual State Pension. All should therefore receive the same the same pension. If some do not then this is government legalised discrimination. The new charter clearly states that discrimination in any form is implacably opposed.

So, if Her Majesty was not advised of this discrimination what steps will be taken to redress the situation? Should Great Britain be excluded from the Commonwealth until it meets the terms of the Charter?

DWP response

The information requested is not held with this department and your FOI request needs to be sent to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

The Commonwealth Charter was presented to Parliament by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and represents the views of the Commonwealth countries. If you have any questions concerning the Charter, they should be directed to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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