

Freedom of Information request 610/2015

Received 15/2/15

Published

Information request

Can you please let me have copies of correspondence regarding how you arrived at the decision to work out a persons single-tier pension entitlement if they have been contracted out of state second pension the way you have done it and also correspondence regarding any any other ways you considered doing it.

DWP response

I confirm that the information you seek is held by the Department. However it engages an exemption from disclosure because it relates to the formulation or development of government policy – section 35(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act .This exemption protects the private space within which Ministers and their policy advisers can develop policies without the risk of premature disclosure.

As required by the Act, I have also assessed the public interest for against disclosure. There is a public interest in greater transparency which makes government more accountable to the electorate and increases trust. There is also a public interest in being able to assess the quality of advice being given to ministers and subsequent decision making.

However, good government depends on good decision-making and this needs to be based on the best advice available and a full consideration of all the options without fear of premature disclosure. If this public interest cannot be protected there is a risk that decision-making will become poorer and will be recorded inadequately

On balance, DWP is satisfied that in this instance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure. Therefore, the information you seek will not be released.

While Section 35 exemption excludes the sharing of detailed papers on policy development you will wish to know that the Department has started an information campaign to tell people about the new State Pension. The key element we want to communicate is that the new State Pension will be set at a rate higher than the Guarantee Credit giving pension savers clarity and the certainty their savings will not be clawed back through the Standard Minimum Guarantee in the Pension Credit means test.

The information campaign will also explain to people the benefits of undertaking the one-off adjustment to reflect periods of contracting out at the point we calculate the new State Pension start amount rather than at State Pension age. This will considerably speed up the transition process and will also mean that of those paying more NI from 2016 as contracting-out ends around 90% will gain enough state pension over and above what they would have received under the current system to offset the extra NICs and any adjustments to their workplace pension scheme