

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

e-mail: [freedom-of-information-request@dwpgsi.gov.uk](mailto:freedom-of-information-request@dwpgsi.gov.uk)

Our Ref: Fol 1576

DATE: 11 May 2016

Dear Mr Thompson,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request of 18<sup>th</sup> April 2016. You asked:

*Back in August last year i asked you the following.*

*Can you please let me have copies of any correspondence you have about why and how you reached the decision not to allow people who had not paid the minimum number of NI contributions (10) to receive any state pension if they reach state pension on and after 6 April 2016 under the single-tier pension especially as there was never a minimum requirement of NI contributions under the state second pension.*

*Can you please tell me if you have contacted these people or will before the single-tier pension starts and let me have a copy of what you have or will send out.*

*As people who reach state pension age under single-tier pension who have GMPs are not going to have the calculation done by which they receive increases via their state pension can you please let me have copies of any correspondence as to why and how the decision was made not to allow the calculation to be done by which people receive increases in excess of the increase on their actual state second pension.*

*Have you or are you going to contact people with GMPs to tell them that the DWP are no longer going to have the calculation done so that they will no longer receive increases in excess of the increase on their actual state second pension paid with their state pension.*

*Can you let me have a copy of the letter you have sent or will send about not doing the calculation as done for people who reach state pension age prior to 6 April 2016.*

*If you have not sent any letters to people as mentioned above can you please tell me when you will be sending them.*

Your Reply  
Our Ref: VTR 3495  
Date: 14 October 2015

You said.

*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.*

*The new State Pension is still to be implemented, from 6 April 2016, and further secondary legislation is required to underpin the new system. Two sets of regulations will be required to describe the more detailed aspects of the closure of contracting out and these regulations will need Parliamentary approval before the policy in these areas is finally settled. While we understand the public interest in accessing information on policy development we believe that the private space required by Ministers and officials to finalise policies in this area outweighs the request for disclosure.*

*As required by the Act, I have also assessed the public interest for and 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.*

*I can however provide you with some information regarding how the Department intends to communicate the new State Pension.*

*The Department has a communication strategy for the new State Pension in advance of its introduction on 6 April 2016. This includes making individuals and stakeholders aware of the full range of issues arising from the introduction of the new State Pension, in line with the information communicated by the National Audit Office. Some information on the new State Pension is already available and this will be added to with different subjects coming out over the coming months. We will make use of a range of media including factsheets, videos on Pension tube, stakeholder engagement and a multi-channel communications campaign.*

*As the new state pension is up and running can you please tell me if you are now able to answer the questions I asked as I would have thought that by now you would have been contacting people in advance of their reaching state pension age to tell them about benefits that they are not going to receive under the new state pension.*

*Back in January 2015 I wrote to Margaret Hodge the then Chair of the Public Accounts Committee. She replied in March 2015 and told me that the National Audit Office (NAO) had been in contact with the DWP asking you to tell people about changes under the new state pension they will make them worse off compared to the state pension system in force prior to 6 April 2016. Can you tell me if you ever did this, and if so when you started writing and if you did not can you please tell me when you intend writing to people as mentioned in the correspondence to you by Neil Sayers a Director of the NAO*

*The recent reports by the NAO and Work and Pensions Committee also recommended that you contact people about changes that make them worse off.*

You are requesting information about the communication of the Minimum Qualifying Period and the end of the additional State Pension/Contracted out Deduction calculation which can have the effect of indexing the Guaranteed Minimum Pension. We have already provided you with our communications strategy in our reply to your previous Freedom of Information request, as quoted by you above.

Similarly in this reply we addressed your other request regarding the correspondence leading to the decision to end the additional State Pension/Contracted out Deduction calculation.

If you have any queries about this letter please contact me quoting the reference number above.

Yours sincerely,

DWP Strategy Fol Team

-----

**Your right to complain under the Freedom of Information Act**

If you are not happy with this response you may request an internal review by e-mailing [freedom-of-information-request@dwpgsi.gov.uk](mailto:freedom-of-information-request@dwpgsi.gov.uk) or by writing to DWP, Central Fol Team, Caxton House, Tothill Street, SW1H 9NA. Any review request should be submitted within two months of the date of this letter.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office for a decision. Generally the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted our own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)