



PRESS RELEASE

No. 123/2015

Date: 2nd March 2015

Chief Minister Re-assures Pensioners on Tax Refunds

- *Income Tax Office to issue tax refunds electronically*
- *Cheques being phased out*
- *No need for alarm amongst elderly citizens*

The Income Tax Office will soon be phasing out cheques and will commence processing refunds electronically.

To this end, in July 2014 the Commissioner of Income Tax commenced writing to all PAYE taxpayers informing them of this change and requesting that they provide him with their bank account details. Reminder letters have recently been sent to persons who have not yet provided the Commissioner with this information. Some pensioners are concerned that this information is being sought by the tax office as a back-handed way to seek data about pensioners' savings. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The Chief Minister will shortly be writing to taxpayers explaining why the tax office is seeking this information and to assure them that personal bank details will only be used by the Commissioner when processing refunds electronically and for no other purpose.

Any person who has received a letter from the Commissioner and is not in receipt of assessable income (e.g. pensioners over the age of 60, whose only income is that of an occupational pension) should ignore this letter.

The Chief Minister, Hon Fabian Picardo QC MP MA (Oxon), said: "It has come to my attention that some elderly citizens are concerned that this information is being sought in order to try to find out about their savings or for other government purposes. Nothing could be further from the truth. In any event, should any pensioner not wish to provide this information, they need not do so. I have asked the Commissioner of Tax to find another way to issue refunds for those who do not wish to provide their account details to the Government. I will be writing directly to all those who have already received letters requesting the information telling them that they need not provide it if they don't want to. All the Commissioner has set out to do, in good faith, is facilitate the refunding process; but our elderly citizens don't have to provide information they are uncomfortable providing and I want to assure them of that directly myself."