Guidance for individuals on completing a self-certification form

In order to combat tax evasion by both individuals and businesses, the UK and many other countries have entered into agreements to exchange information on offshore accounts.

This means that financial institutions must ask customers opening new accounts to provide information. They then need to report certain information on overseas customers to the tax authorities.

What this means for you

When you open an account, you need to complete a self-certification with details of your:

- name
- address
- date of birth
- place of birth
- country or countries of tax residence
- taxpayer identification number(s).

The types of organisations which require this information include:

- banks
- building societies
- fund platforms and other providers of funds
- some types of insurance company.

What happens next

Financial institutions share information on their overseas customers with the local tax authority which then passes it to the relevant overseas tax authority.

For example, if you are a US citizen with a UK bank account, the UK bank will pass information about you and your account (both balances and income) to HMRC. HMRC then shares this with the IRS. If you are UK tax resident and have invested in a Jersey fund, information about you and your investments will be passed to HMRC.

> If you have any questions about completing a self-certification or any other concerns about the impact of automatic exchange of information, you should seek tax advice.

Completing the self-certification

Country of tax residence

Your country of tax residence is usually the country in which you live and where you pay tax on your income (or would pay tax if you had taxable income). Most individuals are tax resident in only one country.

Each country has its own rules on tax residence. Rules on whether you are tax resident in the UK are different from the rules on whether you are tax resident in another country.

Some individuals are tax resident in more than one country. This might be the case, for example, if an individual spends significant amounts of time in two or more countries, owns a property abroad, or was born in another country.

Tax residence is different to citizenship. Broadly speaking, the concept of tax residence relates to where you live, and the concept of citizenship relates to where you were born or the country of your passport. You can be tax resident in one country and a citizen of another.

US citizens are always tax resident in the US, regardless of whether they live in the US or are tax resident elsewhere.

Further information is available from HMRC on the meaning of UK tax residence - http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/international/residence.htm. A person is tax resident in the UK if:

- they spent at least 183 days in the UK during the tax year, or
- their only home was in the UK - they must have owned, rented or lived in it for at least 91 days in total - and they spent at least 30 days there in the tax year.

From the link you can access the Tax Residence Indicator, on online tool to help determine whether you are tax resident in the UK.

Although it is obvious to most people as to their country of tax residence, the rules on tax residence are complex and vary between countries. If you are in any doubt as to your country of tax residence, you should seek help from a tax adviser.

Taxpayer identification number

The taxpayer identification number is the unique identifier assigned to you by the authorities in your country of residence. In the UK it is your National Insurance number.

If you have forgotten or lost your National Insurance number, this website will help you find it: https://www.gov.uk/lost-national-insurance-number

Some countries do not issue a taxpayer identification number. In this case you can use another type of number with equivalent level of identification such as a:

- social security number
- citizen or personal identification code or number
- resident registration number.