



## Has Mr Osborne got expatriates in his sights?

The UK Budget was announced on 23rd March 2011. For a Government so strapped for cash there was an obvious temptation to try and raise revenue from “non doms” and perhaps even from expatriates. The UK, unlike the US, has always fought shy of trying to tax its expatriates (on anything other than UK source income) but there was the temptation. Mercifully, Mr Osborne has resisted that.

The detailed part of the Budget does throw up two items of interest for Britons living overseas, and non Britons thinking of coming to live in the UK.

Firstly, a statutory residence test. It is fair to say that the whole question of whether or not someone is resident or not has become far too imprecise. This year’s Budget states the need for a consultation on the introduction of a clear set of rules – rather than having to rely on old cases and Revenue practice, which is the current state of affairs. In many ways clear rules would make life easier but of course it depends on the basis of the test. At this stage all we can do is wait and see.

Secondly, domicile. At present, those non doms based in the UK can retain the remittance basis of taxation beyond seven years residence in the UK by paying a £30,000 annual charge. That seems set to increase to £50,000 for those who have been resident for 12 or more years.

It is already true that you need to be “fairly wealthy” to make claiming the remittance basis worthwhile, and so moving the charge to £50,000 is unlikely to make much difference either to the amount that the Government raises in revenue or to the attraction of the UK to “non doms”.

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