

***(COPY OF NPC LETTER EMAILED TO MP's 5th February 2020)**



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NPC APPEAL TO OUR MP's – PLEASE DON'T SWITCH HER OFF ON MAY 31!



Dear...

If you lived on the basic pension what would you prioritise – hot food, a warm home, or the company of your television?

It might seem obvious to opt for food and heating over Strictly Come Dancing. But if, like many of our pensioners, you lived alone, were isolated and unable to go out very often, the choice becomes frighteningly stark.

We hope it's a choice you never have to face. But *it is* one that many of your older constituents - and recent voters - will have to make once the BBC starts asking them to pay for their TV licence after May 31.

Figures from Age UK, working alongside the NPC to campaign for free TV licences for all over-75s, show the £154.40 cost of a licence is the equivalent to three months' fuel bills for most older people. In April the licence fee increases by another £3 making it even more difficult for them. These pensioners will genuinely have to decide whether to pay their TV licence or use their gas and electric to heat their home and cook hot meals.

Many older people already struggle to pay their bills, and through ill health or disability are stuck at home, perhaps rarely seeing another living soul for days, sometimes weeks on end.

The NPC already knows that the poorest pensioners make daily decisions as to whether to eat or heat. If the BBC scraps the free TV licence for all over 75's, they will have a third call on their meagre income, which means cutting back even more.

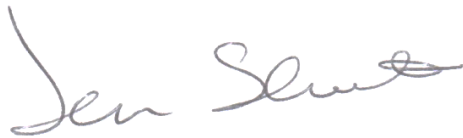
Almost two million already live in poverty, with many just above the pension credit threshold for the BBC's proposed means-test for the few who might still qualify for a free licence. So it is vitally important that all our over 75's do not lose this universal benefit - a key element of a wider package they receive in lieu of a decent state pension.

The NPC appeals to you to think of your oldest constituents and ask the Government to take responsibility for funding the free licence back from the BBC as a matter of urgency.

In a pre-election interview, the Prime Minister said it was 'crucial' to 'thrash out a new funding formula with the BBC to save the free licence.

Please support the NPC and our partners by urging the Prime Minister to keep his word. In the 21st century, it would be an appalling way for our government to treat its most vulnerable and oldest citizens, who have given everything asked of them and more. We hope they can count on your support.

Yours sincerely,



Jan Shortt,
General Secretary,
National Pensioners Convention
www.npcuk.org



***The National Pensioners Convention** was set up in 1979 to champion the rights and welfare of the UK's older people. It now represents more than 1.5 million people in over 1000 different organisations across the UK. The 2020 National Pensioners Annual Convention – previously known as the NPC Pensioners' Parliament - will debate issues affecting older people in Southport from June 2 to 4, 2020.

To find out more, email info@npcuk.org

For further information about the NPC or our TV Licence Campaign, please contact:

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