



Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport

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Thank you for your correspondence of 26 May to the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP and Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, the Rt Hon Oliver Dowden MP regarding the television licencing fee for the over 75's. I am replying as a member of the Ministerial Support Team.

The government recognises the importance of television to people of all ages, particularly for older people who value television as a way to stay connected with the world. That is why the government guaranteed the over-75 concession until 2020.

In the 2015 funding settlement, the government agreed with the BBC that responsibility for the concession will transfer to the BBC in June 2020. This reform was subject to public discussion and debated extensively during the passage of the Digital Economy Act 2017 through Parliament. The government and the BBC agreed this is a fair deal - in return the government closed the iPlayer loophole and committed to increase the licence fee in line with inflation.

As stated in the government's manifesto we recognise the value of free TV licences for over-75s and believe they should be funded by the BBC. The government is disappointed with the BBC's decision to restrict the over-75 TV licence fee concession to only those in receipt of pension credit. However, the government welcomes the BBC's decision to delay the introduction of this restriction until August 2020 in light of Covid-19 and the need for elderly people to self-isolate. The BBC will keep the issue under review as the situation continues to evolve.

The government is committed to ensuring that the BBC and all public service broadcasters adapt to a fast changing market, and keeping them at the heart of our world class TV sector. This work will begin well in advance of the next BBC Charter, set to be introduced in 2027, and will include looking at the licence fee funding model.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Courtney Harris
Ministerial Support Team

