



14/1/19.

I am writing to you about the cost of TV licences that might be imposed upon people over 75 by the BBC. I feel this would be a cruel thing to do to people who might not be able to afford this additional expense.

As you will know I am a member of the CSPA, the Civil Service Pensioners Alliance, and ~~any~~ they have asked me to write to you on behalf of our membership especially in Crawley. Below is a copy of the draft letter which I have been sent which sets out the case very well for not imposing the licence fee to pensioners over 75. For me, the licence fee would be another unwelcome bill to be paid from pension payments which never seem to be enough to pay for a reasonable retirement.

Re: BBC Consultation on Free TV Licences for 75+

You may be aware that the BBC has begun a consultation period on the future of the above licence.

In 2015, George Osborne announced the decision to remove this universal benefit from the Department for Work and Pensions and place it with the BBC – an unelected corporation that has no history of or responsibility for dealing with welfare issues. This move also took place without any public consultation.

The BBC claim that those who receive a free TV licence are being subsidised by the younger generation, but research shows that the younger generation use a variety of ways to access the media (including TV Programmes) that are free of charge. The majority do not therefore pay for a TV licence in the way the broadcaster suggests.

The fact is, older people have paid for their TV licence for at least 50 years or more and there are extremely valid reasons as to why at the age of 75+ they should receive recognition of their support for the BBC over that time. For example:

1. 1 in 2 over 75 are disabled.
2. 1 in 4 view the TV as their main form of companionship.
3. 18% of over 75s live in poverty.
4. Loneliness and isolation is recognised as contributing to more deaths per year than smoking.
5. Pensioner poverty is rising.

PTO

The concession was originally introduced and maintained because successive governments have avoided improving the state pension and instead offered additional universal benefits. As a result, our state pension remains at the bottom of the OECD league table.

Ultimately, this issue rests on whether the broadcaster should be responsible for funding a part of wider government welfare policy, and I hope that you will be able to support our demand that this responsibility should be returned to the appropriate government department as a matter of urgency,

Yours sincerely,