

MARK MENZIES MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA



12 February 2019

Dear

RE: BBC License fee consultation

I am writing in relation to the consultation currently being undertaken by the BBC in regard to the TV licence fee concession for older people.

It is critically important that the over 75s retain a free TV license and I do not support any change to the eligibility criteria of free licenses.

As part of the BBC's funding settlement it agreed at the time to pick up the responsibility for funding this arrangement and it should keep to that agreement.

As vice-chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Group on the BBC, I am more than aware there is plenty of scope for the BBC to find the money to fund these licences. The BBC has not come anywhere near close to maximizing the financial return of its huge back catalogue of programming.

The roaring success of Amazon Prime, Netflix, Hulu and other such services are proof positive that good television and content sells well – and the BBC has plenty of good content. The BBC must first look to maximise its earnings from its back catalogue – and there is plenty of money to be made there – before looking to take free licences away from older people.

When I read the BBC's 'range of options' and its two reports on over-75 licence provision, I am more than disappointed to see none of the suggested options looked into raising revenue elsewhere to cover this cost. These reports have been written to fulfil a brief set by the BBC. They do not step back and look at the wider picture. If the BBC's only suggestions to plug a funding gap is to make cuts or charges to elderly pensioners, I fear there is a real lack of financial acumen and vision which perhaps needs further investigation.

Yours sincerely,



Mark Menzies MP

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR FYLDE

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