



# Comisiynydd Pobl Hŷn Cymru Older People's Commissioner for Wales

Sir D Clementi  
Chairman  
BBC Board  
BBC Broadcasting House  
Portland Place  
London, W1A 1AA

6 February 2019

*Dear Chairman,*

## Consultation on Age-related TV Licence Policy

I am writing as I am concerned about the impact that the proposed changes to concessionary TV licence fee funding will have upon older people.

My role as Older People's Commissioner for Wales - an independent, statutory role established by the Welsh Government - is to protect and promote older people's rights and to stand up and speak out on their behalf so they can access the services and support they need, and ensure that those who may be vulnerable or at risk of harm are kept safe and protected.

There are over 260,000 older people in Wales over the age of 75 and over 50% of them live alone<sup>i</sup>. For many watching television is their only companion, their window on the world and their primary source of entertainment.

Furthermore, the consultation does not seem to take into account the fact that poverty amongst older people is increasing – 1 in 5 older people in Wales now live in persistent poverty<sup>ii</sup> and the rate of income poverty for people over the age of 65 rose to 20% between 2014/15 and 2016/17.

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

**03442 640 670**

Rydym yn croesawu  
galwadau yn Gymraeg

Adeiladau Cambrian  
Sqwâr Mount Stuart  
Caerdydd CF10 5FL

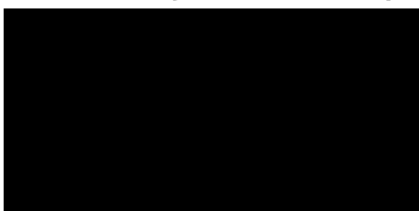
Cambrian Buildings  
Mount Stuart Square  
Cardiff CF10 5FL

All of the options being consulted upon seek to restrict access to a free licence, through increases to the age of eligibility, reducing the value of the concession or by means testing the individual.

Every one of the proposals undermines the universal nature of the benefit and would have a negative impact on both the finances and well-being of older people in Wales.

Based on the impact that proposed changes would have upon older people, I am unable to support or favour any of the options set out within the consultation other than maintaining the status quo.

To that end, I have called on the UK Government to maintain its funding of TV licence fees for persons over the age of 75 for the duration of this parliament, as pledged in its 2017 General Election Manifesto<sup>iii</sup>, to ensure that adequate finances and arrangements are in place to both fulfil this promise and protect the well-being of older people.



Heléna Herklots CBE  
**Older People's Commissioner for Wales**

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<sup>i</sup> Carter-Davies, L. and Hilcoat-Walletamby, S. (2015). *Housing for Older People in Wales: An Evidence Review*. Public Policy Institute for Wales, p.9.

<sup>ii</sup> Gov.wales. (2019). *Welsh Government Poverty statistics*. [online] Available at: <https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/households-below-average-income/?lang=en> [Accessed 5 Feb. 2019].

<sup>iii</sup> Conservatives.com. (2019). *The Conservative Party Manifesto 2017*. [online] Available at: <https://www.conservatives.com/manifesto> [Accessed 5 Feb. 2019].