

mtm



Life without the BBC

Household Study

August 15

## About this research

The BBC commissioned this study in order to help it understand better the value that it delivers to UK households in return for the licence fee and how this could be improved.

The research is based on a proposal by Professor Patrick Barwise of London Business School, co-author of 'What If There Were No BBC Television?' published by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.<sup>1</sup>

Research agency, MTM, designed and conducted the study. The project team at MTM is highly experienced in the use of ethnography, deprivation and immersive approaches (e.g. embedding researchers in households/with audiences for a period of time) for clients including Channel 4, Digital UK and Newsworks.<sup>2</sup> Previous work has included a deprivation study whereby audiences had to forego their preferred news brand in order to help identify the importance of news in people's lives and the needs states it satisfies; an investigation of the viewing choices audiences make requiring participants to film themselves at specific times over a prolonged period; and an ethnographic examination of how 21<sup>st</sup> century households consume media content where researchers stayed with and shadowed leading-edge and mainstream households in order to provide a complete view of media usage across different household members. MTM is a winner of awards from the Market Research Society and Mediatel.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/publication/what-if-there-were-no-bbc-television>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.newsworks.org.uk/Topics-themes/49298>

## 1 Executive summary

The BBC is part of UK life – established in 1922 and used by 97% of UK adults each week, who spend 18 hours in the week consuming BBC content.<sup>3</sup> But scrutiny of the value of the licence fee is greater than ever, and there is debate about the role, scope and future of the corporation. The media landscape is also changing rapidly. This piece of research was designed to gain new insight into what value audiences place in the services and programming currently provided by the BBC, and to consider how households would react if they were unable to access BBC services. Given the number of other channels and services available, how distinctive would they find the BBC's content and how easily would those households be able to find suitable alternatives? What was the impact on their view of the value for money of the licence fee?

To understand this, different kinds of households each spent nine days without the BBC to see how they responded without the range of services that the BBC provides in their everyday lives and received the equivalent of the licence fee cost for that period in return. While the great majority of UK adults say top-of-mind in surveys that they are content to pay the current licence fee in return for BBC services, to make this a harder test of the value, if any, of the BBC, the research focused more on the minority of households that say that, if it was down to them, they would forego the BBC so that they do not have to pay the licence fee and those that say the licence fee is too high.

To this end, the 70 households in the research – from 15 locations across the UK – comprised those that initially said, given the choice, they would:

- prefer to **pay nothing** and not receive the BBC (x 24) – reflective of 12% of all UK households<sup>4</sup>
- only **pay less** than the current licence fee for the current BBC (x 24) – reflective of 16% of all UK households
- be willing to **pay the full licence fee or more** (x 22) – reflective of 69% of all UK households.

After the nine days, would these households rather keep BBC services and pay the licence fee, or forego the BBC? For those households that did conclude the licence fee was worth paying, what elements of the BBC offer were uniquely valued and led them to feel that the fee was worth paying? And for those households that took the view that the licence fee was not worth paying, how could what the BBC provides be improved to increase the value for money that they received?

The results showed that after nine days without the BBC:

- **33 out of the 48 households** that said at the start of the research that they prefer to **pay nothing** and not receive the BBC or would only **pay less** than the current licence fee

<sup>3</sup> Cross-Media Insight Survey by GfK for the BBC, 6,000 UK adults per quarter, 2014/15

<sup>4</sup> Ipsos MORI for the BBC, 1,001 UK adults 15+, 2014

**were now willing to pay £2.80 a week.** This equates to more than two-thirds of these households changing their minds

- **21 out of the 22 households** that said at the start of the research that they would **pay the full licence fee or more** were **still willing to pay £2.80 a week or more, with 15 even more positive than previously.**

In other words, the great majority of the households that had initially said they would **pay nothing** or would only **pay less** than the current licence fee changed their minds (33 out of the 48 in total) and choose to have BBC services at the full cost of the licence fee rather than having the money back. They included a wide range of households: a mix of lifestages; both higher and lower socio-economic groups (ABC1 and C2DE); both homes with pay TV subscription packages and free-to-air television only; different ethnic backgrounds; and from a variety of locations across the UK.

Having spent time without the BBC, these households changed their minds because they:

- **Missed the BBC much more in their daily routines than they anticipated**
- **Felt that the BBC has unique content and services that they could not get elsewhere**
- **Realised that the BBC provides a high level of quality versus the alternatives, which they had not previously appreciated before it was taken away**
- **Became consistently frustrated at the inclusion and volume of advertising on non-BBC services**
- **Were surprised by the range of services that the BBC produces (not all were aware that BBC Radio and Online services were included in the licence fee cost)**
- **Felt the BBC plays a more important role in UK life and the national conversation than they realised originally.**

As a result of this, for these households there was a realisation that the licence fee provided better value for money than they had previously thought. In particular, this was heightened when they considered what the BBC provides versus the cost of the licence fee for the time they had been without its services. Such households across different income levels frequently expressed surprise at the daily (40p) and weekly (£2.80) cost and, after undertaking some mental calculations, often compared this with daily or weekly items, such as 'a pint of beer' or 'a sandwich' or a 'bus fare', or, where they had pay TV packages, compared the cost with the subscriptions they paid. In making such comparisons, the households felt that the BBC content and services that they had missed was now worth this amount of money. Before the exercise, most of these households had preferred advertising or subscription as the means of funding the BBC but after the nine days, changed their opinion to the licence fee.

The households were still willing to **pay the full licence fee or more** valued the BBC (more) as it was:

- **More prominent / important in their lives than they previously thought**
- **Good value for money (£2.80 a week, 40 pence a day)**
- **Providing unique and quality content across platforms, services and genres**
- **A reliable and trusted source for news and information**
- **Advertisement-free**

A minority of the households that preferred to **pay nothing** (nine out of 24) and **pay less** (six out of 24) did not change their minds. It confirmed their views regarding the amount of content from the BBC that they used because they had not missed having access to the BBC across the nine days. Therefore they still felt that they did not want to pay for the licence fee at all or that they still wanted to pay less than the current amount. A minority of these households also cited affordability as their main reason for maintaining the same attitude, whilst the obligatory nature of the licence fee was often a secondary rationale.

That said, more than twice as many of the households that had initially preferred to **pay nothing** or **pay less** changed their minds than did not. More than two in three of the households in this study who had at first been unwilling to pay the licence fee at the current level, if at all, chose to keep the BBC services rather than having the licence fee back. And of those households who were initially content to pay, all but one remained willing to pay, with two-thirds feeling even more positive after nine days without the BBC. This experiment into the realities of life without the BBC would indicate that people's initial view of their willingness to pay for the BBC is most often likely to be an underestimation. Directionally, it is clear that having spent time without the BBC greatly reduces – by about two-thirds – the proportion of households that think the licence fee is poor value for money. When asked in surveys seven in ten adults say, top-of-mind, that they are content to pay the current level of the licence fee for the BBC. This research shows that once households experience life without the BBC, the proportion of people who are willing to pay the full licence fee or more becomes much higher.

Living without the BBC for a period of time also challenged a number of common audience (mis)conceptions about the licence fee and the BBC:

1. The BBC only provides value to its heartland audiences
  - ➔ **A broad / balanced mix of age, socio-economic grades, ethnicity changed their attitude to paying the licence fee**
2. The licence fee is too expensive for what you get
  - ➔ **The weekly cost was seen as minimal after the nine days...particularly compared with other expenditure**
3. There are now lots of quality alternatives to the BBC
  - ➔ **Audiences often struggled to replace BBC content and services**
4. Audiences would not mind advertising on the BBC
  - ➔ **The disruption of advertising was a significant frustration**
5. The licence fee just pays for BBC TV
  - ➔ **Participating in the task raised awareness of the wider licence fee contribution to BBC Radio and BBC Online**

BEFORE: Common audience perception	AFTER: What this deprivation study has shown
<p>1. <b>The BBC only provides value to its heartland audiences</b></p>	<p>A broad mix of ages, socio-economic grades and ethnicity changed their attitude to paying the licence fee</p>
<p><b>Participant 2:</b> I feel that there shouldn't be a licence fee... because the amount of TV, we only watch a few hours ... (we have) Virgin already, on top of that we have to pay for the TV licence... I'm not getting value for money from the licence fee. <i>Pay Nothing, Young family, C2DE, Virgin, Edinburgh</i></p>	<p><b>Participant 1:</b> I just think the content is really good. I mean whether you are on the TV or online, everything is quite well produced. <b>Participant 2:</b> It's changed our views and made us realise it's not much we're paying – it's only 40 pence a day! And the whole family is watching it, and the whole family is taking advantage of BBC. <i>Pay Nothing became Pay the licence fee or more, Young family, C2DE, Virgin, Edinburgh</i></p>

BEFORE: Common audience perception	AFTER: What this deprivation study has shown
<p><b>2. The licence fee is too expensive for what you get</b></p>	<p>The weekly cost was seen as minimal after the nine days, particularly compared with other expenditure</p>
<p> I think it's awful because the way I look at it is that I pay for Sky already... I think it's unfair. Everybody is moving with the times, and the BBC still... expects us to pay £145, £149 yearly...for what?</p> <p><b>Pay Nothing</b>, Older family, C2DE, Sky, Bristol</p>	<p> That's for nine days? That's kind of cheap, isn't it? Surprisingly!... £3.60 for nine days? That's peanuts really. That's affordable... In all honesty we do get a wealth of good programmes. We might be selective in what we watch but it is an integral part of our everyday existence... It would be weird if there was no BBC channels.</p> <p><b>Pay Nothing became Pay the licence fee or more</b>, Older family, C2DE, Sky, Bristol</p>

BEFORE: Common audience perception	AFTER: What this deprivation study has shown
<p><b>3. There are now many quality alternatives to the BBC</b></p>	<p>Audiences often struggled to replace BBC content and services</p>
<p> Well, we'd rather not pay it obviously. I mean, look, really what it boils down to is the licence fee is for the BBC and we think that they're probably limited in what they produce... we don't think we're getting the value for money on what's being shown for the amount of money per year we're paying and what the BBC put forward.</p> <p><b>Pay Nothing</b>, Older couple, C2DE, Sky, Belfast</p>	<p> We just missed (it). Some of the quality on BBC is just that little bit better. Documentaries, nobody can do it like the BBC, there's no two ways about that. They're good at that... I just think it's better quality, better reporting, the whole. The BBC most definitely has a better quality programme when they do something... I don't honestly think that we found stuff that was better.</p> <p><b>Pay Nothing became Pay the licence fee or more</b>, Older couple, C2DE, Sky, Belfast</p>

BEFORE: Common audience perception	AFTER: What this deprivation study has shown
<p><b>4. Audiences would not mind advertising on the BBC</b></p>	<p>The disruption of advertising was a significant frustration</p>
<p> It's (paying the licence fee) just for (no) adverts and I like the adverts. It gives us the chance to make a cup of tea or go and sort the kids out. I don't mind the adverts. Why can't the BBC do that?</p> <p><b>Pay Less</b>, Young family, C2DE, Freeview, Newcastle</p>	<p> I also like it (BBC) because it doesn't have a break. It's continuous, without the adverts... I say I'd rather pay than have the adverts.</p> <p><b>Pay Less became Pay the licence fee or more</b>, Young family, C2DE, Freeview, Newcastle</p>

BEFORE: Common audience perception	AFTER: What this deprivation study has shown
<p><b>5. The licence fee just pays for BBC television</b></p>	<p>Participating in the task raised awareness of the wider licence fee contribution to BBC Radio and BBC Online</p>
<p> Alright, £12 is not a lot of money but it's not so great if I don't watch, what, only 30% of what's being shown on there...There's nothing currently on at the moment that I can think of that or even up and coming that makes me think 'Ooh I'll watch that'... It's a non-event BBC for me.</p> <p><b>Pay Nothing</b>, Single, ABC1, Freeview, Sheffield</p> <p> I think the only reason we have to pay a licence is because of BBC One and BBC Two because all the rest have adverts ... I don't know why people have to pay extortionate prices for two channels on the telly.</p> <p><b>Pay Nothing</b>, Single parent, C2DE, Freeview, Peterhead</p>	<p> It did feel a bit weird not having the BBC on... £2.80 (a week) doesn't get you a lot these days so to say it gets you all those channels, radio and online, it's not too bad, I suppose ... knowing more and realising more what it covers, part of me when we first started this was mainly thinking TV, it was all TV, so I was probably a lot more anti-BBC and anti-paying for the licence fee than I am now.</p> <p><b>Pay Nothing became Pay the licence fee or more</b>, Single, ABC1, Freeview, Sheffield</p> <p> I'm quite shocked by that. I didn't realise it worked out so cheap... the kids watch CBeebies, and things like that. So for their perspective, I'd have the BBC... I thought it was a waste of money... I'm quite surprised to see it's so cheap (for everything BBC includes).</p> <p><b>Pay Nothing became Pay the licence fee or more</b>, Single parent, C2DE, Freeview, Peterhead</p>

## 2 Introduction

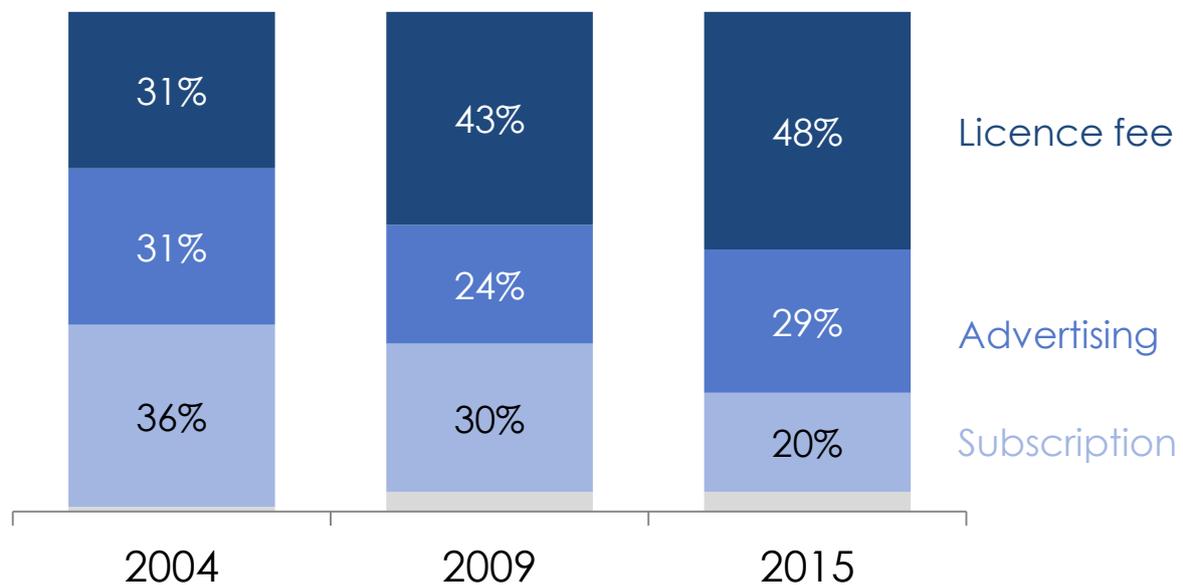
### 2.1 Background

The licence fee costs £145.50 per eligible UK household. For this, the BBC provides nine television services, ten national radio stations, 46 radio stations for the nations and regions of the UK, BBC Online, BBC iPlayer, BBC Red Button and the World Service.<sup>5</sup>

Across all these services, the BBC reaches 97% of UK adults each week. Each UK adult spends, on average, around 18 hours each week with the BBC,<sup>6</sup> and at a household level this increases to over 40 hours a week.

The time people spend with the BBC, coupled with their appreciation of the content, has meant that broad support for the BBC has risen in recent years. While no form of taxation is universally popular, there has been an increase in public backing for the licence fee as the means of funding the BBC over the last ten years, from 31 per cent in 2004 to 48 per cent in 2015.

Which of the following would you like to see as the main source of BBC funding?



2004: ICM, 1,037 UK adults 18+; 2009: ICM, 1,001 GB adults 18+; 2015: Ipsos MORI, 2,062 UK adults 15+. All telephone surveys except Ipsos MORI 2015, which was face-to-face

Furthermore, in surveys of willingness to pay for the BBC close to seven in ten of the public (69 per cent) say top-of-mind that, given the choice, they would be prepared to pay at least the

<sup>5</sup> Funds from the licence fee also go to: S4C, Local TV, BBC Monitoring, broadband infrastructure roll-out

<sup>6</sup> Cross-Media Insight Survey by GfK for the BBC, 6,000 UK adults per quarter, 2014/15

current level of the licence fee rather than see the BBC close.<sup>7</sup> However, looking at this from the opposite point of view, despite almost universal weekly reach and high time spent with the BBC per UK adult, 12 per cent of people answer that, if it were down to them, they would prefer to pay nothing and instead not receive BBC services and 16 per cent reply that they would only pay less than the current licence fee for the current BBC.

Scrutiny of the value of the licence fee is greater than ever, and there is debate about the role, scope and future of the corporation. The media landscape is also changing rapidly. This piece of research was designed to gain new insight into what value audiences place in the services and programming currently provided by the BBC, and to consider how households would find day-to-day life if they were unable to access BBC services. Given the number of other channels and services available, how distinctive would they find the BBC's content and how easily would those households be able to find suitable alternatives? What was the impact on their view of the value for money of the licence fee?

To understand this, different kinds of households each spent nine days without the BBC to see how they reacted without the range of services that the BBC provides in their everyday lives and received the equivalent of the licence fee cost for that period in return. While the great majority of UK adults say top-of-mind in surveys that they are content to pay the current licence fee in return for BBC services, to make this a harder test of the value, if any, of the BBC, the research focused more on the minority of households that say that, given the choice, they would forego the BBC so that they do not have to pay the licence fee and those that say the licence fee is too high.

The study took the form of a deprivation exercise because such studies help to understand the role, if any, that products and services play by removing them to explore the impact this has on people's daily lives. This research approach has been described as 'one of the most illuminating in the pantheon of qualitative brand research'<sup>8</sup> because, by taking something away, a unique understanding of its role and value, if any, can emerge.<sup>9</sup> A deprivation task was chosen for this study because the approach is especially effective at uncovering the underlying benefits or otherwise of products and services that consumers use habitually but often without consciously thinking about their value or importance.<sup>10</sup> Given its long-standing nature and high reach and usage, the BBC is potentially such an organisation where it can be difficult for people to assess what, if anything, it brings, and for the majority of people, they have never experienced life without it. To this end, a deprivation exercise allows us to understand any gap between what people think they get from the BBC and what they actually experience.

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<sup>7</sup> Ipsos MORI for the BBC, 1,001 UK adults 15+, 2014

<sup>8</sup> *Creating Passion Brands: How to Build Emotional Brand Connection with Customers* (Helen Edwards, Derek Day, 2007)

<sup>9</sup> *Waiting for the freak-out* (Bryan Urbick, 2009)

<sup>10</sup> *Consumer Insights 2.0: How Smart Companies Apply Customer Knowledge to the Bottom Line* (Dona Vitale, 2006)

Typically, deprivation exercises will deprive loyal users of a product to understand what they miss most about not having their favoured brand. However, in this research the focus was not only on a single product, but instead on all of the services (TV, radio, online) that the BBC offers. Also it was not concentrated solely on loyal users, but – given the unique nature of the licence fee – the participating households were reflective of all licence-fee paying UK households. Indeed, the sample was purposely skewed towards those households that said they were unwilling or less willing to pay the current level of the licence fee in order to understand where the BBC was providing value to these households and how it could be increased, if at all. To this end, this research included 70 households in total with a mix of attitudes towards paying the licence fee as follows:

- Households who, given the choice, would prefer to **pay nothing** for the licence fee and not receive the BBC
- Households who would only **pay less** than the current licence fee amount if they could for the current BBC
- Households who are willing to **pay the full licence fee or more**.

A sample of the above different household types spent a period of time without accessing any BBC services at all, and in return received the equivalent of the licence fee cost for the period they were without the BBC. This research aimed to understand better the amount and type of value that the BBC delivers to different kinds of UK households in return for the licence fee. This is particularly important given the habitual nature and different kinds of usage and needs fulfilled by TV, radio and online.

## 2.2 Objectives

The research sought to understand:

**Do households who, given the choice, say initially that they would...**

- prefer to **pay nothing** and not receive the BBC
- would only **pay less** than the current licence fee for the current BBC
- or who are willing to **pay the full licence fee or more**

**...still hold these views if they are unable to access any BBC services for a period of nine days and they are given the corresponding licence fee cost for this period? For any households that do conclude after time without the BBC that they would prefer to keep the BBC and pay the licence fee, what elements of the BBC offer are uniquely valued and lead them to feel that the fee is worth paying? And for those households that take the view that the licence fee is not worth the cost, how could what the BBC provides be improved to increase the value for money that they receive?**

## 2.3 Research sample and approach

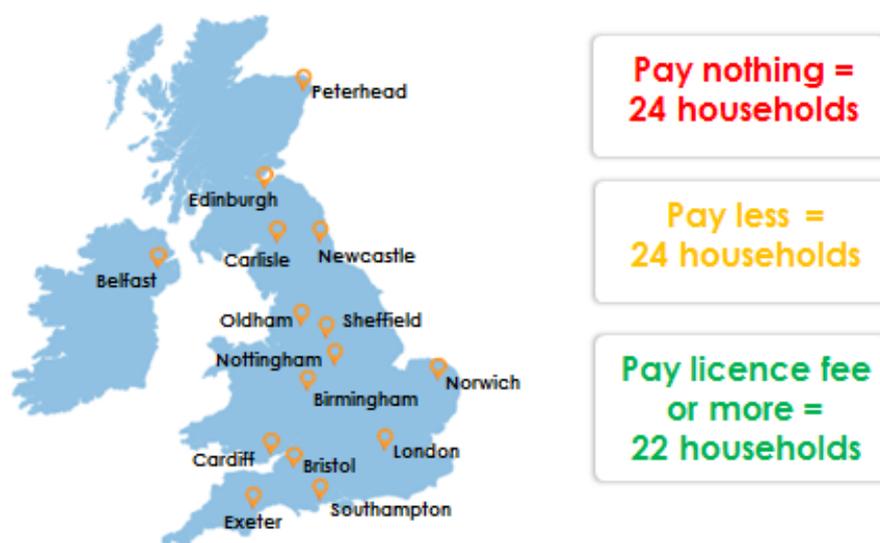
### 2.3.1 Sample

The research involved a strong qualitative sample of 70 households with 185 participants across these households.

As explained earlier, across the UK overall, when asked top-of-mind in surveys if, given the choice, they would continue to pay the current level of the licence fee in order to receive BBC services, the great majority of adults – 69% – say that they would **pay the full licence fee or more**, while close to 30% say they would not, comprising those who say initially they would prefer to **pay nothing** and not receive the BBC and those who initially say they would only **pay less** than the current licence fee for the current BBC.<sup>11</sup> However, the sample of 70 households in this research was more focused towards those who said that they were unwilling and less willing to pay the licence fee than occurs in the population overall so included:

- 24 households that initially said that, given the option, they would prefer to **pay nothing** and not receive the BBC – reflective of 12% of all UK households
- 24 households that originally said they would only **pay less** than the current licence fee for the current BBC – reflective of 16% of all UK households
- And 22 households that had said that they would **pay the full licence fee or more** – reflective of 69% of all UK households.

The overall sample was drawn from 15 locations across the UK:



<sup>11</sup> Don't know: 2%. Ipsos MORI for the BBC, 1,001 UK adults 15+, 2014

Prior to the deprivation study, a nationally representative survey of 1,001 adults by Ipsos MORI was conducted that asked the public about their willingness to pay for the BBC in order to establish the national profile of each of the **pay nothing**, **pay less** or **pay the full licence fee or more** household-types. During the deprivation research the same willingness to pay question was used to recruit the sample. Households had to be eligible to pay the licence fee i.e. had to watch or record TV programmes at the time that they are broadcast and have no residents aged 75 or over. The households were recruited to be reflective of the national profile of each of the **pay nothing**, **pay less** and **pay the full licence fee or more** households that were eligible to pay the licence fee, as per the Ipsos MORI poll. The sample framework was constructed to ensure that the **pay nothing** and **pay less** households matched the characteristics of these households at a national level and that the **pay the full licence fee or more** households were in line with the make-up of this household type nationally.

To this end, quotas were set across the following criteria per location to ensure that the subsamples reflected the UK profile for households of that type in terms of:

- Type and number of people within the household:
  - Singles, couples, shared households
  - Single-parent households
  - Young families (child or children under 16 in the household)
  - Older families (child or children over 16 in the household)
  - Older single people and couples
- Social grade: ABC1 and C2DE
- TV platform ownership: Pay TV (Sky, Virgin, BT, TalkTalk) and Free-To-Air TV (Freeview, Freesat)
- Overall opinion of the BBC: BBC general impression score out of ten (a mix of low (1-6) and high (7-10) scores), reflecting the UK profile of overall views of the BBC for households of that type.

Targets were also set across the sample to ensure a mix of: ethnic backgrounds; academic qualifications; home ownership (owned, local authority rented, private rented); household incomes; and BBC consumption levels.

Fieldwork started in July 2014 and concluded in April 2015. It was conducted over the course of five waves in order to mitigate the impact of seasonal differences in schedules:

- **Wave 1:** London, Sheffield, Cardiff (Saturday, 12<sup>th</sup> July 2014 – Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> July 2014)
- **Wave 2:** Norwich, Oldham, Belfast (Saturday, 1<sup>st</sup> November 2014 – Sunday, 9<sup>th</sup> November 2014)

- **Wave 3:** Southampton, Birmingham, Edinburgh (Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup> December 2014 – Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup> December 2014)
- **Wave 4:** Bristol, Nottingham, Newcastle, Peterhead (Saturday, 31<sup>st</sup> January 2015 – Sunday, 8<sup>th</sup> February 2015)
- **Wave 5:** Carlisle, Exeter (Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2015 – Sunday, 29<sup>th</sup> March 2015).

### 2.3.2 Approach

There were three strands to the research design:

- **Interview 1:** A face-to-face filmed interview of circa 90 minutes in length. Every household member was required to be present (including children, where relevant)
- **Deprivation exercise:** All household members were unable to access any BBC services, across platforms, for a nine-day period. The task occurred during a 'typical week' for their household (i.e. no holiday days / no people away from the home / no guests visiting, etc.) so that their experiences were a true reflection on their normal consumption behaviours
- **Interview 2:** A follow-up face-to-face interviews of circa 90 minutes in length with every member of the households in the week immediately after the deprivation exercise concluded. This was also filmed.

#### Interview 1

The first interview was to meet the individuals within the home and explore their media consumption across TV, radio and online (BBC and other providers), before setting them the deprivation task.

At this stage households did not know that they were going to be tasked to live without the range of BBC services for a period of nine days or that the research was on behalf of the BBC. All they knew was they would be asked, as a household, to try living without some media services for the purposes of study, but did not know what this would involve.

During this first interview the household members were asked about their television set-up within the home, including why they had Pay or Free-To-Air platforms and – where applicable – any services such as Netflix or Amazon Instant Video. Households were asked about any costs involved in their respective set-ups and how they felt about what they paid. This included the extent to which they felt that they received value for money for what they paid for; which providers they saw as value for money; and also how they felt about the licence fee within this.

Towards the end of the interview, once the full extent of the household's media consumption and content behaviours across TV, radio and online was established, they were then set the deprivation task of having to live without the BBC for a period of nine days.

## Deprivation exercise

The task lasted nine days beginning on a Saturday and finishing a week on Sunday later, so that it encompassed the five weekdays and two full weekends. All members of the household were unable to access any BBC services during this time period. This included television, radio and online services, on any devices, both in the home and outside the home (e.g. when commuting / at work / at other people's houses). When outside their home, respondents were asked to restrict BBC consumption as much as possible. This could involve them explaining to family, friends or work colleagues that they were taking part in a nine-day deprivation exercise and to ask them to switch off BBC services, where required.

All households were provided with various pieces of collateral to help them during the task period:

- **'No BBC' posters:** To put up around the house, containing a summary of the rules of the task and the BBC services, across platforms, that they were unable to access
- **'No BBC', 'No CBBC' and 'No CBeebies' stickers:** To stick on devices as a reminder not to access BBC services
- **Media diary:** A nine-day booklet for each household member to complete (adults and, where possible, children) daily. This included pages for participants to detail all of the TV, radio and online services they consumed each day during the task period. It also included pages for them to list and evaluate any 'replacements' for the BBC content and services that they would usually access (if any), as well as to highlight what, if anything, they had missed about the BBC each day
- **Portable video cameras:** To capture individual reactions during the nine days (with accompanying question sheet to assist with this process). Households were encouraged to film themselves with the portable camera provided at least three times during the nine days and for household members to interview each other twice (at the beginning and end) using a question sheet provided, to capture their in-the-moment impressions during the nine days
- **MTM moderator contact details:** In case of any questions.

In addition, MTM assisted the household with changing pre-set BBC stations on any radio devices and removing any BBC apps and website 'favourites' from internet-enabled devices. We also showed households how to lock BBC TV channels on their TV sets via Parental Controls so that they could not be viewed during the task.

During the nine days MTM had intermittent contact with the household via SMS / text message. This was to remind them that the task was about to start, check how they were finding it and to confirm when the task had ended, as well as answer any questions, as required.

## Interview 2

The MTM moderator returned to the household in the week immediately after the end of the task period for the follow-up interview. This focussed on how the participants had found the task, their experiences across the nine-day period and how they had found life without the range of BBC services. This interview was structured around the completed Media Diaries to ensure respondents were recounting their experiences accurately.

Towards the end of the interview the respondents were handed an envelope which contained the equivalent licence fee amount for the duration of the task period. This amounted to £3.60 (the licence fee equates to £2.80 per week or 40 pence per day hence this cost was 40p a day for nine days). Households were not informed what the envelope was for or what was in it, only to open it. Once they opened the envelope they were asked why they thought they had been given this amount. After spontaneous responses, it was explained how this equated to the licence fee amount for the task period. The household was then asked questions around how they felt about this amount and whether they would rather have had the money or whether they would rather have the BBC services they had been without for the nine days. Households retained this amount after opening the envelope. It was not related to the research incentive that each household received at the end of Interview 2.

This research approach was designed with the following considerations in mind to ensure that responses were as accurate and truthful as possible:

### A blind test

All households were recruited 'blind', so that they did not know which broadcaster was the focus of the research. It was important that households did not want to take part because they had a particular affection or grievance against one broadcaster or another.

This was achieved in the recruitment process whereby licence fee payers in the households were asked about their attitudes regarding 'willingness to pay' and 'preferred main source of funding' for multiple broadcasters (with the BBC mixed in with Sky and ITV). Responses to the question on willingness to pay for the BBC helped to ascertain which of the **pay nothing**, **pay less** or **pay the full licence fee or more** categories each household fitted into. The recruitment question used to determine willingness to pay for the BBC had previously been asked in a nationally representative survey of 1,001 adults by Ipsos MORI in order to establish the national profile of each of the **pay nothing**, **pay less** or **pay the full licence fee or more** household-types. The participating households per subsample were recruited to mirror proportionately the characteristics of that household type at the UK-wide level.

Households that agreed to take part in the research were not informed before interview that the task was related to BBC services. Instead they were told that they would be asked, as a

household, to live without the services (TV, radio, internet, mobile) of a selected broadcaster (e.g. BBC, Sky, ITV) for a period of time. It was only at the end of Interview 1 that it was revealed that they would be asked to live without the BBC for nine days. Individual households did not know which broadcasters the other participating households in the study were being asked to forego.

### Establishing trust and honesty with the household members

Engendering the 'buy-in' of the participants in the research was essential to ensure that they were all honest in their assessment of the BBC and licence fee before, during and after the deprivation task. In order to establish this all households were visited face-to-face to help develop a greater level of trust with their MTM moderator.

Whilst the importance of trying to adhere to the deprivation process was stressed, it was also explained that it was equally important to be completely honest about whether or not they were successful in doing so. Within the Media Diaries there was an 'Honesty Box' for each household member to detail each day whether they had 'broken' the task (see below):

mtm 15

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March: Summary**

How did you find having no BBC today? Circle a number below which indicates how easy or difficult you found it today

**DIFFICULT** **EASY**

|-----|

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Why do you say that? Is there anything you missed from the BBC? Is there anything that you didn't miss?

**Honesty Box**

Did you watch / listen / use anything from the BBC today (please tick)?  Yes  No

• If yes, what was it?

### Collecting 'in-the-moment' feedback from all of the different household members

It was necessary to capture 'in the moment' feedback to understand truly the extent, if any, of feelings and frustrations about life without the BBC. This was achieved via the Media Diaries and the self-filmed videos from the portable video cameras that were supplied to each household.

### 3 Life without the BBC: Before and After

This section looks at the results in detail from the 70 households involved in the deprivation exercise, setting out their views before and after the deprivation exercise and the reasons why their opinions did or did not change as a result of their time without the BBC. To this end, it will cover:

#### 3.1 BEFORE: views of the households before they spent nine days without the BBC

3.1.1 Attitudes towards the licence fee at the start of the research

3.1.2 Initial reactions to living without the BBC

#### 3.2 AFTER: views of the households having spent nine days without the BBC

3.2.1 **Pay nothing** and **pay less** households that became willing to **pay the full licence fee or more** – reasons why these households changed their minds

3.2.2 **Pay nothing** and **pay less** household that remained of the view that they would prefer to **pay nothing** or **pay less** – reasons why these households did not change their minds

3.2.3 **Pay the full licence fee or more**, still **pay the full licence fee or more** – reasons why households remained willing to pay, or became even more positive

3.2.4 **Pay the full licence fee or more**, now **pay less** – reasons why this household changed its mind.

#### 3.1 BEFORE: views of the households before they spent nine days without the BBC

##### 3.1.1 BEFORE: Attitudes towards the licence fee at the start of the research

This section examines the households' views of the licence fee at the start of the research and how this differed by household type.

Overall, before the task started, the perceived 'value' of the licence fee was predominantly driven by attitudes to television. So, in simple terms, if the household was satisfied with what they received from the BBC on TV then they would be more likely to be a **pay the full licence fee or more** household type. However, if the household was not satisfied with the BBC on TV they were more likely to fall into the **pay less** or **pay nothing** categories.

The sample for the research was purposely skewed towards those households that were initially unwilling or less willing to pay the current level of the licence fee. Among these households, there was mixed awareness and understanding of what the licence fee pays for. Most of these households recognised that the licence fee pays for BBC television, although some suggested

that it pays for TV in general, or that it was to pay for all of the terrestrial channels. There was less awareness among these households that the TV licence pays for BBC Radio and BBC Online services, perhaps owing to the name.

Looking at the reasons given by households in their first interview to explain why they preferred to **pay nothing**, **pay less** or **pay the full licence fee or more**, the amount of personal value that they perceived that they derived from the BBC was the main driver of their views. **Pay nothing** and **pay less** households (especially those of lower social grades, younger or BAME households) initially felt that they did not get enough personal value from the BBC to warrant the current level of the licence fee, whereas **pay the full licence fee or more** households thought that they did consume enough to justify the cost. A secondary frustration for some **pay nothing** and **pay less** households was the obligatory nature of the payment system. And issues of affordability were cited by those households in harder financial circumstances.

Before they undertook the deprivation exercise and spent nine days without the BBC, attitudes expressed towards paying the licence fee could be categorised as follows by household type:

- The **pay nothing** households did not initially feel that they used BBC services, so did not want to pay anything towards it. These audiences felt that the BBC did not have much content aimed at them. They also generally had the lowest awareness of the range of BBC services and what the licence fee paid for. Prior to the deprivation exercise, they felt that the BBC did not offer content that was particularly distinctive and that they could get similar or better content elsewhere. Some of these households also objected to the licence fee on principle and did not favour the obligatory nature of it. A minority of the **pay nothing** sample also referenced affordability as a factor for not wanting to pay the licence fee at the first interview. In summary, **pay nothing** household did not feel initially that they received enough personal value from the BBC to justify paying the licence fee at all
- The **pay less** households had BBC content rituals, which meant that they valued certain programmes or services from the BBC. However, they felt initially that the BBC was a small part of their overall media consumption so wanted to pay less. If these households also had pay TV this was compound because of the greater choice available to them and they did not want to pay what they saw as 'extra' for the BBC 'on top' of paying for Sky or Virgin, for example. Free-To-Air households also believed that they had paid for the technology (i.e. set-top box) and disliked further ongoing payments in the form of the licence fee, especially if they felt they were not using BBC services frequently. There was also some frustration at the obligatory nature of the payment as well as perceptions around what they saw as BBC 'wastage' of the licence fee. Whilst affordability was less of an issue than for **pay nothing** households, this was still raised by the minority of **pay less** households that said they struggled financially. Overall, **pay less** households valued the content they did use from the BBC, but also felt that they were also paying for content that they were not using and so while they were willing to pay for the BBC, they felt in their first interview that the current level of the licence fee was too high

- The **pay the full licence fee or more** households (representing the biggest grouping UK-wide) recognised that they consumed a considerable amount from the BBC, across platforms, and therefore felt that they were getting value for money. For these households, the educational value of the BBC was particularly important (especially for children). They were also more comfortable with the concept of the licence fee, citing its longevity, and regarded the BBC as a British institution. However, these households could be the most perturbed about any perceived BBC 'waste' as they appreciate the BBC the most. Ultimately, **pay the full licence fee or more** households felt that the BBC was worth what they were paying, with some even saying that they would be prepared to pay more because of the extent that they valued it.

### 3.1.2 BEFORE: Initial reactions to living without the BBC

Towards the end of the first interview the details of the deprivation exercise were made known to participating households, namely that they would be spending nine days without accessing the BBC services. Their reactions were very revealing, in terms of how they felt initially the exercise would impact upon them as a household.

At first **pay nothing** households thought that going without the BBC for nine days would be "easy" and were relieved that they did not have to forego without another broadcaster. The **pay less** households were more mixed in their responses about having to live without the BBC for nine days, with some feeling that it would be achievable, but other raising some concerns. The **pay the full licence fee or more** households were the most shocked, as they realised that the deprivation task would have a huge impact on their daily routines owing to their high levels of BBC consumption.



I'd like to say it's going to be easy... it's a non-event BBC for me... I can live without it I think.

**Pay Nothing**, Younger single person household, ABC1, Freeview, Sheffield

My initial thought is – it's a doddle!

**Pay Nothing**, Young family, C2DE, Sky, London

I think it will be quite easy for me – I don't really like the BBC anyway! I don't think it will be a challenge really.

**Pay Nothing**, Young family, C2DE, Virgin, Edinburgh,

I think the BBC is good (to go without)... if you had said ITV or Channel 4 or Channel 5, I think that would have been really, really hard!

**Pay Nothing**, Older family, C2DE, Sky, Bristol

If you were going to say Sky I was going to cry. No channel E!

**Pay Less**, Younger couple, C2DE, Sky, London

Oh! That's easily done! I know I'll miss EastEnders... I am saying it will be quite easy but it wouldn't!

**Pay Less**, Older single person household, C2DE, Sky, Oldham

There's actually a lot more than you realise, isn't there?... I think it's going to be quite hard actually.

**Pay Less**, Young family, ABC1, Virgin, Edinburgh

Oh God! No BBC? That's going to take some doing, isn't it!

**Pay Less**, Older single person household, C2DE, Virgin, Sheffield

Oh no! No BBC Radio stations! I think it's going to be difficult.

**Pay licence fee or more**, younger single person household, ABC1, Freeview, Edinburgh

It's going to be like... not reaching for that biscuit; you automatically do, without thinking.

**Pay licence fee or more**, Older couple, C2DE, Freesat, Sheffield

(Participant 1) ITV... Gosh that is a real, that's a big ask for me

(Participant 2) I think that's a big ask for all of us.

**Pay licence fee or more**, Young family, ABC1, Freesat, Virgin

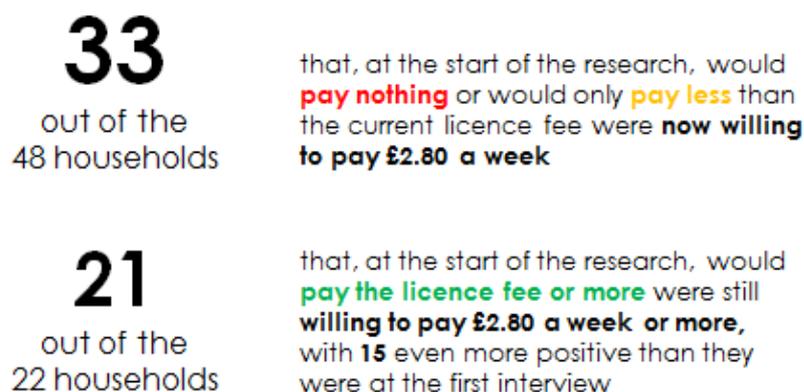
Oh gosh! That will be difficult! I think it will be quite hard actually because...we start with the BBC. It will be like 'Oh God, we can't watch that!'

**Pay licence fee or more**, Young family, ABC1, Virgin, Nottingham

### 3.2 AFTER: Views of the households having spent nine days without the BBC

All households were visited in the week immediately after their deprivation task concluded. Towards the end of the interview the licence fee amount was introduced (see earlier) and households were asked how they now felt about the licence fee having had to live without the BBC for a period of nine days.

How many of the 70 households changed their minds about paying £2.80 a week for the BBC?



In terms of the households that originally said that they would **Pay nothing** or **Pay less**, those that changed their mind regarding their willingness to pay for the licence fee were as follows:

- **Pay nothing** households
  - 15 out of 24 were now willing to pay the full licence fee
  - 9 out of 24 were still unwilling to pay for the full licence fee
- **Pay less** households
  - 18 out of 24 were now willing to pay the full licence fee
  - 6 out of 24 still wanted to pay less than the current licence fee amount.

The breakdown of the **Pay the full licence fee or more** households was:

- 21 out of 22 households were still willing to pay the full licence fee or more
- One out of 22 households was now unwilling to pay for the licence fee in full though they were willing to pay a smaller amount. This household were part of the deprivation exercise in July and freely admitted that at another time of year, they might have remained willing to pay the full amount.

### 3.2.1 Pay nothing and pay less households now willing to pay the full licence fee or more

Of the 48 **pay nothing** and **pay less** households, the 33 homes that changed their mind included a wide range of these household types. They were:

- **A mix of lifestages:** including the full spectrum of single-person households / house shares (5 out of 7), young couples (2 out of 4), single parents (3 out of 5), young families (7 out of 11), older families (4 out of 4) and older couples (12 out of 17)
- **Both ABC1 (x 13) and lower C2DE (x 20)** socio-economic groups
- **More likely to have Pay TV (22 out of 30) than be Free-To-Air households (11 out of 18):** these households are keener on TV as they are willing to pay for TV generally
- **A mix of households with and without extra TV services** such as Netflix
- **More likely to have a lower general impression of the BBC beforehand:** with more room to manoeuvre positively, they were surprised at how much they did value the BBC (21 out of 25 households who scored the BBC 1-6 out of 10, versus 12 out of 23 who scored the BBC between 7-10 at the recruitment stage (scale: 1 = extremely unfavourable; 10 = extremely favourable))
- **Ethnic minority households:** 7 out of 10 BAME households changed their mind
- **Across Nations and English regions:** including Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland
- **A mix of household income types:** including those describing themselves as 'comfortable' (13 out of 19) and 'coping or struggling' (20 out of 29).

The households that became willing to pay for the licence fee as a result of the deprivation task expressed surprise at how much they had missed BBC content and services during the task period – and that they were glad to have these back:



At the beginning I think I felt rather cocky about it and thought this is going to be a breeze... but I was going through the TV guide and I saw things I wouldn't mind watching... so in a way I think that says a lot about missing the BBC!

**Pay Nothing**, younger single person household, ABC1, Freeview, Sheffield

A lot more difficult than I expected. Far, far more difficult. I realised that there were certain programmes that I always watch... and just wasn't able to, and I hadn't thought about that at all. I thought it was going to be easy

**Pay Nothing**, Older couple, ABC1, Sky, Norwich

I actually found it a bit difficult, I always found myself going in the mornings for BBC News and the Red Button services as well. I didn't actually realise I used it as much (as I do)

**Pay Less**, Young family, C2DE, Freeview, Belfast

It was harder than I thought it would be, definitely... (it makes) you think of the quality, It made you think about that more than anything

**Pay Less**, Young family, ABC1, Virgin, Southampton

There were a number of reasons for why these households changed their minds and decided that they were now willing to pay the licence fee:

- a) **Underestimated the volume of BBC consumption in their daily routine and became more aware of the unique BBC content and services not available elsewhere**
- b) **Realised that the BBC provides a high level of quality in its content**
- c) **Missed being able to consume content without advertising**
- d) **The realisation of value for money for what the BBC provides**

Taking each of these reasons in turn:

**a) Underestimated the volume of BBC consumption in their daily routine and became more aware of the unique BBC content and services not available elsewhere**

The households that changed their minds to become willing to **pay the full licence fee or more** missed the BBC in their daily routines and realised that the BBC does have unique content and services that they cannot get elsewhere. They often underestimated how much BBC content they consumed across platforms and, when forced to watch / listen / use alternatives, realised that they preferred the BBC equivalents.

## TV

There was consistency in the types of TV that households missed across the waves. The content most often referenced included:



NB: the poppy icon refers to the BBC's Remembrance Sunday coverage

### Quality of national and local news and current affairs

These households realised that they really valued the BBC's news coverage, becoming frustrated with not being able to access it and disliking the alternatives. They also cited what they perceived as a more formal and "factual" approach to news by the BBC, which they preferred, given the often serious nature of the subject matter:



The news, the local news... we watched ITV news instead in the mornings, which I didn't like. I didn't think it was as good as the BBC news and the local news... there was too many presenters... it was more entertainment... and it was annoying because it was always laughter and yes that's good and everything, change it up in the mornings but it went on too long. With BBC you're just getting the facts direct, straight to it, you know.

**Pay Less**, Young family, ABC1, Virgin, Edinburgh

I lost track of the news due to all the commercial breaks (on ITV)... I feel with the BBC that they are professionals; they know what they're talking about.

**Pay Nothing**, Older couple, ABC1, Freeview, London

In addition, these households disliked advertising interrupting news reports and felt that the lack of adverts on the BBC allowed for more thorough news reporting. The deprivation study particularly affected 'news routines' across the day, meaning that participants could not watch broadcasts such as BBC Breakfast and the BBC News at six o'clock. This was most keenly felt by older audiences. Households also missed the local BBC News for their part of the UK, which they felt went into greater detail and was more insightful than the alternatives. Additionally, households struggled to replace current affairs programming such as Question Time and Panorama, with respondents suggesting that they could not find what they regarded as comparable alternatives on other channels.

### Quality of sports coverage

Across this research project, households were unable to access sports content such as the football World Cup final and could not watch regular sports content such as Football Focus and Match of the Day. The households that changed their minds really struggled with not being able to watch Premier League highlights on Match of the Day, particularly those without access to sports packages on Pay TV services. This programme is also often part of a weekend ritual and the disruption was particularly frustrating. Also sports fans (often, but not exclusively, males) were upset at not being able to watch some of the BBC's live coverage of major sporting tournaments. In the example of the World Cup final 2014, where audiences had to watch this on ITV instead, all commented that they would have preferred to watch it on the BBC owing to what they saw as the more "professional" and uninterrupted coverage. Thus, even where there was a direct and credible alternative on ITV, the BBC's approach was missed:



I really missed the World Cup coverage. I would have preferred to watch that on the BBC... I find that BBC Sport coverage, and particularly the football is a lot better than the majority. I've seen Sky Sports and that's good but the BBC is the best for sports.

**Pay Nothing**, Young single-person household, ABC1, Freeview, Sheffield

Quality of coverage... you notice the difference, like when you watch the football on ITV, it's not as good... Their commentaries are rubbish compared to the BBC... the people presenting aren't as good.

**Pay Less**, Young family, ABC1, Virgin, Southampton

### Every day and returning entertainment

The households that changed their minds missed regular and recurring entertaining TV content. They had not realised until the deprivation exercise how much these programmes provided pillars in their daily lives. This included daily midweek programmes such as EastEnders, The One Show and also daytime quiz content such as Eggheads and Pointless. They had underestimated how fixed these shows were in their weekday routines and the role that they played in their lives:



Pointless will dominate my existence! The two commentators, the presenters are quite funny... we'll go back (to watch it), we missed it.

**Pay Less**, Older family, C2DE, Freeview, Southampton

The temptation was there for EastEnders because it is something I watch every time it's on... I missed the storyline; I know that it's coming to a climax.

**Pay Nothing**, Single parent, C2DE, Freeview, Nottingham

Similarly, when audiences could not watch their regular weekend entertainment programming such as The Graham Norton Show, Doctor Who, The Voice, Strictly Come Dancing and Countryfile they struggled to find alternatives on the other channels that were as appealing or that performed the same role. Households missed the talent, the format and the production values of these BBC shows. The inability to watch such weekend content was frustrating as it disrupted their usual weekend patterns and the alternatives were not seen to be such high quality. They also missed being part of the conversation that high-profile entertainment shows could generate:



They weren't as good, not as many as good (as the) sort of content the BBC has. What I missed, of course, were things like The Voice... the big programmes that they've got on the BBC, like Graham Norton.

**Pay Less**, Student house-share, ABC1, Freeview, Newcastle

On a Saturday night... the BBC always has a bit of an edge, better presenters, better celebrities, better set-ups... it's as if they get the first choice of the best programmes.

**Pay Less**, Post Family, C2DE, Sky, Newcastle

Likewise, returning series such as *The Apprentice*, *Citizen Khan* and *Masterchef* were staples in their TV diet and they missed the continuity in their lives of being able to watch these. These programmes were also ones that their social networks talked about so they felt like they were missing out as they could be part of such conversations.

The inability of young families to access CBBC and CBeebies made some households realise how much they relied on these channels and the value of the content on them. This affected family routines, such as the CBeebies Bedtime Hour. Frequently, these audiences suggested that the alternatives on other channels were not, in their opinion, of the same educational standard as the content on the BBC and that the commercial alternatives offered less variety than the BBC options or were too 'loud' for certain times of day. Households also became frustrated at the volume of advertising on commercial children's channels:



She really missed CBeebies. We kind of appreciate CBeebies because there are no adverts for toys, especially Christmas time because she sees everything and she wants it, you know the way they advertise everything.

**Pay Less**, Young family, C2DE, Freeview, Belfast

(Participant 1) On actual TV, kids programmes are actually the best on BBC... there's more variety on CBBC. You get different programmes.

(Participant 2) We were just getting sick of the same thing. You get more variety on CBeebies, or I feel you do you do, compared to Nick Junior, where it actually literally is Ben and Holly, Peppa Pig, Wonder Pets... it feels like that's kind of all that's on there.

**Pay Less**, Young family, ABC1, Virgin, Southampton

### New content on BBC

Households that changed their minds were particularly annoyed that they could not watch high quality new drama (e.g. *Wolf Hall*, *The Missing* and *The Honourable Woman*). They enjoyed these dramas on the BBC owing to the high production values, talent and lack of adverts. Drama (especially among older audiences) was seen as a strength of the BBC's content offer and something that can produce a word-of-mouth effect whereby they want to tell other people about such shows because they enjoy them so much:



The big (BBC) dramas and things that everyone seems to be watching you can feel a bit out of the loop if you've not watched, or can't join in the conversation.

**Pay Nothing**, Young single-person household, ABC1, Virgin, Oldham

I missed episodes from some of the (BBC) dramas... BBC come up with good dramas, BBC Two as well as (BBC) One, you're like 'Oh, what's this little gem?', and you grow with it and say to people, 'Oh, have you watched this?' ... and the word gets around.

**Pay Less**, Older couple, C2DE, Sky, Newcastle

### Unique to the BBC

The **pay nothing** and **pay less** households that became willing to **pay the full licence fee or more** after the deprivation task often commented that, contrary to what they had previously suggested at the first interview, the BBC did have unique content and services. Red Button was cited for the depth and detail it offered for local news and information. Additionally, households noted how the BBC is unique in its delivery and coverage of major events of national significance such as Remembrance Sunday, the Royal Family and charitable events such as Children In Need. Households also referenced David Attenborough's wildlife documentaries as being something they strongly associate with the BBC:



I found it really difficult (being without the BBC). I would have liked to have watched the Royal British Legion Remembrance... it is a very professional programme, the way they put it together, the way they produce it and show it.

**Pay Nothing**, Older couple, ABC1, Sky, Norwich

The Life Story series on BBC is particularly good, and we missed that... the quality of it is superb, you know, and it's a really good programme... I watched the Great Fire and it was replacing Life Story, It was alright, but I would rather have watched Life Story. ITV never do a thing like that as well as the BBC, no they don't, and if there's a Royal occasion or anything there's nobody does it quite like the BBC.

**Pay Nothing**, Older couple, C2DE, Sky, Belfast

### Radio

The households that changed their minds often also found BBC Radio hard to replace. They were especially frustrated at the high volume of advertising on commercial stations.

As the BBC station with the highest reach, the most missed BBC Radio station was **Radio 2**. In particular this was missed by older, regular listeners and those with long car journeys. These audiences admitted that they underappreciated the quality of the station's talent, in particular during commuting hours. They missed their regular shows, the music mix within them and the features and familiarity of the voices on air. Despite trying numerous alternatives, audiences felt that they were unable to find content of the quality they enjoyed on Radio 2:



In particular, for the radio because I listen to Radio 2 every day, which I tried a couple of alternatives for, but nah, it wasn't very good. I prefer Chris Evans in the morning and the discussions at midday with Jeremy Vine. And we listen to Steve Wright... I do listen to the radio quite a lot and that was the worst part for me.

**Pay Nothing**, Couple, C2DE, Sky, Cardiff

**Radio 4** was especially difficult for audiences who listened to this to replace, in particular the 'Today' programme. These respondents cited a lack of credible commercial speech radio alternatives, to the extent where they no longer listened to talk radio during the task period:



Excruciating! I really missed Radio 4. I really missed Radio 4. I missed the news, I missed the Today programme. Proper interviews with proper people.

*Pay Nothing, Older couple, ABC1, Sky, Southampton*

**BBC Radio 5live** could be replaced to a certain extent by TalkSPORT for sports news and information, but audiences still missed 5live's tone of news and sports coverage. As a substitute, TalkSPORT was not felt by these households to deliver the same calibre of discussion, debate and insight:



You don't realise how bad some of the other stations are. There's one that's supposed to be the equivalent to Radio 5live called TalkSPORT, and they talked the biggest load of nonsense that I've ever heard... it really is bad. TalkSPORT was a very poor substitute for 5live. The presenters were speaking rubbish.

*Pay Nothing, Older couple, ABC1, Freeview, London*

**BBC Local Radio** (relevant to their area) was also missed owing to the mix of localised news, weather, traffic and sport live commentaries. Often audiences relied on this information to plan their days / journeys and without it were forced to seek other methods of finding this, which they found difficult to do – especially to the level of detail (and reliability) that the BBC Local Radio station provided them with:



The other one I missed was I would normally listen to the local football team, the Radio Norfolk commentary when they're away from home.

*Pay Nothing, Older couple, ABC1, Sky, Norwich*

**BBC Asian Network** was missed by some of the BAME households because they enjoyed the mix of music and news from Asian communities without interruptions. Typically, they had to go online to replace this (news especially):



BBC Asian Network I couldn't listen to, because it's BBC again... what's happening in Pakistan... it seemed like I wasn't part of it.

*Pay Nothing, Young single person household, ABC1, Virgin, Birmingham*

Finally, the younger audiences who missed **BBC Radio 1** did so because of specific DJs they tune in for as well as the ability to hear the latest music and new music not confined to the charts. Also audiences commented how they relied on the station to create or fit their mood at certain times of the day or week, for example getting ready for a night out on a weekend. The younger audiences replaced Radio 1 with commercial alternatives, their own music system or by using streaming services or YouTube. Although they were more accepting of the commercials, they

still valued the advert-free nature of Radio 1 and missed the ability to have a single station that they did not have to keep re-tuning when adverts came on:



Yeah, I prefer the presenters (on Radio 1). Capital was just... daft, silly, the music is really pop and charty with Capital. Daft, it plays daft games. With Radio 1, I really think it's the best radio channel... they always look for facts that you might not know and that hidden gem type thing.

*Pay Less, Student house-share, ABC1, Freeview, Newcastle*

## Online

Households found online sources easier to replace than TV or radio. That is not to say that BBC online services were not missed, but, because there are a plethora of online alternatives on offer, audiences were typically able to find substitutes for their regular (BBC) online activities.

The main reasons audiences missed the BBC's online services were reliability and trustworthiness. Households often mentioned how they may use a myriad of sources online but that they use BBC Online to check, double check or compare, particularly news and sport information.

The kinds of BBC websites and apps that were most commonly used by households before the task started were mainly practical / functional ones, which audiences turn to because they have faith in the reliability of the information within them. Thus, although audiences found alternatives, they were not always fully satisfied with them or felt that they could trust what they were reading, whereas they (more often) would with the BBC versions.

### BBC iPlayer

Households missed the convenience of being able to catch up on BBC content that they had missed just before the deprivation task had started. Also, they missed being able to watch content on a mobile device whilst other members of their household were watching something on the main television set in the home. It was particularly felt amongst audiences who did not have PVR technology in the household:



I missed the iPlayer... on Sunday morning he plays football, and I would always watch The Voice – when it's on obviously. I always watch that on the iPlayer if I was at work on the Saturday previous, so I really missed that.

*Pay Less, Young family, C2DE, Freeview, Newcastle*

The BBC is quite good with the online presence, the way the online is laid out, and the iPlayer is very easy. You can download things very easily. And the amount you can download on the iPlayer then in, like, comparison to Channel 4 or ITV is a lot because they seem to want to restrict the content that you want to download, whereas the BBC has most of it available.

*Pay Nothing, Young family, C2DE, Virgin, Edinburgh*

### BBC News and BBC Sport (website and app)

The task disrupted weekday and weekend routines for news and sport. For example, sports fans missed their morning check of BBC Sport's Gossip Column or the headlines from BBC News. Although this kind of information can be found elsewhere (e.g. via Sky News) audiences are familiar with – and value – the presentation and style of the BBC versions and prefer the absence of adverts. In some cases, households also suggested that the BBC versions had more depth or breadth to them than the commercial alternatives:



The Sky Sports app, I had to use that, it wasn't anywhere as good for, like, football and that... just didn't have as much information, and it just wasn't laid out the same... It wasn't that I wasn't used to the layout and stuff. There just wasn't as much there. It just was nowhere as near as good (as BBC Sport app).

**Pay Less**, Young family, ABC1, Virgin, Southampton

BBC News app, I think it's a brilliant thing, you get the notification... it makes you want to go into it and it's good that you're kept up-to-date... I didn't realise I liked it that much. I underappreciated it.

**Pay Less**, Student house-share, ABC1, Freeview, Newcastle

### Other BBC Online services

The inability to access the BBC as a (reliable) online destination for practical, reliable information – without cost at the point of use – frustrated households. Other services mentioned included the CBeebies app and BBC Weather:



I missed the easy layout of the BBC Weather website and that you can save the location.

**Pay Nothing**, Older couple, ABC1, Freeview, London

He's been back on the (Cbeebies) app this morning as soon as he realised he could – he went straight back on it! I do not think he can do without his app. He has struggled without it.

**Pay Nothing**, Single parent, C2DE, Freeview, Nottingham

## b) Realised that the BBC provides a high level of quality in its content

The **pay nothing** and **pay less** households that changed their minds and became willing to **pay the full licence fee or more** after the deprivation task overall felt the BBC was of a higher quality than competitors. This was particularly the case for the areas highlighted above such as national and local news and current affairs, as well as sport, every day/returning entertainment, drama and children's content. It was also mentioned by those who listened to BBC Radio, especially in relation to the presenters' talent. The trustworthiness, reliability and style of BBC Online and BBC apps were also regarded features of quality. Overall, the quality continually referred to was the

BBC's presentation and delivery of content across platforms, such as the tone (e.g. news), educational value (e.g. children's content) and production values (e.g. BBC dramas):



It changed my view because it (the BBC) definitely is good. Well, I just thought everything was the same but they definitely are good at what they do.

**Pay Nothing**, Couple, ABC1, Sky, Belfast

You are going to get really good quality for whatever you watch. There aren't a lot of programmes on the BBC that I would say are rubbish.

**Pay Less**, Young family, C2DE, Virgin, Edinburgh

### c) Missed being able to consume content without advertising

Across these households who changed their minds, there was a consistent theme regarding their frustration at the inclusion and volume of advertising on non-BBC services: In particular, these audiences were frustrated by advertising during news and also sports content on television, which they felt interrupted the flow of the coverage or analysis, as well as the volume and type of adverts during children's programming on non-BBC channels. Being exposed to what they perceived as continuous advertising during radio programming was also a frustration for households who listened to BBC Radio services before the task started. A minority also found advertising on other broadcaster catch-up services frustrating:



The adverts put me off. Your viewing was always interrupted. It's constant bombardment with toys, I find.

**Pay Less**, Young family, C2DE, Freeview, Belfast

On the iPlayer I actually prefer it because when you're catching up you don't really want to watch the adverts.

**Pay Nothing**, Couple, C2DE, Sky, Cardiff

The adverts on TalkSPORT are very annoying, and you just have to wait to follow another discussion.

**Pay Nothing**, Young family, C2DE, Virgin, Edinburgh

### d) The realisation of value for money for what the BBC provides

For the **pay nothing** and **pay less** households that changed their minds there was a realisation that the licence fee provided better value for money than they had previously thought. In particular, this was heightened when they considered what the BBC provides for the cost of the licence fee for the time they had been without its services (£3.60 for the nine days, which was handed to the households in the return interview after the task). They were surprised by the daily

(40p) and weekly (£2.80) cost and felt that the BBC content and services that they had missed was worth this amount of money.

A majority of **pay nothing** and **pay less** households across of all levels of financial security – from those that described themselves as 'struggling'/'coping' to 'comfortable' – changed their minds towards paying the full licence fee (20 out of 29 who referred to themselves as 'struggling' or 'coping', and 13 out of 19 who said they were 'comfortable'). After nine days without the BBC, such households described the current cost of the licence fee as low– referring to the price as 'peanuts', 'nothing', 'not a lot' and comparing it with what they would pay for 'a cup of coffee', 'a bus fare' and 'what I would probably waste on a sandwich'. Where they had pay TV packages, they now felt that the licence fee compared favourably with the cost of the subscriptions they paid.

The households that changed their minds included a mix of those who said at the first interview that they felt the BBC should keep the licence fee or be funded by advertising and those who felt that the BBC could employ a subscription-type approach. With regards to the latter, households did not necessarily talk in terms of subscription but instead used phrases such as 'you should pay £2.50 every time you use it' or 'I think it should be an optional thing if you want BBC'. When they held in their hands the equivalent amount of money for nine days of the BBC, households expressed surprise at the cost and felt they would rather pay this (small) sum to have access to all the BBC's services (instead of only specific paid-for ones), or pay the sum instead of seeing the BBC take advertising:



It's quite cheap when you work it out like that. I mean, 40p a day is nothing really, isn't it? I'm quite shocked by that.

**Pay Nothing**, Single Parent, C2DE, Freeview, Peterhead

As a household, that would be £1.20 each, that is absolutely nothing... for 9 days of the BBC, with everything that you get from it. That's like a pint of beer.

**Pay Less**, Student house-share, ABC1, Freeview, Newcastle

### *Breaking the deprivation task*

Some households 'broke' the task deliberately because they really wanted to watch (or in one case, listen to) certain BBC content. The task was broken for:

- BBC News – for coverage of the Malaysia Airlines MH370 plane crash
- 6 Nations rugby union tournament
- Match of the Day
- Strictly Come Dancing
- The Missing

- The BAFTAs
- BBC Radio 5live – football commentary

In summary, overleaf is a selection of **pay nothing** and **pay less** households who changed their minds and became they willing to **pay the full licence fee or more**, setting out their views on the BBC and the licence fee **before** the research and then **after** they had spent nine days without the BBC.

Originally <b>pay nothing</b> or <b>pay less</b> , now willing to <b>pay the full licence fee or more</b>		
HOUSEHOLD	BEFORE	AFTER
<p><b>Pay Nothing</b></p> <p>Couple, C2DE, Sky, Cardiff</p>	<p>“ (Participant 1) I could manage without it...there's not that much I would miss on BBC.</p>	<p>“ (Participant 1) It was a lot harder than I thought it would be... I didn't realise I'd miss it quite as much as I did.</p> <p>“ (Participant 2) I missed Masterchef, that happened to be the final, Cabbie Abroad... Radio-wise was an absolute nightmare... so (the licence fee) that's roughly £12 a month and we pay £70-odd for Sky... It's a bit of a shock, to be honest, when you look at it like that.</p>
<p><b>Pay Nothing</b></p> <p>Single Parent, C2DE, Freeview, Peterhead</p>	<p>“ It's too expensive. You know, especially for, I know there is ways of paying it, but when you're on benefits you know you've got to prioritise... it's extortionate.</p>	<p>“ I think I'd rather pay it, yeah, seeing how cheap it is weekly. Because like I said, the ballpark figure is quite a lot of money to come up with when you've got a family, but weekly, £2.80 a week is nothing really, is it?</p>
<p><b>Pay Less</b></p> <p>Young couple, C2DE, Freeview, Norwich</p>	<p>“ I just think it's an extortionate amount of money a year when millions of people are paying it, for when you already pay an extortionate amount of money for electricity and rent.</p>	<p>“ I'd definitely rather have BBC on and pay the money... I think that maybe all those programmes I'd be like 'Oh, I'm missing out on that, I'm missing out on that'. Over the course of the year, that's a lot of programmes I'd be missing out on.</p>
<p><b>Pay Less</b></p> <p>Young family, ABC1, Virgin, Edinburgh</p>	<p>“ I'd rather pay less than the current amount, I think. For what you are paying you would expect not so much repeated programmes. We definitely have to budget it for it. It's not like that money can get taken out the bank and we wouldn't miss it.</p>	<p>“ I wouldn't like to live without it. There is too much I think I would miss... I always think I'm going to get quality from the BBC... (In first interview) I said I would pay a bit less. But I think now, realising what I missed, I am actually quite happy with the amount I pay for what I get... I do appreciate it more.</p>
<p><b>Pay Less</b></p> <p>Young family, C2DE, Freeview, Newcastle</p>	<p>“ (Participant 1) Nearly everybody pays a TV licence... so why can't they put it down a bit? I think it should be less.</p> <p>“ (Participant 2) I hate it. I hate paying for it. I absolutely hate it! We're on a budget.</p>	<p>“ (Participant 1) I would normally watch EastEnders every day and I missed that every single night... I was disappointed I was missing the Final Score... If they were taken away I'd be devastated... It doesn't sound that much (the licence fee). I'd rather have it (the BBC). I'd definitely rather have it.</p> <p>“ (Participant 2) I think the same. I would rather pay for it.</p>

### 3.2.2 Pay nothing and pay less households that did not change their minds

There were nine **pay nothing** and six **pay less** households – 15 in total out of 48 – that did not change their minds about the BBC and paying the current level of the licence fee. These households felt the same at the second interview as they had done at the first interview before the deprivation task had commenced. For these households, the deprivation exercise reinforced their views regarding the (limited) volume of BBC that they use because they had not missed sufficiently having access to BBC content and services across the nine days. Therefore they still felt that they did not want to pay for the licence fee or that they still wanted to pay less than the current amount. There was no 'movement' with these households, i.e. these nine **pay nothing** households still said that they wanted to not pay at all and these six **pay less** households still felt that they wanted to pay less.

As with the households that *did* change their mind about the licence fee as result of the deprivation exercise, the households that did not also included a mix of lifestage, social grade, TV set-up, attitudes towards the BBC, ethnicity, locations and income types:

- **A mix of lifestages:** including single-person households/house-shares (2 out of 7), young couples (2 out of 4), single parents (2 out of 5), young families (4 out of 11), and older couples (5 out of 17). All four of the older family households did change their minds. Overall this suggests that lifestage is not a factor behind attitudes
- **Both ABC1 (x 5) and lower C2DE (x 10) socio-economic groups** (NB: the C2DE figure is higher because reflecting the national profile, there was a higher proportion of C2DE households in the **pay nothing** and **pay less** samples (30 C2DE households overall compared with 18 ABC1 households)
- **A mix of Pay TV (8 out of 30) and Free-To-Air (7 out of 18) households**
- **More likely to have a higher general impression of the BBC beforehand:** only four out of 25 households that scored the BBC 1-6 out of ten, versus 11 out of 23 who scored the BBC between 7-10 at the recruitment stage. As outlined below, these households with a higher general impression do value at least some BBC services, but they still would prefer to pay nothing or pay less for them because they do not get enough overall personal value
- **Ethnic minority households:** only 3 out of 10 BAME households did not change their mind
- **A mix of household income types:** including those describing themselves as 'comfortable' (6 out of 19) or 'struggling' / 'coping' (9 out of 29).

Households that did not change their minds and decided that they still wanted to pay nothing or pay less than the current licence fee attributed this primarily to the fact that they felt they received **low personal value**. A smaller number also cited issues of **affordability** and, as a secondary factor, **the obligatory nature of the licence fee**.

### a) Low personal value

The predominant reason for the households not changing their minds was personal value – or the perceived lack of it – that they were getting from the BBC. Of the 15 households, 12 felt that they were not getting enough value from the BBC for what they were paying for. Seven of these households fell into the **pay nothing** category and five into the **pay less** category.

Among the **pay nothing** households, they felt that there were alternative products and services available that are equally good as the BBC equivalents and, because these do not cost them anything, felt that paying for the BBC was unnecessary. Whilst these households acknowledged that there was some BBC content and / or services that they used and valued, they did not feel that there was enough for them to justify the licence fee cost:



I've only really missed EastEnders, to be honest... There's all them channels but I don't use all them channels... If I used it all the time, it probably would be worth it but because I don't use it all the time, I don't think it is.

**Pay Nothing**, Single Parent, C2DE, Freeview, Sheffield

Participant 1) There are just a few things on there that we like to watch  
 (Participant 2) It's not really a lot of money, for all the hours that they put into the shows, but other channels are for free  
 (Participant 1) So just to watch two programmes a week, is it worth £2.80 a week when we pay £70 for all the other Virgin channels? No, it's not worth it, when you look at it like that.

**Pay Nothing**, Young couple, C2DE, Virgin, Nottingham

Regarding the **pay less** households, where they held the same views as they had at the first interview, they felt it was fair to pay for the content that they do enjoy across the BBC (and missed) but that they should not be paying as much as the current licence fee because they did not use all of the BBC's services:



What I would say is yes, BBC has good content... I just don't find the value for it. I don't watch enough of it.

**Pay Less**, Singles/house-share, ABC1, Freeview, Bristol

I would come back to what I said in the first (interview) whereby I would prefer to pay less for it... It would be a shame to lose it so I would rather pay something towards it... I would prefer to pay less because there's not a lot I use if for.

**Pay Less**, young single-person household, ABC1, Sky, Carlisle

There were some commonalities in the types of TV, radio and online content and services that the households that did not change their minds suggested were viable alternatives to the BBC.

### TV

Among the Free-To-Air households that did not change their minds, typically they preferred the style and tone of ITV (or STV / UTV) content to the BBC, which they felt was more informal. The

Pay TV homes and those with services such as Netflix that did not change their opinion talked about the variety of choice they had from their respective providers and so did not feel like they needed the BBC as much (especially as they did not feel they consumed much BBC content). These households tended to prefer or use competitor services to the BBC already. So as an example, they would watch ITV News or Sky News, instead of the BBC. This meant that the deprivation task had less impact on their news viewing behaviours as they continued to watch the news coverage that they would normally watch. This was true for sports coverage, especially amongst Sky Sports subscribers. Regarding children's content, these households were less concerned with the volume of commercials on non-BBC content. They also did not feel that the educational value of CITV or Milkshake on Channel 5 was any better or worse than on CBBC or CBeebies, so were content with their children watching programmes on these channels (or via pay TV channels, DVDs or YouTube):



(To go without) ITV would have been worse, much worse. It would have been awful. It really would have been bad... we would have missed our soaps, Emmerdale, Coronation Street, X Factor...

**Pay Nothing**, Young family, C2DE, Freeview, Belfast

## Radio

These households did not listen to much (or any) BBC Radio before the research started so its loss for nine days was minimal. There was some BBC radio listening in evidence, such as Radio 1, 1Xtra, Radio 2 and Radio 3, but generally these households typically preferred commercial stations, or in the case of some younger audiences, online services such as YouTube for their music activity. These households liked the talent, music mix, competitions and discussions on commercial radio stations and the advertising did not concern them:



I listen to Kiss, Capital, Heart ... you know some of those people who are avid, like 'I only listen to Kiss', I flip between them all!

**Pay Less**, Young couple, C2DE, Sky, London

## Online

Similar to radio, these households talked less about using BBC Online services at the first interview. Their online activity involved little, or no, BBC sources so they did not miss what they do not use. Sky News and Sky Sports websites and apps were often used for news and sport respectively, as well as services such as Yahoo! and MSN. For practical information such as weather, these audiences were using various apps and websites, so did not feel like they relied on the BBC for such information:



The Sky News app has good videos that you can watch so you don't have to read the whole news story.

*Pay Less, Young family, ABC1, Sky, Sheffield*

## b) Affordability

The remaining three households, out of the 15 that did not change their minds, cited affordability as the main reason that they held the same views as they did before the deprivation exercise. Although affordability was the predominant driver for these three homes, this is naturally and intrinsically linked to personal value as well. These households also felt that they were not getting the value out of the licence fee because they were not using the BBC services or preferred alternatives from competitors, which enhanced the sense that it was something that they felt they could not afford.

Of these three households, two were **pay nothing** (1 x single parent, 1 x young family) and one was **pay less** (1 x older single). All three referenced the benefits of a cost saving to the household and other things that they could spend the licence fee on or that they would prefer to spend the money on. On a cost-benefit analysis, the **pay nothing** homes felt that they did not use the BBC enough to justify paying this amount, whereas the **pay less** household felt that she was 'paying twice' as she already paid for Sky and, as also someone living on her own, the figure should be lower:



There's not that much to watch and I don't use it all the time anyway... I would rather have the money... because... it will build up, wouldn't it?

*Pay Nothing, Single parent, C2DE, Freeview, Sheffield*

I think it should be less than that... my views are still the same. I think it should be cheaper.

*Pay Less, Older single-person household, C2DE, Sky, Oldham*

## c) The obligatory nature of the licence fee

A secondary reason for many of the households that retained the same view as they did at the first interview was the obligatory nature of the licence fee. Nine out of the 15 homes made some reference to this at the second interview. They commented how they begrudged paying for a service that they feel they do not use enough or is seen to be forced on themselves and other people to pay. A mix of lifestages held this view including two couples, two young families, a single-parent home and four older households.



It's like with anything in life, you don't want it to be forced upon you... You should have a choice

*Pay Less, Young couple, C2DE, Sky, London*

We don't have to pay for any of the others, do we really? And they get a lot of money off the government as well so I don't think that we should have to pay

*Pay Nothing, Young family, C2DE, Freeview, Carlisle*

In summary, below is a selection of **pay nothing** and **pay less** household who held the same views both before and after the task.

Originally <b>pay nothing</b> , remained <b>pay nothing</b>		
HOUSEHOLD	BEFORE	AFTER
<p><b>Pay Nothing</b></p> <p>Older couple, C2DE, Freeview, Edinburgh</p>	<p>“ I don't believe in it... Honestly, I don't think you get any value for it</p>	<p>“ I found it (the task) very easy... I didn't really miss anything at all... I don't agree with the licence fee</p>
Originally <b>pay less</b> , remained <b>pay less</b>		
HOUSEHOLD	BEFORE	AFTER
<p><b>Pay Less</b></p> <p>Young family, C2DE, Freeview, Sheffield</p>	<p>“ You have to pay for the BBC, it's only for BBC. It's ridiculous</p>	<p>“ It's only EastEnders we've watched maybe two days a week and listened to Radio 1 maybe for five minutes, three mornings a week, so is it really worth paying for that?</p>

### 3.2.3 Pay the full licence fee or more households that remained willing to pay

The deprivation task was especially tough for almost all the sample of **pay the full licence fee or more** homes, who represent the great majority of households across the UK overall (69%). Of the 22 households involved in the research, 21 were still willing to pay after nine days without the BBC and 15 of these said that they were even more positive than they had previously been as a result of taking part in the study because they had missed the BBC so much. The households that were still willing to pay, or pay more, missed the BBC content and services that they had expected to, but also found that they relied on and used the BBC even more than they had thought at the first interview. These households still wanted to **pay the full licence fee or more** as they felt the BBC delivers **high personal value** to them as a household. The deprivation exercise strengthened their **quality perceptions** of the BBC as they rejected the alternatives that they were exposed to as a result of the task. It **dramatically impacted on their routines** because they consume a lot of BBC content across platforms in their daily lives and particularly **disliked the volume of advertising** across platforms. These households already valued the BBC (at the first interview) because they recognised that they used and enjoyed BBC services frequently, and the task heightened their perceptions of **value for money** in terms of what they received from the BBC for the licence fee amount paid:



I bet you I'm just as well informed as anyone else at work about what's happening today by listening to Radio 4, and I get it for 40pence a day! Plus I get all the rest of the radio stuff, plus I get TV, plus I get online, and my daughter gets Bitesize, for 40 pence!  
*Pay licence fee or more, Young family, ABC1, Virgin, Norwich*

They often described BBC content as generally being of a better quality or more intellectual. Thus, when experiencing a taster of a life without the BBC, the vast majority did not enjoy it:



I really missed Radio 1, and I really missed the quality of BBC – certain channels, and the habit of it. I really missed not being able to use it... After watching ITV all week I just needed to get something more intellectual. The BBC presenters are just better, the quality of the shows on radio and TV are better. It's a different calibre.  
*Pay licence fee or more, Young family, C2DE, Freeview, Bristol*

## TV

These households value greatly the BBC's news, which all felt was of a higher quality than alternatives. Similarly, they were frustrated at not being able to watch the BBC's sports content, specifically Match of the Day, and felt that – other than those who had Sky Sports – the BBC's coverage was unmatched elsewhere.



The news. As soon as I go downstairs, the (BBC) news will be on. If I am working at home, the news will be on in the background. It constantly updates, so you get familiar with that programme and the content and the stories. I just missed that, I just can't seem to deal with Sky News at all – because you watch it and it just repeats itself.

**Pay licence fee or more**, Young family, ABC1, Virgin, Nottingham

It (BBC News) comes across more of an adult version... I take more of it in, especially compared to the ITV one.

**Pay licence fee or more**, Young family, C2DE, Freeview, Bristol

Match of the Day, they're experts. They do a lot more in-depth commentary, looking at tactics and other things. No other sports channel does that really.

**Pay licence fee or more**, Young family, C2DE, Freeview, Birmingham

These households missed regular and returning programmes like The Apprentice and Strictly Come Dancing and the ability to watch BBC dramas. As with the **pay nothing** and **pay less** households who changed their minds, drama was perceived as a BBC strength owing to the high production values, talent and lack of adverts:



I love the BBC One dramas... The Fall, to think that that was made here and it's been such a big success nationwide... it just shows BBC is diversifying as well, which is great to see.

**Pay licence fee or more**, Young single-person household, ABC1, Freeview, Belfast

Young families missed CBBC and CBeebies and the impact this had on their routines with their children. The children themselves missed the content and the familiarity with the channels and programmes. Their parents were frustrated by the perceived lack of educational content in commercial programming and it made them realise how educational the BBC's children's programmes can be:



We broke the rules once. She really wasn't feeling well and wanted CBeebies so I let her watch it until she fell asleep on the sofa, it was just for an hour.

**Pay licence fee or more**, Young family, C2DE, Freeview, Cardiff

CBeebies is very educational... all of ours have learnt an awful lot from CBeebies haven't they?... All those sorts of programmes are brilliant but they're learning at the same time as enjoying the programme.

**Pay licence fee or more**, Young family, ABC1, Sky, Norwich

Older family households did not like the quiz show alternatives on other channels and preferred shows such as Pointless and Eggheads:



In the afternoons I've always watched bits and pieces, Eggheads and Pointless and things like that... I watched some of the other quizzes on the other channels, but they haven't got me.

*Pay licence fee or more, Older couple, ABC1, Virgin, London*

Indeed, five households actually broke the task because they insisted that they had to watch certain BBC content. This was for CBeebies, quoted above, plus Strictly Come Dancing as well as the Remembrance Sunday coverage.

## Radio

Radio was especially missed by these households. As BBC Radio advocates, they really struggled without Radio 2, Radio 4 and Radio 1 as they became increasingly frustrated by the volume of advertising on commercial stations and what they perceived to be the repetitive nature of the content, which meant that they felt the need to re-tune their station frequently. They missed the music-based stations for the same reasons as highlighted earlier with the **pay nothing** and **pay less** households that changed their minds: the presenters, the music mix, the features and the advert-free continuity. With regards to Radio 4, these households struggled to find any commercial talk radio alternative with a comparable mix of content and depth of analysis:



I mean in terms of format, news, documentaries, discussions, dramas, there is nothing else out there, you know to compare to BBC Radio 4. I looked on radio listings and under the format it was just music, music, music, sport, music... There was just nothing else out there to replace it, like-for-like. There wasn't a commercial channel that had documentaries or dramas, so the radio was an absolute nightmare for me.

*Pay licence fee or more, Older couple, ABC1, Virgin, Norwich*

I hated it. I was really irritated, like, without having Radio 1 in my life... I just came to a point where I just stopped wanting to listen to radio because it wasn't giving me what I wanted.

*Pay licence fee or more, Young single-person household, ABC1, Freeview, Edinburgh*

## Online

These households also missed having access to BBC News and BBC Sport content online. As indicated previously, this was owing to their reliability and trustworthiness. Households also missed the flexibility of BBC iPlayer in their daily lives:



The websites I had to use instead weren't as good, so like I used Sky Sports to check on the football and stuff and it wasn't instant and as easy to get the information I wanted as I wanted it to be.

*Pay licence fee or more, Young family, ABC1, Sky, Norwich*

Normally I use the Met Office quite a lot, but I go on the BBC to get a second opinion. Whereas I was using Google to get a second opinion this week, and I just don't think it's that reliable. There's just a trust in the BBC.

*Pay licence fee or more, Young single-person household, ABC1, Freeview, Edinburgh*

In summary, below is a selection of the 'before' and 'after' views of **pay the full licence fee or more** households who remained willing to **pay the licence fee or more** after nine days without the BBC, with some even willing to pay more than they had suggested during the first interview.

Originally <b>pay the full licence fee or more</b> , remained <b>pay the full licence fee or more</b>		
HOUSEHOLD	BEFORE	AFTER
<p><b>Pay licence fee or more</b></p> <p>Older couple, C2DE, Freesat, Sheffield</p>	<p>“ We don't want to see the BBC change. It's unique in the world. So if you're paying that money to keep that going – that's fine. It progresses and leads the way, and it doesn't charge any more, which is very unusual.</p>	<p>“ No other company could provide anywhere near that for that amount of money. It's ludicrous, isn't it?... I would be expecting to pay more than that really for what we get.</p>
<p><b>Pay licence fee or more</b></p> <p>Young family, ABC1, Virgin, Norwich</p>	<p>“ I actually don't mind paying the licence fee. I really, really, really am a huge supporter of the BBC... My feeling is that BBC produces world class telly.</p>	<p>“ The TV, I did find it quite a pain to be honest. I really enjoy a lot of BBC dramas, documentaries, the news... I found myself thinking, 'No I can't be bothered to watch anything'... I would be more than happy to pay considerably more and I think this experience has reinforced that view.</p>
<p><b>Pay licence fee or more</b></p> <p>Young single-person household, ABC1, Freeview, Edinburgh</p>	<p>“ It's affordable; it's definitely an affordable price.</p>	<p>“ I would pay more now than I probably would have said that I would have at the start. Because I just don't think I realised how much it would affect me, and how much it did. Everything else is such a hassle, and BBC is so easy... I've realised ... the affect it has on my lifestyle and who I am... I'd definitely be willing to pay more.</p>
<p><b>Pay licence fee or more</b></p> <p>Young single-person household, ABC1, Freeview, Belfast</p>	<p>“ It's something I've always paid. When you're used to paying for something, you don't question it the same.</p>	<p>“ I'm more aware of what I'm getting for it. I'm getting so much, getting so many great dramas, great news and this experiment has showed me how much I watch it. I would rather pay £15 a month for the BBC than pay £20 for the basic package with Sky.</p>
<p><b>Pay licence fee or more</b></p> <p>Young family, ABC1, Sky, Norwich</p>	<p>“ You've got the local radio... the BBC Three, BBC Four, iPlayer - you get a lot more than just the TV channels for your licence fee.</p>	<p>“ I wouldn't want to live without the BBC channels and I'm happy to keep paying the TV licence, and slightly more if that came to it for what we get from the BBC.</p>
<p><b>Pay licence fee or more</b></p> <p>Older couple, ABC1, Sky, Oldham</p>	<p>“ I think it's worth it ... you still get a lot of good programmes and they have got to be paid for.</p>	<p>“ It's like everything, isn't it – you don't know what you're missing until it's gone.</p>

### 3.2.4 Pay the full licence fee or more household that changed its mind

In Wave 1 there was one household that changed their mind at the second interview and following the deprivation exercise decided that they wanted to **pay less** than the licence fee, having previously been willing to **pay the full licence fee or more**:



It's kind of made us realise that we don't watch that much TV, we're not that dependent on it.

**Pay licence fee or more**, Young family, ABC1, Sky, London

This was a young family, with busy parents who commented that the task had made them realise that they do not consume much TV at all, including the BBC. The time of year was a critical factor in their decision to change their mind. They took part in the research in July 2014, during a particularly hot period, which meant that this young family were often outside the home and so not consuming as much as they normally would across platforms in the week of the task. Although they recognised the educational value for their children of CBBC and CBeebies, they also felt there were alternatives as they had access to children's channels on their pay TV platform. And given their limited consumption during the time of the exercise, they did not feel they received full value from the current level of the licence fee. However, they admitted freely that the warm weather had impacted their behaviour during the task and that at another time of year when they were using more media, their opinion could have been different.

HOUSEHOLD	BEFORE	AFTER
<p><b>Pay licence fee or more</b></p> <p>Young family, ABC1, Sky, London</p>	<p> I've always loved any show that's on BBC because you know you haven't got the faff of waiting for an advert.</p>	<p> I do think it's a seasonal thing, and we were also talking about the programmes that we usually watch on BBC, they are usually easy watching and they are on in the winter. So again, if it was winter there would be some programmes that we would really miss.</p>

## 4 Life without the BBC: The BBC in society

The nature of this research asking audiences to think about their media consumption behaviours and the deprivation task itself, which, for many, resulted in living without BBC services for the first time in their lives, meant that households also thought more broadly about the BBC. In particular, households raised how they felt that the BBC is more than just about a provider of content across platforms, but that it also plays a significant historical role in UK society. There were several themes around this topic, as follows:

- **A trusted source with a global reputation:** particularly for news, audiences are proud of the global presence, reputation and prestige of the BBC abroad:



The BBC News is good. Just things like the correspondents, they're good. Maybe cause they're the BBC. You look at them and go 'That's the BBC news. It's well, you know, world-famous'.

**Pay Nothing**, Young family, C2DE, Sky, London

I just find the BBC to be a bit more, I don't know, I trust their story more. You get a lot of different news channels like American ones saying different things and stuff and so I would tend to go with the BBC

**Pay Less**, Young single-person household, C2DE, Southampton

BBC News is probably the most trusted news service in the world.

**Pay Less**, Students/house-share, ABC1, Freeview, Newcastle

- **A part of British culture / heritage:** the original broadcaster, something that audiences have grown up, that is part of the fabric of their life and other people's lives within the UK:



I think it's a service which we take for granted... we've not really known life without it... it's a bit of an institution that we've grown up with and it's a part of British culture. I wouldn't want to see it go.

**Pay Less**, Couple, ABC1, Sky, Cardiff

For me probably the BBC represents home, you know. It represents BBC Northern Ireland

**Pay Less**, Young family, C2DE, Freeview, Belfast

It's an institution. It does make you feel British.

**Pay Less**, Older couple, ABC1, Sky, Edinburgh

The BBC plays a big part in the UK. I think it represent who the British people are because it has that whole circumference of options to choose from... It offers something for everybody, to appeal to 'every British citizen', and everyone who is involved in it.

**Pay licence fee or more**, Young single-person household, ABC1, Freeview, Edinburgh

- **A leader in Royal, historical and events of national significance:** best placed to cover historical events such as Remembrance Sunday and the World War 1 centenary as well as Royal occasions; the national reach and scale to deliver high-impact charity work such as Red Nose Day and Children In Need:



What I like about it is Children In Need. I like to watch Children In Need when it's on... I like how they raise the money to help the children and there's so many poor kids out there that needs the money and that's why I am so amazed by it.

*Pay Less, Older single-person household, C2DE, Sky, Oldham*

I knew it was Remembrance Weekend and I always watch it. I think it's brilliant and this year's was really good. And let's have it straight, no one does it like the BBC, the (tone of) voice, everything is just absolutely superb.

*Pay licence fee or more, Older couple, ABC1, Sky, Oldham*

- **Creates a 'national conversation':** including 'appointment to view' television moments like EastEnders or Strictly Come Dancing but also advert-free sporting events such as the World Cup final and important news stories.



They do do good coverage when they do things like that... it's like watching a sporting event – you're there, with the BBC, you're *there*. You've not got an advert to break it up or anything. You are actually there. You are seeing it as it's happening.

*Pay licence fee or more, Young family, C2DE, Virgin, Oldham*

Yeah, it was hard (missing EastEnders)... because they are kind of building up about the death of Lucy Beale. Everyone is talking about it and watching and you can't.

*Pay Nothing, Older family, C2DE, Sky, Bristol*

For example the start of the week, with everything that was going in Sydney and stuff like that, for news like that I would go on BBC News websites because it updates so quickly... the BBC News website. Although it has local and British news, it offers worldwide news, so it offers something for everybody

*Pay licence fee or more, Young family, C2DE, Virgin, Oldham*

The deprivation exercise made households of all types consider what else the BBC does – and has done historically – via the fact that they were not able to access it for a period of nine days. Audiences had not really considered this wider societal impact of a life without the BBC before and, although this was not a primary driver for households being willing to pay the licence fee, it still played a significant role. Households preferred to have the above perceived benefits that the BBC brings as opposed to being without them.

## 5 Life without the BBC: Conclusions

The results of the deprivation exercise showed that:

- **33 out of the 48 households** that said at the start of the research that they would **pay nothing** or would prefer to **pay less** than the current licence fee for the current BBC **were now willing to pay £2.80 a week**
- **21 out of the 22 households** that said at the start of the research that they would **pay the full licence fee or more** were **still willing to pay £2.80 a week or more, with 15 even more positive than previously.**

A larger number of households that previously had been unwilling or less willing to pay changed their minds about the licence fee because they underestimated what they get and therefore what they value from the BBC, which they only came to realise once all BBC content and services were taken away from them.

Households who became or were still willing to **pay the full licence fee or more** value the BBC as:

- **More prominent / important in their lives than they previously thought**
- **Providing unique, quality and trustworthy content across platforms / genres**
- **Good value for money (£2.80 a week, 40 pence a day)**
- **Advertisement-free**
- **Playing an important role in UK life and the national conversation.**

However, the smaller number of households that still wish to **pay nothing**, or **pay less** primarily see the BBC as an **unnecessary expense for the (limited) volume they consume**. With 12 out of these 15 households citing personal value as the main reason for being unwilling to pay, this could be addressed through more relevant content from the BBC for these households to improve their value perceptions. Given that the BBC has a weekly reach of 97%, even those who remain unwilling to pay are still using the BBC to some degree every week so there are opportunities to build on what they consume already and increase the value that the BBC delivers to them.

That said, more than two in three of the households in this study who had at first been unwilling to pay the licence fee at the current level, if at all, chose to keep the BBC services rather than having the licence fee back. And of those households who were initially content to pay, all but one remained willing to pay, with two-thirds feeling even more positive after nine days without the BBC. This experiment into the realities of life without the BBC would indicate that people's initial view of their willingness to pay for the BBC is most often likely to be an underestimation. Directionally, it is clear that having spent time without the BBC greatly reduces – by about two-thirds – the proportion of households that think the licence fee is poor value for money. When asked in surveys seven in ten adults say, top-of-mind, that they are content to pay the current level of the licence fee for the BBC. This research shows that once households experience life

without the BBC, the proportion of people who are willing to pay the full licence fee or more becomes much higher.

Living without the BBC for a period of time also challenged a number of common audience (mis)conceptions about the licence fee and the BBC:

1. The BBC only provides value to its heartland audiences
  - ➔ **A broad / balanced mix of age, socio-economic grades, ethnicity changed their attitude to paying the licence fee**
2. The licence fee is too expensive for what you get
  - ➔ **The weekly cost was seen as minimal after the nine days...particularly compared with other expenditure**
3. There are now lots of quality alternatives to the BBC
  - ➔ **Audiences often struggled to replace BBC content and services**
4. Audiences would not mind advertising on the BBC
  - ➔ **The disruption of advertising was a significant frustration**
5. The licence fee just pays for BBC TV
  - ➔ **Participating in the task raised awareness of the wider licence fee contribution to BBC Radio and BBC Online**

BEFORE: Common audience perception	AFTER: What this deprivation study has shown
<p>1. <b>The BBC only provides value to its heartland audiences</b></p>	<p>A broad mix of ages, socio-economic grades and ethnicity changed their attitude to paying the licence fee</p>
<p> <b>Participant 2:</b> I feel that there shouldn't be a licence fee... because the amount of TV, we only watch a few hours ... (we have) Virgin already, on top of that we have to pay for the TV licence... I'm not getting value for money from the licence fee.</p> <p><b>Pay Nothing</b>, Young family, C2DE, Virgin, Edinburgh</p>	<p> <b>Participant 1:</b> I just think the content is really good. I mean whether you are on the TV or online, everything is quite well produced.</p> <p><b>Participant 2:</b> It's changed our views and made us realise it's not much we're paying – it's only 40 pence a day! And the whole family is watching it, and the whole family is taking advantage of BBC.</p> <p><b>Pay Nothing became Pay the licence fee or more</b>, Young family, C2DE, Virgin, Edinburgh</p>

BEFORE: Common audience perception	AFTER: What this deprivation study has shown
<p><b>2. The licence fee is too expensive for what you get</b></p>	<p>The weekly cost was seen as minimal after the nine days, particularly compared with other expenditure</p>
<p> I think it's awful because the way I look at it is that I pay for Sky already... I think it's unfair. Everybody is moving with the times, and the BBC still... expects us to pay £145, £149 yearly...for what?</p> <p><b>Pay Nothing</b>, Older family, C2DE, Sky, Bristol</p>	<p> That's for nine days? That's kind of cheap, isn't it? Surprisingly!... £3.60 for nine days? That's peanuts really. That's affordable... In all honesty we do get a wealth of good programmes. We might be selective in what we watch but it is an integral part of our everyday existence... It would be weird if there was no BBC channels.</p> <p><b>Pay Nothing became Pay the licence fee or more</b>, Older family, C2DE, Sky, Bristol</p>

BEFORE: Common audience perception	AFTER: What this deprivation study has shown
<p><b>3. There are now many quality alternatives to the BBC</b></p>	<p>Audiences often struggled to replace BBC content and services</p>
<p> Well, we'd rather not pay it obviously. I mean, look, really what it boils down to is the licence fee is for the BBC and we think that they're probably limited in what they produce... we don't think we're getting the value for money on what's being shown for the amount of money per year we're paying and what the BBC put forward.</p> <p><b>Pay Nothing</b>, Older couple, C2DE, Sky, Belfast</p>	<p> We just missed (it). Some of the quality on BBC is just that little bit better. Documentaries, nobody can do it like the BBC, there's no two ways about that. They're good at that... I just think it's better quality, better reporting, the whole. The BBC most definitely has a better quality programme when they do something... I don't honestly think that we found stuff that was better.</p> <p><b>Pay Nothing became Pay the licence fee or more</b>, Older couple, C2DE, Sky, Belfast</p>

BEFORE: Common audience perception	AFTER: What this deprivation study has shown
<p><b>4. Audiences would not mind advertising on the BBC</b></p>	<p>The disruption of advertising was a significant frustration</p>
<p> It's (paying the licence fee) just for (no) adverts and I like the adverts. It gives us the chance to make a cup of tea or go and sort the kids out. I don't mind the adverts. Why can't the BBC do that?</p> <p><b>Pay Less</b>, Young family, C2DE, Freeview, Newcastle</p>	<p> I also like it (BBC) because it doesn't have a break. It's continuous, without the adverts... I say I'd rather pay than have the adverts.</p> <p><b>Pay Less became Pay the licence fee or more</b>, Young family, C2DE, Freeview, Newcastle</p>

BEFORE: Common audience perception	AFTER: What this deprivation study has shown
<p><b>5. The licence fee just pays for BBC television</b></p>	<p>Participating in the task raised awareness of the wider licence fee contribution to BBC Radio and BBC Online</p>
<p> Alright, £12 is not a lot of money but it's not so great if I don't watch, what, only 30% of what's being shown on there...There's nothing currently on at the moment that I can think of that or even up and coming that makes me think 'Ooh I'll watch that'... It's a non-event BBC for me.</p> <p><b>Pay Nothing</b>, Single, ABC1, Freeview, Sheffield</p> <p> I think the only reason we have to pay a licence is because of BBC One and BBC Two because all the rest have adverts ... I don't know why people have to pay extortionate prices for two channels on the telly.</p> <p><b>Pay Nothing</b>, Single parent, C2DE, Freeview, Peterhead</p>	<p> It did feel a bit weird not having the BBC on... £2.80 (a week) doesn't get you a lot these days so to say it gets you all those channels, radio and online, it's not too bad, I suppose ... knowing more and realising more what it covers, part of me when we first started this was mainly thinking TV, it was all TV, so I was probably a lot more anti-BBC and anti-paying for the licence fee than I am now.</p> <p><b>Pay Nothing became Pay the licence fee or more</b>, Single, ABC1, Freeview, Sheffield</p> <p> I'm quite shocked by that. I didn't realise it worked out so cheap... the kids watch CBeebies, and things like that. So for their perspective, I'd have the BBC... I thought it was a waste of money... I'm quite surprised to see it's so cheap (for everything BBC includes).</p> <p><b>Pay Nothing became Pay the licence fee or more</b>, Single parent, C2DE, Freeview, Peterhead</p>

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