

Andrew Bridgen MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Lord Hall of Birkenhead CBE
Director-General of the BBC
Broadcasting House,
Portland Place,
London
W1A 1AA

08 February 2019

Dear Lord Hall,

I am writing regarding the public consultation into what should the BBC do when the UK Government funding of licence fees for over-75 households comes to an end.

You will no doubt recall that when the current BBC charter was negotiated in 2015, the agreement for the BBC to take on the funding for over-75 households was based on the BBC receiving several concessions such as linking the annual licence fee to inflation if the “purposes and scope of the BBC” remain the same, legislation to be introduced within a year to modernise the licence fee and close a loophole covering catch-up TV (which was introduced in September 2016), and to end the BBC’s commitment to fund superfast broadband around the country by 2020 which would have cost the BBC £80m in 2018. My proposal to decriminalise non-payment of the TV licence in 2015 also failed to make it into legislation despite having widespread cross-party support.

I would remind you that dozens of people, many of whom are women are going to prison for non-payment. As if this is not bad enough, to potentially add people in their 80s and 90s bring prosecuted and going to prison for not being able to afford a TV licence is to my mind, unacceptable.

Using the BBC’s own numbers, if the over 75s concessionary licence is scrapped, this will take an average of **over £22,000 a week out of the pockets of over 75’s in every MP’s constituency**. Age UK have also warned that scrapping the concession would push 50,000 over 75’s into relative poverty.

Member of Parliament for North West Leicestershire

Tel: 01530 41 77 36

Email: andrew.bridgen.mp@parliament.uk

www.andrewbridgen.com

In spite of the dire warnings of channel closures in the consultation paper, I note that several senior managers earning considerable six figure sums have received double digit percentage salary increases in the last year.

I would welcome your thoughts on this.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew Bridgen". The signature is stylized with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Andrew Bridgen MP

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