

# Low income pensioners to get easier access to free TV licences



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Move will save time and energy for around 7,000 people who apply for a free licence each month

Will mean pensioners struggling with the cost of living receive savings with less hassle

Pensioners on low incomes will find it easier and quicker to apply for or renew their free TV licence under reforms laid in Parliament today.

The legislative change will ease the administrative burden put on eligible over-75s when applying for a free licence. As it stands those affected are required to obtain and share documentation with the BBC to prove they are in receipt of Pension Credit.

As the global cost of living continues to rise due to the economic impact of the pandemic and war in Ukraine, this measure will support eligible pensioners struggling to keep on top of their bills to claim the £159 annual saving more quickly and with less hassle.

Under the new plans the BBC will be able to verify automatically whether a person applying for a free TV Licence is on Pension Credit with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). It will mean in most cases the 7,000 people who apply to TV Licensing for a free licence per month will simply need to apply online or over the phone without any need to supply additional paperwork.

In 2020 the BBC stopped providing free TV licences for all over-75s, but those in receipt of Pension Credit - a benefit which provides extra money for people on the state pension

and on a low income - are still eligible.

Digital Secretary Nadine Dorries said:

The BBC's disappointing decision to stop providing free TV licences for all over-75s has left low-income pensioners who remain eligible jumping through administrative hoops to avoid paying the charge.

The changes mean those receiving Pension Credit will get the savings with minimum fuss, ensuring more people get the support they are entitled to as we tackle the cost of living and grow the economy.

Minister for Pensions Guy Opperman said:

We want everyone to claim the benefits to which they are entitled, including Pension Credit which acts as a gateway for other benefits such as the free TV licence. This change will help reduce the administrative burden on over-75s and put their minds at ease.

A statutory instrument has been laid in Parliament today to amend the Television Licences Act 2000. The changes to the application process are expected to come into effect next year.

ENDS

Notes to editors

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport SI has amended the Television Licences (Disclosure of Information) Act 2000 (Prescription of Information) Order 2000.

The Government would not be sharing customer data with the BBC, but instead will be verifying whether free licence applicants fit the BBC's eligibility criteria.

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