

Richard Burden MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS, LONDON, SW1A 0AA

TV LICENCES

Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to contact me on the issue of free TV licences for over-75s.

I was disappointed by the BBC's announcement earlier this month that it would scrap the TV licence fee for those aged 75 or over. For many older people, particularly those who may find themselves isolated, television is a way for them to stay connected with the world, as well as providing an important source of comfort and entertainment.

The free licence fee for over-75s was introduced under the Labour Government in 2000. However, following an agreement between the Conservative Government and the BBC, Government funding of this scheme will be phased out by April of next year. In light of this, the BBC has taken the decision to scrap the over-75s concession, maintaining it only for those who are in receipt of pension credit.

For a variety of reasons, many of those who are entitled to pension credit do not claim it. This is often because of a lack of awareness of benefits, or a lack of support necessary to claim them. Age UK estimates that 40% of those eligible for pension credit do not claim it. This means that as many as 2,230 people in Birmingham Northfield who are eligible for a free TV licence under the new rules may not receive one.

Labour's deputy leader has said "it's time to put an end to this latest austerity measure and preserve the free TV licences promised to our pensioners". I will continue to work with my fellow Labour MPs to hold the Government to account on this issue.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Burden'.

Richard Burden MP
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