



Information Policy & Compliance

bbc.co.uk/foi bbc.co.uk/privacy

Keith Morton

via e-mail: request-582960-7bbb5c3e@whatdotheyknow.com

8 July 2019

Dear Mr Morton,

Freedom of Information Request - RFI20191017

Thank you for your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act) dated 13 June 2019, seeking the following information:

'Ref petition on the subject of free tv licence for over 75 age group, I wasn't aware of this until the decision was announced could you briefly explain how you went about this and supply me with details of their ages and the areas in which they live in particular how many rural areas.'

Consultation (now closed)

The BBC's consultation on TV licences for older people was open from 20 November 2018 to 12 February 2019 and is now closed.

<https://www.bbc.com/yoursay/BBC%20consultation%20document.pdf>

The Government decided to stop funding free licences for all over 75s, and Parliament gave the BBC the clear responsibility to decide the future policy. We've reached the fairest decision we can so we protect the poorest pensioners while ensuring everyone will continue to receive the best programmes and services that the BBC can provide.

Copying the current scheme was ultimately untenable. It would have cost £745 million a year by 2021/22 - and risen to over one billion by the end of the next decade. £745 million a year is equivalent to around a fifth of the BBC's spending on services. The scale of the current concession and its quickly rising cost would have meant profoundly damaging closures of major services that we know audiences - and older audiences in particular - love, use, and value every day.

190,000 people took part in our consultation, there was strong support for the BBC and there was little public appetite for us to close particular services because people recognised the important role of the BBC. We want to work with organisations representing older age groups and charities to help raise the visibility of Pension Credit as a way of claiming a free TV licence. We'll also introduce a new payment plan for pensioners aged 75 or over who are eligible to pay including smaller fortnightly instalments

The BBC has published the following information in relation to the changes to the over 75 TV licence scheme.

BBC decision

This document describes how the BBC Board has reached its decision, and the factors it has taken into account:

<http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/reports/consultation/age/decision-document.pdf>

Equality Impact Assessment

The Equality Impact Assessment which the Board has considered in making its decision:

<http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/reports/consultation/age/updated-eia.pdf>

Consultation responses and supporting evidence

On 20 November 2018, the BBC opened a 12 week consultation on TV licences for older people. More than 190,000 people shared their views with us. These views are set out in four reports commissioned by the BBC, and published in full.

A report from Traverse, analysing responses from around 85,000 members of the public to the BBC's consultation:

<http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/reports/consultation/age/traverse.pdf>

A BBC stakeholder report analysing responses from 115 stakeholders to the BBC's consultation including surveys such as the one carried out by 38 Degrees which had almost 100,000 responses:

<http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/reports/consultation/age/stakeholders.pdf>

A report from Populus summarising interviews with 115 stakeholders:

<http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/reports/consultation/age/populus.pdf>

A report from Ipsos MORI who conducted additional qualitative research with over 250 members of the public:

<http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/reports/consultation/age/ipsos-mori.pdf>

Stakeholder responses

The BBC received 115 responses from stakeholders. Where permission has been given or responses are already in the public domain, these are published at the following link:

<https://www.bbc.com/aboutthebbc/reports/consultation/age-related-tv-licence-policy>

Appeal Rights

If you are not satisfied that we have complied with the Act in responding to your request, you have the right to an internal review by a BBC senior manager or legal adviser. Please contact us at the address above, explaining what you would like us to review and including your reference number. If you are not satisfied with the internal review, you can appeal to the Information Commissioner. The contact details are: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF, Tel: 0303 123 1113 (local rate) or 01625 545 745 (national rate) or see <http://www.ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely

Information Rights

