



Information Rights

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

Mr. M. Whitfield

Via email: request-418119-cddc2832@whatdotheyknow.com

09 August 2017

Dear Mr Whitfield

Request for Information – RFI201711015

Thank you for your request of 13th July 2017 under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('the Act') seeking the following information:

"Until March 2016, the TV Licensing website stated this:

"You need to be covered by a licence if you watch TV online at the same time as it's being broadcast on conventional TV in the UK or the Channel Islands".

That then changed to this, which states the complete opposite:

"You need a TV Licence to watch or record live TV programmes on any channel or device, no matter where they are broadcast or distributed from. This includes satellite or online streamed programmes from outside the UK or Channel Islands, such as sporting events and foreign shows".

By reference to internal memos, emails, policy documents and similar, please can you provide information about how and why this change was made given that as far as I am aware the law did not change."

Please note that "TV Licensing" is a trade mark used by companies contracted by the BBC to administer the collection of television licence fees and enforcement of the television licensing system. The majority of the administration of TV Licensing is contracted to Capita Business Services Ltd ('Capita'). Over-the-counter services are provided by PayPoint plc ('PayPoint') in the UK, and by the Post Office in the Isle of Man and Channel Islands. Marketing and printing services are contracted to Proximity London Ltd. Media services are contracted to Media Planning Limited trading as Havas Media UK. The BBC is a public authority in respect of its television licensing functions and retains overall responsibility.

Firstly, please be advised that there has been no change in the law, as you have asserted: the two statements you have cited are two separate statements on different aspects of the law in respect of TV Licensing and do not contradict each other.

The first statement relates to watching live TV online in the UK and Channel Islands; whereas, the second is a statement of law as it relates to watching live TV on any channel or device in the UK and Channel Islands, irrespective of where that service originates.

I can confirm that the first statement was available on the TV Licensing website in a previous iteration of the current webpage (<http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/check-if-you-need-one/topics/Live-TV-and-how-you-watch-it>) which contains the information in both statements. In line with constantly reviewing our website and improving our advice to customers, we updated and improved the page in question in 2014 to make it clearer to people about the law regarding watching or recording live TV in view of developments in online TV programme services and devices on which to do so.

Appeal Rights

If you are not satisfied that the BBC has 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 under the Act 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 SK9 5AF. Tel: 0303 123 1113 (local rate) or 01625 545 745 (national rate) or visit their website at <https://ico.org.uk/>

Kind regards

Rupinder Panesar

Freedom of Information Advisor, TV Licensing Management Team