

InBrief

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Cash schemes go hi-tech

TV Licensing's cash payment schemes have proved popular, allowing people who wish to spread the cost of their TV Licence to do so in weekly or fortnightly instalments. At the end of 2007, over 1.2 million were registered on a cash payment plan and around 600,000 savings card holders were making £7.5 million of payments monthly.

The cash payment schemes are designed to make buying a TV Licence easier for those who may struggle to pay. But some significant changes are set to make it even easier – and more convenient.

Towards the end of this year, a range of new web services will allow members to access their accounts online to make payments, check balances and see statements. A 'call me' button will enable cash scheme members to request a call from a TV Licensing agent.

A 'self-serve' option will also be available for those contacting TV Licensing by phone, allowing payers to check their balance, renewal dates, payment history and make payments on a debit or credit card. There will be an option to transfer directly to an agent if needed.

TV Licensing has received positive feedback from cash scheme members



about its existing SMS (text message) service, and we will be enhancing this facility. Members will be able to make secure payments or savings towards their TV Licence, request balance and arrears information and receive payment confirmation texts using their mobiles.

TV Licensing's focus remains on helping people to pay; we would much rather help people pay for their licence than see them risk a court prosecution and a fine of up to £1,000.

Remind me about...

The cash payment plan

It's a scheme open to everyone that allows the cost of the TV Licence fee to be spread into weekly or fortnightly payments by cash, credit or debit card.

Initially, payments are made on a weekly basis, enabling customers to pay for their first licence over six months. After this, customers can move to fortnightly payments towards their next licence. Payments are made by cash or a debit/credit card at any one of over 19,000 PayPoint outlets nationwide, or over the phone.

For more information, call 08457 289 289.

The savings card

The savings card was introduced in 2006 and can be used at any time to save towards a TV Licence, with a minimum of just £2 per saving made at any PayPoint outlet by cash/debit card, or over the phone. Members of the scheme receive quarterly savings statements and benefit from a secure system – payments are stored on TV Licensing's database which cannot be lost.

For more information, call 0845 155 0404.

Ask the Expert:

TV Licensing's most frequently asked questions

Want to know how your clients can apply for a blind concessionary licence? Wondering how to spread the cost of the licence? Community organisations ask us questions on behalf of their clients every week – below are the answers to six of the most frequently asked.

Sometimes my clients struggle to pay for their licence. Can they spread the cost into more manageable chunks?

Direct Debit will allow your clients to spread the cost of their TV Licence over the year in either monthly or quarterly instalments. Those paying monthly will be asked to pay for their first licence in six months before starting to pay towards the cost of their next licence in the second half of the year. **For more information go to www.tvlicensing.co.uk or call 0844 800 6732.**

TV Licensing also offers a cash payment scheme, which allows people to pay in weekly or fortnightly instalments over the counter at a PayPoint outlet, or with a credit or debit card over the phone.

A TV Licensing savings card also allows people to save gradually towards the cost of their next licence. **To find out more call 0844 800 5827.**

How do my clients apply for a free Over 75 TV Licence?

Those entitled to a free Over 75 TV Licence need only apply once and it will be automatically renewed every three years. The licence covers their main home and any other people living at that address.

Applying for the free licence is very straightforward. **All your clients need to do is contact TV Licensing on 0844 800 5875** and provide their name, address, date of birth and National Insurance number. If they can't find their NI number, they can still qualify, but will be asked to send some other proof of age.



A client has received a letter from TV Licensing, but doesn't watch TV. What should they do?

They should get in touch and let us know, so we can update our database. We will then arrange to visit their property to confirm that they are not watching TV on the premises.

Who qualifies for a blind concession? How do they pay?

Blind and severely sight impaired people qualify to receive a 50 per cent concession on their TV Licence. The licence will need to be in the name of someone at the property who has a certificate or other document issued by their local authority or ophthalmologist showing that they are registered as blind. In Northern Ireland, the certificate or document must be issued by or on behalf of a Health and Social Services Trust and in the Isle of Man, by or on behalf of the Department for Health and Social Services.

To apply, a photocopy of this document, a licence renewal notice (if they have

one) and fee payment (by cheque or postal order – you can renew a blind concession licence online or over the phone), should be posted to TV Licensing, Blind Concession Group, Bristol BS98 1TL along with their name, address and telephone. **Alternatively, they can call 0844 800 6779 to talk through what they need to do.**

Could my clients go to prison for watching a TV without a licence?

Although watching TV without a licence is a criminal offence, you cannot be imprisoned for it. The maximum penalty for watching TV without a licence is a £1,000 fine. However, you can be imprisoned for non-payment of court fines.

How do I apply for an Accommodation for Residential Care (ARC) Licence for my residents?

The ARC Concessionary TV Licence allows qualifying residents to install and use TV receiving equipment in their unit of accommodation. It costs £7.50 and those in charge of residential/sheltered accommodation can apply for a licence on behalf of their residents.

TVs in shared areas, such as residents' lounges, communal rooms and staff areas are not covered by the ARC Concessionary Licence. **For further advice on whether your residents qualify, please call the Concessionary Licensing Centre on 0844 800 5808.**

Have a different question? Email us on campaignoffice@tvlicensing.info and we'll try to squeeze an answer into the next issue.

20,000 extra licence dodgers caught in 2007

TV Licensing has unveiled the findings of its annual 'League of Shame', revealing that more than 413,000 people were caught watching TV without a licence in 2007 – an increase of over 20,000 on 2006.

London once again topped the league no town wants to top, with over 35,100 licence fee evaders caught in the capital: more than Glasgow and Birmingham, the cities in second and third respectively, combined.

TV Licensing's success in catching evaders is helping to keep evasion levels at around five per cent, but if you work in an advice centre we would like your help to make sure more people don't fall foul of the law this year. Householders who are caught watching television illegally risk a court prosecution and a fine of up to £1,000.

The rise in the number of evaders caught is due to the increasing effectiveness of TV Licensing's detection methods. TV Licensing's sophisticated database of over 29 million UK addresses allows it to see unlicensed properties at the touch of a button and last year hi-tech handheld detectors were introduced alongside the existing fleet of detector vans.

Whilst committed to catching evaders, we would much rather people buy a TV Licence than risk prosecution and a fine. For more information on the range of ways to pay for a TV Licence we would advise people to visit www.tvlicensing.co.uk or call **0844 800 6737**.

Position	City	Evaders caught 2007
1	London	35,191
2	Glasgow	21,715
3	Birmingham	10,417
4	Manchester	8,427
5	Liverpool	8,168



Making TV Licensing more accessible

Over five million English adults – 16 per cent of the population – are classified as 'functionally illiterate'. TV Licensing is aware that for these people reading information from unfamiliar sources or on unknown topics can sometimes cause problems, and is looking into ways of making its website and mailings more accessible.

As part of the process, we have carried out an audit of our communications and worked with LOL Language Services, Dr Mark Garner (University of Aberdeen & ProLingua Limited, Cambridge) and the Campaign for Plain English to gain a greater understanding of possible improvements. We have also enlisted Mencap's expertise as we look at the accessibility of our materials for those with learning difficulties.

As a result of the research, TV Licensing has identified three areas where some of our materials can be improved: readability – ease of reading to the end; clarity – ensuring the meaning is clear; and effectiveness – ensuring people understand what action is required.

TV Licensing is taking steps to improve the accessibility of its communications, but there is often important legal information that needs to be conveyed in a particular way, for example, in our mailings. Over the coming months we will be exploring more ways of improving the way we communicate important information about the law regarding TV Licensing.

We would be pleased to hear your thoughts about how TV Licensing's communications materials work for your clients to add to our research. If you have any feedback, email us on campaignof@.

Did you know...

...TV Licensing has had a facelift

TV Licensing has a new trademark, the first time it has been revised since it was registered almost 20 years ago. The new trademark and visual identity appeared on the website and in direct mail on 1st April 2008.

Whilst the old trademark had served us well for 18 years, it was beginning to show its age. It did not work well electronically (e.g. online) and research showed that people did not regard it as reflecting a modern organisation.

The new trademark, which still incorporates the 'TV Licensing' name, is based on the power button design seen on electrical devices. Many of these, such as laptop computers and mobile phones, are now able to receive TV signals and therefore their use may need to be covered by a TV Licence.

In the new trademark, the power button is combined with a tick to convey the positive connotations of being properly licensed.

TV Licensing's aims are to ensure that everyone who needs a licence buys one, and to reduce the cost of collection to put more money into BBC programmes and services. The effective use of computer technology is at the heart of both these aims, which is why it is so important to have a trademark that works effectively online.

In addition, we have rolled out a new communications campaign, consisting of BBC TV and radio trails, advertising on commercial television, online banners and posters. This campaign, "Circuit City" brings to life how TV Licensing uses technology to make it

easier for people to pay their licence online and how its database of over 29 million addresses plays a key role in detecting licence fee evaders.

TV Licensing has come a long way over the past 20 years, halving the evasion rate and significantly reducing the cost of collection. New technologies have played no small part in that success. In 1991, many people queued to pay their TV Licence in cash; now you can pay in a range of ways, including setting up a Direct Debit online and receiving a TV Licence by email. More technological innovations are on the way with the forthcoming changes to the cash schemes (see front cover). More will undoubtedly appear on the horizon – In Brief will keep you posted.

Ways to pay

There are several ways to pay for a TV licence

Direct Debit

Phone 0844 800 5840 to set up a monthly, quarterly or annual Direct Debit payment. Direct Debit is now used by the majority of customers and it's now also possible to set it up online by visiting www.tvlicensing.co.uk/dd

Debit and Credit Card

Call 0844 800 5850 in order to pay by debit or credit card. This facility accepts payment from a range of debit cards including Maestro/Switch and Delta. You can also pay online at www.tvlicensing.co.uk

By Post

Send a cheque made payable to TV Licensing to: TV Licensing, Freepost BS6689, Bristol BS1 3YJ.

Over-the-counter

Make payments in person at one of over 18,500 PayPoint outlets around the UK. Go to www.paypoint.co.uk/locator to find your nearest outlet. To find out about using PayPoint to make payments under a cash payment plan, call 08457 289 289.

TV Licensing savings card

TV Licensing has replaced TV Licence savings stamps with a more secure TV Licensing savings card, which has been sent to stamps users along with details of how to use the new card at PayPoint outlets. Call 0845 155 0404 for further information.

Useful numbers

Direct Debit enquiries and payment	0844 800 5840
Change of address notifications	0844 800 5840
Cash payment plan enquiries	0845 728 9289
Requests for TV Licensing literature	0844 800 5827
Minicom facility	0844 800 6778
Over 75s enquiries	0844 800 5875
National Debtline	0808 808 4000

TV Licensing contact details

TV Licensing, 6th Floor, 77 Kingsway, London WC2B 6SR
Tel: 020 7544 3116 Fax: 020 7242 4202

Your Feedback

We hope you have enjoyed this issue of In Brief, and we would welcome your views on both its current design and content. Please tell us the kind of TV Licensing stories you would find useful and interesting, and whether any other improvements could be made.

You can contact us at the TV Licensing Campaign Office, on 020 7544 3116, or at campaignof@.

We look forward to hearing from you.