


InBrief

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TV Licensing put simply

A new 'easy read' section was launched by TV Licensing on its website in December last year. The new web pages are designed to help make information on TV Licensing readily accessible to those people who experience reading or learning difficulties – or those who simply have a need for an alternative source of information on TV Licensing.

The easy read pages – which include a mixture of written and illustrated material – can be found at www.tvlicensing.co.uk/easyread. Produced in consultation with Mencap, they feature a wide variety of information, ranging from when a licence is needed to ways that people can pay for their licence, or what they need to do if they move home. It also includes important information on the TV Licensing concession, for example the 50% concessionary licence for blind people or the free licence for those aged 75 and over.

TV Licensing's launch of the new pages follows an audit of its communications carried out in 2007, which included feedback from LOL Language Services, Dr. Mark Garner (University of Aberdeen & ProLingua Limited) and the Campaign for Plain English. This audit identified three areas where materials might be generally improved: ease of reading to the end; clarity – ensuring the meaning is clear;



and effectiveness – ensuring people understand what action is required.

The development of these web pages is part of ongoing work under the BBC's equality schemes to ensure TV Licensing provides an appropriate service for all licence fee payers and that everyone has access to information on TV Licensing in a way that suits their needs. If you have any feedback on the easy read pages – or any element of TV Licensing that affects your clients – we would love to hear from you. Don't hesitate to get in touch with our campaign office on 020 7544 3116 or at campaignoffice@tvlicensing.info.

TV Licensing checklist

All of the following information is included on TV Licensing's easy read web pages:

- Information on how to buy a TV Licence: whether online, by direct debit or via a cash payment plan
- When you need a TV Licence – including if you are watching TV online
- How to apply for a free licence if you are aged 75 or over
- How people who are blind or severely sight impaired are eligible for a licence at half the usual cost
- What to do if you move home

Remember that on 1 April the cost of a colour TV Licence will rise by £3.00 to £142.50 and the cost of a black and white licence will rise from £47.00 to £48.00. The licence fee is set by the Government.



Ask the Expert: Q&A with ... the TV Licensing Campaign Office

This issue, *In Brief* sits down with...one of the writers of *In Brief*, Nicola Tomlinson, for an insight into how she works with organisations across the UK to raise awareness and understanding of TV Licensing



You're part of the TV Licensing Campaign Office. What exactly does the Campaign Office do?

Over the course of an average year, the TV Licensing Campaign Office team speaks to hundreds of people from different organisations – from local councils, advice centres and community groups to national organisations such as Age Concern and Citizens Advice – to provide information, support and literature.

In essence, we work to try and make sure everybody has equal access to important information on TV Licensing by spreading awareness of when a licence is needed, how to get one and what concessions are available. We aim to provide relevant information tailored for different communities, by speaking to organisations across the country which represent their needs and best understand their requirements.

So it's all just about making people pay, is it?

Not at all! First and foremost, our job is about helping everyone to understand when they need a licence. In some cases, people might be eligible for a

concession (for example, if they are blind or aged 75 or over), and if so, we try to ensure that they are aware of the ways in which they might claim this.

In other cases, of course, our activity is payment-related – but our priority is always to focus on ways to help people pay. For example, we know that some people struggle to pay in one lump sum, so it's important that they have information on our cash payment plan, where people can make weekly or fortnightly payments towards their TV Licence.

What does a typical day look like?

It's hugely varied work – we speak to a range of organisations each week. A typical day might involve briefing a money advice organisation on specific elements of the cash payment plan, speaking to a housing association about a local TV Licensing campaign or drafting an article on TV Licensing's multi-lingual services for inclusion on a council's website.

Lately much of our time has been spent publicising the recent changes to the cash payment plan – which include the ability for members to check their account status and make payments online or via SMS – and helping to raise awareness of the newly launched easy read section of the TV Licensing website.

I've read you suggest you want to work with community organisations. How would that work?

Working with community groups is absolutely central to what we do.

We can advise on the resources available to individual organisations and their clients and keep them updated on any relevant TV Licensing developments. We can also provide TV Licensing content for newsletters or websites, as well as provide leaflets. Above all, we aim to provide a useful resource for each organisation, exchanging relevant and timely information.

What's coming up for the Campaign Office over the next year?

We are looking to assess and update our literature range – for example, our foreign language leaflets – to make sure they are as useful as possible for the organisations we work with and of course, their clients. Our leaflets are available free of charge and we welcome any opinions on ways in which we can improve them.

We are also looking forward to some changes to the community relations section of our website (www.tvlicensing.co.uk/mediaandcommunity). Look out for the changes later in the year.

If you work for an organisation that needs information from TV Licensing or would like to discuss anything relating to our operations or communications that affect your clients, please don't wait for us to get in touch. You can contact us on 020 7544 3116 or at campaignoffice@tvlicensing.info and we will be happy to help.



News In Brief

It was a busy 2008 for TV Licensing. *In Brief* brings you up to date with developments over the past twelve months.

In November 2007, TV Licensing introduced a new way of administering the **free TV Licence for those aged 75 and over**. Under the new scheme a licence is issued and then automatically renewed twice before a further paper licence is sent – effectively it is a free three-year licence. TV Licensing undertook a community and media relations campaign at the end of 2008 to ensure that all those who are eligible for the free TV Licence were aware of the changes and how

they would affect them. Applying for the free licence is very straightforward – if your clients need more information, they can contact TV Licensing on 0844 800 5875.

A range of **changes to TV Licensing's cash payment schemes**, designed to make buying a TV Licence more convenient, were introduced towards the end of 2008. People can now check the status of their TV Licensing account, check balances and make payments online or via text message. There are currently 1.2 million cash scheme members, making on average 400 payments a day, and TV Licensing's SMS payment reminder

service sends over 520,000 reminder texts monthly.

Meanwhile, elsewhere...TV Licensing's latest figures showed that TV Licensing caught more than 400,000 licence dodgers across the UK in 2008... and five more languages were added to the TV Licensing website, taking the total up to 16.

Have something to say?

If you have any feedback on the services and resources TV Licensing provides for your clients, we would love to hear from you. Please get in touch with the Campaign Office by calling 020 7544 3116 or via campaignoffice@tvlicensing.info

From mono to mobile

TV viewing habits have come a long way since the days when families first huddled around small black and white TV sets to watch the Queen's Coronation. First came the wonder that was colour TV; and more recently the ability to watch television programmes online via platforms such as BBC iPlayer and Channel 4 On Demand.

The technology that brings us our favourite programmes continues to change at a breathtaking pace. In 2009 it's now a common sight to see young people on the bus or in the park catching up with their favourite TV show on their mobile phone. Viewing TV programmes has never been easier.

Despite these huge technological advances, there are still people in the

UK determined to stick to tradition. Although the number has been steadily dropping year on year, there are nevertheless around 33,000 black and white TV Licences currently in force.

However you watch TV – whether online, on a mobile phone or on a black and white TV set – everyone who watches or records TV programmes as they are broadcast must be covered by a valid TV Licence. A regular colour licence costs £139.50, and a black and white licence costs £47.

TV Licensing takes deception very seriously and it carries out regular spot checks on those black and white licence holders it suspects might be watching in colour. Although the number of black and white licences is decreasing, the total number of licences in force is going up and is currently at a record 25m.



Whatever the colour of your TV screen, anyone caught watching TV illegally risks prosecution, a fine of up to £1,000. The fine is in addition to having to buy a TV Licence.



Did you know... that people living in residential care could qualify for a £7.50 concessionary TV Licence?

The Accommodation for Residential Care (ARC) Licence allows certain residents who live in homes qualifying for the scheme to install and use TV receiving equipment in their unit of accommodation. It costs £7.50 a year.

Who is eligible for an ARC Licence?

A full description of the people who are eligible and the types of accommodation schemes that qualify for the ARC Licence can be found in the Communications (Television Licensing) Regulations 2004.

Broadly speaking however, for someone to be eligible for an ARC Licence they must be living in either a local authority care home providing accommodation for disabled and retired people or a home managed by a person registered under Part II of the Care Standards Act 2000. A

warden should live on the premises or work there for at least 30 hours a week.

In addition, the person themselves must:

- Be retired and aged 60 or over, or
- Have a physical or mental disability

Since there are a number of eligibility criteria for the ARC Licence, the best way to be sure whether your residents qualify is to get in touch with the TV Licensing Concessionary Licensing Centre on **0844 800 5808**.

How does a care home manager apply for an ARC Licence on behalf of their residents?

Those in charge of residential or sheltered accommodation can apply for a licence on behalf of their residents, and should take responsibility for collecting and administering the licence fee on behalf of each person covered by it.

Remember, if residents watch TV as it is broadcast in a communal living area, that television should be covered by a full licence – which currently costs £139.50.

I work at a care home. Can I be covered by an ARC Licence?

Staff living at the home that watch or record television as it is broadcast in their private accommodation must be covered by the full licence fee. There are a number of ways to pay for a licence – for more information visit www.tvlicensing.co.uk.

If you work in a care home and are still confused about how and when you can apply on behalf of your residents, you can either call **0844 800 5808** or visit www.tvlicensing.co.uk/info to find out more information

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/info

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/info

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 20,000 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

The TV Licensing savings card is designed to help people save towards the cost of their next TV Licence in small, manageable amounts. People can make a payment at any time, either online, by text, at any PayPoint outlet or over the phone. 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

* National Debtline is an external telephone advice service not run by TV Licensing

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 campaignoffice@tvlicensing.info

We look forward to hearing from you.