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Did you know?

... that TV Licensing is changing its numbers?

When a licence is needed, here in black and white



TV Licensing: the key facts

- A colour TV Licence currently costs £142.50, a black and white TV Licence £48
- People aged 75 or over are entitled to a free licence
- People who are blind or severely sight impaired can get a 50% reduction
- There are many ways to pay for a TV Licence, including over-the-counter at a PayPoint outlet, via the cash Payment Card, by direct debit and online
- For more information visit www.tvlicensing.co.uk or call 0300 790 6115. For more information on the Payment Card, call 0300 555 0300

To celebrate the fortieth anniversary since the first colour transmissions on BBC1 and ITV in November, TV Licensing released new figures revealing over 28,000 homes across the UK are still enjoying their programmes in black and white. But while the figures showed there may yet be life in the oldest TV equipment, they also show emerging technologies are changing the way many people are watching TV.*

In the face of an ever-increasing number of ways to watch TV, TV Licensing is keen that advice organisations help us to avoid any confusion by reminding people that a TV Licence is needed to watch or record programmes as they're being broadcast, whatever device they use to watch their favourite shows.

In September, BBC iPlayer attracted over one million unique users a day watching 60.8 million TV programmes. iPlayer users watched those programmes either on the internet using computers, smart-phones and games consoles or on TV using Virgin Media set-top boxes.

Yet despite there being an increasing number of ways to watch, leaning back on the sofa in front of a TV set is still the most popular – with sales of flatscreen TVs almost trebling in the last three years.

TV has never been more popular but, with so many ways to watch TV now available, TV Licensing is keen to make sure people aren't confused about their legal responsibilities.

Whether someone is watching on a black and white television or in colour on a flatscreen LCD, they still need to be covered by a TV Licence if watching or recording programmes as they are broadcast. The same is true if you access programmes via the internet as they are being shown on TV – regardless of whether you're using a laptop, mobile phone, games console or any other device.

What are the most common questions your clients ask you about TV Licensing? Are they confused about when they need a TV Licence? If you need any information about TV Licensing to help advise your clients, please contact the Campaign Office at campaignoffice@tvlicensing.info.

*BBC iPlayer usage statistics, September 2009



Ask the Expert: Q&A with ...

TV Licensing's Head of Field Operations, Training and Development

In Brief found out a little more about TV Licensing Enquiry Officers, the challenges they face and their role on the doorstep.



What is the role of an Enquiry Officer?

An Enquiry Officer's role is to visit addresses where there is no record of a current TV Licence and establish whether one is needed. If someone is watching TV programmes as they are broadcast without being correctly licensed, the officer will take further action to report the offence and, if appropriate, help them to buy one.

What training do Enquiry Officers receive?

Once a prospective officer has passed their initial interview they then complete a two-week induction. This includes classroom work as well as on-the-job shadowing and coaching to help them apply the theory to real-life situations.

Throughout their careers Enquiry Officers, no matter how experienced, receive in-the-field coaching sessions on at least a quarterly basis. They also receive regular reviews to monitor their progress.

What is the process when an Enquiry Officer finds someone watching TV illegally?

Enquiry Officers now carry digital handheld devices that allow them to check the details of an address on the TV Licensing database remotely.

Once the officer has established that a person is watching TV illegally, they will caution the individual before carrying out an interview. The aim is to establish the facts of the situation, for example when the TV set was last used, and this is all done under the regulations put in place by the Police and Criminal Evidence Act.

The Enquiry Officer will then pass the statement to TV Licensing HQ where senior staff decide how to progress the case. TV Licensing looks at potential prosecution on a case-by-case basis depending on the nature of the evidence collected and whether it is considered to be in the public interest.

After the interview, the officer will offer to talk through all of the available payment options with the person and can, if appropriate, set up a payment scheme straight away.

What is the role of an Enquiry Officer if a case progresses?

Enquiry Officers are there to report the evidence of a situation rather than pass judgement as to whether or not a case should go any further. However, they are on occasion called upon to give evidence if a case goes to court in rare cases where the Enquiry Officer's evidence is disputed by the defendant.

Do Enquiry Officers treat people differently in certain situations, for example if someone has a learning disability or can't speak English?

Absolutely. If the Enquiry Officer is in a situation where they think that for any reason the person they are cautioning does not fully understand the process – and there is no-one else in the household who can help explain the situation – they will not proceed with the interview.

Are there any risks that Enquiry Officers face – is it a tough job?

People aren't always happy to see us! Enquiry Officers do face risks and some have been threatened with violence. This is rare however and they are trained to handle these situations appropriately.

But amusing things do happen from time to time, too.

Every year we take an informal record of some of the funniest, most 'creative' excuses people make for not having a TV Licence. One parent claimed their child had secretly bought a TV overnight without their knowledge. Another person claimed they hadn't been able to buy a licence because they had been too busy nursing a baby magpie back to health.

Very amusing, but honestly...





A new TV Licensing website

In autumn 2009 TV Licensing launched a new-look website to make it even simpler to find information about when you need a TV Licence, and easier to buy one. The launch followed the introduction of new services for Payment Card users last year which allowed them to make payments and check their balance online and by text message.

The new website is designed to provide a more efficient online service for TV Licensing customers allowing them to buy, change their details and check the status of their licence.

One major difference under the new website is the introduction of the TV Licence Online. The TV Licence Online is simply an online version of a paper TV Licence that can be viewed when visiting the website.

People are now invited to log in at the website – using their surname, licence number and postcode – to:

- View, download or print their TV Licence Online
- Update their details, eg. correspondence address, bank details
- Be alerted to any issues with their licence
- See information about their licence, including its number and expiry date
- View direct debit payment plans
- Let TV Licensing know they are moving

People on the TV Licensing Accommodation for Residential Care scheme or paying for their TV Licence via the Payment Card will still receive a conventional paper TV Licence.

If you have any feedback on the new TV Licensing website please do get in touch with the Campaign Office at campaignoffice@tvlicensing.info. The Campaign Office is also keen to make sure advice organisations have the latest information about TV Licensing. If you have any questions, give us a call on 020 7544 3116.

Make sure the over-75s go free

With cold weather setting in and heating bills going up, TV Licensing launched a campaign this winter to urge people to remind their older relatives that they could be entitled to a free TV Licence.

Anyone aged 75 or over is entitled to a free TV Licence for their main address.

Following the launch of the new TV Licensing website, people aged 75 or over can now apply for a free licence at www.tvlicensing.co.uk, provided they have their National Insurance number to hand.

People can also apply for the free licence by calling TV Licensing on 0300 790 6073 and providing their

name, address, date of birth and National Insurance number.

The free licence covers the applicant's main home and any other household members who live at that address. People aged 74 can buy a short-term licence which will cover them until they become eligible for a free licence on their 75th birthday.

Do you work with people aged 75 or over? We would like to get you involved in our campaign to make sure they are claiming their free TV Licence. The Campaign Office – contactable on 020 7544 3116 – can provide free leaflets and information for inclusion in newsletters or online.

The free licence in brief

- Anyone aged 75 or over is entitled to a free licence
- People can apply for the free licence over the phone or online if they have their National Insurance number
- If they can't find their National Insurance number, people can call 0300 790 6073 to discuss other ways to apply
- Once someone has applied their licence is automatically renewed each year
- People aged 75 or over now receive a new paper licence every three years



Did you know... that TV Licensing is changing its telephone numbers?



TV Licensing has moved its 0844 and 0845 numbers to 03 numbers. This means calls to TV Licensing will be charged at a standard rate from all landlines and mobile phones and will be included in free call packages from mobile phone networks.

TV Licensing's decision to change the numbers formed part of the response to recommendations from the BBC Trust earlier this year and followed clear feedback we had received from a range of advice organisations that we work with.

Customers were invited to use the 03 numbers from 4 January onwards. While they will no longer be publicised, the existing 0844 and 0845 numbers will continue to be active for a further 18 months.

TV Licensing's focus remains to help people pay for their licence. The move to 03 numbers reflects our ongoing work to do all we can to make it as easy as possible for people to pay for their licence and understand when one is needed.

We need your help

Many organisations carry information about TV Licensing, including our telephone numbers, in their newsletters and on their websites.

To ensure that your clients, members or network take advantage of the new numbers as soon as possible we would be grateful if you could update the old numbers wherever you currently publish them.

All of the relevant 03 numbers are listed in the panel below, but do get in touch with the Campaign Office on **020 7544 3116** or at campaignoffice@tvlicensing.info if you want to make sure you have all the information you need.

Ways to pay

There are several ways to pay for a TV Licence

Direct Debit

Phone 0300 790 6063 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 0300 790 6063 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 almost 22,000 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 0300 555 0300.

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 0300 555 3434 for further information.

Useful numbers

Direct Debit and credit card enquiries	0300 790 6063
Change of address notifications	0300 790 6065
Cash payment plan enquiries	0300 790 6078
Requests for TV Licensing literature	0300 790 6022
Minicom facility	0300 790 6050
Over 75s enquiries	0300 790 6073
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.