

# InBrief

Spring 2010



**2 Ask the Expert Q&A**  
Julia Dudley  
In Brief talks court relations



**3 News In Brief**  
Know the rules:  
watching TV online



**4 Did you know?**  
... 'We're fluent in  
180 languages'

## Blame it on the bizarre! TV Licensing reveals the worst excuses of the year



TV Licensing has revealed the most implausible excuses gathered over the last year for not having a TV Licence – and it has been a top year for tall tales. Family members and the animal kingdom are among those that make an appearance in this year's list, as heard by TV Licensing's Enquiry Officers. From the sublime to the ridiculous, some people have been particularly inventive in their attempts to avoid paying for a TV Licence.

Some of the more bizarre excuses given by licence fee evaders this year included:

- **Feathered friends:** "A pigeon fell down the chimney and broke the aerial so I have bad reception"
- **Family members:** "My 11-year-old son must have bought the TV during the night. It wasn't there when I went to bed"
- **Fairly far-fetched:** "My Payment Card's been stuck in the washing machine so I can't pay"

While shifting the blame on to family and pets was a firm favourite, Enquiry Officers faced a raft of far more inventive tales, with one person even trying to blame their dreams: "I've not bought a licence as I dreamt I didn't have to, and the saying is you've got to follow your dreams".

People who watch TV programmes as they are broadcast risk prosecution and a fine of up to £1,000 if they don't have a valid licence. Whilst some people actively try to avoid paying for a licence, TV Licensing understands that some people struggle to pay. We would like to encourage organisations working with those on low incomes to ensure people get in touch with us as soon as they run into difficulties so we can discuss a payment method that suits them.

You can contact TV Licensing 24 hours a day at [www.tvlicensing.co.uk/info](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/info) or by calling 0300 790 6115.

### Top five excuses

- "A pigeon fell down the chimney and broke the aerial so I have bad reception"
- "I've not paid due to my shop only accepting £5 and £10 notes and I haven't got any of those"
- "My 11-year-old son must have bought the TV during the night. It wasn't there when I went to bed"
- "It's my dog that watches it when I'm at work to keep him company – not me"
- "I've not been making payments as a baby magpie flew into my house and I had to stay in and feed it until it was ok"



# Ask the Expert: Q&A with ... the TV Licensing court relations team

This issue, *In Brief* sits down with...Julia Dudley from the BBC TV Licensing court relations team. Julia explains how the team works to raise awareness and understanding of TV Licensing among magistrates and court staff.



## You are part of the TV Licensing court relations team. What exactly does the team do?

The TV Licensing court relations programme aims to engage with magistrates and court staff up and down the country on an ongoing basis. As TV Licensing cases account for a significant proportion of all cases handled by the courts, we want to ensure all those who come into contact with evasion cases have a good understanding of us as an organisation and how we operate.

As well as reaching magistrates through industry magazines and websites, we also speak to a range of organisations on a regular basis, including The Justices' Clerks' Society and the National Bench Chairmen's Forum. We also attend events like the Magistrates' Association Annual General Meeting so we can talk to magistrates face to face.

In addition, an important part of our work involves visiting courts to speak to groups of magistrates about TV Licensing.

## What do these court visits involve?

We explain the process that takes place before prosecutions reach court. A visit from the team is an opportunity for magistrates and court staff to ask any questions they may have. It is also a chance for them to receive clarification on any of the policy areas of which they are unsure. Attendees can also flag problems they commonly encounter when handling licence fee evasion cases.

## What do court visits aim to achieve?

We want to leave people with a better understanding of TV Licensing and of the lengths to which the organisation goes to avoid cases reaching court in the first place, as well as helping make it easier for people to pay. Magistrates tell us learning more about the process that takes place to avoid people having to come before the court helps them in their daily work.

## How long do the sessions last?

They are fairly informal and can be tailored to suit the interests of the specific court. The sessions can vary in length depending

on the time available. They can even feature as part of business development or planning days. The sessions have been well received across the country from Weston-super-Mare in the South West to Gateshead in the North East.

## How is TV Licensing making it easier for people to pay?

TV Licensing understands some people struggle to pay for a licence in one go and so offers a range of ways to spread the cost. For example, the TV Licensing Payment Card allows people to pay weekly, fortnightly or monthly either online, in person at a PayPoint outlet, by phone or by text message.

We liaise with a range of organisations, including Citizens Advice and the Institute of Money Advisers, to help ensure information about the ways to pay reaches the right people. There is also a variety of leaflets about the importance of paying the fee available in 18 different languages. People can also buy their licence or ask for further information in over 180 languages over the phone.

## Want to arrange a visit from the TV Licensing court relations team?

If you or any of your colleagues would like to chat to one of the team about arranging a visit, contact us on **020 7544 3116** or email [campaignoffice@tvlicensing.info](mailto:campaignoffice@tvlicensing.info)



# Know the rules: watching TV online

The way we watch television is changing. You can now watch your favourite shows on a range of devices including laptops, games consoles and mobile phones either as they are shown on TV or, increasingly, via catch-up. In one month last year, BBC iPlayer attracted over 1 million unique users per day.

Speaking to a range of advisers over the last few months it is clear that the rules around when a licence is needed to watch TV programmes online are sometimes causing confusion. We are keen to work with local organisations to clarify this and help people avoid the potential for prosecution and a fine.

In essence, if you are watching programmes on the internet as they

are being shown on TV, then you need a TV Licence. This is true regardless of the device being used: whether watching sport on your iPhone or the latest episode of your favourite drama on your laptop, if you are watching it as it is shown on TV, you need a licence. Luckily, the vast majority of people are covered by the TV Licence they have registered to their home address.

However, you don't need to be covered by a licence if you're only using 'on-demand' or catch up services to watch programmes after they have been shown on TV. You don't need a TV Licence if you only use BBC iPlayer's catch-up services, for example.

If any of your clients are unclear about whether they need a TV Licence they

can find more information at [www.tvlicensing.co.uk/info](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/info) or by calling 0300 790 6115.

## You need a TV Licence

if you watch or record programmes as they are being broadcast – on any device.

## You don't need a TV Licence

if you only use catch-up services online. If you think you don't need a TV Licence, let us know by calling **0300 790 6115**.

We may arrange for someone to visit to double-check that no licence is needed.

## Presenting to the advice community



Over the course of 2009 the Campaign Office team spoke to hundreds of organisations across the UK to pass on important information on TV Licensing.

These conversations were all part of TV Licensing's ongoing community relations programme, which involves speaking to a range of organisations from Citizens Advice Bureau and regional money advice forums through to councils and housing associations.

The Campaign Office started a programme of presentations to organisations offering money advice in 2009. The presentations – which typically last no longer than half an hour in total – are delivered by regional teams and provide an opportunity to update money advisers on the latest changes to the payment schemes and provide important detail on the processes that affect their clients.

To date, feedback on these presentations has been very positive. In particular, advisers have appreciated the opportunity to have any questions they have on TV Licensing answered, get more detail on specific processes and also give their feedback on issues related to TV Licensing.

Over the course of 2010 the Campaign Office is looking to broaden its programme of presentations to money advisers. If you would like someone from the Campaign Office to give a presentation to your group of advisers, please call us on **020 7544 3116**.

## The Campaign Office... In Brief

What can the Campaign Office offer me?

- Briefing presentations to advisers at your offices
- Briefing on specific areas of TV Licensing
- Free literature orders
- Tailored copy for newsletters/websites



# Did you know...TV Licensing is fluent in over 180 languages?

Hundreds of languages are spoken across multicultural Britain, and TV Licensing works hard to communicate with people who don't have English as a first language.

TV Licensing is constantly adding to its foreign language resources to help make sure everyone has equal access to information on when a TV Licence is needed and how to buy one.

Information on TV Licensing is available in 16 languages on the [www.tvlicensing.co.uk](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk) website, and the TV Licensing Campaign Office distributes leaflets in 18 different languages. Between April and December 2009 over 33,500

multi-lingual leaflets (nearly a quarter of which were in Polish) were distributed to various local community groups and organisations across the UK.

TV Licensing also offers a telephone translation service which, following its launch in 2006, has now increased in scope to offer over 180 languages. The translation service allows people to buy their licence or ask for further information in their own language.

The translation service, which can be accessed by calling 0300 790 6044, received over 3,100 calls during 2009 – that's over eight a day on average. Polish has been the most requested

language, but Portuguese and Arabic have also been very popular.

We are keen to speak to any organisations that work with people who don't have English as a first language to raise awareness of TV Licensing's multi-lingual resources. If you have any clients that might benefit from access to information on TV Licensing in another language, please get in touch with the Campaign Office on 020 7544 3116 or via [campaignoffice@tvlicensing.info](mailto:campaignoffice@tvlicensing.info). We are happy to order free multi-lingual leaflets for you or discuss other ways of raising awareness of the translation service in your area.

## 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](http://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](http://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](http://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 790 6078.

### 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.

### TV Licensing contact details

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

## How to contact us

### Court training sessions

Julia Dudley – 020 7544 3116 (England and Wales)  
Jonathan King – 028 9033 9949 (Northern Ireland)  
Fergus Reid – 0141 222 2040 (Scotland)

### Court Presenter queries

Philip Jones – 07766 577 747 (England and Wales)  
Tony Jones – 07766 577 750 (Northern Ireland)  
Sarah Armstrong – 0141 800 8207 (Scotland)

### Fines Enforcement queries

Paul Johnston, Head of Field Prosecutions and Office Services – 07766 577 739

### Court Listings enquiries

Paul Edwards/Sonia Holden – 01254 700 492 or 07766 577 948

If you would like further information, would like to comment on the content of this newsletter or would like us to cover other issues in the next edition please contact Abigail Forbes, Jonathan King or Fergus Reid, or alternatively email [campaignoffice@tvlicensing.info](mailto:campaignoffice@tvlicensing.info)