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Jo Swinson MP
House of Commons
London
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Dear Jo

Thank you for your correspondence of 21 June, on behalf of a number of your constituents, regarding the over-75 TV licence concession.

The government recognises the importance of television to people of all ages, particularly for older people who value television as a way to stay connected with the world. That is why the government guaranteed the over-75 concession until 2020.

In the 2015 funding settlement, the government agreed with the BBC that responsibility for the concession will transfer to the BBC in June 2020. The government and the BBC agreed this is a fair deal - in return the government closed the iPlayer loophole and committed to increase the licence fee in line with inflation.

The future of the concession is therefore a matter entirely for the BBC. It announced on 10 June that, from June 2020, only people who are aged 75 and above and in receipt of pension credit will continue to receive a free television licence. The BBC had received views from over 190,000 people as part of their broader public consultation, which sought opinions on a number of options.

The government is disappointed with this decision as it has been clear that it wants and expects the BBC to continue this concession. Taxpayers want to see the BBC using its substantial licence fee income in an appropriate way to ensure it delivers for UK audiences. People across the country value television as a way to stay connected, and the government expects the BBC to look at further ways to support older people.

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