

# MOTION ON NOTICE

City Council 24 June 2019



## OPPOSITION TO THE SCRAPPING OF FREE TV LICENCES FOR OVER-75s

Full Council notes that:

The free TV licence was introduced by the Labour Government in 2000, as recognition that as people get older the TV becomes an ever more important way of keeping in touch with the world. As time has gone on, the need for it has become even greater – more people live on their own nowadays, and a survey for AgeUK found that four in 10 older people said they rely on the TV for their main company. With rising prices in other areas like food, gas and electricity, having one less thing to have to afford can be a real help – a full TV licence costs £150.50 a year.

The BBC has confirmed plans to scrap free TV licences for millions of people aged over 75 with the exception of those on pension credit from June 2020, this council recognises that many over 75's are not able to afford this cost they are on a fixed income, and already often struggle to meet their bills. Furthermore, the council notes the evidence which shows that Pension Credit is hugely under claimed, which means that in the future the very poorest pensioners will now miss out on their TV licence.

This council notes analysis by the House of Commons Library for the Labour Party has revealed that over 11,000 households in Plymouth are at risk of losing their free TV licences, 7,000 of them with someone aged 80 or over. This includes 4810 households in Plymouth Moor View and 5,170 households in Plymouth Sutton and Devonport. Millions of older people across the country are now set to lose their TV licence, despite the Conservatives promising in their 2017 general election manifesto to protect free TV licences until 2022.

This council further notes the research undertaken by The Campaign to End Loneliness, which found that 40% of older people say their television is their main source of company, and recognises that supporting the continuation of TV licences for over 75s supports this council's ambition to tackle loneliness for older people.

This council recognises the opposition to the scrapping of TV licences for over-75s offered from across the political spectrum. In light of the BBC's announcement, Plymouth City Council reaffirms its commitment to tackling loneliness for older people and believes that the Government must step in to guarantee that everyone over 75 gets a free TV licence, as has been the case for nearly twenty years.

The City Council resolves to:

- (1) Ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Government to ask them to reaffirm their commitment to their own manifesto promise to protect free TV licences for over 75s until 2022.
- (2) Ask the Leader of the Council to write to the three Plymouth MPs to ask them to confirm their commitment to this important measure in tackling loneliness amongst older citizens in Plymouth.

**Proposed by** Councillor Kate Taylor

**Signed**

**Seconded by** Councillor Mary Aspinall by email 14 June 2019

**Dated:** 14 June 2019