

**Councillor Tudor Evans OBE**  
Leader of Plymouth City Council  
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Johnny Mercer MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

23rd July 2019

Dear Johnny

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

Following the unanimous support for a motion on the above at the 24 June meeting of the City Council, I write to ask you to confirm your opposition to the scrapping of free TV licences for over 75s.

You will know that the BBC plans to scrap free TV licences for millions of people aged over 75 with the exception of those on pension credit from June 2020. I note that the evidence shows that Pension Credit is hugely under claimed, which means that in the future many pensioners will now miss out on their free TV licence.

We know that many over 75s are not able to afford this cost as they are on a fixed income, and are already struggling to meet their bills. 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.

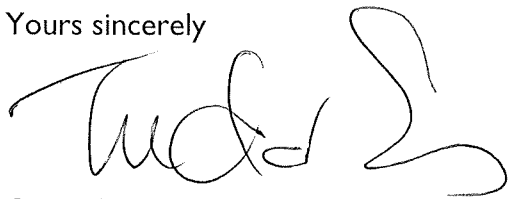
I note also the research undertaken by The Campaign to End Loneliness, which found that 40% of older people say their television is their main source of company, and recognise that supporting the continuation of TV licences for over 75s supports this council's ambition to tackle loneliness for older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

Analysis by the House of Commons library shows this will affect 11,000 households in Plymouth. This will include 4,800 households in Plymouth Moor View, 5,000 households in Plymouth Sutton and Devonport and 1,200 in South West Devon. I am deeply concerned about the impact this will have on our residents.

The free TV licence was introduced by the Labour Government in 2000, in recognition of the fact that as people get older the TV becomes an ever more important way of keeping in touch with the world and to help with the rising prices of food, gas and electricity. During the 2017 General Election campaign the Conservatives promised in their manifesto to maintain free TV licenses for this age group until 2022.

I hope that you will be able to confirm your commitment to oppose the change to this scheme which is an important measure in tackling loneliness amongst the older citizens of Plymouth.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tudor Evans', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Councillor Tudor Evans OBE  
**Leader, Plymouth City Council**

cc Luke Pollard MP  
Gary Streeter MP