



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

March 2019.

Dear Constituent,

A Response to the Television Licencing for Over-75s Campaign

Thank you for contacting me with your concerns about the future of the free TV licence for over-75s.

Members of the Government do not, by convention, sign any Early Day Motions, as doing so is likely to breach the Ministerial Code's rules on collective responsibility.

However, as you will be aware, people over the age of 75 are eligible for a free TV licence, which also covers anyone they are living with. In 2015, the Office for Budget Responsibility estimated the cost of continuing the free TV licences to be £200 million in 2018/19, rising to £445 million in 2019/20 and £745 million in 2020/21. At the moment, the Government reimburses the BBC for the free TV licences, but funding of the free TV licence will transfer to the BBC from 2020. It then becomes the BBC's decision whether to continue the concession in its current form.

The Government has made it clear that it wants, and expects, the BBC to continue the concession. The BBC understood the level of commitment required when it agreed to the funding settlement and to take on responsibility for the concession in 2015.

In 2015, I understand the BBC commissioned Frontier Economics to explore the long-term options for funding the over-75s concession. Following the publication of its report last year, the BBC consulted on possible options for the future. This was an important step in order to ensure the BBC is aware of the public's views on the subject. I look forward to hearing the outcome in due course.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alister Jack".

Alister Jack DL MP
Dumfries and Galloway constituency.