



Campaigning for the rights of older people

**\*\*NEWS UPDATE – Immediate Release\*\***

## **NPC blames Government over BBC'S decision to end free TV licence for over 75's**

**NPC STATEMENT – 9<sup>TH</sup> July 2020**

**Jan Shortt, General Secretary of the National Pensioners' Convention said:**

“The news that the free TV licence for over 75s is to end from 1<sup>st</sup> August is absolutely devastating for the millions of pensioners who rely on their television for information, entertainment and company.

The NPC lays the blame for this draconian measure squarely at the door of the government, who have kicked responsibility to the BBC for this universal entitlement for our oldest and most vulnerable, knowing most will struggle to find the money to keep their TVs switched on.

It is a cruel decision for the government to force the BBC to take, particularly while a great many over 75s are still self-isolating and afraid to go out because of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. This age group relies on their TV for the latest information on the easing of lockdown and shielding.

The majority of over 75s are not online - so forcing them to switch off unless they pay for a licence is depriving them of their only means of obtaining key messages and, for many, their only companionship. This may well have a profound impact on their health and well-being in general, particularly if, as predicted, the coronavirus spikes again this winter.

Over 75s will now have to choose between switching off permanently or finding the money for the licence to stay switched on - which could leave many having to decide between their TV or eating and heating. It is a choice that they should never have to make in the 21st century.

The chancellor is busy handing out money to save businesses, but this government clearly has no concept of how most of our elderly live and how even those whose income goes just beyond the Pension Credit level, still struggle daily to make ends meet.

## **ENDS**

*\***The National Pensioners Convention** was set up in 1979 to champion the rights and welfare of the UK's older people. It now represents more than 1.5 million people in over 1,000 different organisations across the UK and holds an Annual Convention – a pensioners' parliament - to debate issues affecting older people.*

[www.npcuk.org](http://www.npcuk.org)

## **Ends**

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