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21 May 2020

The Rt. Hon. Boris Johnson MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1A 2AA

Dear Prime Minister,

Re: Free TV licence for over 75s

The National Pensioners Convention is the largest campaigning organisation for older people in the UK. We believe every pensioner has the right to choice, dignity, independence and security as an integral and valued member of society.

We are writing today to follow up on your promise on playing your part to ensure that the free TV licence remains for those over 75.

In November 2019, as Prime Minister, you were quoted as saying; *'it is crucial to retain the benefit'* and that you *'aimed to thrash out a new funding formula.'* Since then complete inactivity when there was enough time to do the work prior to the virus reaching the UK.

As you will see from copies of letters enclosed herewith, the NPC has also written to the Chairman of the BBC and to the Rt. Hon. Oliver Dowden CBE MP in his role as Secretary of State responsible for the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport.

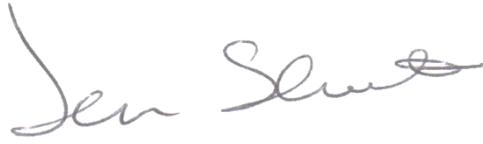
Given that older people have already been in lockdown due to COVID-19 longer than other age group and the indications are that they will remain so for some time to come, access to TV and radio is crucial. Isolation and loneliness was a major concern before the virus came to the UK – it is even more so now.

Older people have borne the brunt of COVID-19 with the highest proportion of deaths being reported in the age groups 75-90. As we have suggested to the BBC, perhaps this is the time for kindness and understanding?

We would very much appreciate your promise being fulfilled, particularly at a time when there are so many uncertainties in the UK and of course worldwide. Being able to view your TV without having to scrape together a licence fee from a fixed income would be a small reward for the generation we celebrated on V E Day as heroes never to be forgotten.

We hope that we can rely on you to make good your promise and look forward to hearing from you as a matter of urgency.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read "Jan Shortt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'J' and a stylized 'S'.

Jan Shortt
General Secretary

Enc. Letter to Chairman of BBC
Letter to Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport