

STATES OF JERSEY



TELEVISION LICENCE FEE: EXEMPTION FOR JERSEY RESIDENTS AGED 75 AND OVER (P.117/2016) – COMMENTS

Presented to the States on 13th March 2017
by the Chief Minister

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

Successful negotiations, overseen by Senator P.F.C. Ozouf, were concluded with the BBC in December 2016 to ensure the continued provision of broadcasting services to Jersey.

The outcome of these negotiations is that the BBC has provided assurances on the future of service provision to Jersey, as well as agreeing very positive arrangements in respect of TV licences for over-75s in Jersey.

From 2018, the BBC intends to begin contributing towards the cost of Jersey's means-tested concession to the TV licence for eligible citizens over the age of 75. This contribution will result in a saving for the States of Jersey of approximately £270,000 in total from 2018 to 2020. The BBC has also committed its intention to contribute the full cost in 2020 of Jersey's means-tested TV licence concession for people over the age of 75.

This is an excellent outcome, and is undoubtedly the result of the good working relationship that officers within the Chief Minister's Department and the London Office have with the BBC.

The current television licence benefit was introduced by the Jersey government in 2007, and has always operated on a means-tested basis. If instead it were provided to all the Island's over-75s, including those who can afford to pay for a television licence, it would cost just over £700,000 per year.

In Jersey, we benefit from a wide range of BBC programming, and it is right that those who can afford to pay for it, do so. This is particularly true of local services that are produced specifically for the Island, such as BBC Radio Jersey and the coverage of States Assembly Sitings.

Going back to the BBC to attempt to extend the benefit to people who have not received it before would be counterproductive. Our priority instead is to continue to engage with the BBC to ensure that all licence fee-payers will be treated equitably once the BBC is given control of its funding liability under the concession in 2020, at which point its revenue model may change. This is how we secure the best long-term arrangements for all Islanders.