



**September 2008**

**Key Points:**

- Replaces previous version dated September 2007

## **Television licence concessions**

This factsheet is aimed at people aged 60 and over. It describes the concessionary television licences and the main criteria for eligibility.

This factsheet describes the situation in England. Readers in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales should contact their respective national Age Concern offices for information specific to where they live.

**Contact details are:**

**The Scottish Helpline for Older People – Age Concern Scotland, tel: 0845 125 9732 (local call rates) Monday to**

**Friday, 10am – 4pm; website:** [www.olderpeoplescotland.co.uk](http://www.olderpeoplescotland.co.uk); rate); website: [www.ageconcernscotland.org.uk](http://www.ageconcernscotland.org.uk);

**Age Concern Cymru, Ty John Pathy, Units 13/14 Neptune Court, Vanguard Way, Cardiff CF24 5PJ, tel: 029 2043 1555 (national call rate), website:** [www.accymru.org.uk](http://www.accymru.org.uk);

**Age Concern Northern Ireland, 3 Lower Crescent, Belfast BT7 1NR, tel: 028 9032 5055 (national call rate) Monday to Friday 10am – 12pm and 2pm – 4pm, website:** [www.ageconcernni.org](http://www.ageconcernni.org).

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## **1. Available concessions**

A television licence is required for the installation or use of television receiving equipment (which includes television sets, video/DVD recorders, set-top boxes, TV-enabled PC etc) to receive and/or record television programme services, including terrestrial, digital, satellite or cable. A licence is not required for equipment only used to replay pre-recorded tapes/DVD. The television licence covers you, anyone living at the premises as a part of your family and guests, at the address stated on the licence.

There are television licence concessions available to:

- those who are registered blind;
- people who are retired or disabled and live in certain types of accommodation;
- households with a person aged 75 years and over.

Details on the criteria for concessions are available from TV Licensing, Bristol BS98 1TL. General enquiries tel: 0844 800 6790 (local rate); textphone: 0844 800 6778; website: [www.tvlicensing.co.uk](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk).

## **2. Registered blind concession**

People who are registered blind can claim a 50% discount on the cost of their television licence.

To apply, a person will need to send a photocopy of the original certificate from their local authority or ophthalmologist confirming their status together with their licence application form and the appropriate fee to TV Licensing, Blind Concession Group, Bristol BS98 1TL. Once registered with TV Licensing as being blind, all subsequent renewals will be at the concessionary rate.

## **3. Accommodation for Residential Care licence**

Accommodation for Residential Care (ARC) concessionary licence is a licence for people who are retired or disabled and are living in specific types of accommodation.

### 3.1 Who is eligible

Only disabled people or retired people aged 60 or over can qualify for this concessionary licence. Retired for these purposes means if the person works, those hours do not exceed 15 hours a week (or more than 15 hours' if the resident benefited from the ARC Concessionary TV Licence as at 31 March 2004).

### 3.2 Care homes

For the people described in 3.1 to be eligible, they must live in a care home whose sole or main object is to provide accommodation for retired people aged 60 or over or disabled people. A minimum of 50% of the residents must fall within the categories of eligible people.

### 3.3 Sheltered housing

For the people described in 3.1 to be eligible, they must live in sheltered accommodation which:

- forms part of at least four dwellings within a common and exclusive boundary; **and**
- is provided for occupation only by disabled people or people aged 60 or over and retired; **and**
- has been erected or converted for occupation by such people; **and**
- is publicly provided or managed by a body under part II of the *Housing Act 1985* such as a local authority, development corporation, or a housing association under the *Housing Association Act 1985*;
- has a person (eg a warden) whose function is to care for the needs of the residents and who either lives on site or works there for at least 30 hours a week.

Concessionary television licences granted under sheltered accommodation are available only if all the qualifying criteria are met and all the residents are eligible.

If anything happens that makes the sheltered housing ineligible under the qualifying criteria, for example, if the person whose function is to care for the needs of the residents does not live on site and has the hours worked on site reduced to below 30 hours per week, residents may benefit from a 'new preserved right' that was introduced on 1 April 2003. (See Section 3.4).

Private housing schemes are eligible only if they are run or publicly provided or managed by a local authority or housing association.

### **3.4 Exceptions**

In the Regulations there are exceptions to the above rules for sheltered accommodation.

#### **Old Preserved Rights**

The qualifying criteria for sheltered accommodation changed as of 19 May 1988 but people who were eligible and living in accommodation that qualified for the concessionary licence immediately prior to that date, but not after it, were given a 'preserved right' to the concession. This means that provided they continue to live in accommodation which would have qualified under the old rules they can continue to benefit from the concession.

#### **New Preserved Rights**

New Preserved Rights will apply to existing occupants of a sheltered housing scheme where the scheme no longer fulfils the criteria for the full ARC concession due to the inclusion of ineligible residents in the scheme or changes in its warden provision.

It applies to eligible residents who are:

- under the age of 75; **and**
- living in a scheme that has lost the full concession for the above reason after 1st June 1998; **and**
- who were covered by a full ARC licence in that scheme on or after that date.

The concession is therefore not portable and cannot be carried from one scheme to another.

## **Sites where some units have been sold**

Sheltered schemes which would otherwise fail to qualify solely because up to 25% of the residents had exercised their 'right to buy' under the *Housing Act 1985*, continue to qualify for a concessionary licence. The concession applies only to those remaining residents who continue to rent their property from the local authority or housing association.

### **3.5 How the licence works**

#### **What does the licence cover?**

The licence covers the installation and/or use of television receiving equipment for residents in their own accommodation. Separate licences are required for sets used in communal areas, or sets used by staff or by the warden in their own accommodation.

#### **How much?**

The fee is £7.50 for each eligible unit of accommodation (flat or room) occupied by a resident. Residents aged 75 or over are eligible for a free Accommodation for Residential Care (ARC) licence.

#### **Who applies?**

Application should be made by the authority administering or managing the home or housing scheme. If an individual person considers that their accommodation qualifies they should contact the warden, staff or managing authority.

## **4. Households with a person aged 75 years and over**

A person is eligible for a free over 75 licence from the start of the month in which they become 75. In order to obtain a free licence, it has to be applied for. Until an application for a free licence is made, TV Licensing does not know of the person's right to have a free licence and the person will be treated as unlicensed.

The person applying will need to provide name, address, date of birth and National Insurance number (if National Insurance number is not available, proof of age will be required such as photocopies of passport, birth certificate or driving licence).

If the previous licence has been paid for by direct debit, the renewal document will have an over 75 application form attached to it. The form should be completed and returned to TV Licensing, or the details telephoned through. The payments will be adjusted to give licence cover up to the month of eligibility, at which point the free licence will be issued.

If the previous licence was purchased using any other method, a short term licence can be purchased to provide cover up to the month of the person's 75th birthday. The application for a free licence will normally be made when a short term licence is purchased. At expiry of the short term licence the free licence will be issued.

If a full fee licence is purchased by mistake, write to or call TV Licensing supplying the necessary information (see above) and the free licence together with a refund, where applicable, will be issued at the appropriate time.

Entitlement to a free licence is not affected if there are younger people living in the same household, but the free licence will have to be in the name of the person who is aged 75 or over. A free licence is limited to a principal residence and will not be available on a second home.

If the licence holder dies, then the licence will remain in force until its expiry. At this time the surviving members of the household will need to make arrangements for a new licence.

Once the free Over-75 Licences is issued, your licence will be renewed automatically every year and you will get further paper communication only every three years.

## **5. Help from local authorities**

Some local authorities have, in the past, operated schemes for full or part payment of television licences for older and/or disabled people in their area. As with any local concessions, the conditions and scale of any scheme will vary. Contact your local authority for details.

## **6. Caravans and mobile homes**

A separate licence is not needed for static caravans, mobile homes and other vehicles that are not used as main residences, provided there is a licence held for the main residence and no simultaneous use of television occurs.

Use of a TV in caravans which are normally used for touring from place to place does not need a separate licence, as long as there is a licence held at the main address.

## **7. Paying for your TV licence**

To pay for your TV licence you can use one of the following options:

- By debit or credit card on line or over the phone by calling 0844 800 6790;
- By Direct Debit – you can set up a monthly, quarterly or yearly payment on the website or by calling 0844 800 6767;
- At a PayPoint outlet – take your renewal notice, payment slip or saving card (see below) to one of the PayPoint outlets to pay by cash or debit card. You can find your local PayPoint outlets on the website: [www.paypoint.co.uk/locator](http://www.paypoint.co.uk/locator). If you have a queries about disabled access PayPoint outlets call 0844 800 5812.
- By post – send a cheque to TV Licensing;
- Cash Payment Plan – with this scheme you can spread the cost of your TV Licence fee by paying regular weekly or fortnightly payments at PayPoint outlets or over the phone; for more information and/or to join the scheme call 0845 601 5526 (lo-call rate).
- Savings Card – you can save towards the cost of your next TV license in small amounts by using a saving card. To apply call 0845 155 0327.

For more information see TV Licensing website: [www.tvlicensing.co.uk](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk).

## **8. Further information from Age Concern**

The following Information Sheet may be relevant:

Info Sheet IS/29 *Digital Switchover*

If you would like

- to find your nearest Age Concern
- any additional factsheets mentioned (up to a maximum of 5 will be sent free of charge)
- a full list of factsheets and/or a book catalogue
- to receive this information in large print

phone 0800 00 99 66 (free call) or write to Age Concern FREEPOST (SWB 30375), Ashburton, Devon TQ13 7ZZ. For people with hearing loss who have access to a textphone, calls can be made by Typetalk, which relays conversations between text and voice via an operator.

Age Concern factsheets and other information materials can be downloaded free from our website at: [www.ageconcern.org.uk](http://www.ageconcern.org.uk). To receive a free e-mail notification when new and updated factsheets are published, please either contact the Factsheet Subscription Service on tel: 020 8765 7200 by email: [factsheet.subscriptions@ace.org.uk](mailto:factsheet.subscriptions@ace.org.uk), or sign up on-line.

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No factsheet can ever be a complete guide to the law, which also changes from time to time. Therefore please ensure that you have an up to date factsheet and that it clearly applies to your situation. Legal advice should always be taken if you are in doubt. (*Age Concern England is unable to give legal or financial advice*).

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