



Commissioner for **Older People**
for Northern Ireland

BBC Charter Review Consultation
BBC Trust
180 Great Portland Street
London
W1W 5QZ

2 November 2015

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: BBC Charter Review Consultation

I am writing to you on behalf of the Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland (COPNI) in relation to the BBC Trust consultation document on the renewal of the BBC Charter. The Commissioner's role is to promote awareness of issues relating to older people and to be an authoritative champion for them.

COPNI note the BBC's commitment to delivering content through different platforms over the next Charter period. Given the new opportunities technology provides, but also the prediction of the consultation document that internet only media consumption will not occur during this period, COPNI believes this is the right approach. Care should be taken to ensure that key content is available across all platforms so older people have continuity of access whether online or offline.

COPNI welcomes the BBC's commitment to do more to reflect society as it is during the next Charter term and hopes that older people are one of the groups that are reflected in this way.

COPNI has also noted that it has been confirmed by the Government that the BBC is taking over the cost of distributing free TV licenses to over 75's. This consultation document states that the BBC will be able to "*reform the policy from 2020.*" Many older people, even those with assets, are not cash rich and have to carefully account for new expenditure. As the consultation document states, there is no possibility of the license fee charge being reduced during the next charter period, with the Government already having committed to raise the fee in line with inflation.

Any proposed change in the cost to individual older people of licenses for over 75's would cause implications for household budgets, and would require careful consideration of the impacts. COPNI would like to hear more detail about what shape reform would take and where the BBC's thinking and planning is on this issue.



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If you would like to discuss any of these points in further detail, please do not hesitate to contact the Policy Team via:

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Yours faithfully,

Emer Boyle
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Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland