

# InBrief

Spring 2016

p2



Hello from TV Licensing, Black and White viewing, Single Justice Procedure

p3



TV Licensing on the road: Money Lifeline Basingstoke

p4



Ask TV Licensing, Ways to Pay

## Aspiring animators from leading universities compete to bring TV Licensing excuses to life



Judges' Award: students from Middlesex University won one of the top prizes

Parrots, microwave ovens and the King of Scotland feature in the list of implausible excuses for not having a TV Licence given over the past year. Many from the list have been turned into animations by five of the UK's leading animation universities as part of a national competition.

Excuses have been collected from people right across the UK, who have tried to avoid paying for a TV Licence. One Plymouth resident claimed his TV was only used to send his pet goldfish to sleep, while a TV viewer in Glasgow

told a TV Licensing Officer he didn't need a licence as he simply stole his neighbour's signal. An exasperated West Midlands viewer informed TV Licensing that she couldn't pay for her TV Licence as her payment card had been eaten by her hamster and she was waiting for it to "come out the other end".

Outlandish royal claims were also heard, with one Northumbrian viewer stating he didn't need a licence as he was the self-proclaimed "King of Scotland".

Jason Hill, TV Licensing spokesperson, said: "Although the students' animations are highly imaginative, we're not so impressed with the creative approach to excuses, as watching or recording live TV without a licence is against the law.

"Even though we're effective at catching evaders, we'd always prefer people pay than risk a maximum £1,000 fine. For those who may find it difficult to pay in one go, we offer a range of payment options to spread the cost. Sign up at [www.tvlicensing.co.uk](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk)."

Middlesex University students Ida Melum, Kyle Xuereb Cunningham, Adara Penelope Todd and Nicole Smith won the Judges' Award for their stop-motion animation about an alien abduction excuse. The People's Choice Award was won by Dundee University students Alex Heywood, Mark McGinty and Steve Buntin for their 'King of Scotland' video.

You can see all the videos at [youtube.com/tvlicensing](http://youtube.com/tvlicensing)

## Single Justice Procedure

As regular readers will know, TV Licensing prefers people to pay rather than be prosecuted which is why we allow a significant amount of time for people to pay and why we offer ways to spread the cost, including our weekly cash payment schemes. We also allow out of court disposals for the vast majority of first time offenders (where people are allowed to buy a licence before the case comes to court and the case is subsequently dropped). However, we do prosecute persistent offenders as we have a duty to enforce the law. This year the Ministry of Justice is introducing the Single Justice Procedure (SJP), where low-level, high-volume cases (such as TV Licence evasion and some DVLA offences) are reviewed by a single magistrate, rather than heard in open court with a bench of magistrates supported by court staff.

Continued on Page 2.

# Introduction of the Single Justice Procedure

## Continued from Page 1.

A Statutory Instrument - a form of legislation which allows for alterations to an Act of Parliament without the need for a new Act - is required for TV Licensing to operate under the SJP. Once this is in place, TV Licensing plans to work with court areas to introduce the SJP on a staggered basis.

It is expected the first cases are likely to be reviewed at Teesside court in May. Under the SJP, TV Licensing will send out an SJP notice to the defendant, rather than the courts sending out a summons. The SJP notice will

explain the defendant has 21 days to plead either not guilty or guilty. Three options can be selected for response:

1. Plead guilty – I do not want to come to court
2. Plead guilty - I want to come to court
3. Plead not guilty – send me the date of my trial

If the first option is chosen, the magistrate will review the case and the defendant will not attend court but will be sent details of any sentence and fine. If options 2 or 3 are chosen, the defendant will be

sent a summons giving a date and time to attend court.

The SJP notice will also give details of the charge and provide an opportunity for the defendant to provide mitigation for the offence. The defendant will still be able to submit a means form to the court under this procedure.

TV Licensing also plans to send answers to “Frequently Asked Questions” with the SJP Notice. If you have any questions about how the SJP will work for TV Licensing cases please let us know on [campaignoffice@tvlicensing.co.uk](mailto:campaignoffice@tvlicensing.co.uk) and we will respond.

## Black and white viewing still on song

It may be hard to believe, but more than 9,000 people in the UK are still watching black and white TV.

Nearly 50 years after former BBC Two controller David Attenborough raced to broadcast colour TV in the UK ahead of his German television colleagues, 9,356 black and white licences are still in force across the UK.

Jeffrey Borinsky, a television and radio technology historian, commented:

“There are hundreds of collectors like myself who have many black and white TVs; some of them are purists who won't have this new-



angled colour TV in the house. We like the glow of valves, rich sound and wonderful warm smell of these old sets. It's simply pure nostalgia and the joy of seeing old equipment

still working in the internet age.”

Some black and white TVs may require a colour licence if they can receive and record programmes in colour, for example when using a Personal Video Recorder (PVR) connected to a black and white TV.

The cost of a black and white TV Licence remains frozen at £49 until BBC Charter Review in 2016. A colour licence costs £145.50. A TV Licence is needed if you're watching or recording programmes at the same time as they're shown on TV, and can be bought online in minutes at [tvlicensing.co.uk/info](http://tvlicensing.co.uk/info).

## Hello from TV Licensing

Welcome to the first InBrief of 2016. We know that for some the start of a new year is not easy, especially for those clients and customers operating on shoestring budgets. We work with Money Advice organisations across the country during this peak time of the year to ensure anyone requiring a TV Licence understands all the payment options available to them.

Regionally, we have been working with several groups providing valuable advice and support in local communities. These include Trent Debt Advice, Glasgow Old People's Welfare Association and

Ipswich Housing Action Group. Our relationship with these groups - and many other organisations across the UK - will be crucial in a year that promises to be a significant one for TV Licensing.

Earlier this month the Government confirmed an agreement had been reached on closing the iPlayer loophole “as soon as practicable.” This means those watching any content on BBC iPlayer will require a TV Licence, not just - as now - if live TV is being watched. Of course, the vast majority of people will already be covered by a licence.

When we have more information about the changes taking place we'll be in touch so you can give the best possible advice to your clients, customers and members.



If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact me on [campaignoffice@tvlicensing.co.uk](mailto:campaignoffice@tvlicensing.co.uk) for further information.

I hope you enjoy this edition of InBrief.

**Dan Higgins**  
Editor, InBrief



# TV Licensing on the road



**TV Licensing works closely with community organisations throughout the UK. In this edition, we focus on Money Lifeline. InBrief talks to Adviser and Trustee, David Evans (pictured second from left), as the charity continues to help the community in Basingstoke.**

## Q1. In a nutshell, what services does your organisation offer?

Money Lifeline is a debt advice charity set up by the churches in Basingstoke to support people in debt crisis. We advise on benefits, income, setting budgets and on ways to manage money. We negotiate with creditors to help people find a way through their money problems. Our service is free.

Often we are able to agree an affordable repayment schedule but sometimes problems are more difficult and, where appropriate, we help people through court hearings and applying for bankruptcy or a debt relief order.

## Q2. How does your role fit in there and what do you like most about your job?

I am one of a team of advisers who are all volunteers focusing on seeing clients face-to-face and trying to assist. This involves correspondence and telephone contact with creditors on behalf of clients, as well as sometimes dealing with courts, bailiffs and insolvency applications. In addition, I am one of the two managers of the centre who take a lead in making sure we have systems, policies and procedures in place to respond appropriately to clients and make sure we treat clients fairly in line with requirements of the regulator, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA).

## Q3. What are the common issues your clients are dealing with at the moment?

Every client is different but our typical client is more likely to be female than male, more likely than not to have children and be a single parent, and have multiple issues in their life that are threatening to overwhelm them.

We regularly see clients with rent and council tax arrears as well as utility debts and lots of phone debts. But we have been finding recently that clients are struggling more than before with benefits – either because of sanctions or because they can't make the money stretch as far as they wish.

## Q4. Tell us about a recent campaign or project you've worked on – what made it so successful?

The past year has seen us needing to spend a lot of time in preparing our application to the FCA. This body has taken over regulation of consumer credit from the Office of Fair Trading and we needed to reapply. The FCA requirements are rightly very strict and we've had to make sure that we understood these and that our policies and procedures were in line with the FCA requirements. It's been a big job and frustrating in some ways – but just after Christmas we heard that we had been authorised and could carry on helping local people in crisis.

The FCA does an important job in ensuring that vulnerable people are advised properly and not taken advantage of by unscrupulous lenders. Applying for authorisation has meant we have had to redirect some time and effort away from client advice but it's vital that we did it to ensure we could carry on. A good start to 2016 therefore.

## Q5. What are the benefits of organisations forming partnerships with TV Licensing?

We have found TV Licensing to be very helpful in terms of general guidance and advice, attending training sessions and responding to queries about particular clients. Too often creditors or agencies are remote and obstructive but TV Licensing is fair, professional and approachable.

With clients we talk about making sure they pay the big five first: rent, council tax, gas, electric and TV Licence. It's amazing how many people get their priorities muddled or believe that they don't need to pay for a TV Licence because they have a subscription service such as Sky or Virgin Media.

The literature and support from TV Licensing means we are confident in the advice we can give and happy that we will be able to arrange an affordable method of paying for the licence.

For more information, you can contact Money Lifeline at 01256 351026 or [moneylifeline@btinternet.com](mailto:moneylifeline@btinternet.com)



# Ask TV Licensing

TV Licensing's Community Relations team speaks to hundreds of organisations every year to help make sure people understand when a licence is needed and how to pay. We often attend conferences, provide workshops, and put on Q&A sessions. As part of a regular feature, we provide answers to frequently asked questions. Have a question you need answering? Email us at [campaignoffice@tvlicensing.co.uk](mailto:campaignoffice@tvlicensing.co.uk) or call us on 020 875 26537.

## Do Armed Forces Personnel need a TV Licence?

In Ministry of Defence (MOD) living accommodation, on or off base, you need to be covered by a TV Licence if you watch or record programmes as they're being shown on TV – on any device. That includes TVs, computers, tablets, mobile phones, games consoles, digital boxes and DVD/VHS recorders.

If service personnel are moving overseas, they may be able to claim a refund on their licence. For more information, service personnel can visit the dedicated Armed Forces' pages on the TV Licensing website at [tvlicensing.co.uk/armedforces](http://tvlicensing.co.uk/armedforces), which offers definitive answers to the most frequently asked questions on TV Licensing, or visit their local HIVE or unit administration office.

## Does my client need a TV Licence if they watch live TV from abroad?

Yes, they will still need a licence, even if they only watch or record programmes broadcast from outside the UK.

You need to be covered by a TV Licence to watch or record programmes as they're being shown on TV or live on an online TV service, no matter what device you use.

For clients who don't speak English as a first language, we offer resources that explain who needs a TV Licence, how much it costs, how you can pay for one and what concessions are available, in a number of different languages. To download, go to [tvlicensing.co.uk/community-relations/downloadLeaflets](http://tvlicensing.co.uk/community-relations/downloadLeaflets)

## Equality and Diversity update

TV Licensing continues to improve information for customers as part of our commitment to equality and diversity. Here's a round-up of our latest improvements:

- The new accessibility page of our website provides signposting to a range of information including where to get debt advice.
- There are improved processes for assisting customers who contact us on behalf of a friend or relative who is mentally or physically incapacitated.
- We have made improvements to the Welsh page of our website, including making it easier to contact the TV Licensing Welsh Team.

## Ways to pay: there are several ways to pay for a TV Licence

### Direct Debit

Phone 0300 790 6112 to set up a monthly, quarterly or annual Direct Debit payment. Direct Debit is now used by the majority of customers and it's now also possible to set it up online by visiting [tvlicensing.co.uk/payinfo](http://tvlicensing.co.uk/payinfo).

### Debit and Credit Card

Call 0300 790 6112 in order to pay by debit or credit card. This facility accepts payment from a range of debit cards including Maestro/Switch and Delta. You can also pay online at [tvlicensing.co.uk/payinfo](http://tvlicensing.co.uk/payinfo).

### By Post

Send a cheque made payable to TV Licensing to: Customer Services, TV Licensing, Darlington, DL98 1TL

### Over-the-counter

Make payments in person at one of more than 24,000 PayPoint outlets around the UK.

Go to [paypoint.co.uk/locator](http://paypoint.co.uk/locator) to find your nearest outlet. To find out about using PayPoint to make payments under a cash payment plan, call 0300 555 0300.

### TV Licensing Payment Card

The TV Licensing Payment Card gives people the chance to spread the cost of their TV Licensing through weekly or fortnightly payments. Customers receive reminders in the post, by telephone or via text message advising them that payments are due. Call 0300 790 6078 for further information.

### Useful numbers

Change of address notifications	0300 790 6112
Cash payment plan enquiries	0300 790 6078
Requests for TV Licensing literature	0208 752 6537
Multilingual facility	0300 790 6044
Minicom facility	0300 790 6050
Over 75s enquiries	0300 790 6154



Follow us on [Twitter](#)



Watch us on [YouTube](#)



Listen to us on [AudioBoom](#)