

## **Television licence concessions**

### **About this factsheet**

This factsheet gives information about television licence concessions and the main criteria for eligibility.

The information given in this factsheet is applicable in England. Different rules may apply in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. Readers in these nations should contact their respective national Age UK organisation for information specific to where they live – see section 7 for details.

For details of how to order other Age UK factsheets and information materials go to section 7.

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# 1 Introduction

You need a television licence to use any television-receiving equipment including TV set, set-top box, video or DVD recorder, PC or mobile phone to watch or record programmes as they are being broadcasted. This includes foreign broadcasts.

There are television concessions available to:

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

Details on the criteria and how to apply are available from TV Licensing, Bristol BS98 1TL, telephone 0300 790 6115, website: [www.tvlicensing.co.uk](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk)

## 2 Blind or severely sight impaired

If you are blind or severely sight impaired you can claim a 50% discount on the cost of your television licence.

To apply, you will need to send a photocopy of the certificate from your local authority or ophthalmologist confirming your status together with your licence application form and the appropriate fee to TV Licensing, Blind Concession Group, Bristol BS98 1TL.

Once you are registered with TV Licensing as being blind or severely sight impaired, all subsequent renewals will be at the concessionary rate.

If you live with someone who is blind or severely sight impaired you can also benefit from the blind concession TV Licence. You will need to transfer the licence to the name of the blind person.

If you've already paid the full fee for a TV Licence, but qualify for a blind concession you may be entitled to a refund. There is an on line refund form or you can get in touch with TV Licensing to send you one. You can only get refunds for TV Licences bought after 1 April 2000, when the blind concession was introduced. You will need proof that you were certified as either blind or severely sight impaired when you bought the licence.

### 3 **Accommodation for Residential Care (ARC) licence**

An Accommodation for Residential Care (ARC) concessionary licence is available to some people who live in certain types of care homes or sheltered housing (see sections 3.1 and 3.2 below).

To qualify you must be retired and aged 60 or over or disabled.

A retired person for this purpose is a person who, if in paid employment, works less than 15 hours a week. You can only work for more than 15 hours a week if you have had ARC concessionary licence since 31 March 2004.

A disabled person is a person who has substantially impaired sight, hearing or speech, a mental health disorder or substantial physical disability.

An ARC licence costs £7.50. Residents aged 75 or over are eligible for a free licence.

You will need a licence if you watch television in your own separate accommodation but not if you only watch television in common areas such as a residents' lounge.

If you consider that your accommodation qualifies for an ARC licence, contact the warden, staff or managing authority who will apply for your licence.

If you have already paid for a TV Licence and now qualify for an ARC Concessionary TV Licence you may be able to claim a refund on your full fee TV Licence; ask your care home manager to help you with this.

#### 3.1 **Care homes**

Residents of care homes are only eligible for an ARC licence if they fulfil the criteria described above and if they live in a registered care home whose main purpose is to provide accommodation for retired people aged 60 or over or disabled people.

### 3.2 Sheltered accommodation

Residents of sheltered accommodation are only eligible for an ARC licence if they fulfil the criteria described above and if they live in sheltered accommodation that:

- 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 registered under part II of the Housing Act 1985; or a housing association as defined in the Housing Association Act 1985; or a development corporation as defined in the New Towns Act 1981; and
- 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.

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

If there are any changes that make the sheltered accommodation ineligible under the qualifying criteria, eg 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 3.3).

### 3.3 New preserved rights

New preserved rights 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 1 June 1998; and
- who were covered by a full ARC licence in that scheme on or after that date.

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

### 3.4 Sites where some units have been sold off

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.

## 4 The over 75 concession

If you are 75 years or over you are eligible for a free TV Licence for your main home. You will need a separate licence for your second home or any other address where you are staying regularly such as holiday home (see section 5).

A free licence is not issued automatically – you have to apply for it. You will need to provide your date of birth and National Insurance (NI) number. If you do not have a NI number, you can send alternative proof of age such as photocopies of passport, birth certificate or driving licence.

If you are 74 when renewing your licence you can apply for a short-term licence to cover the period until you reach 75. When you turn 75 you should automatically receive a free over 75 TV Licence.

If you paid for a full year's licence by mistake, contact TV Licensing. They can change it to the free licence once application has been received and refund any overpayments.

If you share your home with someone younger, you can still apply for a free TV Licence as long as you transfer the licence into your name.

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

## 5 **Second home**

Your TV Licence for your main home does not cover you for a second home – you will need to purchase a separate licence.

You do not need a separate licence for a static caravan or a mobile home that is not used as a main residence if you do not use television at the same time at both places and you have a licence for the main residence. You will still need to fill in a declaration form and return it to TV Licensing.

You do not need separate TV Licence for touring caravans, vehicle or boat, as long as you hold a licence for your main address.

## 6 **Paying for your TV Licence**

You can pay for your TV Licence using one of the following options:

- by debit or credit card on line or over the phone by calling 0300 790 6131
- by direct debit – you can set up a monthly, quarterly or yearly payment on the website or by calling 0300 790 6161
- 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 query about disabled access PayPoint outlets call 0300 790 6131
- by post – send a cheque to TV Licensing
- TV licensing payment card – with this scheme you can spread the cost of your TV Licence fee by paying regular weekly or monthly payments at PayPoint outlets, online or over the phone; for more information and/or to join the scheme call 0300 555 0286
- savings card – you can save towards the cost of your next TV licence in small amounts by using a saving card. To apply call 0300 555 0281

- with and electronic transfer (BACS) from your bank; details on the website.

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

## 7 Further information from Age UK

### Age UK Information Materials

Age UK publishes a large number of free Information Guides and Factsheets on a range of subjects including money and benefits, health, social care, consumer issues, end of life, legal, issues employment and equality issues.

Whether you need information for yourself, a relative or a client our information guides will help you find the answers you are looking for and useful organisations who may be able to help. You can order as many copies of guides as you need and organisations can place bulk orders.

Our factsheets provide detailed information if you are an adviser or you have a specific problem.

### Age UK Advice

Visit the Age UK website, [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk), or call Age UK Advice free on 0800 169 65 65 if you would like:

- further information about our full range of information products
- to order copies of any of our information materials
- to request information in large print and audio
- expert advice if you cannot find the information you need in this factsheet
- contact details for your nearest local Age UK



## Age UK

Age UK is the new force combining Age Concern and Help the Aged. We provide advice and information for people in later life through our publications, online or by calling Age UK Advice.

Age UK Advice: 0800 169 65 65

Website: [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

In Wales, contact:

Age Cymru: 0800 169 65 65

Website: [www.agecymru.org.uk](http://www.agecymru.org.uk)

In Scotland, contact:

Age Scotland: 0845 125 9732

Website: [www.agescotland.org.uk](http://www.agescotland.org.uk)

In Northern Ireland, contact:

Age NI: 0808 808 7575

Website: [www.ageni.org.uk](http://www.ageni.org.uk)

## Support our work

Age UK is the largest provider of services to older people in the UK after the NHS. We make a difference to the lives of thousands of older people through local resources such as our befriending schemes, day centres and lunch clubs; by distributing free information materials; and taking calls at Age UK Advice on 0800 169 65 65.

If you would like to support our work by making a donation please call Supporter Services on 0800 169 87 87 (8.30 am–5.30 pm) or visit [www.ageuk.org.uk/donate](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/donate)

## Legal statement

Age UK is a registered charity (number 1128267) and company limited by guarantee (number 6825798). The registered address is Tavis House, 1-6 Tavistock Square, London, WC1H 9NA. VAT number: 564559800. Age Concern England (charity number 261794) and Help the Aged (charity number 272786) and their trading and other associated companies merged on 1 April 2009. Together they have formed Age UK, a single charity dedicated to improving the lives of people in later life. Age Concern and Help the Aged are brands of Age UK. The three national Age Concerns in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales have also merged with Help the Aged in these nations to form three registered charities: Age Scotland, Age Northern Ireland, Age Cymru.

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