

Watchdog
1st Floor
BBC Dock House
MediaCity UK
Salford
M50 2LH

Insert Your Address
& Phone Number
& Email Address
Here

Insert Date Here

Dear Watchdog,

TV Licensing Harassment of Non-TV Users

I am writing to encourage your programme to investigate the underhand tactics employed by TV Licensing in the pursuit of TV licence fee payment by genuine non-TV users.

As I'm sure you're aware the Communications Act 2003 requires that all premises where equipment is used to receive or record live (as broadcast) TV signals must be correctly licensed. Additionally, from 1st September 2016, a TV licence is needed for those properties where equipment is used to watch or download BBC on-demand programmes via the BBC iPlayer system. The Licensing Authority, the BBC, has been delegated responsibility for the administration, collection and enforcement of the TV licence fee, which in turn it subcontracts to a number of private companies acting under the TV Licensing trademark.

Anyone not using equipment in the circumstances described above does not require a TV licence, nor are they legally obliged to inform TV Licensing of that fact. Despite this legally indisputable fact TV Licensing make it their business to harangue and intimidate people who have no need for a TV licence.

Those who voluntarily communicate their non-licensable status to TV Licensing find their disclosure met with disbelief and are rewarded with the threat of a TV Licensing agent paying a confirmatory visit to their property.

People exercising their lawful right to abandon television should be able to do so without receiving TV Licensing's intimidatory correspondence, which threatens them with legal action unless they purchase a TV licence they do not require. TV Licensing's correspondence barely acknowledges the fact that a property may be correctly unlicensed, as is the case with tens of thousands of properties across the UK.

TV Licensing correspondence I have seen, sent to correctly unlicensed properties, contains the following threatening statements I can only assume are designed to coerce payment where none is due:

"We want to ensure you have the information you may need before a hearing is set at your local court."

"My Enforcement Officers may visit [address of unlicensed property] without warning at any time. It could be during the day, at evenings or weekends."

"They may interview you under caution in accordance with the Police and Criminal

Evidence Act 1984 or Scottish criminal law.”

“I would urge you to comply with the law and renew your television licence immediately.”

As if receiving letters of such a deceitful and menacing tone was not bad enough, TV Licensing are kind enough to emblazon red lettered threats on the outside of their envelopes, clearly designed to further embarrass the correctly unlicensed occupier into compliance.

By the BBC’s own admission more than 80% of these letters are destined for properties that are correctly unlicensed. I am also aware of situations where the occupiers of correctly unlicensed properties have been terrified, by threats of police or search warrant action, into paying for a TV licence they have no legal need for.

As a quick search of the internet and newspapers will confirm, TV Licensing's tactics are increasingly deceptive and intimidating. I do hope you will be able to investigate them further, despite the obvious fact they are endorsed and encouraged by the BBC.

Yours sincerely

Signature

Print Name Here