



# Understanding the TV Licensing prosecution process

**(in England and Wales)**

This leaflet is a guide to the TV Licence prosecution process. It will help you understand what happens now you've been interviewed.

If you need extra help, we suggest you read this with someone who can support you. For example, a case worker.

**If you have any questions, please contact us.**



**0300 373 5451**



**[tvlicensing.co.uk/visit](https://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/visit)**



**TV LICENSING**

[tvlicensing.co.uk](https://www.tvlicensing.co.uk)

## Why you were visited today

One of our Officers visited you recently because we had no record of a TV Licence at your address and you hadn't replied to our previous letters. We wanted to check if you were watching live TV and needed a TV Licence.



### **A TV Licence covers you for:**

- All TV channels, like BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Dave and international channels
- Pay TV services, like Sky, Virgin Media and BT
- Live TV on streaming services, like YouTube and Amazon Prime Video
- Everything on BBC iPlayer

**This includes recording and downloading.  
On any device.**

## Why you were interviewed

At the visit, the Officer found that you'd been watching live TV without a TV Licence. This is a criminal offence, so they interviewed you under caution and recorded your information.

**You'll receive a copy of your interview by email or post if you asked for one. A further copy will be sent by post if you are prosecuted.**

## What was discussed at your interview

The Officer explained they were going to ask some questions about the offence of watching TV without a licence.

### They then:

- Cautioned you to let you know your rights
- Explained that you didn't have to say anything, but if you did it could be used in court
- Explained that you could take legal advice, but you would have to pay for it
- Recorded important information, including the evidence they saw and the answers you gave
- Asked you if there was anything we should know about which may help stop your prosecution

### Didn't tell the Officer about your circumstances at the time?

Don't worry – you can do this now. You'll need to provide evidence.

### Either:

- Call us on 0300 373 5451 and we can explain what you need to do
- Or go to the 'Providing your evidence' section of this leaflet

## What you need to do now

You need to buy a licence if you haven't already. If you buy a licence today and keep up with your payments, you may be able to avoid prosecution. We will write to you and let you know if this is the case.

A TV Licence costs £169.50.

### To buy one, you can either:



#### Pay in one go

You can pay £169.50 with a debit or credit card, or by sending a cheque. You can also pay with cash at your nearest PayPoint store.

Find out more at [tvl.co.uk/waystopay](https://tvl.co.uk/waystopay) or call **0300 373 5451**.



#### Spread the cost


Our Simple Payment Plan is the most affordable way to pay. It works out at about £3 a week.

Visit [tvl.co.uk/sppcard](https://tvl.co.uk/sppcard), call **0300 373 5451** or scan the QR Code with your phone to find out more. You will need to enter the reference code HHP201.



**You must keep up with your payments to remain correctly licensed.**

## Help managing your finances



We know some customers find it difficult paying for a TV Licence.

There are many not-for-profit organisations that could help you. Their advice is free, confidential and independent.

### Citizens Advice

Visit your local Citizens Advice Bureau or go to [adviceguide.org.uk](https://www.adviceguide.org.uk) (England and Wales).

### National Debtline

If you live in England or Wales call **0808 808 4000** or visit [nationaldebtline.org](https://www.nationaldebtline.org) for advice and information.

### Money Helper

Visit [moneyhelper.org.uk](https://www.moneyhelper.org.uk) or call **0800 138 7777** for free, unbiased advice.

If you're struggling to make your payments, please call us on **0300 373 5451** and we'll try to help.

## Prosecution is the last resort

We want to help you avoid prosecution. However, even if you do buy a licence, you may still be prosecuted if:

- You have a previous TV Licensing conviction, or you've been considered for TV Licence prosecution in the past
- You previously told us you don't need a TV Licence when you do
- You previously told us you will not buy a TV Licence even when you were told you need one

### The prosecution process

If you are found guilty by the courts, the magistrate will decide the level of your fine. You may have to pay:


- A maximum fine of up to £1,000
- A victim surcharge of 40% of the fine
- Prosecution costs of around £120

You will still have to buy a TV Licence if you need one.

**You cannot be sent to prison for a TV Licensing conviction. However, the court may decide to send you to prison for deliberately refusing to pay court fines.**

For more information on the prosecution process, please visit [tvlicensing.co.uk/visit](https://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/visit), call **0300 373 5451** or scan the **QR Code**.






## Your personal circumstances


Before we prosecute you, we must be sure the evidence against you is strong enough. We'll also look at any personal circumstances you've told us about that may mean it would be unfair to prosecute you. These need to be serious enough that they've stopped you from buying a TV Licence and managing your day-to-day affairs.

**On the right hand side are some examples of what might be happening to you. It might be related to your physical health. Or your mental health, a learning difficulty, money problems or domestic abuse. There are also examples of proof you can give us.**

**We consider every case individually and look at all of the evidence before making a decision. Please call us on 0300 373 5451 for advice on how this could apply to you. We won't share your information with anyone else, unless it's required or permitted to do so by law.**







## **Examples of your personal circumstances.**

**I was in hospital. Or I have a very serious illness. What can I do?**

You can show a letter from a GP, a nurse or the hospital.

**I have a serious mental illness. Or I recently lost a loved one. What can I do?**

Your care support worker can help give us information on your needs.

**I have a learning difficulty that makes it hard to buy a licence. What can I do?**

Your carer can help give us info on your needs.

**I lost my job. Or I can't pay for basic things like food or heating. What can I do?**

You can show proof your benefits have stopped. Or a letter from a charity saying what happened.

**I am experiencing domestic abuse. What can I do?**

Please find a safe place to call us. We can help. If a charity is helping you, ask them to call us.



## Providing your evidence

The evidence you give us must show how your circumstances prevent you from buying a TV Licence. It may also explain the difficulties you have managing your day-to-day affairs and how prosecution could impact you.

### How to send us your evidence

You can send evidence by email or post. If you're posting documents, please only send copies (not originals), as we're unable to return them.

Please fill in the form on this leaflet and send it with your evidence. If you email us instead, please include the same details included on the form. Scan your evidence (you can do this using a smart phone) and email it to:

**[visit@tvlicensing.co.uk](mailto:visit@tvlicensing.co.uk)**

Any evidence you provide will be carefully considered before any decision to prosecute is made.

If you need any guidance, please call us on **0300 373 5451**.



## Your evidence form

**Use this form if you are posting evidence of your personal circumstances to us.**

Complete the form, tear it off, and send along with the copies of your evidence.

**If you are sending us evidence by email, please also include the information below.**

**Interview reference number:**

Found under the barcode on your Record of Interview form.

**Full name:**

**Date of birth:**

 :  : 

**Address:**

**Postcode:**

**Signature:**

**Date:**

 :  : 

Send copies of your evidence, together with this completed form, to:

**TV Licensing, Customer Service Centre,  
PO Box 88, Darwen BB3 1WZ**

The BBC, which is the data controller, and its suppliers (who with the BBC use the brand name “TV Licensing”) will only use the personal data you provide to help decide whether to prosecute you for the offence of using a TV receiver without a licence and in connection with any such prosecution (and, if appropriate, to update our records). We will not share it with anyone else unless required or permitted to do so by law. To find out more, visit [tvlicensing.co.uk/privacypolicy](http://tvlicensing.co.uk/privacypolicy)

## Further information

For further information regarding a visit from an Officer, or a potential prosecution for a TV Licensing offence, please call us on **0300 373 5451** or visit **[tvlicensing.co.uk/visit](https://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/visit)**

If you have sight problems, you can get this information by email or in Braille, large print or audio by calling **0300 790 6076**.

If you are deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired, we provide relay assistant services. For more information, go to **[tvlicensing.co.uk/accessibility](https://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/accessibility)**



[tvlicensing.co.uk](https://www.tvlicensing.co.uk)