

**STATEMENT TO BE MADE BY THE ASSISTANT CHIEF MINISTER
ON WEDNESDAY 16TH NOVEMBER 2016**

I am making this brief statement in response to Deputy Tadier's proposition P.117/2016, regarding age-related concessions to the television licence fee for Jersey residents.

This followed Deputy Mézec's written question in October 2015 on the subject.

I wanted to provide States Members with an update on the progress that the States of Jersey has made in this area, and on the issue of BBC Charter renewal more generally.

As many Members will know, the Charter forms the constitutional basis for the BBC, sitting alongside a Framework Agreement that adds a level of policy detail.

Collectively, these two documents set out the public purposes of the BBC, they guarantee its independence, and they cover its various duties and funding. Both apply to Jersey, and both expire at the end of this year.

To ensure that Jersey's relationship with the BBC remains clearly defined from January therefore, States of Jersey officers have (since 2015) been in regular discussions with the BBC and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (the DCMS).

These discussions have covered various subjects within the broader context of Charter renewal.

However, I can confirm that Officials were tasked specifically with ensuring that the BBC continues to treat the Island fairly with regard to funding for TV licence concessions.

And also that Jersey continues to receive a high level of service provision from the BBC in the future, in terms of radio, television and other services (such as live coverage of States sittings).

In early discussions it was established that the agreement between the UK Government and the BBC regarding age-related concessions to the TV licence only applies to people over the age of 75 in the UK and not to the Crown Dependencies.

As Members will understand, this is partly due to the fact that the social security systems of the jurisdictions are separate and distinct.

Until a formal agreement has been finalised with the BBC, I cannot confirm the full outcome of these discussions.

However, it is worth noting that officers from the Digital Policy team and the London Office have developed a strong working relationship with their counterparts at both the BBC and DCMS over the course of the past year, and I can say that both parties have been receptive to our requests.

I am also happy to advise that, where appropriate, these discussions have been conducted on a pan-Island basis with representatives of Guernsey and the Isle of Man, to ensure an equitable approach across the Crown Dependencies.

In recent months, meetings between States of Jersey officers, the DCMS and the BBC took place on:

16th December 2015 (with the BBC)
17th December 2015 (with the DCMS)
27th April 2016 (with the DCMS)
19th May 2016 (with the BBC)
16th August 2016 (with the BBC and the DCMS)

4th November 2016 (with the DCMS).

I hope this goes some way to answering Deputy Tadier's question. It is disappointing that the Deputy did not seek to ask or email me directly about the progress that was being made, and instead lodged a proposition.

I look forward to providing further information once an agreement between the States of Jersey and the BBC has been finalised.

This will be before the end of the year.

In the meantime, and subject to the caveat I have already mentioned, I look forward to answering any questions that Members might have on this issue.