



Information Policy and Compliance

[bbc.co.uk/foi](http://bbc.co.uk/foi)

Via email:

05 October 2007

Dear

**Freedom of information request – RFI2007000790**

Thank you for your request dated 11 September 2007 seeking further information about TV Licensing. Your request is being dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“the Act”). In your request you asked the following:

*I note from your current advertising that you are capable of tracking changes of address, and using this as a stimulus to send out TV licensing reminder letters. This sounds an extremely interesting database which might have applications for academic research – for example, in tracking migration patterns within the UK. If you have any published (or non-commercially-sensitive) data on how you do this, I would be very grateful if you could send it to me. It would also be of great interest to know what primary data sources you are using.*

Please note that “TV Licensing” is a trading name used by companies contracted by the BBC to administer the collection of television licence fees and enforcement of the television licensing system. The majority of the administration of TV Licensing is contracted to Capita Business Services Ltd (which undertakes the majority of the administration of the TV Licensing system), with the administration of our cash related payment schemes contracted to Revenues Management Services Ltd (RMS). PayPoint Network Ltd and PayPoint Collections Ltd are contracted to provide over-the-counter services. The marketing and public relations activities are contracted to the AMV Consortium. The consortium is made up of the following four companies: Abbott Mead Vickers BBDO Ltd, Fishburn Hedges Boys Williams Limited, PHD Media Limited and Proximity London Ltd. The BBC is a public authority in respect of its television licensing functions and retains overall responsibility.

Before answering your question it may be helpful if I set out some background information regarding the TV Licensing database which, as you suggest in your message, is key to the TV Licensing operation.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

The TV Licensing database lists all the addresses in the UK which hold a valid TV licence as well as a list of those addresses which do not. It enables to a certain extent the automation of TV Licensing enquiries and reminder letters and is therefore a vital tool in informing TV Licensing about the licence status of an address.

The database is updated through a variety of methods. Externally acquired data such as our primary source, the Post Office Address File, is of great importance. From time to time TV Licensing may also access other public primary information sources such as the electoral roll via an external company in order to ascertain name information for particular addresses. Another method is through customer contact, whereby individuals notify TV Licensing of circumstances such as changes in address. We carry out activity to ensure this takes place, for example by reminding the public via home moving websites and similar methods to inform when they move. Finally updates to the database are also made via 'dealer notifications' which are sent to TV Licensing as the result of the legal requirement that television retailers must notify TV Licensing every time they sell or rent a television set.

However, it is important to emphasise that while all these methods are used to update the database, TV Licensing does not attempt to proactively trace a licensee or a change of address per se. This is because a licence is only valid at the address stated on the licence unless the licensee has requested a transfer. TV Licensing's operations therefore centre around the address itself and whether it is currently licensed; we are not concerned with tracking particular individuals as they move address. The onus therefore lies with the licensee or a member of their family living with them to inform TV Licensing that their address has changed.

Finally, I should highlight that the TV Licensing database can only be used for the exclusive purpose of administering the television licensing system and cannot legally be used for any other purpose (including academic research).

### **Appeal rights**

If you are not satisfied with this response you have the right to an internal review by a BBC senior manager or legal adviser. Please contact us at the address provided, explaining what you would like us to review and including your reference number. If you are not satisfied with the internal review, you can appeal to the Information Commissioner. The contact details are: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF, telephone 01625 545 700 or see <http://www.ico.gov.uk/>

I hope this response is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

**Natalie Saunderson**  
**Policy Adviser**  
**BBC TV Licensing Management Team**