

The independence of the BBC

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According [to reports](#) in the Sunday Times the BBC is to lose about 18% of its income because it is to be required to fund the free television licence for the over 75s.

Four thoughts follow. The first is that it is worrying that the report was made via the Murdoch press, who have campaigned for this.

Second, it is of concern that the cost of social policy should be born by the BBC when the decision was not theirs.

Third, that this is justified by the neoliberal dogma of 'crowding out' is absurd: the current news privately owned news media is more than capable of sustaining itself but if ever it was not then the need for the BBC would be greater, and not less.

But last, what is worrying is the break down of the appropriate barriers between the BBC and government that now implies the BBC is just an arm of the state. It cannot and should not ever be seen as such if it is to retain its credibility as the foundation of the free press not just in the UK but around the world.

This last point apparently now counts for nothing, and it's this lack of regard for the real value that the [fourth estate](#) can bring to debate that worries me most.