

## PURNELL PRAISES SWITCHED ON LANDLORDS

Five public housing providers were today named as the first recipients of a new award recognising housing providers and managers who are prepared for digital television switchover.

The Homes Set for Digital scheme, established by Digital UK, recognises organisations able to provide digital television and information about switchover to residents in good time before analogue services are switched off in their region.

James Purnell MP, Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport, said: "I'd like to congratulate these organisations for leading the housing sector in preparing for the digital future. They are at the forefront of a change which will touch every home and which every landlord, property manager and developer should be planning for now."

Research shows that while most property managers are aware of switchover many have yet to take action to upgrade their television reception systems. According to research published by DCMS last year, around one third (34%)<sup>1</sup> of social housing providers in the UK's first regions to switch don't have a plan to be ready in time. Digital UK estimates that even fewer private landlords may be making preparations for the change.

The Homes Set for Digital scheme is the latest initiative from Digital UK aimed at boosting switchover awareness and preparation among housing developers, landlords, property managers and residents. Leaflets have been sent to rented properties across the first four regions to switch and a dedicated website providing information for property managers ([digitaluk.co.uk/propertymanagers](http://digitaluk.co.uk/propertymanagers)) was launched in summer 2007.

Jane Ostler, Digital UK's Director of Housing, added,

"Housing providers have an important role to play in ensuring the success of the UK's digital switchover. While most householders can make the switch for themselves, many people rely on a shared aerial system which can only be converted to digital by their landlord or property manager.

"Taking action early will mean that landlords are able to manage the process in a way that works best for them and their residents. For private landlords, it could also help give them an edge over their competitors in the rental market. Anyone who wants to apply to the scheme, can do so online at the Digital UK website: [www.digitaluk.co.uk/propertymanagers](http://www.digitaluk.co.uk/propertymanagers)."

The successful Homes Set for Digital award winners are:

- Arena Housing Association
- IDS (Industrial Dwellings Society)
- Sanctuary Housing
- Six Town Housing
- SPH Housing

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<sup>1</sup> BRMB research on behalf of Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), November 2006 – published in January 2007

Applications for the Homes Set for Digital certification mark are welcomed from organisations that have responsibility for the provision of communal TV aerials to residential properties. This could be in the role of developer, managing agent or landlord in either the private or public sectors. Interest in participating or making an application for the certification mark can be registered online: [www.digitaluk.co.uk/propertymanagers/industry\\_updates\\_entry/accreditation\\_scheme](http://www.digitaluk.co.uk/propertymanagers/industry_updates_entry/accreditation_scheme)

Ends.

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### Notes to editors

**Homes Set for Digital** is supported by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR), the Scottish Government, the Welsh Assembly Government, the Housing Corporation, Communities Scotland and the National Housing Federation.

The Homes Set for Digital certification mark incorporates a special logo, known as the 'digital tick', which has been developed to help consumers through switchover. The 'digital tick' identifies digital products and services that are designed to work through switchover, stockists of digital products and services, and reliable sources of information about digital switchover.

More details available at:

[www.digitaluk.co.uk/propertymanagers](http://www.digitaluk.co.uk/propertymanagers)

**Digital UK** is the independent body implementing the UK's switch to digital television. The company communicates switchover to the public; manages the upgrade of 1,154 transmitters for digital; and works with industry to ensure understanding and support for switchover. Digital UK was set up by the public-service broadcasters, and offers independent switchover advice to the public through its helpline (08456 50 50 50) and website (digitaluk.co.uk).

**Switchover** will create a fairer situation in which everyone has access to a choice of affordable digital TV services. Between 2008 and 2012, all TV services in the UK will go completely digital, region by region. The UK's old analogue television signal is being switched off and replaced with a digital signal, a process that will also allow the UK to remain a world leader in broadcasting.

**digitaluk.co.uk/press**