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Press release

digitaluk

WEST REGION WAKES TO A DIGITAL DAWN

Viewers need to retune Freeview equipment to receive all channels

All analogue television channels in the West TV region were switched off for good today, signalling the dawn of an all-digital era for more than two million viewers.

Shortly after midnight, analogue BBC One, ITV1, Channel 4 and Five were turned off permanently enabling extra digital channels to be broadcast from 61 local relay transmitters serving thousands of homes.

The changes also affect existing Freeview viewers who may find some of their channels missing this morning. The services have moved to new frequencies and can be restored by retuning Freeview TVs and boxes.¹ After retuning, some viewers may find they can receive services from both England and Wales. Advice on choosing preferred channels is available from Digital UK.

Both Digital UK, which has co-ordinated the switch, and the Switchover Help Scheme are today running advice points and roadshows to provide support for viewers who need it. The Help Scheme is still open to applications from older and disabled viewers who may qualify for help including a choice of equipment, installation and aftercare.² The Help Scheme remains open to applications until 7 May.

Bill Taylor, Digital UK's Regional Manager for the South West, said: "This is an historic day for TV in the West region as we say goodbye to the old analogue system forever. Viewers have responded extremely well and many are enjoying the benefits of digital TV for the first time.

"As with any change on this scale, some people may need a bit of extra help so we and the Help Scheme are on hand to give advice and assistance to those who may need it."

Digital UK is providing support through local advice points, its website (digitaluk.co.uk) and an advice line (08456 50 50 50). A list of advice points is available at digitaluk.co.uk/westadvicepoints. Switchover roadshows are also running today at the following locations between 9am and 5pm:

- The Podium, Bristol
- Stall Street, Bath
- Wharf Green, Swindon
- High Street, Weston-Super-Mare
- Fore Street, Taunton

- ends; notes follow -

Notes to editors

1. Retuning and regional services

How to retune your Freeview, Top-Up TV or BT Vision equipment:

- Switch on your digital box or digital television
- Press 'menu' on the remote control
- Select 'set up' or 'installation' option
- Select 'first time installation' option (sometimes called 'factory reset', 'full retune' or default settings')
- Press 'OK' if your equipment asks if you want to delete all your channels - don't worry this is normal
- Channels will be automatically installed. This may take a few minutes; your equipment may shut down and restart

These instructions are a guide only – each product works slightly differently. For more information on retuning visit digitaluk.co.uk/retuning

Regional services

As with analogue terrestrial TV, Freeview signals will overlap in some areas, enabling viewers to receive two or more regional variants of BBC and ITV channels. Most Freeview equipment will automatically load all versions, placing one at the top of the channel list and any additional channels in the 800s. Viewers can prioritise their preferred regional services by completing a 'manual retune'. Alternatively, they can be made easier to find by using the 'favourites' feature on their digital TV or box. Advice on retuning is available at digitaluk.co.uk/retuning or by ringing 08456 50 50 50.

2. **Switchover Help Scheme:** People aged 75 and over, eligible for certain disability benefits, registered blind or partially sighted or living in care homes are entitled to practical help from the BBC-run Switchover Help Scheme. For £40, they will be given equipment to switch one TV per household to digital. They will be able to have that equipment installed if they want it, a demonstration of how it works and a number to call while they get used to things. If they're eligible and also on income-related benefits, the help will be free. Everyone eligible will be contacted directly before switchover. More information is available on 0800 408 7654 and online at helpscheme.co.uk.

Digital TV switchover is the process of converting the UK's terrestrial television system to digital. Between now and 2012, analogue channels will be switched off region by region and replaced with free-to-air digital TV and radio services (Freeview). Switchover will extend Freeview coverage virtually to the whole of the UK and free up airwaves for new services such as ultra-fast wireless broadband and mobile television. Digital services are also available via broadband, cable and satellite.

Digital UK is the independent, not-for-profit organisation established in 2005 to lead the implementation of digital switchover. It is jointly owned and funded by the public-service broadcasters (BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Five, S4C and Teletext), and the digital multiplex operators.

The Switchover Help Scheme is run by the BBC under an agreement with the Government to help older and disabled people make the change to digital TV. More information is available from helpscheme.co.uk.

Images and video clips are available to media free of charge from vismedia.co.uk.

Follow us on Twitter for live updates on switchover: twitter.com/Digit_AI

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