

THE SOUTH EAST WAKES TO A DIGITAL DAWN

Switchover complete, Freeview viewers must retune

All analogue TV channels across East Sussex and parts of Kent were switched off for good today, signalling the dawn of an all-digital era for more than 280,000 households.

Analogue BBC One, ITV1, Channel 4 and Channel 5 were turned off permanently last night at the Hastings, Heathfield and Tunbridge Wells transmitter groups, enabling extra channels to be broadcast from 17 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

Viewers in some areas may also find their digital TVs or boxes load more than one regional service. Advice on prioritising the preferred regional service is available from Digital UK.

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

Tony Gray, Digital UK's Assistant Regional Manager, said: "Switchover is now complete across much of the south east of England. People have responded positively to the change, and hundreds of thousands of viewers can now receive Freeview for the first time."

Viewers receiving television from the main Heathfield and Tunbridge Wells transmitters will also need to retune their Freeview equipment on 27 June as further changes will take place when channels move to their final frequencies and power levels.

Digital UK is providing support through local advice points, its website (digitaluk.co.uk) and an advice line (08456 50 50 50). Switchover roadshows are running today and tomorrow from 9am until 5pm in the following locations:

- Outside Debenhams, Terminus Road, Eastbourne, BN21 3AP
- Adjacent to the Millennium Clock, Fiveways, Tunbridge Wells, TN1 1QR
- Outside Debenhams, Robertson Street, Hastings, TN34 1HN

Additional switchover advice points are also available from 10am to 4pm in Heathfield, Uckfield, Battle, Hayward's Heath and Tonbridge.

- ends; notes follow -

Notes to editors

1. Retuning and regional services

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

- Make sure your Freeview TV or box is on and in digital mode. Press 'menu' on your remote control.
- Select 'set up' or 'installation'. If you see picture icons, select the tool box, satellite dish or spanner.
- If you are prompted for a code, try 0000 or 1234.
- Select the full re-tune option. This is sometimes called 'first time installation', 'factory reset', 'default settings' or 'shipping conditions'. Do not select 'channel update' or 'add channels'.
- Press 'OK' if your equipment asks if you want to delete all your channels, don't worry this is normal.
- Channels will automatically be installed. This may take a few minutes and 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 40 85 900 and online at helpscheme.co.uk.

Digital TV switchover is the process of converting the UK's terrestrial television system to digital. Finishing in October 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, Channel 5 and S4C), 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.

The engineering work for TV switchover is being undertaken by **Arqiva**, as owner and operator of the transmitter network.

Images are available to media free of charge at digitaluk.co.uk/press. Follow us on **Twitter** for live updates on switchover at twitter.com/DigitalUK.

Contacts

Please contact Rachel Hadfield or Nicola Holder at McKenna Townsend PR on 01425 472330 or email rachel@mckennatownsendpr.com / nicola@mckennatownsendpr.com

digitaluk.co.uk/press