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Press release

GOLD STANDARD FOR AERIAL INSTALLERS LAUNCHED TO ASSIST UK'S DIGITAL SWITCHOVER

A Government-backed scheme to provide an army of trusted, qualified engineers who will help enable the UK's switchover to digital television was launched in London today by the Rt. Hon Alun Michael MP, Minister for Industry and the Regions.

Thousands of aerial engineers are expected to apply to become a Registered Digital Installer (RDI), meaning that those consumers who need their aerial upgrading in order to receive digital TV have a trusted source of advice. The aim of the scheme is to create a gold standard for the aerial industry and help drive out "cowboy" operators.

Under the RDI scheme, engineers will be awarded the 'digital tick' certification mark if they obtain a Level 2 National Vocational Qualification in Electrical and Electronic Servicing, undertake criminal records disclosure and have public liability insurance.

Alun Michael said: "The successful training of the first group of registered digital installers has been achieved through partnership working by the DTI, industry and a network of colleges offering NVQ courses for digital TV installers.

"This qualification will ensure that these registered installers carrying out the work have the right skills needed to ensure that switchover will be done well and on time. It will also raise standards and improve the overall perception of an industry that, at times has suffered from a poor image."

Ford Ennals, chief executive of Digital UK, added: "We intend to maximise awareness of this scheme through our marketing and free digital helpline. Digital UK will promote the qualification by advising viewers to seek professional assistance from recommended digital installers who display the digital tick."

This pioneering scheme will confer a new level of credibility on the aerial installers' industry. Qualified installers are expected to benefit from increased business, because the public will be assured that those with the RDI certificate are the best source of help and advice on aerials during switchover.

The scheme will be administered by the Registered Digital Installer Licensing Body (RDI-LB).

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Bill Twigg, chair of the RDI-LB, said: "This scheme is the result of collaboration between a range of bodies including SEMTA and the trade associations, to produce a skilled and reliable workforce which the public can rely upon during and following the switch to digital."

The DTI has worked closely with the Sector Skills Council, SEMTA and the aerial installer industry trade associations – the CAI and the IDSC – to develop a suite of national qualifications, including the RDI Scheme, in order to raise the professional status of the industry and reassure the public during switchover.

The RDI qualification is designed to be an enduring legacy of switchover, benefiting the aerial-installer industry long after analogue switch-off is complete. In the longer term, apprenticeships will be available to attract high quality people into the sector.

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About Digital UK

Digital UK is the independent, not-for-profit organisation leading digital television switchover in the UK. The company manages the upgrading of the UK's 1,154 television transmitters for digital; explains switchover to the public; and works with industry to ensure understanding and support for switchover. Digital UK is funded by the public-service broadcasters and multiplex operators. Our consumer helpline is 08456 50 50 50. For press pack and material visit digitaluk.co.uk/press.

About switchover

Starting in 2008 and ending in 2012, 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. This will create a fairer situation in which everyone has access to a choice of affordable digital services. Switchover will also allow the UK to remain a world leader in broadcasting.

Contact for installers

Trade professionals with questions about the RDI scheme should contact the licensing body, RDI-LB: **01246 252 857**, or info@rdi-lb.tv

digitaluk.co.uk/press