

CAPTIONS TELL VIEWERS: THE TV SWITCH IS COMING

BBC, ITV and Channel 4 to carry the message in Whitehaven

TV viewers in Whitehaven, Cumbria will become the first to see captions about the digital switchover on their analogue television channels from next week.

The translucent captions, warning viewers that their TV signal is switching to digital, will appear on the four¹ analogue channels BBC1, BBC2, ITV and Channel 4 from May 8. Lasting for a minute at a time, the messages will appear intermittently over the top of the screen in the months leading up to switchover in Whitehaven.

The first captions will read:

“If you are not ready to receive digital TV by October 17th you’ll start losing your channels. For more information call Digital UK on 08456 50 50 50.”

In order to reach as many viewers as possible, the messages will appear during programmes at different times of day, from 0600 to midnight.

Beth Thoren, Director of Communications at Digital UK, the organisation leading the UK’s digital switchover, said:

“This is the most targeted means of communication we have. People who see the captions will know for sure that they are in the switchover area, and that any analogue TV set they are watching must be converted.

“The message on screen is designed to increase awareness of the date of switchover, and provide a source of advice for those who need it.”

The two-stage Whitehaven switchover begins on October 17, when analogue BBC2 comes off air and the first digital channels become available through an aerial to people in the area. Four weeks later, on November 14, switchover will complete as the remaining three analogue channels cease broadcasting and the full complement of 18 digital channels become available.

Although Whitehaven is the first place to experience the captions, they will appear throughout the UK in the run-up to each local switchover, which takes place region by region and finishes in 2012.

- end; notes follow -

Notes to editors

¹ Analogue channel Five is not available in Whitehaven.

Indicative image of how captions will appear is available on request.

Viewers in the Whitehaven area can check whether they need to act by looking out for the captions – for example at:

On BBC1, May 8 at 12:00, 14:20, 17:50 and 19:45

On BBC2, May 9 at 13:15, 15:15, 18:45 and 21:15

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.

Contacts

Jon Steel
020 7462 5428
jon.steel@digitaluk.co.uk

Joe Smithies
020 7462 5442
joe.smithies@digitaluk.co.uk

Fishburn Hedges (public relations)
Rosie Strachan, Matt Cooper or Kate Brader: 020 7839 4321

digitaluk.co.uk/press