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Press release

digitaluk

THE END OF ANALOGUE IN WEST COUNTRY

Region's last switchover completes today ■ Freeview reaches 96% of homes

The last analogue TV signals in the West Country region will be turned off today, bringing an end to a 73-year-old technology¹ and marking the start of a new digital era.

As the region's last digital switchover completes in Plymouth, parts of Devon and east Cornwall, digital TV is now available through an aerial to **96%** of households in West Country, up from just **63%** when switchover began at Torbay in April.

All terrestrial TV signals were turned off shortly after midnight and a team of engineers worked through the night on the switch to all-digital TV services. Analogue services will remain switched off permanently, allowing new Freeview channels to be broadcast from 29 local relay transmitters serving areas such as Tavistock, Plympton and Kingsbridge for the first time.

Viewers receiving their signal from relays will see the number of TV channels available free via an aerial increase from four to around 20 (see notes).

When the transition is completed later today, Freeview, BT Vision and Top Up TV equipment should be retuned in order to receive all the channels available.²

Digital TVs or analogue sets converted with a digital box will be able to receive BBC One, BBC Two, ITV1, Channel 4 and Five – plus additional digital channels, digital text and radio services.

Bill Taylor, Digital UK's South West Regional Manager, said: "This is a truly historic moment for television in the West Country. Later today, the last analogue signals will be shut down from local transmitters and almost everyone will be able to receive Freeview. With satellite and cable also available, viewers across the West Country finally have a choice of ways to get digital TV."

Digital UK, the independent body leading switchover, continues to provide support through local advice points (see notes), its website (digitaluk.co.uk) and helpline (08456 50 50 50). A switchover roadshow is also running today in Place de Brest, High Street, Plymouth.

The Switchover Help Scheme is still welcoming applications from eligible older and disabled people to get help to convert one television – including a choice of equipment, installation and aftercare. But they need to act now, because they can only apply for up to a month after today until 8 October. Eligible people who have already converted a TV set without the Help Scheme can still apply to convert a second set. Viewers can contact the Help Scheme on 0800 40 85 900.

Caroline Byng, Regional Manager for the Help Scheme in the West Country, said: "Although switchover in the West Country has gone smoothly the Help Scheme is never complacent about reaching everyone that needs our help. Anyone that thinks they could be eligible or anyone who knows they are entitled to our help but hasn't been in touch so far should contact the Scheme before the 8th October".

- ends -

Notes to editors

1. The first BBC analogue TV service began in 1936.
2. To retune your Freeview, Top-Up TV or BT Vision equipment, follow these steps:

Note: These instructions are a guide only – each product works slightly differently. Your instruction manual will explain the process for your particular product. Make sure you do a full retune following the guide below. Some product menus have ‘add channels’ or ‘auto search’ functions which may not restore all channels.

- 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.

For more information on retuning visit digitaluk.co.uk/retuning

- **Don’t forget** On 30 September, all UK Freeview viewers will need to retune, as several changes will be made by broadcasters to the channel line-up.

Advice Points

Switchover advice points are running at the following locations. They will be open today and tomorrow:

- Plymouth Guild, Ernest English House, Buckwell Street, Plymouth (10am-4pm)
- Plymstock United Church, 70-74 Plymstock Road, Plymstock (10am-4pm)
- Ivybridge Library, The Watermark, Erme Court, Leonard Road, Ivybridge (10am-4pm)
- Tavistock Area Support Services, Anchorage Centre, Chapel Street, Tavistock (10am-4pm)
- Age Concern, Ilbert Road, Kingsbridge (11am-4pm)
- Age Concern, 2 Crediton Road, Okehampton (12pm-4pm)
- The Ilfracombe Centre, 44 High Street, Ilfracombe (11am-3pm today only)

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 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. Every eligible person will be offered practical help to convert one of their TV sets to digital in the run-up to switchover in each region. People are eligible if they are aged 75 years or more, have lived in a care home for six months or more, get (or could get) certain disability benefits, or are registered blind or partially sighted. Most people will be asked to contribute £40 towards the help but for those on certain income-related benefits, it’s free.

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

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