

4 April 2012 at 0700

Press release

digitaluk

LONDON TV SWITCH STARTS TODAY

Freeview viewers reminded to retune as signal is boosted to reach all areas

The biggest change to television in a generation is underway as the UK's largest digital switchover begins today across the London TV region.

Analogue BBC Two was turned off last night at Crystal Palace and other transmitters across the region, marking the start of a process that will see Freeview coverage boosted to reach all areas.

From today, more than 400,000 viewers in former digital blackspots across Greater London and much of the Home Counties can receive Freeview channels for the first time.

Homes already watching Freeview will need to retune their TVs and boxes in order to regain their BBC services, which are missing this morning.¹

Digital switchover will be completed in the London region on 18 April when the remaining analogue channels will be switched off. Channel 5 and further Freeview channels from ITV and Channel 4 will then be available from local transmitters for the first time.

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. For those who have already signed up, the Help Scheme call centre is available to help with any problems and can be contacted on 0800 40 85 900.

Deborah Bain, London Manager for Digital UK, said this morning: "This is the biggest day for TV in London since Crystal Palace started broadcasting 56 years ago. From today, thousands of viewers across the capital and beyond can receive more channels and better quality pictures.

"Anyone who still hasn't switched to digital should prepare for 18 April when the last analogue channels will be permanently switched off. We urge everyone to get ready now – don't leave it until the last minute."

Digital UK, the body leading switchover, continues to provide support through local advice points, as well as its website and advice line. Switchover roadshows are also running today and tomorrow in Basildon, Croydon, Enfield, Guildford, Hackney, Harlow, High Wycombe, Sevenoaks, Slough, Southend-on-Sea and Watford.

- digitaluk.co.uk/londonevents
- **08456 50 50 50**

- 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.

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.

- Analogue ITV1:** From today, due to a change in broadcast frequencies, most viewers still watching analogue will find that ITV1 has moved to button 2 on the remote control, where BBC Two used to be. Analogue ITV1 will be turned off on 18 April along with remaining analogue channels.
- The 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. Between now and 2012, analogue channels are being 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

Joe Smithies
joe.smithies@digitaluk.co.uk
020 7462 5915

Chris Cain
chris.cain@digitaluk.co.uk
020 7462 5442

digitaluk.co.uk/press