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Press release

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DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO SWITCHOVER LAUNCHED FOR PROPERTY MANAGERS

Digital UK urges property managers to act to avoid blank screens at switchover

Digital UK, the independent body leading switchover, has today launched a new *Online Property Managers' Guide*, equipping property managers with the information they need to be prepared for digital switchover.

Available at www.digitaluk.co.uk/propertymanagers, it is the definitive step-by-step guide to switchover, offering practical advice and tools for property managers, especially those with responsibility for communal aerial systems.

The online guide includes interactive areas for the sharing of issues and best practice, and features an RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feed, so users can keep up with the latest news and updates to the guide. It also covers the background to switchover and appropriate options for delivering digital TV, through to procurement and installation advice.

The guide is aimed at all types of property managers, including those working in public and private sector housing, commercial properties in sectors such as leisure and tourism, and other public sector buildings.

Research from Digital UK and Ofcom* amongst private housing landlords shows they have a high awareness of digital switchover (91%) and a good understanding of what to do (81%). However, nearly half of private tenants (43%) and more than half (54%) of council property tenants do not understand how to make the switch to digital, which could mean they are left with blank screens.

The same research revealed that 97% of tenants have never spoken to their landlord about switchover, and 34%** of social housing providers in the first regions to switch to digital don't have a plan to be ready in time.

Jane Ostler, Director of Housing at Digital UK, said: "Making digital television universally available will bring significant benefits to television viewers but requires forward planning, particularly by those responsible for communal aerial systems. Every communal TV aerial system across the UK will need to be capable of receiving a digital signal, otherwise there will be blank screens at switchover. They should find out when the analogue signals are being switched off in their area.

"This applies to all types of property, including; hotels, B&Bs, businesses, student accommodation, and care homes. We are concerned that there is a communications gap between landlords and tenants, and that some property managers do not have plans in place for switchover. Our guide offers all the help and advice property managers should need, including practical advice and tips on how they can discuss switchover with residents."

Baroness Andrews, Housing Minister, Communities and Local Government, said: 'Landlords and property managers have an important role to play in making sure their tenants and leaseholders are part of the digital revolution and are fully prepared for digital switchover. This guide is an excellent new resource which should be invaluable in taking managers through the issues step by step'.

Digital UK today also launched the new "Homes Set for Digital" accreditation, to be awarded to organisations with responsibility for development, provision, letting and management of residential properties that meet certain criteria in preparing for switchover. It is an opportunity for them to publicly demonstrate commitment to providing the best services to residents through switchover and ensure residents will not be left without television.

For more information on switchover, people should visit www.digitaluk.co.uk.

- ends; notes follow -

Notes to editors

* Source: Quarterly Ofcom/Digital UK Switchover Tracker (Q1 07)

** Source: BRMB research on behalf of Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)

Digital UK is the independent body implementing the UK's switch to digital television. The company communicates switchover to the public; manages the upgrade of 1,154 transmitters for digital; and works with industry to ensure understanding and support for switchover. Digital UK was set up by the public-service broadcasters, and offers independent switchover advice to the public through its helpline (08456 50 50 50) and website (digitaluk.co.uk).

Switchover will create a fairer situation in which everyone has access to a choice of affordable digital TV services. Between 2008 and 2012, all 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, a process that will also allow the UK to remain a world leader in broadcasting.

Images of switchover and Digital UK are available to media, free of charge, from vismedia.co.uk

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