

HALF OF TENANTS UNPREPARED FOR SWITCHOVER

Around half of tenants in the UK still don't know what they need to do to continue watching television after digital TV switchover, according to research published today.

With half of all those living in flats dependent on communal aerial systems, Digital UK, the body leading switchover, is today calling for action from both landlords and tenants to ensure no one is left in the dark when analogue TV signals are switched off.

The joint research by Digital UK and Ofcom found that:

- **43%** of private tenants, and **54%** of council tenants, understand how to prepare for switchover (compared to national average of 64%)
- Just **3%** of tenants have discussed switchover with their landlord
- Three quarters of tenants already have digital TV on their main sets but less than **one third** of secondary sets in rented property have been converted
- General awareness of switchover among private tenants, at **73%**, lags behind the national average of 82%

As well as targeted communication to landlords, Digital UK is launching a campaign to boost awareness of the implications of digital switchover for those who live in rented accommodation. Advertising and leaflets in the first four regions to switch over will provide advice for tenants – including those who rely on communal aerial systems, many of which will need updating in order to provide digital television.

Ford Ennals, Chief Executive of Digital UK, said: "This research is a wake-up call for any landlords or tenants who have yet to start thinking about switchover. Our message is simple: switchover is coming, the countdown has started and you need to prepare.

"We have already been focusing communications on the social housing sector but are now stepping up a gear in response to low awareness, particularly among those renting in the private sector."

Digital UK is working with Communities and Local Government (CLG) and housing associations across the country to implement a programme of conversion and awareness-raising.

Digital UK's three top tips for tenants are:

- Speak to your landlord to check they know when switchover is happening in your area and are getting prepared
- Consider which way of going digital suits you. Find out what digital services are available in your area using the Digital UK online postcode checker (digitaluk.co.uk) or ring the helpline 08456 50 50 50
- Remember to convert all your sets to digital if you want to continue watching TV on them after switchover

- end; notes follow -

Notes

Figures from Ofcom/Digital UK Switchover Tracker (Q1 07) and the Tenants Recontact Survey carried out on behalf of Digital UK by GfK/NOP, February and March 2007.
Sample: 477 tenants

The tenants information campaign will focus on the first four ITV regions to switch to digital television: Border (2008-9); West Country (2009); Wales (2009-10); and Granada (2009).

More information can be found at www.digitaluk.co.uk/propertymanagers. Digital UK is working to update and refresh this over the coming months.

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.

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