

## COUNTDOWN BEGINS TO END OF ANALOGUE ERA

*Dates announced for the TV switchover*

The dates for digital TV switchover in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire were announced today at the region’s National Media Museum, setting out the timetable for the biggest change to broadcasting for a generation.

Switchover will see the five analogue TV channels switched off permanently and the Freeview digital service boosted to reach virtually all households in the Yorkshire TV region. Thousands of homes previously in digital blackspots such as Skipton and Halifax will be able to receive Freeview channels for the first time.<sup>1</sup>

In order to make sure that the switchover message gets across loud and clear, Digital UK has appointed a digital poet. Local word-smith and national broadcaster Ian McMillan will dedicate a series of switchover sonnets to Yorkshire and Lincolnshire as the region counts down to the big day. Local TV themes will be immortalised in the poems and viewers will be invited to lend Ian a hand capturing what the region loves about television.

Digital UK and the Switchover Help Scheme are also preparing to launch a public information campaign to ensure viewers are ready for the change. The campaign, due to intensify early next year, will include roadshows, advertising and an information leaflet sent to every home. The Help Scheme will write to eligible older and disabled people offering support in making the switch, including equipment, installation if needed and aftercare.<sup>2</sup>

Analogue signals will be switched off in two stages at each transmitter group.<sup>3</sup> The dates for switchover in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire are:

Transmitter group	Area	Stage one (BBC Two analogue off)	Stage two (all analogue channels off)
<b>Oliver’s Mount</b>	the Scarborough area	<b>3 August 2011</b>	<b>17 August 2011</b>
<b>Belmont</b>	Lincolnshire, Humberside and East Yorkshire		
<b>Sheffield</b>	the Sheffield area	<b>10 August 2011</b>	<b>24 August 2011</b>
<b>Chesterfield</b>	the Chesterfield area		
<b>Emley Moor</b>	West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire	<b>7 September 2011</b>	<b>21 September 2011</b>

John Askew, Digital UK’s Regional Manager for the Yorkshire TV region, said: “Today’s announcement paves the way for a new era in broadcasting for viewers in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. We’re preparing for the end of the analogue TV era and the dawn of a fully digital age in which everyone can enjoy extra choice. Digital UK and the Switchover Help Scheme will ensure people know about this important change, and that advice and practical support are available.

“We’re delighted that Yorkshire and Lincolnshire has appointed the first ever switchover poet. Born in Barnsley, Ian McMillan is known and loved across the region having risen to fame here, and I can’t wait to hear our move into the digital era celebrated in his work.”

Ian McMillan, official switchover poet for Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, added: “I’m looking forward to being the world’s first digital switchover bard and I hope I’ll help people not to wander lonely when the analogue signal gets switched off – and I’m looking forward to finding rhymes for digital!”

Iain Logie Baird, curator of television at the National Media Museum and grandson of television’s inventor John Logie Baird, said: “The analogue system has lasted a long time, but digital terrestrial television gives viewers higher quality HD images and more choice of programmes.”

### **Get set for switchover with Digital UK’s Top Five Tips:**

1. Visit the switchover postcode checker at [digitaluk.co.uk](http://digitaluk.co.uk) to find out when your area switches or ring the advice line on **08456 50 50 50**.
2. Remember the Switchover Help Scheme will offer equipment and practical support to older and disabled viewers. It will write to eligible viewers in the run-up to switchover. Call 0800 40 85 900 or visit [helpscheme.co.uk](http://helpscheme.co.uk) for more details.
3. Don’t throw out your old TV - almost all sets can be converted with a digital box.
4. Check out the different ways of getting digital TV, including subscription-free options. Digital UK’s postcode checker provides details of digital services available in your area.
5. If you already have Freeview, check you know how to retune your TV or box – you’ll need to do it at both stages of switchover. For more information visit [digitaluk.co.uk/retuning](http://digitaluk.co.uk/retuning).

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### **Notes to editors**

1. **Extending digital coverage:** Turning off analogue TV signals will allow digital terrestrial TV (Freeview) coverage to be boosted to reach virtually all homes. At the completion of switchover, Freeview services are predicted to be available to 98.5 per cent of UK households.

**Channel availability:** Before switchover, Freeview channels are available from main transmitter sites only, offering viewers with digital TVs or set top boxes a line-up of more than 40 channels. Switchover will see more than 1,000 local relay transmitters upgraded to digital. After switchover, relay transmitters will broadcast around 15 Freeview TV channels, including BBC One, BBC Two, ITV1, Channel 4 and Five plus associated services such as ITV2 and BBC Three. Viewers can use the postcode checker at [digitaluk.co.uk](http://digitaluk.co.uk) to check channel availability in their area. Digital TV is also available via cable, satellite and broadband.

2. **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](http://helpscheme.co.uk).
3. **How switchover happens:** Analogue services will be switched off in two stages at each transmitter group. At stage one, analogue BBC Two is switched off and the first group of Freeview digital channels will become available from relay transmitters for the first time. At stage two the remaining analogue channels will be permanently switched off and replaced with additional digital TV, radio and text services.

**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 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, Five 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](http://helpscheme.co.uk).

**Images and video clips** are available to media free of charge from [vismedia.co.uk](http://vismedia.co.uk).

**Follow us on Twitter** for live updates on switchover: [twitter.com/Digit\\_AI](https://twitter.com/Digit_AI)

## Contacts

Please contact Gemma Walters and Rachel Gladwin on 0113 220 0595 or email [digitaluk@brassagency.com](mailto:digitaluk@brassagency.com)

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