

30 May 2012 07:00

Press release

digitaluk

SWITCHOVER UNDERWAY AT HASTINGS, HEATHFIELD AND TUNBRIDGE WELLS

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

Analogue TV signals were turned off across East Sussex and parts of Kent today, and digital TV boosted to reach all areas.

The start of TV switchover means that thousands of viewers in digital blackspots such as parts of Hastings Old Town, Eastbourne, Newhaven and Hailsham can now get BBC Freeview channels for the first time, while picture quality will improve for many existing viewers.

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

Switchover began in the early hours when analogue BBC Two was permanently turned off at the Hastings, Heathfield and Tunbridge Wells transmitter groups.

The process will be completed on 13 June, 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.

Tony Gray, Assistant Regional Manager for Digital UK, said this morning: "This is great news for viewers across the whole region, as many people are receiving new channels for the first time.

"Those viewers who haven't switched to digital should prepare for 13 June, when the last analogue channels will be permanently switched off. Our advice is: get ready now – don't leave it until the last minute."

Digital UK, the body leading switchover, continues to provide support through its website and advice line. Switchover roadshows are running today and tomorrow in Eastbourne, Hastings and Tunbridge Wells, with additional advice points at locations across the region.

- digitaluk.co.uk/meridianevents • **08456 50 50 50**

- ends; notes follow -

Notes to editors

1. Retuning

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.

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.

Digital TV switchover is the process of converting the UK's terrestrial television system to digital. Finishing in October 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

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