

28 January 2009

Press release

digitaluk

SOUTH COAST ANALOGUE CHANNEL FIVE TO BE SWITCHED OFF

TV retune required for 500,000 digital viewers

The analogue Channel Five service in the south coast area will be switched off as part of a reorganisation of TV signals ahead of digital switchover, it was announced today (28 Jan).

The changes, due to take place on **Wednesday, 25 March, 2009**, will affect viewers in parts of Hampshire, east Dorset, West Sussex and the Isle of Wight.

On the same day as the analogue Channel Five switch off, existing digital terrestrial TV services (those received via an aerial), such as Freeview, Top Up TV or BT Vision, will move to new frequencies. An estimated 500,000 homes watching these services will need to retune their equipment or risk losing access to dozens of channels, including those from the BBC, ITV and Channel 4. Satellite and cable TV are not affected.

Digital UK, the independent body leading the implementation of switchover, announced the changes which are required as part of a reorganisation of airwaves ahead of the UK's switch to digital TV, due to take place in the Meridian TV region in 2012. The moves will protect existing digital services from interference from neighbouring areas in the UK and France where switchover is starting in mid-2009.

David Scott, Chief Executive of Digital UK, said:

"Making these changes now is vital to protecting existing services from interference and ensuring that the process runs smoothly in the Meridian TV region in three years' time. Analogue viewers who make the switch to digital now will be able not only to continue enjoying Five but also many extra TV channels, radio and text services. For digital viewers, retuning their equipment should only take a few moments and we are here to offer advice to anyone who needs it."

The changes will be publicised in leaflets sent to every home in the area affected and through local advertising and on-screen captions to be broadcast on the analogue Five service from next month.

For more information on getting digital TV and retuning Freeview equipment, visit digitaluk.co.uk or call the helpline on 0845 845 0231.

- ends; notes follow -

Notes to editors

- 1. The analogue Five service** is broadcast from the Fawley transmitter to around 100,000 homes in the Southampton, Gosport and Portsmouth areas and parts of the Isle of Wight. Latest research suggests that 84 per cent of homes in the region already watch digital TV on the main set, though one-in-three households still have an analogue secondary set.
- 2. Existing Freeview services** will move to new frequencies, including those currently used by analogue Channel Five. Homes affected are those served by the Rowridge transmitter on the Isle of Wight which broadcasts to Hampshire, east Dorset and West Sussex. Viewers can check if they are served by the Rowridge transmitter by using the postcode checker at digitaluk.co.uk or calling the helpline: 0845 845 0231.

3. The reorganisation of Freeview channels will be complete by 6am on Wednesday, 25 March. To retune Freeview equipment, follow these steps:

- Switch on your digital box or digital television
- Press **'menu'** on the remote control
- Select **'set up'** or **'installation'** option
- Select **'auto set up'** or **'update'**
- Channels will be automatically installed

4. Switchover in the Meridian TV region will take place in 2012. Analogue terrestrial TV services (those received via an aerial) will be switched off and replaced with an expanded line up of Freeview channels. Freeview coverage will be extended to reach 97 per cent of households, up from 61 per cent today.

Contacts

Fishburn Hedges (PR)
Suzanne Morris, Paul Hodgson
020 7839 4321

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 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, S4C and Teletext), 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. Every eligible person will be offered practical help to convert one of their TV sets to digital in the run-up to switchover in each region. People are eligible if they are aged 75 years or more, have lived in a care home for six months or more, get (or could get) certain disability benefits, or are registered blind or partially sighted. Most people will be asked to contribute £40 towards the help but for those on certain income-related benefits, it's free.

Images and video clips are available to media free of charge from vismedia.co.uk

digitaluk.co.uk/press