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Press release

digitaluk

WEST COUNTRY SWITCHOVER UNDERWAY

Analogue BBC Two turned off • Freeview viewers required to retune

The digital TV switchover in West Country got underway this morning, as analogue BBC Two was turned off at transmitters across Torbay and south Devon.

The new, high-power digital signal began broadcasting from Beacon Hill at 03:04 this morning and is now being made available from relay transmitters across the area. Analogue BBC Two will remain permanently off.

An improved digital signal is now being made available from Beacon Hill and relay transmitters, broadcasting the full range of BBC channels in digital form – BBC One, BBC Two, BBC Three, BBC Four, CBBC, CBeebies, BBC News and BBC Parliament. For the first time, Torbay and south Devon viewers served by a relay transmitter will be able to receive digital TV through their aerial (Freeview).

Terrestrial TV services will be off air for some viewers until the first stage of switchover is completed by around mid afternoon today. Once services are back on air, viewers of Freeview, BT Vision and Top Up TV should retune their boxes.¹

The second stage of switchover takes place on **Wednesday, 22 April**, when the remaining analogue channels will be switched off permanently. On this date, further Freeview channels from ITV, Channel 4 and Five will also become available from relay transmitters for the first time. Virtually all households in Torbay and south Devon will then be able to receive a Freeview signal.

Bill Taylor, Digital UK's Regional Manager for West Country, said this morning: "West Country switchover is now underway, and many people are receiving Freeview channels for the first time.

"We're now encouraging viewers who still don't have the necessary equipment to get ready in time for 22 April, when all the analogue channels will be permanently switched off. Anyone who needs advice during this period should contact Digital UK."

Digital UK, the body leading switchover, continues to provide support through local advice points (see notes), as well as its website (digitaluk.co.uk) and helpline (08456 50 50 50). A switchover roadshow is also running today and tomorrow in Victoria Street, Paignton between 9am and 5pm and on Wednesday, 22 April in Union Street, Torquay.

The Switchover Help Scheme, run by the BBC, is still welcoming applications from eligible older and disabled people to get help to convert to one television – including a choice of equipment, installation and aftercare. So far, 16,000 people across the West Country have taken up the help. The Help Scheme number is **0800 40 85 902**.

- ends; notes follow -

Notes to editors

1. 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
- **Channel swaps** From today, due to a change in broadcast frequencies, some viewers may find that one of their analogue channels moves to a different button on the remote control. All the analogue channels will be switched off permanently at stage two.
- **Freeview channels** After switchover, virtually all UK households will receive the most-watched Freeview channels and text services. These will include the public service channels BBC One, BBC Two, ITV1, Channel 4 and Five, plus associated digital channels such as ITV2, E4 and BBC Three. Viewers who receive their television signal from a main transmitter will receive more than 40 channels, including optional subscription services. Those who receive their television from a relay transmitter will receive around 20 channels. Viewers can use the postcode checker at digitaluk.co.uk to check which channels are available in their area.

Advice points

Switchover advice points are running at the following locations on Wednesday 8, Thursday 9, Wednesday 22 and Thursday 23 April from 11am-6pm:

Paignton: Preston Baptist Church, Old Torquay Road

Newton Abbot: The Courtenay Centre, Kingsteignton Road

Totnes: The Mansion, Fore Street

Ashburton: Church of Our Lady of Lourdes and St Petroc, East Street

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

Contact:

Ryan Martinez

Deborah Clark Associates

Tel: 01208 77900

ryan.martinez@dca-pr.co.uk

digitaluk.co.uk/press