



# Digital Television Switchover Channel Islands Media Briefing

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# about **switchover**

## What is digital TV switchover?

Switchover is the process of converting the UK and Channel Islands terrestrial television systems to digital. Between now and 2012, analogue channels broadcast from more than a thousand transmitter sites are being switched off region by region and replaced with Freeview digital TV and radio services.

## Why is it happening?

1. The Channel Islands have never had the benefit of digital television through an aerial. Switchover will make television fairer by making digital TV available for the first time from the Fremont Point transmitter (on Jersey) and its seven 'relay' transmitters, to reach almost every Channel Islands home.<sup>1</sup> Viewers will then be able to receive around 15 TV channels, up from just four in analogue today, plus digital radio and text services.
2. Digital TV is more efficient than analogue. Switchover will free up spectrum that could be used for new services.
3. Switchover will allow the UK and the Channel Islands both to keep up with the rest of the world and continue as world-leading markets for broadcasting.

<sup>1</sup> After switchover, Freeview coverage will extend to 97% of households in the Channel TV region.

## When will switchover happen in the Channel Islands?

Switchover will take place on Wednesday, 17 November 2010.

## What is Digital UK?

Digital UK is the independent, not-for-profit organisation set up by the main UK broadcasters to implement digital switchover. The company, launched in September 2005, is jointly owned and funded by the public-service broadcasters (BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Five and S4C), and digital multiplex operators SDN and Arqiva. Digital UK is running a £200m, seven-year national and regional information campaign and provides information to the public via an advice line (08546 50 50 50) and website ([digitaluk.co.uk](http://digitaluk.co.uk)).

## What happens at switchover and what do viewers need to do?

At switchover, analogue TV channels will be switched off at the Fremont Point transmitter group and replaced with around 15 Freeview digital channels, plus radio and text services.

Most people have already converted their main TV to digital. Viewers will need to ensure that their TVs are capable of receiving a digital signal in order to continue receiving television services after switchover. Virtually any TV, even black and white ones, can be converted with a digital box. Anyone buying new TV equipment should look for the 'digital tick' logo (above) which identifies equipment designed to work to continue working after switchover.



## What are the different ways to get digital TV?

There are three main options for going digital:

- **Convert your existing TV with a digital set-top box**  
(eg *Freeview, Top Up TV, BT Vision\**)
- **Get a service like satellite or cable installed for you**  
(eg *Sky, Freesat or Newtel*)
- **Get a new TV with digital built-in** (eg *Freeview, Freesat*)

A postcode checker on the Digital UK website ([digitaluk.co.uk](http://digitaluk.co.uk)) tells viewers which options are available in their area now and after switchover.

\*requires broadband connection

## How much does digital television cost?

For those getting digital for the first time or who are converting secondary sets around the home, the cost will vary according to the number of TVs and method of conversion. It's estimated that 5-10 per cent of households may need to replace damaged aerials in order to receive Freeview signals.

- Freeview digital boxes start at around £25
- Digital televisions start from around £150
- Freesat from Sky costs approximately £150 (includes installation)
- Freesat from BBC/ITV costs from £49 for a standard box and £80 for installation
- Subscriptions (e.g. Sky, Top Up TV) start from approximately £10 per month
- Digital television recorders cost from around £80
- A standard new roof aerial normally costs £60-180

## What channels will viewers get?

Switchover will make around 15 Freeview television channels available across the Channel Islands. Viewers choosing to get digital television this way will be able to receive BBC One, BBC Two, ITV1, Channel 4 and Five, plus a range of digital channels and services free via an aerial. Viewers can check the channels available in their area by using the postcode checker on the Digital UK website ([digitaluk.co.uk](http://digitaluk.co.uk)).

## What other equipment is affected by switchover?

After switchover, analogue recorders will still be able to play tapes and discs but will need to be connected to a digital television or one which has been converted with a digital box in order to record programmes. Analogue recorders will also lose their independent recording function, ie they will only be able to record the digital channel being watched. Viewers updating their recording equipment are recommended to look for a digital DVD recorder or a digital TV recorder which stores programmes on a hard disk and can pause or rewind live TV.

## Do viewers need HD TV equipment for switchover?

No. There's no need to buy HD equipment for digital switchover. Viewers choosing to do so should make sure it carries the 'digital tick' logo. HD services are currently available on satellite but will also be available on Freeview after switchover.

## What help is available?

There is a range of switchover help available. Digital UK co-ordinates public information campaigns in each region during the lead up to switchover. It also operates an advice line (08456 50 50 50), website ([digitaluk.co.uk](http://digitaluk.co.uk)) and postcode checker which informs viewers about the digital television services available in their area.

Digital UK also works with a range of organisations which provide information about digital television to consumers. They include broadcasters, digital platform operators, retailers and local authorities. In addition, it has formed a partnership with a consortium of national charities, including Age Concern and Help the Aged, which will provide information and advice to people who might need some extra help.

The **Switchover Help Scheme** has been established by the BBC to offer practical assistance at the time of switchover to approximately seven million households. You are eligible for the scheme if you:



- are aged 75 years or over; or
- have lived in a care home for six months or more; or
- get (or could get) certain disability benefits, or
- are registered blind or partially sighted

Eligible households will be offered the following:

- equipment to convert one television set
- installation and demonstration of equipment
- follow-up support

There will be a fee of £40 for the help. Help will be free for eligible people on certain income-related benefits.

For more information about the **Switchover Help Scheme**, visit [helpscheme.co.uk](http://helpscheme.co.uk)

## your contacts

Digital UK Media Office: Tel 020 7462 5442  
Email: [media@digitaluk.co.uk](mailto:media@digitaluk.co.uk)

Ryan Martinez, Deborah Clark Associates : Tel 01208 77900

**NOTE: These contacts are strictly for use by members of the media only.  
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