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Press release

digitaluk

## COUNTDOWN BEGINS TO END OF ANALOGUE ERA

*TV switchover begins for thousands of viewers on 30 March 2011*

**The dates for digital TV switchover in parts of the east of England were announced today, setting out the timetable for the biggest change to broadcasting for a generation.**

Switchover at the Sandy Heath transmitter group will see the five analogue TV channels switched off permanently and the Freeview digital service boosted to reach over 966,000 households in parts of Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and Northamptonshire. Thousands of homes previously in digital blackspots such as Luton, Kimpton and Dallington Park will be able to receive Freeview channels for the first time.<sup>1</sup>

Digital UK and the Switchover Help Scheme are preparing to launch a public information campaign to ensure viewers are ready for the change. The campaign, due to kick off later this 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 the east of England are:

Area	Transmitter group	Stage one (BBC Two analogue off)	Stage two (All analogue channels off)
Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire	Sandy Heath	30 March 2011	13 April 2011
parts of Suffolk and Essex	Sudbury	to be announced in 2010	to be announced in 2010
Norfolk and north Suffolk	Tacolneston	to be announced in 2010	to be announced in 2010

Peter Monteith, Digital UK's Regional Manager for the Anglia region, said: "Today's announcement paves the way for a new era in broadcasting for viewers in the east of England. We are preparing for the end of the analogue TV era and the dawn of a fully digital age in which everyone can enjoy extra choice and easier recording. Digital UK and the Switchover Help Scheme will ensure that people know about this important change and that advice and practical support is available for those who need it."

Viewers can check their switchover date and options for getting digital TV by using the Digital UK postcode checker at [digitaluk.co.uk](http://digitaluk.co.uk) or by ringing **08456 50 50 50**.

- more -

## 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. The Help Scheme will write to eligible viewers in the run-up to switchover. Call 0800 408 7654 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 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.
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 408 7654 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 on 13 April 2011, 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, 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. 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)

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