

COUNTDOWN BEGINS TO END OF ANALOGUE ERA

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

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

Switchover at the Bromsgrove, Lark Stoke, Nottingham, Ridge Hill and Wrekin transmitter groups will see the five analogue TV channels switched off permanently and the Freeview digital service boosted to reach households across the region. Thousands of homes previously in digital blackspots such as Halesowen, Hereford and Ludlow will be able to receive Freeview channels for the first time.¹

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.²

Analogue signals will be switched off in two stages at each transmitter group.³ The dates for switchover in the Midlands are:

Area	Transmitter group	Stage one (BBC Two analogue off)	Stage two (All analogue channels off)
The Bromsgrove area	Bromsgrove	6 April 2011	20 April 2011
The Stratford on Avon area	Lark Stoke	6 April 2011	20 April 2011
The Nottingham area	Nottingham	30 March 2011	13 April 2011
Herefordshire, south Shropshire and parts of Gloucestershire	Ridge Hill	6 April 2011	20 April 2011
North Shropshire and south Cheshire	Wrekin	6 April 2011	20 April 2011
Stoke on Trent and Newcastle under Lyme	Fenton	to be announced in 2010	to be announced in 2010
Oxfordshire, parts of Berkshire and Buckinghamshire	Oxford	to be announced in 2010	to be announced in 2010
Much of the West Midlands	Sutton Coldfield	to be announced in 2010	to be announced in 2010
Parts of Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and south Nottinghamshire	Waltham	to be announced in 2010	to be announced in 2010

Peter Monteith, Digital UK's Regional Manager for the Central region, said: "Today's announcement paves the way for a new era in broadcasting for viewers in the Midlands. We're 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 people know about this important change, and that advice and practical support are available.”

Midlands viewers can check their switchover date and options for getting digital TV by using the Digital UK postcode checker at digitaluk.co.uk or by ringing **08456 50 50 50**.

Get set for switchover with Digital UK's Top Five Tips:

1. Visit the switchover postcode checker at 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 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.

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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.
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 and 20 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 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.

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

Follow us on Twitter for live updates on switchover: twitter.com/Digit_AI

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