

4 October 2006

Press release

HOUSING CHIEF JOINS UK SWITCHOVER PROJECT

Digital UK, the organisation leading the UK's switch to digital television, has appointed a housing and property expert to prepare the sector for the change.

Frances Kneller joins Digital UK as Head of Housing and Property, with a brief to tackle low awareness among tenants and landlords to ensure the housing sector is ready for switchover.

Every television in every school, hospital, social and private dwelling will need to be able to receive a digital signal in time for switchover, a phased programme starting in 2008 and ending in 2012.

According to recent research¹ by Digital UK and regulator Ofcom, 54% of public sector tenants have digital TV, far below the national average of 74%. Awareness of switchover is also lower among council tenants, at 57% compared to 66% nationally.

Many tenants in blocks of flats, both public and private, are dependant on their landlords for upgrade work to a communal system before they can receive digital television. Digital UK plans to address this issue by encouraging landlord bodies to make provision for the upgrade work as part of their long planning and investment cycles

The Head of Housing and Property will also work to raise awareness of switchover among tenants and landlords, both public and private. Her work will include:

- Providing detailed technical information and advice on communal TV systems
- Building partnerships with trade and professional bodies seeking to encourage their members to adopt best practice and prioritise TV upgrades
- Working with industry to ensure sufficient supply of equipment for upgrade work

Frances joins Digital UK from the Housing Corporation, the government agency that funds and regulates the social housing sector, where she was Policy Manager. Frances has held senior policy and management positions for a variety of housing associations and local councils over the last 30 years.

Frances said: "The housing and property sectors still have a great deal to do to prepare for switchover, the biggest change in broadcasting since the introduction of colour TV. So Digital UK is working on a comprehensive communications programme to raise awareness and drive action by landlords. I am looking forward to helping develop and deliver that plan."

Ford Ennals, Chief Executive of Digital UK, added: "Frances' experience will be vital in implementing our plan for social, private and public properties. Her track record in working with different government departments at the Housing Corporation makes her ideal for helping us to deliver the major public policy of digital switchover."

Frances will report to Andy Townend, Director of Operations at Digital UK.

- ends; notes follow -

Notes to editors

¹ Source: Ofcom/Digital UK Switchover Tracker, Q2 2006.

About Digital UK

Digital UK is the independent, not-for-profit organisation leading digital television switchover in the UK. The company manages the upgrading of the UK's 1,154 television transmitters for digital; explains switchover to the public; and works with industry to ensure understanding and support for switchover. Digital UK is funded by the public-service broadcasters and multiplex operators. Our consumer helpline is 08456 50 50 50. For press pack and material visit digitaluk.co.uk/press.

About switchover

Starting in 2008 and ending in 2012, TV services in the UK will go completely digital, region by region. The UK's old analogue television signal is being switched off and replaced with a digital signal. This will create a fairer situation in which everyone has access to a choice of affordable digital services. Switchover will also allow the UK to remain a world leader in broadcasting.

Contacts

Joe Smithies
020 7462 5442
joe.smithies@digitaluk.co.uk

Fishburn Hedges (public relations)
Rosie Strachan, Joanna Kwiatkowska or Matt Cooper: 020 7839 4321

digitaluk.co.uk/press