

INDUSTRY BRIEFING

From Digital UK, the organisation leading technical co-ordination of the 700MHz clearance programme

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Upcoming changes to transmitters in Q1 2019

The UHF channels used to broadcast some DTT multiplexes at certain transmitters in the Border, Channel, Wales and Westcountry regions will be changing between **February and March 2019**. These changes are part of work being carried out for the 700MHz clearance programme.

How will this affect viewers?

- Freeview viewers receiving their signal from a transmitter in one of the groups listed overleaf may need to retune to continue receiving some TV channels and radio services. Other platforms that use terrestrial TV, such as YouView, BT TV, EE, Plusnet and TalkTalk, will also be affected.
- Most aerials are expected to be capable of receiving a reliable signal following the changes. However, some grouped aerials - notably group C/D - may need to be updated. A wideband model is generally recommended.¹
- Full details of the affected transmitters, multiplexes, frequencies and aerial group changes are available to download as regionalised PDF files on the Digital UK website at digitaluk.co.uk/clearance.
- Some transmitters may have multiple retune dates during the clearance programme. Where dates are confirmed, these are noted in these PDFs. Otherwise we have listed the planned quarter. Retune dates are also noted in Digital UK's coverage checker at digitaluk.co.uk/coveragechecker.

Why is clearance happening?

The 700MHz band is being cleared for future mobile broadband services, following a decision by the UK Government. Ofcom announced its plan to reallocate this spectrum in November 2014. Freeview services currently using frequencies in this band are being moved to new UHF channels. Transmitters across the UK are being updated as part of a major engineering programme being carried out between now and 2020. The dates and details of changes to transmitters will be announced as the programme progresses and published online at digitaluk.co.uk/clearance.

¹ Group K or T, or equivalent, appropriate to the specific transmitter.

When are the changes taking place?

Engineering work will take place on the dates shown in the table at the end of this document and services will be subject to disruption during this time. Work on main transmitters is expected to be finished by 6am. Engineering at relays will continue until late afternoon. Viewers can retune at any point once work is completed at their transmitter.

Checklist for installers

- If you work with landlords or property managers/factors in the areas listed, please advise them of these changes (including local councils and housing offices, hotels, B&Bs, hospitals and care homes).
- Channelised distribution systems receiving a signal from one of the transmitters changing may need to be adjusted.
- Viewers reliant on DTT who are unable to restore those services affected after a retune as a result of these changes may be eligible for in-home support (See below). In the first instance, all viewers should be directed to freephone **0808 100 0288**.



- Digital Mobile Spectrum Limited is responsible for in-home support during these clearance events.

Further support

Free information and support will be available for these retune events.

Information will be available on the Freeview website at freeview.co.uk/tvchanges and advice as well as support can be accessed from the Freeview Advice Line on freephone **0808 100 0288**.

Please direct viewers to this number for initial support.

An information campaign to help prepare viewers, including local advertising and on-screen messaging where possible, will begin in each area approximately two weeks ahead of these changes.

A full listing of the current channels on Freeview is available at digitaluk.co.uk/channels.

Technical information on transmitters is available from the detailed view of the Digital UK coverage checker (digitaluk.co.uk/coveragechecker). You can also use our planned engineering works page (digitaluk.co.uk/engineeringworks) to keep up-to-date and check for ongoing maintenance.

General trade information on the 700MHz clearance programme is available at digitaluk.co.uk/clearance.

Upcoming Freeview retunes in Q1 2019

Transmitter group	Area Served	Retune Dates
Caldbeck Scotland (Creetown relay only)	the Creetown area	27-Feb-19
Moel y Parc	north east Wales	27-Feb-19
Fremont Point (relays only)	the Channel Islands	13-Mar-19
Beacon Hill	Torbay and south Devon	27-Mar-19
Caradon Hill (Salcombe relay only)	the Salcombe area	27-Mar-19
Stockland Hill (some relays only)	parts of Devon and Dorset	27-Mar-19

Q1 important notes:

- The Arqiva COM 7 and COM 8 multiplexes will close at a small number of transmitters during 2019/early 2020 following 700MHz clearance in certain areas. These transmitters are: Beacon Hill, Caradon Hill, Caldbeck¹, Fenham and Sheffield. As a result, some Freeview channels will no longer be broadcast from these particular sites.

Most channels carried on these multiplexes are +1 or HD simulcasts and the main versions of these services will continue to broadcast as normal. Information for viewers will be available ahead of each clearance event at freeview.co.uk/tvchanges

These multiplexes will close at Beacon Hill on 27 March 2019. Changes at Caradon Hill in the same region (Westcountry) will take place in Q2.

- Moel y Parc will undergo an additional clearance event in Q2 2020
- The Local multiplex will launch on UHF channel 34 from the Hemel Hempstead transmitter on 27 March 2019.

¹correction