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Press release

## CLOCK IS TICKING TO FIRST SWITCHOVER

*Display tells Whitehaven that analogue switch-off is close*

A countdown clock is being switched on today in Whitehaven harbour to mark the countdown towards the UK's first switchover to digital TV.

Digital UK, the independent body leading the switchover, has installed the clock to inform the people of Whitehaven how many days, hours and minutes are remaining before analogue TV signals start being turned off on October 17 – in 161 days' time.

An online version of the clock is also going live this week at [www.digitaluk.co.uk](http://www.digitaluk.co.uk).

The clocks are designed to improve awareness of the timing of switchover in Whitehaven and the surrounding Copeland area. Figures published today by Digital UK reveal **97%** awareness of the switchover locally, but just **54%** of people know it is happening in October.

Also from today, captions warning viewers that their TV signal is switching to digital start appearing on analogue channels in Whitehaven. Lasting for a minute at a time, the messages will reappear intermittently over the top of the screen in the months leading up to switchover in Whitehaven, re-enforcing the exact date of switchover.

John Askew, Digital UK's Regional Manager for the Border region, said: "Switchover is just around the corner, and it's vital that everyone in Whitehaven and Copeland knows when it will happen.

"This clock is counting down to an historic event. Whitehaven is switching first over, but the whole of the UK will follow."

Digital UK's national information programme includes television and radio trails and sponsorship of Channel 4's afternoon quiz show *Countdown*.

The next major communication to Whitehaven will be a leaflet sent to every home in the area in July, outlining the detail of how switchover will take place.

**- ends; notes follow -**

## Notes to editors

How the switchover will happen:

- On **October 17**, BBC2 will cease broadcasting in analogue to Whitehaven, and the first group of Freeview digital channels: BBC1, BBC2, BBC Three, BBC News 24 and CBBC will become available.
- Four weeks later (**November 14**), the remaining analogue channels will be switched off. Every home in the area will then be able to receive at least 18 Freeview channels, including ITV2, E4 and BBC Four, plus digital radio, via an aerial.
- The rest of the country will follow the same two stage process, carried out transmitter by transmitter, between 2008 and 2012.

The Digital Switchover Help Scheme:

- All households in the Whitehaven area have been sent a letter explaining the Help Scheme for the over-75s and those with significant disabilities or who are registered blind or partially sighted.
- The scheme is designed to help those who have not yet switched to digital, and will provide the equipment necessary to convert one television and help with installation. There will be a one-off, subsidised fee of £40. For eligible households on income-related benefits, the help will be free.

## About Digital UK

Digital UK is the independent, not-for-profit organisation leading digital television switchover in the UK. Digital UK is funded by the public-service broadcasters and multiplex operators. Our consumer helpline is 08456 50 50 50.

## 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.

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