

100 DAYS TO PREPARE FOR SWITCHOVER

Viewers across North West urged to get ready ■ Booklet going to every home

With just 100 days to the start of digital TV switchover across the North West, Digital UK is urging viewers to get ready for 4 November, when analogue television will start to be turned off.

Latest research¹ indicates 42 per cent of all viewers in the Granada TV region can pinpoint the month when analogue signals will be switched off. The figure is climbing fast, and Digital UK is now stepping up its communications campaign.

A series of roadshows is running across the region²; a detailed 20-page guide to switchover is being sent to every household in the area; and on-screen captions on analogue channels resume today, telling viewers to get ready. These will be backed up by TV, press and radio advertising, reminding viewers of the date and their options for going digital. The Switchover Help Scheme is contacting those eligible for assistance to convert one TV.

Jo Waters, Digital UK's Manager for the Granada TV region, kicked off the countdown at the 1,035-foot Winter Hill transmitter mast. She was joined by switchover mascot Digit Al, as well as dozens of local school children and their grandparents to unfurl a 100 square metre banner bearing the 4 November switchover date.

Jo said: "There are just 100 days to prepare for the biggest event in broadcasting since the introduction of colour. We're urging anyone who is still watching analogue television to make the change now before 4 November.

"Anyone who needs advice on switching to digital can visit the Digital UK website, call our helpline on 08456 50 50 50, or join us at the roadshows."

The recent research also reveals:

- 93% of viewers in the North West are now aware of switchover
- 80% understand their options and know how to get ready
- 75% of the three million households involved have converted all of their TVs to digital

To continue watching TV through an aerial after switchover, viewers will need to convert their television using a digital box or upgrade to a fully digital model. Subscription and non-subscription digital TV services are also available via satellite across the North West, as well as cable from Virgin Media and broadband television from BT Vision and Tiscali. A postcode checker on the Digital UK website (digitaluk.co.uk) can tell viewers which options are available in their area now and after switchover.

The BBC-run Switchover Help Scheme is also on hand to give practical help to eligible older and disabled people to make the change to digital. Eligible people will receive a letter and information pack explaining the options for switching to digital, and should respond in order to get the help. More information is available through phoning the Help Scheme free on **0800 40 85 906** or visiting helpscheme.co.uk.

- ends; notes follow -

Notes to editors

¹ Source: Digital UK switchover tracker, Apr – Jun 09

² The **switchover roadshow** will visit the following places over the coming weeks (open 9am-5pm)

31 July	Crewe , Town Square, CW1 2EZ
31 July – 1 August	Manchester , Picadilly Gardens, M1 1RG
1 August	Hanley , Tontine Square, ST1 1NP
5 August	Tarporley , Community Centre Car Park, High Street, CW6 0AY
6 August	Winsford , Fountain Square, Next to Peacocks, CW7 1AS
7 August	Malpas , Malpas Car Park, High Street, SY14 8PR
8 August	Congleton , 43 High Street, Opposite B&M Bargains, CW12 1AU
10 August	Wilmslow , Banks Square, SK9 1AN
11 August	Nantwich , Town Centre, High Street, CW5 5AH
12 August	Sandbach , Town Hall Car Park, High Street, CW11 1AX
13 August	Whitchurch , Civic Center, High Street, SY13,1AX.
14-15 August	Chester , Town Hall, CH1 2HS
17 August	Prestwich , Longfield Centre, M25 1AY
18 August	Hoylelake , Lifeboat Station, Seafront (right hand side of slipway)
19 August	Bebington , Church Rd car park
20 August	Huyton , Derby Road
20 August	Ellesmere Port , Civic Square, CH65 0AZ
20 August	Whitefield , Morrisons Stanley Road, M45 8QH
21 August	Neston , Neston Market, Brook Street
22 August	Wallasey , Outside Barclays Bank, Liscard Way
22 August	Oldham , Market Place (Near Yorkshire Building Society) OL1 3AJ
24 August	Heswall , May Road Car Park
25 August	Birkenhead , outside Pyramids Shopping Centre
27 – 30 August	Liverpool , Paradise St, by Whitechapel Junction
1 September	Ormskirk , Morrisons, Park Road, L39 3RB
2 September	Formby , Waitrose, Three Tuns Lane
3 September	Crosby , Crosby Village, Liverpool Rd
4 September	Maghull , Town Square
5 September	Kirkby , Newtown Gardens
7 September	Helsby , Helsby Library, Lower Robin Hood Lane, WA6 0BW
8 September	Runcorn , Trident Retail Park, Halton Lea, WA7 2EU
9 September	St Helens , Church Square, WA10 1BN
10 September	Buxton , Spring Gardens Shopping Centre Car Park, LA6 3HG
11 September	Altrincham , Stamford Square, WA14 1RJ
12 September	Macclesfield , Market Place, SK10 1DY
14 September	Newton-le-Willows , Earlestown Market, WA12 9BQ
15 September	Rochdale , The Butts, South Parade, OL16 1LR
16 September	Warrington , Bridge Street, WA1 2QN
17 September	Skelmersdale , Concourse Shopping Centre, WN8 6LN
18 September	Leigh , Bradshaw Gate, WN7 4NB
19 September	Wigan , Standishgate, Outside galleries shopping centre, WN1 1UE
21 September	Orrell , Orrell Town Library, WN5 8LY
22 September	Chorley , Market Street, PR7 2SN
23 September	Standish , Standish Town Library, WN6 0HQ
24 September	Ashton in Makerfield , Gerard Shopping Centre Car Park, WN4 9AN
25 September	Preston , Flag Market, Market Square, Cheapside, PR1 2PP
26 September	Preston , Flag Market, Market Square, Cheapside, PR1 2PP
28 September	Southport , Chapel St, PR8 1AJ
29 September	Kirkham , Community Centre Car Park, High Street, PR4 2AN
30 September	Garstang , High Street Car Park, PR3 1EB
1 October	Morecambe , Library Car Park, LA4 5DL
2 October	Hornby , Village Car Park, Main Street, LA2 8JR
3 October	Lancaster , Market Square, LA1 1HT
6 October	Ulverston , Brewery Street Car Park, LA12 7HU
8 October	Carnforth , War Memorial Gardens, LA5 9JU
7 October	Grange-over-Sands , Kents Bank Road, LA11 7EY
8 October	Carnforth , War Memorial Gardens, LA5 9JU
9 October	Kirby Lonsdale , Market Square, LA6 2AN
10 October	Ingleton , Community Centre Car Park, LA6 3HG
13 October	Settle , Market Place, Outside Natwest Bank, BD24 9GH
14 October	Shaw , Kershaw East Car Park, off Westway, OL2 7AJ

15 October
20 October

Rochdale, The Butts, South Parade, OL16 1LR
Huyton, Derby Road, L36 9UG

How switchover will happen:

- At the start of switchover, BBC Two will cease broadcasting in analogue and the first group of Freeview digital channels will become available. Four weeks later, the remaining analogue channels will be permanently switched off and replaced with additional digital services.

Transmitter group	Area served	Stage 1	Stage 2
Winter Hill	Liverpool, Manchester, Lancashire, Cheshire and north Staffordshire	4 November 2009	2 December 2009
Moel y Parc	North East Wales	28 October 2009	25 November 2009

- Freeview channels** After switchover, virtually all UK households will receive the most-watched Freeview channels and text services. These will include the public service channels BBC One, BBC Two, ITV1, Channel 4 and Five, plus associated digital channels such as ITV2, E4 and BBC Three. Viewers who receive their television signal from a main transmitter will receive more than 40 channels, including optional subscription services. Those who receive their television from a relay transmitter will receive around 20 channels. Viewers can use the postcode checker at digitaluk.co.uk to check which channels are available in their area.

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 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. Every eligible person will be offered practical help to convert one of their TV sets to digital in the run-up to switchover in each region. People are eligible if they are aged 75 years or more, have lived in a care home for six months or more, get (or could get) certain disability benefits, or are registered blind or partially sighted. Most people will be asked to contribute £40 towards the help but for those on certain income-related benefits, it's free.

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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