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Press release

digitaluk

EXETER BECOMES FIRST DIGITAL CITY

Viewers should retune again ▪ Freeview signals move to full power

Exeter becomes the first digital city in the UK today. The final stage of digital TV switchover in Exeter, parts of Devon, Somerset and Dorset is on course to complete later this afternoon, extending digital terrestrial television (Freeview) coverage to all households served by the Stockland Hill transmitter group.

All terrestrial TV signals were turned off shortly after midnight and a team of engineers worked through the night on the switchover to all-digital TV services. Analogue services will remain switched off permanently, allowing Freeview channels to be broadcast later today from 24 local relay transmitters serving areas such as Weymouth, Tiverton and Crediton for the first time.

All transmitters are on course to be converted to digital by this evening. Once services are restored, viewers should retune their Freeview, BT Vision and Top Up TV equipment.¹

Switching off the analogue signal makes it possible to extend the level of Freeview coverage to reach 96 per cent of households in the West Country TV region. Viewers receiving their signal from relay transmitters will see the number of TV channels available free via an aerial increase from four to around 20 (see notes).

Digital TVs or analogue sets converted with a digital box will be able to receive BBC One, BBC Two, ITV1, Channel 4 and Five, plus additional digital channels such as BBC Three, BBC Four, BBC News, ITV2, ITV3, E4, More 4 and digital text and radio services.

Bill Taylor, Digital UK's South West Regional Manager, said: "I'm pleased to report that the technical transition went according to plan and, from today, many more viewers will be able to receive digital TV free via an aerial. People in Exeter, parts of Devon, Somerset and Dorset have responded really well in adapting to the change and preparing in good time."

Digital UK, the independent body leading switchover, is working closely with the Switchover Help Scheme and will be providing support through local advice points (see notes), its website (digitaluk.co.uk) and helpline (08456 50 50 50). A switchover roadshow is also running today in the Guildhall Shopping Centre, Exeter between 9am and 5pm.

- ends; notes follow -

Notes to editors:

1. To retune your Freeview, Top-Up TV or BT Vision equipment, follow these steps:

Note: These instructions are a guide only – each product works slightly differently. Your instruction manual will explain the process for your particular product.

Make sure you do a full retune following the guide below. Some product menus have ‘add channels’ or ‘auto search’ functions which may not restore all channels.

- Switch on your digital box or digital television
- Press ‘menu’ on the remote control
- Select ‘set up’ or ‘installation’ option
- Select ‘first time installation’ option (sometimes called ‘factory reset’, ‘full retune’ or ‘default settings’)
- Press “OK” if your equipment asks if you want to delete all your channels - don’t worry this is normal.
- Channels will be automatically installed. This may take a few minutes, and your equipment may shut down and restart.

For more information on retuning visit digitaluk.co.uk/retuning

- Stage one of switchover took place on 6 May 2009 when analogue BBC Two was turned off and replaced with BBC digital channels at the Stockland Hill transmitter group.
- **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.

Advice points

Switchover advice points are at the following locations today and tomorrow (Thursday 21 May), 11am-6pm:

Bridport: Chancery House Day Care Centre, Chancery Lane
Weymouth: Pilgrim House, 1 Hope Street
Tiverton: Beck House, Beck’s Square
Honiton: Community Church, The Kings Centre, Lees Buildings, King St

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

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