

3 December 2009

Press release

digitaluk

LONG MOUNTAIN SWITCHOVER COMPLETE

Freeview signals move to full power ■ Viewers should retune again

The final stage of digital TV switchover in parts of east and central Wales is on course to complete today, extending digital terrestrial television (Freeview) coverage to all households served by the Long Mountain transmitter group.

All terrestrial TV signals were turned off shortly after midnight and a team of engineers worked through the night on the switch to all-digital TV services. Analogue services will remain switched off permanently, allowing new Freeview channels to be broadcast from 15 transmitters serving areas such as Llandinam and Llanidloes for the first time.

When the transition is completed later today, Freeview, BT Vision and Top Up TV equipment should be retuned in order to receive all the channels available.

Switching off the analogue signal makes it possible to extend the level of Freeview coverage to reach 98 per cent of households in Wales. Viewers will see the number of TV channels available free via an aerial increase from four to 15 or more.

Digital TVs or analogue sets converted with a digital box will be able to receive BBC One, BBC Two, ITV1, S4C, Channel 4 and Five – plus additional digital channels, digital text and radio services.

Emyr Hughes, Digital UK's National Manager for Wales, 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 the area have responded really well in adapting to the change and preparing in good time."

Digital UK, the independent body leading switchover, continues to provide support through local advice points (see notes), its website (digitaluk.co.uk) and advice line (08456 50 50 50). A switchover roadshow is also running today in Newtown on the High Street outside Boots.

The Switchover Help Scheme is still welcoming applications from eligible older and disabled people to get help to convert one television – including a choice of equipment, installation and aftercare. Eligible people who have already converted a TV set without assistance can still apply to convert a second set. Help Scheme engineers will be working in the area over the switchover period to help with retuning and viewers can contact the Help Scheme on 0800 408 7654.

- 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; your equipment may shut down and restart.

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

- Stage one of switchover at the Long Mountain transmitter group took place on 4 November, when analogue BBC Two was turned off and replaced with BBC digital channels.

Advice points

Switchover advice points are running at the following locations today (3 December) and tomorrow (4 December), from 10am to 4pm:

Llanidloes: Minerva Arts Centre, High Street, Llanidloes, Powys, SY16 3LX

Newtown: Age Concern Montgomery, 11/12 Market Street, Newtown, Powys, SY16 3LX

Welshpool: Judge's Retirement Room, Town Hall 40-47 High Street, Welshpool, Powys, SY21 7RR

Digital TV switchover is the process of converting the UK's terrestrial television system to digital. Between now and 2012, analogue channels are being 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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