

NORTH WEST SWITCHOVER UNDERWAY

Digital signal launched from local transmitters, Freeview viewers should retune

All Freeview viewers in the north west will need to retune their equipment today, as the digital switchover gets underway.

Shortly after midnight, all TV services were temporarily switched off at the Winter Hill transmitter group. Analogue BBC Two was switched off permanently. An improved digital signal is being made available from Winter Hill and its relays, broadcasting the full range of BBC channels in digital form.

Almost half a million viewers served by relay transmitters across the north west can receive digital TV through their aerial (Freeview) for the first time today.

Terrestrial TV services will be off air for some viewers until the first stage of switchover is completed by late afternoon. Once services are back on air, viewers of Freeview, BT Vision and Top Up TV should retune their equipment.¹

As Freeview signals are boosted, a small proportion of north-west viewers may find they receive BBC Wales, ITV Wales or S4C at the top of their Freeview channel guide after retuning, due to overlaps with transmitters in Wales. Viewers can make their preferred services easier to find using either the 'favourites' list, 'channel settings' or 'edit channels' feature of their Freeview equipment.

The second stage of switchover takes place on 2 December, when the remaining analogue channels will be switched off permanently. On this date, further Freeview channels from ITV, Channel 4 and Five will also become available from relay transmitters for the first time.

Jo Waters, Digital UK Regional Manager, said this morning: "Switchover in the north west is underway, and thousands of people are receiving Freeview channels for the first time.

"We're now encouraging viewers who still don't have the necessary equipment to get ready in time for 2 December, when all the analogue channels will be permanently switched off. Anyone who needs advice during this period should contact Digital UK."

Digital UK, the body leading switchover, continues to provide support through local advice points as well as its website (digitaluk.co.uk) and helpline (08456 50 50 50). Switchover roadshows are also running today and tomorrow in Chester, Liverpool, Manchester and Preston.²

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

2. Roadshow locations (4-5 November, 9am – 5pm)

Chester	Town Hall, CH1 2HS
Manchester	Picadilly Gardens, M1 1RG
Liverpool	Paradise Street (by Whitechapel Junction), L1 8BQ
Preston	Flag Market, Market, Cheapside, PR1 2PP

- **Channel swaps** From today, due to a change in broadcast frequencies, a small number of viewers may find that one of their analogue channels moves to a different button on the remote control. All the analogue channels will be switched off permanently at stage two.

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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