

SWITCHOVER CAMPAIGN GOES UNDERGROUND

Tube train unveiled, roadshows begin and information sent to every home

The campaign to prepare London for digital switchover in April goes full steam ahead today, as every home in the capital is written to and a unique pink train begins a three-month run on London Underground's Central Line.

Most of the London TV region's 12m viewers will be affected by switchover in three months' time. Analogue viewers must convert their sets or see them go blank, while Freeview viewers must retune their equipment.

Digital UK, the body in charge of switchover, is ensuring everyone is made aware of the change through a range of initiatives launching today. Every household is being sent a 20-page booklet explaining the process, and roadshow teams will visit 400 locations between now and March.¹

A tube train wrapped in the campaign's distinctive pink livery, with windows forming TV screens and the switchover message on every door, runs on the Central Line from today.² All 272 seats have been turned pink. More than 45m journeys will be taken on the Central Line in the course of the tube train's three-month run, helping generate awareness of the biggest change to television in a generation.

Analogue TV viewers in the London region will also see on-screen messages from today reminding viewers of the need to convert to digital by April.

London's switchover is the biggest in the UK by far, affecting households across the capital and much of the home counties and extending Freeview coverage to almost all viewers.

Analogue BBC Two will disappear in London and neighbouring parts of Berkshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Kent, Middlesex and Surrey on 4 April 2012. The remaining analogue channels – BBC One, ITV1, Channel Four and Channel Five – will then be turned off on 18 April 2012.

Deborah Bain, London Manager for Digital UK, said: "There are now less than three months to prepare for switchover. This is an exciting change affecting millions of viewers, and we're doing everything we can to avoid people facing a blank screen in April.

"The benefits will be felt by people across London and the Home Counties, with stronger signals and more channels available to many viewers."³

- ends; notes follow -

Notes to editors

- ¹ Details of all local roadshows are at www.digitaluk.co.uk/londonevents
- ² Digital UK worked with CBS Outdoor UK and London Underground.
- ³ Around half a million viewers in the London region will be able to receive Freeview for the first time after switchover.

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 virtually 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, Channel 5 and S4C), 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.

The engineering work for TV switchover is being undertaken by **Arqiva**, as owner and operator of the transmitter network.

Images are available to media free of charge at digitaluk.co.uk/press. Follow us on **Twitter** for live updates on switchover at twitter.com/DigitalUK.

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