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Press release

digitaluk

FINAL WEST COUNTRY SWITCHOVER UNDERWAY

Digital signal launched from local transmitters • Freeview viewers should retune

75,000 homes in Plymouth, parts of Devon and east Cornwall can receive digital TV through their aerial for the first time today, as the final digital switchover in West Country gets underway.

Shortly after midnight, all TV services were temporarily switched off at the Caradon Hill transmitter and its 29 relays. Analogue BBC Two was switched off permanently.

Viewers of relay transmitters – in areas such as Tavistock, Plympton and Kingsbridge – have never before had access to digital TV through their aerial (Freeview). An improved digital signal is now being made available from Caradon Hill and relay transmitters, broadcasting the full range of BBC channels in digital form.

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

The second stage of switchover takes place on 9 September, 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. Virtually all households in Plymouth, parts of Devon and east Cornwall will then be able to receive a Freeview signal.

Bill Taylor, Digital UK's South West Regional Manager, said this morning: "This is the final switchover in the West Country. Once it's complete, Freeview will be available to 96 per cent of households in the region.

"We're now encouraging viewers who still don't have the necessary equipment to get ready in time for 9 September, when the last analogue signals in the region 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 (see notes), as well as its website (digitaluk.co.uk) and helpline (08456 50 50 50). A switchover roadshow is also running today and tomorrow in Place de Brest, Plymouth.

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 40 85 902.

- 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

- On 30 September, all UK Freeview viewers will need to retune, as several changes will be made by broadcasters to the channel line-up.
- **Channel swaps** From today, due to a change in broadcast frequencies, some 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.

Advice points

Switchover advice points are running at the following locations. They will be open on Wednesday 12 and Thursday 13 August and Wednesday 9 and Thursday 10 September:

- Plymouth Guild, Ernest English House, Buckwell Street, Plymouth (10am-4pm)
- Plymstock United Church, 70-74 Plymstock Road, Plymstock (10am-4pm)
- Ivybridge Library, The Watermark, Erme Court, Leonard Road, Ivybridge (10am-4pm)
- Tavistock Area Support Services, Anchorage Centre, Chapel Street, Tavistock (10am-4pm)
- Age Concern, Ilbert Road, Kingsbridge (11am-4pm)
- The John Betjeman Centre, Southern Way, Wadebridge (Weds 12 August, 10am-5pm)
- Age Concern, 2 Crediton Road, Okehampton (Weds 12 Aug & Weds 9 Sept, 12pm-4pm)
- Ilfracombe Centre, 44 High Street, Ilfracombe (Weds 12 August, 11am-3pm)

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.

Contact

Ryan Martinez, Deborah Clark Associates
01208 77900
ryan.martinez@dca-pr.co.uk

digitaluk.co.uk/press