

28 October 2008

Press release

digitaluk

## FINAL COUNTDOWN TO TV SWITCHOVER

*Scottish Borders prepares for the end of analogue signals*

TV viewers in the Scottish Borders are getting ready for the UK's first full-scale digital TV switchover starting on 6 November.<sup>1</sup>

With just days to go until the first analogue channel is permanently switched off, Digital UK, the independent body in charge of the process, is launching the final stage of its information campaign for the 52,000 households served by the Selkirk transmitter group.

Over the coming weeks, quarter-screen warning captions on all analogue channels will increase in frequency. There will be regular reminders in the local media and the switchover roadshow will be at three locations offering face-to-face advice and practical demonstrations of digital TV equipment.

Recent research suggests the majority of homes in the Scottish Borders are well prepared for switchover, which will see the five analogue terrestrial TV channels turned off and broadcast in digital form, along with an expanded line-up of Freeview TV, radio and text services. The research indicates high levels of awareness about switchover and that around nine-out-of-ten homes already have digital TV via satellite or Freeview.<sup>2</sup>

Figures for September indicate that, of those still watching analogue TV, no respondents said they did not intend to make the switch to digital.<sup>3</sup>

Also in September, around 3,000-4,000 households had yet to convert their main sets to digital TV. Many may be waiting for Freeview signals to become available in their area. Currently, Freeview is only available to around half of households in the Scottish Borders. This will be boosted to 98 per cent of households when switchover takes place and digital channels are broadcast for the first time from 11 local relay transmitters.

Switchover will take place in two stages. The first stage starts shortly after midnight on 6 November when analogue BBC Two will be switched off and replaced with the BBC's full range of digital channels. All terrestrial TV services will be off air during the night and are expected to be restored in most areas by around 6am. In some areas served by relay transmitters, services will be off air until around noon.

Stage two will take place two weeks later on 20 November. The remaining analogue channels (BBC One, ITV1, Channel 4 and Five) will be replaced in digital format along with more public-service TV, radio and text services. All terrestrial TV services will be off air during the night and are expected to be restored in some areas by around 6am and in other areas (served by relay transmitters) by around late afternoon. After both stages, Freeview boxes will require retuning.

Digital UK is working with local charities and there will be seven advice points on switchover days to give extra advice to those that need it. The Switchover Help Scheme will continue to offer equipment and advice to eligible households.

- more -

John Askew, Border Regional Manager for Digital UK, said: “Scottish Borders is well prepared for switchover and many viewers are looking forward to getting digital TV for the first time.

“While the process will be straightforward for most people, we know that some viewers may need a bit of extra help so we will be working with all our partner organisations to offer support for those who need it throughout the switchover period. People can call us on 08456 50 50 50 or visit [digitaluk.co.uk](http://digitaluk.co.uk)”

- ends -

#### Notes to editors:

1. A trial switchover was completed in Whitehaven, Cumbria in October 2007. Unlike in Scottish Borders, no main television transmitters were involved.
2. Digital UK/Ofcom switchover tracker, Selkirk transmitter area, July-September 08. Sample 160. Awareness of switchover, 100%; understanding, 87%; have digital TV, 90%.
3. Digital UK/Ofcom switchover tracker, Selkirk transmitter area, September 08. Results are indicative only (sample size 56).

Digital UK’s roadshows will be based at the following locations:

5 November: **Peebles**, town centre

6 November: **Galashiels**, Asda

20 November: **Hawick**, Morrisons

After switchover, virtually all UK households will receive approximately 20 of the most watched free to air digital 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. Households that receive their television signal from a main transmitter will receive 48 channels. These will include Freeview channels plus optional subscription services such as Top Up TV and Setanta Sport. Viewers can use the postcode checker at [digitaluk.co.uk](http://digitaluk.co.uk) to check which channels are available in their area.

**Digital television 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 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](http://vismedia.co.uk)

#### Contact

Stephanie Robertson, Weber Shandwick

[srobertson@webershandwick.com](mailto:srobertson@webershandwick.com)

0131 556 6649

**digitaluk.co.uk/press**