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Press release

digitaluk

NORTH DEVON WAKES TO A DIGITAL DAWN

Freeview signals move to full power ▪ Viewers should retune again

The final stage of digital TV switchover in north Devon is on course to complete today, extending digital terrestrial television (Freeview) coverage to all households served by the Huntshaw Cross 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 Freeview channels to be broadcast from 14 local relay transmitters serving areas such as Barnstaple, Braunton and Westwood Ho! for the first time.

When the transition is completed by late afternoon, 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 96 per cent of households in the West Country TV region. Viewers receiving their signal from relay transmitters will see the number of TV channels available free via an aerial increase from four to around 20 (see notes).

Digital TVs or analogue sets converted with a digital box will be able to receive BBC One, BBC Two, ITV1, Channel 4 and Five, plus additional digital channels such as BBC Three, BBC Four, BBC News, ITV2, ITV3, E4, More 4 and digital text and radio services.

Bill Taylor, Digital UK's South West Regional Manager, said this morning: "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 north Devon 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 helpline (08456 50 50 50). A switchover roadshow is also running today in Barnstaple.

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

- Stage one of switchover at the Huntshaw Cross transmitter group took place on 1 July, when analogue BBC Two was turned off and replaced with BBC digital channels.

Advice points

Switchover advice points are running from 11am – 4pm at the following locations today and tomorrow:

Barnstaple: Library, Tuly Street, Barnstaple EX31 1EL
Bideford: Arts Centre (next to main Post Office), The Quay, Bideford EX39 2EY
Ilfracombe: The Candar, off Fore Street, Ilfracombe EX34 9DS
Torrington: Volunteer Centre, 22 Cornmarket Street, Torrington EX38 8EY
South Molton (today only): The Amory Centre, 125 East Street, South Molton EX36 3BU

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