

26 September 2012

**Press release**

**digitaluk**

## **NORTH EAST WAKES TO A DIGITAL DAWN**

*TV switchover complete, Freeview viewers must retune*

**The last analogue TV channels in England were switched off for good today, signalling the dawn of an all-digital era for more than 1.4 million households across the North East.**

Analogue BBC One, ITV1, Channel 4 and Channel 5 were turned off permanently last night across the region, enabling extra digital channels, including Freeview HD services, to be broadcast from local transmitters for the first time.

Existing Freeview viewers will find some of their channels missing this morning. The services have moved to new frequencies and can be restored by retuning Freeview TVs and boxes.<sup>1</sup>

Viewers in some areas may also find their digital TVs or boxes load more than one regional service. Advice on prioritising the preferred regional service is available from Digital UK.

John Askew, Digital UK's Regional Manager in the North East, said: "This is an historic day for TV in the North East as we say goodbye to the old analogue system forever. Viewers have responded extremely well and many are enjoying the benefits of digital TV for the first time.

"As with any change on this scale, some people may need a bit of extra help so we and the Help Scheme are on hand to give advice and assistance to those who may need it."

Digital UK, which has co-ordinated the switch, and the Switchover Help Scheme are running advice points and roadshows to provide support for viewers who need it. The Help Scheme is still open to applications from older and disabled viewers who may qualify for help including a choice of equipment, installation and aftercare.<sup>2</sup>

The Help Scheme remains open to applications until 26 October 2012.

Support is also available from Digital UK via its website ([digitaluk.co.uk](http://digitaluk.co.uk)) and an advice line (08456 50 50 50). Roadshows are running today and tomorrow in Newcastle, Sunderland and Middlesbrough.

**- ends; notes follow -**

## Notes to editors

### 1. Retuning and regional services

#### How to retune your Freeview, Top-Up TV or BT Vision equipment:

- Make sure your Freeview TV or box is on and in digital mode. Press 'menu' on your remote control.
- Select 'set up' or 'installation'. If you see picture icons, select the tool box, satellite dish or spanner.
- If you are prompted for a code, try 0000 or 1234.
- Select the full re-tune option. This is sometimes called 'first time installation', 'factory reset', 'default settings' or 'shipping conditions'. Do not select 'channel update' or 'add channels'.
- Press 'OK' if your equipment asks if you want to delete all your channels, don't worry this is normal.
- Channels will automatically be installed. This may take a few minutes and your equipment may shut down and restart.

These instructions are a guide only – each product works slightly differently. For more information on retuning visit [digitaluk.co.uk/retuning](http://digitaluk.co.uk/retuning)

**Regional services:** As with analogue terrestrial TV, Freeview signals will overlap in some areas, enabling viewers to receive two or more regional variants of BBC and ITV channels. Most Freeview equipment will automatically load all versions, placing one at the top of the channel list and any additional channels in the 800s. Viewers can prioritise their preferred regional services by completing a 'manual retune'. Alternatively, they can be made easier to find by using the 'favourites' feature on their digital TV or box. Advice on retuning is available at [digitaluk.co.uk/retuning](http://digitaluk.co.uk/retuning) or by ringing 08456 50 50 50.

- 2. Switchover Help Scheme:** People aged 75 and over, eligible for certain disability benefits, registered blind or partially sighted or living in care homes are entitled to practical help from the BBC-run Switchover Help Scheme. For £40, they will be given equipment to switch one TV per household to digital. They will be able to have that equipment installed if they want it, a demonstration of how it works and a number to call while they get used to things. If they're eligible and also on income-related benefits, the help will be free. Everyone eligible will be contacted directly before switchover. More information is available on 0800 40 85 900 and online at [helpscheme.co.uk](http://helpscheme.co.uk).
- 3. Homes watching TV from the Bilsdale transmitter** will need a wideband aerial to be sure of receiving all available Freeview channels.

**Digital TV switchover** is the process of converting the UK's terrestrial television system to digital. Finishing in October 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 and Channel 5), 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. More information is available from [helpscheme.co.uk](http://helpscheme.co.uk).

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](http://digitaluk.co.uk/press). Follow us on **Twitter** for live updates on switchover at [twitter.com/DigitalUK](https://twitter.com/DigitalUK).

### Contacts

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