

SWITCHOVER COMPLETED IN SCOTTISH BORDERS

The final stage of digital TV switchover in the Scottish Borders was completed today, extending digital terrestrial television (Freeview) coverage to all households served by the Selkirk transmitter group.

Engineers finished converting all eleven relay transmitters, serving areas such as Peebles, Eyemouth and Hawick, to digital at 4.30pm. Freeview, BT Vision and Top Up TV equipment will need to be retuned in order to receive all the channels available.

Prior to switchover, only about half of households - those receiving their signal from the Selkirk main transmitter - were able to get Freeview services. Those relying on local relay transmitters could only watch analogue channels (BBC One and Two, ITV1 and Channel 4) via an aerial.

Switching off the analogue signal makes it possible to double the level of Freeview coverage to reach 98% of households. Viewers receiving their signal from relay transmitters will see the number of 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 services.

John Askew, Regional Manager for Digital UK, the body charged with leading the implementation of switchover, said: "Viewers across the Borders can feel proud to be leading the UK's transition to digital TV. Today thousands of households in dozens of communities are able to receive a great line up of digital TV free via an aerial for the first time.

"The technical task has gone well but, of course, some people will still need a bit of extra help. We and the Switchover Help Scheme will remain on hand in the weeks ahead to offer advice and practical support to those who may need it."

Digital UK is working closely with the Switchover Help Scheme and will be providing support through local Advice Points (see notes), its website (digitaluk.co.uk) and helpline (08456 50 50 50).

- ends; notes follow -

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

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