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Press release

digitaluk

FINAL WALES SWITCHOVER UNDERWAY

Analogue BBC Two comes to an end in Wales after 46 years; viewers should retune

All Freeview viewers in Cardiff, Newport and south east Wales will need to retune their TVs and boxes today, as the final digital switchover in Wales gets underway.

Forty-six years after BBC Two was launched, the channel's last remaining analogue signal in Wales was turned off permanently at the Wenvoe transmitter, and engineers started switching on digital signals at 75 relay transmitters serving more than 280,000 homes. These households will be able to receive Freeview for the first time today.

The changes also affect existing Freeview viewers who may find their BBC TV channels are missing. These services have moved to new frequencies and can be restored by retuning Freeview TVs and boxes.¹ Viewers in areas where more than one regional service is available can get advice on choosing their preferred channels from Digital UK.

The second and final stage of switchover at the Wenvoe transmitter group takes place on 31 March, when the remaining analogue channels will be switched off permanently. On this date, further Freeview channels from ITV, S4C, Channel 4 and Five will also become available from relay transmitters for the first time. At this point, Wales will have completed the digital switchover process to become the UK's first digital nation, making Cardiff the first digital capital.

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. For those who have already signed up, the Help Scheme call centre is available to help with any problems and can be contacted on 0800 408 7654.

Emyr Byron Hughes, Digital UK's National Manager for Wales, said this morning: "The final switchover in Wales is now underway, and the final analogue signals will be turned off on 31 March. Anyone who needs advice during this period should contact Digital UK or sign up for the Help Scheme if they are eligible."

First Minister Carwyn Jones said: "The Welsh Assembly Government has been working closely with Digital UK to raise awareness of the switchover to digital. Now that the final switchover is underway, I'd like to encourage everybody to make sure that they have the right equipment in place so that they are able to receive a full digital service."

Digital UK, the body leading switchover, continues to provide support through local advice points, its website and advice line. Switchover roadshows are also running today at St John's Street in Cardiff City Centre and the Kingsway shopping centre in Newport.

- digitaluk.co.uk/walesadvicepoints
- **08456 50 50 50**

- ends; notes follow -

Notes to editors

1. Retuning and regional services

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

- 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

These instructions are a guide only – each product works slightly differently. For more information on retuning visit 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 or by ringing 08456 50 50 50 (Welsh language line 08458 48 48 48).

- 2. 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.
- 3. The 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 408 7654 and online at helpscheme.co.uk.

Digital TV switchover is the process of converting the UK's terrestrial television system to digital. Between now and 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, 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. More information is available from helpscheme.co.uk.

Images and video clips are available to media free of charge from vismedia.co.uk.

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