

WEST REGION SWITCHOVER TIMING ANNOUNCED

Digital UK starts countdown to TV switchover

The timing for the start of switchover to digital television in the West TV region has been announced today by Digital UK, the independent body leading the process.

Switchover is the process of converting the UK's terrestrial television system to digital. Between now and 2012, analogue broadcasts will be switched off region by region and replaced with free-to-air digital TV and radio services (Freeview). The West TV region includes all of Bristol, parts of Somerset, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and the Cheltenham and Gloucester area.

The West TV region switchover will take place in 2010, apart from Cheltenham and Gloucester which will switch in 2011:

Timing ¹	TV transmitters
Jan-Mar 2010	Bristol Ilchester Crescent , serving parts of Bristol
Jan-Mar 2010	Bristol Kings Weston group , serving parts of Bristol
Jan-Mar 2010	Mendip transmitter group , serving parts of Somerset, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and Bristol
Apr-Jun 2011	Ridge Hill serving the Cheltenham and Gloucester area

After switchover, Freeview channels will be available via an aerial across the West TV region for the first time*.

Bill Taylor, Regional Manager for Digital UK in the South West, said: "Today is a key milestone in the switchover timetable for the West TV region. We now have a clear timeframe for people to prepare for – there are steps you can take now and some households may already be able to receive a digital signal through their aerial.

"As we get closer to switchover, Digital UK will announce the actual date each of these transmitters starts the switch. We will keep people informed throughout the process and give help and advice wherever possible."

Latest statistics from the Digital UK/Ofcom Tracker survey (to March 2008) indicate that 93% of viewers in the West region are aware of switchover, and 80% know what they need to do. More than eight in ten households have converted their main television; and 64% have converted all sets in their household.

As part of Digital UK's national information campaign, leaflets explaining switchover and the options available for going digital will be delivered to every home in the West TV region next year. Letters will be also sent to every household eligible for help from the Switchover Help Scheme, which offers assistance and equipment to convert one television for those aged 75 or over, registered blind or partially sighted, or on certain disability benefits.

Viewers can check whether they are able to receive a digital signal already by visiting Digital UK's website www.digitaluk.co.uk and entering their postcode. This gives details of what services they can receive before, during and after switchover. The Digital UK helpline can also be contacted on 0845 6 50 50 50.

-ends-

Notes to editors

*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, C4 (plus S4C in Wales) 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 approximately 40 digital 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 www.digitaluk.co.uk to check which channels are available in their area.

¹ Dates for digital TV switchover at the Mendip transmitter group and Ridge Hill transmitter were updated on 8 December 2008.

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 implement 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 by agreement with Government to offer help to an estimated 7 million households in making the switch to digital television. Every eligible person will be offered practical help to convert one of their TV sets to digital in the run-up to switchover in their television region.

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

For more information contact:

Ryan Martinez
Deborah Clark Associates
Tel: 01208 77900
Email: ryan@dca-pr.co.uk

digitaluk.co.uk/press