

24 March 2010, 0700

Press release

digitaluk

WEST TV REGION SWITCHOVER UNDERWAY

Freeview viewers reminded to retune as signal is boosted to reach all areas

All Freeview viewers in the West TV region will need to retune their televisions and boxes today as the digital switchover gets underway.

Shortly after midnight, analogue BBC Two was turned off permanently and engineers started switching on digital signals at 61 local relay transmitters serving thousands of homes. Viewers in these areas will be able to receive Freeview digital channels for the first time.

The changes also affect existing Freeview viewers who may find their BBC TV channels are missing. The services have moved to new frequencies and can be restored by retuning Freeview TVs and boxes¹. After retuning, some viewers may find they can receive services from both England and Wales. Advice on choosing preferred channels is available from Digital UK.

The second and final stage of switchover in the West TV region, covering Bristol, parts of Somerset, Dorset, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire, takes place on 7 April, when the remaining analogue channels will be switched off permanently. On this date, further Freeview channels from ITV, Channel 4 and Five will also become available from relay transmitters for the first time.

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.

Bill Taylor, Digital UK's Regional Manager for the South West, said this morning: "Switchover in the West TV region is underway, and many people are receiving Freeview channels for the first time.

"We're now encouraging any viewers who still don't have the necessary equipment to get ready in time for 7 April, when all remaining analogue channels will be permanently switched off. Anyone who needs advice during this period should contact Digital UK or sign up for the Help Scheme if they are eligible."

Digital UK, the body leading switchover, continues to provide support through local advice points (see notes), as well as its website (digitaluk.co.uk) and advice line (08456 50 50 50). Switchover roadshows are also running today and tomorrow at the following locations between 9am and 5pm:

- The Podium, Bristol
- Stall Street, Bath
- Wharf Green, Swindon
- High Street, Weston-Super-Mare
- Fore Street, Taunton

- 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.

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.

Advice points

Switchover advice points are running at the following locations. They will be open on Wednesday 24 and Thursday 25 March and Wednesday 7 and Thursday 8 April, from 10am to 4pm:

Somerset

- Age Concern Somerset, Ground Floor, Elizabeth House, 30-32 The Boulevard, Weston-Super-Mare
- Crispin Community Focus, Crispin Community Centre, Leigh Road, Street
- St Mary's Church, St Mary Street, Bridgwater
- Temple Methodist Church, Upper High Street, Taunton
- The Annexe, St Andrew's Church, Wellington Square, Minehead
- Bruton Unionist Hall, Quaperlake Street, Bruton

Bath, Bristol and Gloucestershire

- Bath Central Library, 19 The Podium, Northgate Street, Bath
- Southmead Library, Greystoke Avenue, Bristol
- Age Concern Bedminster, 2 Imperial Arcade, East Street, Bedminster, Bristol
- Pop Inn Café, Yate Shopping Centre, West Walk, Yate
- The Co-Op, 33 Newerne Street, Lydney (only open 24 March)
- Coleford Town Council, The Town House, Lords Hill Walk, Coleford (only open 25 March)
- VCA Stroud, The Old Town Hall, The Shambles, High Street, Stroud
- Community Café, 65 Queens Road, Keynsham, Bristol

Wiltshire

- West Swindon Library, Link Centre, Whitehill Way, Swindon
- Chippenham Library, Timber Street, Chippenham
- Trowbridge Lending Library, Cradle Bridge, Mortimer Street, Trowbridge
- Warminster Library, Three Horseshoes Walk, Warminster
- Devizes Library, Sheep Street, Devizes
- The Exchange, Old Market Hill, Sturminster Newton
- Marlborough Library, 91 High Street, Marlborough

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.

Follow us on Twitter for live updates on switchover: twitter.com/Digit_AI

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