

## Digital Switchover Help Scheme

### 1. Introduction

1.1 This Document sets out details of the Digital Switchover Help Scheme which will support the region-by-region switchover to digital television in the UK. This document is intended to give more details about the help scheme. It is also available as a source document for organisations or consortia who express an interest in tendering for the delivery of the help scheme.

### 2. Background

2.1 Digital switchover is the process by which analogue television broadcasting signals will be phased out in favour of digital signals. Digital Switchover will begin at the end of 2007 in Whitehaven followed by the rest of the Borders ITV region starting in 2008 and ending in 2012. The phased timetable for Digital Switchover is set out in Annex A.

### 3. Published Eligibility Rules

3.1 In September 2005, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport announced details of a comprehensive help scheme that the BBC would fund and help to establish. The Digital Switchover Help Scheme will cover:

- all households with one person aged 75 or over;
- all households with one person with a significant disability in the relevant qualification period. This will be defined as being eligible for the following social security benefits: disability living allowance (including where the qualifying person is a child), attendance allowance, constant attendance allowance (CAA) under the industrial injuries disablement benefit scheme and CAA and war pensioners mobility supplement under the pre-2005 war pensions scheme.
- all households where one person is registered severely sight impaired/blind or where one person is registered sight impaired/partially sighted.

3.2 The definition of household will follow the DWP definition of a "benefit unit": a couple and any dependent children (aged under 16 or in full time education). Non dependent adults will be able to claim assistance in their own right.

3.3 Help will be available free of charge to all qualifying households where the qualifying person or partner is also in receipt of an income related benefit (income support or income-based jobseeker's allowance) or pension credit (both guaranteed and savings credit in pension credit); other households will pay a modest charge. The level of charge will be set shortly.

3.4 Help available from the scheme will consist of:

- appropriate equipment (a set-top box) meeting the core receiver requirement appropriate for the regional switchover (see paragraph 5.27) to convert one TV set and where requested the relevant help to install and use such equipment, including where necessary provision of set-top aerials or aerial upgrades as appropriate. This will cover a free –to-view satellite receiver in areas where there is no other access to public service channels in digital at switchover; or
- a contribution of equivalent value within the DTT option to an integrated digital television (iDTV), digital video recorder (DVR) or free to view satellite equipment which the scheme will make available ; or
- a contribution of equivalent value towards connection to a non-DTT platform whether this be a free to view satellite service, or a pay service or any new platform providing TV services.

3.5 The scheme will be operated on a platform neutral basis. Those eligible will get advice on all the options available from the scheme and will be able to choose to receive assistance directly from a non-DTT platform without having to go to the main scheme operator.

3.6 Individuals who want the DTT option will be able to fit the equipment themselves or get friends or family members to do so. There will be a free telephone support service for those who have claimed help. For those who are not able to do this, the Scheme will provide access to a comprehensive network of trained and accredited installers that will be able to deal with all queries from basic fitting and set up to aerial and satellite dish installation.

## **4. Legal basis for scheme**

### Scheme Agreement

4.1 The detailed rules for determining eligibility for help will be set out in the scheme agreement provided for under clause 39 of the new BBC Agreement.

4.2 The scheme agreement will specify, amongst other things, objectives for the delivery of help; these will cover usability of equipment and the quality of service provided by the scheme in determining eligibility and providing help. It will also set out the detailed governance arrangements including provisions enabling the scheme to be funded from the licence fee in line with the Government's announcement in September 2005. We envisage that discussions with the BBC on the Scheme Agreement will be concluded early in 2007.

### Data Sharing

4.3 The scheme's eligibility criteria are based on age and/or qualification for social security benefits.

4.4 The intention is that the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to provide social security information to the BBC, or organisations involving the BBC (which may

include DCMS), and with the supplier so that help is targeted effectively without the need for written claims or the production of documentary evidence. The powers to enable DWP to share data are set out in the Digital Switchover (Disclosure of Information) Bill, which DCMS published in November 2006. DCMS hopes the Bill will receive Royal Assent in the current session.

## 5. Policy and Operational development

### Background

5.1 It is envisaged that the help scheme will be managed and operated by a single organisation or a consortium formed for the purpose. The successful supplier will need to demonstrate a strong track record of delivering large, customer facing programmes and with the logistics involved in sourcing equipment and delivering in-home assistance and support. The successful supplier will also need to demonstrate a strong IT capability for the setting up and management of customer accounts tracking those eligible through the scheme and linked with a contract centre designed around and capable of meeting the need of older and disabled people.

5.2 The supplier will need to develop operational relationships with:

**Digital UK**, the independent organisation leading the process of digital TV switchover in the UK. Digital UK's main role is to provide impartial information on what people need to do to prepare for the move to digital, and when they need to do it. Digital UK also works with the supply chain, consumer digital TV platform operators, equipment manufacturers, installers, retailers, rental companies and consumer groups to coordinate the technical roll out of digital television across the UK. Digital UK was established by the UK's public service broadcasters (BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Five, S4C and Teletext), and the transmission/multiplex operators SDN, Arqiva and National Grid Wireless

**Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)**, who will supply the social security information to the supplier under terms that we envisage will be set out in a detailed memorandum of understanding.

**Non DTT Platforms**, who will provide the end-to end assistance to those eligible who opt for pay or free services available from the cable, satellite or broadband TV providers.

### Detailed operational requirements

5.3 The end-to-end operational requirements can be broken down into distinct work areas (phases), which will be managed and delivered by the successful supplier.

#### Customer identification and eligibility (Phase 1)

##### *Data sharing (Phase 1a)*

5.4 The working principle is that data to support the identification of those eligible will be drawn entirely from DWP datasets. It is envisaged that detailed handling

arrangements will be in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between DWP and the successful supplier setting out the conditions (including system security requirements) which the operator will need to meet before DWP will be able to share data.

#### *Establishing regional boundaries and platform choices (Phase 1b)*

5.5 The help scheme will be rolled out to follow the ITV regional order. A person living in an area which is not due to switch for some time will not be eligible until just before switchover affects them.

5.6 At present, DCMS, the BBC and Digital UK are examining whether to:

- roll out the scheme by ITV regions;
- roll out the scheme by the 60 smaller transmission areas – each of will have a separate switchover.

5.7 The decision will depend on whichever option ensures the most effective and efficient operation of the scheme. The boundaries between either ITV regions or transmission areas will be set by a new digital television predictive coverage database that Digital UK is commissioning. The scheme operator will be able to access the database to help organise the delivery of the scheme and determine whether there is eligibility for help during a particular switchover event. The database will also identify the platform choices available to a specific post code.

#### Qualifying periods and other eligibility rules (Phase 1c)

##### *Qualifying periods*

5.8 As the scheme needs to follow the same regional order of switchover, the scheme agreement will need to set out a date or period when eligibility to help is deemed to have vested for those eligible linked to their address. A qualifying period rather than a single date will be adopted – this means a someone will qualify:

- if they are 75 on or no later than one month after the date that analogue switch off affects them;
- they have an award of the qualifying disability benefits (see paragraph 2.1) no later than one month after the date of analogue switch-off affects them;

5.9 The detailed provisions will depend on whether the scheme rollout is by ITV region or by transmitter region. However, the minimum qualification period will start **eight** months before full switchover in an area and continue **one month** after switchover. The qualification periods and procedures for dealing with people who may be in more than one area will be set out in the scheme agreement.

### *Other qualifying conditions*

5.10 Help will only be available once to a person who qualifies and partner (i.e. members of "benefit unit"). If a person who has received help moves subsequently to an unconverted region, neither they nor their partner will be entitled to assistance.

5.11 To give the scheme certainty that it will not be required to process individuals again if their circumstances change (an issue which is a consequence of adopting a qualification period rather than a qualifying week), the qualification period will come to an end at the point a person contacts the scheme and confirms their platform choice. This avoids a situation where someone comes to the scheme, pays a charge and gets help but later seeks a refund of charge because they subsequently become entitled to an income-related benefit.

5.12 All claims will be required to be made by the end of the regional qualifying period (one month after the final regional or transmitter area switchover event). These rules will apply to cases where an individual opts another platform.

5.13 Given the age profile of the help scheme, the Scheme Agreement will need to set out how to deal with cases where the eligible person or scheme beneficiary dies during the switchover period. The scheme supplier will need to ensure effective arrangements are in place to deal sensitively with these cases.

### Communications, contact centre operations and customer management (Phase 2)

5.14 Getting communications right will be critical for the operation of the help scheme. The Digital Switchover (Disclosure of Information) Bill will permit access to social security information without the need for consent. This will make it possible to use a "target/response" approach enabling customers quickly and effectively claim help without the need to complete a claims form.

5.15 It is very important that communications about the scheme and the development of customer requirements reflect best practice in dealing with older and disabled groups and that this be supported by an effective contact centre operation. It will be a requirement for the successful supplier and Digital UK to coordinate all scheme-related communications to avoid confusion and duplication.

### *Communications to and with potential beneficiaries*

5.16 The successful supplier will be responsible for communicating directly with those eligible and giving them information on their choices and how to access help. The guiding principle is that all entitled will receive two letters: the first towards the start of the qualifying period enclosing an entitlement pack; the second, where needed, a reminder around half way through the qualifying period. The communications with individuals will be supported by other general communications co-ordinated by DUK. It will be possible for people to claim without having received an entitlement pack – though this will trigger a separate validation process.

5.17 We expect that the claims pack will give those eligible contact numbers for other platforms and allow individuals to approach them direct if they so wished (although

there would still be an advice line through the scheme to help guide choices). This should simplify the scheme operations and facilitate choice. It will be for the successful supplier to develop material which presents the choices simply, and the scheme will still need to provide a general advice line (which will have to be signposted in the claims pack) to help confused beneficiaries and guide them through choices. Detailed work during tender development is needed to consider whether this approach raises significant issues about eligibility validation.

#### *Confirmation letters and cooling off periods*

5.18 All those who make a claim will receive a confirmation letter (essential given that transactions will be predominantly by phone) from the main scheme (and from non-DTT platforms). This will confirm their choice and arrangements for delivery of equipment. There should be a cooling-off period to allow beneficiaries to change their mind within 14 days.

5.19 Those who approach the scheme but who are not entitled will be able to request a letter setting out the decision. The letter will give details of review/appeals procedures.

#### *Setting customer service objectives*

5.20 The scheme agreement will set out customer service objectives covering as a minimum the key principles. These will be supplemented by performance requirements set by the client.

#### *Length of time for delivery of service to regional wind-down*

5.21 The scheme will be required to support households that qualify and make a claim up to one month after final transmitter switches in a region or transmitter area. The length of time needed before a regional operation can be wound down (for the deployment of fitters) depends on each region and the level of follow up support required. This does not affect the provision of advice from the help desk (which should be open to beneficiaries for at a period after switchover after final transmitter in a region has switched off or to aftercare arrangements).

#### Blind and partially sighted claimants (Phase 2a)

5.22 Each local authority keeps a register of blind and partially sighted people living in their area, but this information is not held centrally. We are exploring the best way of how to contact blind and partially sighted about the help scheme and dealing with the overlap with age/benefit qualifications (around 70% of blind/partially sighted claimants will qualify on age/benefit grounds).

#### Charge and collection provisions (Phase 2b)

5.23 A charge will be levied on those who want help but who do not qualify for an income-related benefit (Income Support, Pension Credit or Job seeker's Allowance). The level of charge will be set shortly.

5.24 In terms of operational issues for the charge, four working principles will guide the development of detailed rules:

- (a) the scheme should be able to insist on payment of the charge before help is provided;
- (b) the current intention is that the level of charge once set will not be adjusted between the start and end of switchover (though a provision in the scheme agreement will enable this to be changed by agreement);
- (c) the end provider – either scheme operator or other platform operators - will collect any charge due (with the scheme operator reimbursing the vertical platform operator with a credit based on the equivalent of providing help through the scheme);
- (d) there will be an obligation in the scheme agreement for the successful supplier to consider different payment methods suitable to the needs of those who qualify.

#### Arrangements with non DTT Platforms (Phase 3)

5.25 The help scheme will operate on a platform neutral basis: those entitled will have four choices:

- a DTT set-top box which meets the minimum specification for usability set, or equivalent equipment for another platform if the address is in an area predicted to be unserved by DTT;
- to “trade-up” from the basic DTT equipment to an iDTV or STB with DVR functionality through the scheme (or possibly through a partner organisation with an exclusive arrangement with the scheme) but with the user meeting the difference in cost;
- to “trade-up” within the scheme to a free satellite service, but with the user meeting the difference in cost;
- to opt for an alternative pay platforms including IPTV services and emerging hybrid offerings such as BT Vision but with the user meeting the difference in cost;

5.26 The development of arrangements with other platforms will be developed in the next phase of the tender process.

#### Equipment provided (Phase 4)

##### *Core Receiver Requirement*

5.27 Equipment provided by the scheme needs to be easy to use and to allow scheme users to get all the services they have now and all the specific functionalities they need.

As far as possible, it needs to be capable of meeting current and future needs (to recognise that the needs of target groups increase with age). Without this, the costs of fitting, support and after care services provided under the scheme are likely to increase substantially.

5.28 DTI, DCMS and the BBC consulted on the draft receiver requirement in July 2006. The requirement sets out all the functionality appropriate for equipment provided by the scheme such as audio description and auto-rescanning (but not access to broadband). DCMS, published details of the finalised core receiver requirements shortly on 13 December 2006 – details are available from [www.digitaltelevision.gov.uk](http://www.digitaltelevision.gov.uk). The DCMS/BBC scheme agreement will make provision for the core receiver requirement to be updated from time to time to reflect technical advances during the lifetime of the scheme.

#### *Degree of choice over equipment*

5.29 Scheme beneficiaries should have a choice of equipment. The range of that choice will depend on the proposals made by potential bidders. There are advantages about equipment being sourced from more than one manufacturer. Equally, there may be different merits in a proposal coming from a consortium including a single manufacturer. As a guide, we envisage, there should be a choice between:

- a high quality set-top box or boxes;
- a set-top box or boxes with recording functionality (the scheme will need to judge whether this is all DVRs or whether there should be a STB with DVD recording functionality);
- a range of iDTVs

5.30 This equipment must meet the Core Receiver Requirement, including audio description functionality. It is envisaged that the range of choice will change over time as new equipment becomes available. Set top boxes will have to meet any improvements in the core receiver requirements which will from time to time be agreed between the BBC and DCMS. The provisions for such changes will be set out in the Scheme Agreement

#### *Aerials and Communal TV systems*

5.31 The scheme will take all reasonable steps to ensure a continuity of reception at switchover. This could include the repair, repositioning or installation of a new outside aerial (which could include replacing worn cabling) where reception equipment is the responsibility of the household.

5.32 It will be the responsibility of landlords to upgrade communal TV systems and reception or other reception equipment which they are responsible. Detailed provisions setting out where aerial upgrades can and can't be given will be published as part of the scheme agreement. However, it is envisaged that aerials will not be upgraded where (a) the aerial is a communal aerial system or (b) where the aerial is not the householder's responsibility. If the aerial cannot be upgraded, the scheme will have a responsibility to

take all reasonable steps to ensure a continuity of reception at switchover – this will include set-top reception or connecting the equipment to the upgraded communal TV system.

#### *Warranties and Insurance*

5.33 The scheme will need to support all equipment provided for periods in line with industry best practice.

#### Delivery of help and fitter standards capacity (Phase 5)

5.34 The scheme will be designed around the desire of those eligible to be assisted – where possible – by their friends or families. Where the beneficiary opts for the DTT equipment option, this can be despatched to them. There will be some cases where the beneficiary will be offered a visit to supply and fit equipment straightaway. For the other platforms, equipment will need to be installed professionally.

5.35 The equipment will come with clear instructions. There will be follow up support – in the first instance from a help desk – able to deal with straightforward queries from beneficiaries. Scheme users will be able to draw on the services of a fitter to install/set up the DTT equipment if they need to.

5.36 The supplier will need to recruit and train sufficient fitters to cover 2 million potential visits.

#### Residential care and nursing homes (Phase 6)

5.37 Residential care and nursing homes will typically provide access to a communal TV in the living area (this is the responsibility of the home) and access via a communal TV system or independent outdoor aerials (typically in smaller homes). The requirements for people in residential care and nursing home may need to be adapted because of the different requirements of care home residents. Details of how residents should be dealt with will be developed during the tender phase.

#### After care and role of charities (Phase 7)

5.38 The charitable and voluntary sector will play a critical role in the successful delivery of the help scheme. This role covers three broad areas:

- (a) assistance in scheme design, targeting eligible participants and the development of communications (this role is carried out by the Consumer Experts Group);
- (b) provision of help and communications support to those who fall outside the Help Scheme (this will be organised by Digital UK).
- (c) provision of after care support to those who need intensive support following a fitter visit;

5.39 Digital UK is coordinating proposals for help for those who fall outside the

Digital Switchover Help Scheme bringing together voluntary organisations that specialise in delivering services to vulnerable scheme users. Arrangements will be developed to outline and manage the boundaries between the scheme and After Care arrangements.

#### Complaints – right of redress (Phase 8)

5.40 The Scheme Agreement will give beneficiaries and potential claimants access to complaints mechanism in the scheme with some independent oversight and a right to a review to a non scheme party, possibly to an “Ombudsman”. It is envisaged that the review arrangements will be set out under the contractual terms.

## **6. Volumes**

6.1 DCMS estimates that around 7 million households will be eligible for assistance, of whom around 4.5 million are predicted to use the Scheme. A more detailed breakdown of those eligible is at Annex B. A breakdown of equipment volumes by year is at Annex C.

## **7. Further details**

7.1 Further details about Digital Switchover are available from [www.digitaltelevision.gov.uk](http://www.digitaltelevision.gov.uk).

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DCMS

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## Annex A - Digital Switchover Timetable

Region	Year	Start Date
<b>Confirmed by Digital UK</b>		
Whitehaven	2007	October
Border (including the Isle of Man)	2008	Q4 Selkirk (Caldbeck in Q2 2009)
West Country (Devon, Cornwall, Somerset)	2009	Q2
Wales		Q 3
Granada		Q4
<b>Not yet confirmed – half year dates only</b>		
HTV West	2010	1st Half
Grampian		1st Half
Scottish Television		2nd Half
Yorkshire	2011	1st Half
Anglia		1st Half
Central		1st Half
Meridian	2012	1st Half
Carlton/LWT (London)		1st Half
Tyne Tees		2nd Half
Ulster		2nd Half

## Annex B - Estimates of Numbers Helped

By qualifying group	High Case	Central Case	Low Case	Potentially Eligible	% take up (central case)
Households 75+ Pension Credit (PC)	1,500,000	1,600,000	1,800,000	1,900,000	85.0%
Households Disabled Pension Credit/Income Support(IS) /income-based Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA)	1,000,000	1,100,000	1,200,000	1,300,000	85.0%
<b>Total Free Homes</b>	<b>2,400,000</b>	<b>2,700,000</b>	<b>3,000,000</b>	<b>3,200,000</b>	<b>85.0%</b>
Households 75+ Non PC	1,000,000	1,100,000	1,200,000	2,200,000	50.2%
Households Disabled/Non PC/IS?JSA	800,000	900,000	1,000,000	1,700,000	50.6%
<b>Total Charge Scheme</b>	<b>1,800,000</b>	<b>2,000,000</b>	<b>2,200,000</b>	<b>4,000,000</b>	<b>50.4%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,200,000</b>	<b>4,700,000</b>	<b>5,200,000</b>	<b>7,100,000</b>	<b>65.8%</b>

By Level	High Case	Central	Low Case	
Level 1 - Equipment and Despatch	1,900,000	2,100,000	2,300,000	
Level 2 - Equipment and follow up support from the scheme contact centre	600,000	700,000	800,000	
Level 3 – Equipment and visit	1,700,000	1,900,000	2,100,000	
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,200,000</b>	<b>4,700,000</b>	<b>5,200,000</b>	
Of which new aerals(households)	420,000	500,000	520,000	

**Note** - The definition of household will follow the DWP definition of a "benefit unit": a couple and any dependent children (aged under 16, or in full time education). Non dependent adults will be able to claim assistance in their own right and are counted as a separate household.

## Annex C - Predicted annual volumes of equipment supplied by the Digital Switchover Help Scheme

### Estimates of the number of receivers needed for the Help Scheme

Range	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Total
High Case	6,600	100,000	1,200,000	1,600,000	1,300,000	1,000,000	5,200,000
Low Case	5,400	80,000	1,000,000	1,300,000	1,100,000	800,000	4,200,000

#### Note

1. The volumes shown are based on estimates prepared by DCMS with the assistance of the BBC. The volumes are based on forecasts of scheme take up between 2007/8 and 2012/13 which show an average scheme take up of 85% for the free scheme for the life time of the scheme and an average scheme take up of 50% for the free scheme for the life time of the scheme.
2. The assumptions assume equipment is supplied in the financial year that switchover in the region is completed – therefore the between year breakdowns need to be treated with cautions at this stage.
3. The assumptions do not make any assumption about those who opt for a non-DTT platform or who may choose, through the scheme to trade up to an iDTV.