



Helping older and disabled people switch to digital TV

The Help Scheme story so far



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Forewords



In 2005 the Government asked the BBC to manage a scheme to ensure that older and disabled people are not left behind as the country switches to digital television. I am pleased that around 350,000 people have already taken up the help we offer.

The BBC is used to working in successful partnerships with many other groups and individuals, and the Switchover Help Scheme is an excellent example of that. I am very grateful to all those who have worked with the Help Scheme over the last few years and I hope that many others will do so in the future. Without you, we cannot reach out to those who need our help the most.

Mark Thompson,
BBC Director-General



The Switchover Help Scheme provides practical help to older and disabled people to make the switch to digital TV. Ultimately, our mission is to make sure that no eligible person is left with a blank screen after switchover. We have worked hard to make sure that those people who need support know what help is available and receive the highest standards of service.

Regions covering a quarter of the UK population have now switched to digital television and by June 2010 we had given practical help to around 350,000 older or disabled people. We anticipate helping more than one million before switchover completes in 2012.

The Help Scheme doesn't just act through our own teams and our service provider Eaga plc. Our success is also down to the hard work and commitment of the many community groups and volunteers who partner with us to help the people they serve. Without such 'Help Scheme heroes' it would not be possible to reach many of the people most in need. We thank them for their enthusiasm and invaluable support.

This, our first report, is the Help Scheme's story so far: the organisations we have worked with, the people we have helped, those who have helped us, and the lessons learned along the way. We are proud of what we have achieved since 2007, but continue to seek ways to improve as switchover rolls out across the UK.

Peter White,
Chief Executive, Switchover Help Scheme

Section one:

The story so far

The Help Scheme in action

1

The Department for Work and Pensions and local authorities provide us with information on who is eligible for the Help Scheme.

2

We write to every eligible person up to three times before switchover in their region.

3, 4, 5

Many national and local partners are helping us reach eligible people. They range from local voluntary organisations and individuals, and even local small businesses and good neighbours, to national charities such as Age UK, RNIB and Citizens Advice Bureaux as well as local authorities, police forces and other statutory bodies.

6

Digital UK helps publicise the Help Scheme and runs our joint roadshows.

7

Our Helping Hand campaigns urge neighbours and friends to tell eligible people about the Help Scheme.

8, 9

Our specially trained service agents talk through the range of equipment options available and provide free aftercare support for 12 months.

10, 11

Trained Help Scheme installers take time with eligible people to make sure they are comfortable with how to use their new equipment.





Switchover Help Scheme: The facts

What do we do?

The Switchover Help Scheme has been created to help eligible older and disabled people switch one of their TV sets to digital.

Who is eligible?

People are eligible for support if:

- They are aged 75 or over, or
- They have lived in a care home for six months or more, or
- They get (or could get) Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance, Constant Attendance Allowance or mobility supplement, or
- They are registered blind or partially sighted

The eligibility criteria were set by the Government. People are eligible from eight months before the first switchover in their ITV region until one month after the final transmitter switchover in that region.

How do people get help?

We write to all eligible people in the run up to switchover. They simply need to respond to us to get our help.

What help do they get?

- A choice of easy-to-use digital equipment
- Someone to install it and demonstrate how to use it in their homes
- A new dish or aerial where we can, if needed
- Free aftercare for 12 months, including help with retuning

How much does it cost?

Support from the Help Scheme costs £40 for the standard offer. It's free to eligible people who are also on these income-related benefits: pension credit, income support, income-based jobseekers allowance or income-related employment and support allowance.

What options are there?

Eligible people are offered a choice of ways to go digital, including integrated televisions, personal video recorders, Freeview or freesat. Some of these options are at extra cost. Options vary region by region, and can include pay TV providers such as Sky.

Who operates the Help Scheme?

The Switchover Help Scheme is run by the BBC through an agreement with the Government. It is funded out of the BBC licence fee. The BBC Trust holds the BBC Executive Board to account to ensure that the Help Scheme delivers its objectives (see section five for more detail).



Marion, Help Scheme customer

Marion from South Gloucestershire is in her eighties and leads a very independent lifestyle, in which TV plays an important part.

“I enjoy watching TV. Like a lot of retired people it has become an increasingly important and useful part of my life.

I had seen lots of information about digital switchover on TV and in the newspaper, but I didn't understand what I had to do. I saw an advert for the Help Scheme in a local community magazine and so I called them.

The whole process is very simple, and the people you speak to are extremely helpful. After I phoned up the helpline my new digital box was installed very quickly. I was actually quite surprised how easy it all was! And, because of my eligibility, the equipment and installation was free of charge.

It's important people don't feel silly asking for advice – after all, we all need a little help sometimes.”

Section two:

Help Scheme history

Between June 2008 and June 2010 the Help Scheme contacted more than two million people and completed around 350,000 installations. The Help Scheme has provided a service that, with the help of partners and experts, has continually evolved and found new ways to reach and serve eligible people better. Here's how we got here.

July 2005: Trial Help Scheme conducted by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the BBC in the Hulton ward of Bolton

July 2009: Rest of Border region completes switchover

September 2005: Culture Secretary Tessa Jowell announces the digital switchover timetable and a support scheme for disabled people and those who are aged 75 or over

January 2008: Help Scheme annual consultation establishes the Code of Service Standards

August 2009: 100,000th Help Scheme installation

February 2008: Eaga selected by the Help Scheme as the company to manage the service

September 2009: The West Country completes switchover

May 2007: Scheme Agreement for the Digital Switchover Help Scheme published

November 2008: Selkirk, Scottish Borders, completes switchover

October 2007: Pilot Help Scheme delivered in Whitehaven, Cumbria



Where we started

The Help Scheme was first formally proposed in March 2005 when the Government asked the BBC to offer support through switchover to the people who need it most.

The Scheme Agreement between the Government and the BBC, published two years later, set out the details of the Help Scheme. The BBC set up the company DSHS Ltd as a wholly owned subsidiary to run the Help Scheme.

Designed with the people we support

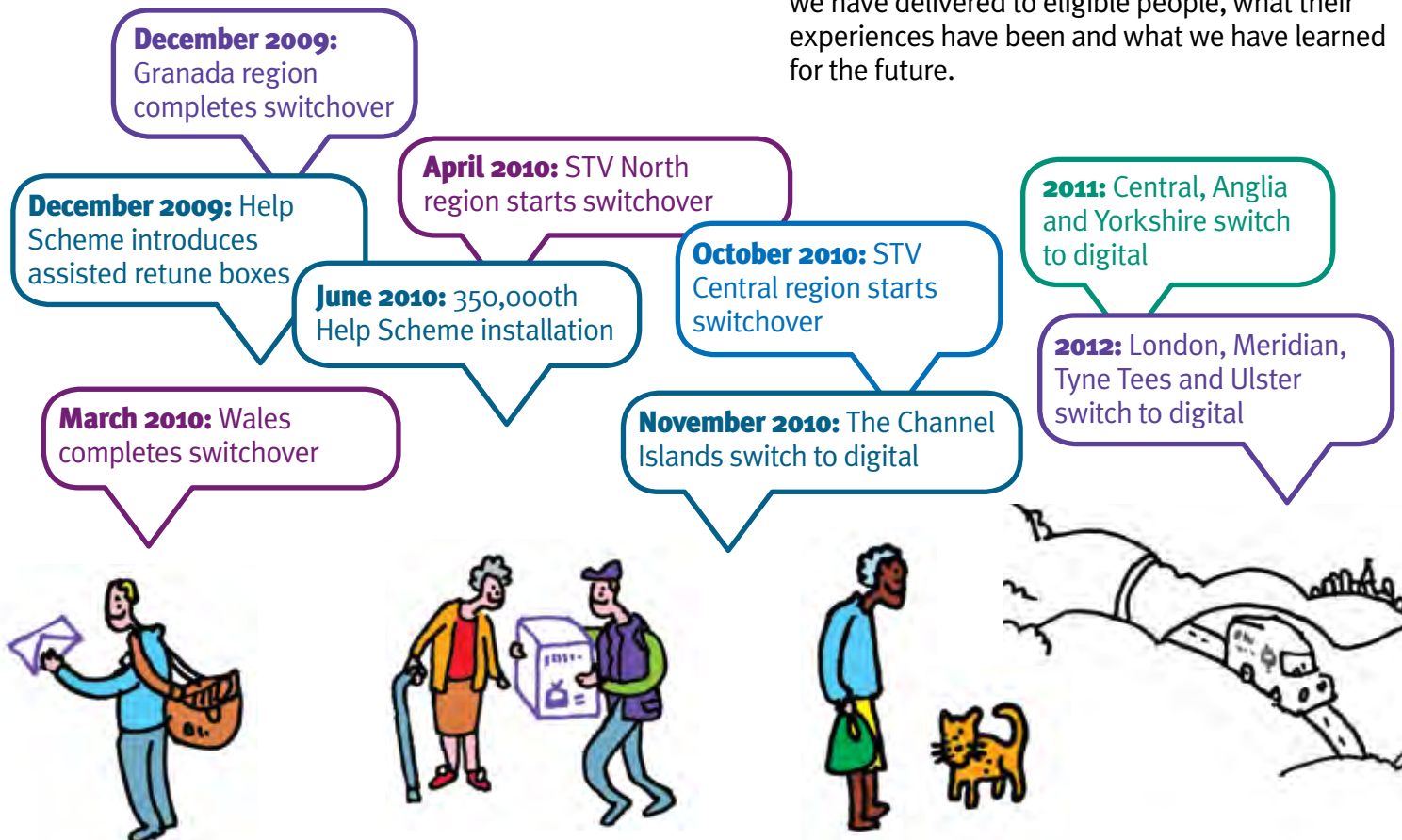
In 2007, as we prepared to deliver the service for the first time in Copeland, Cumbria, we carried out a national consultation with a wide range of eligible people, their support networks and disability experts. We asked them what they wanted to see from a service designed with all their needs in mind.

The outcome was our Code of Service Standards: a comprehensive range of 91 promises to eligible people of the service they can expect from the Help Scheme. For example, we reassure people that their call to us will be handled by a trained person, not a machine; that they can receive information in a choice of formats; and that face-to-face help will be provided at any point in the process if needed.

Listening to feedback

We continue to listen to our customers and the organisations that support them to make the help we deliver more effective. We have worked closely with the Consumer Expert Group set up by Government to advise on switchover. As well as continual stakeholder feedback and regular social and market research, we have also carried out two further major annual consultations as the Help Scheme has moved from planning to delivery. In 2008 Help Scheme research also focused on better understanding those people in society who are the hardest to reach.

As the switchover programme nears the halfway stage, this report looks at the service we have delivered to eligible people, what their experiences have been and what we have learned for the future.



Section three:

About us and our eligible people

It has been estimated that more than seven million individuals and couples across the UK will be eligible for the Switchover Help Scheme over its lifetime.

Rising to the challenge

We have come a long way since the Help Scheme was first established. The number of eligible people we have contacted and the number of installations we have undertaken has risen significantly as we have moved from one switchover region to the next. Working in up to four live switchover regions at a time, our focus is always on the differing needs of the eligible people we serve.

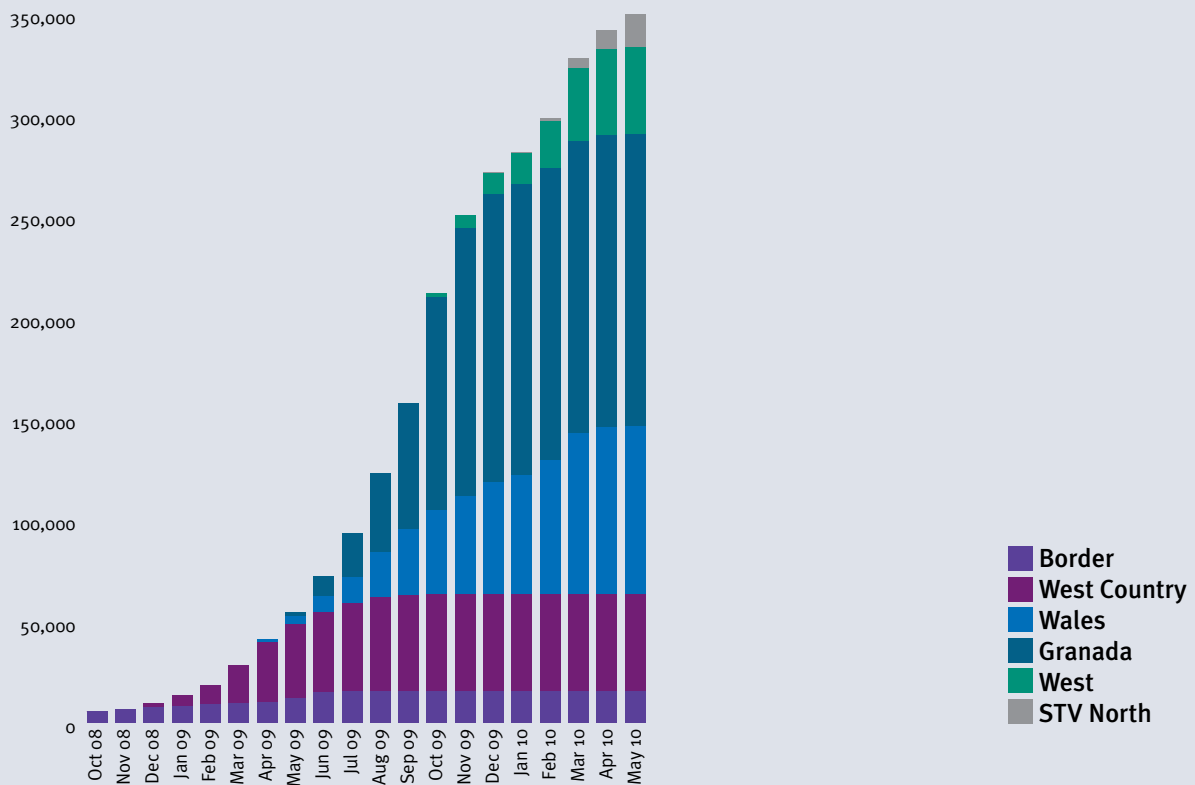
Who are the people we serve?

People eligible for the Help Scheme are diverse, and so are their needs in relation to digital switchover. Insights about their varied lives help us understand what we need to do to offer them support. For example, up to 300,000 older people in the UK can go a month without speaking to a family member or neighbour, according to Help the Aged 2008 statistics. 24% of people with disabilities experience difficulties understanding things, or making themselves understood (Experiences and Expectations of Disabled People, Office for Disability Issues).

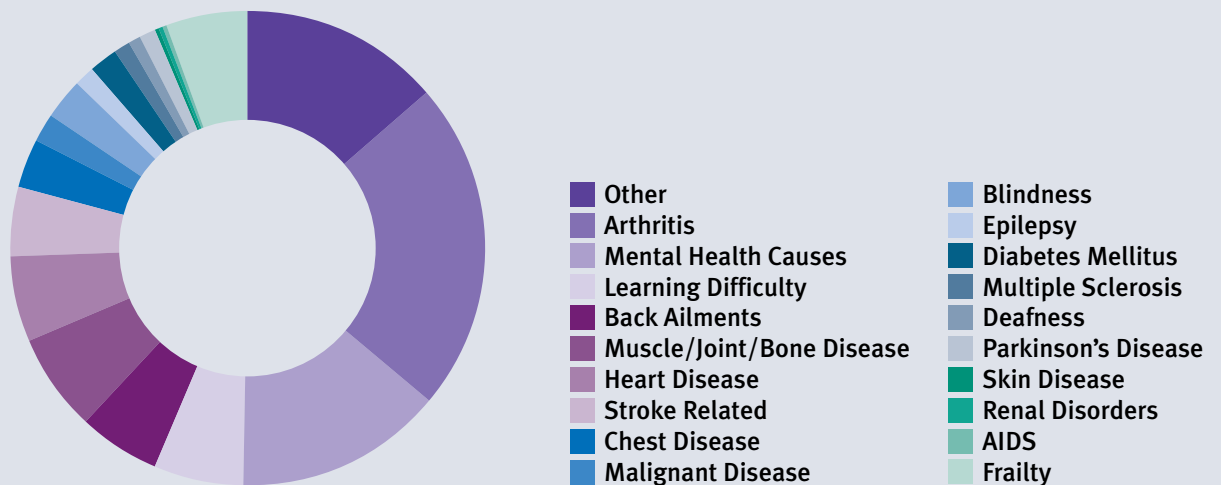
In regions served so far, about 60% of those eligible for help were aged 75 and over. The remaining 40% were under 75 but were eligible because of their disability or because they lived in care homes. Many older people also receive disability benefits such as Attendance Allowance. 36% of all those eligible qualified for free help. The prevalence of disability rises with age: around one in seven working age adults are disabled, compared with almost one in two people over state pension age (Family Resources Survey 2008/9, Office for Disability Issues).

The chart on page 9 shows the range of main conditions experienced by each individual on Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance. Arthritis, mental health issues and learning difficulties are among the largest categories. Many eligible people have two or more disabling conditions. 23% of people with a disability have two such conditions, and 9% have three or more (Experiences and Expectations of Disabled People, Office for Disability Issues).

Cumulative installations by region to May 2010



Population on Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance, split by main disabling condition (Office for National Statistics, November 2007)



Leaving no-one behind

Not every eligible person finds switchover challenging. However, those who do can face more than one hurdle. The people most at risk are those who find it difficult to cope and lack the support networks that could help them through switchover.

To help us understand and serve different levels of need, we think of eligible people in three broad groups, termed the '80%', '15%' and '5%'. Tailored approaches for each group give us the best chance of reaching everyone.

- **The '80%' can, generally speaking, be reached using mainstream advertising and publicity**
- **The '15%' will need the help and support of someone else to switch, for example a friend, family member or carer**
- **The '5%' will not get through switchover alone and have no strong support network to rely upon. They are most at risk of not being able to access the Help Scheme**

Most organisations, agencies and programmes struggle to find ways to reach people within this last group. They tend not to engage with mainstream communications. Because of their circumstances they can be extremely selective about the people they trust and tend to rely on very few 'contact points' with the world. One or two trusted people could be the only reliable route to reach them, so we have developed a specialised 'Communities Programme' to try to find those individuals.

Over the remaining sections of this report, we describe the ways in which we interact with eligible people at every stage of the journey through switchover, and how we continually look to improve the way we meet their needs.



Who are the '5%'?

The following quotes were collected in May 2008, as part of Help Scheme research into the '5%' hardest to reach eligible people and their social support networks.

For a lot of my clients I'm the only person they see all week really. I think they pay me more for the conversation than anything else.

Mobile hairdresser

John was one of our most extreme cases. He lost his partner and just gave up the will to live. He was referred to us by his brother, who lived some distance away and was worried that John was deteriorating. The brother didn't realise himself how bad things had got.

He hardly went out – just stayed in watching TV. But all that time he was still going about his old routine – because his long-term memory was ok. He took himself to the local shops and to collect his pension when he needed to. I don't know why it had got so bad... He would always say 'I'm alright, don't worry about me.'

Age Concern Support Worker

You just don't have the same kind of interaction with them as the rest of the community.

Local shop owner

The lady in the cottage at the end of the lane used to be able to get the bus to town but now she can't walk very far at all. I bring her some groceries and help her out when she needs something.

Milkman

Some people do fall through the net. It's only when they collapse in the street and are taken to hospital that we find them. They've been struggling on, not realising that there are things we can do to help them cope with dementia and be independent.

Community psychiatric nurse

Some people are not that easy to help. If they don't want help there's nothing we can do. Unless it's an emergency...

Community Police Officer

Section four:

The Help Scheme in action

The Help Scheme journey

Every stage of the Switchover Help Scheme ‘journey’ is carefully designed, and is kept under constant review. Here’s how it works in detail – from first contact and awareness raising through to installation and aftercare.

“When the Help Scheme information pack arrived in the post, we thought we’d missed our chance as we’d already got digital TV. But then we realised we could get our TV in the kitchen converted to digital under the Help Scheme, which was fantastic.

My experience of the Help Scheme has been great; I was really impressed by how quickly everything got sorted out. I’m actually the chairman of my local village association and wanted to spread the word to others who could benefit from the service, so I put some Help Scheme leaflets on my stall at our annual Blackrod Scarecrow Festival for people to take away with them.”

John, Help Scheme customer

John, 47, from Blackrod in Bolton is a Help Scheme customer who helped raise awareness of the Switchover Help Scheme within his local community.



Stage 1: Making contact

The primary way in which we make contact is by writing directly to every eligible person to offer them our help. We start to do this around six months before the first phase of switchover in their area. We will send out more than 20 million letters during the lifetime of the Help Scheme.

The Department for Work and Pensions in the UK and the Social Security Departments in the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man supply us with the names and addresses of everyone who is eligible through age or disability benefit. We rely on local authority registers for records on blind and partially sighted people. We take data protection extremely seriously and handle all information on our eligible people with total confidentiality.

The first mailing we send is our information pack. This includes details of exactly what support is available, so people can decide whether the Help Scheme offer is right for them. We continually work to refine our information packs to ensure they are as straightforward and personalised as possible, while also including all the necessary information in a readable format. All our mailings use a minimum 14 point font size throughout, and we also send audio CDs automatically to all eligible people on the blind and partially sighted register.

We then send up to two reminder letters, urging people to let us know whether or not they want our help, so we know that they are ready for switchover.



“I would like to thank you for all the work your organisation has done on the digital switchover in Wales. It was very successful and I believe that Wales set an excellent example of how to implement the digital switch seamlessly.”

**Alun Ffred Jones, Minister for Heritage,
Welsh Assembly Government**

Stage 2: Raising awareness

Digital UK spread the word about the Help Scheme in their publicity materials alongside general switchover information and work with us on our TV, radio and press advertising.

The Help Scheme distributes materials in local communities wherever eligible people are most likely to see it, for example in Post Offices and on buses. We have also devised more innovative targeted materials such as branded pharmacy bags and a Help Scheme 'storybook' for people with low English literacy levels.

Friends, family members and neighbours are often the people who support and act on behalf of more vulnerable older and disabled people. So just before switchover in each region we launch a 'Helping Hand' campaign, backed by former Tomorrow's World presenter Maggie Philbin, to encourage local people to make sure everyone they know is ready for switchover.

Maggie Philbin launches Helping Hand in Shetland



Stage 3: Working on the ground

The Help Scheme builds a layered outreach programme in each region in addition to our mailings and general publicity work. From large local authorities to small-scale ‘lunch clubs’, the programme works across three streams:

- Engaging statutory authorities, particularly social and healthcare services
- Engaging the voluntary and third sector
- Running the ‘Communities Programme’



“Our neighbourhood policing team had a special digital switchover training session and we are now able to advise members of the community who might not have known how to make the switch. ”

**Sergeant Darren Warr,
Avon and Somerset Constabulary**

David Scott, Chief Executive, Digital UK

“Digital UK is the not-for-profit company responsible for leading the UK’s digital TV switchover. The last year saw the programme gather pace across the UK, with viewers generally well prepared for the change.

We work with the Switchover Help Scheme to run information roadshows and forge partnerships with charities, community organisations and local volunteers. That work has been crucial in helping viewers prepare for the day when analogue TV is switched off. Today, nine out of ten households across the country have already made the switch to digital TV.

While most people take switchover in their stride, we know that some do struggle. The innovative work the Switchover Help Scheme does with Digital Outreach Ltd and others at the heart of local communities offers support to those people who need it most. We look forward to continuing our work with the Switchover Help Scheme – and with all our partners – as the rest of the UK approaches switchover.”

Ashley Guise, Managing Director of Eaga Digital Services

Eaga is the company contracted by the Switchover Help Scheme to manage the service.

“Eaga has over 15 years’ experience of dealing with some of the most vulnerable groups in our society, most significantly through our work to help deliver the Government’s fuel poverty programmes.

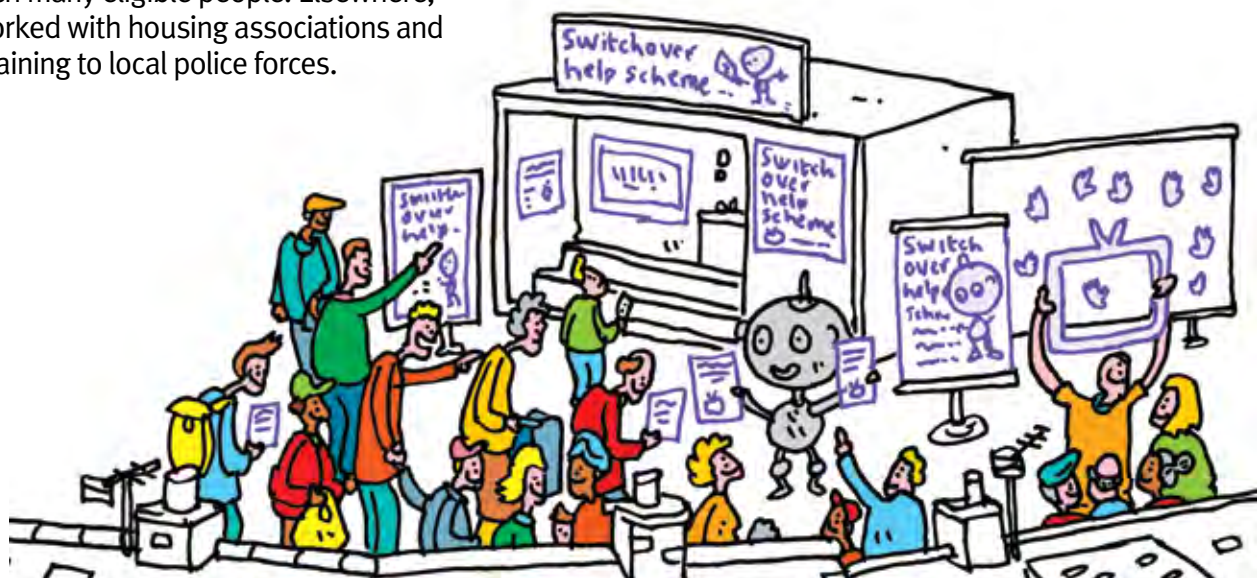
We are proud to be working on the Switchover Help Scheme, which has already helped hundreds of thousands of eligible people across the UK make the switch to digital. With the simple aim of ensuring that all eligible people who want help with the switchover process receive it, we follow the Code of Service Standards to ensure high levels of customer excellence throughout its different stages of delivery.

Engaging statutory authorities

We form partnerships with a huge variety of community and public service organisations to help us reach older and disabled people.

Building good relationships with all major national, regional and local statutory bodies lets us run shared events, gain coverage in local newsletters and set up information points at major city libraries, town halls, council offices and day centres. Similarly, working with Social Services and Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), we run ‘Digital Clinics’ in hospitals, health centres and libraries where we can reach many eligible people. Elsewhere, we have worked with housing associations and provided training to local police forces.

In the 12 months up to March 2010, over 3,000 presentations and events were held with statutory bodies, engaging over 5,000 different organisations and departments.



Engaging the voluntary and third sector

The Help Scheme has engaged Digital Outreach Ltd (DOL) to deliver Help Scheme awareness through its partnerships with the third sector. Digital Outreach works with one or more primary charity partners in each region: for example, the primary partner in the ITV West region was Age UK. Together they train volunteers to spread the word about the Help Scheme through a range of local events.

In addition other organisations are engaged to reach people locally in each TV region – for example Neighbourhood Watch programmes, as well as voluntary groups such as Argyll Voluntary Action in STV North, Community First Wiltshire in West, Guernsey Citizens Advice Bureau on the Channel Islands and Youth Action Group Blackburn in Granada.

The Communities Programme

As important and effective as our work with statutory and charitable organisations is, it does not guarantee we will reach the most isolated individuals.

We have therefore invested in an innovative ‘Communities Programme’ that uses word of mouth to generate interest among those people that the ‘5%’ already know and trust most. We term these people ‘community supporters’, and they range from local shopkeepers, hairdressers, carers and community counsellors to drivers for community car services, postmen, GPs and psychiatric nurses.

The programme works as closely as possible with the communities that support the most disadvantaged people on the ground. Partnering with community organisations like the Salford Foundation, the Circles Network and Villages in Partnership, we adopt a more indirect approach to reaching eligible people than in other elements of our outreach work. We run skills workshops for these organisations, to demonstrate how they can identify and pass information about the Help Scheme on to the critical community supporters who support the hardest to reach.

“Age UK works closely with the Switchover Help Scheme, using our network of volunteers to ensure that as many eligible people as possible know about and take up the help and support available. It’s a vital service and we are pleased to play a role.”

**Michelle Mitchell, Charity Director,
Age UK**



Paul, Help Scheme volunteer

Paul is a bus driver in Cornwall who volunteered to help older passengers find out more about the Help Scheme.



“I got involved as a Community Service Volunteer. I drive a bus between Newquay and St Austell, and I always like to help out and chat to the older passengers who travel on their own. So it made sense to give useful advice, too. For many older people, travelling on the bus can become a day out in itself and in this case they got something practical out of it!

Enid, in her 80's, was very anxious about the switchover. It was great to reassure her with some simple advice and a Help Scheme information leaflet. She is just one of the many older people I speak to every day and it has been a real pleasure for me to ease their switchover worries.”

Stage 4: Applying for help

Eligible people who want our support can get in touch with us simply by returning the form in their information pack, by calling our freephone contact centre or via textphone, email or fax.

Every element of the service we provide, from the moment an individual first gets in touch, through to receiving our practical help and any aftercare support, follows our Code of Service Standards: our commitment to our customers.

Every call we receive during opening hours is handled by a real person – we keep recorded messages to a minimum. All our contact centre advisers have been Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checked and are trained with the varying needs of eligible people in mind.

For those who need information in different formats, we provide it on request in large print, Easy Read, Braille, on audio CD, on DVD or video with British Sign Language and subtitles, and in ten languages.

Gary, Eaga Help Scheme Contact Centre Adviser

“We’re trained to see things from our customers’ viewpoint – to be able to put ourselves in their position. That’s really important as it helps us understand their needs and how best to provide them with clear, impartial advice when they call.

Often it’s as simple as making sure I speak slowly and clearly, that I’m giving customers information in easy ‘chunks’, and that I’m recapping on all the most important points as I go.

The feedback I get from most customers is that they find the call helpful and straightforward. But of course there are some who need additional support. We sometimes suggest speaking to a family member or, if they’d find it easier to chat to someone face-to-face, we can direct them to one of the advice points we have set up near them, so they can speak to our network teams in person.

For many of the people I speak to, it’s more than just a TV we’re talking about, it’s a companion – and we’re often the only ones there to support them. It’s really satisfying to know I’ve been able to help.”



Stage 5: Getting help

Once people have decided to take up our support and chosen an option, we fix an appointment for installation. We know concerns about security can deter some eligible people from asking someone into their homes, so the Help Scheme seeks to make installations as convenient and reassuring for our customers as possible.

Appointments are fixed for morning, afternoon or evening. We can arrange things so a friend, family member or carer can be present when we visit. We can also provide a British Sign Language interpreter or chaperone.

We commit to calling or texting eligible people to remind them of their appointment before installation. On the doorstep, the installer will allow extra time for the customer to answer. All installers have been CRB checked, carry Help Scheme identification and wear a recognisable uniform. Eligible people are told the name of the installer in advance.

Help Scheme installers – who are selected not just for their technical skill but also for their manner – are trained to be patient and to communicate with each customer in the way that best suits their needs. For example, they will repeat things or talk more slowly if requested or, if a customer lip-reads, speak towards them and stand in the light.

Before they leave, the installer explains how to use the new equipment and its features.

Mike, Eaga Help Scheme Installer

“As soon as I arrive at a customer’s home, I make sure I give them a friendly greeting and show my ID so they feel reassured.

I always give customers a full explanation of the work that needs to be done before I get started, particularly if I need to put in any new wiring or replace the aerial. I also ensure the customer has a good understanding of how to use the set top box and remote control before I leave. This involves a practical demonstration – I make sure I give the customer control of the remote as I guide them through the functions, so they can get familiar with it.

The best demonstrations are when it’s a two-way conversation, with the customer asking questions, rather than me just going through a scripted speech. I always try to allow plenty of time to talk to the customer, to understand their needs and ensure I’ve answered all their questions.

Often the most satisfying part of the job for me is giving aftercare help – going to a customer who has had a problem and solving it for them. It’s a great feeling.”



Our equipment

Eligible people who are new to digital TV need equipment that is straightforward and easy to use. Not all equipment on the market suits their needs and this can deter them from switching altogether.

Our customers can be confident that the Help Scheme's standard offer set top box has been designed to be easy to use. It always has a well laid-out remote control and simple on-screen menus. It meets EU energy efficiency standards and provides easy access to services they may find useful, such as subtitles and audio description.

The specifications for these boxes are set out by the Government in the Core Receiver Requirements (CRR), which were developed by the Help Scheme in consultation with groups such as the RNIB and RNID.

This year the Help Scheme has introduced Freeview set top boxes with a new function, which makes it much easier for people to retune them. A message on their TV screen alerts customers when they need to retune. One click of the 'OK' button on their remote control and the set top box does the rest. The new technology also helps by displaying a choice if a signal is received from more than one region. This means that people can select the regional services they'd prefer to watch. The 'assisted retune' function was developed by the Help Scheme in conjunction with manufacturers and industry bodies.

Help Scheme equipment options may develop further – for example we will soon be offering a set top box with 'text to speech' functionality as an upgrade option. Designed by the RNIB, this will help, among others, blind and partially sighted people get the most out of digital programme guides.

“The Switchover Help Scheme is crucial in ensuring that blind and partially sighted people have continued access to television services through switchover. RNIB is pleased to be working with the Switchover Help Scheme, supporting them in their work to provide tailored and personal support to those who need it.”

**Leen Petre, Principal Manager,
Media and Culture, RNIB**





Linda, Help Scheme customer

Linda, from North Wales, was pleased the Help Scheme installer had been trained to meet her needs as a blind person.

“I have been blind since I was five and have always relied on TV. I had not heard anything about digital switchover until I met people from the Help Scheme at an event near where I live. I was very quickly offered an installation.

I was really pleased with how the installation went. I felt secure because I was able to choose a password to make sure I recognised the installer when he came. He was very polite and clearly explained everything he was going to do, which included new wiring and fixing a new aerial on my roof. Once he had finished, he talked me through how the new box worked and showed me how to use the buttons on the remote control by moving my hand to find them.

I am particularly pleased about the audio description voiceover button which helps me enjoy more programmes as well as the bigger selection of channels that I can now choose from.”

Stage 6: Help Scheme aftercare

Our aftercare service is a very important part of the overall Help Scheme package of support. We provide this free to everyone who has had Help Scheme equipment installed up to 12 months after delivery or installation.

We can help with re-tuning, offer technical advice, replace lost instructions or remote controls and, on the rare occasions when equipment fails, we will of course replace it. In addition, we can simply provide reassurance after the switch to those who need it. Customers can call our helpline to ask questions about their equipment or how to use it. We can arrange to visit them again if necessary.

Jeanie, Help Scheme customer

Jeanie is an 85 year old living in Levenwick, Shetland who really appreciated the reassurance provided by the Help Scheme as she switched to digital.

“TV is important to me – I do rely heavily on it. I’m not very well and live mostly indoors, so I do tend to watch quite a lot. I like soaps and nature programmes, and it’s the only place I get to hear the latest news. Without the TV, I would be lost.

I saw something about the switchover on television and got in touch with the Help Scheme. From then there were no problems – the installation was quick and everything was very clear. I enjoy the new channels and it’s a big improvement on what I had before.

I wouldn’t have been able to switch on my own. The best thing about the Help Scheme though was that I felt I was in very safe hands. Knowing that, after switchover, I could just call them if I had any problems was really reassuring. It was good to know that I wouldn’t have to disturb my family or neighbours if something went wrong.”



Section five:

Measuring success and looking forward

The goal of the Help Scheme is to make digital switchover as easy as possible for eligible people. We are accountable to the BBC Trust on four key measures, on which we report on a regular basis:

- Value for money
- Encouraging appropriate take up
- Identifying and helping the hardest to reach
- Customer satisfaction

“CEMVO’s aim is to ensure that opportunities are extended to all communities – including disadvantaged communities. Digital TV is among those opportunities and we feel that no-one should be left behind in the switch to digital. The Switchover Help Scheme does a very important job aiding those who need the most help.”

**Hashmukh Pankhania, CEO,
Council of Ethnic Minority Voluntary
Sector Organisations (CEMVO)**



Measure one: Value for money

Spending on the Help Scheme totalled £78 million by the end of the 2009/10 financial year. Since the Help Scheme launched, more than one million people have responded to our mailings and our call centre has handled two million calls. Most importantly, in that time the Help Scheme carried out nearly a third of a million installations for eligible older and disabled people.

From the regions that have switched to date, it is clear that the Help Scheme is spending significantly less than the £600 million originally ring-fenced in the TV licence fee for its operation. Underspend to date is just over £130 million, with the projected final total likely to be around £300 million. This is partly due to the £100 million savings made through the competitive process to procure our service provider. It is also due to a lower than projected take up of the Help Scheme, which can be attributed to more people than expected independently converting to digital TV.

Service providers Eaga have also completed the next phase of procurement for set top boxes which, through working on a 'pay as you go' basis, is forecast to deliver savings of at least £3 million to the Help Scheme.

The cost of helping each eligible person switch to digital varies widely depending on the level of support they need. Incorporating all operational costs, marketing and community outreach, the average cost so far works out at around £200 for every customer that we serve directly. We commissioned PA Consulting to carry out an external benchmarking exercise. They compared Help Scheme costs to similar commercial activities and found that they were lower than or in line with the relevant benchmarks.

It isn't just those who take up our support who benefit. The guidance we offer over the phone to those who decide not to take up the offer of help gives them useful information and can ease their anxieties about switchover. 140,000 eligible people so far have benefited in this way from conversations with our advisers – these conversations last five minutes on average.

Lessons learned

We will continue to review and develop our service to ensure Help Scheme customers, and all licence fee payers who fund the Help Scheme, get best value for money.

Because of our fixed costs, the Help Scheme offers better value for money as more eligible people opt in to the service. So we must make efforts to ensure the appropriate number of eligible people take up the Help Scheme.



Measure two: Encouraging appropriate take up

The Help Scheme has engaged a high proportion of eligible people. About half respond to our mailings, which is extremely high for any direct mail campaign. Averaged across the regions that have switched to digital so far, around 18% have taken up our support.

We constantly look for ways to improve and refine our communications to increase accessibility for eligible people. Research among blind and partially sighted people this year prompted us to redesign the layout of our bespoke letter and audio CD which, for example, made it as easy as possible for them to find our phone number.

We try to make sure that all communities have an equal chance of hearing about the Help Scheme. In the Granada region, awareness and understanding levels among the black and minority ethnic communities were below other groups, so we took additional steps. We set up 'street teams', recruited from within the target communities, who set about raising awareness of the Help Scheme among eligible people and their support networks.

“Our work has centred around raising awareness about the switchover and encouraging people to get ready, whether that's through the Help Scheme or through upgrading their equipment. As well as face-to-face briefings for teams who work most closely with elderly or disabled people, we have also featured switchover messages in our 'council connect' locations with leaflets and displays.”

Jane Smith, Director of Adult Social Services and Housing at North Somerset Council

Lessons learned

A total of 740,000 people have so far contacted us to decline our help. After the Granada switchover we surveyed a sample of eligible people who had opted not to take our help and asked them why. The majority told us they were already digitally ready (86%), and a further 9% said they had made their own arrangements.

Our 2009 consultation showed that some eligible people who do not take up Help Scheme support subsequently struggle with switchover, whether for their main or a second set. The Granada research also found that some people agreed they may have opted in if they had understood the benefits better. In fact, when people phone in to opt out and we talk them through the benefits, many change their minds.

As a result of our research we have changed our communications to highlight the Help Scheme benefits most highly valued by customers, such as trusted installers and an end-to-end service for a fixed cost.



Anwar, Project 29

Anwar founded Project 29 to promote community cohesion in Bury. In addition to establishing a multi-faith library and a number of other initiatives, Project 29 also ran a community radio pilot during the month of Ramadan last year.



“The aim of the radio project was to provide local people with relevant local news, so when the Switchover Help Scheme got in touch we were pleased to work with them.

They provided us with information which we then converted into three short scripts – one in Pashtun, one in Urdu and one in English – which were recorded by young people from the community, and played during the month.

We had three or four thousand listeners over the month, and the feedback from older people in particular was really positive. The information we provided meant that when switchover approached in the area, they already knew what to do.”

Measure three: Identifying and helping the hardest to reach

Early on it became clear that traditional communications and outreach alone aren't enough to reach the broad range of eligible people the Help Scheme has been designed to support through switchover.

We have developed tailored approaches to reach the '80%' through publicity and advertising and the '15%' through their friends and family and through outreach. The approach for the '5%' most hard to reach builds upon these other activities to target eligible people most in need of our support.

We know that people in the '5%' often face disadvantages such as multiple disabilities, low incomes, or barriers to communication. They have sometimes withdrawn from society or society has withdrawn from them. The challenge has been finding the few trusted people who can best pass on our message but who might not be affiliated to any organisation.

Lessons learned

To answer this need we have developed the Communities Programme, in which we pass information to the most isolated individuals by word of mouth, through the people they trust.

Through research and experience on the ground we have learned how best to identify the voluntary organisations most suited to work with us to find these community supporters.

Kath has a great deal of contact with very elderly housebound people as part of her "knitting outreach" work. She has been spending time talking to the knitters she visits, personally helping and explaining the Help Scheme: "I've one lady who is 90", she said, "[who] told me she doesn't want people knocking on her door. She wants to know what's what – with the help I gave her she feels fully informed!"

John, Trevor, Henry and Martin have been speaking to church congregations across the Caradon area in their roles as lay preachers. They distribute Help Scheme leaflets and advice to those who need it. They also identify key community members and enlist their help in getting the message across to the elderly and vulnerable.



Selwood Housing, a Help Scheme outreach partner in Wiltshire.

Paul Moore, Operations Director at Selwood Housing, explains how ‘neighbourhood champions’ (as shown) helped local residents who needed help to get through the switchover.



“We have a new group of tenants called ‘neighbourhood champions’ who volunteered to become active in their community and make a difference for other residents. Many residents know their champion and turn to them for advice about issues that affect them, so it made sense to get them involved.

Neighbourhood champions attended awareness sessions with the Help Scheme to make sure they had the right information. As the region neared switchover, they helped raise awareness about the switchover and encouraged the most vulnerable people in their community to get ready, whether through the Help Scheme or through upgrading their equipment.”

Measure four: Customer satisfaction

Satisfaction levels – recorded each month – are very high among our customers. Almost 95% say they would recommend the Help Scheme to a friend. This compares very favourably with other organisations.

To help maintain the quality of our support we carry out service delivery inspections on an ongoing basis. An average of 25 customers and care homes are visited each week and all aspects of the customer journey are covered. The results are fed into our ongoing service review.

Testing the service

We recently asked a group of eligible volunteers to pose as ‘mystery shoppers’ to test our call centre and installer service standards. Half described the experience as ‘excellent’, and none rated it as anything less than ‘good’. Half told us they were anxious about switchover before calling the Help Scheme but their anxiety was reduced after getting in touch.

I was very impressed with the engineer's professional approach and conduct. They took their time with all the explanations, making sure that we fully understood what was said. They were friendly but not patronising and appeared to be completely competent in doing the work.

Disabled customer

This was a very good call with good, clear and confident information provided. Had the eligible person made the call, I think they would have understood much of what was being said.

Carer

Lessons learned

The Help Scheme has a three-stage complaints process, escalating from Eaga to the Digital Switchover Help Scheme, and finally to the BBC Trust. There are approximately 60 complaints recorded each month at stage one, rising to around 100 during the periods of the most intensive activity. This represents less than 0.3% of installations. Around 80% of these are upheld, and roughly 10% of all complaints progress to stage two. As at June 2010 only one complaint has gone through to stage 3 for BBC Trust adjudication.

Whilst complaints are very rare and usually easy to resolve, damage to property, missed appointments and incomplete installations are the most common cause for concern. Knowing this has helped us focus on areas where we need to improve.

To help ensure that our customers' experiences of switchover are as smooth as possible, we are looking to increase the number of ‘right first time’ interactions. In January 2010 all engineers were given refresher training to emphasise the importance of right first time installations, customer education and people handling skills. More broadly, a quality improvement programme is in place across the board to help build a stronger, improved service fully geared to our customers' needs.



Challenges for the future

Eligible people already value the service we provide, but we know we cannot be complacent. We are only half way through switchover and the majority of the population has yet to switch to digital. As we contemplate the switchover of the remaining eligible people across the UK, our challenge is to ensure that take up remains at an appropriate level, and that we continue to deliver the same high standard of service.

We are moving in the right direction: awareness of the Help Scheme has increased in each region we have served. With switchover yet to take place in nine TV regions, we will continue to seek out ways to improve the way we communicate and deliver our service.

We are constantly learning as we go. At the heart of this is the insight we get from our valued partnerships with the organisations and individuals who help us reach eligible people and understand their needs.

Luke McCullough, Switchover Help Scheme National Manager (Scotland)

“Local Help Scheme teams work hard to understand local needs and develop an approach which addresses them directly. In North Scotland, for example, despite the population being so spread out, face to face contact has been vital in building trust among eligible people. In fact, this way of ‘doing business’ is ingrained in Scottish culture.

As switchover reaches other, more urban parts of Scotland like Glasgow and Edinburgh, we’ll need to find new ways of working. We will look to learn from similar areas of the UK that have already switched, such as the North West, to help us find the most relevant ways to reach eligible people.

But whether we’re in Shetland, Aberdeen, Norwich or London, easing the path to digital for eligible people who need our help the most relies on partnership. The crucial support of those organisations and individuals eligible people trust most will help us ensure no-one is left behind.”



Extracts from our customer satisfaction surveys

“It was reassuring that everything was ready in good time. On the day we went digital I was able to ring the helpline and I was not kept waiting. The people I spoke to were very reassuring”

“I have never ever encountered such cheerful, patient and exhaustive help from any centre staff in my life and I am 93 years old”

“As an elderly lady with sight and hearing problems everything was very straightforward. I am enjoying all the new channels – thank you”

“The Help Scheme installer was the most courteous person I have ever met. It was a pleasure to have him in my house – I cannot praise him enough. It is a pity more people are not like him”

“I was very late making my call and still received all the available help for which I was very grateful – I am not good with new technology”

“I am a disabled pensioner living 10 miles out of Dumfries with no near neighbours or relatives. A wonderful scheme, and it was easy once I telephoned. I had to do nothing – everything was done for me”

“Very good and easy to understand for a lady of nearly 80 – thank you”

“I could not have done it without your help. A great help too regarding cost, being 84 years old and an OAP. Thank you”

“As an elderly person it was comforting to know that someone was willing to help and advise on something I know nothing about. Thank you”

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Please let us know if you would like this report in Welsh or audio CD format.

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