

Moving Freeview to make more airwaves available for mobile – the ‘700 MHz Clearance Programme’

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Consumers’ demand for mobile data has never been higher and is expected to continue to grow significantly over the next decade. To cope with this increasing demand, an additional section of the airwaves – known as ‘the 700 MHz band’ – is being made available for future mobile broadband use.

Opening up the 700 MHz band will allow mobile networks to provide new and better services to help meet the rapidly growing demand for mobile data. The process will [deliver up to an estimated £1.3bn worth of benefits to the UK](#).

The 700 MHz band is currently used to broadcast digital terrestrial TV, commonly known as Freeview.¹ It is also used for wireless communication for programme-making and special events. In order to make the band available for mobile broadband in the coming years, these services are being moved to other frequencies. This is known as the ‘**700 MHz Clearance Programme**’.

Viewers affected should check whether they have lost service on any Freeview channels, including especially their local TV or High Definition TV channels. By retuning their TVs or set-top boxes, most viewers should be able to restore these channels when these changes happen in their area.² Local TV channels are available on channel number 7 or 8³ on your TV remote and the High Definition channels are available on channel 101 upwards (only available for TVs carrying the Freeview HD logo). A very small minority of viewers – estimated to be less than 1% of households – may need to replace their rooftop aerial to continue receiving services. Support for viewers affected will be available (see information below).

Each area of the UK will undergo the change at a different time. The process started in parts of Scotland in 2017. The first clearance events affecting England and Wales took place earlier this year. The map below shows when the different areas of the UK will see the change happen. The programme is currently scheduled to finish in April 2020. Ofcom published a [review in October 2017 confirming that the programme is on track to meet this goal](#).

Transmitter work in Central, Southern and Eastern England

As part of the 700 MHz clearance, changes to transmitters are happening in many areas in the UK. The next phase of the changes starts today and changes will continue through to June 2018. Most digital terrestrial viewers tuned to the following transmitters or their relays will need to retune to continue receiving all available services: Crystal Palace (some local relay transmitters only), Guildford, Hannington, Hemel Hempstead, Mendip (Crockerton and Upavon relay transmitters only), Oxford, Rowridge, Salisbury, Sandy Heath and Tacolneston.

¹ The digital terrestrial platform also includes YouView, TalkTalk TV, and BT TV services.

² Coverage of local TV services may change in a small number of areas.

³ Local TV is usually on channel 7 in England and Northern Ireland and on channel 8 in Scotland and Wales.

We encourage viewers in affected areas to check whether changes at these transmitters have affected their Freeview service, including their local TV channels, and to retune their TVs or set-top boxes if they have lost service. Viewers can check in advance if there are changes happening in their area by using the retune checker at www.freeview.co.uk/tvchanges

Local information campaigns are preparing people for the changes as they take place in each area. Information about these changes is available on the [Freeview website](http://www.freeview.co.uk). Support can also be accessed from the Freeview Advice Line on Freephone 0808 100 0288. See a [code of service explaining the support viewers can expect during 700 MHz clearance](#).

Figure 1. current proposed 700 MHz clearance timetable

