

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**’.

Each area of the UK will undergo the change at a different time. The map below shows a simplified overview of when different areas of the UK will start to see changes happen. The process started in parts of Scotland in 2017. The programme is currently scheduled to finish in Q2 2020. Ofcom published a [review in December 2018 confirming that the programme is on track to meet this goal](#).

When the changes happen in their area, viewers affected should check whether they have lost service on any Freeview channels, including their local TV or High Definition TV channels. Where Local TV channels are broadcast, they are available on channel number 7 or 8² on your TV remote. High Definition channels are available on channel 101 upwards (available for TVs carrying the Freeview HD logo and some other Digital Terrestrial Television providers such as YouView and BT TV).

If any services are missing after the changes are made, most viewers should be able to restore them by retuning their TVs or set-top boxes.³ 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 is available (see information below). Some services, mainly +1 channels and HD simulcasts of SD channels, will cease broadcasting from the Fenham transmitter following the completion of clearance at this transmitter group. For further advice on this please contact Freeview.

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

² Local TV is usually on channel 7 in England and Northern Ireland and on channel 8 in Scotland and Wales.

³ Coverage of local TV services may change in a small number of areas.

Transmitter work across the UK

As part of the 700 MHz clearance, changes to transmitters are happening in many areas in the UK. The final changes this year will occur in October and November. Most digital terrestrial viewers tuned to the following transmitters or their relays will need to retune to continue receiving all available services (in alphabetical order): Angus, Belmont, Bilsdale, Bradford West, Chatton, Dover, Emley Moor, Fenham, Idle, Keighley Town, Midhurst, Oliver's Mount, Pontop Pike, Sheffield, Ventnor, Whitehawk Hill, Winter Hill.

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 occur in each area. Information about these changes is available on the [Freeview website, including information for Welsh speakers](#). Viewers can also access support 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

