

## 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.<sup>1</sup> 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 ‘**700 MHz Clearance Programme**’.

Freeview and other digital terrestrial viewers will simply need to retune their TVs or set-top boxes when these changes happen in their area. A very small minority – 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 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, Eastern and North-western England and Wales

As part of the 700 MHz clearance, there will be a change to transmitters in many areas in England as well as in a small area in Wales. This will happen during February – March 2018, and will involve moving channels that are currently being broadcast in the 700 MHz band to their new frequencies. This will involve upgrading the transmitters to enable the change to happen.

Most digital terrestrial viewers tuned to the Brierley Hill, Bromsgrove, Crystal Palace, Dover, Fenton, Guildford, Hemel Hempstead, Lark Stoke, Malvern, Mendip, Midhurst, Oxford, Reigate, Ridge Hill, Rowridge, Sudbury, Sutton Coldfield, Tacolneston, The Wrekin, Waltham, Wenvoe (Monmouth relay only), Whitehawk Hill and Winter Hill transmitters, or their relay transmitters, will need to retune their TVs or set-top boxes to continue receiving all of their Freeview services.

A local information campaign will prepare people for the changes as they take place in each area. Information will be available on the [Freeview website](#). Support can also be accessed from the

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<sup>1</sup> The digital terrestrial platform also includes YouView, TalkTalk TV, and BT TV services.

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

