



**FPRA**  
FEDERATION OF PRIVATE  
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## The Voice of Leaseholders

Embargo: Immediate (9th October 2008)  
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# Flat-dwellers face being 'switched off' at ' SWITCHOVER'!

According to analysis by the Federation of Private Residents Associations, if you live in a flat or share a communal TV aerial you are more likely not to be fully aware of what is needed to upgrade or adapt your TV equipment to receive digital TV before the current analogue signals are turned off.

Commenting ahead of the latest 'switchover' for viewers in the Border region on November 6th , the FPRA are strongly recommending that flat-dwellers check with their landlord or managing agents now to find out whether the building in which they live is ready to receive digital TV.

**Federation Chairman, Bob Smytherman** said.

"Waiting until your own area switches over could result in higher prices for aerial upgrades or new installations as contractors will have inevitable capacity problems as many landlords delay the improvements needed due to the financial crisis or the bureaucracy of Section 20 of the Landlord and Tenant act procedures which can take in excess of 3 months to get any expenditure approved?" (see attached)

"The FPRA who are represented on the Housing expert group to inform Digital UK of the issues faced by flat-dwellers will be providing member associations with the necessary advice to try and avoid residents facing a BLANK screen when their area switches off the current analogue signals."

"With the Border region next for switching over to Digital next month we thought now would be a good time to update our members on the issues facing 1000's of flat-dwellers from England and Wales over the next few years"

"We would also like to hear from any leaseholders about their experiences of switching to Digital and whether there are any specific difficulties with upgrading communal TV equipment."

**The first large-scale switchover starts on 6th November 2008 and will involve 52,000 homes in the Scottish Borders. During 2009, a further five million UK households across the Border, West Country, Wales and Granada TV regions will have analogue services replaced with digital terrestrial TV (Freeview).**

### **The FPRA have produced a checklist for flat-dwellers to help prepare for Switchover:-**

Once you have checked that your building is able to receive a digital TV signal, you will need to upgrade or adapt all existing TV equipment - If you haven't already done so.

Adapting or upgrading TV equipment can be simple and inexpensive. The simplest way is to connect a digital box to your TV set. Alternatively you can replace your existing TV with a Integrated Digital TV (IDTV) which is a TV with a digital box built in which provides Freeview through an aerial which we believe will likely to be the simplest option for many members with a communal TV aerial.

There are four main ways to receive a digital TV signal through a digital box:

- Through a satellite dish (Sky, Freesat from Sky, freesat)
- Through an existing aerial (Freeview, Top Up TV, BT Vision)
- Through a cable (Virgin Media, Smallworld)
- Through a phonenumber (Tiscali)

### **What does digital TV switchover mean for your residents?**

If you live in a flat or share an aerial with another household it is likely that you receive your TV signal through a communal TV aerial system. A large number of these will need to be upgraded or adapted to receive digital TV. Check with your landlord or managing agent to find out whether your building is ready to receive digital TV now to allow time for you to take the best option for you block.

**Note: There is NOT Government help to fund the costs to upgrade communal aerials**

#### **Individual aerial reception**

**An individual aerial reception system is when a single TV aerial or dish feeds a single household. Individual aerial reception systems are relatively easy to convert to receive digital TV signals. Most households access television services using a dedicated aerial, satellite dish or cable connection. Aerials and satellite dishes can be self-installed or installed**

**professionally; cable and broadband services are always installed by the service provider**

### **Communal TV aerial systems**

**A communal TV system provides television signals to a number of users from a single set of aerials and/or dishes. This can be used with all types of properties, from small numbers of detached houses where for example planning constraints restrict the use of roof mounted aerials, to tower blocks and even entire estates of several thousand households.**

<b><u>ITV Region</u></b>	
<b><u>Border</u></b>	
<b><u>West Country, Granada</u></b>	
<b><u>Wales</u></b>	
<b><u>West, STV North</u></b>	
<b><u>STV Central</u></b>	
<b><u>Central, Yorkshire, Anglia</u></b>	
<b><u>Meridian, London</u></b>	
<b><u>Tyne Tees, Ulster</u></b>	

**The Government have set up a Help Scheme for individuals, but NOT Landlords or Managing agents**

**This has been set up to help people to switch one of their TV sets to digital and provide you with easy-to-use equipment that suits your needs**

- This scheme will help with installing equipment in your home
- This scheme will fit a new dish or aerial, BUT ONLY where they can. Your Landlord/Managing Agent MUST provide new or upgrade existing communal systems
- The help scheme will give you an easy-to-understand demonstration of how everything works in your flat.
- The help scheme will provide someone you can call for help while you're getting used to things.

Over seven million people in the UK will be eligible to receive help. If you are eligible for the Help Scheme we recommend you get in touch personally in plenty of time to ask if you need help.

The key highlights so far are:

- Awareness among those living in flats and understanding of the implications has also been steadily increasing although main set conversion remains a concern with many flat-dwellers behind those in houses -those living in flats generally with more barriers to consider when going digital.
- Communal aerial systems and issues of responsibility are the main causes of slower conversion rate than in houses.

Digital UK are to commission research to evaluate and monitor progress and attitudes amongst the private rented and long leasehold residential housing sector in the Manchester area. The aim of the project is to measure the level of progress made by private sector landlords to upgrade communal TV systems and likely intentions for conversion.

FPRA would welcome your own experiences so we can inform Digital UK of real practical difficulties.

Digital UK have produced publications 'Calling All Landlords' and 'Calling All Flat Owners' leaflets and a 'Tenants' Chest' which is a box of switchover materials which can be provided to your organisation when you have your AGM all of which are provided free of charge.

The FPRA would also be keen to know whether there is a capacity problem for your organisations to find installers which is forcing up the cost of going Digital.

### **Media Contact:-**

**Chairman: Bob Smytherman**  
**Home (01903) 507073 Mobile: 07867 562538**  
**Direct email: [Bob@fpra.org.uk](mailto:Bob@fpra.org.uk)**

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**Digital UK is the independent not-for-profit company leading the implementation of switchover.**

### **Media office contacts**

**For journalists only**

**PRESS OFFICE**

**[media@digitaluk.co.uk](mailto:media@digitaluk.co.uk)**

**Chris Cain 020 7462 5442**

**Jon Steel 020 7462 5428**

**Joe Smithies 020 7462 5915**

Please note, the press office cannot answer questions from members of the public or general corporate enquiries. The contacts above are only for use by members of the media.

If you are a member of the public with an enquiry about switchover, please consult the FAQs section or contact Digital UK using the number below:

08456 50 50 50

Digital UK press release (Embargo: 0001, 6 October 2008) attached

**'BEGINNING OF THE END FOR ANALOGUE TV'**  
*Five million homes to make switch to digital in 2009*

## Notes to Editors:

Attached; Photo of an upgraded communal aerial at the Chairman's own block of flats

The Federation of Private Residents Association annual membership fee is based on the size of the block, PLUS A £30.00 ONCE ONLY JOINING FEE

Up to 25 flats £55.00  
26 - 50 flats £75.00  
51 - 100 flats £135.00  
101 - 150 flats £195.00  
151+ flats £235.00

The subscription year begins 1st April.

Between 30th September and 31st December, there is a 50% fee reduction (not including the £30.00 one-off joining fee).

If joining after 1st January, the subscription will run to 1st April of the following year.

### **Reasons to Join the FPRA**

The FPRA offers support and a practical service to help tenants in blocks of flats deal with the everyday issues they face.

These include the complexities of running a residential management company, disputes between freeholder and

### **Who Can Join?**

Membership is open to any residents' association or resident management company of a block of flats, or other leasehold properties.

For leaseholders without a residents' association, the FPRA publishes a guide on

leaseholder, problems between individual leaseholders, and forming a residents' association for collective action.

how to set one up.

FPRA membership means joining a community of associations actively interested in the management and well-being of their block of flats, and the wider political and legal issues affecting all leaseholders.

#### **Free Legal Advice**

Far more comprehensive than a telephone advice line, the FPRA's legal adviser or one of its volunteer panel of experts, looks at each case on its own merits, a process which includes scrutinising individual leases and the application of statute and case law. The advice will be as detailed and in depth as necessary to answer the query.

The FPRA cannot act for members, but will advise on when and if they should instruct a solicitor, and possible strategies and tactics.

Members requiring legal advice should, in the first instance, write to the FPRA and enclose a copy of their lease. The legal adviser will respond quickly by letter or phone, and is available, by appointment, to discuss cases

in person.

### **Other Advice**

Through its pool of expertise, the FPRA is often able to offer advice in other areas, such as property management and structural matters.

### **Newsletter**

The free quarterly newsletter keeps members up to date with current issues of interest to leaseholders and residential management companies, including legal updates.

### **Members Area of Website**

The members' area of the website is a valuable information and advice resource. It contains copies of all the newsletters, plus index to all articles, news items and features, tips, a discussion forum, and useful forms to download.

### **Promoting the interests of leaseholders**

The FPRA campaigns and lobbies on behalf of private sector leaseholders and resident management companies. It gives a leaseholders a voice and influence with government and the media, including representation on working parties and other consultation exercises.

Pressure exerted by the FPRA, for example, led to the statutory recognition of tenants' associations and the statutory authority for specific performance of the landlord's repairing

covenants.

**The FPRA is a non-political, not-for-profit advice, support and lobbying organisation for our members who include private residential leaseholders, tenants' and residents' associations and residential management companies as well as those companies where the leaseholders together own the freehold of their own residential block.**

**Disclaimer: - FPRA only advises our member associations - we cannot and do not act for them. Opinions and statements offered orally and in writing are given free of charge and in good faith and as such are offered without legal responsibility on the part either of the maker or of FPRA Ltd. All questions and answers are passed to our newsletter and website editors and may be published (without name details) to help other members.**

