



Press Release  
3 February 2010

## **MAGGIE PHILBIN URGES PEOPLE IN BRISTOL TO COME AND LEND A HELPING HAND**

Well-known broadcaster and former Tomorrow's World presenter, Maggie Philbin, and mascot Digit Al are urging people living in Bristol to come and lend a helping hand next Tuesday (9 February, 2010) when the BBC-run Switchover Help Scheme arrives in the city to advise television viewers in the West region.

In less than two months time digital switchover takes place in Bristol, parts of Somerset, Dorset, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire. The Helping Hand campaign urges everyone to make sure older and disabled people in their area know about the help they can get from the Help Scheme to switch to digital TV.

At 9.00am on Tuesday 9 February, Maggie will launch the Helping Hand Campaign on the Promenade in Bristol city centre (opposite Bristol Hippodrome). Shoppers and passers-by will have the opportunity to add their handprint to a large-scale pledge board and their name or the name of the person they are going to help in the lead up to switchover.

Maggie says: "We're appealing to the local community in Bristol to come and join us and add their handprint and pledge to our board on the day. Maybe you have already switched. Now it is time to think of those who still need help, particularly older and disabled people who might be leaving it to the last minute, or might not be sure what to do. Lend a Helping Hand by telling them about the Switchover Help Scheme."

Help Scheme representatives will be on hand to tell people about the Help Scheme, which provides practical help for older or disabled people to switch one of their television sets to digital. Those eligible for the help have already been contacted by the Help Scheme but must reply by post or telephone call to get the help they are entitled to.

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For more information, please contact:  
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Caroline Byng, south west regional manager for the Switchover Help Scheme, says: “Even if you’ve had digital telly for years, you may have friends or neighbours who haven’t made the switch yet, and who may be confused about the process. We can all lend a helping hand by making sure that older and disabled members of our community know about the help they can get from the Help Scheme.”

Experts from the Help Scheme will be visiting shopping centres, community centres and libraries across the West region to provide advice on what assistance is available for people to switch to digital.

Helping Hand materials and more information on the Helping Hand campaign are available at Bristol Central Library, Bedminster Library, North Bristol Advice Centre and Weston Library (full details below).

To apply for help from the Switchover Help Scheme, or to find out if you are eligible for help, call the free helpline number on 0800 40 87 654. Textphone users can call 0800 40 85 936. For more information, please visit [www.helpscheme.co.uk](http://www.helpscheme.co.uk) or e-mail [info@helpscheme.co.uk](mailto:info@helpscheme.co.uk). To find out more about digital switchover, visit [www.digitaluk.co.uk](http://www.digitaluk.co.uk).

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

Switchover begins in the West region on 24 March 2010 and completes on 7 April 2010.

### Information locations –

People can pick up Helping Hand materials and information about the Helping Hand campaign at the following locations:

Bristol Central Library, College Green, Bristol, BS1 5TL	Bedminster Library, 4 St Peters Court, Bedminster Parade, Bristol, BS3 4AQ
North Bristol Advice Centre, Gainsborough Square, Bristol, BS7 9XA	Weston Library, The Boulevard, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1PL

**Switchover Help Scheme** – People aged 75 and over, eligible for certain disability benefits, registered blind or partially sighted or living in care homes are entitled to practical help from the BBC-run Switchover Help Scheme. For £40, they will be given equipment to switch one TV per household to digital. They will be able to have that equipment installed if they want it, a demonstration of how it works and a number to call while they get used to things. If they’re eligible and also on income-

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related benefits, the help will be free. Everyone eligible will be contacted directly before switchover. More information is available on 0800 408 7654.

Digital television switchover is the process of converting the UK's terrestrial television system to digital. Between now and 2012, analogue channels will be switched off region by region and replaced with free-to-air digital TV and radio services (Freeview). Switchover will extend Freeview coverage to the whole of the UK and free up airwaves for new services such as ultra-fast wireless broadband and mobile television.

**Digital UK** - Digital UK is the independent, not-for-profit organisation established in 2005 to implement digital switchover. It is jointly owned and funded by the public-service broadcasters (BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Five, S4C and Teletext) and the digital multiplex operators.

**eaga** - eaga, the provider of residential energy efficiency and outsourcing services, has been selected by the BBC as the Help Scheme service provider to deliver the help available under the scheme from the ITV Border region onwards.

**Digital Outreach Limited** - Digital Outreach Ltd was set up through a third/private sector partnership between Age Concern; Help the Aged, Community Service Volunteers and Collective Enterprises Ltd to help older and disabled people benefit from new technology and services delivered in their own homes. Digital Outreach Ltd currently works under contract with Digital UK to deliver the Digital Switchover Community Outreach Programme.

**Maggie Philbin** – Maggie Philbin has worked in television for over 30 years. Currently providing analysis on technology for BBC Breakfast and a regular reporter on Inside Out, she has been making complicated science engaging since presenting Tomorrow's World and Hospital Watch.

Technology which we now take for granted was demonstrated for the very first time by Maggie -the fax machine, the first supermarket barcode reader and the first sat nav. She also demonstrated the first fishing rod that lit up in the dark, the first washing line that sang when it rained and the first electric blanket that knew where your hot bits were. She tends to keep quiet about that!

Maggie is passionate to make sure that young and old make the most of modern technology. Through groundbreaking events like Teentech, she encourages young people and their parents to understand the wide range of opportunities in science and technology. She also works with Age Concern to make sure older people realise the powerful modern communication tools are for them as well as their children and grandchildren.