

# **Digital Dividend: clearing the 800MHz band consultation Response by the Ofcom Advisory Committee for Scotland**

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 We recognise the benefits of the changes that are being discussed, and the need to be responsive to changing circumstances. However it is important that reasonable attempts are made to mitigate the impact on those who have to deal with the consequences. We welcomed the clear and focused presentation made to the ACS in February. In this response we concentrate mainly on issues raised then which we feel are particularly relevant or important to Scotland.

## **2. Response to consultation document**

2.1 Firstly we want to reiterate the importance to Scotland of the option of a '7<sup>th</sup> mux' and the two additional 'layers', one with 80% and one with 50% coverage. We wait with interest to hear how the changes will affect this, though we expect options to be broadly similar.

2.2 We feel there is a need to set out clear timetable as soon as possible so users know what to expect.

2.3 Retuning in the Borders (who experienced DSO last year) requires careful handling, as you have identified. However, with all the experience of Switchover and Digital UK, we are confident that this can be done well. It would make sense for Digital UK to do the publicity work associated with this, and be given specific funds and remit to do this.

2.4 We wanted to raise the fact that there a possibility that a (very) few users in the Border region who are at outer reaches of range of transmitters, and who have been receiving digital successfully since switchover may lose reception, due to local conditions ( eg worst case, channel 62 moved to channel 38 would be a change from 758MHz down to 614 MHz)? We realise that others in similar circumstances may gain reception, but this won't be much consolation to those who lose it! There may need to be a helpline or similar to explain this to people.

2.5 In the current economic climate we feel it is important that PMSE users are properly compensated in a timely manner for additional equipment costs.

Philip Schlesinger, Chair, Ofcom Advisory Committee for Scotland

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