

Basic advice about the switch to digital television...

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Don't let the sharks empty your wallet

Sheet 9 - Widescreen and High Definition

These new features both have things in common - they both require a digital TV signal, but often people think they have them when, in fact, they don't.

Widescreen

Widescreen televisions have now become commonplace in the UK, but just because you have a wide screen TV it does not necessarily mean that you are watching proper widescreen pictures. By default, Freeview and Sky boxes are usually set to provide a correct picture on a standard (4:3) television. If this picture fills a TV with a widescreen all that happens is that the picture is stretched until everyone looks short and fat. This is not what widescreen is about.

On our web site there is a straightforward, step-by-step guide to making sure that you are watching a true widescreen picture.

High Definition

High definition pictures have more detail and precision and are of particular benefit to those with larger screens. High definition is not a feature that can be added to the an existing transmission so it has to be broadcast as a special new channel with its own schedule of programmes. This is why you will hear references to "The BBC HD Channel", for example. (Though often these channels will broadcast the HD version of a programme at the same time as it goes out on the main channel - a necessity when the programme is live!)

HD services are digital, of course, and at present only available on satellite or cable, though there are plans to introduce HD services to 'Freeview' after Digital Switchover.



Many TV sets are now being sold as HD Ready and bear the logo shown on the right. This means just what it says: the sets are ready to display a high definition picture if they are given one to display. This may be from a satellite or cable HD box or from a High Definition disc player e.g. Blu-Ray.

The best way of connecting any High Definition box to an HD Ready tv is using an HDMI cable. HDMI stands for High Definition Multimedia Interface. (That's nice, isn't it?) This will ensure that you get the very best quality picture possible.



More detail on our web site at www.paras.org.uk