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3 February 2010

Adrian Sanders MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

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*Dear Mr Sanders,*

*To ask the Minister of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, when he expects the migration of programme making and special events users from the digital dividend spectrum channels 31 to 37 and 61 to 69 to replacement frequencies to a) start and b) finish and if he will make a statement. [312866]*

I am writing in response to your question (above) to the Minister of State for Business, Innovation and Skills tabled on 19 January 2010. It has been forwarded to Ofcom for a reply as the independent regulator for the UK communications industry.

To facilitate the migration from channel 69, we have designated channel 38 for use by programme-making and special events (PMSE) users. Channel 38 is already used for PMSE and is available in most of the UK except in the North West of England and around Cambridge to protect UK radio-astronomy services. It will be available on the same UK-wide basis as channel 69 when radio-astronomy protection ceases at the end of 2011. Interference from analogue television will also reduce with digital television switchover. PMSE use will not be cleared from channel 69 until at the earliest January 2012 and possibly as late as the end of digital television switchover late that year.

We expect to be able to say more about the availability of specific interleaved channels in specific locations from the middle of this year, following the outcome of negotiations with neighbouring countries to clear the 800 MHz band. We expect these frequencies will remain broadly the same, increasing the likelihood they can continue to be used by existing equipment.

I hope this information is helpful, but if you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact us.

*Yours sincerely*



**Ed Richards**