# Audio Description on Freeview

Freeview is digital TV delivered through your TV aerial. All Freeview equipment supports Audio Description but not all devices allow the user to easily turn the Audio Description on and off.

This factsheet covers some of the ways you can get Audio Description on Freeview.

## Freeview televisions and set-top boxes

The Freeview trademarks (Freeview, Freeview HD and Freeview Play) can only be used on products designed to work with UK broadcasts. Freeview products deliver channels in standard definition and most of these products support Audio Description. Freeview HD and Freeview Play products deliver some channels in high definition. All Freeview HD products must support Audio Description. Even if a device can receive Audio Description it is not always easy to turn it on and off so find out if the remote control has an Audio Description button and if possible, try turning Audio Description on and off in the shop.

Freeview Play supports apps (additional software) such as TV catch-up players. The organisations behind Freeview Play have implemented an accessible EPG (Electronic Programme Guide) on channel **555** which can offer high contrast menus, a spoken TV guide and filtering for programs with AD, subtitles or signing. Not all Freeview Play devices are compatible and some feature a reduced version without the spoken TV Guide. Go to **freeview.co.uk/help/accessible-tv-guide** for more details and a list of compatible devices.

Things to remember when choosing a Freeview product:

* All products displaying the Freeview HD and Freeview Play logo can receive Audio Description.
* Freeview Play products are planned to have an accessible EPG.
* Ask if the remote control has an Audio Description or AD button.
* Look for products where the Audio Description can easily be turned on and off.

## Digital TV equipment for computers

Hardware and devices which enable a computer to receive digital TV broadcasts will work reasonably well with UK broadcast TV, however they are unlikely to handle UK Audio Description well. These devices are often designed to work in multiple countries, not just in the UK, but most countries send the Audio Description in a different way to the UK when transmitting digital TV. This means that if you turn on Audio Description when using this hardware, you may just hear the Audio Description and not the main audio. If you want to watch broadcast TV on your computer using one of these devices, try to find one that claims to be Freeview compliant as this means it is more likely to handle UK Audio Description properly.

## Sound only Freeview solutions

#### Portset

Portset Digital Media Centre is a device that doesn't require a TV screen. It offers sound only Freeview TV with Audio Description as well as access to electronic programme guides, a DAISY talking book player and a recording function.

Portset also offer a Freeview Receiver with Personal Video Recorder.

Contact **01489 893 919** or visit their website **portset.co.uk**.

### Other Sound Only Receivers

A Freeview set-top box that delivers AD can be connected to a Hi-Fi or amplified speakers. Call our Helpline on **0303 123 9999** to speak to our Technology Volunteers if you need help setting this up.

You will not need a TV license if you adopt this method of getting digital TV, so long as you do not own a TV or any device on which to display TV pictures or record TV content. People who are blind or severely sight-impaired are eligible for a 50% discount on a TV license if they are required to purchase one.

## TTS (Text to Speech) on TV devices

TTS (or Text to Speech) is where text on a device is converted to speech to allow a blind or partially sighted person to use that device. Since 2010 there have been some mainstream television devices available in the UK that provide spoken menus or will read out the channel information. The Smart Talk and TVonics set-top boxes provide TTS on all menus.

Panasonic, Samsung, Sony and LG have started providing TTS on some of their TVs.

The set-top boxes are no longer available but TVs with text to speech can still be bought. Look for the phrases; “voice guide”, “voice guidance”, “Talkback” or “Text-to-Speech”.

If you would like more information on these devices, then please visit the **rnib.org.uk/television** on RNIB's website.

## Further Information

RNIB can offer further advice on **0303 123 9999** or email **audiodescription@rnib.org.uk**.

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