We have received many reports about problems in France with the reception of satellite TV over the UK’s Freesat network.

This is linked to an accelerating switchover to high-definition (HD) broadcasts from standard definition (SD) technology.

HD allows for crisper images but older Freesat and Sky receiver boxes are SD-only.

It means viewers need to change their receiver box or re-tune. Some might also need a bigger dish.

TV over the internet is another alternative.

**Most SD services will go**

The BBC recently closed almost all of its SD services. Both it and ITV say the last SD channels will be turned off from the end of March 2024. Channel 4 is also moving towards mostly HD.

For some readers, changing to an HD box solved the issue. Many mentioned a Man­hattan Freesat receiver, which is available for around £70.

**Read more:**[**Will BBC’s May radio streaming service changes affect me in France?**](https://www.connexionfrance.com/article/Practical/Your-Questions/Everyday-Life/Will-BBC-s-May-radio-streaming-service-changes-affect-me-in-France)

**Weather and tilt of the Earth can affect quality**

Others report that their reception, despite being HD, is affected by weather changes.

“All channels go if it is not sunny – and we have an extra-large dish,” said a reader in Haute-Savoie.

Richard Westbrook, of Sky in France, based in Occitanie, said most people already have HD boxes and can probably continue receiving HD services if they have a correct-sized dish.

He said new dishes cost around €200-£350, depen­ding on size.

BBC HD signals seem to have become weaker with this year’s changes, he added.

Plus, there is often a drop-off in signal strength from April to August related to the tilt of the Earth.

An IP TV box for streaming over the internet can be an alternative.

**Streaming to your TV with wifi**

Sky Stream, with a specific Sky box that allows streaming to your TV with wifi, is another possibility.

Anyone with a smart TV can also use this, combined with a VPN paid-for service that disguises the location of your TV by providing a UK-based IP address.

Mr Westbrook said people who use Sky boxes can still find SD services on channels 801 to 805 while wait­ing to get a bigger dish for bet­ter HD reception.

In some cases, poor reception may simply be due to a dish being blown out of alignment, Mr Westbrook added.

His firm can look at it for free, and charges €80 to realign it, if necessary.

**VPN router to plug into French internet box**

Trevor Dallas of TVBrittany, serving mostly northern France, said the move to all-HD is due to demand for quality.

“If you’re paying €2,000 for a TV, you don’t want fuzzy old 1980s-style pictures.”

He reports selling a lot of HD boxes this spring to people with old equipment at their French second homes.

He adds that streaming television is becoming popular. This includes UK TV services such as BBC iPlayer and ITV Hub (‘catch-up’), for which he can provide a dedicated VPN router box.

This uses a small UK service that is not blocked, unlike many of the well-known VPN companies.

Plugging it into your French internet box allows users to watch Netflix or Amazon Prime’s UK services, if they have subscribed to these.

**Read more:**[**Tip: How to save money on Netflix and other streaming offers in France**](https://www.connexionfrance.com/article/Practical/Money/Tip-How-to-save-money-on-Netflix-and-other-streaming-offers-in-France)

He can also provide a ‘wifi Magbox’ linked to a particular British service that allows you to access all the usual UK channels, as well as a library of films and series box-sets. Both involve subscriptions.

Several readers also suggest VPNs or a similar Smart DNS.

Some combine this with a sep-arate router or a Fire TV stick. The latter converts an ordinary TV to a smart TV that can connect to the internet.

**Other reader tips**

* Cable quality can also make a difference to satellite reception.

“Webro’s WF100 is great for preventing signal quality loss. Also, I think a lot of people align the dish and get a good signal strength but then don’t tilt the LNB [a little box on an arm that points towards the centre of the dish] to bring up the signal quality too.”

* “You should completely rescan the satellite and do some housekeeping on your saved channels,” another advised. De­s­pite having a “cheap as chips HD box,” he said this had got everything working again.
* A reader from Lot used to watch on SD as it was less affected by weather and was struggling to watch the BBC after it went all-HD. A technician replacing the head on her dish had solved the issue.
* Try a low-tech approach first by just rebooting your box: unplugging it, leaving it a while, then plugging it back in again.