Helpful

Accessibility

What you need to know about the new public sector website requirements

Why is accessibility important?

- Many of your users will have some sort of impairment
- It's a legal requirement
- It's good for SEO

- 2.7m people have colour blindness
- 4m people need a hearing aid (only 2m use them)
- 1.5m people have a learning disability
- 600,000 people suffer from epilepsy
- 20% of adults are functionally illiterate or innumerate

Legal cases

Guillermo Robles vs Dominos Pizza 2019

The issues:

- missing alt text from images
- couldn't choose or select food with a screen reader
- could not use discount vouchers
- could not order anything

The result:

- case still in progress

National Federation of the Blind vs Target 2006
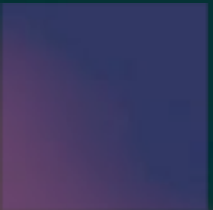
The issues:

- missing alt text from images
- form controls not properly labelled
- no screen reader or keyboard navigation compatibility
- could not make a purchase without a mouse

The result:

- Target had to pay damages of **$6 million**

What are the new requirements
 and what do I need to do?

The new requirements

1. Meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA accessibility standard

2. Publish an accessibility statement

The important dates

What's covered	Deadline to comply with the regulations
New public sector websites (published after 22 September 2018)	22 September 2019
All other public sector websites	22 September 2020
Public sector mobile applications	22 June 2021

From GDS blog https://gds.blog.gov.uk/2018/09/24/how-were-helping-public-sector-websites-meet-accessibility-requirements/

WCAG 2.1 AA in a nutshell

1. Perceivable	2 . Operable	3. Understandable	4. Robust
▪ Provide captions / audio description for videos ▪ Provide text alternatives for images ▪ Present content in a meaningful order and logical structure ▪ Don't play audio automatically ▪ Provide ability to resize text ▪ Have sufficient colour contrast	▪ Be accessible using keyboard only ▪ Have logical heading structure ▪ Provide user control for moving content ▪ Ensure no content flashes more than three times per second ▪ Provide a 'skip to content' link ▪ Use meaningful link text	▪ Show clear error messages ▪ Have clear form field labelling ▪ Use the same navigation menu on every page ▪ Use icons and buttons consistently	▪ Ensure the site is coded to standards ▪ Ensure it is compatible with assistive technology ▪ Ensure 3rd party plug-ins are accessible

Accessibility statement

- You must publish an accessibility statement that explains how accessible your website or app is

- Your statement must tell your users how your website meets WCAG 2.1 and where it doesn't

- Use the GDS sample accessibility statement to help you:
  https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sample-accessibility-statement

Simple things to fix in-house

	Meaningful link text	Appropriate alt text	Good headings structure	Accessible media
Issue	Users can ask screen reading software to read aloud only the links on a page. Vague or unclear link text means users don't know where the link will take them.	Users with visual impairments rely on screen readers to describe images using 'alt text'. Vague or missing alt text means users don't know what the image contains.	Screen reader users are able to navigate web pages by heading structure. To do this, headings need to be in the correct order on the page (h1 > h6).	You must provide captions and audio versions of videos. Flashing or auto-play media can cause distress or medical issues.
What to do	‣ Avoid links like 'click here' or 'read more' ‣ Ensure link text makes sense on its own	‣ Read your alt text out loud. Does it make sense on its own? ‣ Think how you would describe an image to someone over the phone ‣ Leave alt text blank on decorative images	‣ Check your top pages are structured correctly ‣ Ensure editors have sufficient training	‣ Avoid flashing media ‣ Provide alternative versions to all media ‣ No auto-play and include pause button

More advanced issues for technical development

	Good colour contrast	'Skip to content' link	Form labelling	Accessible media
Issue	Users with visual impairments may not be able to perceive content where the contrast between foreground and background colours is too low.	'Skip to content' is a hidden link for users who are using a screen reader or keyboard-only browsing to skip past your navigation to go straight to the important content.	Labels are used to describe what the form field is asking for or what it does.	PDFs and other documents are hard to make accessible and are difficult to use with assistive devices or on smaller screens such as mobile devices.
What to do	Use the WebAIM colour contrast checker to your text-to-background contrast ratio is at least 4.5:1 https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/	Press the 'tab' button to see if your website has a 'skip to content' link.	Check every form has a clear label explaining what it can be used for.	Use the Full Check tool in Acrobat Pro to check whether the PDF meets accessibility standards.

Disproportionate burden

Some organisations might not have to fully meet the requirements if doing so would be a 'disproportionate burden'.

This means if resources or budget do not allow, you may be able to make any changes you can now and further improvements later.

You are legally required to carry out an accessibility assessment before claiming anything as a disproportionate burden.

Disproportionate burdens must be recorded in your accessibility statement.

Free tools to help you

Tota11y

A free Chrome extension that tests a website for accessibility and presents recommendations in a clear format.

Get it here: https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/tota11y-plugin-from-khan/oedofneiplgibimfkccchnimiadcmhpe?hl=en

Axe

A free Firefox or Chrome extension to check your website for accessibility issues using 'inspect element'.

Get it here: https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/axe/lhdoppojpmngadmnindnejefpokejbdd

https://addons.mozilla.org/en-GB/firefox/addon/axe-devtools/

How we can help

We can help get your website ready for the new accessibility requirements.

Get in touch to find out more about the services we offer:

- manual and automated accessibility testing

- user experience testing

- writing for the web training, including how to write accessible content

- content design and editing

- creating accessible PDFs

- accessible PDF training

- HTML templates for online documents

- help writing accessibility statements

Bespoke projects range from 2-10 days effort (£1,600 - £8,000)

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