



Good Practice Guide **Accessible Websites**





Introduction to Website Accessibility

Making a website or mobile app accessible means making sure it can be used by as many people as possible. This includes those with: impaired vision, motor difficulties, cognitive impairments or learning disabilities, deafness or impaired hearing.

At least 1 in 5 people in the UK have a long term illness, impairment or disability. Many more have a temporary disability. Accessibility means more than putting things online. It means making your content and design clear and simple enough so that most people can use it without needing to adapt it, while supporting those who do need to adapt things.

This guide will give you an overview of some basic do's and don'ts of website accessibility.





Platforms

It's important to check that all types of user can interact with your website in whatever way they need too. This includes considering the technology available to users.

Websites should:

- ✓ Work on all devices, this includes desktops, tablets and mobile devices.
- ✓ Be mobile friendly, majority of users now access websites from their phone!
- ✓ Work and look the same way across a variety of internet browsers such as Chrome, Safari, Microsoft Edge and Samsung internet.



Navigation

Not all users move through a website in the same way. Some use a mouse to navigate a website whilst others might rely on a keyboard. Users could rely on screen reading technology to read the page back to them, and some users might prefer to move through a website using a site map or search bar.

Therefore it is important there are multiple ways for users to reach any page on a site. That way users can choose whatever route they find easiest.

Top Tips:

- ✓ Have multiple options for accessing pages of the site such as main menu, search bar, site map or menu categories.
- ✓ Menus should be a good size, with clear headings and well labelled sections and should be consistent throughout the site.
- ✓ Ensure users can tell what page of the website they are on through the use of breadcrumbs.
- ✓ **Support keyboard navigation.** Ensuring users can tab through information in a logical order and that there is a visual marker indicating where you are on the page.



Page Structure

It's important that web pages are laid out in a logical order. This not only makes a web page easier to visually navigate it ensures users can easily find specific pieces of information without difficulty.

Page structure is particularly important to users who don't rely on visual cues such as users with low vision or those who prefer to view a website in a read only format, with all styling removed.

Using correct headings helps those using screen readers skip directly to content that they need.

Top Tips:

- ✓ Present content in a logical order.
- ✓ Use clear headings and titles throughout.
- ✓ Proper use of headings, paragraphs, bullet points and lists to clearly organise information.
- ✓ Ensure all links, buttons and call to actions are easy to identify.
- ✓ Page layouts are consistent throughout the site.
- ✓ Page still makes sense with all visual styling removed.



Online Forms

Online forms can be confusing for everyone so it's important we take the steps to ensure they are as user friendly as possible.

Forms can be particularly tricky for those using screen reads as incorrectly labels forms can be missed entirely by the software.

Top Tips:

- ✓ Do not use place holder or low contrast text to label form fields. Where possible ensure form labels are placed above, or to the side of the form field.
- ✓ Ensure all required fields are clearly marked. Required fields should not rely on colour alone to be identified by the user.
- ✓ Use good, clear instructions.
- ✓ Error messages should be as helpful as possible. Let users know they have made a mistake and offer a solution to fix it.
- ✓ Use additional styling to help highlight errors such as colour, icons or graphics.
- ✓ Give users the option to review and correct and save information, particularly on large forms like job applications.
- ✓ Avoid adding timed elements to forms where possible.
- ✓ Warn users if a form will time out after a certain period of time/inactivity.
- ✓ Ensure forms work on mobile devices.



Copywriting

Being mindful of the language used when creating website content will benefit users with cognitive impairments.

It may also benefit those who do not speak English as a first language, and even users that are easily distracted when reading.

Top Tips:

- ✓ Use clear and simple language. Avoid using technical jargon or difficult words.
- ✓ Offer explanations for abbreviations, unusual words or technical terms.
- ✓ Keep paragraphs to a reasonable length, avoid using large paragraphs where possible.
- ✓ Keep language consistent throughout site.
- ✓ Make sure the web page still makes sense with all visual styling removed.



Styling

The colour, fonts graphic elements on a website can effect how users interact or view a website. Users with sight impairments or low vision can be particular effected by web site styling.

Whilst styling can make a website look good and engaging it should not be relied on to relay important information.

Top Tips:

- ✓ Use a good colour contrast between text and background colour.
- ✓ Colour should never be relied upon to inform users of information or to indicate an action. Use icons, pattern and underlines to assist users.
- ✓ Use readable fonts, avoid using fancy, decorative display fonts. These might look good but are incredibly hard for some to read.
- ✓ Limit the amount of font styles used.
- ✓ Make sure buttons and links are easy to identify and are not over styled.
- ✓ Where possible make sure buttons still make sense without surrounding contenxt. For example instead of saying “Apply” use “Apply for job”.



Images

Images can be used for decorative purposes throughout a website, but we should take extra care when using images or graphics to convey information.

It's important to consider screen reader users when using images on a website, this can include people with sight and cognitive impairments.

Top Tips:

- ✓ Avoid using images of text as screen readers will not be able to read these.
- ✓ Add text descriptions to non decorative images, This is known as Alt. Text (a web developer can help with this).
- ✓ Ensure images that display important information such as diagrams or graphs are also explained in the surrounding text.
- ✓ Be mindful that moving or flashing graphics can be overwhelming for some, maybe add an option to turn off or disable this.



Get in touch

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