Website accessibility

26 June 2019 – Updated 23 March 2021

# Overview

The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 came into force on 23 September 2018. The Council is required to meet the new standards by 23 September 2020.

# Council requirements

1. The Council website must comply with the accessibility requirements by 23 September 2020. 1
2. The Council must provide an accessibility statement on the website and review that regularly.
3. The Council must provide information in another format if it is requested for accessibility purposes.

1  The Regulations state that the council is not required to comply with the accessibility requirement if doing so would impose a disproportionate burden on the council. The council must undertake an assessment (things like lack of time or knowledge cannot be taken into account). If a council determines that compliance would impose a disproportionate burden it must explain in an accessibility statement the parts that could not be complied with, and where, if appropriate alternatives are available.

1. *March 2021 – The “disproportionate burden on the council” phrase was not meant to excuse a council from permanently not complying, but to give it more time if it were not possible to be compliant by September 2020. As the council is able to raise the funds it requires via the precept, the cost of compliance is not deemed to be a reason for non-compliance.*

# Accessibility requirements

The website needs to adhere to WCAG 2.1 standards.

This means that users should be able to:

* Change colours, contrast levels and fonts;
* Zoom in up to 300% without the text spilling off the screen;
* Navigate most of the website using just a keyboard;
* Navigate most of the website using speech recognition software;
* Listen to most of the website using a screen reader.

# Accessibility statement

An accessibility statement on the website lists what requirements the website meets, and explains the parts which are not accessible and the reasons why, provides details of accessible formats, and informs the user who to contact to advise of failures to comply with accessibility requirements, and the user’s legal recourse if there is an unsatisfactory response to their notification or request.

# Provision of accessible alternative format on request

The council is required to provide information in another format if requested, where reasonable to do so.

# Council action

1. Talk to the webdeveloper and find out how compatible the site currently is.
2. Find out the cost of making the site more/completely compatible.
3. Find out how we make the new content compatible.
4. If necessary, work out whether to comply or fully comply would place a disproportionate burden on the council.
5. Complete an accessibility statement and place on website.

*March 2021 – update*

1. *Our current website is not WCAG compliant.*
2. *The web developer is not willing to undertake the work to make the site compliant. This will involve redesigning the website.*
3. *Companies are available who understand the compliance requirements of local authorities.*
4. *It will take a disproportionate amount of time for the Clerk to learn out to improve and implement WCAG compliance on the current website.*
5. *Clerk has undertaken training to learn how to make compliant documents for the website.*
6. *Document layouts and templates will have to be changed for compliance.*
7. *An accessibility statement has been written on the website.*

# Research References

NALC Legal Briefing – L09-18: The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018

OALC May 2019 update – Requirement for accessible websites for Parish Councils

Government Digital Service – sample accessibility statement