

# Warwick District Council website accessibility policy

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## Introduction

### Why make our website accessible to disabled people?

- The Equality Act 2010 replaced the Disability Discrimination Act of 1995. Excluding anyone from using a service based on disability may be a breach of the Act.
- There are over 11 million disabled people in the UK (Department for Work and Pensions 2014). In addition there are millions of other individuals who are affected by sensory, physical and/or cognitive impairments, including those resulting from the ageing process. AbilityNet estimates that the UK's 11 million+ disabled people have a spending power of £120 billion.
- Research has confirmed that people without disabilities are also able to use websites more effectively and more successfully when they are optimised for accessibility (AbilityNet).
- Content developed upholding World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) guidelines can be more easily transferred to other digital platforms and future browsers.
- There is a great deal of overlap between best practice for search engine optimisation and accessibility optimisation. Accessible content with clear title tags, meaningful links, informative image text, structured headings and so on is highly visible to search engines, and can lead to higher rankings.
- Ensuring accessibility can be a source of good publicity.

### The aims and use of this policy

- This accessibility policy outlines the accessibility targets that will be set and any measures that will be taken to broaden access to the Warwick District Council (WDC) website.
- The accessibility policy should be referenced in tender and contract documents. It contains requirements for contractors undertaking the development and maintenance of the website. All contractors should be asked specifically to commit to helping WDC meet its accessibility policy and this should be reflected in all contracts. A summary of the policy is available on the website.

## 1. Accessibility statement

The website contains a declaration of accessibility and this should always be maintained and updated as necessary.

The declaration should be written in plain English and reference the standards the website aims for in terms of the W3C guidelines.

Any logos awarded to the site (e.g. Digital Accessibility Centre, RNIB) should only be displayed for the duration of the accreditation awarded.  
<https://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/accessibility>

## 2. Users

The following user groups should be consulted during any major development of the website (e.g. complete website redevelopment, new content management system), or when significant new features are to be added (e.g. new third party system):

### 2.1. Vision impairment

- Users of screen reader software or users of magnification software.
- Users with mild vision impairment, e.g. users who might enlarge text in the browser.

### 2.2. Mobility

- Users who might use switch access and an on-screen keyboard to interact with a computer.
- Users who might use voice recognition software.
- Users who might only use a keyboard (a mouse being too difficult to use) or users who might use a mouse but have fine control difficulties.

### 2.3. Cognitive and learning

- For example users with medium dyslexia who might change site colours and text formatting, and who in many cases might supplement this with text to speech software for reading sections of text.

### 2.4. Deaf and hard of hearing

- British Sign Language (BSL) users and or/deaf or hard of hearing users should be consulted if there is multimedia content on the site.

### 2.5. Elderly

- 20% of our users are over 60, so users in this age group should user test any significant new features.

### 2.6. Low literacy

- An estimated 30% of web users have low literacy (Nielsen Norman Group). There may be difficulties in recruiting people in this bracket so the WDC style guide recommendations should be consulted when adding new features or carrying out redevelopment.

**There are organisations such as the Digital Accessibility Centre, Shaw Trust or RNIB who can help arrange user testing with many of these user groups. There is an associated cost and this should be included in any budget for major redevelopment of the website.**

## 3. Core tasks performed on the site

The following core tasks should be tested to ensure that all users can perform them successfully and efficiently on the website. These should be tested after any major redevelopment and during any accessibility/usability audits.

### 3.1. Common website tasks

- a) Find out how to contact WDC directly.

- b) Find out what services are available on the site (i.e. use the navigation, search, sitemap or A-Z).
- c) Find out information relating to a property e.g. local councillor, bin collection dates (for local residents).
- d) Complete an online form.
- e) Find out opening times for a leisure centre (for example).

Depending on the nature of any new feature, the main function should be usable to disabled users (e.g. making a booking, making a payment etc.)

### **3.2. Criteria for determining success**

Criteria for determining success should include:

Effectiveness:

- Task completion rate
- Degree of completion, error rates

Efficiency:

- Number of keystrokes/clicks
- Time taken)

Satisfaction:

- What is the user feedback on each task?

## **4. Maintaining accessibility standards**

In order to maintain accessibility standards and to improve them further the following steps will be taken:

- We will identify user needs. Website feedback will always be available on the website. A feedback link needs to be kept on the accessibility page.
- Accessibility and usability audits should be carried out on a regular basis by expert external companies. These should take place at least every two years or during and after any major development.
- Automated checks should be carried out as part of business as usual to ensure the validity of code, and website functionality and availability.

## **5. Questions for suppliers**

The following questions should be used as **a guide** when considering suppliers for the website. Use a selection of these questions as appropriate. It is important to note that conformance to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 is important not sufficient. It is something to check but it is not the primary goal.

### **General**

- Does your solution meet the accessibility target of level AA from the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0? Provide supporting evidence.

### **Requirements and design process**

- Do you gather requirements from users and disabled users i.e. the public (as opposed to the buyer of the system)?
- Do you validate early designs with users, including disabled users (i.e. the public as opposed to the buyer of the system)?
- Do you use feedback from these users to take your design process forward? Provide supporting evidence.

## Development

- What technologies will be used to build the website?
- If non-W3C technologies (e.g. Flash) are used, provide a justification for using these technologies and how equivalent accessible functionality will be provided.

## Content creation

- Will rich-media formats be used? If yes, describe how these formats will be made accessible.

## Testing

- Are user testing and accessibility testing *with the public* included as part of the overall test plan? Provide supporting evidence.
- We conduct our own usability and accessibility testing. Do you correct designs and code as a result of accessibility/usability testing?

## Maintenance

- Do you test changes and upgrades for compliance with WCAG level AA?

## 6. Accessibility levels

The WDC website aims to reach conformance to Level AA of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0. We aim for practical accessibility so that the website is usable when tested by the users in section 2 above.

## 7. Exceptions

If an area or element of the website (e.g. GIS mapping) is unlikely to be accessible to people with particular impairments, an explanation should be provided on the website saying how disabled people can access this information or these services via alternative means. If this is not possible, an explanation should be provided saying why it is considered reasonable for the area to remain inaccessible. The explanation should also be referenced on the accessibility page.

## 8. Contact details

Use the following contact details for more information about this accessibility policy, or for providing comments and suggestions.

Website Manager  
Warwick District Council  
Riverside House  
Milverton Hill  
Royal Leamington Spa  
CV32 5HZ

Email: [webadmin@warwickdc.gov.uk](mailto:webadmin@warwickdc.gov.uk)  
Phone: 01926 450000

## 9. Reference material

- W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (W3C WAI) - <http://www.w3.org/wai/>
- Abilitynet - <http://www.abilitynet.org.uk/>
- Disability Rights Commission - <http://www.drc.org.uk/>
- Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB) - <http://www.rnib.org.uk/>
- Digital Accessibility Centre – [www.digitalaccessibilitycentre.org](http://www.digitalaccessibilitycentre.org)
- Shaw Trust – [www.shaw-trust.org.uk](http://www.shaw-trust.org.uk)
- Website Usability - <http://www.useit.com/>
- Business case for an accessible website - <http://www.w3.org/WAI/bcase/Overview>
- Web Standards Project (WaSP) - <http://webstandards.org/>
- Lower literacy users  
<http://www.useit.com/alertbox/20050314.html>

## 10. Reviewing this policy

This policy should be reviewed every 2 years from the date of first approval. The policy was last reviewed in 2017.