Chichester District Council
ICT & Customer Services
Web & GIS Team

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Page:	1 of 12

TITLE:

Web Accessibility Policy

ABSTRACT:

This document has been compiled to assist in the development of an accessible website, which conforms to Web Accessibility Standards and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

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1. Document Control

1.1. Issue history

Version	Date	Remarks	Reviewers
0.1	24.08.03	First issue	Richard Bridgland, Diane Shepherd, Martin Barnes, Simon Collis
0.2	19.08.04	Second issue, in Diane's absence to ensure this document is included in all legal contracts.	Richard Bridgland, Simon Collis
0.3	20.10.04	Third issue	Legal
0.4	28.09.05	Amend hyperlinks to account for new DirectGov micro sites.	Richard Bridgland, Simon Collis, Philip Bentall
0.5	09.06.09	Updated to account for new WCAG 2.0 guidelines	Diane Shepherd, Jane Dodsworth, David Stewart, Daniel Bramley, Helen Belenger, Jeremy Lambert, Jon Moon

2. Background

Chichester District Council is firmly committed to providing and promoting Web Accessibility to the wider community. This Policy should ensure accessibility influences the way we provide services on our website.

This document has been compiled to assist in the development of an accessible website, which conforms to Web Accessibility Standards and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The Web Accessibility Policy for Chichester District Council refers to all applications interfacing on the website along with all content pages that are hosted under the Chichester District Council domains.

The Policy is intended for all Web contributors and external contractors who create web pages and applications under the Chichester District Council domain. The primary goal of this policy is to promote accessibility. It is not the intention of this policy to discourage content developers from developing interesting web pages but rather to explain how to make content more accessible to a wider audience.

2.1. The Disability Discrimination Act (1995)

The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) Part III states "from 1 October 1999, service providers have to make 'reasonable adjustments' for disabled people, such as providing extra help or making changes to the way they provide their services" - this includes information and services provided through the web

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1995/ukpga_19950050_en_1#19

3. Policy Statement

It is the policy of Chichester District Council to make reasonable adjustments in order to make all web-based information and services on the Council web site accessible and equally effective to all users, regardless of their disability.

The Council requires adherence to high priority level accessibility as specified by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C®), W3C/WAI's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (WCAG) Conformance Level "Double-A" as a means to provide optimal access.

Departmental Web contributors of the Content Management System will become familiar with the Accessibility Guidelines (Section 5) and apply them when designing and creating web pages. The guidelines will ensure that web pages and applications created by Chichester District Council are developed to serve the largest possible audience. In addition, compliance with these guidelines provides an added benefit to those users with text-based browsers, low-end processors, slow modem connections and/or no multi-media capabilities on their computer.

Each Department will be responsible for achieving universal accessibility of their own content. Departmental Heads are required to designate a Web Lead User of the Content Management System to be responsible for implementing this policy. Any third party contracted to develop under the Chichester District Council domain will be required to comply with these guidelines**.**

Note: All third party works carried out on the website should include Chichester District Council's Web Accessibility Policy in the terms and conditions of the contract.

4. Accessibility

There are many people who find it difficult to interact with computer technologies. One of the ways in which government websites differ from commercial sites is the requirement that the needs of these audiences are part of our website strategies.

Accessibility describes a person's ability to use a website. Individuals with disabilities face a number of obstacles when accessing the web. Many of these obstacles are relatively simple to overcome, others require a bit more thought and effort (Howell, 2003).

4.1. Physical Impairments

Recent disability figures for the UK suggest that there are:

- over 8.54 million people registered with one form of disability or another;
- of these over 2 million have a visual impairment;
- eight million people suffer from some form of hearing loss;
- one million people have a form of learning difficulty;
- over seven million people have literacy problems.

It is worthwhile remembering that impairments take a variety of forms and can exist together in combination. Specific considerations for the common disabilities are as follows;

4.2. Visual Impairment

The web is superficially seen as a visual medium, but as the majority of information in a website is in text format there are many ways in which this data can be manipulated. Screen reader software reads a web page one line at a time, horizontally across the screen.

The text is spoken using a speech synthesiser or alternatively sent to a retractable Braille display or to a fixed single line display. Screen magnification software is used to magnify portions of a screen using a zoom feature. Many people who have visual impairment still have a degree of usable vision. Simply using clear fonts and distinguishable colours may be all that is needed.

4.3. Hearing Impairment

Many people with auditory disabilities have little difficulty in using websites unless streaming audio and video files are used. This can be overcome simply with the use of text captioning. This also assists those non-native speakers who may find written language easier than spoken.

4.4. Motor Impairment

Many diseases and physical conditions can cause a person to have a loss or limitation of function in muscle control or movement, which can mean difficulty in using a conventional keyboard or a mouse. Software such as, Sticky Keys can make difficult keystrokes more accessible and WAI offers the ability to assign hotkeys to navigation elements. The use of speech recognition systems allows the user to speak commands to their computer. Other alternative input devices include pointer devices and eye scanning systems controlled by mouth or head movements.

4.5. Cognitive disability

Reading difficulties such as dyslexia and limited mental agility can all limit the understanding of information. Users may have problems with memory recall or text recognition; they may also have problems entering information correctly, such as querying a search facility.

4.6. Selective disturbance

Flickering and flashing text or images can trigger epileptic seizures in some individuals and do not encourage usability among the visually impaired.

5. Web Accessibility Guidelines

5.2   ICM Contributors

The purpose of this list is to provide a summary of the types of issues to consider when creating and designing accessible web pages.

Issue	Guideline
Graphics	Provide a text equivalent for every non-text element. *This includes*: images, graphical representations of text (including symbols), image map regions, animations (e.g., animated GIFs), applets and programmatic objects, ascii art, frames, scripts, images used as list bullets, spacers, graphical buttons, sounds (played with or without user interaction), stand-alone audio files, audio tracks of video, and video.
Colour	Ensure that all information conveyed with colour is also available without colour. It is estimated that about one-third of the male population is colour-blind.
Language	Use the clearest and simplest language appropriate for a site's content.
Underlining	Do not underline titles or sub-titles. They will confuse the user as they look like hyperlinks.
Alignment	Centre-aligned titles and text will cause problems for visitors with dyslexia or cognitive difficulties. Align titles and text to the left.
File downloads	Use the clearest and simplest language appropriate for a site's content. Include a meaningful explanation of the file and insert supportive code for visitors with disabilities.
Uppercase	Do not use uppercase for titles or sub titles. Visitors with dyslexia will have problems reading them.
Applets	Ensure that pages are usable when scripts, applets, or other programmatic objects are turned off or not supported. If this is not

	possible, provide equivalent information on an alternative accessible page.
Multimedia	Until user agents can automatically read aloud the text equivalent of a visual track, provide an auditory description of the important information of the visual track of a multimedia presentation.
Multimedia	For any time-based multimedia presentation (e.g., a movie or animation), synchronize equivalent alternatives (e.g., captions or auditory descriptions of the visual track) with the presentation.
Animation	Until user agents allow users to control blinking, avoid causing content to blink (i.e., change presentation at a regular rate, such as turning on and off).
Pop-ups	Until user agents allow users to turn off spawned windows, do not cause pop-ups or other windows to appear and do not change the current window without informing the user.
Text	Divide large blocks of information into more manageable groups where natural and appropriate. Use short paragraphs with sufficient white space and limit new points to one per paragraph.
Hyperlinks	Clearly identify the target of each link. Do not use 'Click here'. Give links meaningful names and phrases and be short and concise.
Formatting	Create a style of presentation that is consistent across pages.
Page layout	Create a style of presentation that is consistent across pages. If the page is cluttered and complex, those with a limited field of vision can miss vital pieces of information.

5.2   Implementation

Accessibility issues will be incorporated into the programme of Web training courses and the Council's Web Design Guidelines.

To facilitate the implementation of the Web accessibility guidelines, the Council will provide templates, which are accessible. These templates will be usable in combination with the adopted Web Content Management System (CMS) and will make the maintenance and management of Web resources much easier for Web Contributors.

In addition, all content published to the site will form part of a workflow process where content will be checked for accessibility.

5.2   Contractors

The Council requires adherence to high priority level accessibility as specified by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C®), W3C/WAI's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (WCAG) Conformance Level "Double-A" as a means to provide optimal access.

Any third party contracted to develop under the Chichester District Council domain will be required to comply with these guidelines**.**

6. Web Accessibility Evaluation Tools

The following automatic checkers are available:

W3C HTML validation service
http://validator.w3.org
A free service that checks (X)HTML documents for conformance to W3C standards.

The WAVE Accessibility Tool Online Web Service
http://wave.webaim.org
A free visual tool for quickly assessing the accessibility of web pages. Feedback is provided through a clever and user friendly system of icons.

Web Developer Toolbar for Firefox
http://chrispederick.com/work/web-developer/
A useful utility that adds a menu and a toolbar to Firefox with various web developer tools (eg outline structural elements such as headings, validate pages, disable styles or images, etc). See Evaluating Web Sites for Accessibility with the Firefox Web Developer Toolbar for further information.

Web Accessibility Toolbar for Internet Explorer
http://www.visionaustralia.org.au/ais/toolbar/
A comparable tool to Firefox's Web Developer Toolbar, for Internet Explorer. It allows you to validate pages, resize the browser, disable images or CSS and much more with the click of a button. See Using the AIS Web Accessibility Toolbar for further information.

7. Web Accessibility Resources

Royal National Institute of the Blind - Web Access Centre
http://www.rnib.org.uk/xpedio/groups/public/documents/code/public_rnib008789.hcsp

Disability Rights Commission
http://www.drc-gb.org

W3C Web Accessibility Initiative - Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0
http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG/

WebAIM (Web Accessibility in Mind)
http://www.webaim.org