Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

This is reproduced from an email sent from the Council's Communications team to all Parish & Town Councils on 6 July 2023

The law on digital accessibility applies to all local authorities

There may be some uncertainty about whether town and parish councils are covered by the [Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations 2018](#)

Please be aware that the regulations apply to <u>all</u> public sector bodies, including town and parish councils.

In practice, you need to ensure your websites and other online and mobile platforms comply with the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)](#). This is the internationally recognised standard for digital accessibility.

The Government Digital Service is auditing public sector websites. It is contacting public sector bodies that do not comply with the guidelines to tell them what they need to put right. They usually allow 12 weeks for this process.

Where they find continued non-compliance, they may refer the public sector body to the Equality and Human Rights Commission, which may choose to take enforcement action.

In some cases, public sector bodies are not required to comply with the accessibility requirement where doing so would impose a disproportionate burden. However, any public sector body claiming this exemption must demonstrate clear justification.

The Government Digital Service has published [advice online to help you make your websites accessible](#).

Some points to remember:

You need to [publish an accessibility statement](#) on your website to comply with the regulations.

Follow the WCAG design principles. Websites should be:
- perceivable – so people can access your services with the senses available to them,
- operable – can find and use your content,
- understandable – can comprehend it, and
- robust – can use a range of technologies to interact with it.

The guidelines also cover any documents you upload to your website (such as PDFs) or pass to another authority for online publication.

Use accessibility checkers in apps such as Word and Excel to ensure documents are accessible when you create them.

You should have processes to:
- regularly monitor and review your website to ensure it remains accessible, and
- invite and manage requests for any content not in an accessible format.

This is an opportunity for us to enhance the service we provide to residents, because accessible websites usually work better for everyone.