



WEB ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2009

www.equalities.gov.uk

The Government Equalities Office (GEO) website is a vital resource for everybody and it is essential that we work towards overcoming the barriers that people face when using the internet, aiming to provide equal access to everybody. The web accessibility plan illustrates how we will make the GEO website more accessible.

The GEO has committed to creating and maintaining an accessible website. This means that more people will be able to use the site effectively. We have conducted a general review of the GEO website, which includes accessibility, where we have identified the ways the website has improved and the ways we plan to improve in order to make it more accessible.

WHAT WE HAVE DONE- WAYS WE HAVE IMPROVED

Here are the improvements that we have already made to our website:

Accessibility level:

The GEO website was revamped in December 2008 now conforms to a AAA level as measured against W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0. The website code is validated as W3C XHTML 1.0 Transitional; and W3C CSS level 2.1.

Images:

All images on the site use alt-tags describe the images. We do not use graphical text (text as pictures) because it is difficult to pick up on screen-reading devices and we do not use animations, as it can be a distraction and also can compromise the ability to read content on the page, particularly for people with learning difficulties.

PDF:

Most PDF documents on our site are accessible and tagged, which works better with screen-reader devices. Where PDFs are not fully accessible (because they are old documents) we endeavour to make them accessible to all who request it.



Alternative versions:

Many important documents are available in other formats, including Easy Read, Large Print, Braille, Audio CD, Welsh and other languages. Alternative formats are made available when there is a reasonable request.

Structure/Layout:

All pages on the site are structured with clear headings, lists and tables (only used on the site to display data) where appropriate and we have a clear a site map. The site also offers the option to change to just text or to switch back to graphical. The design of the website is consistent.

Language:

Content on the site is simple and we avoid the use of jargon.

Colour:

There is a lot of white space to make it easier to read. The site also has the option to change to a high contrast.

WHAT WE WILL DO – WAYS WE PLAN TO IMPROVE

We plan to make web accessibility a priority and to implement the modifications listed below, which came out of our initial review:

Text:

Offer the option to change the size of the text.

Keyboard use:

Install 'Skip navigation' / 'Back to top' links for those who use their keyboard to navigate and check navigation is available through the keyboard and not just the mouse.

Images:

Use more pictures to aid understanding for those people with learning difficulties (all of which will have alt text).



Colours:

Offer the option to choose the background colours on the site, which can help people with Dyslexia.

Training:

Offer more accessibility training to GEO web developers and keep informed of and up-to-date on new accessibility techniques and developments.

Language:

Use text that makes sense when read out of context, e.g. "click here."

Alternative versions:

Build a Welsh-language version of the site and install the 'Browsealoud' screen-reading device.

Evaluation:

Have regular internal reviews of the website and yearly external independent reviews.

Miscellaneous:

Create an easy to find 'Help page', which can assist users if they encounter any problems, including problems using the site.

Next steps:

The web manager at the GEO will keep informed of up-to-date and new accessibility techniques and will reinforce GEO's commitment to creating an accessible website. We will regularly promote the improvement of our website internally, providing updates on key milestones and progress on the ways we plan to improve. We plan to ensure that web developers at the GEO are trained adequately on website accessibility and will also establish a process to regularly monitor the GEO website and invite feedback from web-users.



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Useful links:

- W3: www.w3.org/TR/WAI-WEBCONTENT
- COI: www.coi.gov.uk/guidance.php?page=129
- My Web My Way: www.bbc.co.uk/accessibility/index.shtml
- ODI: www.officefordisability.gov.uk

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