

5. A strategic approach to web accessibility

Planning for an accessible Website



- **Obtain top management and trustee commitment** make them aware there is a legal requirement to make your site accessible under the DDA
- **Find out how accessible your site is now** – Have it audited using the testing information in the ICT Hub Web guide
- **Decide on what level of accessibility you want to achieve** – W3C WCAG level 2 is increasingly becoming a goal of many VCS organisations



Planning for an accessible Website



- **Create an internal team to identify accessibility objectives** - this might just be you!
- **Make sure the relevant people in your organisation understand about accessibility** – encourage them to read the relevant sections of the ICT Hub Web guide – make sure you read it also
- **Create an accessibility policy...**

- **A key part of making your site accessible is to set in place an accessibility policy to give all those involved in the creation, editing, testing and updating of your site a clear idea of what they need to do.**
- The accessibility policy should explain things like what level of accessibility you are working towards and how you have thought about the access needs of disabled people



Web accessibility policy



- **If any part of your website has specific accessibility issues** that will impact on the ability of disabled people to use your site you must document the problem and explain how you are working towards fixing it, and if possible give a time frame for this solution.
- **For those services that are inaccessible** you need to explain how disabled people can access this information or these services via alternative means
- Encourage feedback from disabled people
- Put a summary of your policy on your Website



Content Management Systems



- Many sites use some form of Content Management System (CMS) for generating web pages and for adding and editing content.
- For accessibility it is very important that you check out the functionality of your CMS - is it flexible enough that it can be modified to produce accessible pages?
- You need to identify early if this is going to be a bottleneck for your accessibility planning.
- Also it is important that the CMS interface is accessible so disabled employees and volunteers are able to add content to your website.

Content Management Systems



- You might be in the situation where you don't currently have a CMS, but are looking for one. If this is the case ensure you ask about accessibility and use it as a key criteria to base on which one you choose, whether it is open source ('free') or a commercial product.
- A useful product to benchmark against is Adobe (formally Macromedia) Contribute - it costs around £99 for a single license and contains a number of useful features that help keep Web pages accessible. You can download a free 30 day trial – it is aimed at small organisations who want a simple tool to manage their Website



Working with external agencies



- You need to ask them about their accessibility knowledge
- There is currently no clear definition of a DDA compliant website
- There is currently no national accreditation for developers who claim to create accessible websites
- You therefore need to ask them specifically about:
 - Examples of previous work
 - References from previous clients
 - Evidence they know what the W3C accessibility guidelines cover
 - Do they have any knowledge about assistive technology?
 - Do they know what PAS 78 is?

- You need to ensure processes are in place – are people doing what they are meant to?
- Monitoring and testing – are you checking the site regularly, and testing it for accessibility?
- New content/functions – has accessibility been thought about?
- New staff – if they work on the website do they know about accessibility?
- Keep it as an ongoing project – integrate it into your website strategy
- Publicise what you are doing about accessibility internally and externally