

CUCKFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Queen's Hall, High Street, Cuckfield, RH17 5EL



Item 17: Website Accessibility Quotation

Overview

When websites and web tools are properly designed and coded, people with disabilities can use them. However, currently many sites and tools are developed with accessibility barriers that make them difficult or impossible for some people to use.

Making the web accessible benefits individuals, businesses, and society. International web standards define what is needed for accessibility.

People may not have a choice when using a public sector website or app, so it's important they work for everyone. The people who need them the most are often the people who find them hardest to use.

Accessible websites also tend to work better for everyone. For example, they are often faster and easier to use and tend to appear higher in search engine rankings.

Most public sector websites and apps do not currently meet accessibility requirements. For example, a recent study found that 4 in 10 local council homepages failed basic tests for accessibility.

Common problems include websites that cannot be navigated using a keyboard, inaccessible PDF forms that cannot be read out on screen readers, and poor colour contrast that makes text difficult to read - especially for visually impaired people.

You may be breaking the law if your public sector website or app does not meet accessibility requirements.

Meeting Accessibility Requirements

New regulations came into force for public sector bodies on 23 September 2018. They say you must make your website or mobile app more accessible by making it 'perceivable, operable, understandable and robust'. The full name of the regulations is the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

The 2018 regulations build on your existing obligations to people who have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 (or the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 in Northern Ireland). These say that all UK service providers must consider 'reasonable adjustments' for disabled people.

For example, somebody might ask for information in an alternative, accessible format, like large print or an audio recording. There are a number of factors that determine what makes something a 'reasonable' adjustment.

Non-compliance with the accessibility requirement will be treated as a failure to make a reasonable adjustment (as per the relevant sections of the Equality Act 2010 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995), and may ultimately result in claims for discrimination and reputational damage.

This is not just about compliance, it's about customer service. It also comes under the Equality Act as non-compliance is a form of discrimination against someone with a protected characteristic.

Please see details from the www.gov.uk website copied below.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/accessibility-requirements-for-public-sector-websites-and-apps#how-the-accessibility-regulations-will-be-monitored-and-enforced>

How the accessibility regulations will be monitored and enforced

From January 2020, the Government Digital Service (GDS) will monitor public sector bodies' compliance on behalf of the Minister for the Cabinet Office. GDS will do this by examining a sample of public sector websites every year. GDS can request access to intranets, extranets or any public sector website.

Public sector bodies must also publish an accessibility statement and review it regularly.

If GDS decides that a public sector body has failed to publish an accessibility statement or that the accessibility statement is incorrect, it will publish:

- the name of the body
- a copy of the decision

From June 2021, GDS will also check mobile applications published by public sector bodies.

Enforcement

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in England, Scotland and Wales and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) in Northern Ireland will enforce the requirement to make public

sector websites and mobile apps accessible (making them perceivable, operable, understandable and robust).

Organisations that do not meet the accessibility requirement or fail to provide a satisfactory response to a request to produce information in an accessible format, will be failing to make reasonable adjustments. This means they will be in breach of the Equality Act 2010 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

The EHRC and ECNI can therefore use their legal powers against offending organisations, including investigations, unlawful act notices and court action.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/memorandum-of-understanding-monitoring-and-enforcement-of-public-sector-website-accessibility>

Quotes

I have contacted 3 organisations to request quotations to test our website:

Supplier 1

I was verbally advised that their high-level estimate would take 2 people 2 days to complete the testing, including a report of findings, followed by 1 day's retesting after changes had been made.

Their daily rate is £850, meaning the high-level quote to complete this would be £4,250 + VAT.

Supplier 2

I have received a quote estimating it would take 2 days to complete the accessibility testing at a day rate of £750, or £100 per hour should a full day not be required. Any changes necessary would be charged at the same rates.

Supplier 3

Their estimate to complete a full assessment, provide a report detailing issues and offering solutions and then to complete retesting after fixes have been made is £2,302 plus VAT.

Recommendation

I recommend we proceed with the Supplier 2.