Vision Support

Accessibility
Strategy

Introduction

Ensuring our communications and services are accessible is fundamental and aligns with our values of inclusivity, respect, and equal opportunity. This strategy outlines our commitment to ensuring everything we provide and do is accessible to all, as well as helping others to achieve the same. Our aim is to create an environment where everyone can fully participate and benefit from our offerings.

Vision

Our vision is to raise awareness of and be a leader in accessibility, providing an inclusive experience that meets the diverse needs of our service users, employees, volunteers, and stakeholders. We are committed to continuous improvement and innovation in accessibility practices.

We want everyone to strive towards an inclusive and accessible world, and we believe it is possible!

Commitments

Compliance with Standards
- Adhere to national and international accessibility standards, including the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA, and relevant local legislation such as the Equality Act 2010.
- Regularly review and update our policies to ensure ongoing compliance.

Inclusive Design
- Build in inclusive design principles from the outset of any project or service.
- Engage with diverse user groups during the design and development phases to gather feedback and insights.

Training and Awareness
- Provide comprehensive accessibility training to all employees, ensuring they understand the importance of accessibility and how to implement best practices in their roles.
- Foster a culture of inclusion by raising awareness about accessibility issues, and promoting understanding and empathy.

Accessible Digital Content
- Ensure all digital content, including websites, social media platforms, and multimedia, is accessible.
- Regularly audit, test, and adjust our digital properties for accessibility.

Physical Accessibility
- Ensure that our physical locations are accessible, including buildings, facilities, and signage.
- Conduct regular assessments of our physical spaces to identify and address any barriers to accessibility.

Commitments Cont.

Service User Support
- Offer multiple channels of communication, including phone, email, large print, Braille and audio.

Employee Support
- Provide reasonable accommodations to employees, ensuring they have the necessary tools and support to perform their jobs effectively.
- Promote an inclusive workplace culture that values diversity and encourages the contributions of all employees.

Community Engagement
- Collaborate with our Steering Group and campaigning groups, and external organisations to gather feedback and stay informed of accessibility issues and best practices.
- Participate in community events and initiatives to promote accessibility and inclusion.

Feedback Mechanisms
- Implement robust feedback mechanisms to allow service users and employees to report accessibility issues and suggest improvements.
- Act promptly on feedback to address concerns and enhance accessibility.

Continuous Improvement
- Establish an accessibility task force responsible for monitoring, evaluating, and improving our accessibility efforts.
- Set measurable goals and track progress to ensure accountability and continuous improvement.

Email Accessibility

Subject Line and Preheader Text
- Use a clear and descriptive subject line to indicate the content of the email.
- Provide a preheader (preview) text that gives more context to the subject line.

Text Formatting
- Use a simple, clear layout with plenty of white space and a clear hierarchy of information.
- Avoid using images as the sole means of conveying important information; always provide Alt text.

Responsive Design
- Ensure the email layout is responsive and works well on various devices, including mobile phones.
- Use a single-column layout for easier navigation.

Links and Buttons
- Use clear, descriptive link text and ensure buttons are large enough to be easily clicked.
- Avoid using vague link text like "click here"; instead, describe the action, such as "Read more about our services."

Colour / Colour Contrast
- Avoid coloured backgrounds.

Attachments
- Provide accessible versions of any attachments, ensuring they are screen reader-friendly and properly formatted.

Social Media Accessibility

Alt Text for Images

- Use the Alt text feature on platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram to describe images.
- Ensure Alt text is concise and conveys the essential information or message of the image.

Video Content

- Provide captions or subtitles for all videos.
- Include transcripts for audio content, such as podcasts or voice-over.

Hashtags and Emojis

- Capitalise each word in multi-word hashtags (e.g., #AccessibleDesign instead of #accessibledesign).
- Use emojis sparingly and place them at the end of sentences to avoid interrupting the flow of text.

Use of Colour

- Ensure sufficient contrast between text and background in images or graphics.
- Avoid relying on colour alone to convey meaning; instead, use text labels or symbols.

Descriptive Text

- Provide context or explanations for any visuals or links in the post, especially when sharing infographics or complex images.
- Be concise and clear in your messaging, keeping in mind that long posts may be harder to read for some users.

Interactive Elements

- When using polls, quizzes, or other interactive content, ensure that they are accessible via keyboard navigation and compatible with assistive technologies.

Document Accessibility

Use Clear and Simple Language
- Write in plain language, avoiding jargon, and complex sentences.
- Structure content with headings, subheadings, and bullet points.

Headings and Structure
- Use heading styles (e.g., Heading 1, Heading 2) to create a clear hierarchy.
- Ensure a logical structure with a clear flow of information.

Alt Text for Images
- Provide alternative text (Alt text) for all images, diagrams, and charts to describe their content.
- Ensure that Alt text is concise but descriptive enough to convey the image's purpose.

Use Accessible Fonts and Formatting
- Choose simple, sans-serif fonts like Arial or Verdana, and use a minimum font size of 16 points.
- Ensure sufficient colour contrast between text and background (e.g., black text on a white background).
- Avoid using colour alone to convey meaning; use text labels or patterns in charts and graphs.
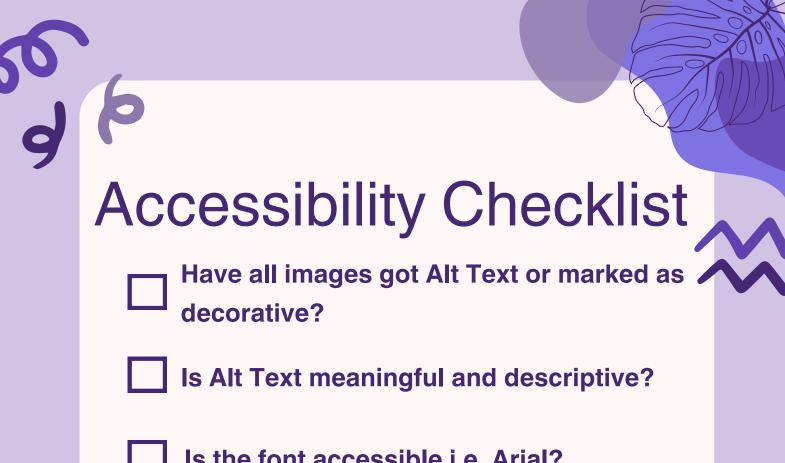
Tables and Lists
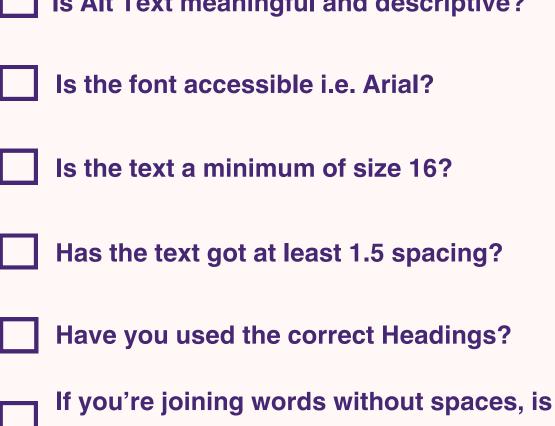- Ensure tables are simple and structured, with row and column headers clearly identified.

Hyperlinks
- Use descriptive link text that clearly indicates where the link will lead (e.g., "Download the report" instead of "Click here").
- Ensure hyperlinks are distinguishable by underlining them or using a different colour.

File Formats
- Provide documents in multiple formats where possible (e.g., Word, accessible PDFs).
- Ensure PDFs are tagged and formatted for accessibility, including the use of headings and alt text.

Accessibility Checklist

- [ ] **Have all images got Alt Text or marked as decorative?**

- [ ] **Is Alt Text meaningful and descriptive?**

- [ ] **Is the font accessible i.e. Arial?**

- [ ] **Is the text a minimum of size 16?**

- [ ] **Has the text got at least 1.5 spacing?**

- [ ] **Have you used the correct Headings?**

- [ ] **If you're joining words without spaces, is each word capitalised i.e. VisionSupport**

- [ ] **Is the hyperlink text descriptive?**

Accessible Physical Spaces

Entrances and Exits
- Provide ramps at entrances and exits, ensuring they are wide enough for wheelchair users.
- Use clear, large-print, high-contrast signs at entrances and throughout the building, with Braille and tactile features where possible.

Navigation
- Provide sighted guiding when necessary.

Interior Design
- Ensure wide aisles, corridors, and spaces between furniture to accommodate wheelchairs and mobility aids.
- Remove any tripping hazards.
- Provide restrooms that are spacious, have grab bars, and are equipped with accessible fixtures.

Lighting and Acoustics
- Ensure spaces are well-lit with even, glare-free lighting.
- Control noise levels and provide assistive listening systems in areas where communication is key, such as meeting rooms and auditoriums.

Accessible Physical Spaces Cont.

Emergency Systems
- Clearly mark accessible emergency exits and ensure they are easily reachable.
- Install fire alarms and other emergency signals that are both audible and visible (e.g., flashing lights).

Furniture and Fixtures
- Provide adjustable-height desks and seating options for varying needs.
- Ensure computers, and other technological systems are accessible, with features like screen readers and touch screens at an appropriate height.

Transportation and Parking
- Where possible, provide designated accessible parking spaces close to the building entrance, with adequate width for wheelchair access.
- Ensure that the building is accessible via public transportation, with clear, accessible routes from transit stops.

Training and Awareness
- Train staff on accessibility needs and how to assist individuals with disabilities.
- Develop and communicate accessible emergency evacuation plans that consider the needs of people with disabilities.
- Create Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans for those with additional requirements in the event of an emergency.

Contacts

To report an accessibility issue or if you would like to learn more about accessibility and how we can help

Call 01244 381515 or email information@visionsupport.org.uk