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# Accessibility policy template

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# About this resource

It is essential to display your accessibility policy on your website. An accessibility policy sets out how your Healthwatch attempts to make their communications accessible, what they are legally required to do and how people can get in touch with you if they need more help.

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) is the webs governing body, and they have set out the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) that lay out the standard everyone needs to meet.

To meet these standards, you must display an accessibility policy on your website, and there are specific points it must cover.

To help you produce your statement, we have provided a template for you to use.

# How to display your policy

### This policy is most accessible if displayed on your website as HTML text rather than PDF download.

### If you use the Healthwatch England template

### We have an accessibility page in the footer of the template. Copy your accessibility policy into paragraphs on this page.

### If you don’t use the Healthwatch England template

# We recommend creating a page dedicated to your accessibility policy and making sure a link to it is available on every page on your site.

# The easiest way to do this is to put a link in either the header or footer to appear on every page.

# How often should we review?

Accessibility guidelines and best practice changes, so we would suggest reviewing the policy annually.

If no updates are needed, you can update the policy to reflect the review.

# Accessibility policy template for the network

## About

We are committed to making sure all our information is clear and accessible for everyone.

This policy aims to explain how we will do this. It sets out:

* What we are legally required to do
* How we make our communications and events accessible
* What to do if you do not find our communications accessible and need more support

## What are our legal requirements?

The Equality Act 2010 means that we have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people, including taking steps to put information into accessible formats if a disabled person is at a substantial disadvantage if we do not do this.

Also, there is a duty under the Equality Act 2010 which covers age, disability, sex (gender), gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexuality (whether you are lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual).

In summary, those who are governed by this duty must take account of the need to:

* Get rid of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
* Encourage equal opportunities between different groups
* Encourage good relations between different groups

## How do we make our online information accessible?

This accessibility policy applies to the following websites for Healthwatch [INSERT NAME]

[INSERT WEBSITE ADDRESS]

We want as many people as possible to be able to use this website. For example, that means you should be able to:

* Zoom in up to 300% without the text spilling off the screen
* Navigate most of the website using just a keyboard
* Navigate most of the website using speech recognition software
* Listen to most of the website using a screen reader (including the most recent versions of JAWS, NVDA and VoiceOver)

We’ve also made the website text as simple as possible to understand by using clear language and avoid unnecessary jargon in our communications.

### Website accessibility

This website is fully compliant with the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.1](https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/) AA standard. [IF YOU DO NOT USE THE HEALTHWATCH ENGLAND WEBSITE TEMPLATE YOU NEED TO CHECK THAT YOUR WEBSITE IS FULLY COMPLIANT]

#### Clear labelling

We use clear labels so visitors know where a link or button is taking them and the type and size of documents they are downloading. We have also used a clear design that takes account of people with visual impairments.

#### Plain language

We've attempted to use plain English throughout the site to make the information easy to understand.

#### Colour

We don't use colour alone to convey vital information.

#### Images

All relevant images have alternative text descriptions explaining what the image is about. This description will be read out by screen readers and will be displayed if you hover your cursor over the image.

If the image is complex and cannot be described in just a few words, there will be a link below the image to another page with the full text alternative.

#### External links

All links to other websites will open in a new browser window.

If you want to return to our website after following an external link, you just need to close the new browser window.

#### Increasing text size

If you need to change the size of the text on our website, you can do this by changing your internet settings in the top right-hand corner.

#### Magnifying the screen

If increasing the text size doesn't make the text easy to see, you could try magnifying your screen. Most computer operating systems allow you to do this.

Select one of the options below to find out how to magnify your screen.

Windows

* Select the Start button, then 'Control Panel', then 'Ease of Access', then 'Ease of Access Centre'.
* Under 'Quick Access to common tools' select 'Optimise visual display'.
* Select the tick box next to ‘Turn on magnifier’
* The magnifier will now be turned on and the settings box will display.
* You can click in the magnification level box to change the level of magnification or use the up and down arrow keys.
* You can also minimise the magnifier settings box by clicking the minimise button or by pressing 'Alt' and 'Space', then pressing 'N'.

Mac OS X

* Open the 'Finder' then select the 'Apple' menu, select 'System Preferences...', select the 'Universal Access' icon.
* Select the 'Seeing' tab then select the 'Turn on Zoom' button.
* To zoom in press 'Alt' and 'Cmd' and '+'. This zooms to your maximum level of magnification set in 'Zoom Options...'. The preview rectangle (black bordered box) shows the area of the screen that you will see at maximum zoom.
* To step back or zoom out press 'Alt' and 'Cmd' and '–'. Move your mouse around the screen to view the magnified page.
* To change the maximum and minimum zoom settings select 'Zoom Options...', then:
* Use the 'Maximum Zoom' gauge bar to increase or decrease the magnification level.  
  Use the 'Minimum Zoom' gauge bar to increase or decrease the magnification level.  
  When you have finished select 'Done' and, finally, select 'Close' (red button at the top of the 'Universal Access' window) to return to the Finder desktop.
* To turn magnification on or off at any time, press 'Alt' and 'Cmd' and '\*'.

#### Navigating our site without a mouse

You can use the 'arrow' keys to scroll up and down a page.

You can use the space bar to move down and 'shift' and 'space bar' to move up pages.

You can use the 'tab' key to move from one link to the next, in sequence, then press the 'return/enter' key to select the link.

You can use the 'backspace' key to go back to the previous page.

#### Software to read out loud

Both Windows and Apple now offer built in Software to read your screen out loud to you.

Windows

* Go to start - settings – ease of access – narrator
* Click the slider next to ‘Turn on narrator’ to activate it.
* Go to the web page or document you are trying to view
* Move your cursor to the area of text you want Narrator to read and press ‘Caps lock’ + ‘R’
* To stop the Narrator from speaking simply press ‘Ctrl’.

Apple

* To turn on VoiceOver press ‘Command-F5’
* When VoiceOver is turned on you can use VoiceOver commands to navigate and interact with items on the screen.
* You can enter VoiceOver commands by holding down ‘Ctrl’ and ‘option’ keys together.

### Non-accessible content

We know some parts of this website are not fully accessible:

* You cannot modify the line height or spacing of text
* Some older PDF documents are not fully accessible to screen reader software
* Not all our older videos have captions
* Some third-party content not created by Healthwatch [INSERT NAME]
* There’s a limit to how far you can magnify the map on our ‘contact us’ page
* [ADD ANY OTHER CONTENT YOU ARE AWARE OF THAT IS NOT ACCESSIBLE]

## If you need information in a different format

If you need information on this website in a different format like accessible PDF, large print, easy read, audio recording or braille:

* Email [INSERT EMAIL]
* Call [INSERT PHONE NUMBER]

All publications added to the website will include a statement explaining how to request the document in a different format. We will try our best to meet every request for a document in a different format.

We’ll consider your request and get back to you within [INSERT NUMBER OF DAYS] working day. Requests for audio format files, if produced will be done within five working days, all other requests will be completed within [INSERT NUMBER OF DAYS] working days.

When we publish our annual report, we will publish large print and easy read versions at the same time. [DELETE IF YOU DON’T DO THIS]

## How we make our events accessible

### Online events

Online meetings and conferences will be held via [INSERT ONLINE PLATFORM YOU USE].

British Sign Language (BSL) and different language interpreters can be arranged to be present if requested.

### Face-to-face events

All our public and external meetings and events will be held in accessible venues and where possible, facilities will include:

* Wheelchair accessible venues
* Induction loops
* Accessible lifts and entrances
* Appropriate car parking arrangements
* Clear signage
* Audible lifts / braille
* Quiet / break out areas
* Appropriate lighting
* Support from venue staff for health and safety information

British Sign Language (BSL) and different language interpreters can be arranged to be present if requested.

## When was this accessibility policy last reviewed?

This policy was created in [INSERT DATE]. It was last reviewed in [INSERT DATE].

We will regularly monitor, evaluate and review the effectiveness of this policy, and amend it as necessary.