A Guide for Accessible Procurement

To ensure accessibility is embedded in all that we do, it is important that we consider the issue during the tendering and procurement process for online services (such as website design or provision of online submission portals). As a helpful guide, follow these best practice steps developed with accessibility consultants All Able.

Introduction

Public Sector Bodies have a responsibility under the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No.2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 (PSBAR), the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty to ensure that the digital systems/products they procure are accessible. In doing so, the duty to not discriminate against members of the public or staff because of disability would be met. Therefore, all procured products should meet the required standards, with clear evidence to support compliance with responsibilities. **This applies to both front (customer) and back-end (staff) aspects of systems and services**.

Although not a Public Sector Body, the Faraday Institution has chosen to follow the principles of the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

Questions for suppliers

As part of any tendering response, suppliers are asked to answer the following questions and provide the following details.

Describe in detail your accessibility testing process

Including the following details for front and back-end aspects of your products or services:

- How frequently do you undertake accessibility testing?
- What standards do you test against?
- What (if any) automated accessibility testing tools do you use?
- What (if any) assistive technologies and browser pairings do you use?
- What user research do you undertake with people who have additional access needs?
- What do you do about identified issues?

How compliant is your product/service with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2 AA?

Show how your solution/product meets the 50 success criteria covering all level A and AA of WCAG 2.2 or the equivalent within the EN 301 549 harmonised standard.

Suggested evidence for this:

- Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT)
- Accessibility audit report detailing areas of non-compliance
- Any other evidence of testing for accessibility requirements carried out

Compliance results should be shared for both front and back-end interfaces.

If not fully compliant with WCAG 2.2 AA, please provide as many of the following as possible:

- Remediation plan including timescales
- A full list of non-compliances
- Workaround guidance for users

Provide a compliant accessibility statement
This should ideally be in a format that matches the Central Digital and Data Office (CDDO) sample accessibility statement, alternatively, provide as much required information as possible so that it can be easily transposed to match the CDDO sample.

Provide a release schedule for future accessibility features
If your products are going to incorporate increased accessibility features in the future, please tell us about these features and when we might expect to see them. Please also specify how you will maintain existing features.

Further information
- Make things accessible. A repository for guidance material and useful resources for organisations looking to improve their digital accessibility.

    - Meeting WCAG 2.2. WCAG 2.2 is very close to becoming the new standard and at present it adds 9 additional success criteria and removes one success criterion from WCAG 2.1. This guide outlines what we need to do regarding this new standard and how to meet the new requirements.

    - Accessibility in supplier contracts. The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications (No.2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 places all legal burden on the public sector body. Suppliers are not directly held responsible for the accessibility of their products that you decide to use. The only way to hold suppliers responsible for fixing accessibility issues or taking responsibility in the event of 3rd party products causing accessibility complaints is to include accessibility requirements into contracts.

    - Procurement accessibility guidance. Managing accessibility requirements at the procurement stage can help avoid problems later down the line after

contracts have been signed. During procurement you can challenge suppliers more easily on the accessibility of their product before you buy.