Accessibility Guide: Leading the way   
in accessible information

A guide for government agencies to provide information and services that can be independently accessed by everyone

This guide has been developed by the Ministry of Social Development, Department of Internal Affairs and Ministry of Culture and Heritage, in consultation with the Disabled People’s Organisation’s Deaf Aotearoa, People First New Zealand Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi, Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand, and Kāpō Māori Aotearoa.

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# About the Accessibility Guide

In New Zealand, we have 1.1 million disabled people, about one in four of our population. As government agencies, it’s important our information and communications are accessible for everyone we serve and our employees, and inclusive of disabled people.

The guide is for those tasked with developing information and communications for government agencies, including employees, vendors and contractors and will support your agency to meet the needs of disabled people in your communities.

The government has made a commitment to providing information and communications through the Accessibility Charter programme of work[[1]](#footnote-1), which implements the requirements of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)[[2]](#footnote-2) through the New Zealand Disability Strategy, Priority 9A: Increase accessibility of information across government agencies[[3]](#footnote-3). The Accessibility Charter also relates to other disability programmes of work, such as increasing the employment of disabled people in the public sector.

To support government agencies to implement the intent of the Charter, it was agreed as one of the outcomes of the Disability Strategy[[4]](#footnote-4) that the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) would work with the Association of Blind Citizens New Zealand, Deaf Aotearoa, and People First New Zealand Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi, Department of Internal Affairs and the Ministry for Culture and Heritage to develop a guide to inform government agencies about accessible information.

This guide is supported with a training programme that is free to all relevant government employees.

This training can be accessed by sending your email contact to accessibility@msd.govt.nz.

It is acknowledged that this guide is by no means definitive, and it’s important to learn through individual experience. This is a living document and will be revised regularly to make sure content reflects current practice based on mutual discussions and feedback from those who use it.

# Accessible information and communications

Accessible information and communications allow disabled people to participate and contribute on an equal basis with non-disabled people.

To be accessible, information and communications is provided in formats and languages that disabled people can access independently, without relying on other people, and is compatible with assistive technology, such as computer screen readers (known as assistive devices). Essentially, it is free of barriers.

Accessibility is the measure of how easily people can access and engage with information and communications.

Information and communications include any printed or online information in pamphlets, brochures, websites, online applications, forms, or ways that people access and engage with information and services.

Having accessible information and communications recognises the diversity of New Zealand. It considers alternate formats (eg Easy Read, large print, braille, audio, and New Zealand Sign Language [NZSL]).

The trend towards a digital society provides users with new ways of accessing information and services. Government agencies rely increasingly on the internet to produce, collect, and provide a wide range of information and services online that are essential to the public. Access to public services and information through accessible and usable websites and mobile applications would benefit disabled people’s daily lives.

It’s important, for the public sector, that we are responsive to the needs of our communities. As part of this responsiveness, all New Zealanders should have equal access to information about government’s policies, initiatives, and programmes.

# About the accessibility charter

The Accessibility Charter and its programme of work across government agencies sits under The New Zealand Disability Action Plan, of which the vision is for “all New Zealanders to experience equal rights of citizenship”. For disabled people, realising their human rights is dependent on their access to information, services, and products.

The purpose of the Accessibility Charter is to:

* improve disabled people’s access to information provided by government agencies to the public
* provide disabled people with a consistent experience when accessing government information
* meet New Zealand’s international obligation under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In 2017, as part of the New Zealand Disability Action Plan, the Accessibility Charter was developed by the Ministry of Social Development and the Disabled People’s Organisation’s (DPO) action lead, the Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand (Blind Citizens NZ).

In July 2017, the State sector Chief Executives agreed to the content, which forms the Accessibility Charter.

## What the Accessibility Charter says

“Public Sector Chief Executives are committed to working progressively over the next five years towards ensuring that all information intended for the public is accessible to everyone and that everyone can interact with our services in a way that meets their individual needs and promotes their independence and dignity. Accessibility is a high priority for all our work.

This means:

* meeting the New Zealand Government Web Accessibility Standard and the Web Usability Standard, as already agreed, by 1 July 2017;
* ensuring that our forms, correspondence, pamphlets, brochures and other means of interacting with the public are available in a range of accessible formats including electronic, New Zealand Sign Language, Easy Read, Braille, large print, audio, captioned and audio described videos, transcripts, and tools such as the Telephone Information Service;
* compliance with accessibility standards and requirements as a high priority deliverable from vendors we deal with;
* responding positively when our customers draw our attention to instances of inaccessibility in our information and processes and working to resolve the situation;
* adopting a flexible approach to interacting with the public where an individual may not otherwise be able to carry out their business with full independence and dignity.

We will continue to actively champion accessibility within our leadership teams so that providing accessible information to the public is considered business as usual.”

## Implementing the Accessibility Charter

The Accessibility Charter was launched in February 2018 at the State sector Chief Executive’s master class. To implement the intention of the Charter, the following 7-point process is recommended.

1. Endorse your commitment

The first step in the programme is for organisations to endorse their commitment to providing accessible information.

To do this, the Chief Executive, and Communications and IT managers sign the Accessibility Charter, giving employees the mandate to work towards an accessible environment for their clients, and employees.

1. Appoint a sponsor

The Leadership Team appoint a sponsor. With sponsorship at a Senior Leadership level the work is visibly acknowledged, supported and accessible approaches demonstrate to employees and clients the commitment to including disabled people, both internally and externally.

1. Appoint champions

The IT, Communications, and Human Resource (HR) teams each appoint a champion to support staff to up-skill and be a point of contact for queries.

1. Develop the Action Plan

The Action Plan can be developed from a gap analysis using the checklist for accessibility and inclusion in Appendix 1.

1. Prioritise the projects

A more detailed analysis will identify key projects to progress. This may include developing capability and engaging with the DPOs to find out what projects are of priority for their communities.

1. Monitor progress

To monitor your progress, develop regular reporting through the IT, Communications, and HR champions to the leadership sponsor. Make sure that you incorporate user feedback in your reports.

Each agency reports on progress to MSD every six months. The reporting on the Accessibility Charter is combined with the Lead Toolkit programme of work and Disability Data work programme, which is about employing and retaining disabled people in an accessible and inclusive way.

1. Continuous quality improvement

Use your reporting to identify further areas of improvement. You can also engage the DPOs for feedback on ways to improve accessibility within your agency.

# Web Accessibility Standard

“The power of the web is in its universality. Access by everyone regardless of disability is an essential aspect.”

Tim Berners-Lee, inventor of the World Wide Web

The Web Accessibility Standard[[5]](#footnote-5) focuses on improving Government website accessibility for disabled people. Accessible websites also benefit users without disabilities, as well as those using a variety of technologies to access the web. This helps the New Zealand Government to meet its obligations under the Human Rights Act 1993, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and directly supports the development of accessible digital services.

The Web Accessibility Standard is a mandatory requirement for Public Service and non-Public Service departments as laid out in Cabinet Minute (03) 41/2B and is supported by a requirement for Government agencies to self-assess against the Standard by the Department of Internal Affairs. The latest assessments were completed by February 2018, and a report published on 30 November 2018[[6]](#footnote-6). This report sets out the findings on the current state of government compliance, and the next steps of an ongoing commitment to maintaining and supporting these standards.

The all-of-government Digital Service Design Standard, approved by the Government Chief Digital Officer and launched by the Minister for Government Digital Services in July 2018, will also support and promote the Web Accessibility Standard under a new overarching service design framework. The Web Accessibility Standard is specifically referenced as a mechanism for meeting Principle 4 of the Design Standard: ‘Be inclusive and provide ethical and equitable services. The compliance and support model for this standard was published in mid-2018[[7]](#footnote-7).’

# Accessible language and content

## Language

When talking with and about disabled people, we are respectful and courteous.

* Keep language clear, accurate and neutral – follow plain language principles.
* It is often not appropriate to name a person’s impairment/s or ask what their impairment/s is/are, unless confidentially such as in a survey.
* Don’t define someone by their impairment or the equipment they use.
* Use neutral language – the art of discussing difficult issues while still maintaining dignity and respect for each other.
* Use inclusive language – avoid creating or perpetuating negative social stereotypes. Use “person uses a wheelchair”, rather than being confined to a “wheelchair.” Or someone may “have an impairment”, but they neither “suffer” from it, nor are they “afflicted” with it. Other language that is inappropriate includes “mental retardation” and “deaf mute”.
* It’s important not to make assumptions about a disabled person’s needs or capabilities based on your own preconceptions.

In New Zealand, we use the term “disabled person/people” as outlined in the New Zealand Disability Strategy rather than “person/people with a disability”.

In this context, “disabled” refers to things outside the person that impact on them and put barriers in the way of them participating in the world we all live in. These barriers can be both attitudinal and physical. By using the term “disabled people” we are indicating that we need to do something about the barriers that disable them.

## Images of disabled people

Information about disabled people should show them as people in society and not create an impression of separateness or specialness. Images should be age appropriate.

* Disabled people should be included in general illustrations to show they are part of the community like everyone else.
* Show disabled people in everyday social situations and work environments.
* Show diversity amongst disabled people – disabled people can be any ethnicity, any relationship or family status etc.
* Some impairments are not visible or obvious. Don’t go out of your way to accentuate a person’s disability in photos/images.

# Accessible design for print

The following information is for print design. However, many of the principles for print design are the same as for online design, for example text spacing. It has been adapted with permission from the Round Table on Information Access for People with Print Disabilities Inc[[8]](#footnote-8).

## Fonts

* The minimum recommended body size is 12-point type for a general audience, while 16 point is the minimum size recommended for people with vision impairment/low vision, or people with learning disabilities.
* Use a strong sans-serif font such as Arial.
* Avoid highly stylised or simulated handwriting and typefaces.
* Typefaces are available in different weights. Avoid light options as there is less contrast between paper and text.
* Avoid italics, which can be difficult for some people to read.
* Bold type can be used to emphasise text.
* Avoid using all capital letters in words. The human eye recognises the shape of words and a word in all capitals is harder to recognise.
* Use a typeface that makes numerals distinct.

## Design characteristics

* Avoid underlining except for hyperlinks.
* Body text line length should be about 60 characters.
* Align text to the left-hand margin.
* Avoid right-justified text.
* The space between lines should be 1.5 and twice the space between words.
* Words should be evenly spaced.
* Make sure there is a strong contrast between the text and the background.
* Use plenty of white space around text and images and separate the different elements of the page.
* Avoid using text over images or patterned backgrounds.
* Avoid using colour shading and screens that reduce the contrast between text and background.
* To accentuate pieces of text, use white spaces or boxes.
* Leave a space between paragraphs for ease of reading.
* Avoid fitting text around images if this means lines of text start in different places and are difficult to find.
* Avoid using watermarks in the background of content to identify for example, “draft” and “confidential”. Signal these clearly on the front page and include in the running header or footer.
* Allow extra space/widely spaced lines on forms for people to write on or for signatures.
* Consistency is important, for example make sure page numbers are in the same place on each page.

## Paper and binding

* Use matt or satin paper rather than glossy paper.
* Use paper with enough weight so the print does not show through on the other side.
* Choose binding that allows the print documents to open flat.

# Accessible document formats

## Email

If you are sending out emails including newsletters, they should be in accessible HTML format with the option of viewing in plain text:

* Provide the original Word document as well as the PDF.
* Include the document in the original email if the document is short.
* Provide a web link at the end of the text.
* Provide captioned and audio described video or New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL).
* Do not use a PDF file as the only communications tool.

## Websites

Information on the web should follow the New Zealand Government Web Standards[[9]](#footnote-9), which includes:

* Conformance to WCAG 2.1 (the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines[[10]](#footnote-10)) at Level AA.
* Correctly marked-up HTML (HyperText Markup Language).
* Tagged/structured PDFs that are optimised for accessibility, including alt text on images and tagged tables.
* The document properties should include title, an author such as the organisation, the language and “window option” as document title. PDFs are not to be relied on as an accessible version.
* PDFs created from scanned content should not be used as the only communications tool. They cannot be read by screen readers and can be inaccessible to people with other impairments.
* Alternate formats which include audio, New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) Easy Read, Braille and large print.

## Social media

The following list of tips about accessible social media is reproduced from the Australian Network on Disability[[11]](#footnote-11).

### Images

* If images contain informative text, include that text in your post.
* Ensure enough contrast between your text and background.
* Provide appropriate alternative text for informative images.
* Use emojis and emoticons sparingly.
* Caption informative images where possible.

### Video

* Provide captions for your videos. Closed captions are preferred.
* Provide audio descriptions for your videos.
* Picture in picture using NZSL.
* Provide transcripts for your videos, preferably in HTML.

### Readability

* Avoid jargon, acronyms and idioms.
* Use CamelCase for hashtags.
* Include hashtags or mentions at the end of your post.
* Create short links or remove redundant links.
* Tell users when linking to an image, video, document, or audio file.
* Thread related Twitter posts on the same topic.

## Presentations

Slideshows are a powerful communication tool that are often inaccessible to people who are blind or vision impaired. Fortunately, there are ways you can create slideshows that are accessible to a wider audience.

To ensure presentations are accessible, consider the:

* visual presentation (slideshow, PowerPoint, videos, audio files)
* handouts
* verbal presentation.

### Design of presentations

* Use a simple, uncluttered design template.
* Use the pre-defined text boxes, title boxes, and image boxes already in the templates, rather than creating your own. Adding new page elements can reduce the ability of adaptive software to read the information in the right order or to read it at all.
* Use sans serif fonts such as Arial, Verdana, or APHont (a font developed specifically for low-vision readers), in minimum 24-point.
* Be mindful of colour contrast issues. Light text on a dark background is best (eg yellow on black, white on dark blue, or white on black).
* Do not convey information with colour alone, as some individuals may be colour-blind.
* Limit the number of bullet points and total quantity of text per slide. We recommend 5 words per bullet and no more than 5 to 7 bullets per slide. If your audience is largely made up of people with learning disabilities use 2 to 3 bullets per slide.
* If using Microsoft PowerPoint, consider incorporating audible slide transitions that notify audience members that you are moving to a new slide. iWork Keynote does not offer audio transitions, so use some verbal indication, such as saying “next slide”.

### Features of presentations

* Set presentation to “Normal” view, open the Slide Show menu, and select Slide Transition. A Slide Transition pane will appear on the right side of the screen.
* In the Modify transition section, select Sound. Choose a sound from the select box. “Click”, “whoosh”, “chime”, or “camera” are good choices. Some of the others might become annoying to the audience.
* Disable automatic slide transitions and ensure slides change “on click”. This allows audience members who want to review your slides to control the speed with which slides change.
* Minimise the number of transitions or animations used in your presentation. These features can limit the functionality of adaptive technology.
* If using Microsoft PowerPoint (version 2010 or later), once you have completed your slideshow use the “Document Accessibility Checker” to check for accessibility issues. This tool can scan the slideshow for elements that are missing descriptive text, elements that have no assigned order for adaptive technologies, slides that have no assigned titles, and other issues.

## Public service advertisements on TV and online

If you are communicating to New Zealanders through a video on television or online, you should:

* Have the video captioned so that Deaf and hard of hearing people can understand what is being said and know about any other important sounds, such as a phone ringing off screen.
* Look at using picture-in-picture for New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL).
* Ensure that information presented visually (such as a phone number) is also said out loud so that the blind and vision impaired community don’t miss out on important information.
* Look into having the video audio described so that blind and vision impaired people can understand information that is being communicated visually.

The independent charitable trust, Able, provides all the captioning, and picture audio description on free-to-air television in New Zealand. Able can caption your videos for a fee.

If you are procuring an advertisement, you could make captioning and picture audio description a necessary deliverable of the contract.

For more information on captioning and audio description please see the next section on alternate formats.

# Alternate formats

This section is about providing alternate formats for people who are print disabled[[12]](#footnote-12), including those with sensory or learning disabilities, dexterity, or literacy issues.

Alternate formats – Easy Read, Braille, audio, large print, and NZSL video – mean disabled people can experience the same level of service that is offered to the rest of the community.

To provide a consistent approach across government, we recommend you build accessibility in from the beginning by contacting the relevant Disabled People’s Organisation (DPO) early in your project by contacting [accessibility@msd.govt.nz.](mailto:accessibility@msd.govt.nz)

The DPOs will advise you on the structure of information and whether wider context is needed to explain the information further.

When considering the information you will provide, the most important things you can do are:

* Let [accessibility@msd.govt.nz](mailto:accessibility@msd.govt.nz) know ahead of time that you will be sending a document. Once a quote has been confirmed and the final document received, alternate formats can start.
* Allow for the 4-week minimum timeframe for complete translations.
* Put your document into plain language as much as possible.
* Consider whether it will be okay to translate only the summary or key points of your document.

## Formats for people with learning (intellectual) disability

Easy Read is an alternate format that is easier for people with learning disability to read and understand.

It is also more accessible for many people who are Deaf, older, have English as a second language or low literacy.

### Easy Read:

* uses many of the same principles of plain language, but goes further in terms of avoiding or explaining difficult words
* uses images to explain the meaning of the ideas in the text.

People First New Zealand provides a professional Easy Read Translation service, called Make It Easy.

There are 2 ways you can use the Make It Easy service:

1. You can use the service to get a complete translation of your information into Easy Read, and guidance on the best way to structure your document and reach people with a learning disability. This service is charged by the hour, includes the cost of images (and the right to use them for that document) and testing by people with a learning disability, and has a 4-week minimum timeframe. This service enables you to state your document has been translated by People First – a recognised Easy Read producer.
2. You can have a go at putting your information into Easy Read by following the principles in the People First New Zealand ‘Guide to making Easy Read information’. You can then send your draft to the Make It Easy service for a consultation. A consultant will provide you with practical advice on what to change in your document to bring it into line with the principles of Easy Read. This service can take 1 to 2 weeks and is charged out at a set price. Making the changes suggested by the consultant will enable you to state your document has been translated in consultation with People First New Zealand.

People First New Zealand can also utilise its networks through local groups and social media to distribute information to people with learning disability throughout New Zealand. Publicly available Easy Read documents are regularly uploaded to the People First website for free downloading by the community. Discuss this possibility with People First to make sure your information is easy to find.

## Formats for blind, vision-impaired, low vision, and Deafblind

Association of Blind Citizens New Zealand provides advice about producing documents in alternate formats for those who are blind, vision-impaired, Deafblind or have low vision (referred to as blind and vision-impaired) and provides a blind consumer’s perspective.

Blind and vision-impaired people read information via a range of options such as large print, audio, braille, e-text etc. Creating well-structured, accessible documents using clear print principles, means they can be more easily converted into alternate formats such as large print, braille, and synthetic audio files. Clear print documents are more legible, and readable, and they benefit everyone, especially someone who is vision impaired.

### Large print

Large print refers to text that is larger than 12-point print (font) size and uses clear print principles. When producing large print documents for a wide audience the recommended minimum print (font) size is 16 point. Some people prefer their large print to be 22-point print size or bigger. When producing a large print document for just one person’s use, ideally you should ask them what print size they prefer.

Documents that are created accessible from the beginning are more easily reformatted to a larger print size. Reformatting an existing document to large print will require attention to the layout of all content.

Large print information can be produced effectively using standard word processors and printers.

### Audio

Audio versions of print documents must be accurate, uncensored reproductions of the printed text. They must be of the highest standard possible and describe the purpose and circumstances of the document.

Several providers provide a quality audio recording service using either a professional narrator or synthetic text. Information can be produced as audio on CD, as MP3 (files can be emailed, downloaded from websites etc.), and/or DAISY files.

DAISY offers a flexible and navigable reading experience for blind or vision-impaired people.

### Braille

New Zealand has a standing setting authority for braille – this is The Braille Authority of New Zealand Aotearoa Trust (BANZAT). For several hundred blind and vision- impaired people, braille is the primary means of accessing information. For Deafblind people this may be the only way information can be obtained.

Braille consists of arrangements of raised dots that stand for individual letters, combinations of letters (contractions), punctuation signs and other print symbols. By using a six-dot cell, 63 different patterns can be formed. Braille must always be of a high standard, and mirror print documents exactly. Often people will prefer hard-copy braille as opposed to using technology that displays print as braille.

### Audio description of video

For blind and vision-impaired people audio description is the equivalent to captioning for Deaf and Hard-of-hearing people.

Audio description gives blind and vision impaired people information about the things they may not be able to see. Blind people benefit from audio description because it provides a commentary on the nuances of silent, visual activities on screen such as body language, scenery, facial expression, clothing, and style of dress etc., and static displays in museums and art galleries, that they would otherwise be unable to follow or appreciate.

When producing video, visual clips etc., attention to visual content that will not be seen by blind or vision-impaired people is needed. In the same way as spoken and audio content requires captioning (and/or NZSL), purely visual content requires audio description.

Able is the primary producer of audio description in New Zealand and is recognized internationally for the quality of its work.

### User testing

Test your website’s accessibility and usability through the Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand who involve blind and vision-impaired testers to complete a series of tasks using a variety of assistive software, devices, and technology platforms. The Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand will co-ordinate the feedback and provide recommendations.

People First New Zealand may also be able to offer website testing by people with learning disabilities. Contact [accessibility@msd.govt.nz](mailto:accessibility@msd.govt.nz) about accessing user testing.

## Formats for Deaf people

Deaf people who use New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) as their first or preferred language can find English information difficult to access and understand. This is due to a range of factors including that NZSL and English are different languages, and the grammatical order and linguistic rules of each language are very different. English is like a second or third language for many Deaf people. Deaf people are provided significantly greater access and understanding of information when it is provided in their first or/preferred language – NZSL.

NZSL is a real language and the natural language of the Deaf community. It is a visual language using the hands, body, facial expressions, and movement in very precise ways. NZSL has no written form of expression - you cannot write a note in NZSL, but you can record one on video.

NZSL was made an official language of New Zealand by the New Zealand Sign Language Act 2006. The Act acknowledges that NZSL is a language unique to New Zealand, that it is the preferred language of Deaf people, and guides government agencies in making their information and services accessible through NZSL. The Act also provides the right to use NZSL in courts.

### NZSL video

Making information accessible for Deaf people entails translating the information into NZSL on video. NZSL videos can be shared on websites, e-newsletters, social media and on screens used in offices/workplaces.

### Distributing to the community

Ensure the NZSL video is uploaded and shared widely in Deaf community networks including Deaf Aotearoa’s communication channels.

### Captions on videos

Captions make videos more accessible for people who are Deaf or Hard-of-hearing and who do not use NZSL as their first or preferred language. Captions are also used by people who are learning English, have difficulty understanding certain accents or want to watch without sound.

Captioning can be open or closed. “Open captions” are permanently on the screen and “closed captions” can be turned on and off by the user.

Captions are different from subtitles. Captions are designed for Deaf and Hard-of- hearing people and include information about speakers and sounds. For example, captions will indicate changes in speakers, when the person speaking is off screen, when there is music and what kind of music. Subtitles are often put on foreign language films and are designed for people who can hear and so don’t include the additional aural information.

Some video hosting services such as YouTube provide a free online automatic captioning service that can easily be edited.

You can get your video captioned professionally for a fee.

### Picture and Picture

Picture in Picture is a feature where a second video is superimposed on the main video. This feature is useful when you want to add in a Sign Language translator on the screen, usually in the bottom corner. Using the Picture in Picture feature offers lots of flexibility, that is sometimes a green screen (chromakey) is used so that the green background on the superimposed second video can be removed.

## Process for alternate formats

1. Contact [accessibility@msd.govt.nz](mailto:accessibility@msd.govt.nz)when you are thinking about a new project that will involve alternate formats. The alternate formats team is managed by MSD and includes Association of Blind Citizens New Zealand; People First; Deaf Aotearoa.
2. The team has regular meetings, and you can attend one to discuss your proposed project to ask for advice.
3. Once you have a final document, complete the alternate formats form. The completed form is then sent to [accessibility@msd.govt.nz](mailto:accessibility@msd.govt.nz) along with:
   1. a Word document copy of the final document
   2. a link to your logo with the colour pallet
   3. your cost centre or contact for invoicing.
4. In looking at the final document, there may be questions that the alternate formats team will ask. There may be changes to your document as the result of these questions.
5. The alternate formats team will provide you with a quote. Once the quote is confirmed, and the final word document is received, production of the alternate formats will start.
6. Copies will be sent to you to review and make any changes.
7. Once confirmed, the final copies will be sent to you to upload to your system.

# Including accessibility in projects

By building in accessibility early and incorporating it in your projects at the beginning, you’ll save time and money, as it is more expensive to retrofit later. This process is called “born accessible”.

Below is guidance for ensuring your projects are accessible for disabled people, regardless of whether it is in print, online information, or an application.

1. Engage with print disabled DPOs at the start of the project through [accessibility@msd.govt.nz](mailto:accessibility@msd.govt.nz)

By engaging early with DPOs, you can allocate time and budget into your project.

The DPOs will advise on:

* the appropriate alternate formats for the project
* the budget needed to produce alternate formats
* the timeframe needed to complete the alternate formats (usually a minimum of 4 weeks)
* the process for producing alternate formats and any testing that is needed
* how to structure the content so it is accessible
* if the audience might need additional context for the information.

Email [accessibility@msd.govt.nz](mailto:accessibility@msd.govt.nz)if your project wants usability testing done by disabled people.

1. Include accessibility in tender documents and contracts

Accessibility is a non-negotiable requirement for contractors and providers and can be included in an RFPs or contracts. Make sure you are clear about what you mean by accessibility. For online development work, web standards are an IT procurement requirement[[13]](#footnote-13).

Ask contractors and providers to provide evidence that their products or services can comply with accessibility and web standards requirements.

1. Test for accessibility against the web standards

Test your product against the web standards throughout the design and build phases. The Marketplace lists suppliers who provide web accessibility services[[14]](#footnote-14). Potential users can test for accessibility – email [accessibility@msd.govt.nz](mailto:accessibility@msd.govt.nz) if you need help with user testing.

1. Follow the process for producing alternate formats

Develop your content with an accessible structure, language and formats following the guidance from DPOs, the information in this guide and your agency’s standards.

1. Communicate alternative formats are available

Ensure that the communications plan includes details of how the information will be promoted and distributed. Ask the DPOs for advice on alternate formats, if it needs to be distributed to NGOs, community organisations and external stakeholders.

1. Feedback

Encourage your audience to provide feedback and respond to feedback in a timely way.

Feedback is a useful way to review how accessible a product or service is, and to find out more about your audience and their needs.

1. Share experiences with colleagues and provide training where needed

Identify ways people can share their experiences with creating accessible information within their teams, their organisation and wider with other agencies.

A two-hour training on accessible information and communications is provided free of charge for government agencies. To find out about the training, please email [accessibility@msd.govt.nz.](mailto:accessibility@msd.govt.nz)

## Prioritising accessible communications, information, and tools

The list below identifies ways to prioritise which communications, information and tools should be made accessible. Each agency will have individual priorities, so the list is not exhaustive, nor is it in any order of priority.

Priority should be given to information that:

* is aimed specifically at disabled people or has a significant impact on disabled people and/or their families and/or whānau
* is needed to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship (such as voting or paying tax)
* is needed to make an informed decision, receive payments or other services
* is of a personal or confidential nature (eg if it relates to medical or financial issues)
* could result in legal consequences or loss of rights if not acted upon (eg census or voting information)
* seeks a response from the public (eg consultation documents)
* is in response to correspondence from a disabled person who has expressed a preference for a particular format.

Where information is not considered a high priority, it will be necessary to address on a case-by-case basis.

For example, it might be appropriate to provide several lengthy documents in an alternate format to an individual who needs them to use in a court case.

All new documents should be made available in alternate formats, while recognising that some pre-existing documents, communications, and tools may also be important enough to justify transcribing into alternate formats.

Under certain circumstances, it might be decided to provide a summary version of a longer document as a minimum alternative to providing the complete document eg documents longer than 10 pages.

# Appendix 1: Checklists for accessibility and inclusion

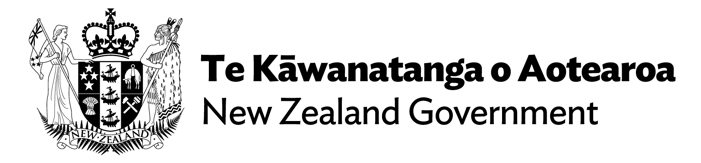
Below are two checklists to help inform your priorities as an organisation for accessibility of your products and services for disabled people, and whether your organisation is accessible and inclusive of the employment and retention of disabled people.

## Accessible services and products

* Our physical premises are accessible to people with a range of disabilities
* We communicate the availability of our accessible products and services
* We regularly review and update our premises, products and services and ensure they are accessible to disabled people
* We provide training in ‘Disability Responsiveness’ and ‘Welcoming Disabled Customers/Clients’ to all employees
* Our website meets the New Zealand Government Web Standards
* We provide information in a variety of formats
* We use an accessibility checklist to ensure events are accessible to all
* We have an organisation-wide policy on our product and service standards in relation to disabled customers/clients
* We encourage our suppliers and contractors to become disability confident businesses
* We recognise and respond to disabled people as suppliers, shareholders, employees, and members of the community
* We monitor the success of our customer/client service policies in relation to disabled customers/clients at an executive level

## Accessible and inclusive employment and retention of disabled people

* There is internal top-level support for the employment of disabled people in our organisation
* We have a good understanding of the business case for including disabled people in our workforce
* We have a reputation as being an employer of choice for disabled people
* We have implemented an Accessibility Plan
* We know how many disabled employees are in our workforce
* Disabled people routinely apply for positions
* We have reviewed our recruitment processes to ensure they are barrier-free to disabled people
* We have policies and procedures for making reasonable accommodations for all employees, including those who are disabled
* Our human resources team know how to make reasonable accommodations for disabled candidates and employees
* We offer flexible work conditions
* Our employers know the procedure when an employee tells us they have a disability
* Disabled employees participate in training and development as frequently as other staff
* When redundancies are made, we review the demographics and ensure that disabled people are not over-represented.



1. https:/[/www.msd.go](http://www.msd.govt.nz/accessibility-charter)v[t.nz/accessibility-charter](http://www.msd.govt.nz/accessibility-charter) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https:/[/www](http://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-).[un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-](http://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-) disabilities/article-21-freedom-of-expression-and-opinion-and-access-to-information.html [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. https:/[/www](http://www.odi.govt.nz/nz-disability-strategy/outcome-5-accessibility/#purpose).[odi.govt.nz/nz-disability-strategy/outcome-5-accessibility/#purpose](http://www.odi.govt.nz/nz-disability-strategy/outcome-5-accessibility/#purpose) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. https:/[/www](http://www.odi.govt.nz/nz-disability-strategy/).[odi.govt.nz/nz-disability-strategy/](http://www.odi.govt.nz/nz-disability-strategy/) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Further information about the Web Standards can be accessed at: https:/[/www](http://www.digital.govt.nz/).[digital.govt.nz/](http://www.digital.govt.nz/) standards-and-guidance/nz-government-web-standards/  
   For guidance on meeting the standards and assessing compliance, see: https:/[/www](http://www.digital.govt/).[digital.govt.](http://www.digital.govt/) nz/standards-and-guidance/design-and-ux/ [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Department of Internal Affairs (2018): 2017 Web Standards Self-Assessments Report. DIA, Wellington. https:/[/www](http://www.digital.govt.nz/standards-and-guidance/nz-government-web-).[digital.govt.nz/standards-and-guidance/nz-government-web-](http://www.digital.govt.nz/standards-and-guidance/nz-government-web-) standards/web-standards-self-assessments-report/ [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Digital Service Design Standard: https:/[/www](http://www.digital.govt.nz/standards-and-guidance/digital-).[digital.govt.nz/standards-and-guidance/digital-](http://www.digital.govt.nz/standards-and-guidance/digital-) service- design-standard/ [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Guidelines for producing clear print: <https://printdisability.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/round_table_-clear_print_guidelines-PDF.pdf> [PDF 802KB] [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. https:/[/www](http://www.digital.govt.nz/standards-and-guidance/nz-government-web-standards/).[digital.govt.nz/standards-and-guidance/nz-government-web-standards/](http://www.digital.govt.nz/standards-and-guidance/nz-government-web-standards/) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. https:/[/www](http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/).[w3.org/TR/WCAG21/](http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/) [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. https:/[/www.and.org.au/articles.php/43/how-to-write-more-accessible-social-media-post](http://www.and.org.au/articles.php/43/how-to-write-more-accessible-social-media-posts)s [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. The 3-print disabled DPOs are part of the team managed through [accessibility@msd.govt.nz.](mailto:accessibility@msd.govt.nz) [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. https:/[/www.procurement.go](http://www.procurement.govt.nz/procurement/principles-charter-and-rules/government-)v[t.nz/procurement/principles-charter-and-rules/government-](http://www.procurement.govt.nz/procurement/principles-charter-and-rules/government-) procurement-rules/other-rules-you-need-to-know/web-standards/ [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. https://marketplace.govt.nz/about-the-marketplace/whats-open-on-marketplace/approved- suppliers/ [↑](#footnote-ref-14)