

## Accessible information

Accessible information means information that everyone can understand and use. This includes people with disabilities, those who speak different languages, and people with low levels of literacy.

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### The Accessible Information Standard

The Accessible Information Standard is a UK law to make sure that people who have a disability, impairment or sensory loss are given information they can easily read or understand. It is found in [section 250 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012](#)

All health and social care organisations are legally required to follow the Accessible Information Standard. This includes hospitals, doctor's offices, clinics, care homes

They must:

- find out your information and communication needs. For example large print text for information or a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter at medical appointments for communication.
- record your information needs in your health and social care records. This includes
- share your information and communication needs with other health and social care services when needed and with your consent.
- make sure you get support the way you need it in an accessible format. For example you may need to receive smaller documents in large print but need longer documents on audio.
- ask regularly if your needs have changed

You can watch a short video below about the Accessible Information Standard

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### Other regulations

[The Public Sector Bodies \(Websites and Mobile Applications\) Accessibility Regulations 2018](#) made it law for public sector organisations such as Local councils and NHS trusts to have accessible websites or mobile apps based on 4 areas: Perceivable, Operable, Understandable, and Robust (POUR). Websites or app content should be perceivable to all users, operable using different input methods, understandable with clear language and instructions, and robust enough to work across different technologies and devices. They also must publish an accessibility statement that explains how accessible the website or mobile app is.

[The Equality Act 2010](#) made it law for public sector organisations such as local councils and NHS trusts to make a 'reasonable adjustment' to support people with disabilities. This includes asking for information or communication in an accessible format or use of interpreters.

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## Accessible Formats

### Easy Read

Easy read guides explain information in an easy to understand way using images and short simple sentences. They help people with learning disabilities and lower literacy levels. Easy Read guides include:

- Easy to understand words, short sentences and written numbers. For example one written as 1.
- Clear formatting such as an easy to read font size 16 or larger. No italics or underlining, and lots of space around the writing
- simple photos and images to the left of each sentence or instruction to visually show the meaning. Only one image is used per sentence or instruction.
- No more than 12 pages of information

Sometimes important or hard to understand words are shown in **bold**. These words are often explained at the end of the Easy Read guide.

[Skills For People](#) support organisations in Newcastle to make Easy Read documents

### Large print

Large print documents are printed materials for people with visual impairments. Text size is usually 18 pt or larger, but the text size can be different for each person.

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### Alternative paper colours

People may need information printed on coloured paper. People with dyslexia, learning difficulties or visual impairments are most likely to find materials printed onto coloured paper helpful.

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### Braille and audio

People with visual impairments may need information as an audio file, video with audio description or read aloud using a screen reader. Some people may also ask for some information written in Braille if they read it.

Read more on InformationNOW about [support for sight loss and visual impairments](#)

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### British Sign Language (BSL)

Sign language is used mainly by deaf people and people with hearing difficulties. Videos in British Sign Language (BSL) versions let deaf customers watch in their first language.

**Read more on InformationNOW about [British Sign Language and subtitles](#) and [interpreting and translation](#)**

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## Language

Sometimes people need written information or spoken information translated into their first language . People can also have low literacy levels in their first language meaning they struggle to read written information even when translated. They could need information to be translated by an interpreter or read aloud using audio translation.

**Read more on InformationNOW about [interpreting and translation](#)**

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## Online information

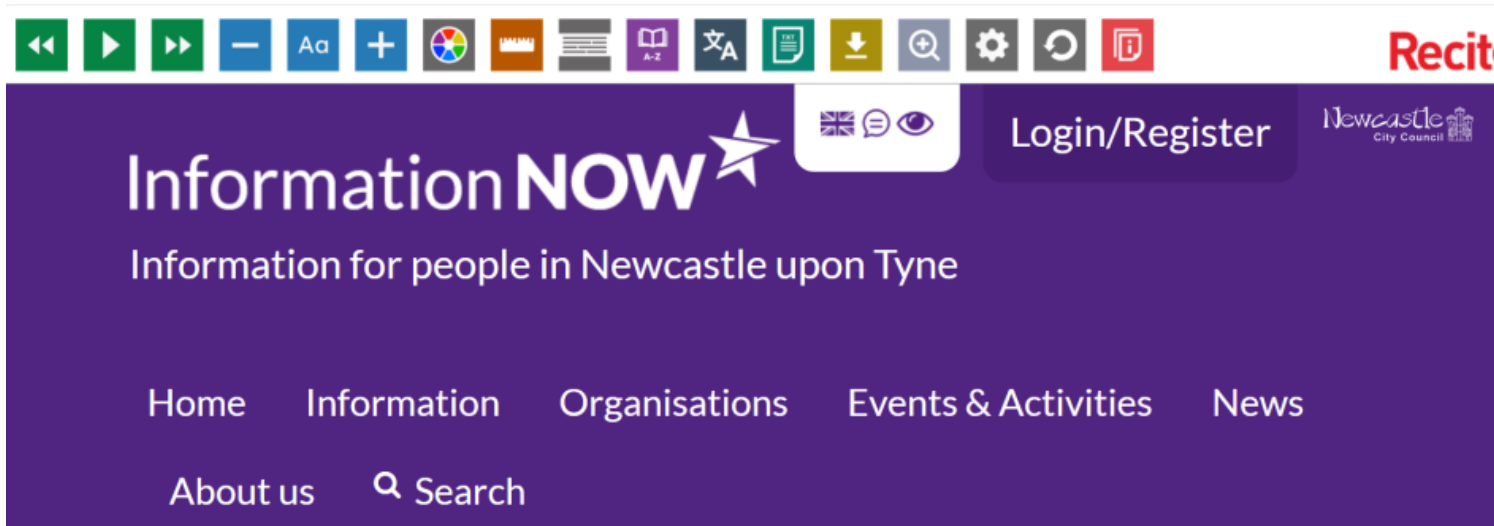
[Web Content Accessibility guidelines \(WCAG\)](#) are standards for web developers and designers to follow to make websites and digital content that is accessible, easy to use and easier to search for for a wide range of people. This is measured at three levels – A (minimum level), AA (mid-range level), and AAA (highest level).

**Accessibility statements** make clear the level of accessibility across a website or app. Accessibility statements also tell you what to do and who to contact if you can't access parts of a website. All new and older public sector websites since 2020 must have an accessibility statement.

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## How to make InformationNOW more accessible

InformationNOW uses Accessibility software called Recite Me. You can use this software to change language, change text size, change text and background colour, read text aloud, use reading aids such a screen ruler, download MP3 audio of a page and more. You can open the accessibility software by clicking the white button with three icons(a flag, speech bubble and an eye) in the right hand corner of any page on the site.

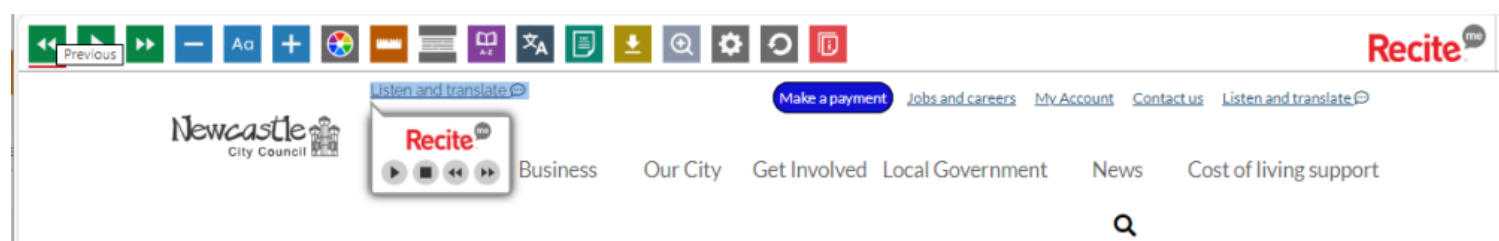


**You can read more about** [how to tailor InformationNOW to your access needs here](#)

You can read [InformationNOW's accessibility statement here](#)

## Newcastle City Council

The Newcastle City Council Website also uses Recite Me software to change language, change text size, change text and background colour, read text aloud, use reading aids such a screen ruler, download MP3 audio of a page and more.



If you need information from Newcastle City Council in a different format or language, please contact the Communications Support Team on 0191 211 5094

**You can read more about** [Newcastle City Council Website's accessibility here](#)

## Tips on making information more accessible

### Use Plain Language

Write in clear and simple language that is easy to understand.

- try to use short sentences and bullet points .
- try to avoid jargon, technical terms, and complex sentences.
- try to avoid abbreviations and acronyms. If you cant, explain what they mean the first time you use them.

GOV.UK has a [plain English content writing guide](#)

## Think about format of online documents

Written documents stored online or shared digitally may not be accessibility-friendly. PDF's are less likely to be accessibility friendly because:

- they use scanned images of text rather than text.
- text is formatted or spaced differently or doesn't have headings, links, page numbers and sections. This means information can be read aloud in the wrong order or make it difficult to navigate using assistive technology.
- images and photos in documents lack Alternative Text descriptions
- the layout of the document is fixed and can't be changed to support accessibility such as enlarging text and changing colour.

Microsoft Office products such as Word, PowerPoint and Excel and similar products have [a built in accessibility checker](#) to help you make your document more accessible. Other document and design software such as [Canva](#) and Adobe also let you add Alt Text.

[GOV.UK](#) has guidance on how to create, convert and publish accessible documents

## Webpage Accessibility

When creating pages for a website think about accessibility from the start. This includes:

- using **Alternative text (Alt-Text)** for images. This is a short description of the image for screen readers or if an image doesn't display.
- testing the page for **keyboard only navigation**. Test how easy it is to scroll, open hyperlinks and website tabs using the only Tab and arrow keys on the keyboard.
- checking the webpage works with **screen readers**.
- using **good colour and contrast** so text, images and other information is easy to read or look at for everyone. This includes people with low vision or colour blindness.

## Add Captioning and Subtitles on Videos:

For videos and media content, think about including captions or subtitles. Subtitles translate the speech on the screen into text, usually into a different language. They are for people who can hear but don't fully understand the language in the video. Closed captions (CC) translate the speech on the screen into text and add audio cues for example 'knock on the door'. They are for people who can't hear the audio in the video.

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) have an [accessible captions and subtitles guide](#)

[Read more on InformationNOW about making your computer or mobile device easier to use](#)

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## Support for accessible information

[Newcastle Libraries](#) can support people with visual impairments or other disabilities to:

- get online using a dedicated area for people with visual impairments at [City Library and community hub](#)
- use library computers with accessibility software and adjustable desks
- use a electronic book and document magnifier
- join the RNIB Braille Library or Calibre audio library.

### [Read more on Newcastle.gov.uk about accessible library services](#)

**Advocacy** is free, independent support to help you to get your voice heard. If you need support to get information, understand your options or to have it in an accessible format an advocate could help you.

### [Read more on informationNOW about advocacy](#)

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## Resources

[An Easy Read Guide](#) on Accessible Information Standard from NHS England.

[GOV.UK](#) has guidance on how to create, convert and publish accessible documents

The Shaw Trust offer a [Free Website Accessibility Checker for organisations](#). They can audit your website and send over a snapshot report on its accessibility

Worldwide web consortium W3's [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.1](#) is the standard for website accessibility.

GOV.UK has profiles of example users of a website and their accessibility needs as prompts to consider when planning website content. [You can view them here](#)

[Hemingway Editor](#) is a free to use text editor that gives feedback on how easy your text is to read using a simple traffic light format.

The Plain English Campaign website has a wide range of [Plain English free guides such as alternate words A-Z](#)

You can check colour and contrast for webpages or documents using [ColourContrastCC](#)

[SCOPE](#) have a guide on [How to write alt-text for image accessibility](#)

[Abilitynet](#) have simple [‘how to’ guides](#) to make your device easier to use.

[Get started with accessibility features on iPhone – Apple Support \(UK\)](#) [Use the Accessibility menu – Android accessibility Help](#)

[Accessible PDF.info](#) have [guidance and tutorials](#) on creating accessible PDFs

[WebAIM.org](#) have a range of information and tools to check web accessibility. This includes an [Introduction to Web Accessibility](#), their [Web AIM Contrast Checker](#) tool and pages on topics such as [keyboard navigation](#)

[NVDA screen reader](#) is a free, open source, accessible screen reader for Windows. It works with internet browsers such as Chrome, Edge and Opera.

[VoiceOver](#) is a free accessible screen reader installed on Mac

[DWP's Accessibility Manual](#) has information on [how test your website for screen reader compatibility](#) on Windows and Mac.

[Easyhealth](#) and [LD:NorthEast](#) have websites for people with learning disabilities where you can find accessible health information, health cards and films.

[W3's Web accessibility initiative](#) have an [accessibility statement generator](#) that helps you to write an accessibility statement for your website. They also have [guidance on involving people with disabilities in testing website accessibility](#).

[RNID](#) have a guide to help you use [captions in social media](#)

Most Social Media platforms have Alt-Text tools for images including: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#)

Video sharing websites such as [Youtube](#) and [Vimeo](#) allow you to add automatic closed captions and subtitles.

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## Useful Organisations

### Inclusion North

**Email:** [info@inclusionnorth.org](mailto:info@inclusionnorth.org)

**Website:** <https://inclusionnorth.org/>

**Telephone:** 0113 244 4792

**Address:** Suite 12a, LS7 1AB

### Disability North

**Email:** [reception@disabilitynorth.org.uk](mailto:reception@disabilitynorth.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.disabilitynorth.org.uk](http://www.disabilitynorth.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 0191 2840480

**Address:** The Dene Centre, NE3 1PH

### Skills for People

**Email:** [information@skillsforpeople.org.uk](mailto:information@skillsforpeople.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.skillsforpeople.org.uk](http://www.skillsforpeople.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 0191 281 8737

**Address:** 4 Glendale Terrace, NE6 1PB

## Deaflink

**Email:** [admin@deaflink.org.uk](mailto:admin@deaflink.org.uk)

**Website:** <https://www.deaflink.org.uk/>

**Telephone:** 0191 233

**Address:** Deaflink North East, NE3 3XT

## BrowseAloud

**Email:** [info@browsealoud.com](mailto:info@browsealoud.com)

**Website:** [www.browsealoud.com](http://www.browsealoud.com)

**Telephone:** 028 9442 8105

**Address:** Lucas Exchange, BT41 2RU

## Communications Support Team

**Email:** [corporatecommunications@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:corporatecommunications@newcastle.gov.uk)

**Telephone:** 0191 211 5094

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## Related Articles

[Making your computer or mobile device easier to use](#)

[Accessible venues in Newcastle](#)

[Sight Loss and Visual Impairments](#)

[British Sign Language and subtitles](#)

[Interpreting and translation](#)

[Learning disability local support services](#)



## Accessible and public toilets