

## **1. Introduction**

Scottish Borders Council (SBC) is committed to ensuring accessibility of its website for a wide range of people, including those with disabilities.

## **2. Our aim**

We aim to ensure all pages on our website conform to W3C WAI Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (WCAG 2.0), Conformance Level AA.

## **3. Guidelines**

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (WCAG 2.0) is the W3C WAI specification which explains how to make websites accessible.

## **4. Conformance level**

Conformance to WCAG 2.0 AA sets the expectation that a website will fulfil all priority one and priority two checkpoints, which address absolute and substantial barriers to accessing content on a website.

## **5. Legal requirements**

The introduction of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) and more recently the Equalities Act 2010 states that it is a legal requirement to provide an accessible website.

There are over 10 million disabled people in the UK and millions more affected by sensory, physical and/or cognitive impairments, including age related issues such as sight, hearing, memory and dexterity loss.

## **6. Research**

Research and studies have shown that accessible websites promote good publicity and are more effective and usable for all users, not only users with disabilities.

Content developed, using World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) guidelines, is more easily transferred to other media such as mobile phones, handheld devices and interactive TV. Search engines find accessible content more easily often leading to higher search engine rankings.

## **7. Scope**

This policy outlines accessibility targets and measures that apply to all new, updated, and existing webpages and web content, produced or updated by Scottish Borders Council.

Future web development tender and contract documentation should reference the accessibility policy. Contractors should be asked to commit to helping Scottish Borders Council meet the criteria outlined in the policy.

In addition, Scottish Borders Council is taking steps to ensure accessibility of web content provided by council owned organisations by:

- informing them about Scottish Borders Council policy on web accessibility
- providing links to information and resources on implementing web accessibility
- monitoring and providing feedback on inaccessible content

## **8. Accessibility statement**

[SBC Accessibility Statement](#) should be reviewed periodically, updated as required and:

- demonstrate the council's commitment to web accessibility
- provide information about features or content that does not meet accessibility targets
- provide a link to the accessibility policy
- provide contact details for people wishing to report accessibility problems be clear and written in plain English

## **9. Exceptions**

Exceptions to accessibility conformance exist on the website where regional GIS map information, such as school catchment areas and council wards, is available. GIS map information is not accessible to some users with disabilities, therefore an alternative means to access the information, should be provided.

## **10. Milestones**

Content editors and approvers will receive writing for the web and accessibility training by the end of July 2011.

By December 2011, Scottish Borders Council's website aim to meet WCAG 2.0 AA Conformance Level.

## **11. Monitoring standards and follow-up process**

Scottish Borders Council will initially review content after six months and conduct periodic reviews of the website, thereafter.

Departments with non-accessible webpages or content will be asked to correct the problem within two weeks. If departments do not resolve the issue within two weeks it will be escalated to the Web steering group. Recurrent on-going accessibility problems may result in editors and approvers requiring additional training.

Every section of the website will include a feedback form and information received will be gathered and considered during the review process.

Any changes or developments to pages, page templates and CSS should be validated to ensure code continues to conform to specified standards.

## **12. Updating this policy**

The policy will be reviewed every 2 years, from August 2011, by the Senior Integration and Web Services Officer and approved by the Web steering group. Minor changes to policy, relating to new legislation or accessibility methods or techniques should be made without the approval process.