



# Girlguiding website accessibility guidelines

## Introduction

Girlguiding is committed to working towards ensuring that its websites are accessible to everyone. People access the web in many different ways and Girlguiding promotes inclusion for all, regardless of disability, capability or technology.

## Guideline Intent

The intention of these guidelines is to provide clear accessibility principles that all Girlguiding organisational websites are aiming to follow. For the purpose of these guidelines, the term “website” includes:

- the Girlguiding corporate website
- the Girlguiding online shop
- the Girlguiding youth websites
- the Girlguiding members’ area websites
- the Girlguiding Girls’ Attitude Survey website
- the Girlguiding intranet
- the Girlguiding Subscriptions website
- the Girlguiding CRB website
- the Join Us III platform
- all microsites produced after the implementation date of this policy.

The Go! platform does not currently comply with these guidelines and it is not within our ability to make it. As we are embarking on keeping this database up to date we shall certainly expect any future developments to fully comply with this guidance

## Guideline Principles

The principles of these guidelines form a set of requirements that all Girlguiding websites are working towards. The principles should be fulfilled according to the policy timetable.

- Principle 1: Websites should aim to conform to the accessibility targets laid out in Delivering Inclusive Websites from the Central Office of Information ;
- Principle 2: In doing so, websites should aim to conform to level Double-A of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0 ;
- Principle 3: If the guidance from the Central Office of Information should be revised, Principle 1 of this policy updates automatically and Principle 2 will be updated accordingly.

## Guideline Timetable

The Girlguiding websites contain a large volume of content.

From 2012, all new online content will aim to comply with online accessibility standards

Efforts will be taken to ensure that legacy content complies with accessibility standards - priority will be given to improving key documents and popular (highly visited) sections of the website first.

## Online content formats

The core of the [www.girlguiding.org.uk](http://www.girlguiding.org.uk) content is published as extensible hypertext mark-up language that uses cascading style sheets. It is to this type of content that the WCAG guidelines directly apply.

## Exceptions

Girlguiding websites also carry online content that is not provided in XHTML. Where non-XHTML formats are used, and where possible:

- files will be created in accordance with the accessible authoring techniques available for these formats
- all reasonable efforts will be taken to provide alternative accessible versions
- contact details will be provided for the supply of alternative non-web formats

Situations where online content may be provided in non-XHTML formats include:

### Content with technical restrictions or legal requirements

Girlguiding is required to publish content on its website to meet legislative requirements, for example documents relating to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. Often the source material for this content is only available in hardcopy or must be presented in a format that retains the layout or formatting integrity of the original documents.

### Rich media formats

Girlguiding may occasionally publish content in non-XHTML rich-media formats, such as embedded YouTube videos. Where such content cannot be made accessible, every reasonable effort will be made to provide an accessible alternative version.

### User-generated (third party) content

Girlguiding is required to publish content on its website that is created by third parties, for example member submissions to competitions. This content is sometimes available only as hardcopy or in inaccessible formats. Girlguiding will ensure that user generated content is as accessible as possible by:

- encouraging third-party authors to follow good accessibility practices when submitting content
- taking all reasonable steps to convert submitted content into accessible formats that do not compromise the integrity or meaning of the content

### Time-critical content

Girlguiding is often required to publish content on its website at a particular time or date. As a temporary measure, an inaccessible version of time-critical content may be published to meet deadlines. Girlguiding will then

publish an accessible version of the same content as soon as it is reasonably possible to do so.

#### **Online versions of hardcopy publications**

Online versions of hardcopy publications are published on the Girlguiding websites as Word (DOC) or Portable Document Format (PDF) files.

Every reasonable effort is taken to make PDF files accessible. Some PDF files may still not be fully accessible, such as: scanned and older PDF files and those containing complex statistical and data tables.

Every reasonable effort is taken to ensure that file sizes are as small as possible. Large documents may need to be published in several smaller sections.

### **Conformance with web and online accessibility standards**

Online content on the Girlguiding websites will work towards conforming to best practice web and accessibility standards and guidelines published by the:

Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)  
United Kingdom Government Central Office of Information (COI)  
Creators of propriety software (e.g. Adobe)

In particular, Girlguiding will take all reasonable steps to ensure that its online content complies with:

Conformance levels A (priority level 1) and AA (priority level 2) of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 1.0 [www.w3.org/TR/WAI-WEBCONTENT](http://www.w3.org/TR/WAI-WEBCONTENT)

United Kingdom Government web standards and guidelines [www.coi.gov.uk/guidance.php?page=188](http://www.coi.gov.uk/guidance.php?page=188)

COI guidance TG102 delivering inclusive websites [www.coi.gov.uk/guidance.php?page=129](http://www.coi.gov.uk/guidance.php?page=129)

COI guidance TG109 minimum technical standards [www.coi.gov.uk/guidance.php?page=176](http://www.coi.gov.uk/guidance.php?page=176)

COI guidance TG110 making PDF files usable and accessible [www.coi.gov.uk/guidance.php?page=149](http://www.coi.gov.uk/guidance.php?page=149)

XHTML 1.0 the extensible hypertext markup language (second edition) specification [www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1](http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1)

Cascading style sheets level 2 revision 1 (CSS 2.1) specification [www.w3.org/TR/CSS](http://www.w3.org/TR/CSS)

Accessible authoring techniques available for all propriety software  
Adobe PDF [www.adobe.com/accessibility](http://www.adobe.com/accessibility)

Microsoft

Office <http://www.microsoft.com/enable/products/office2003>

### **Website Technical Standards**

Girlguiding will work towards achieving the following technical standards for web development.

1. We will aim to achieve the W3C recommendations of XHTML 1.0 and CSS2. Given the current state of browser developments and that of the software tools typically used to generate and maintain websites, it may be appropriate to adopt XHTML 1.0 with CSS1 or HTML 4.01 with CSS1. It may also be appropriate to adopt the 'transitional' rather than 'strict' sub-versions of XHTML 1.0 or HTML 4.01 in order to accommodate browsers that have incomplete or faulty CSS1 implementations.
2. Currently, HTML tables are frequently used to effect screen layout designs. Where HTML tables are used for this purpose, care will be taken that the resulting pages work properly with assistive technologies, eg, screen readers that are used to make the Web available to impaired users.
3. When server-side scripting and related 'dynamic publishing' techniques are employed, consideration will be given to developing an implementation capable of serving mark-up customised for the browser or other client technology with which a user is accessing the site.
4. When planning websites that are intended to be long-lived, appropriate versions of the mark-up languages and the range of versions of client technology used to access the site will almost inevitably change during the site's lifetime. A strategy for dealing with these evolutionary processes will form a part of the website project plan.
5. Girlguiding web managers will aim to keep abreast of developments and to ensure that their website remains accessible to the full range of client technology with which users visit it. Web managers will work towards ensuring that their sites 'transform gracefully' when viewed with older client technology and that their sites do not become 'broken' when viewed in newly released browsers.

## **Checking conformance with web and online accessibility standards**

Conformance checking against W3C/WAI and COI guidelines and specifications will be carried out regularly by Girlguiding or third-party accessibility specialists, using appropriate combinations of the following techniques and tools:

- automated testing and validation (WCAG, XHTML, CSS)
- manual checks
- assistive technology tool testing
- user testing with people from a range of disabilities, preferences and ages

## **Accessibility testing timetable**

Girlguiding will run an in-house accessibility check on its most popular websites twice yearly. During the building of a new site, accessibility audits will be performed:

- on the information architecture
- on the page template creative designs

- on the wireframes
- on the site itself

## Accessibility user testing profiles

Disabilities to be considered during the development and redevelopment of content on the Girlguiding websites may include a mixture of mild, moderate and severe:

- vision impairment
- mobility problems
- cognitive and learning problems
- hearing loss

Consideration will also be given to other users who will benefit from improved online accessibility, including:

- people with slow internet connections
- people with low bandwidth quotas
- people using hand-held mobile internet-enabled devices
- people with English as a second language
- people from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds
- older people

## Accessibility user testing techniques and technologies

A combination of techniques and adaptive technologies that disabled users may employ will be tested, including:

- changing website colours and contrast
- changing text size and formatting
- third-party testing services

Accessibility across different operating systems (e.g. Mac, Windows, Linux), internet-enabled hardware (e.g. desktop computers, notebooks, mobile phones) and web browsers (e.g. Firefox, Internet Explorer) will also be tested.

## Accessibility user testing tasks

Accessibility user testing will involve completing core tasks that users should be able to achieve on Girlguiding websites. These may include:

finding out how to contact Girlguiding via email, phone, mail or in person  
finding a popular piece of information  
downloading a particular publication  
using the search facility

The criteria for determining the success of accessibility user testing of a Girlguiding website include:

effectiveness

how often can users complete each task? (task completion rate)  
how well can users complete each task? (degree of completion, error rates)

efficiency

how much effort does it take to complete each task? (number of keystrokes or clicks, time taken, pauses)

satisfaction

what is an appropriate experience?

does the experience fit with Girlguiding values?

perceived efficiency

perceived effectiveness

## Other resources

Girlguiding will provide links to additional information on how someone with disabilities can create a more accessible digital experience for themselves.

## Contacts

For further information about the Girlguiding website accessibility policy, contact:

Membership Support Services  
Girlguiding  
17 - 19 Buckingham Palace Road  
London  
SW1W 0PT

Telephone: 020 7834 6242

Email: [membershipsupportservicecs@girlguiding.org.uk](mailto:membershipsupportservicecs@girlguiding.org.uk)