

PDF usage guidance for www.pendle.gov.uk

This guidance applies to the use of PDFs on the www.pendle.gov.uk website.

This guidance does not apply to PDFs created by other parties that we publish.

Problems with PDFs

Compared with HTML content, for example, one of our web pages, information published in a PDF is harder to find, use and maintain. If PDFs are not created with sufficient care, they are often bad for accessibility, and rarely comply with the accessibility standards now required of us.

Reasons to move away from PDFs:

- They do not change size to fit the browser
- They are not designed for reading on a screen
- It is harder to track their use
- They cause difficulties for navigation and orientation
- They can be hard for some users to access
- They are less likely to be kept up to date
- They are hard to re-use

Why is it important to make PDFs accessible to everyone?

In September 2019, the [EU Web Accessibility Directive](#) became law. By September 2020, we were required to make sure that our website and all the PDFs uploaded to it, comply with the [WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility standards](#)

We are required to have an Accessibility Statement on our website, which outlines which parts of our website are not accessible and why, and what our plans to fix these elements are. You can [read our Accessibility Statement](#).

We currently have 951 downloadable PDFs on our website that we are required to make accessible. We are drawing up an action plan to either delete them, fix them or replace them with HTML content.

What alternatives to PDFs are there?

If you have a new document that you would like to upload to the website, consider creating it in another way. In most cases, PDFs can be converted into one of the following:

- A webpage or series of webpages
- An online form
- A website directory
- Social media posts
- An HTML email promotion

These following document types are the most common PDFs on our website, and are the easiest to change into one of the above alternatives:

- Flyers and posters
- How-to guides
- Word document advice notes

- Terms and Conditions documents (e.g. refuse and recycling)
- Printable forms

Flyers and posters

PDF flyers and posters on the website are not good promotion. Designing them to be accessible would affect the quality of the end print product. The corporate website should not be promoting printed material. If the event needs a web page, then [contact the Web Team](#). If it is a small scale, one-off event, and all the information the customer needs is on the flyer itself, then consider using social media and email marketing only.

Word document advice notes

How-to and step-by-step guides should be on web pages. There is no reason to upload this type of text as a PDF. The Web Team are happy to create web pages from any PDF documents of this type that are supplied.

Terms and Conditions documents

Terms and Conditions should not be separate Word or PDF documents. They should be integrated into the web content itself. Again, the Web Team are happy to create this content for you.

Forms and payments

The Council's digital transformation and channel shift agenda dictates that wherever possible we should move from paper to digital processes. This is to help streamline processes and meet our customers' expectations.

The Council's Jadu project Board manages all online processes delivered via the website and can help identify the best way to deliver the form and/or process that you need. [Contact the Web Team](#).

Questions to ask yourself about any new PDF

- Do we have to have the PDF on the site for legal reasons?
- Can the PDF be converted into a webpage?
- How does having the PDF on the website help the user?

Answers that are not acceptable include:

- Some people may find it useful
- I find it interesting
- We may as well put it up as we have it on file
- It's the quickest way to promote my event

I still think I need a PDF. What should I do?

If you do not think any of the previous options suit your document, then you will need to make your PDF accessible in Word. Use our [Creating Accessible Word documents](#) guide to help you.

PDF documents that do make it on to our website should, by and large, be:

- Annual reports
- Large strategy documents
- Large policy documents
- Evidence based reports

How will the process be audited?

Each time a request is made for a PDF to be uploaded to the website, the Web Team will assess the content. If it falls into the accepted categories above, then they will run an Accessibility Check on the PDF. The PDF may then require some alterations to ensure it meets the accessibility criteria.

This process will be a lot smoother if documents have been written using the Creating Accessible Word Documents guidance.

If the content is not appropriate for the PDF form, then the Web Team will suggest an alternative format.

It is vitally important that you give the Web Team enough time to make this assessment and to either make changes to an existing PDF, or create the content in another format – for example, web pages, or an online form.

PDF documents which do not meet the criteria, and/or which do not pass the Accessibility Check will not be uploaded to the website.