
Book a visit to view our documents

Accessibility evaluation report

1. Executive Summary

This report describes the conformance of the Book a visit to view our documents website with W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). The review process is described in Section 5 below and is based on evaluation described in Accessibility Evaluation Resources.

Based on this evaluation, the Book a visit to view our documents website meets WCAG 2.1, Conformance Level AA with an Essential Exception¹ sought for Success Criterion 2.2.1 (see Section 6.3 for details). Detailed review results are available in Section 6 below. Resources for follow-up study are listed in Section 7 below. Feedback on this evaluation is welcome.

2. Background about Evaluation

Conformance evaluation of web accessibility requires a combination of semi-automated evaluation tools and manual evaluation by an experienced reviewer. The evaluation results in this report are based on evaluation conducted between 15-16 April 2021. The website may have changed since that time.

3. Scope of Review

Name and purpose of website	The Book a visit to view our documents site is provided to allow users to book a visit to The National Archives and to order documents for their visit.
Base URL of site	https://dev-www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/book-a-reading-room-visit/ Note: because the service had not yet been launched testing was against a staging environment rather than the live environment.
Service pages included in the review	See table below
URLs excluded from the review	The review is focused on the Book a visit to view our documents site only, it does not include pages from associated services such as Discovery and Reader Registration or pages from the main website (such as T&Cs pages)

¹ <https://www.w3.org/TR/UNDERSTANDING-WCAG20/time-limits-required-behaviors.html>

Service pages included in the review²

	Lighthouse	18F	Screen reader (VoiceOver for iOS)
Service homepage	Done	Done	Done
Select a date (Standard Order)	Done	Done	Done
Select a date (Bulk Order)	Done	Done	Done
Return to your booking	Done	Done	Done
Enter your details	Done	Done	Done
Your visit details	Done (See footnote)	Done	Done
Before you leave	Done	Done	Done
Order documents for your visit	Done	Done	Done
Order summary	Done	Done	Done
Cancel your visit	Done (See footnote)	Done	Done
Your visit has been cancelled	Done (See footnote)	Done	Done
Server error	Done	Done	Done

4. Reviewer

This review was conducted by Gwyn Jones, Lead Front End Developer at The National Archives.

5. Review process

The site was tested for conformance to WCAG 2.1 Level AA using:

- Automated testing using the accessibility testing tools within Google Lighthouse <https://developers.google.com/web/tools/lighthouse>
- Manual testing following the 18F checklist (<https://accessibility.18f.gov/checklist/>) as recommended by Government Digital Service (GDS) in the Service Manual <https://www.gov.uk/service-manual/helping-people-to-use-your-service/testing-for-accessibility>
- Manual testing using a screen reader (VoiceOver on iOS)

² Automated tests were unable to run against some pages because they were returning a HTTP 405 Status Code to the tools. For these pages, automated tests were conducted against the static HTML pages we tested against static versions from <https://kbs-frontend.herokuapp.com>

6. Results and recommended actions

6.1 Interpretative summary of review results

This website appears to meet WCAG 2.1 AA. All issues marked as 'Success Criteria' in Version 0.1 of this document have been fixed. Those that remain are marked as potential usability issues for AT users and can be reviewed after go-live.

6.2 Detailed results

Page	Issue [Type]	Recommendation
Multiple pages (Footer)	In Chrome the OGL logo link focus style is offset from the element and the link does not receive focus in Safari [Potential usability issue for AT users]	Remove the link from the OGL logo since it duplicates what is available in the surrounding text
Multiple pages (Progress bar)	VoiceOver on iOS does not announce the current step [Potential usability issue for AT]	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore if this is a bug on iOS and if there are any ways to fix it• Consider using 'aria-current="step"' (rather than "page") to better communicate this is a step in a process
Enter your details	The notification provided to users when the timer increments is not sufficiently descriptive. For example, when the timer moves from 19 minutes to 18 minutes, all that is announced is '18' [Potential usability issue for users of AT]	Use aria-atomic="true" to stipulate that the entire live region contents should be announced upon update
Your visit details	VoiceOver on iOS announces the table headings incorrectly. For example, 'Visit type' is announced as 'Booking reference, booking reference, visit type'. This is odd because the markup seems to be correct. [Potential usability issue for users of AT]	Review the table structure to see if there are any techniques to prevent this. Note that the W3C guidance suggests the scope attribute might not be needed (see https://www.w3.org/WAI/tutorials/tables/one-header/)
Order documents for your visit	VoiceOver on iOS announces the document reference fields as numerics only. By preceding these with 'Document reference' it might be clearer what the purpose of these elements is [Potential usability issue for users of AT]	Consider adding text for screenreader only which explains these fields are for document references only

6.3 Use of timer on Enter your details page

Why there is a timer

Early user research³ indicated that users should be able to hold a place in the reading room before they have entered their details. Having updated the service design to accommodate this it exposed potential for malicious users to block multiple seats. Introducing time limit for users to enter their details (after which the seat will be released to others) was identified as the only practical mitigation.

How the timer works

Having selected a seat users are informed that they have 20 minutes to enter their details (for example, *“Complete this page by 04:05 PM British Summer Time (BST). If you do not complete the form by this time we will cancel your seat and you will need to start the process again.”*). The time limit is enforced by a server-side block on proceeding where the time limit has been passed, along with relevant validation messaging. There is no client side restriction or change of context (and therefore no impact on Success Criterion 3.2.1).

Where JavaScript is available, the server-rendered message is replaced by a dynamic timer which updates the time remaining each minute (for example, *“Enter your details within 16 minutes If you do not complete the form in this time we will cancel your seat and you will need to start the process again.”*). This continues until there is one minute left, at which point updates are made each second. WAI-ARIA is used to communicate updates to Assistive Technologies.

How this impacts accessibility

Because this timer is not adjustable, cannot be turned off and is less than 20 hours in duration it is not compliant with Success Criterion 2.2.1 at Level A.

Why the Essential Exception is sought

The product team have deemed this timer to be essential because it exists to mitigate potential for malicious misuse. The Essential Exception⁴ to Success Criterion 2.2.1 Level A is sought on the basis that the timer is essential and that providing a mechanism to extend the time limit would invalidate the activity.

Next steps

The product team should monitor the impact of this timer and consider making adjustments if it is found to be impacting on users.

7. References

- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Overview <https://www.w3.org/WAI/intro/wcag>
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 <https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/>

³ <https://github.com/nationalarchives/ds-booking-experience#changes-in-response-to-feedback-for-007>

⁴ <https://www.w3.org/TR/UNDERSTANDING-WCAG20/time-limits-required-behaviors.html>

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- Techniques for WCAG 2.1 <https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG21/Techniques/>
 - Accessibility Evaluation Resources <http://www.w3.org/WAI/eval/>
 - Web Accessibility Evaluation Tools List <https://www.w3.org/WAI/ER/tools/>
 - Using Combined Expertise to Evaluate Web Accessibility <https://www.w3.org/WAI/eval/reviewteams>