

Making digital products accessible for Camden citizens


Digital Products and
Services

December 2023


Accessibility

In the UK, almost 1 in 5 people have a disability of some kind.

Many more have a temporary disability like an illness or injury.



We have a
legal obligation
to make
products
accessible



As a public body, Camden's digital products and services must meet the accessibility regulations introduced in 2018. This includes products that are public-facing and used internally by Camden employees (e.g. an intranet).

Challenge: Camden has 100+ websites

Camden offers various digital services, including websites and applications, for residents' use.

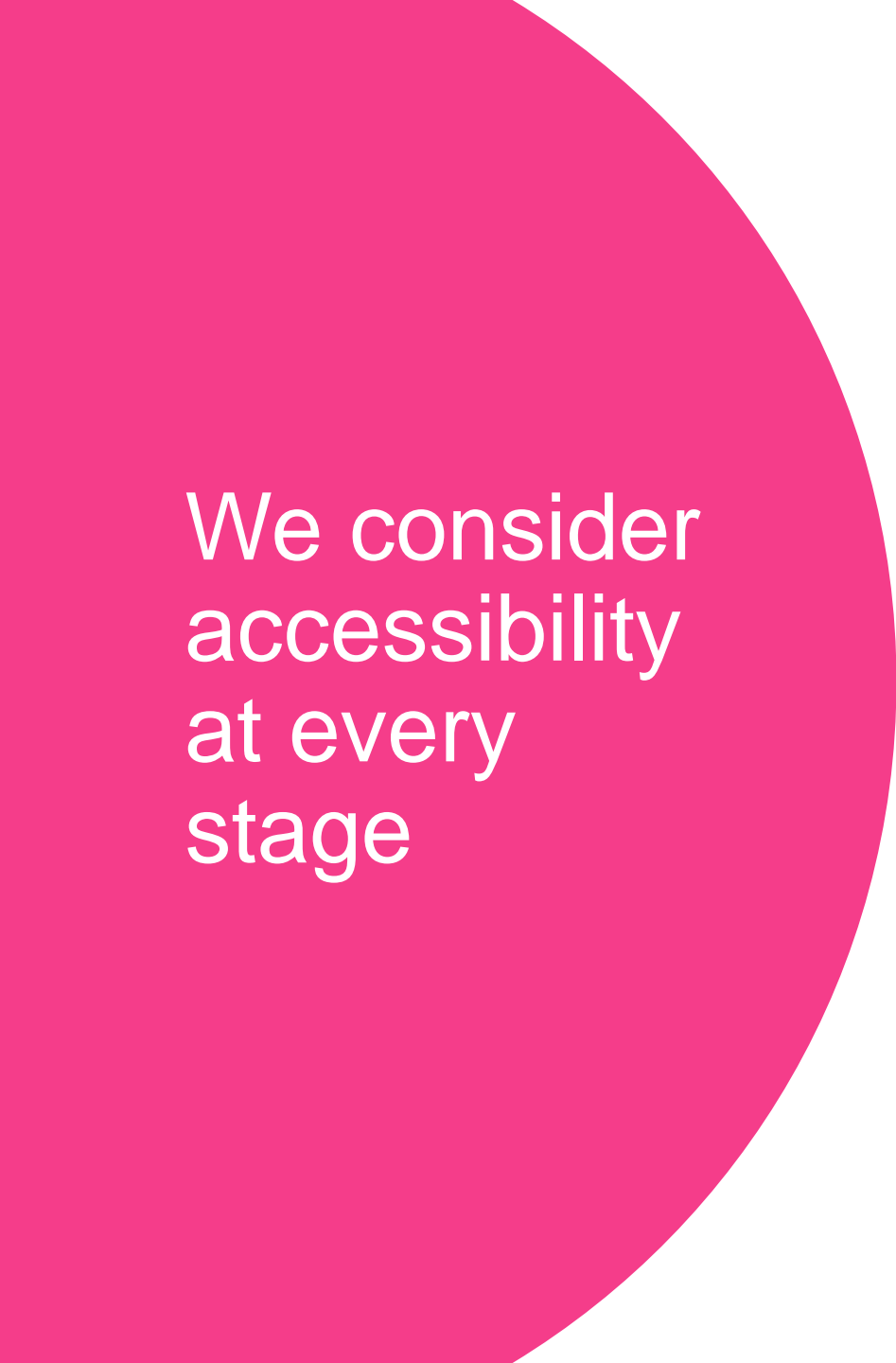
Maintaining accessibility is a priority, but it's complex due to 3rd party organisations hosting some of our popular services, like recycling and rubbish collection (managed by third-party Veolia).

While we strive for a seamless user experience, challenges arise as certain services, though part of Camden Council, are administered by external organisations.

Despite difficulties posed by time and cost constraints, our strategy focuses on engagement and sharing digital best practices to enhance accessibility across our diverse digital estate.

The screenshot displays the Camden Council website interface for recycling and rubbish collection services. At the top, the Camden logo and the title 'My Recycling and Rubbish Collection Services' are visible. Below this, there is a section for 'Need help putting your bins out?' with contact information. The main content area is divided into three collection service cards: Domestic rubbish collection, Domestic food collection, and Domestic recycling collection. Each card includes a table with columns for 'Collection day', 'Last collection', and 'Next collection', along with a 'Last collection: Completed' status and 'Mixed Collection' and 'Feedback' buttons. To the right of these cards, there is an 'Address' section with the address '7 Cressy Road, London, NW3 2ND' and a 'Change address' button. Below the address section, there are 'Related pages' and 'Order bins, bags and recycling supplies' links. At the bottom of the screenshot, there is a 'Find your address' search form with a text input field and a 'Look up property' button. The Camden logo is also present at the bottom of the page.

How we make our products
meet accessibility standards



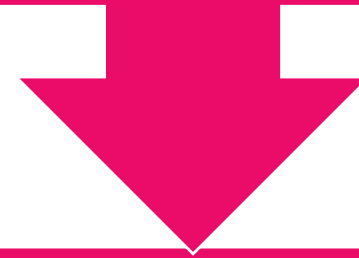
We consider
accessibility
at every
stage

We think about how we are going to address accessibility from the beginning and at every stage of a project.

It's much harder to make a service accessible if we only address it later down the line.

We make it
everyone's
responsibility

Every member of our team
contributes towards making
our service inclusive.



We expect everyone to:

have a good
understanding of
accessibility

observe and
research with people
with access needs



Research


Our aim is to include 1 person with access needs in every 5 people we research with. This ensures we implement participatory design

Participatory design involves individuals with disabilities sharing their experiences right from the start of creating any digital product, ensuring accessibility is considered from the beginning.

It's also about both the designer, developer and the user sharing what they know, working together instead of one telling the other what to do.

This approach reduces the risk of launching a new product that isn't accessible to a group of users who may have access needs.

Accessibility and content

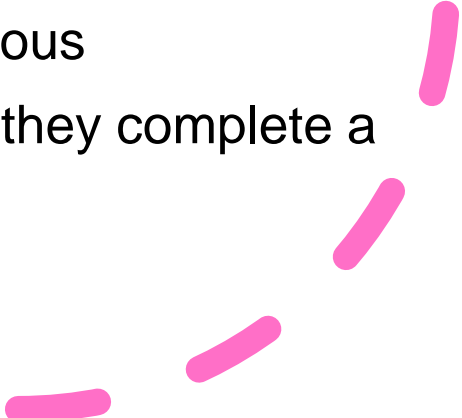


We write
content that
is easy to
understand

Clear content helps everyone and it's the most important thing you can do to make things accessible. It will help more people than any other accessibility requirement.

- For example, a good page title helps users find what they want and recognise they're in the right place. It's the link that shows in search results and the first thing a screen-reader will read out when the user lands on a page.
- We make each page title unique and descriptive. We keep it concise and consider putting important keywords near the beginning.

We believe written content should be clear and easy to understand

- Important information must be clear and obvious
 - Users will understand what will happen after they complete a service
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Content redesigned

We've been rewriting, restructuring and improving content across the site. We've redesigned and published improvements to help citizens better find, understand and access information across our highest traffic journeys:

- Universal credit
- Housing benefits
- Find available benefits and support
- Council Tax support
- PCNs
- Apply for permits
- Parking on estates
- Bin collections
- Bulky waste collection
- Regis road centre
- Search for a planning application

Significant progress has been made on:

- At risk of homelessness
- Housing options and advice
- Housing allocations
- Climate change priority journeys

New benefits content

On this page:

- [Who can claim](#)
- [How to claim](#)
- [How you're paid](#)
- [Backdating your claim](#)
- [Tell us about a change of circumstances](#)

Who can claim

Most working age people can no longer claim Housing Benefit and should go to GOV.UK to [apply for Universal Credit](#).

You can only make a new claim for Housing Benefit if you are:

- pension age and a single person
- pension age and have a partner who is also of pension age
- working age and live in specified, or temporary accommodation

Specified accommodation

This includes:

- accommodation provided by a housing association, a registered charity or a voluntary organization where you receive care, support or supervision.
- domestic violence refuges
- local authority hostels

Temporary accommodation

This includes accommodation provided by us, or another provider of social housing in arrangement with us, to prevent a person being or becoming homeless.

Advice and guidance

- Get a Housing Benefit estimate using the [Turn2Us benefits calculator](#)
- Get advice from [Citizen's Advice Camden](#)
- Find a [landlord who accepts benefits](#)

How to claim

Evidence to support your claim

You'll need to provide evidence to support your Housing Benefit claim.

Upload scans or photos of your documents as part of your online application. This helps us to review your claim quicker.

Easier to use: 85% more people who arrive on the pages interact with them

Easier to understand: Reading age reduced, in some sections from 14 to 7 years old

Accessibility and design

Structure and layout

- Layouts should be simple, logical and consistent
- We give reminders and prompts so we don't force users to remember things from previous pages
- Titles should be in hierarchical order (H1, H2, H3)
- All colour combinations used on camden.gov.uk must be AAA compliant with WCAG. This means they meet the highest standards for contrast between text and background colours, making them easy to read for people with all types of vision



Accessibility and coding

Coding approach to accessibility

- We use descriptive text when we add images or links that explains what they are. This helps people using screen readers understand our content.
- We ensure the website can be easily navigated using only a keyboard. People with mobility disabilities often rely on keyboards to move around.
- We make sure there's enough contrast between text and background colours. This helps people with visual impairments read our content.
- We ensure our website adapts to different screen sizes, making it accessible on both large desktop monitors and small mobile screens.
- By following these best practices, we make our website more inclusive and accessible to a wider range of users, especially those with disabilities.

What we have done so far

Testing with the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)

Our council website went through external accessibility testing in May 2022 to ensure that it's easy for everyone to use.

The audit checked a representative sample of web pages against specific guidelines (WCAG 2.1) that help make websites accessible. When we meet all the requirements, we can say our website is at a good accessibility level (Level AA).

To conduct this audit, we worked with RNIB's web accessibility consultants. They started by using a tool that automatically checks for common accessibility issues and points out areas needing closer examination.

After that, they reviewed a selection of website pages using a mix of tools, including WAVE, colour contrast tools, accessibility checkers, and developer toolbars. They also used different web browsers like Chrome, Firefox, and Safari.

To ensure our website works well with assistive technologies, they tested with screen readers like NVDA, JAWS, and VoiceOver. They also made sure these screen readers work smoothly with specific browsers, like Chrome for JAWS, Safari for VoiceOver, and NVDA for Firefox. This way, we make sure our website is accessible to as many people as possible.

Summary of RNIB testing

Following this evaluation by RNIB, it was found that Camden Council's digital products did not meet WCAG 2.1 AA compliance.

Many issues were discovered on sites not developed by camden.gov.uk teams. We will work with these external partners to improve their accessibility and have ensured that all digital services procured going forward have guidance on how to monitor and test accessibility.

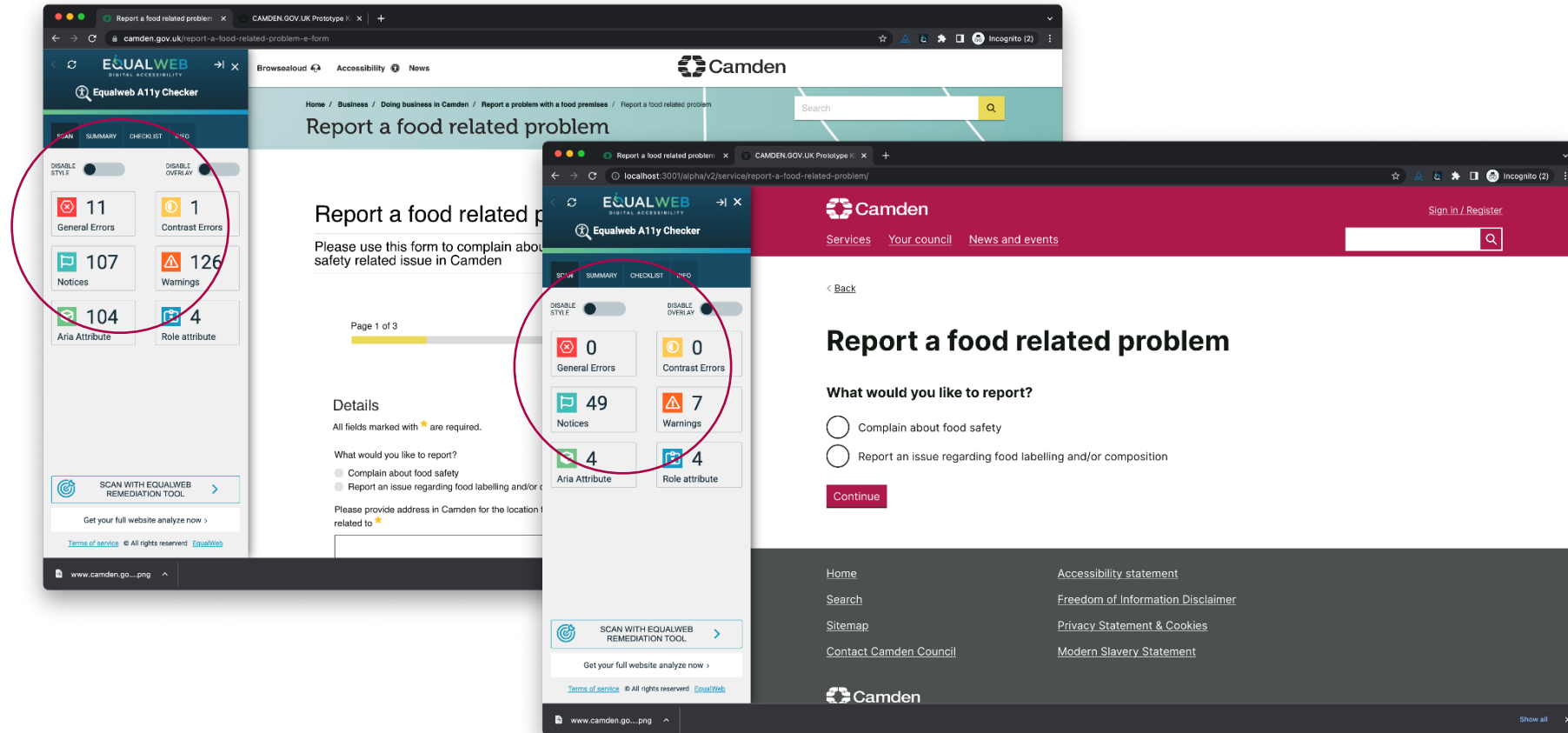
A total of 71 issues, mostly issues that were re-occurring on multiple pages, were identified.

These issues were immediately prioritised, and issues deemed high priority were worked on and resolved. Any remaining issues are published on our public accessibility statement on our website.

We conducted this external audit to identify major issues that must be resolved in the upcoming redesign of camden.gov.uk. It has become the basis for setting our key priorities.

Using our new design
system

Design systems mean automatic adherence to many standards. Sites are more easily built and updated with “baked-in” accessibility and usability



Opt-In-Beta site (Proof of concept)

BETA We're trialling a new site. Return to [the original site](#) at any time.

[Home](#)

Council Tax

Pay your Council Tax, tell us you've moved in or out of Camden or apply for a discount or exemption.

Popular

[Pay your Council Tax](#) >

[Tell us you're moving home](#) >

[Student Council Tax discounts](#) >

In this section

Paying your Council Tax

- [Pay your Council Tax](#)
- [View your Council Tax account](#)
- [Support if you can't pay](#)

[View all >](#)

Discounts and exemptions

- [Single person discount](#)
- [Student discounts](#)
- [Empty property](#)

[View all >](#)

Change in circumstances

- [Tell us you're moving home](#)

Appeals

- [Council Tax appeals](#)

[Home](#)

[Contact Camden Council](#)

[Accessibility statement](#)

[Cookies](#)

[Data protection and privacy statement](#)

[Modern slavery statement](#)

[Freedom of Information disclaimer](#)



Removal of Browsealoud


- As part of our ongoing work towards redesigning camden.gov.uk, we are making some adjustments that may affect how citizens with accessibility needs interact with our website.
- In the next few months, we will be removing our current accessibility tool, Browsealoud, from the camden.gov.uk website. Browsealoud will remain on the Camden Care Choices website.
- This tool has been used by a small number of Camden's citizens and we will ensure that guidance exists to point them to better tools that can be used across multiple websites e.g. translating in browser means most websites can be automatically translated rather than just the Camden website
- We have published a page on our website, www.camden.gov.uk/accessibility, providing alternative accessibility solutions that will not only meet but exceed the needs of our users. There are several reputable options available, and we have listed a few on our site.

What we are doing next

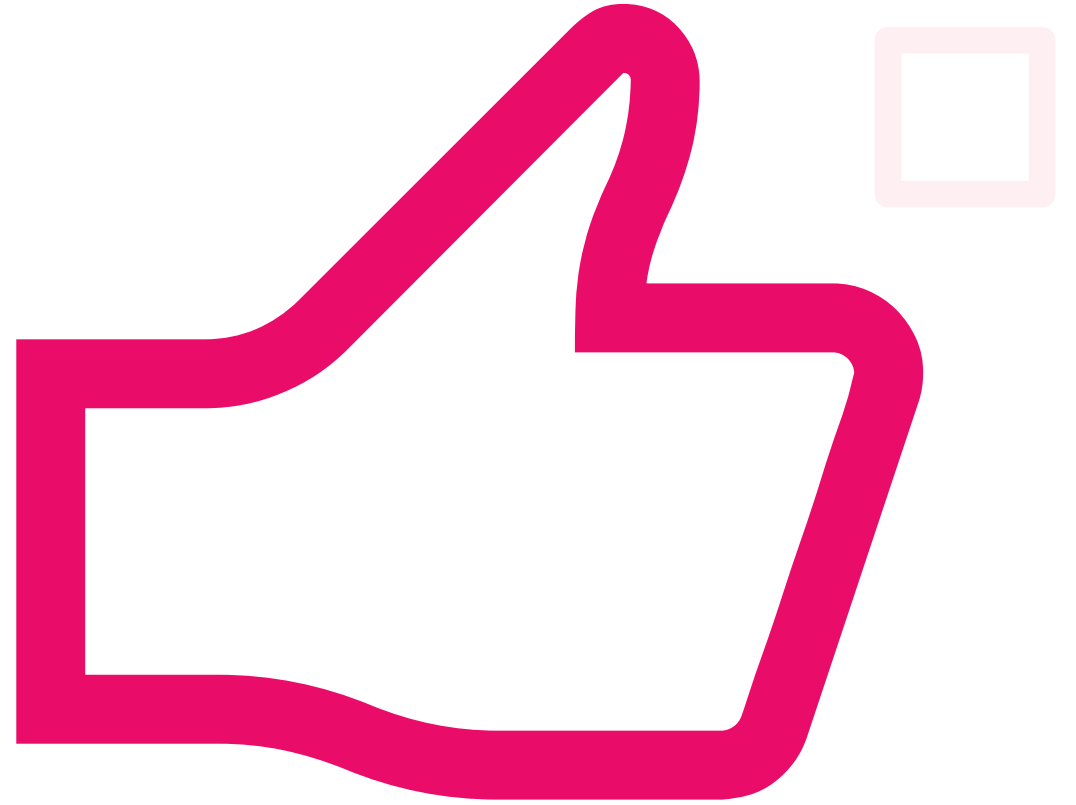
- Redesign of camden.gov.uk using the design system
- Further testing to identify issues
- Carry out another audit and external testing on camden.gov.uk and establish a backlog of issues.
- Audit and analysis of Camden affiliated sites that sit outside of the camden.gov.uk domain



What we need support with

- Finding citizens with a range of accessibility needs to include in user research
 - Advice on any specific actions to take to help establish a network of interested disabled residents that can participate in ongoing accessibility testing of new and existing digital products.
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Thank you
and any
questions?



For further information on today's presentation or for any follow-up questions please
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