

RNIB

supporting blind and
partially sighted people

Access Consultancy 2011

Helping businesses to create
an inclusive society





RNIB access consultancy is a pan-disability service which aims to help create an inclusive society by providing good practice guidance, expert advice and consultancy across a range of topics from built environment to web accessibility.

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Introduction to access consultancy

RNIB's access consultancy provides a pan-disability service that focuses on improving access to the environments and facilities that disabled people use in their day-to-day life.

Drawing on more than 50 years combined experience of delivering disability and access related consultancy, RNIB access consultancy has developed a wealth of knowledge and understanding of the needs of disabled people. This expertise covers a wide range of areas, including built environment and product and packaging assessment.

A significant part of this service is based around our unrivalled appreciation of the specific needs of blind and partially sighted people and we possess unparalleled resources in this area.

Our research and policy activities have kept us at the forefront of the disability field and we regularly consult with our beneficiaries. As a result, RNIB has played an integral role in the creation and modification of many of the main standards and guidance documents in the industry.

Our built environment team includes NRAC registered access consultants, who offer access audits and design appraisals for both existing and proposed environments. They are able to provide businesses with extensive details of current and potential issues as well as expert design advice to assist in ensuring comprehensive accessibility and peace of mind for you and your customers.

How will improving access benefit your business?

- with approximately 10 million disabled people in Britain, there are a large number of potential customers you could be excluding if your services are not accessible
- an inaccessible environment can cause problems for older people and families that include young children. Improving your environment will make it easier for all your customers to use, not just disabled people
- access related training and consultancy will help to improve staff confidence when dealing with disabled customers and will contribute to improved customer focus.

Buildings, streets and transport audits

Access audits are specifically aimed at identifying barriers and hazards to mobility for disabled people and making recommendations as to how they may be overcome. Our access audits are carried out with reference to existing legislation, regulations and best practice guidance relating to the specific needs of disabled people and the overall development of inclusive environments.

Bronze service – Overview audit

A brief tour of the site to identify the main disability access issues, which is followed up with a short report listing the main issues and provision of our relevant technical fact sheets to provide supporting information. Recommendations for improvement and legislative background are not included as part of this service, but can be added if required.

Silver service – Bullet-point audit

A survey of the site to identify the main disability access issues, which is followed up with a report including legislative background, supporting information and a bulleted list of the observations and corresponding recommendations for improving the main access issues. Summarised comments and recommendations are provided and these are backed up by our relevant technical fact sheets.

Gold service – Detailed audit

A full survey of the entire site covering all disability access issues, which is followed up with a detailed audit report including legislative background, supporting information and photographs. All observations and recommendations are contained in a detailed spreadsheet with information on location and priority/category along with references to relevant accompanying photographs and fact sheets for each.

Bolt-on services

- photographs to illustrate points for bronze and silver options
- post-report meeting to discuss the report and next steps for all options.



Design appraisals

A design appraisal is an assessment of the accessibility of a proposed environment based on plans and other design based information. This could be either a new development or alteration to an existing environment.

Why undertake a design appraisal?

A design appraisal will highlight barriers to access and give recommendations as to how they can be overcome. Such changes are easier to make at the design stage and will avoid costly retro-fitting or adaptation once the environment has been built. We recommend that an access consultant is brought in at the earliest stages of the project and works as an integral part of the design team.

Bronze service – Single design appraisal

A stand-alone appraisal of current plans and specifications to identify potential disability access issues, followed up with a report containing legislative background, supporting information, comments and corresponding recommendations for addressing issues. The report is supplemented by our relevant technical fact sheets.

Silver service – Design appraisal and advice

An appraisal of current plans, specifications and supporting documents, followed up with a report as per the bronze level. This is supplemented by provision of design advice by phone and email and attendance at one architect meeting to discuss the report and to review any subsequent changes.

Gold service – Full design appraisal and advice service

With our consultant on board at an early design stage, the Gold option includes appraisals of plans at each RIBA stage, provision of design advice whenever required, attendance at architect meetings and input into supporting documents such as access statements.

Bolt-on services

- attendance at architect or design team meetings for bronze and silver options
- provision of design advice by phone and/or email for bronze and silver options
- input into design and access statements and building control access statements for bronze and silver options
- liaison and consultation with disabled people/groups for input into access statements for all options
- access audit of completed development for all options.

Signage – audits

A review of your existing signs will help to highlight current good practice and also barriers that your signage scheme may create to people using your buildings or services.

Why should you review your existing signs?

A signage assessment will be of benefit if you are unsure that your signs are meeting the needs of all users. Perhaps you have had complaints about your signs or that people find your site difficult to navigate. You may be looking to update your signs and want to find out how your current signage system can be improved.

Many of the recommendations we give in relation to improving signage for blind and partially sighted people are also beneficial to a wider range of people and can help to improve signage for all.

Bronze service – Overview audit

A brief tour of the site to identify the main signage issues, which is followed up with a short report, including photographs and listing the main issues. Recommendations for improvement and legislative background are not included.

Silver service – Bullet-point audit

A survey of the site to identify the main signage issues. This is followed with a report which includes legislative background, supporting information and a bulleted list of the observations and corresponding recommendations for improving the main signage issues. Photos are provided. Comments and recommendations are supported by our signage fact sheet.

Gold service – Detailed audit

A full survey of the entire site covering signage issues. This is followed up with a detailed audit report which includes legislative background, supporting information and photographs. All observations and recommendations are contained in a detailed spreadsheet with information on location and priority/category along with references to our signage fact sheet and Sign Design Guide.

Bolt-on services

- signage fact sheet for Bronze option
- a copy of the Sign Design Guide to illustrate points for all options
- post-report meeting to discuss the report and next steps for all options.

Signage – appraisals

Signage can be an expensive part of many environments. When spending a lot of money you want to ensure that the signage you specify is accessible to as wide a range of users as possible and avoid costly mistakes.

Why should I make my signage scheme accessible?

Making your signs accessible can open up your environment to a wider range of users and increase the number of people using your building/service. It can also reduce the amount of assistance that is required from staff to guide people around the environment.

Undertaking a signage appraisal and using best practice guidelines can help you get it right first time and reduce the need for you to adapt your signage at a later stage.

Bronze service – Overview appraisal

A brief review of your proposed signage designs to identify the main signage issues. This is followed up with a short report listing the main issues. Recommendations for improvement and legislative background are not included, but can be provided if required.

Silver service – Bullet-point appraisal

A review of your proposed signage designs to identify the main signage issues, followed with a report which includes legislative background, supporting information and a bulleted list of the observations and corresponding recommendations for improving the main signage issues. Summarised comments and recommendations are provided and are supported by our signage fact sheet.

Gold service – Detailed appraisal

A full survey of your proposed signage, which is followed up by a detailed report including legislative background and supporting information. All observations and recommendations are contained in a detailed spreadsheet with information on location and priority/category along with references to our signage fact sheet and Sign Design Guide.

Bolt-on services

- signage fact sheet for Bronze option
- a copy of the Sign Design Guide to illustrate points for all options
- post-report meeting to discuss the report and next steps for all options.

Sign design, production and installation

Our sign design, production and installation service will be of benefit to those clients looking at having signs designed for an existing or proposed environment.

This service includes a visit to your site or reviewing plans for a proposed environment and assessing locations for a new signage scheme. A report is provided showing the design of the proposed signs including:

- proposed colour scheme for the signs
- size of each sign, drawn to scale
- typestyle to be used

- details on the construction of the signs
- photographs showing the proposed location of each sign
- plans showing the location of each sign
- prices for each sign
- price for purchasing recommended signs
- price for installation of the signs
- sample of the type of signs we have recommended.

We can also arrange for your signage scheme to be produced and installed.



Product assessments

Inclusive design ensures that mainstream products and services are designed to enable as many people as possible to use them easily – regardless of age and ability. We can help you to make your products more inclusive through assessment and user testing.

Working with us to improve the usability of your product will increase your potential customer base and enable you to tap into the £80 billion spending power of disabled people in the UK. If appropriate we can award you with our coveted RNIB Reference approval and you can use our logo to increase customer confidence and reassurance that they are buying an accessible product.

Bronze service – Ergonomic assessment

A stand-alone assessment by our products consultant based on the principles of inclusive design to identify access issues. This is followed up with a report detailing issues and recommendations for improvement.

Silver service – User trial

A user trial with 15 participants to test the product, followed up with a report detailing issues identified by the participants, their comments, data from the trial and recommendations for improvement.

Bolt-on services

- client meeting to discuss the report and next steps for all stages
- design advice as a follow-up to bronze and silver stage reports.

Gold service – RNIB Reference assessment

The full assessment of the product, culminating in the awarding of the RNIB Reference, the benchmark for inclusive product design. The process is split into stages, beginning with an ergonomic assessment, highlighting all necessary improvements which should be made before moving on to the user trial stage. The user trial tests the refined product and identifies any further issues and recommendations. A user trial report is provided detailing all data collected, discussion and conclusions. A final report summarising the full process is provided with final recommendations which must be implemented to receive the RNIB Reference award.

Braille packaging assessments

Pharmaceutical and commercial packaging

Assessment of braille on pharmaceutical packaging to European, British and RNIB standards, using a technical measurement process backed up by testing with 5 experienced braille readers.

Bronze – technical assessment

A stand-alone technical measurement of the braille on packaging against European, British and RNIB standards. The results are presented in a simple spreadsheet.

Silver – user testing

Samples are assessed by a group of experienced braille readers to give valuable

feedback on the readability of the braille. The results are presented in a short report with results and concluding remarks.

Gold – full assessment

Both the technical assessment and the user testing are undertaken and presented in one cohesive report with supporting information.



Introduction to web accessibility

Our web accessibility team combines 30 years of experience with continuous professional and technological development to offer a benchmark service.

It is vitally important to ensure that your website is accessible to as many users as possible, regardless of how they browse the internet. This includes people with sight problems, hearing mobility and cognitive impairments as well as those using older

browsers and dial-up connection, or newer technologies such as mobiles and tablets.

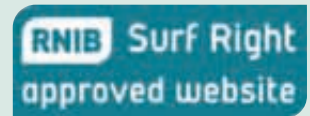
Our consultants assess websites applying the principles of an expert review to standards with practical accessibility benefits, surfing in the same way a disabled person does, whilst also using specialised automated tools and manually inspecting the code.

How will improving your website accessibility benefit your business?

- develop your market share of customers and improve retention through customer loyalty
- enhances usability of an accessible website to improve the online experience of customers that are not disabled
- faster websites with reduced maintenance and bandwidth costs and a greater robustness as technology progresses
- meet your obligations under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustment for disabled people.

Website audits

An audit will help to identify work which needs to be done to improve accessibility for an existing site, or assist you during the development of a new site.



We offer a range of website accessibility audits:

- **RNIB Surf Right**

Using a combination of manual and automated checks, a Surf Right audit will detail what needs to be done to your site to make it sufficiently accessible and meet the standard required to achieve RNIB's Surf Right accreditation. We provide you with a report that logs all issues found and changes that you need to implement to reach the selected standard. After you have done the remedial work we carry out a recheck free of charge. Once all issues have been addressed, we award the site our Surf Right logo which is valid for one year. We can also offer maintenance checks to sites that have reached the Surf Right standard.

- **Web content accessibility guidelines (WCAG)**

For website owners and designers who want to be able to display our Surf Right logo and also claim WCAG 2.0 conformance, we can offer audits combining both Surf Right and WCAG 2.0 criteria.

- **Development audits**

We can carry out a rolling audit to either Surf Right or WCAG 2.0 standard, as you develop or redesign a site, to help you keep it on track towards meeting your accessibility target.

- **Disabled user testing** (Only available in conjunction with a full audit)

All of the above audits can be complemented by disabled user testing. In partnership with AbilityNet, we offer a formal accreditation that combines the best of our popular RNIB Surf Right award, with the benefits of disabled user testing carried out by a panel of web users with disabilities. Sites which successfully pass the accreditation process will be eligible to display the joint Surf Right/AbilityNet logo for one year.

Live reviews

Our live reviews are a combination of automated and manual checks followed up with a face-to-face meeting with a consultant who will demonstrate the issues, explain the results in detail and answer any questions that might arise.

For a real insight into the experience that disabled site visitors have on your web site, the consultant will demonstrate how it appears to disabled people and help you find the most efficient solutions. We can organise half or whole day long meetings at your location or at an RNIB venue to discuss the findings of the conformance review stage of this service.



Face-to-face meetings are often the most effective way to address accessibility issues with designers, developers and content managers. You can use this opportunity to raise questions, troubleshoot specific areas of concern and discuss best practice techniques relevant to the system and technologies you use.

A live review will give you the right knowledge to improve the accessibility of your website and be ready for a full audit. Customers choosing a live review will be able to follow up with a full audit at a discounted rate.

Regular live reviews could be also used to monitor the accessibility of a website subject to frequent changes and new content additions. For example quarterly rechecks could follow a website audit. Discounted prices are available for customers committing to regular live reviews.

Conformance overviews

Conformance overviews provide an intelligent benchmark of a website's accessibility. An initial automated test¹ is followed by an expert review of the results, to provide an overview against RNIB Surf Right or the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

A purely automated test wouldn't be able to check all the features required for an accessible website. Even the best automated testing solutions can not identify all accessibility issues, some key problems can only be identified by human review. Our consultants verify the results of the automated test and integrate them with manual checks in order to ensure their completeness and accuracy.

If you are unsure about how compliant and accessible your website is, this is the optimal starting point for you. The results of a conformance overview will give you an indication of the most prominent accessibility issues or confirm that your website is fully compliant to RNIB Surf Right or to the Web Content Accessibility



Guidelines (WCAG). A conformance overview can be the ideal tool to help you make an informed decision on next steps and priorities.

You might want to integrate the conformance overview with follow up consultancy meetings, commission a full audit or book a development audit for a new website. A full audit informs website owners not only of where key accessibility issues exist, but also delivers in-depth solutions to all issues identified, along with outlining exactly how each issue affects website users with disabilities. Customers choosing a conformance overview will be able to follow up with a full audit at a discounted rate.

¹ For the automated part of accessibility testing, RNIB use the siteSifter analysis package, delivered by Greytower Technologies.

PDF assessment or repair

NEW We can now test your PDF documents against WCAG 2.0 and provide feedback on any fixes that may be needed. We also offer a PDF repair service where we can fix any errors to ensure their overall accessibility including access for screen readers.

Consultancy services

Working with you face-to-face complemented by email and phone support, we can not only help you to build and maintain an accessible website, but also to produce accessibility policies, accessibility statements, editorial guidelines for your content authors and other documentation.

Training courses

You can join us on one of our regular open training courses, or we can design and run a bespoke, in-house training course for your company. Training covers a wide range of issues, including strategy, design and coding techniques, testing and maintenance, legal requirements and the business benefits of putting accessibility at the heart of your web strategy. Our current selection of courses includes:

- **Demystifying accessibility**
a non-technical introduction for decision-makers and content editors
- **Working through WCAG 2.0**
for sites already working to WCAG 1.0 and wanting to upgrade
- **Accessibility – beyond the basics**
looking at techniques to adopt and those to avoid in a technical workshop
- **Making PDF accessible**
creating or repairing PDF that can be accessed and understood by all.
- **Practical accessibility testing**
learn how to check your own site's accessibility

For further details about our access consultancy services please contact:
01733 375370 or email commercialservices@rnib.org.uk

RNIB is the leading charity working in the UK offering practical support, advice and information to anyone with sight loss or those who work with them.

Go online and visit rnib.org.uk/professionals to find out more.