



# The Digital Accessibility Standard (DAS)

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**Transcriber's Note:** The logo at the top of the page is  
Government Digital Delivery Agency—Te Pūnaha  
Matihiko.

# **The Digital Accessibility Standard (DAS)**

## **About the standard**

The New Zealand Government Web Standards currently include the Web Accessibility Standard and the Web Usability Standard.

A new Digital Accessibility Standard (DAS) will replace the Web Accessibility Standard in early 2027.

The new standard is being created with the people who need it—disabled people and those who create digital information and services for government.

## **Timeline for implementation**

The standard is being drafted and there will be a public consultation from 13 July to 7 August 2026. The standard will be published in early 2027, along with a document explaining how and why decisions were made. The standard will become official soon after that.

- 13 July to 7 August 2026—Public consultation (<https://www.digital.govt.nz/das/consultation>)
- Early 2027—Consultation summary published
- Early 2027—Support programmes published
- Early 2027—Standard published.

## **What the standard will cover**

The Web Accessibility Standard applies only to websites and web apps. The proposed DAS will apply to all information and communication technology (ICT). This includes:

- websites, mobile apps, and non-web documents like PDFs, spreadsheets, and emails software like an operating system or web browser hardware, from laptops and headsets to printers and kiosks.

## **Why we need a new standard**

We are changing the standard to make sure that accessibility is considered for all digital technology—something the current standard does not do.

All government digital information and services, not just websites, must be accessible to disabled people. This is stated in New Zealand's Human Rights Act and in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The DAS will help government to meet these responsibilities by setting clear rules for digital accessibility, along with support to help agencies put them into effect.

## **Support for government agencies**

In addition to the DAS, some programmes are being planned to help government agencies improve digital accessibility and meet the standard. These programmes are being developed with Whaikaha—Ministry of Disabled People.

## **What will happen to the Web Usability Standard**

The requirements of the Web Usability Standard will become guidance and techniques for the updated Digital Service Design Standard—

<https://www.digital.govt.nz/digital-service-design-standard>.

## **Summary of the Digital Accessibility Standard**

Below is a summary of the draft NZ Government Digital Accessibility Standard.

It follows the same structure as the standard.

# **1. Purpose**

## **1.1 What this standard is for**

This standard helps make sure disabled people can access digital government information and services.

# **2. Application**

## **2.1 When the standard starts**

The standard will start in early 2027 and will replace the Web Accessibility Standard 1.2.

## **2.2 Who must follow this standard**

### **Mandated organisations**

Government organisations covered by the Government Chief Digital Officer (GCDO) as system lead for digital must follow this standard. These are called mandated organisations.

### **Other organisations**

Other public sector organisations do not have to follow this standard but are encouraged to apply it where possible.

## **3. Requirements for information and communication technology (ICT) products and services**

This section explains the accessibility rules for government products and services that use information and communication technology (ICT). These are called ICT products and services, and include:

- websites, mobile apps, and non-web documents like PDFs, spreadsheets, and emails
- software like an operating system or web browser
- hardware, from laptops and headsets to printers and kiosks.

### **3.1 What this section applies to**

This section applies to every ICT product and service that a mandated organisation is responsible for.

### **3.2 When the requirements apply**

#### **New or changed ICT products and services**

All ICT products and services, whether new or updated, must meet the standard from [the start date].

## **Existing ICT products and services**

Existing ICT products and services must meet the standard by 2031. There are different deadlines depending on the type of ICT product and service.

### **3.3 When the requirements do not apply**

The standard does not apply to:

- working drafts or notes, unless you need to share them with someone else
- technology the mandated organisation did not build or buy and is not needed to use their ICT product and services. For example, a Contact us page has a Google map showing where a government building is located but the Google map is not accessible.

### **3.4 Core accessibility requirement**

All ICT products and services must meet the EN 301 549 accessibility standard.

### **3.5 Accessibility statements**

Accessibility statements explain how ICT products and services meet this standard, any known accessibility issues, and how to give feedback.

#### **When an accessibility statement is needed**

Public web pages and mobile apps must have an accessibility statement.

## **What it must include**

The statement must include information about:

- accessibility status
- giving feedback
- known issues
- exceptions
- plans to improve.

## **Where it must be**

The statement must be:

- included in the ICT product or service or
- linked to from inside the ICT product or service.

The statement must also be:

- easy to find from the home page or main screen and
- clearly labelled, for example "Accessibility".

## **3.6 Contact information**

Contact information tells users how they can give feedback or ask for accessibility help about ICT products and services.

### **When contact information is needed**

Public web pages and mobile apps must have contact information.



## **What it must include**

Contact information must include:

- an email address
- a phone number
- a link to the Relay Service and
- other ways to get support.

## **Where it must be**

The contact information must be:

- easy to find from the home page or main screen
- clearly labelled, for example "Contact us".

## **For non-web documents**

Public documents must include at least one way to give feedback or get accessibility help, either an email address, a phone number, or a link to a web page with that information.

## **3.7 Web-first publishing**

Public digital services and information should be published first as accessible web pages, rather than as mobile apps or documents, such as PDF files.

## **4. Requirements for mandated organisations**

This section explains what organisations must do to plan, monitor, test, and report on accessibility.

### **4.1 Accessibility planning**

Each organisation must have a 3-year accessibility plan. The plan must show:

- their progress in improving accessibility
- any exceptions they have and their plans to fix these exceptions.

This plan must be reviewed every year and updated.

The plan must also call be published on a public website.

### **4.2 Plain language**

Organisations must write content for users in plain language.

### **4.3 Testing**

Organisations must test for accessibility using a mix of methods, including testing with disabled people.

## **4.4 Monitoring and reporting**

Organisations must:

- regularly check if their ICT products and services are accessible
- report on their accessibility progress when the GCDO asks
- cooperate with testing by the GCDO
- reply to accessibility questions within 3 days and say when they will provide a full answer
- keep a record of any accessibility feedback they get and what they do about it.

## **4.5 Procurement**

Contracts for buying or building ICT products and services must require that suppliers meet this standard's accessibility rules.

# **5. Exceptions**

## **5.1 When exceptions are allowed**

Exceptions are allowed only where the standard cannot be met, or where doing so would involve unreasonable cost or effort.

## **5.2 Keeping records**

Organisations must keep records explaining why an exception applies and the proof for why they need it.

## **5.3 Reviewing exceptions**

Exceptions are temporary. They must be reviewed regularly and when any of the circumstances change.

# **Glossary**

## **Accessibility standard**

An accessibility standard is a set of rules that helps everyone by removing barriers that stop disabled people from taking part. It might say things like "use clear language" or "add captions to videos".

## **Digital Accessibility Standard**

A set of rules that makes sure that disabled people can use digital technology.

## **Digital Service Design Standard**

The Digital Service Design Standard has principles that help the designers make quality government services that are focused on what people need.

# **EN 301 549**

An accessibility standard from Europe.

## **Exception**

When a government organisation cannot meet the rules of the standard straight away.

## **GCDO (Government Chief Digital Officer)**

The person in charge of getting government departments to work together to make technology, data, and online services safe, easy to use, and accessible for all New Zealanders.

## **Human Rights Act**

A New Zealand law that protects everyone from being treated unfairly or bullied because of who you are, how you live, or what you believe.

## **Mobile app**

An application (app) or program that runs on a mobile phone or tablet.

## **Must**

Must means you have to do something.

## **Non-web document**

A digital document that is not a web page or in a web page.

Examples include letters, spreadsheets, emails, or presentations.

## **Plain language**

Writing that is clear and easy to understand for all readers. Plain language uses short sentences and everyday, common words.

## **Public Consultation**

When the government asks for your opinion before it makes big decisions or creates new rules.

## **Responsible for**

An organisation is responsible for something that it runs, looks after, builds, buys or pays for.

## **Should**

Should means you have to do something unless there is a very good reason not to, and you have thought about what happens if you do not do it.

# **Standard**

A standard is a set of rules that helps make things easy for everyone to use.

## **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

An agreement by countries around the world to make sure that disabled people have the same rights as everybody else.

## **New Zealand Government Web Standards**

These are rules that the government has to follow to make sure that disabled people can use government websites. The New Zealand Government Web Standards has 2 parts: the Web Accessibility Standard and the Web Usability Standard.

## **Web Accessibility Standard**

A set of rules that makes sure that government websites can be used by disabled people.

# **Web Usability Standard**

A set of rules to makes sure that government websites follow basic steps like saying who runs the site and how people can talk to them.

## **End of The Digital Accessibility Standard (DAS)**