



Accessibility Statement

Our commitment and approach to maintaining an accessible website

We firmly believe that the internet should be available and accessible to anyone and are committed to providing a website that is accessible to the broadest possible audience, regardless of ability.

This website utilises various technologies that are meant to make it as accessible as possible at all times. We utilise an accessibility interface that allows persons with specific disabilities to adjust the website's UI (user interface) and design it to their personal needs.

Additionally, the website utilises an AI-based application that runs in the background and optimises its accessibility level constantly. This application remediates the website's HTML, adapts its functionality and behaviour for screen-readers used by blind users, and for keyboard functions used by individuals with motor impairments.

The Tax Appeals Commission is committed to:

- maintaining an accessible website. We state our commitment to this in our Quality Customer Service Charter.
- ensuring that this website achieves "Level AA" conformance to the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 (WCAG 2.1), to comply with the National Disability Authority's Code of Practice on Accessibility of Public Services and Information Provided by Public Bodies.

- ensuring that all new information on the website will achieve “Level AA” conformance to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 (WCAG 2.1).
- including accessibility when we procure 3rd-party systems or upgrades to existing systems.

This website’s conformance with official accessibility guidelines

The website currently has adopted universal accessibility and the W3C (World Wide Web Consortium) WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) V2.1 Level AA in the design and development of its website. Our most recent web accessibility audit for this website was in December 2022.

How to send feedback on this website’s accessibility

The role of our Access Officer is to support our customers who require assistance when engaging with the services provided by the Tax Appeals Commission. In accordance with Section 26 (2) of the Disability Act 2005, if you require assistance to access our services or wish to provide feedback on the accessibility of this website, please contact our Access Officer, Paddy O’Keeffe.

Access Officer contact details:

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Accessibility features of this website

Screen-reader and keyboard navigation

Our website implements the ARIA attributes (Accessible Rich Internet Applications) technique, alongside various behavioural changes, to ensure blind users visiting with screen-readers can read, comprehend, and enjoy the website's functions. As soon as a user with a screen-reader enters the website, they immediately receive a prompt to enter the Screen-Reader Profile so they can browse and operate the website effectively.

Here's how our website covers some of the most important screen-reader requirements:

1. **Screen-reader optimisation:** We run a process that learns the website's components from top to bottom, to ensure ongoing compliance even when updating the website. In this process, we provide screen-readers with meaningful data using the ARIA set of attributes. For example, we provide accurate form labels; descriptions for actionable icons (social media icons, search icons, cart icons, etc.); validation guidance for form inputs; element roles such as buttons, menus, modal dialogues (popups), and others.

Additionally, the background process scans all of the website's images. It provides an accurate and meaningful image-object-recognition-based description as an ALT (alternate text) tag for images that are not described. It will also extract texts embedded within the image using an OCR (optical character recognition) technology. To turn on screen-reader adjustments, users need only press the Alt+1 keyboard combination. Screen-reader users also get automatic announcements to turn the Screen-reader mode on as soon as they enter the website. These adjustments are compatible with popular readers such as JAWS, NVDA, VoiceOver, and TalkBack.

2. **Keyboard navigation optimisation:** The background process also adjusts the website's HTML and adds various behaviours using JavaScript code to make the website operable by the keyboard. This includes the ability to navigate the website using the Tab and Shift+Tab keys, operate dropdowns with the arrow keys, close them with Esc, trigger buttons and links using the Enter key, navigate between radio and checkbox elements using the arrow keys and fill them in with the Spacebar or Enter key.

Additionally, keyboard users will find content-skip menus available at any time by clicking Alt+2, or as the first element of the site while navigating with the keyboard. The background process also handles triggered popups by moving the keyboard focus towards them as soon as they appear, not allowing the focus to drift outside.

Users can also use shortcuts such as "M" (menus), "H" (headings), "F" (forms), "B" (buttons), and "G" (graphics) to jump to specific elements.

Disability profiles supported on our website

- **Epilepsy Safe Profile:** this profile enables people with epilepsy to safely use the website by eliminating the risk of seizures resulting from flashing or blinking animations and risky colour combinations.
- **Vision Impaired Profile:** this profile adjusts the website so that it is accessible to the majority of visual impairments such as Degrading Eyesight, Tunnel Vision, Cataract, Glaucoma, and others.
- **Cognitive Disability Profile:** this profile provides various assistive features to help users with cognitive disabilities such as Autism, Dyslexia, CVA, and others, to focus on the essential elements more easily.

- **ADHD Friendly Profile:** this profile significantly reduces distractions and noise to help people with ADHD, and Neurodevelopmental disorders browse, read, and focus on the essential elements more easily.
- **Blind Users Profile (Screen-readers):** this profile adjusts the website to be compatible with screen-readers such as JAWS, NVDA, VoiceOver, and TalkBack. A screen-reader is installed on the blind user's computer, and this site is compatible with it.
- **Keyboard Navigation Profile (Motor-Impaired):** this profile enables motor-impaired persons to operate the website using the keyboard Tab, Shift+Tab, and the Enter keys. Users can also use shortcuts such as "M" (menus), "H" (headings), "F" (forms), "B" (buttons), and "G" (graphics) to jump to specific elements.

Additional UI, design, and readability adjustments

1. **Font adjustments** – users can increase and decrease its size, change its family (type), adjust the spacing, alignment, line height, and more.
2. **Colour adjustments** – users can select various colour contrast profiles such as light, dark, inverted, and monochrome. Additionally, users can swap colour schemes of titles, texts, and backgrounds with over seven different colouring options.
3. **Animations** – epileptic users can stop all running animations with the click of a button. Animations controlled by the interface include videos, GIFs, and CSS flashing transitions.
4. **Content highlighting** – users can choose to emphasize essential elements such as links and titles. They can also choose to highlight focused or hovered elements only.

5. **Audio muting** – users with hearing devices may experience headaches or other issues due to automatic audio playing. This option lets users mute the entire website instantly.
6. **Cognitive disorders** – we utilise a search engine linked to Wikipedia and Wiktionary, allowing people with cognitive disorders to decipher meanings of phrases, initials, slang, and others.
7. **Additional functions** – we allow users to change cursor colour and size, use a printing mode, enable a virtual keyboard, and many other functions.

Assistive technology and browser compatibility

We aim to support as many browsers and assistive technologies as possible, so our users can choose the best fitting tools for them, with as few limitations as possible. Therefore, we have worked very hard to be able to support all major systems that comprise over 95% of the user market share, including Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, Apple Safari, Opera and Microsoft Edge, JAWS, and NVDA (screen readers), both for Windows and MAC users.

Notes, comments, and feedback

Despite our very best efforts to allow anybody to adjust the website to their needs, there may still be pages or sections that are not fully accessible, are in the process of becoming accessible, or are lacking an adequate technological solution to make them accessible. Still, we are continually improving our accessibility, adding, updating, improving its options and features, and developing and adopting new technologies. All this is meant to reach the optimal level of accessibility following technological advancements. Please email tacaccessofficer@taxappeals.ie if you wish to make any comments or provide feedback on accessibility.