

Preparing for the European Accessibility Act 2025

A Guide for UK eCommerce Businesses

Executive Summary

Digital accessibility ensures that websites, applications, and online services are usable by all individuals, including those with disabilities. The upcoming European Accessibility Act ([EAA](#)) that came into force in 2019 has a deadline of 28th June 2025 to make sure that any accessibility measures are in place, seeks to make this standard clearer and to ensure an open and accessible internet for all users.

Currently, many businesses adhere to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines ([WCAG](#)), which set global standards for accessible design, however, the level of compliance remains inconsistent, with many eCommerce sites still presenting barriers for users with visual, auditory, motor, or cognitive impairments.

As legal frameworks like the EAA introduce stricter requirements, businesses must make sure to take accessibility into account when designing their eCommerce platforms to ensure a consistent and usable experience across customers of all ability levels, even expanding their customer base, and of course, meeting regulatory obligations. This white paper will help to inform UK eCommerce businesses about the upcoming EAA, its implications, how to make sure you're compliant with the law and how to benefit from an increased focus on accessibility.

Understanding the European Accessibility Act (EAA) & the UK



The EAA is a law designed to improve accessibility across the EU by setting common standards for digital and physical products and services. It was adopted in 2019 and will be enforced starting June 28, 2025.

The goal of the EAA is to remove barriers that prevent people with disabilities from fully participating in society, particularly in areas like eCommerce, banking, telecommunications, and transportation.

For businesses, the EAA means that websites, mobile apps, self-service terminals and digital services must be accessible to all users, including those with visual, hearing, motor, or cognitive disabilities. It aligns with international accessibility standards such as the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) to ensure that online platforms are perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust.

While the UK is no longer part of the EU, UK businesses that sell to EU customers or operate within the EU must comply with the EAA. Non-compliance can lead to fines, legal action, and potential restrictions on trading within EU markets. By making their eCommerce websites accessible, businesses not only meet legal requirements but also improve user experience and reach a wider customer base.

The EAA applies to any business that sells goods or services in the EU that has at least 10 staff and an annual turnover of at least €2 million. If your business is above both of these criteria, then the EAA will apply to you.

What are the key accessibility requirements under the EAA for eCommerce?

The EAA introduces specific requirements for eCommerce businesses to ensure digital accessibility. Under the new rules, businesses must:



Provide accessibility information

Provide information about the products and services they sell, when available from the relevant manufacturer, about how accessible their product or service is (for example, whether a piece of technology has screen reader support or a wheelchair-friendly design).

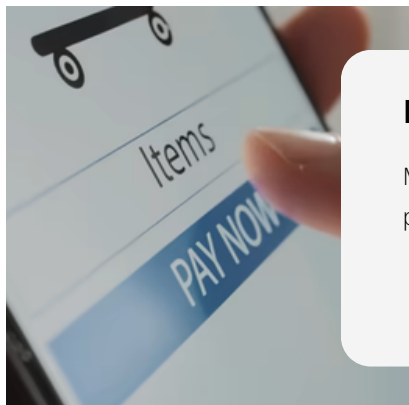
Ensure security processes are accessible

Ensure all login and security processes are accessible so that users with disabilities can easily sign in, verify their identity, and complete their task. This means making these processes easy to see, navigate, and interact with, no matter how someone accesses the website.



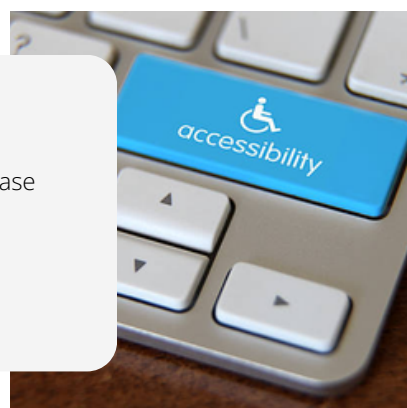
Ensure payment services are accessible

Make sure that customers using assistive technologies can use the payment services on offer and complete their checkout unhindered.



Comply with the WCAG 2.1 level AA

The EAA directly references the WCAG2.1 level AA compliance as its base level, making meeting these standards essential at every stage of the eCommerce experience.



What should I do next?

As with most things, the first step is to ensure that you evaluate your current website with regards to the standards and identify which areas need improving.

Conduct an accessibility audit

There are a wide range of tools that you can use to run an accessibility audit on your eCommerce website. Luckily our partner accessiBe maintains a comprehensive list of the best options to use which you can find here: <https://accessibe.com/blog/knowledgebase/top-web-accessibility-tools>

For a quick set of recommendations, here are the tools that we at Screen Pages like:



accessScan by accessiBe:

Tests your site against EAA requirements as well as WCAG2.1, US ADA Title III and other global accessibility and compliance standards and provides recommendations for how to resolve each failure.

<https://accessibe.com/accessscan>



PageSpeed Insights by Google:

Includes tests for accessibility in its suite of website performances tests with recommendations with how to resolve each one.

<https://pagespeed.web.dev/>



Accessibility Checker:

Provides a free basic accessibility checker that checks against the WCAG2.2 standard.

<https://www.accessibilitychecker.org/>



Adobe Color Contrast Analyser:

A free tool for Adobe users that allows you to test and try out colour combinations to ensure they meet the required contrast levels.

<https://color.adobe.com/create/color-contrast-analyzer>

Hint! It's recommended to run the checks with a couple of different tools across a few of your main pages, home, category, product, search, basket, etc, so that you're getting a more complete picture of what needs addressing across your whole site, and not just your home page.

Identify and make the changes required

Once you've conducted your tests, pull together a list of the issues that were flagged and group them by page template and then by whether the issues are in the content that you have access to, e.g. a missed alternative text on a home page banner image, vs. ones that you will need your web developers or agency to handle, e.g. the contrast ratio between button backgrounds and button text on your product page.

You might also find that there are some areas where your site falls below the accessibility standards that are already required, so these issues should be addressed as the highest priority as there is very likely to be increased focus on compliance as we get closer to the 28th June deadline.

Issues that you can work on yourselves through changes to the content you control can start to be fixed straight away. You'll need to make sure you add in checks for any future content you change to make sure that all the same requirements are being met and maintained so that your compliance doesn't slip in future.

Discuss the template changes that you need to investigate with your development team or agency and get them to input into what the best way to solve the issues are. They're probably more familiar with accessibility standards and how to be compliant that you would be as they'll probably be doing this with a lot of their other clients.

Hint! If you don't have a developer team or agency assisting you with your website, we would be happy to talk to you about helping with getting your eCommerce site compliant.

Add in accessibility checking to your testing process

Integrating accessibility checks into your testing process ensures that your eCommerce platform meets your legal requirements and provides a seamless experience for the widest possible set of users.

Regular audits of your test/staging site using tools like the ones listed above can help identify barriers before they impact customers.

Including people with disabilities in usability testing also provides valuable insights into real-world accessibility challenges. By making accessibility a standard part of your testing process, you can catch issues early, reduce compliance risks, and create a more inclusive shopping experience.

Hint! This will take some getting used to but it's also a great time to run performance tests against the test/staging site to understand how changes that are being made affect not only accessibility but also the core performance of the website.

Put in place a process to check your compliance regularly

Achieving compliance isn't a one-off task and you should be continuing to monitor your website for compliance issues regularly.

Put in place a process for checking your website on a monthly basis through the same tools you used for your initial checks. Make a note of anything that has slipped through on the content side or the site template side and make sure to feed that back into your content creation or website development processes.

Hint! Some of the accessibility testing tools can be scheduled to automatically check and report on compliance so that you don't have to remember to run the tests manually but you do have to remember to pay attention to the results.

Hint! For the more technically skilled, some of these tools can also be added into code deployment processes, so if your developers or agency are using automated deployment workflows, talk to them about adding in automatic tests each time a change is made to the website that automatically checks for and reports on accessibility.

Keep records of your tests, the outcomes and actions you took

Keeping detailed records of the tests you run, the tools that you use for each and the outcome of each test is a great way to show that you take accessibility seriously and this can help demonstrate your commitment to remaining compliant.

Other than the obvious legal requirement, are there any other benefits to making my eCommerce site accessible?

Yes, there are several other benefits to focusing on accessibility, outside of your legal responsibilities.

Enhanced user experience leads to higher conversions

Accessible websites provide a better experience for all users, potentially increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty. Accessible websites make sure that the path through a website is clearly identified, that forms and processes all work reliably and in a logical order and that the experience is consistent across the site. All these things apply just as much to customers who use assistive technologies as those who don't.



Think about making a physical store accessible by wheelchair users and how this would impact on customers who don't require one:

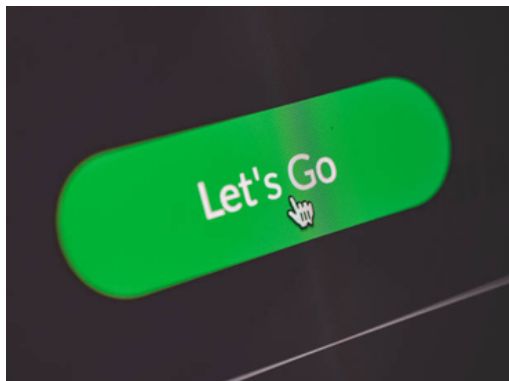
- Wider aisles provide a more pleasant shopping experience for everyone.
- Making it easier to get from one area of the store to another increases the likelihood that people will shop more and explore your whole product range.

Those same principles apply to making your website easier to use and understand.



For instance, a study highlighted by PayPal ⁽¹⁾ revealed that approximately 37% of consumers abandon eCommerce websites due to poor navigation or limited payment options. Ensuring your site is accessible can mitigate these issues, encouraging users to complete their purchases.

While the exact increase in conversion rates will vary depending on the specific changes implemented and the nature of your business, these examples demonstrate a clear trend: investing in web accessibility can lead to tangible improvements in user engagement and conversion metrics.



Reduction in bounce rates

Accessibility improvements can also lead to a decrease in bounce rates, the number of people who come to a website but leave on that first landing page. A case study involving Natural Intelligence ⁽²⁾ demonstrated that after implementing accessibility solutions, the company observed a 0.5% reduction in bounce rates. This indicates that users were more engaged and less likely to leave the site prematurely, which can contribute to higher conversion rates.

Market expansion

By accommodating users with disabilities, businesses can tap into a broader customer base. Around 20% of the population rely on assistive technology to access the web and this percentage holds true for most eCommerce users as well. Imagine if you could make shopping on your website easier for 20% of your customer base and the impact this would have on your revenue.



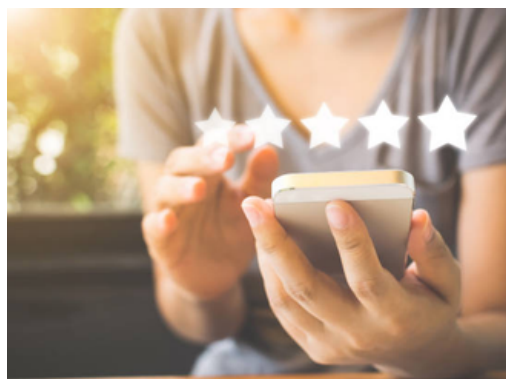


Enhanced organic SEO performance

Accessible websites have cleaner code and better structure, which has a direct impact on search engine optimisation. Better SEO performance leads to increased organic traffic, providing more opportunities for conversions. For example, a leading online retailer implemented WCAG standards across their website and experienced a 25% increase in organic search traffic within a year⁽²⁾.

Reputation management

Demonstrating a commitment to inclusivity can strengthen brand reputation and trust.



Conclusion: The business case for accessibility

With the European Accessibility Act (EAA) taking effect in June 2025, eCommerce businesses must take proactive steps to ensure their eCommerce websites meet the required accessibility standards. Compliance is not just about avoiding legal risks, it's about creating a better, more inclusive experience for all users.

Improving accessibility brings tangible business benefits. It expands your customer base by making your site usable for the millions of people with disabilities who may otherwise struggle to navigate it. It also enhances the user experience for all customers, leading to better engagement, lower bounce rates, and higher conversion rates. Research shows that accessible websites often outperform their non-accessible counterparts in terms of usability, search rankings, and customer satisfaction.

Investing in accessibility can also strengthen brand reputation and loyalty. Customers are increasingly choosing to support businesses that demonstrate inclusivity and social responsibility. By prioritizing accessibility, you're sending a clear message that your business values all customers equally. This not only builds trust but can also give you a competitive advantage in a crowded eCommerce landscape.

Moreover, the cost of not addressing accessibility can be significant. Non-compliance with accessibility regulations can result in legal action, financial penalties, and reputational damage. With accessibility lawsuits on the rise worldwide, ensuring compliance now can save your business from costly legal challenges down the road. The good news is that making your website accessible doesn't have to be overwhelming. Start by conducting an accessibility audit, implementing best practices like clear navigation and alternative text for images, and integrating accessibility testing into your development process. Regularly reviewing and updating your compliance ensures your site remains accessible as technology and regulations evolve.

With the June 2025 deadline approaching, now is the time to take action. Businesses that start early will have the advantage of a smooth transition, while those that wait may face last-minute compliance challenges. By embedding accessibility into your digital strategy today, you're future-proofing your business, ensuring compliance, and creating a better experience for all users.

Prioritising accessibility isn't just the right thing to do—it's a smart business decision that leads to increased customer engagement, improved conversions, and long-term success in an increasingly digital world.

What should I do if I need help?

Screen Pages can help you identify the areas of your site that need attention, put in place a plan to resolve them and get yourself compliant by the June 2025 deadline. [Get in contact with us](#) to discuss it in more detail.



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References

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3. <https://texta.ai/blog/seo/unlocking-the-web-mastering-wcag-compliance-for-all-users>