

Regulations on the accessibility of new public sector websites come into force

From today, public sector websites launched on or after 23 September 2018 must meet accessibility standards. This includes publishing accessibility statements, explaining how accessible their websites are.

The deadline for public sector organisations to make all existing websites accessible is 23 September 2020, and the compliance date for mobile applications is 23 June 2021.

Around a third of disabled people in the UK experience difficulties in accessing public, commercial and leisure goods and services. The aim of the legislation is to help make sure online public services are accessible to all users, including people with disabilities.

The Minister for Implementation, Simon Hart said:

Today is another positive step in our longstanding commitment to ensuring digital services are accessible for all users and to encourage improved equality of access to public information and services.

Although directly impacting the public sector, the regulations provide a necessary reminder for all organisations to consider the needs of all users when building online services.

This builds on the existing legal obligations of all UK service providers to make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 and Northern Ireland's Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Government Digital Service (GDS) will monitor public sector websites and apps on their accessibility from 2020.

You can find out more about accessibility, including our guidance at [GOV.UK/accessibility-regulations](https://gov.uk/accessibility-regulations)

£1.5m boost for space innovation

The announcement marks the next step in the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory's (Dstl) 'Space to Innovate' competition, which sought to find and

fund new technologies that could improve the UK's resilience, awareness and capability in space.

The competition, run on behalf of Dstl by the Defence and Security Accelerator, the MOD's innovation hub, received more than 60 bids from innovators around the world.

The successful entries cover the full spectrum of innovative ideas, from state-of-the-art imaging technology developed at the University of Strathclyde, to futuristic optical communication technology from mBryonics.

The announcement was made by Defence Minister Anne-Marie Trevelyan at the UK Space Conference, which brings together government, industry and academia to discuss the challenges and opportunities offered by space. She said:

It's vital we harness the ideas of the brightest and best innovators to improve the UK's resilience and awareness in space.

Faced with growing threats to UK interests, programmes like those selected today will boost our intelligence capability and help us stay ahead of our adversaries.

The successful bidders will share more than £1.5m of funding, provided jointly by Dstl and the UK Space Agency's (UKSA) National Space Technology Programme, to further develop the concepts.

Key challenges outlined in the competition include the development of technology to boost the surveillance capability of UK satellites and identify potentially hostile actors in space.

Gary Aitkenhead, Dstl's Chief Executive, said:

Our role at Dstl is to provide innovative solutions, underpinning science and technology to access the best space has to offer for defence and security, but also to protect our interests against growing threats.

I am delighted that the competition has unearthed a breadth of UK expertise from a good mix of industry, academia, and SMEs. And I welcome the UK Space Agency's investment which will ensure that the civilian market will also benefit.

Dr Graham Turnock, UK Space Agency Chief Executive said:

The UK Space Agency is leading cross-government efforts to grow a

strategic capability in space-based systems, technologies and applications.

The National Space Technology Programme provides vital, early-stage support to innovative technologies which have the potential to play a leading role in future space activities.

The initial stage of development will complete with a demonstration day in summer 2020, at which point further funding may be available.

The publication of the winning bids follows a string of recent announcements on the UK's military space programme.

At the RAF's Air & Space Power Conference, the MOD established a new transatlantic team of government and industry personnel, named Team ARTEMIS, to lead a small satellite launch programme and undertake research into the military uses of small satellites.

The MOD also announced the UK as the first formal partner in the US-led Operation Olympic Defender – a multinational military effort formed to strengthen deterrence against hostile actors in space, enhance resilience and preserve the safety of spaceflight.

At the DSEi conference earlier this month, the MOD awarded a contract worth almost £70 million to QinetiQ to develop enhanced satellite receivers and noted its intention to tender contracts to develop the £6 billion SKYNET 6 programme over the next few months.

The UK has a rapidly growing space sector estimated to have generated an income of £15.5 billion last year and employing almost 42,000 people.

The full list of the successful bids can be found by [clicking here](#).

[UK to help develop new tech to stop sharing of terrorist content](#)

The Home Office is providing funding and support for a new project that will help to stop violent videos being shared online after terrorist attacks.

The new funding, announced by the Prime Minister at the UN General Assembly in New York, will support efforts to develop industry-wide technology that can automatically identify online videos which have been altered to avoid existing detection methods, and help prevent them from being shared online.

The announcement follows the Christchurch attack in New Zealand in March, in which 51 people were killed and which saw hundreds of different versions of the attacker's live-streamed video spread across online platforms, with Facebook removing over 1.5 million uploads of the video from their platform.

Many had been intentionally edited to evade current content filters and, in some cases, it took days for them to be removed.

UK data-science experts, supported by the Home Office, will use the new funding to create an algorithm which any technology company in the world can use, free of charge, to improve the way that they detect violent and harmful videos and prevent them being shared by their users.

Not only will this make it much harder for terrorist content to be shared online but the outcomes of the research could eventually also be used to help spot other types of harmful content such as child sexual abuse.

Home Secretary Priti Patel MP today added:

The sharing of images of terrorist attacks has a devastating effect on the families and loved ones of victims and plays into terrorists' hands by amplifying their twisted messages.

The UK has a track record of showing that state of the art technology can be developed, in partnership with industry, at relatively low cost and this is just the latest example of our commitment to working with industry to tackle our shared challenges and respond to the ever evolving threats which we face.

The announcement further demonstrates the UK's role as a world leader in online safety as it continues to build on the shared commitments to work with industry in the fight against terrorism online which were made at the Home Secretary hosted Five Country Ministerial meeting in London earlier this year.

This announcement also honours the commitments made in the Christchurch Call to Action to tackle terrorist use of the internet, which world leaders signed up to at a summit in Paris in May.

[Ghana: H.M The Queen recognises Ghanaian volunteer with POL Award](#)

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has recognised Cordie Aziz, representing Ghana, as the 105th Commonwealth Point of Light Award recipient in honour of her exceptional voluntary service to the environment, training hundreds of

people to become recycling entrepreneurs.

As part of the legacy of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London 2018, Her Majesty The Queen – as Head of the Commonwealth – is thanking inspirational volunteers across the 53 Commonwealth nations for the difference they are making in their communities and beyond, by recognising one volunteer from each Commonwealth country each week in the two years following the Summit.

By sharing these stories of service, the Commonwealth Points of Light awards celebrate inspirational acts of volunteering across the Commonwealth and help inspire others to make their own contribution to tackling some of the greatest social challenges of our time.

The award ceremony was hosted by the British High Commissioner; Ian Walker at the British High Commission, Accra on Tuesday, 17th September, 2019. The Mayor of Accra; Hon Mohammed Adjei Sowah and the Deputy Minister for Sanitation and Water Resources, Hon. Patrick Yaw Boamah (MP) attended the occasion to show their support of the tremendous contribution of Ms. Aziz towards waste management and recycling.

Ahead of the award ceremony Cordie Aziz said: “I am absolutely humbled and honoured to be the third recipient of the Points of Light Award in Ghana. It is such a great privilege to be recognised for doing something that I absolutely love. Through my work with informal waste sector workers, I seek to not only reduce the poverty gap among a vulnerable population, but also create waste collection systems that stop plastic waste from devastating our communities and waterways. I think that by empowering the vulnerable, we can create a ripple effect that will undoubtedly change the way the world works. Through my work, I envision creating greater social equity, inclusion and a cleaner Ghana that we all can enjoy. I thank everyone at the British High Commission in Ghana for championing these causes and recognising the importance of this work.”

British High Commissioner to Ghana H.E. Iain Walker said: “I am delighted to present the Commonwealth Point of Light award to Cordie Aziz of Environment 360 on behalf of HM The Queen. Cordie is bringing together communities and businesses to change the culture around recycling. Together with her dedicated team at Environment360, Cordie has become a key partner to the British High Commission at our flagship events, helping us to reduce and recycle our waste. Her work has already led to the collection of 600 metric tonnes of waste paper. Cordie’s innovative workshops in schools has resulted in 15,000 children setting up their own recycling programmes. The future looks green.”

Presenting the award on behalf of the Her Majesty The Queen, the British High Commissioner H.E Iain Walker said the UK Government is now diverting much more of its money into environmental protection, waste management and recycling and recognised that it is a global effort, not just an issue for governments, communities and individuals can also make a difference. The Deputy Minister for Sanitation and Water Resources, Hon. Patrick Yaw Boamah (MP) said: “I want to encourage the youth of this country to emulate the

shining example of Ms. Cordie Aziz so that not only would they find solutions to the myriad of challenges in the country but also they would be creating employment for themselves and others”.

The Mayor of Accra; Hon Mohammed Adjei Sowah said: “Waste disposal has been a challenge in Accra. We need to be conscious of how we generate and dispose of waste to reduce its impact on the climate. It is not only the responsibility of the city management but all of us. We are thankful for what Ms. Cordie has done and we will continue to support her.” -END

UK creates global alliance to help protect the world's ocean

The UK has today announced a new global alliance to help drive urgent action to safeguard the world's ocean and protect its precious wildlife.

Plastic pollution, warming sea temperatures and human impacts are having a significant impact on the world's marine environments and even putting certain species at risk of extinction.

The UK is leading the way on this issue, [having been the first country to call for a global 30 per cent target at the United Nations General Assembly last year](#). The UK has also taken action, protecting more than 50 per cent of UK and Overseas Territories waters by 2020, and tackling the scourge of plastic that often ends up there, by introducing the 5p plastic bag charge and banning the supply of plastic straws, stirrers and cotton buds from next April.

So far, Belize, Costa Rica, Finland, Gabon, Kenya, Seychelles, Vanuatu, Portugal, Palau and Belgium have all signed up to the 30by30 initiative, which is pushing for at least 30 per cent of the global ocean to be protected in Marine Protected Areas by 2030. These protections help sensitive species such as seahorses, turtles and corals to thrive, and can help fight climate change by protecting key carbon habitats such as mangrove forests and seagrass meadows.

The Global Ocean Alliance will push for the trebling of existing globally-agreed targets so at least a third of the ocean is safeguarded in Marine Protected Areas over the next decade. It will also call for the 30by30 ambition to be adopted at the next Convention on Biological Diversity conference in China and introduced into international law through the High Seas Treaty in 2020.

Last month [the Prime Minister announced plans to go even further with £7 million to extend the 'Blue Belt'](#) – over four million square kilometres of marine environment – across the UK Overseas Territories. The international

coalition announced today will help to drive even greater international action to tackle these issues and safeguard the world's ocean for future generations.

Environment Secretary, Theresa Villiers said:

The UK is taking a world-leading approach to marine conservation and is on track to safeguard nearly 50 per cent of our precious marine habitats. But we are determined to go further.

The world's ocean is a shared resource, sustaining lives and livelihoods and supporting 80 per cent of our blue planet's biodiversity. Only by working together can we protect and restore our marine environment for future generations to come.

International Environment Minister Zac Goldsmith, in New York to attend UNGA, said:

We have all seen the damage that both climate change and human exploitation has had on our most pristine environments. Our ocean is under unprecedented pressure, with appalling effects on marine biodiversity and human livelihoods.

I am delighted to be in New York to press the case for an ambitious global network of marine protected areas which will be critically important in reversing the loss of biodiversity and mitigating the impacts of climate change.

Less than 10 per cent of the world's ocean is currently designated as Marine Protected Areas. But science shows such areas are one of the most important ways to protect precious sea life and habitats from damaging activities – and evidence supports a target of at least 30 per cent to reverse existing adverse impacts, preserve fish populations, increase resilience to climate change, and sustain long-term ocean health.

The international coalition announced today builds on the UK's world-leading efforts to increase Blue Belt protections. [The UK government designated 41 new Marine Conservation Zones in May](#), marking the most significant expansion of England's 'Blue Belt' to date. The UK now has a total of 355 marine protected areas in waters around Great Britain and Northern Ireland and an independent review is considering whether stronger protections should be introduced.

It also follows recently announced UK-backed plans for more than 150,000 square miles of a 'no take' zone around Ascension Island, closing the off-shore area to any fishing activity. This will support the protection of key

species such as green turtles.

The government's commitment to marine protection forms a key part of the [25 Year Environment Plan](#). As part of this plan, the government has also introduced [one of the world's strongest bans on microbeads](#) to protect our ocean, in addition to the plastic bag charge and [ban on straws, stirrers and cotton buds](#).