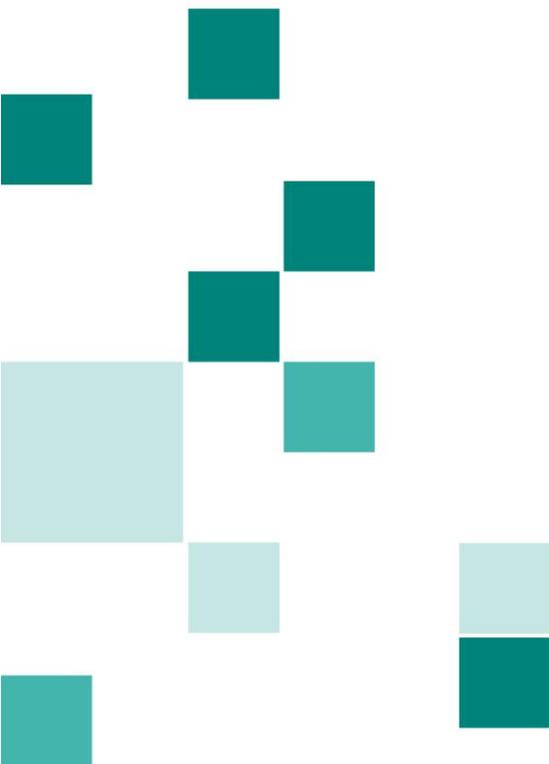


Accessibility guidelines for staff

March 2021



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Introduction

This guide explains the accessibility guidelines for all staff when creating publications (in Word and Excel), website content, intranet content and video content. As a member of staff at the SSSC we are all individually responsible for making sure our material is accessible and here is why.

Accessibility - what it is and why we need to do it.

The legal bit

We have a legal obligation under the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 which came into force for public sector bodies on 23 September 2018. We must make our websites or mobile apps more accessible by making them 'perceivable, operable, understandable and robust'.

This covers intranets, websites and mobile apps which could be used by the public or by public sector employees. As most of our publications go on our website and intranet as PDFs this also applies to them.

You can read more about the requirement on this UK Government webpage:

[Understanding accessibility requirements for public sector bodies](#)

Accessibility is not about disability it's about ability.

Everyone has different abilities and the main point is to make things easier for everyone so that we are all included.

All of us need to ask ourselves:

'Will everyone I am trying to reach understand what I am trying to get across to them?'

It's not about thinking one group is cleverer or more able than another but about taking into consideration people's visual, audible and physical abilities as well. Someone could have the knowledge and skills but be unable to see so would not be able to get information from a complex graphic without you providing an explanation or description of some sort in what is known as 'alternative text'.

What is alternative text?

Alternative text (alt text) is descriptive text which gives the meaning and context of a visual item in a document, on a website or app or in a presentation. Screen readers read aloud the alt text about the visual item allowing people to better understand what is shown on the screen. Well-written, descriptive alt text reduces ambiguity and improves the user experience. It is important to use alt text appropriately and there is more information and guidance in this document. Also read this article from Microsoft on [how to write effective alternative text](#), when and how to use it.

We share so much of our work digitally now. It is important we make sure we structure what we write and design and produce it correctly so that it works for all of us.



We need to think about the technology and other things that people with disabilities use to access, read and use digital products:

- visibility – screen readers, high contrast, magnifiers
- audibility – narration through captions and subtitles, video and audio
- mobility – physical mobility through navigation, electronic mobility through multiple devices.



Link to accessibility training in Microsoft 365

All apps in Microsoft 365 have an accessibility checker built in. There are guidelines and tips for Word and Excel in this document for quick reference. You can also:

- learn how to use the checker by following this link to Microsoft training materials

[Improve accessibility with the accessibility checker](#)

- watch these videos to learn how to make your MS Office documents accessible

[Microsoft accessibility training video](#)

[Microsoft Word accessibility training videos](#)

[Microsoft Excel accessibility training videos](#)

[Microsoft PowerPoint accessibility training videos](#)

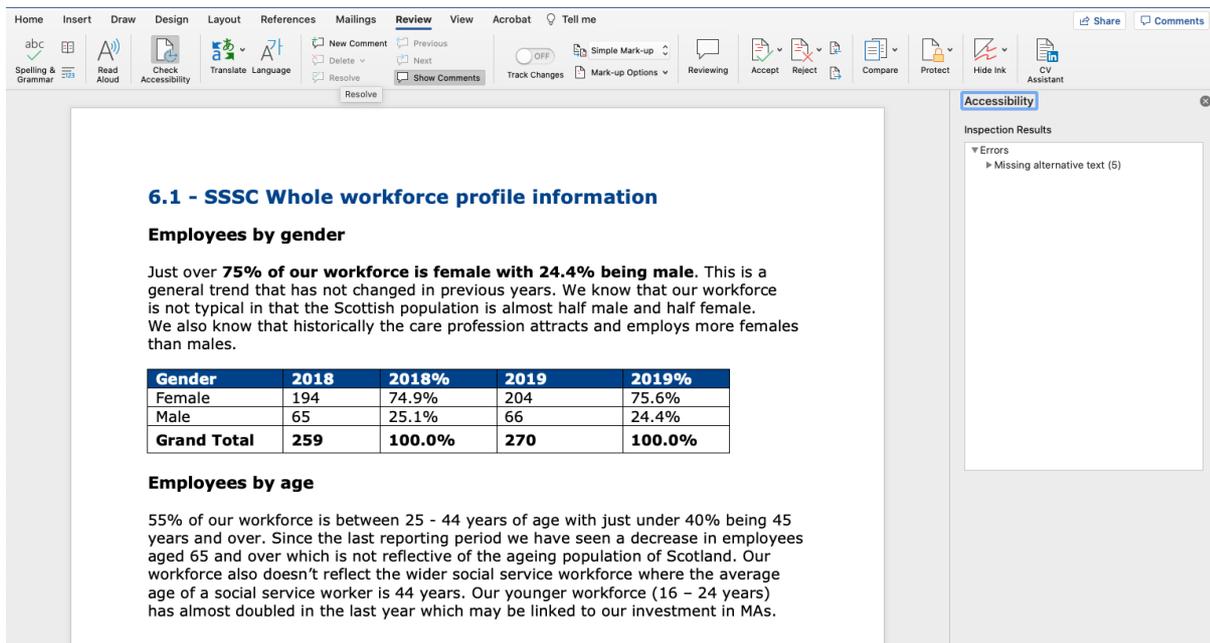


Guidelines for Word

Open the Word [‘Accessibility checker’](#)

The easiest way to keep track of a document’s accessibility in Word is to have the ‘accessibility’ pane open. The checker will alert you of any accessibility issues and how to fix them. You will find the checker in the ‘Review’ section at the top of the window

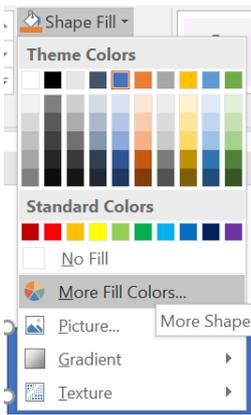
and then click on the ‘Check Accessibility’ button , the ‘accessibility’ pane will appear in the right-hand side of Word (see screen grab below). Any accessibility issues will appear within the ‘Inspection Results’ box and you can then click through these and see how to fix the issues.



Colours

Make sure you are only using our brand colours when creating a document. You can add the brand colours to Word and the other Microsoft apps by going into fill colours for either shapes or text, then select ‘More fill colours’ (see screen grab below) where you can input either the RGB (Red, Green, Blue) colour values or the ‘Hex code’ (code with # at start).





Master colour

You can use the 'Dark Blue' colour for larger text such as large title text, sub heading text, introduction paragraphs for header rows on tables.

- Dark Blue: R0, G66, B137 / #004289

Supporting colours

Only use these colours for supporting elements such as graphs, accents and decorative purposes.

- Teal: R0, G144, B142 / #00908e
- Orange: R237, G109, B63 / #ed6d3f
- Lime: R160, G192, B27 / #a0c01b
- Pink: R233, G73, B124 / #e9497c
- Purple 1: R164, G64, B113 / #a44071
- Purple 2: R119, G64, B136 / #774088
- Light Blue: R0, G124, B189/ #007CBD

Using colour

Titles and header text

For larger headers and titles, use the 'Dark Blue' from the master colour palette above or alternatively a dark grey or black.

Body text and smaller text

For all body text or smaller text (ie footnotes, endnotes, captions) only use black or dark grey.

Colour contrast

When using any of the above colours make sure there's enough contrast for readability. If the contrast is not good enough, the 'accessibility' pane on Word, Excel etc will alert you to any issues and how to fix them.



Watch this space

Our colour palette will be reviewed in 2021 to allow it to evolve with the new accessibility criteria in mind. If you have any queries regarding use of colours in your work, please contact Communications for more advice.

Charts and graphs

Before creating a graph consider whether you could lay out the data in a simple table format which is more accessible and explained in the body text.

Steps to creating more accessible graphs:

1. Create a simple table with the graph data alongside or underneath the graph, it is helpful to list the numbers from smallest to largest.
2. Prepare alt text for the graph that explains the key highlights, trends or comparisons. Don't describe the visual attributes of the charts, eg orange wedge, lime wedge etc.
3. Good level of colour contrast to allow the user to differentiate between the data. Don't make all the bars or segments the same colour.
4. Directly label data in the graph where possible to allow users to see data at a glance, avoiding complex legends.
5. Separate segments or bars from each other with a white line to differentiate between the data.
6. Avoid inserting graphs as images (ie JPEG, PNG). If you have no other option, ensure you have included alt text to clearly describe the graph in the image.



Doughnut graph example:

Figure 1, Employees by age in 2018 and 2019

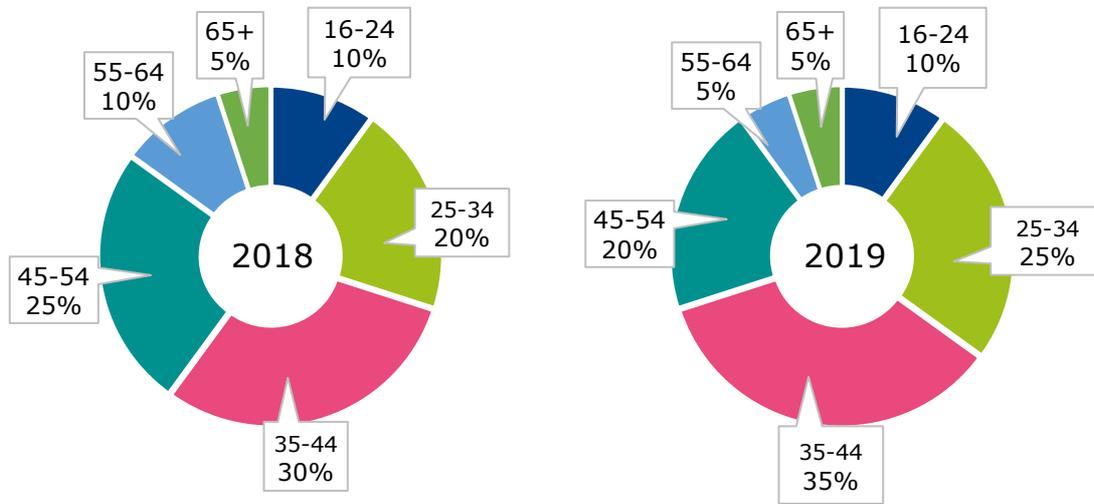


Figure 1 is a doughnut graph showing percentage of age groups working for the SSSC in 2018 and 2019. The following table summarises the data.

Age group	2018	2019
16-24	10%	10%
25-34	20%	25%
35-44	30%	35%
45-54	25%	20%
55-64	10%	5%
65+	5%	5%

Bar chart example:

Figure 2, Gender breakdown by pay grade 2019

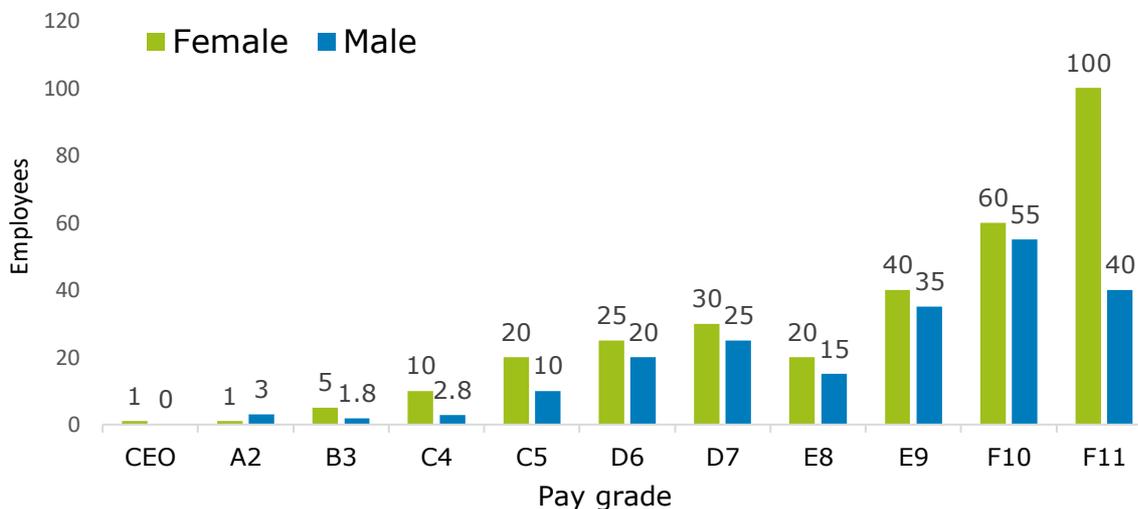


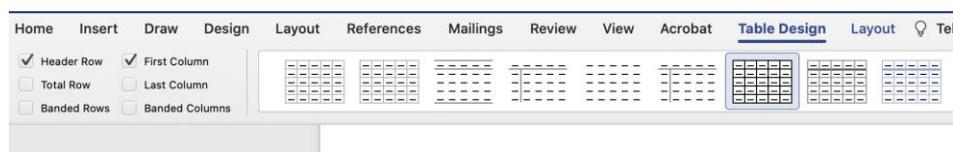
Figure 2 is a bar chart showing gender breakdown by pay grade in 2019.

The following table summarises the data.

Pay grade	Female	Male
CEO	1	0
A2	1	3
B3	5	1.8
C4	10	2.8
C5	20	10
D6	25	20
D7	30	25
E8	20	15
E9	40	35
F10	60	55
F11	100	40

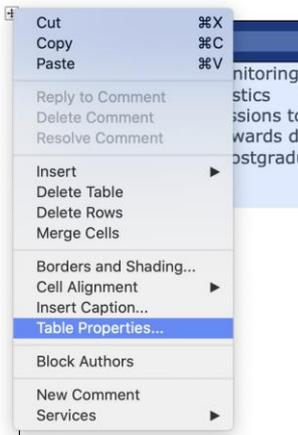
Table style tips and advice

- Keep tables simple and avoid merged cells where possible. Use a dark blue to signify the table header row for good contrast, see example below. Avoid using too many background tints or colours within a table as this may create contrast issues.
- When creating a table ensure that the table header row is set as a 'header row' and the 'first column'. To do this create the table and then select the full table by clicking the 'four arrows' icon in the corner: . Then make sure that the 'Header Row' and 'First Column' boxes are ticked. This will allow a screen reader to understand the difference between the different row and column types.



- Add alt text to summarise the purpose of each column in the table, to do this select the table and right click > select 'Table properties'





Add a 'title' and 'description' of the table in the panel below and click 'ok'.



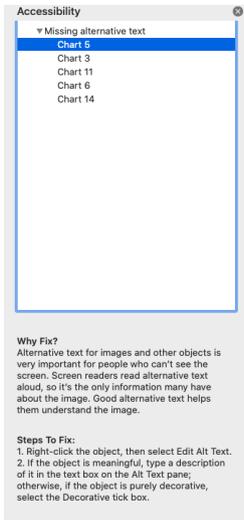
Table example:

Action	Progress
<p>1. We will continue monitoring the protected characteristics information of admissions to the childhood practice awards degree in social work and postgraduate courses</p>	<p>We continue to collect this data through annual monitoring forms received from our 42 approved courses across Scotland. However, as this requirement is not mandatory, we have many gaps in the data collected so are unable to accurately report figures.</p> <p>To improve the quality of these annual returns the EWG will work closely with SSSC colleagues and higher education institutions (HEIs)/colleges to raise awareness of the importance of this data explaining why we collate it and how we use it – namely to enhance the service we provide to the social service workforce. We will plan awareness raising events across Scotland in collaboration with key stakeholders.</p>
<p>2. We will continue to provide a disability allowance for disabled students on the full time MSc social work course</p>	<p>We have been given powers to pay of postgraduate bursaries from Scottish Ministers for nominated and eligible students studying the full time MSc social work at selected universities across Scotland. Eligible students can also apply for a disabled student’s allowance (DSA). They can claim for: equipment (for example laptop, software) non-medical helper support (for example proofreading) general allowance (for example printing/photocopying).</p> <p>Funding is reviewed annually and at this time no changes are expected to the provision of DSA to eligible students receiving a bursary for the full time MSc social work course.</p>



How to add alt text

The 'Accessibility' pane will tell you exactly how and where to add alt text within 'Steps to Fix' at the bottom of the pane. See screen grab below.



Exporting as an accessible PDF

- Before generating your PDF, run the [Accessibility Checker](#) to make sure your document is easy for people of all abilities to access and edit.
- Click File > Save As and choose where you want to save the file.
- In the Save As dialogue box, choose PDF in the Save as type list.
- Click Options, make sure the 'Document structure tags for accessibility' check box is selected, and then click OK.

Guidelines for Excel

In the same way when using Word, the easiest way to keep track of a spreadsheet's accessibility is to have the 'accessibility' pane open. The checker will alert you of any accessibility issues and how to fix them.

You will find the checker in the 'Review' section at the top of the window and then

click on the 'Check Accessibility' button , the 'accessibility' pane will appear in the right-hand side of word (see screen grab below). Any accessibility issues will appear within the 'Inspection Results' box and you can then click through these and see how to fix the issues.

Heading styles

Applying heading styles in Excel helps screen readers to read in the correct order.

- Select the cell
- Select cell styles
- Go to Titles and Headings
- Select Heading 1
- Highlight all the text and press 'merge & center'
- Then 'left align'

Tables in Excel

To make a table navigable by a screen reader.

- Select all the data in the spreadsheet that will be in the table.
- Click on Format as a Table.
- Choose a style.
- Click on the box 'My table has headers' and click OK
- Make sure the Header Row and First column check boxes are ticked.

Guideline for website pages, intranet pages and video

Website content

When you provide content for a website it is your responsibility to write your alt text for any images, illustrations, tables or diagrams etc that you intend to include on the page.

For video content you will need to edit the subtitles or closed captions which are auto generated. See details below.

Alt text

Alternative (Alt) text provides a textual alternative to non-text content in web pages.

You can read more in [a guide to writing good alt text](#).

Alt text serves several functions:

- screen readers read it in place of images allowing the content of the image to be accessible to those with visual disabilities
- it is displayed in place of the image in browsers if the image file is not loaded or when the user has chosen not to view images.

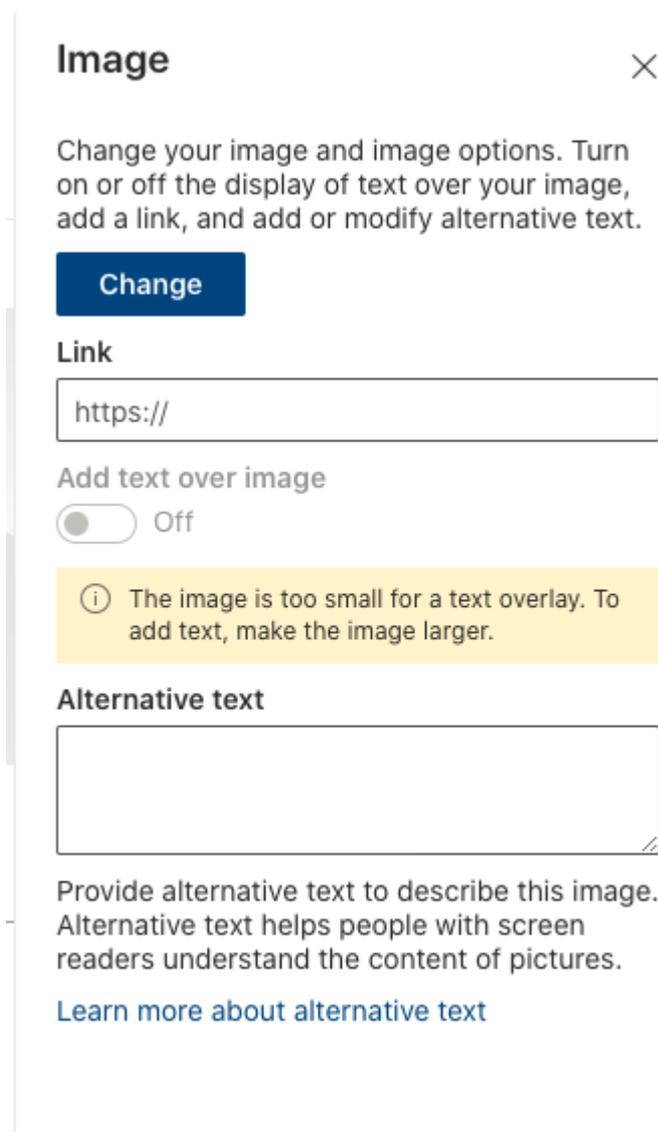
Every image must have an alt attribute. This is a requirement of the Accessibility guidelines. Images without an alt attribute are likely inaccessible. In some cases, where an image is purely decorative, images should be given an empty alt attribute value eg alt="".

Intranet page images

Our intranet is built on the SharePoint framework. When adding an image to an intranet page you must add alt text to the image, even if you are satisfied the image is purely decorative. This is because SharePoint does not generate an empty alt text tag (alt="").

To enter the alt text, simply type it into the alternative text field in the image properties area. See screenshot below.





Website page images

Our website is built using the D365 framework. Alt tags have to be added manually to the HTML and should be included at the time of adding an image to the page.

Tables

Any table added to a page on the website must be accessible. Like images, tables have to be added manually to our website pages and should be marked correctly.

[Watch the tutorial to learn how to do this.](#)

We have no control over the mark-up for tables added to our intranet, as they are added using the Insert Table function in the text editor.

Videos

All our audio and video media must be accessible.

The W3C (World Wide Web Consortium) has produced a guide to video and audio accessibility:

[The W3C \(World Wide Web Consortium\) training video](#)

We host all our intranet videos using Microsoft Stream. Stream has an automatic transcript function that will generate subtitles for the video. Due to the automatic nature of the subtitles, you will probably need to edit them to make sense.

Similarly, videos uploaded to YouTube for adding to our website will need their automatically generated subtitles edited.

[Guides for editing Stream transcripts](#)
[Guides for editing YouTube subtitles](#)

Hyperlinks

Adding a hyperlink to a document is something we all do and a useful tool to add further information that you don't want to include in your document for example guidance notes or additional reading and other resources. We need to make sure that the text in the hyperlink describes where people will go if they click the link. You should not just add the link as the website address or use vague link text like **click here** or **download now**.

For example, if you are including a link to our brand guide you should include a link like:

[SSSC brand guide](#).

Bad examples include:

<https://ssscdundee.sharepoint.com/sites/Intranet/Policies%20and%20procedures/Strategy%20and%20Performance/SSSC%20Brand%20Guide.pdf>

or click [here](#) for the SSSC Brand Guide.

Further help

For further help please email the [Communications Team](#) and we will do our best to help.





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If you would like this document in a different format, for example, in larger print or audio-format, or in another language please contact the SSSC on 0345 60 30 891.

We promote equality by removing unlawful and unfair treatment on the grounds of any protected characteristic wherever possible.

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