Department for Business Innovation & Skills

BIS'S NEW INTRANET

Equality Impact Assessment

JANUARY 2015

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Equality impact assessment for new intranet at the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

Background to the project

As part of BIS's move to a new IT system from 1 May 2014 (the Evolve system), the Department is now operating a new intranet.

Technical Information

The former intranet was built in Microsoft's SharePoint product and the new site is in WordPress, an open-source product.

The templates for the WordPress intranet meet WAI AA accessibility standards.

Risks of the change

The former intranet comprised web pages with: text in a sans serif font (9 point Tahoma); images with 'alt' text descriptions readable by screen-readers; and links to downloadable documents held in a documents management system (SharePoint), in Word, PowerPoint, Excel and PDF formats.

The new intranet comprises web pages with: text in a sans serif font (12 point Helvetica); images with 'alt' text descriptions readable by screen-readers; and links to downloadable documents held in a documents management system (Alfresco – to come online later in 2015), in Word, PowerPoint, Excel and PDF formats.

Alt text descriptions on the SharePoint site were visible to all users as well as those using screen-readers whereas the WordPress site text is only visible to screen-reader users. Where an image in WordPress requires a description for all users to see (as opposed to just screen-reader users), this will be included in the text on the page.

The Internal Communications team meets regularly to discuss intranet content, including the quality and suitability of the images featured on the site. A key concern is to ensure that images and other content reflect the diversity of BIS staff, and this is reviewed during these meetings.

All documents hosted on the site are uploaded by the Internal Communications team, and are checked to ensure that they meet accessibility standards. Where possible, 12 point Arial font is used and text is left aligned. If there are concerns about accessibility, and the document cannot easily be modified to rectify these concerns, the contact details of the document owner are supplied so that users can contact the owner if they have any problems in using the document.

Decision

The only changes occasioned by the new intranet (aside from visibility of alt text described above) will be a larger font size and change of repository for documents.

As the larger font enhances accessibility and the change in documents repository leaves the user's experience of opening a document unchanged, the decision is the new intranet does not negatively impact on staff with a protected characteristic under the equality duty.

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Contacts us if you have any enquiries about this publication, including requests for alternative formats, at:

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
1 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0ET
Tel: 020 7215 5000
Email: enquiries@bis.gsi.gov.uk

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