



## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Department	Communications
Project	Website Development

### Introduction

This is a project to develop a new website to improve user experience, engagement and content management using Craft Content Management System (CMS). The Royal Academy of Music's new website will enhance user experience, accessibility, and visibility across recruitment, research, ticketing, philanthropy and alumni pages. It supports goals to champion artistic and educational excellence, widen access, foster student performance, improve alumni and donor engagement, strengthen research, and build a diverse, outward-looking global community. This website development will include a full accessibility audit to identify issues and devise an action log in order to meet highest possible accessibility standards.

**Potential for adverse impact on equality in relation to the following protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010:**

- Age
- Disability
- Gender re-assignment
- Marriage or civil partnerships
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

No, the website development is compliant with, and upholds the principles of, the Equality Act 2010 and will not have an adverse impact on equality.

## Opportunities to make a positive impact on equality

Yes, the website development will improve accessibility through responsive design, screen reader capability and inclusivity of content including imagery and language.

One of the key objectives of the project is to improve on the accessibility rating of the Academy's existing website, which (as of March 2025) has only partial compliance with WCAG 2.2 AA. The website development will ensure WCAG 2.2 AA full compliance, including partial compliance with AAA, by 31 July 2027. A key stage to allow for full AAA compliance is the need to provide a governance framework for the inclusion of new content, including text and images. To achieve this, key staff who develop web content at the Academy will be provided with accessibility related guidelines and training.

The website specification includes the following detail on the user experience and accessibility:

- Redesign navigation and information architecture for clearer content discovery.
- Implement accessibility best practices (WCAG 2.2 full AA compliance and partial AAA compliance).
- Ensure seamless experience for a diverse audience, including international students, older concert attendees and donors.
- Content will to be built to a reading level of Key Stage 1, if this proves possible within a multifunctional website as required by the Academy.

The project brief highlighted the potential risk of the need to ensure user-focused design. This will be mitigated by prioritising user research and testing to ensure the website meets user needs. A key element of this will be the accessibility testing and review, which will be undertaken by a third party company 'Accessibility by Design' <https://accessiblebydesign.co.uk/> who will produce a log of compliance issues which can be fed to the contracted website developers. This will continue beyond the September 2026 website launch to set windows to address bugs and provide fixes.

The Academy's existing website includes an accessibility statement as required by the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018 and supporting guidance from GOV.UK <https://www.ram.ac.uk/accessibility-statement> This includes a feedback facility where users can report any issues or concerns regarding accessibility of the website. A very similar statement will be included on the new website, with text being reviewed, and possibly revised, following the conclusion of the Accessibility by Design review.

## Consultation

- Undertook internal consultation with senior Communications and Marketing staff, the Academy Principal, and a governing body member to assess strengths and weaknesses of the current website.
- Conducted interviews with 12 internal stakeholders, including heads of professional services departments to identify system limitations and priorities.
- Collected 1,726 user responses via a one month survey on the current website (March 2025) to inform structure and navigation of the new site.
- Explored best practice in accessibility, engagement, and CMS via research of potential vendors; with the software developer awarded the contract being specialists in accessibility of both technical and content build.
- Assessed potential vendors for expertise in education, arts, and non-profit site web development.
- Undertook sector-wide research via the Bloomberg Digital Accelerator Programme award which allowed for the Academy's Website and Multimedia Manager to liaise with other recipients of the award across the US/UK to record and share good practice, receive audience insights etc. The Website and Multimedia Manager was also assigned a supervisor as part of the award to act as a point of liaison and to steer aspects of the project including accessibility.
- Created a Student Insight Group, consisting of 9 students, meeting once a term to review relevant aspects of the project e.g. design of the homepage etc.
- Undertook consultation, and testing, with key Academy departments ahead of website launch (ongoing).
- Co-ordination of student and staff focus groups, post launch of new website, to include feedback on issues of accessibility.

## Actions

Item	Action	Who	Timescale	Progress
1	Liaise with web developers on the design process including branding, functionality and accessibility prior to creating a migration plan	Web Management Team	September 2025 - March 2026	ongoing
2	Consult with key individual departments on website build and testing	Web Management Team	September 2025 - May 2026	Ongoing
3	Produce guidelines for core Academy web content developers	Web Management Team	May 2026	Completed
4	Provide training for core Academy web content developers	Web Management Team	May/June 2026	Completed
5	Provide online feedback facility to identify any user accessibility issues	Web Management Team	June 2026	Completed
6	Roll out guidelines to all Academy web content developers	Web Management Team	July 2026	
7	Co-ordinate a staff user focus group	Web Management Team	October 2026	
8	Co-ordinate a student user focus group	Web Management Team	October 2026	
9	Accessibility testing and review by Accessible By Design	Web Management Team	July - September 2026	
10	Action log of accessibility compliance issues to be addressed by web developers	Web Management Team	July and ongoing	

Date of Belonging Committee approval: 16 June 2026.