Accessibility-related

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

from Kooth customers and Growth team

Context

This document consists of a list of questions asked by our customers or members of the Growth team. The purpose of the document is to:

- Help Kooth Growth team familiarise themselves with questions already asked by our customers
- Help Kooth Growth team to search for an answer for a question about Accessibility
- Build on questions asked by customers that are not in the existing list below

We love feedback! If you receive feedback from our customers after answering their Accessibility questions or you have thoughts on improving the process, please do reach out to us. We'd love to hear from you.

How to add new questions?

On some occasions, members of the Growth team (Area Managers, RSMs, KELs) might have a question about Accessibility that is not in the list of questions below. We want to build on these questions to help us be more prepared when they come up again.

Guidance on adding a new question:

- Think of the question you want to ask and try to write it in 1 short sentence. If you think your question is too long maybe break it down to two separate questions.
- Write your question in the bottom of the 'List of questions' section below.
- Highlight the question and tag Kooth Product Managers (currently Virena, Lucie and Charlie) to make them aware.
- One of us, Product Managers (currently Virena, Lucie and Charlie) will add an answer to the question after a consultation with the Product team to ensure that the response is suitable and client-facing.

List of questions

1. "An online offer may negatively impact CYP with certain disabilities i.e. vision impairment" – is there anything that you have in terms of Accessibility Standards to mitigate this?

    /

    Is the website / counselling service accessible for CYP who might have long term sight impairments or live with a learning disability that may mean they need to use specialist software when visiting the site (e.g. screen reading software)?

2. Is there anything in place for those who do not speak English as a first language?

3. Is the service accessible for CYP who use British Sign Language?

4. Is Kooth available in languages other than English? Or does Kooth have a translation tool?

5. How can visually impaired users make use of Messaging and Chat?

6. Is it possible to edit the website settings (e.g. change the colour, increase font settings etc)?

7. Please detail the minimum hardware specifications that are required to access the digital solution.

8. What is the language used on the site and how does it impact users who's first language is not English?

9. What assistive features that read text out loud for you do we have?

10. What is the digital literacy that we follow when developing the platform?

11. What specific features/ considerations are in place for YPs with Dyslexia who may struggle to read the stories in the magazine articles?

Answers to the questions

Question 1: I have mentioned that "An online offer may negatively impact CYP with certain disabilities i.e. vision impairment" – is there anything that you have in terms of Accessibility Standards to mitigate this?

Or, similar question: Is the website / counselling service accessible for CYP who might have long term sight impairments or live with a learning disability that may mean they need to use specialist software when visiting the site (e.g. screen reading software)?

We're committed to meeting the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) level AA with every new page and feature that we build.

It's not yet the case that the whole of Kooth meets that standard. But we have been working hard at it and making very fast progress.

Everything we've designed or built in the past six months already meets that standard. And this will be the case moving forward.

The WCAG's success criteria ensure that:

- The service's user interface is accessible to screen reader users. (Screen readers are mostly used by people who are blind or have low vision).
- Every page can be zoomed up to 400% without losing access to any content.
- Text or visual elements have very good colour contrast.
- Information is never indicated with colour alone (as this would be an issue for people with colour deficiencies).
- People who can't use a mouse can do everything using just the keyboard, or other assistive input devices.
- … and much more with regards to other types of impairments.

Our 'product and technology' team have made big investment to ensure that this happens:

1. We've hired an IAAP-certified Web Accessibility Specialist as our Principal Front-end Engineer.
2. All our designers and developers have been using the WCAG, in extensive training and as part of our day-to-day processes.
3. We've developed a library or re-usable user-interface components that are fully accessible.
4. Meeting the WCAG level AA is now necessary as part of our Quality Assurance process.

Question 2: Is there anything in place for those who do not speak English as a first language?

Kooth' user interface and content are written for a low reading age. This also helps those who do not speak English as their first language.

We're following the WCAG guideline below about reading level. But we're going beyond that: we also make sure that the language we use is easy to understand for children towards the end of primary education.

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

Success Criterion 3.1.5 Reading Level (Level AAA)

When text requires reading ability more advanced than the lower secondary education level after removal of proper names and titles, supplemental content, or a version that does not require reading ability more advanced than the lower secondary education level, is available.

Question 3: Is the service accessible for CYP who use British Sign Language?

Kooth's content and services are currently not available in British Sign Language.

However, we're committed to meeting the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) level AA with every new page and feature that we build.

This includes accommodations such as captions for videos.

Question 4: Is Kooth available in languages other than English? Or does Kooth have a translation tool?

- At the moment, Kooth's content and user interface is only written in English.
- Web browsers are now able to do very good translation of web pages. Our web pages work well with web browsers' translation features.
- When we provide alternative text for screen reader users, we're careful to do it in a way that browsers will translate.

Question 5: How can visually impaired users make use of Messaging and Chat?

- We're currently rebuilding Messaging and Chat to ensure that it fully meets accessibility best practices.
- As it stands, whether Chat and Messaging is easy to use for people with visual impairments depends on what visual impairment they have.
  - **Blind, or very low vision**
    - At the moment, that's not possible for a user whose visual impairment means that they need to use a screen reader (if they can't see the screen at all, and zoom is not enough).
    - WCAG 1.1.1, 1.3.1, 1.3.2, 1.4.2, 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.4.1, 2.4.2, 2.4.3, 2.4.5, ….
  - **Someone who requires the page's content to be zoomed, say up to 400%**
    - **on a computer**
      - Yep, people can zoom up to 400% and still have access to all content and functionality – including chat and messaging. WCAG 1.4.10 Reflow
    - **on a small mobile device (320px)**
      - that won't work, because the only zoom mechanism available is pinch-to-zoom, which doesn't work on Kooth. WCAG 1.4.4 Resize text
    - **on a larger mobile device**
      - People can zoom in, and all the content and functionality is still available. The bigger the device, the more they can zoom in and still have access to all the content
  - **Someone who requires the page's content to be zoomed 500% - 5000%**
    - This is automatically supported using zoom assistive technologies (Not in WCAG)
  - **Someone who doesn't see contrast well**

- - - Yes, people who don't see colour contrast well will be able to use the chat.
    - There are a few text elements that do not have sufficient contrast.
    - [WCAG 1.4.3 Text contrast](#) and [WCAG 1.4.11 Non-text contrast](#)

- We're in the process of redesigning chat and messaging so it fully meets the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines level AA.
  - This will address the points ago

Question 6: Is it possible to edit the website settings (e.g. change the colour, increase font settings etc)?

All web browsers (like Chrome or Firefox) and Operating Systems (like Windows or macOS) offer a very wide range of accessibility settings to change the appearance of websites.

This includes increasing the font size, turning on a high contrast mode, and many other things. Including those features is the responsibility of web browsers, browser extensions and operating systems, as specified by the [W3C's User Agent Accessibility Guidelines](#).

Our responsibility as websites and digital services creates, is to make sure that the default appearance meets the [W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 level AA](#). This ensures that browsers and operating systems' accessibility features work well.

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It's not yet the case that the whole of Kooth meets that standard. But we've working hard at it and making very fast progress.

Everything we've designed or build in the past six months already meets that standard. And this will be the case moving forward.

The WCAG's success criteria ensure that:

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3. We've developed a library or re-usable user-interface components that are fully accessible.
4. Meeting the WCAG level AA is now necessary as part of our Quality Assurance process.

Question 7: Please detail the minimum hardware specifications that are required to access the digital solution.

Because Kooth.com runs in a web browser, it does not have minimum hardware requirements as such.

It will work on any computer or mobile device that can run one of the following web browsers:

- Internet Explorer 11 (released in 2013 and available on Windows 7, 8 or 10)
- Google Chrome (Windows, macOS, Android, iOS, ipadOS)
- Microsoft Edge (Windows, macOS)
- Mozilla Firefox (Windows, macOS)
- Samsung Internet (Android)
- Apple Safari (macOS, iOS, ipadOS)

Question 8: What is the language on the site and how does it impact users whose first language is not English?

The design team is very careful to use simple language everywhere on the site.

We aim to write everything so it works for a 10 year old. This is in line with the level AAA of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines:

https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG21/Understanding/reading-level.html

We also avoid acronyms, or define them before we use them:

https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG21/Understanding/abbreviations.htmlW

Question 9: What Assistive features that read text out loud for you do we have?

Operating Systems let users select/highlight a bit of text and hear it read out loud.

That's a very popular accessibility feature on iOS (I know that about iOS because it's possible to get usage stats for accessibility features on native apps – it's generally not possible for on the web for good ethical reasons).

That feature is also available on macOS and I expect it's available on Windows too.

Question 10: What is the digital literacy that we follow when developing the platform?

When it comes to digital literacy, we do the following things:

- We're careful to keep things very simple
- We do usability tests with young people. And we're working on including people with impairments in those tests more regularly
- We use visible headings at the top of pages
- We use visible labels for interactive controls
- Even if an icon doesn't have a visible label, we give it an "accessibility name" (also known as "alt text"). This is essential for screen reader users, but also very useful for everyone else: Operating Systems have an assistive feature that let people hover their mouse over an image/icon and see that image/icon's alternative text displayed very big on the screen. (We can't rely on those accessibility features though, because they're not available everywhere and because not many people know about them).