

Website Accessibility (WCAG) Compliance Report

Updated March 2026

Prepared for: Penlee House Gallery & Museum

Evaluation Tools Used: WAVE Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool (wave.webaim.org) & Manual WCAG 2.2 Browser Testing

1. Summary

This report details the extensive accessibility remediation carried out on the Penlee House website to meet WCAG 2.2 AA compliance standards, ensuring alignment with UK Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations. Through deep structural updates to templates, styling, and plugins, all critical accessibility errors and contrast failures have been completely resolved.

| Metric | Before | After |
|-------------------|--------|--------|
| Overall AIM Score | 4.1/10 | 9.6/10 |
| Critical Errors | 20 | 0 |
| Contrast Errors | 14 | 0 |
| Alerts | 32 | 18* |

*Note: Remaining alerts are informational only and do not constitute compliance failures.

2. Initial Audit Findings (Pre-Remediation)

Prior to development, the homepage scored 4.1/10 and presented several critical barriers:

- Errors (Resolved): 14 linked images missing alt text (exhibition/news cards), 5 empty links (social/navigation elements), 1 broken ARIA reference.
- Contrast Errors (Resolved): 14 instances of text failing the 4.5:1 minimum contrast ratio requirement.
- Alerts (Addressed): 23 redundant links, 2 skipped heading levels, 1 broken same-page link, 3 disruptive positive tabindex values, 1 very small text, 1 redundant title text.

3. Detailed Remediation Log

To achieve compliance, the following technical updates were applied across the website's architecture:

Global Header & Navigation (header.php)

- **Logo & Mobile Nav:** Added descriptive alt text and aria-label to the logo. Converted the mobile navigation toggle from a broken anchor link to a semantic <button> with full aria-expanded and aria-controls attributes.
- **Mega Menu:** Converted the close control to a semantic <button>, marked decorative menu images as aria-hidden="true", and added role="region" for screen reader context.

Homepage & Content (front-page.php, WooCommerce)

- **Slideshow:** Upgraded previous/next controls to semantic <button> elements. Introduced a pause/play button giving users full control over auto-playing content. The slider automatically pauses for users with device-level reduced motion preferences or when keyboard focus enters the container.
- **Card Consolidation:** Resolved major redundant link errors in the Boxes, Exhibitions, and News sections. Consolidated three separate links per box (image, title, button) into a single, accessible wrapping .
- **WooCommerce:** Remedied a WAVE error on the cart page by hiding an empty heading element generated by the e-commerce plugin.

Footer & Third-Party Scripts (footer.php, script.js)

- **Social Links:** Added aria-label and target="_blank" rel="noopener noreferrer" to Facebook, Bluesky, Instagram, and TripAdvisor icons.
- **Fancybox ARIA/Tabindex Fix:** Engineered a custom JavaScript MutationObserver to fix disruptive positive tabindex values injected by the Fancybox lightbox plugin. Added a hidden span target to resolve a broken aria-labelledby reference.

Global Styling & Contrast (style.css, Cookie Banner)

- **Contrast Upgrades:** Improved ratios across navigation links (3.60:1 to 4.72:1), news filters (2.35:1 to 4.54:1), mega menu hovers (2.63:1 to 15.78:1), and cookie banner text. Added dark CSS overlays (::before) to background images in the Collections and Slideshow sections to guarantee text contrast.
- **Focus States:** Implemented clear, highly visible focus styles across the site for keyboard users (a distinct purple focus ring on light backgrounds and a white ring on dark backgrounds).

Functions (functions.php)

Added an automated wp_get_attachment_image_attributes filter that populates missing alt text from the post title, safeguarding against future user error in the Media Library.

4. WCAG 2.2 AA Manual Verification Addendum

In addition to automated WAVE testing, manual verification was conducted to ensure compliance with the newly enforced WCAG 2.2 AA criteria:

- **Focus Not Obscured (2.4.11):** Keyboard focus indicators remain fully visible and are not hidden by author-created content like cookie banners or headers.
- **Target Size Minimum (2.5.8):** All interactive elements (slider buttons, mega menu close toggles, mobile toggles) meet the 24x24 CSS pixel minimum or possess adequate clearance.
- **Dragging Movements (2.5.7):** Draggable interfaces (sliders) feature accessible single-pointer alternatives (Previous/Next buttons).
- **Redundant Entry (3.3.7) & Consistent Help (3.2.6):** Forms and checkout paths do not require unnecessary redundant data entry. Help/contact mechanisms are consistently located.

5. Context on Remaining WAVE Alerts

The 18 remaining alerts do not prevent user access and relate largely to platform limitations:

- **Fancybox Plugin (3):** The lightbox injects tabindex values into the DOM dynamically.
- **Redundant Links (7):** Footer navigation links are duplicated in the mobile nav, an unavoidable trait of standard responsive web design.
- **Skipped Headings (2):** Minor structural content decisions that do not impede screen reader flow.

6. Maintaining Accessibility: Ongoing Guidance

To maintain this 9.6/10 compliance score, the team should adhere to the following:

- **Images & Media:** Every uploaded image requires meaningful alt text. Decorative images must have empty alt attributes.
- **Documents & PDFs:** Ensure all PDFs are generated with accessibility tags and logical reading orders. Avoid scanned image-only documents.
- **Video Content:** All published video must include accurate captions.
- **Colour & Contrast:** Maintain a minimum contrast ratio of 4.5:1 against backgrounds for new designs.
- **Regular Auditing:** Conduct a WAVE accessibility audit every six months.

Document Control

Prepared by: Unify Studio

Date: March 2026