

UK Health Security Agency enhancing SSISS

Client

UK Health Security Agency

Industry

Healthcare

Project

Accessibility and technology enhancements

Focus

Accessibility, development, user-centred design

Success

WCAG 2.2 AA compliance, enhanced functionality, improved UI/UX



Background

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is a government agency dedicated to protecting the nation's health from infectious diseases and other health threats.

UKHSA plays a critical role in providing data, analysis, and evidence-based insights to inform public health decisions. UKHSA focuses on disease surveillance, outbreak response, and health protection, working closely with local authorities, NHS organisations, and international partners.

The agency's mission is to improve the public's health and wellbeing by ensuring the country is prepared for, and can respond to, health threats. Through research, innovation, and effective communication, UKHSA aims to build a resilient health security infrastructure for the UK.

The need

UKHSA identified the need for comprehensive accessibility and front-end design and development enhancements for the SSISS web application.

The primary goal was to ensure the application met the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2 AA standards, aligned with the GOV.UK Service Manual, and complied with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018. This initiative aimed to make the application fully accessible across

web browsers, mobile devices, and tablets, ensuring inclusivity for all users, including those using assistive technologies.

To address these requirements, the project focused on several key aspects. First, achieving accessibility compliance was essential. The SSISS application needed to pass an external accessibility audit, reaching at least WCAG 2.2 AA level. This ensured usability for individuals with disabilities, including those relying on screen readers, keyboard navigation, and other assistive technologies. Second, cross-platform compatibility was crucial. The application had to function seamlessly across various platforms and browsers, including the latest stable versions and the version immediately preceding it, on both desktop and mobile operating systems. Third, responsive design was a priority, providing an optimal user experience on PCs, laptops, tablets, and smartphones. Additionally, the project required adherence to the Government Digital Service (GDS) Service Standards for communication and reporting, which involves measuring and reporting progress as outlined in the GDS's Service Manual and agreed upon with UKHSA.

The solution

6B approached the project with a structured methodology, starting with a thorough assessment of the SSISS web application, an ASP.NET application hosted on Azure. The initial phase involved a detailed audit to identify accessibility gaps and compliance issues against WCAG 2.2 AA standards, the GOV.UK Service Manual, and Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations 2018.

6B

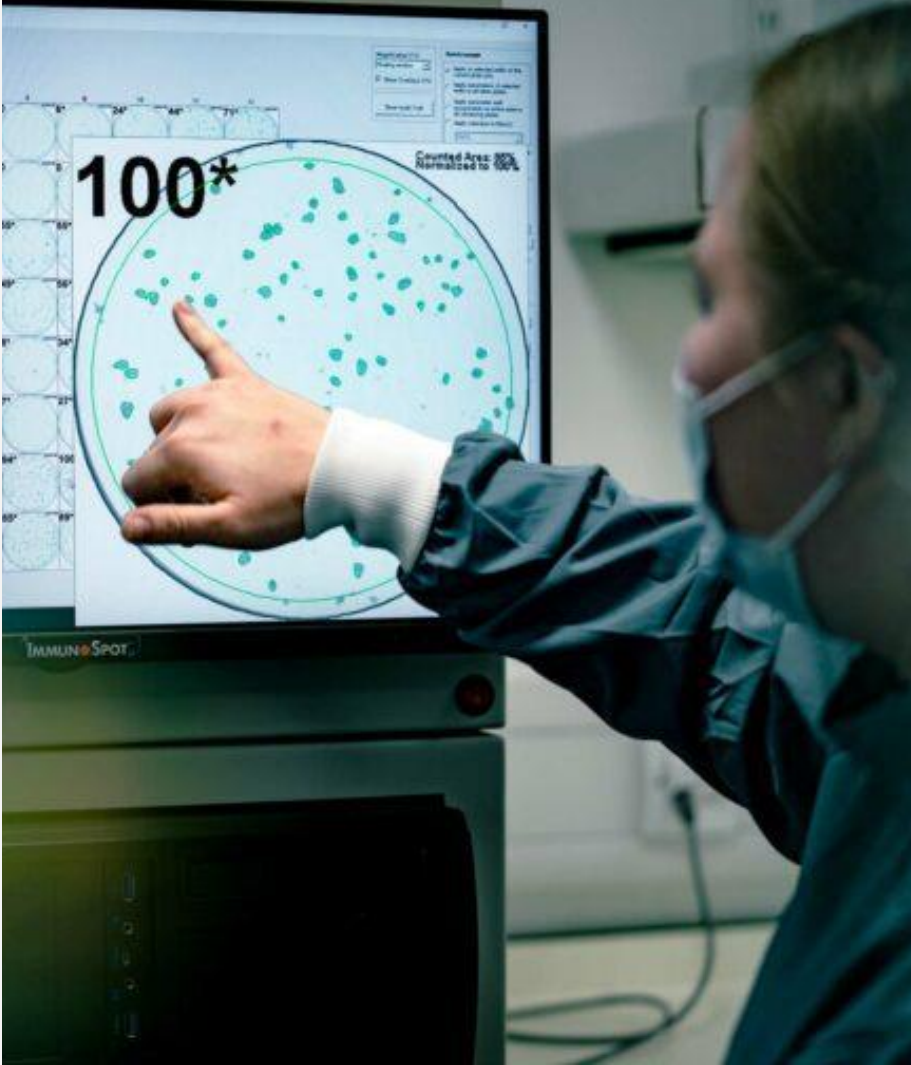
Following the audit, 6B's development team focused on enhancing the front-end design to ensure the application was fully responsive and accessible across all devices, including PCs, laptops, tablets, and smartphones. The 6B team employed modern front-end technologies and frameworks to implement responsive design principles, ensuring optimal user experience on various screen sizes.

To ensure cross-platform compatibility, 6B conducted extensive testing across multiple browsers and operating systems. This included testing with the latest stable versions and the versions immediately preceding them. They also ensured the application worked seamlessly with assistive technologies, such as screen readers and keyboard navigation tools.

The development process included integrating accessibility features such as ARIA (Accessible Rich Internet Applications) roles, semantic HTML elements, and keyboard navigation improvements. These enhancements made the SSISS application more navigable and usable for individuals with disabilities.

6B adhered to the Government Digital Service (GDS) Service Standards for communication and reporting, providing regular updates and transparent progress reports to UKHSA. This included measuring and reporting progress as outlined in the GDS's Service Manual.

By following this structured approach, 6B successfully enhanced the



SSISS application’s accessibility and usability, ensuring compliance with all relevant standards and regulations.

The impact

The updates to the SSISS application have just gone live, and early feedback indicates significant improvements in accessibility and user experience.

These enhancements have ensured compliance with WCAG 2.2 AA standards and the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations 2018, making the application accessible to a broader audience, including users with disabilities. The application now functions seamlessly across various devices and browsers, providing a consistent and optimal user experience. The integration of accessibility features, responsive design, and cross-platform compatibility has improved overall usability.



Ready to get started with your project?
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