



NEWS RELEASE

12/02/07

For immediate release

Access all areas! Blind charity launches new accessible website

Further to recent findings that 97% of websites don't meet minimum levels of accessibility*, national charity, **Action for Blind People**, launches its new fully accessible website www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk on Tuesday 20 February.

Action for Blind People's website has been designed by the OTHER media who have revamped the site with a new design and new content, supported by new web developments and technologies. The website features:

- Action's latest news
- Information on Action's services
- Online polls
- An RSS newsfeed with the latest news from the visual impairment sector
- Stories from Action's clients
- Information on supporting and donating to Action
- Monthly Podcasts

To make the site usable and accessible the website boasts:

- An easy-to-see web colour scheme
- Easier to read Arial font in size 14
- Accessibility tabs so visitors can choose how to view the site
- Descriptive alternatives for all images.
- No use of frames or JavaScript which sometimes don't work with the browsers and screen readers used by visually impaired people



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To mark the launch, the site will feature a special Podcast from Billy ‘the whiz’ Baxter - the fastest visually impaired man on a motorbike.

Sophie Gray, Action for Blind People’s Online Marketing Officer, commented: “As a visual impairment charity, accessibility is very important to us. We have involved Action clients throughout the design and testing of this website allowing us to gain a real insight into how visually impaired people, their family and friends use websites. This has helped to create an accessible and usable website for everyone.”

Theresa Austin, Account Manager at the OTHER media, added: “We wanted to design a fully functioning site where accessibility wasn’t an afterthought but the prime driver in everything we did from beginning to end. I’m happy to say that we have achieved that – the site is a fantastic source of information and it’s within everyone’s reach.”

Joe Chidzik, Usability Consultant at AbilityNet, added: “Proving that accessibility and a first class design can go hand in hand, Action for Blind People has bucked the trend by providing a website that is accessible for those with disabilities and looks great as well. Making a website easier to use for disabled users invariably makes it easier to use for non-disabled users alike. Using a sensible font size, a sans-serif font such as Arial and giving users a choice of colour schemes, designed to increase site visibility for different users, are just some of the simple, yet highly effective, methods they have employed to make their site accessible”.



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Action's website will see further improvements over the coming months including a facility to manage donations and update users' account details online. People can access the charity's new website by logging on to www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk

-Ends-

For further media information please contact Zoë Patel or Victoria Moffett, press office on 020 7635 4898/ 07739 819954 or email: zoe.patel@actionforblindpeople.org.uk

Notes to editors:

*United Nations global audit of web accessibility report, 5 Dec 2006.

- The website has been designed to meet the highest levels of accessibility according to the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) guidelines.
- Action for Blind People supports over 20,000 blind and partially sighted people in the UK every year. Contact Action for Blind People's National Freephone Helpline on 0800 915 4666 or www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk
- Action works to inspire change and create opportunities to enable blind and partially sighted people to have equal voice and equal choice and to live a full and valuable life.
- Action provides visually impaired people with opportunities through employment, housing, leisure and information and support.
- 2007 marks Action's 150 years of transforming the lives of blind and partially sighted people.
- If abbreviating "Action for Blind People", please use "Action" rather than AFBP or ABP.