Hello, everyone. I'm Richard Morton and

I'm Head of Accessibility at the Central Digital and Data Office,

that's CDDO, formally GDS.

Both CDDO and GDS are part of Cabinet Office.

I'll talk a bit more about that in a bit.

I help raise awareness of the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations,

and I provide some support to the accessibility monitoring team within CDDO.

I also run the accessibility capability team,

which is a cross government effort and it helps to ensure

CDDO internal and cross-community accessibility, compliance, and capability.

Today, though, I'm going to talk to you particularly about

the mobile apps accessibility in relation to

the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations.

Firstly, a reminder that digital accessibility means ensuring

your services and content can be used and understood by the widest possible audience.

In the UK, at least one in five people have a long-term illness, impairment,

or disability, and many more have a temporary or situational disability.

This chimes in more with what Jane was showing earlier about

different types of needs.

The UK public has to use public services,

and generally don't have a choice of going to a different provider.

Litter picking or whatever or arrangeable waste collection,

they have to go to their own provider.

This means it's our responsibility, as public servants,

to make sure we remove as many barriers or obstacles

to accessing our services as possible.

Everything we create needs to be accessible to everyone, as far as possible,

regardless of whether or not they have impairments in any of these areas.

As Jane said, vision, hearing, motor, and cognitive,

but also, I'd add speech, because that's becoming more and more

prevalent in terms of controlling things through mobile devices.

There's things like Alexa and Google Home.

It's also important to remember the impairments aren't always permanent.

They can be temporary, for example,

an ear infection or a situation,

for example, working in a noisy environment or being outside on a mobile phone.

Whether impairments is permanent, temporary,

or situational, we need to design and build things that work for everyone.

Where does the law come into this?

Well, firstly, the Equality Act 2010 says we have

a legal obligation to provide equal access to people with disabilities.

This is true of both public facing services and non-public facing services,

so internal services as well.

The Equality Act covers both service providers and employers.

For Northern Ireland, this is covered by the Disability Discrimination Act.

Then there's also the Public Sector Equality Duty,

which is part of the Equality Act, and

effectively, it means we have a duty to be proactive in making things accessible.

So while the Equality Act and the Disability Discrimination Act cover all organizations,

the Public Sector Equality Duty is

an additional requirement for public sector organizations specifically.

More recently though, there are the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations 2018,

which I'll just refer to as the Accessibility Regulations.

These mean that public sector organizations

have a legal obligation to make their websites

and mobile apps accessible to people with

disabilities and to a particular standard as well.

But the new regulations don't replace or

supersede the Equality Act or the Disability Discrimination Act,

but are in addition to them.

Here's a timeline from when the regulations came to

force, on the 23rd of September 2018.

New websites needed to be compliant by

the 23rd of September 2019 and existing websites by the 23rd of September 2020.

There's now just one remaining deadline for regulations,

which is actually just a week away, next week.

Mobile applications have to be compliant by the 23rd of June 2021.

No doubt what many of you are here for though

are some more specifics about what is happening regarding mobile,

what you need to do, and some further contextual information.

So what you need to do. it's a general requirement, if you like.

Public sector organizations have a duty to check

their responsibilities for mobile app compliance under the Accessibility Regulations.

I'll share a link where you can get information that you need for this at the end.

They need to meet a particular standard,

the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

So mobile apps need to comply with WCAG,

or the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines,

version 2.1, level A and level AA with following exceptions.

The following success criteria don't apply to mobile apps:

2.4.1 Bypass Blocks, 2.4.2 Page Titled,

2.4.5 Multiple Ways, 3.1.2 Language of Parts,

3.2.3 Consistent Navigation, 3.2.4 Consistent Identification,

and 4.1.3 Status Messages.

This is largely because of the way apps are developed and the way they tend to

be used compared to websites and web apps.

You also need an accessibility statement.

You need to create one for mobile apps.

You should make the statement available either

in the app store or on your website or both.

You also need to make sure it's in an accessible format itself so everyone can use.

A question, when is an app not an app?

Terminology around this can be confusing.

The mobile apps aspect to the regulations is very specifically

about native mobile apps that you download to your phone or tablet,

not web apps or progressive web apps.

Those are effectively websites and they're already

covered in the regulations on the previous deadline.

So this specifically what you call native mobile apps.

Just to get a bit about the differences between iOS and Android apps,

the same app on different devices may look similar,

may even behave similarly,

but perhaps with some minor differences perhaps,

but the underlying code is likely to be very different.

In other words, what I'm saying is,

it's best to test apps on both Android and iOS, unless it's

only going to be available on one of those platforms, in

which case, you can just test on the one platform.

I would, of course, recommend going beyond the regulations' requirements to

include testing with assistive technologies and testing with disabled users,

as Jane was talking about earlier.

Just to be clear,

regulations compliance does not equal accessibility,

it equals following a standard. It can help.

It can provide a baseline,

but it doesn't mean things are accessible.

It doesn't confirm that your website or app is accessible.

Yeah, test with assistive technologies.

In particular, a screen reading software on touch screen devices works quite

differently to keyboard-based devices.

It uses swipe gestures rather than keyboard shortcuts.

You should test with disabled people.

Even the best auditors and tools can't anticipate all the ways people use

technology or anticipate all the barriers people might face.

CDDO monitor the public sector websites and the mobile apps for

their accessibility to ensure compliance with the regulations.

What is accessibility of CDDO?

Well, the accessibility monitoring and accessibility capability teams

and functions were at GDS,

but they've all moved from GDS to CDDO.

But in effect at the moment,

this has no impact at all with the way things work.

It's business as usual.

It's just a name change effectively for the purposes of this event.

What happens about non-compliant apps and sites?

We'll write to organizations found to be non-compliant,

giving them seven days to acknowledge a report and 12 weeks to

fix the issues outlined and publish a compliant accessibility statement.

Websites and apps may then be retested and if any issues are found outstanding,

the findings will be shared with enforcement bodies and the names of

organizations with incorrect accessibility statements

will be published by Cabinet Office.

What about enforcement?

Well, while CDDO is the reporting and monitoring body,

the Equality and Human Rights Commission in Great Britain and the Equality Commission for

Northern Ireland will enforce

the accessibility requirement and reasonable adjustment requirements to the regulations.

They'll do that using their existing powers under

the Equality Act and the Disability Discrimination Act.

CDDO can help you be compliant.

We have a range of resources online to help you make

sure your websites and mobile applications are compliant,

as well as various communities you can join for discussions and shared experiences.

The details of what public sector bodies need to do and links to

various guidance are available from accessibility.campaign.gov.uk.

As Jane mentioned, we have the Accessibility Personas,

which are branded as GDS,

which are really useful.

We have the Accessibility Empathy Lab,

which is available to anyone in the public sector to visit once we reopened,

and various training facilities,

and training courses, and things like that.

Thanks, everyone.