

Five things your website needs to do well in 2025

Superhighways 25th anniversary conference

#FromEmailToAI / #Superhighways25

Madeleine Sugden

Introduction

We're going to look at five common issues I see in my travels across charity websites.

I'll show you the issues with some examples.

And give you some pointers to look out for.

Plus useful links.

Go back to your desk and do your own healthcheck!



About me

A career in websites for charities including RNIB and KnowHow NonProfit.

Background in psychology and information management.

Now work as a consultant helping charities with their websites and other digital comms.



Your website

Your website should still be your primary digital asset.

It should:

- inspire support
- give information and raise awareness
- be a gateway to services
- build brand awareness and community
- be a hub for your other comms.



Your website

But often it is:

- one of those jobs you just don't have time for
- run by a volunteer
- not integrated with what you do or how you fundraise
- an embarrassment
- getting no traffic.

But it doesn't have to be like this!



1. Findability

The issues

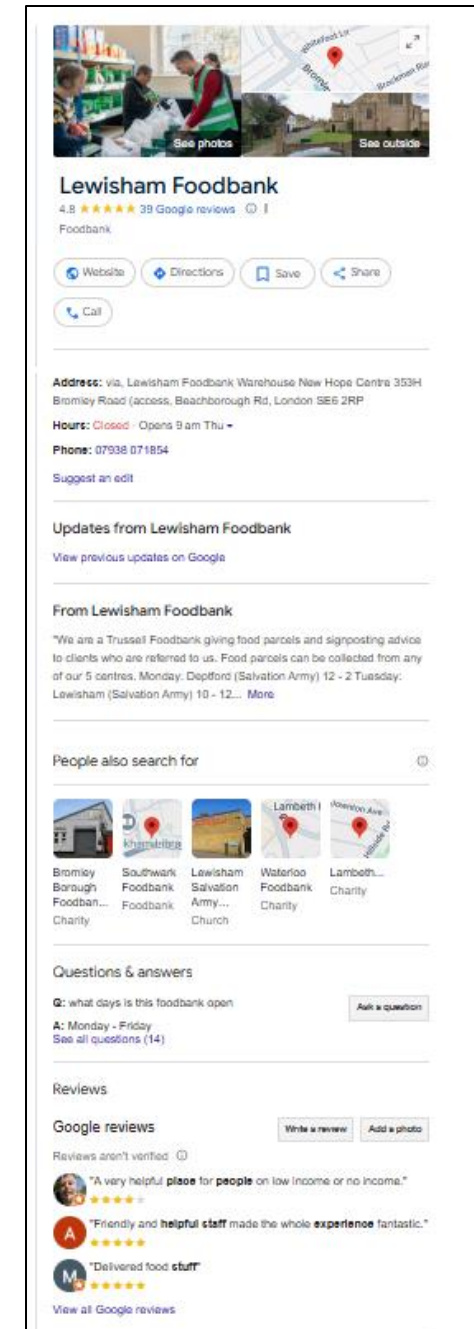
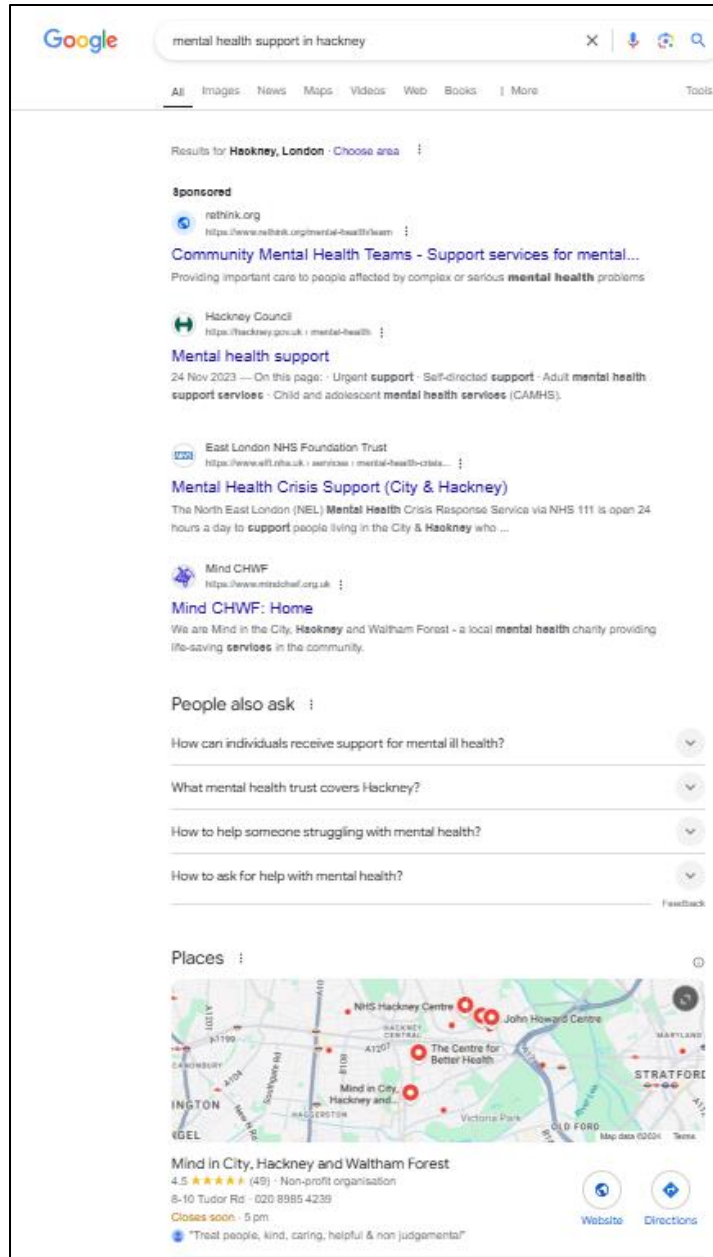
- External search – eg Google
- Internal search – your own website
- Navigation and architecture on your site



External search

The issue

- Ads get in the way.
- Search doesn't find you at all.
- Your organisation is way down the results.
- Information is not accurate



External search

The issue

- AI search results now appearing.

stroke support groups in north london

All Images Maps News Videos Web Books More Tools

AI Overview Learn more

There are many stroke support groups in North London, including groups that offer exercise classes, rehabilitation, and other support:

- **Different Strokes:** A free, registered charity that offers rehabilitation, exercise classes, and other support for younger stroke survivors:
 - **Stroke Support and Exercise Group London North:** Offers exercise classes at the New River Sports Centre and Winkfield Centre
 - **StrokeLine:** A telephone service that connects younger stroke survivors with each other
- **Islington Stroke Recovery Service:** Offers support, information, and practical advice to help stroke survivors rebuild their lives
- **North Central London Stroke Association Services:** Offers support for stroke survivors who have communication difficulties
- **Stroke Recovery Service:** Offers information, advice, and support to stroke survivors, carers, and family members
- **Stroke Rehabilitation Community Service:** Offers care to people who have recently suffered a stroke and are being discharged from inpatient care
- **Newham Together We Can Stroke Group:** A Stroke Association-run group that offers support
- **South Islington Stroke Club:** A club that supports people and families affected by stroke

You can also contact the Stroke Association's helpline by: Emailing helpline@stroke.org.uk and Calling 0303 3033 100.

This is for informational purposes only. For medical advice or diagnosis, consult a professional. Generative AI is experimental.

Support in your area - Stroke Association
Islington - Stroke Recovery Service ... Our Stroke Recovery Service will work with you to identify your personal support...
Stroke Association

Stroke Support and Exercise Group London North
Find out more about our Stroke Support and Exercise Group London North. Our friendly Stroke Support and Exercise group...
Different Strokes

Newham Together We Can Stroke Group
If you or someone you know could benefit from the support of our group, please get in touch, we'd love to hear from you....
Stroke Association

Show all

👍 🗨️

External search

Be your own mystery shopper

- Search for your name
- Search for your cause and location
- Search for questions
- Are you found?
- Is the information accurate?
- Do other ads appear first? Or AI results?

This screenshot shows search results for 'Kingston Voluntary Action'. The top result is 'Kingston Voluntary Action' with the URL https://kva.org.uk. Below it are 'Mind in Kingston' (https://www.mindinkingston.org.uk) and 'Staywell' (https://www.staywellservices.org.uk). Further down are 'Crossroads Care Richmond & Kingston' (https://crossroadscarerik.org) and 'Refugee Action Kingston' (https://www.refugeeactionkingston.org.uk).

This screenshot shows a search for 'are there cancer support charities in lewisham'. The search bar contains the query. Below the search bar are filters for 'All', 'Images', 'News', 'Videos', 'Web', 'Maps', 'Books', and 'More'. The results are for 'Lewisham, London'. A sponsored result for 'Cancer Care Map' is shown, with the text 'Find Your Local Cancer Charity - Find Cancer Support Near You'. Below this is a result for 'Lewisham and Greenwich' with the text 'Living with and beyond cancer'. A 'People also ask' section contains four questions: 'Which is the best cancer charity to donate to?', 'What charity supports cancer?', 'Is Macmillan Cancer Support a charity?', and 'What charity is stand up to cancer?'. At the bottom, there is a result for 'Cancer Research UK' with the text 'Lewisham'.

External search

Take action

- Review your metadata
- Use keywords in your copy
- Review page titles and writing for the web
- Invest in paid search
- Keep your website tidy
- Use trackers and tools

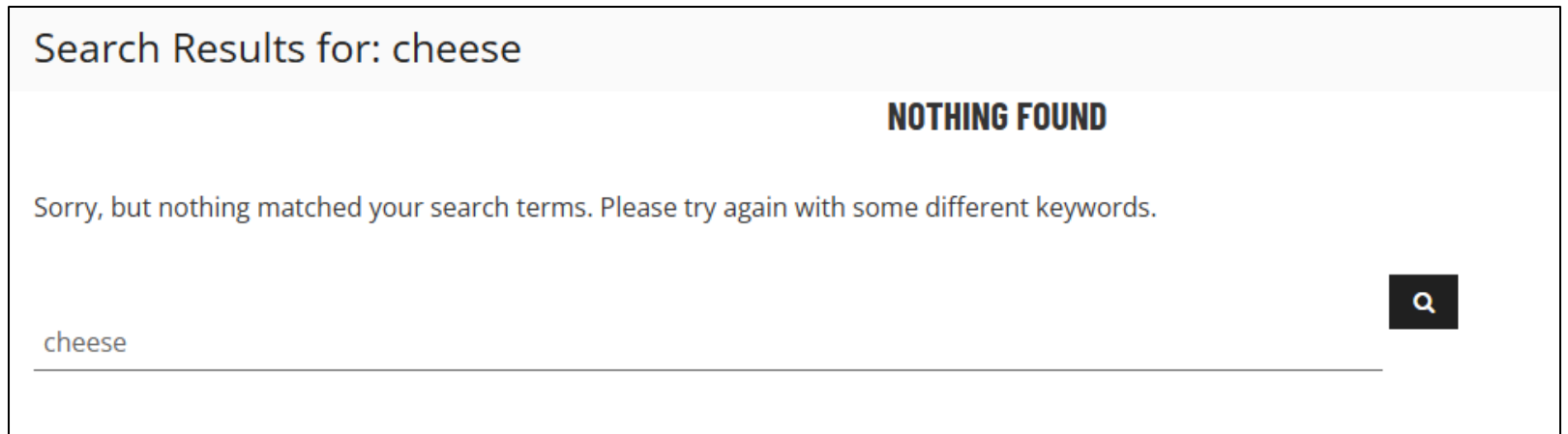
Find out more

- [On-page SEO](#) tutorial from Third Sector Lab
- [SEO for charities: How to get found online through Google Search](#) – Empower
- [Google Ads and Google Grants Management for charities](#) – Platypus Digital

Internal search

The issue

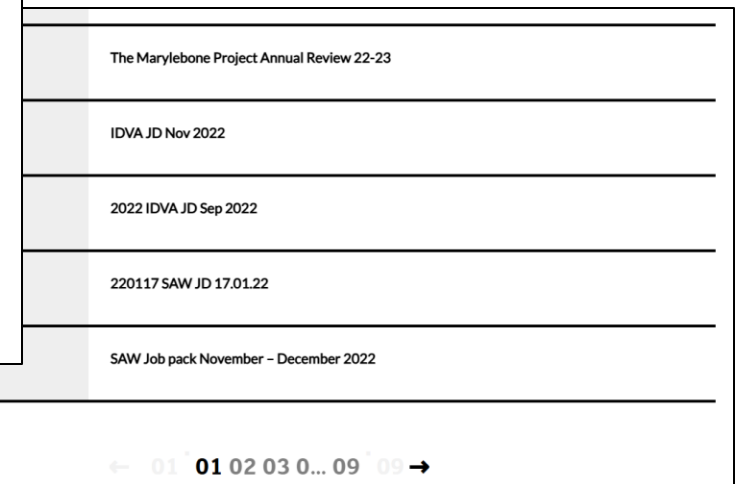
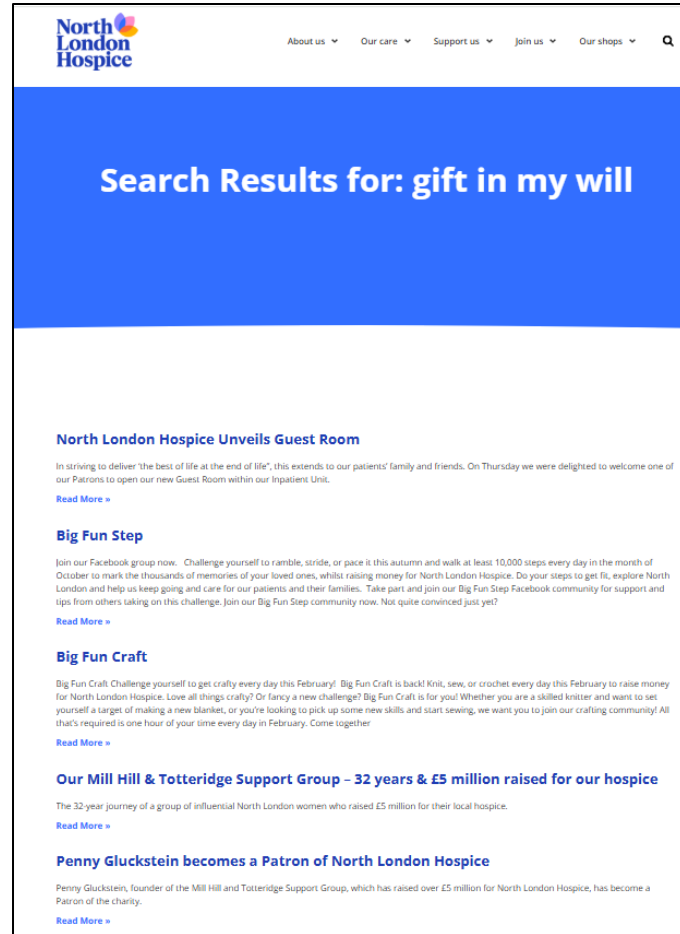
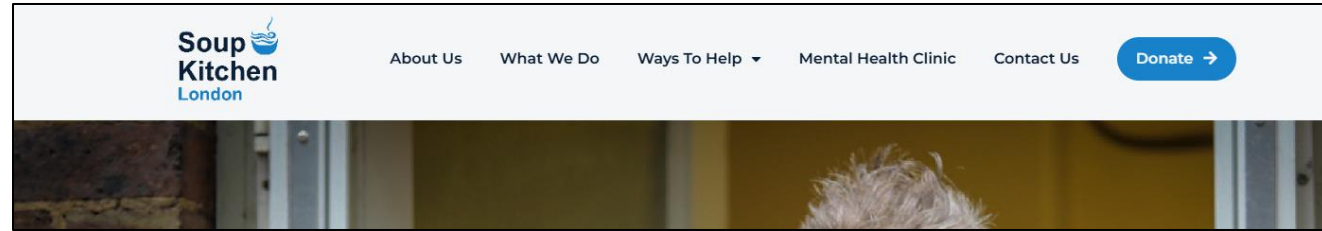
- Your search gives bad results



Internal search

Be your own mystery shopper

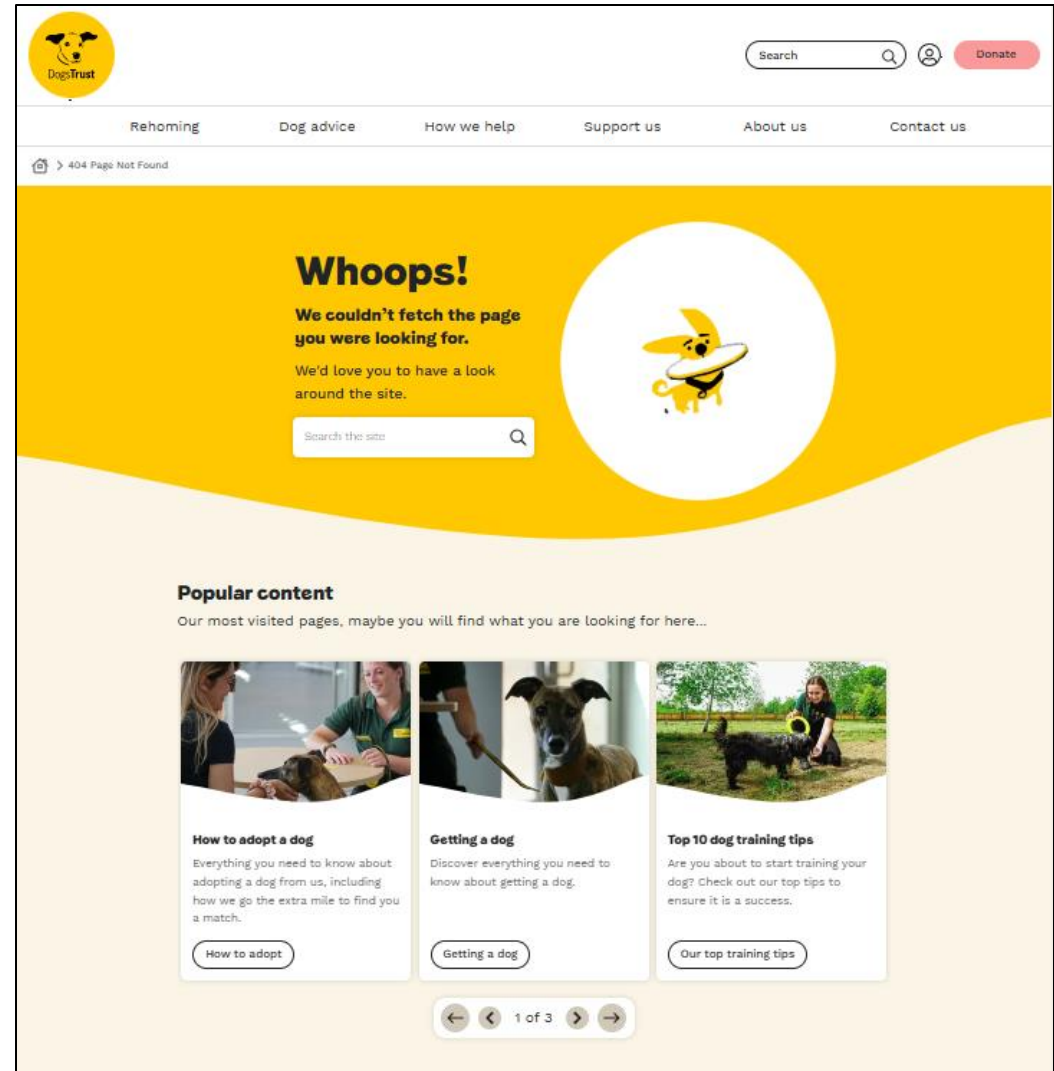
- Search for popular content or actions
- Search for questions
- Is it easy to find the search on the page?
- Are important landing pages prioritised?
- Are search results well presented?
- Is it easy to tell what is a download and what is a web page?



Internal search

Take action

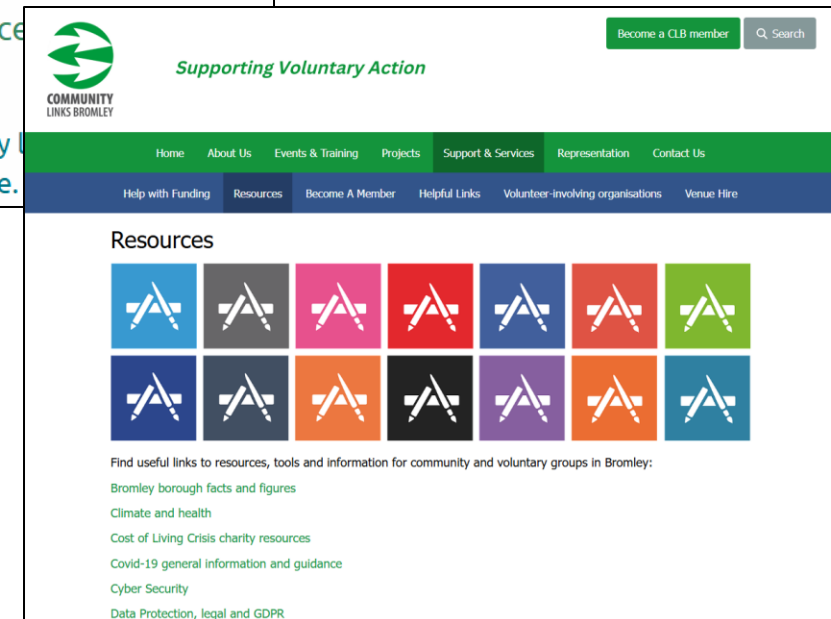
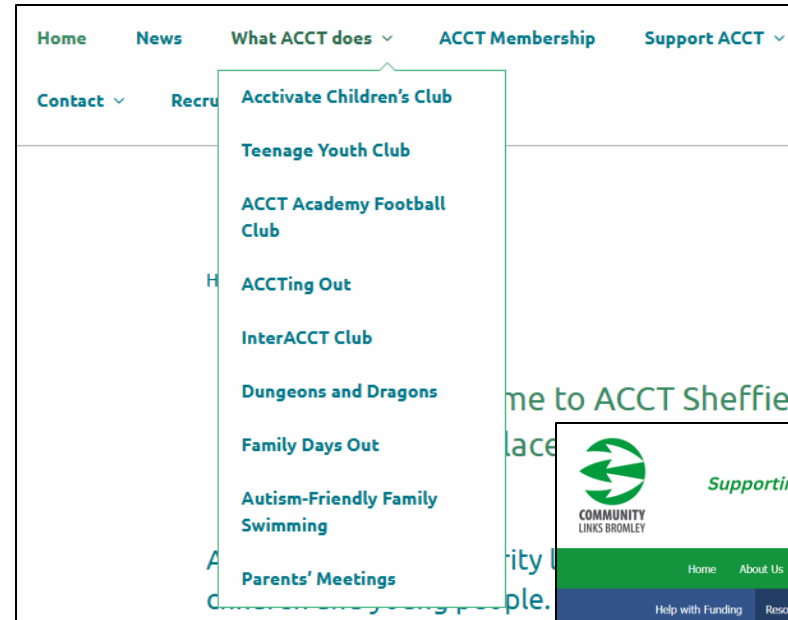
- Keep your website tidy – delete old news stories or campaign pages
- Prioritise content over news or blogs in search
- Improve the layout and appearance of results
- Customise your error page (404) to be helpful



Navigation and architecture

The issues

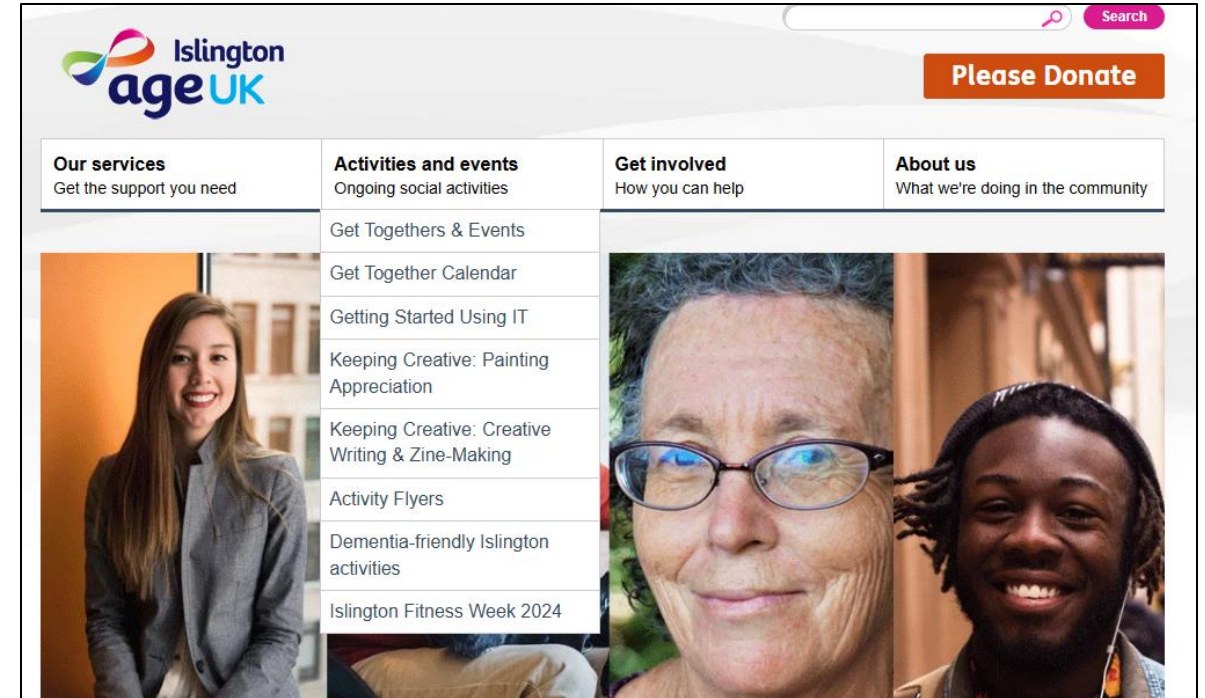
- Long lists which make sense if you are internal
- Buried important pages
- Menus which don't work on mobile
- Most sites now have an expanding-mega menu which helps surface pages at levels 1 and 2. But what happens deeper?



Navigation and architecture

Be your own mystery shopper

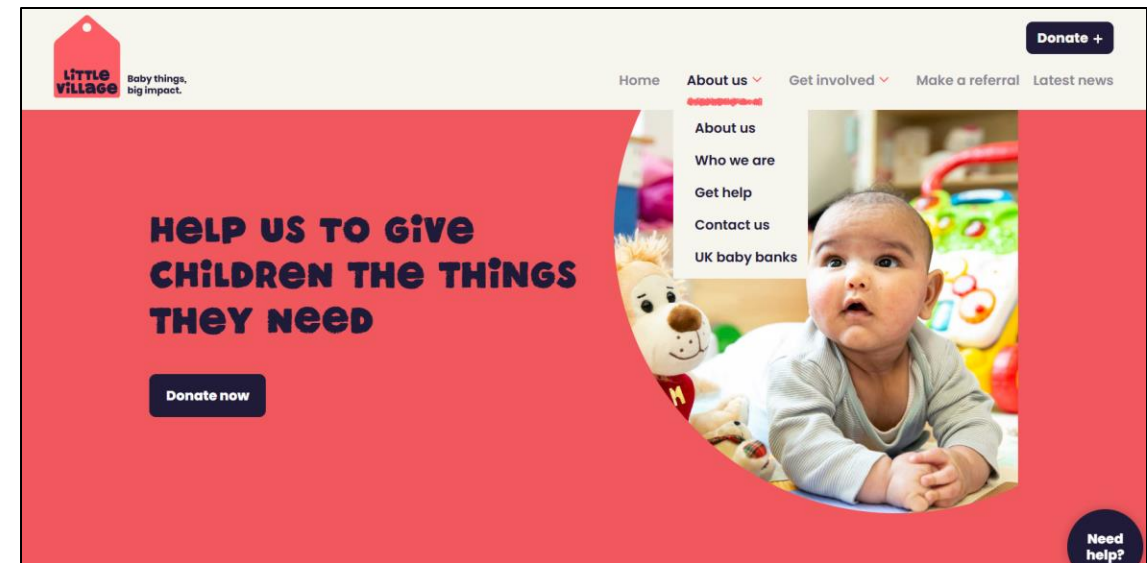
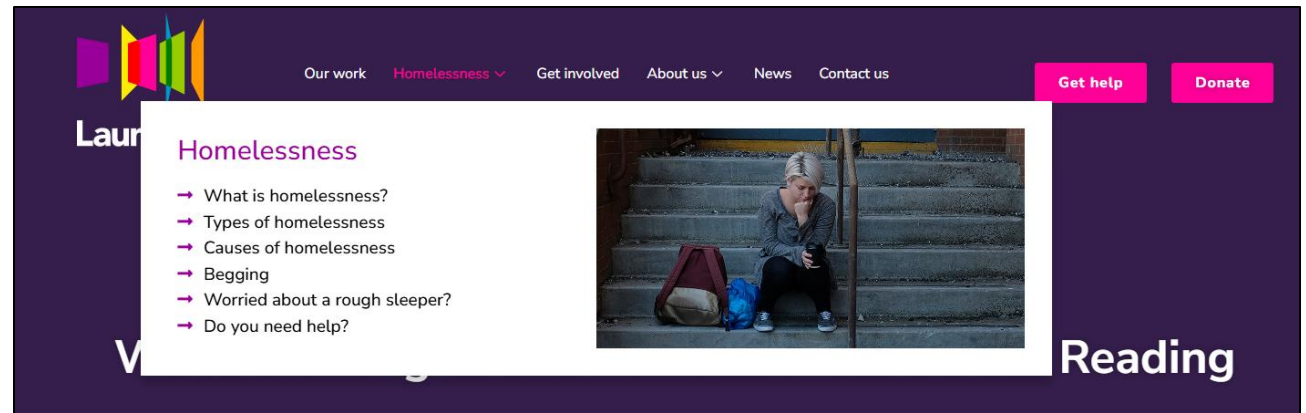
- Is the structure clear and logical?
- Can important pages be found easily?
- Check with your users that your system makes sense to them



Navigation and architecture

Take action

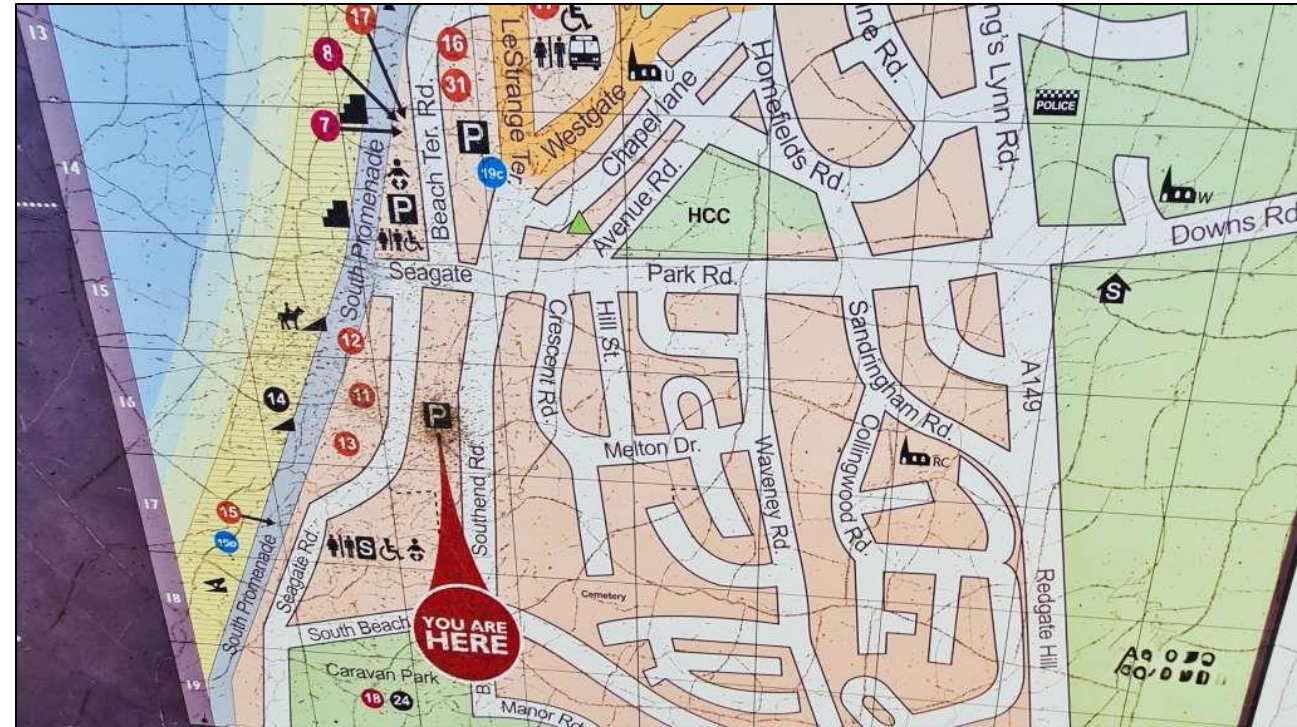
- Limit top-navigation to between 3-6 items
- Expanding lists no more than 10
- Check consistent language
- Think keywords and active voice.



2. User journey

The issues

- People come to your website for different things
- They won't spend very long so the journey needs to be clear and smooth
- A bad user journey and poor user experience costs you money



User journey

Identify key tasks and test these yourself

- How many clicks does it take?
- Do you have to fill in a form?
- Do you get a thank you?
- Are the error messages helpful?
- Is there a dead end?



Remember your loved one

Sadly not everyone that comes to hospital gets better. Ensuring a dignified death is something we're very proud to support.

Giving a gift to remember a family member, friend or colleague can bring comfort at a time of great sadness. Your gift will honour the life of your loved one and make a meaningful difference to the lives of patients and staff here at Southmead Hospital.

Here are some of the ways you can choose to remember your loved one:

- set up a special tribute page**
- donate in your loved one's name**
- organise a collection at a funeral or memorial service**
- do an event to fundraise in memory**

User Journey

What to look for

- Long forms
- Dead links
- Unclear pathways with long descriptions
- Poor accessibility
- Old information / dates
- No contact details
- Shouty error messages

Forensic Team

Helps people who are in secure hospital services make the move back into the community.

[Learn more >](#)

High Support Accommodation

24/7 support and housing for people with complex needs including homelessness, drug and alcohol misuse, mental health problems and offending behaviour.

[Learn more >](#)

Housing First Bristol

Housing First aims to provide homes in Bristol for people with multiple disadvantage for whom traditional homelessness pathways don't work.

[Learn more >](#)

Mixed Homelessness Pathway

Part of Bristol City Council's homeless pathways to support men and women into more secure housing.

[Learn more >](#)

The screenshot shows a registration form with the following fields and error messages:

- Name: Full name or company name
- Phone: Full name required
- Address: City, state/province, postal code
- Postcode: Postcode
- Email: Required
- Proof of Address Documents: Invalid email address
- Gender: Required
- Date of Birth: dd/mm/yyyy
- Disability: Please submit date in dd/mm/yyyy format
- Ethnic Group: Please Select
- How Did You Hear About St Lukes?: Please Select
- Agree to Privacy Policy: Agree to Privacy Policy
- Opt-out from emails: Opt-out from emails
- Password: Too short

User journey

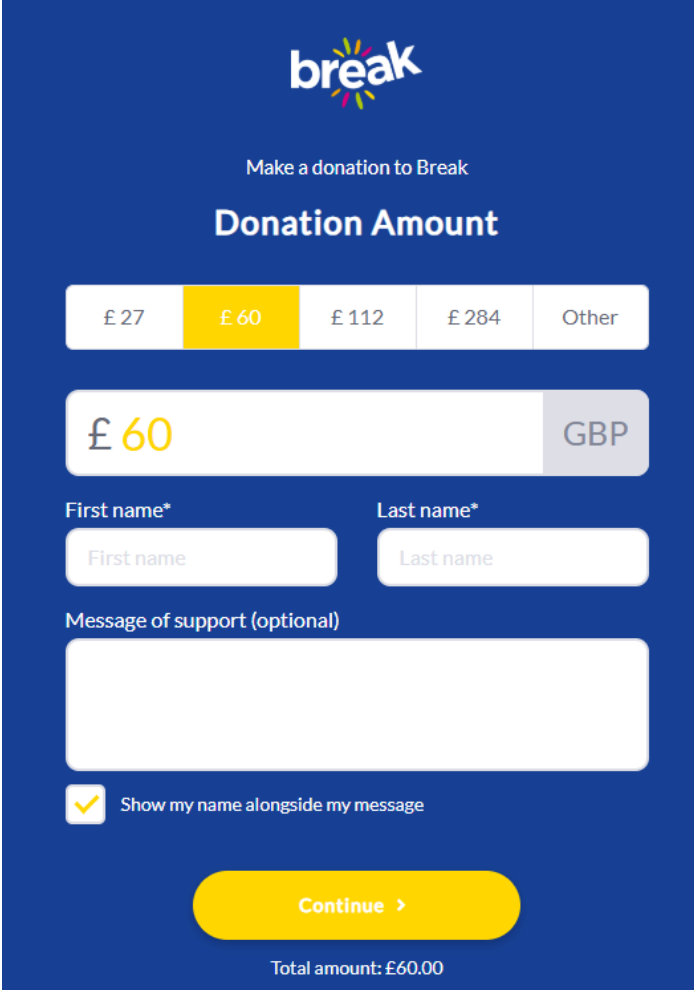
How to fix

- Check what actions work for your audience – phone / email / form?
- Simplify and remove friction
- Make links and buttons clear

Referrals and visits

We welcome visits to our centre.

If you would like to speak to someone about our children services please contact manager **Jayne Buckingham** or phone **01603 766566**.



The screenshot shows a donation form for 'break'. At the top is the 'break' logo. Below it, the text 'Make a donation to Break' is displayed. The main heading is 'Donation Amount'. There are five buttons for donation amounts: £ 27, £ 60 (highlighted in yellow), £ 112, £ 284, and Other. Below these is a text input field containing '£ 60' and a dropdown menu set to 'GBP'. The form then asks for 'First name*' and 'Last name*' with corresponding input fields. Below that is a 'Message of support (optional)' text area. A checkbox labeled 'Show my name alongside my message' is checked. At the bottom is a yellow 'Continue >' button. Below the button, it says 'Total amount: £60.00'.

NEWSLETTER

To receive news about our services and other activities, enter your email address below

Email Address

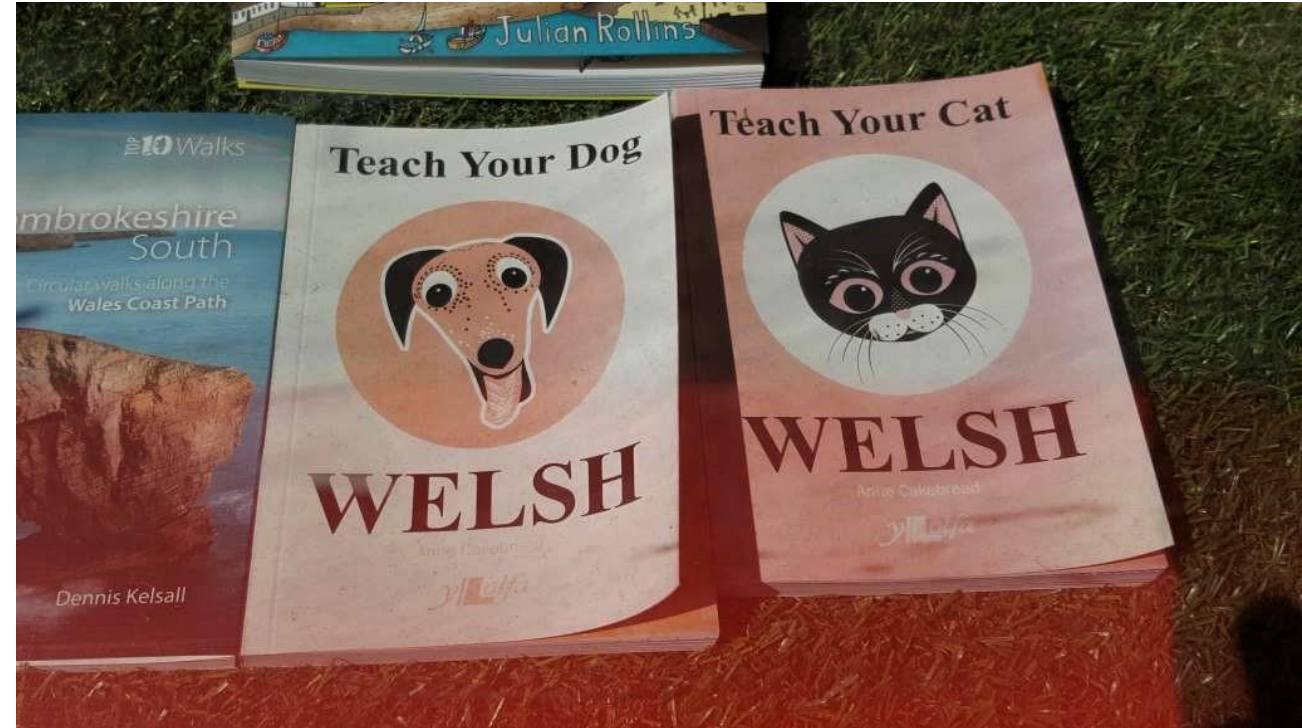
SIGN UP

Our quarterly newsletter is sent out using Mailchimp. You can unsubscribe at any time by clicking the link in the newsletter or by [contacting us](#). We take your privacy seriously and will not share your details with third parties. Information about how we protect and use your personal data is set out in our [privacy notice and data protection policy](#), which you can read [here](#).

3. Content

The issues

- Too much
- Not enough
- Badly written
- Out of date information
- No strategy or analysis



Content

Check your site

- Does your website's content answer your audience's questions?
- Is it easy to skim read?
- Does it work on mobile?
- Does it inform / persuade / entertain?
- Is it accessible?
- Are people using it?

The screenshot shows the NHS MindWell website. The top navigation bar includes 'MindWell' logo, a search bar, and the NHS logo. Below the navigation bar are links for 'Home', 'Myself', 'Someone else', 'Find support', 'A to Z', and 'Professionals'. There are also buttons for 'Accessibility' and 'Need urgent help?'. The breadcrumb trail reads: 'Home / I'm looking for myself / Bereavement and loss / How life experiences can affect us / The grieving process'. The main heading is 'The grieving process'. On the left, there is a list of links under the heading 'Bereavement and loss': 'Is what I'm feeling normal?', 'The practical things that need to be done', 'The grieving process', 'Preparing for the certain death of a loved one', 'Sudden or traumatic bereavement', 'Losing a child or experiencing a miscarriage', 'Pet bereavement', ''Living loss' like divorce or retirement', 'Self-care during bereavement', and 'Coping with flashbacks during bereavement'. On the right, there is text explaining that early theories of grief suggest a linear progression through stages like shock, denial, and anger, but modern understanding is more complex and messy. Below the text is a diagram titled 'Early theories of grief' showing a circular path of emotions and actions. The path starts with 'Loss' and 'Shock', leading to 'Numbness', 'Denial', 'Overwhelming sadness', 'Helplessness', 'Confusion', and 'Anger'. From 'Anger', it goes to 'Panic' and 'Feeling low', then 'Loneliness', 'Stress', 'Continue with everyday tasks', 'Difficulties re-adjusting', 'Take on tasks from the person who died', 'Do some social activities again', 'New friendships', 'Re-invest in life', and finally 'Acceptance'.

Bereavement and loss

- [Is what I'm feeling normal?](#)
- [The practical things that need to be done](#)
- The grieving process**
- [Preparing for the certain death of a loved one](#)
- [Sudden or traumatic bereavement](#)
- [Losing a child or experiencing a miscarriage](#)
- [Pet bereavement](#)
- ['Living loss' like divorce or retirement](#)
- [Self-care during bereavement](#)
- [Coping with flashbacks during bereavement](#)

You may be familiar with theories of grief that suggest we go through different stages such as shock, denial and anger until finally 'getting over' the loss.

Our ideas about the grieving process have changed. The Stages of Grief Model shows how life is often much more messy and complicated than that. You are likely to have many ups and downs, good days and bad as you start to adjust to your loss.

Early theories of grief

```
graph TD; Loss --> Shock; Shock --> Numbness; Numbness --> Denial; Denial --> Overwhelming_sadness[Overwhelming sadness]; Overwhelming_sadness --> Helplessness; Helplessness --> Confusion; Confusion --> Anger; Anger --> Panic; Panic --> Feeling_low[Feeling low]; Feeling_low --> Loneliness; Loneliness --> Stress; Stress --> Continue_with_everyday_tasks[Continue with everyday tasks]; Continue_with_everyday_tasks --> Difficulties_re-adjusting[Difficulties re-adjusting]; Difficulties_re-adjusting --> Take_on_tasks[Take on tasks from the person who died]; Take_on_tasks --> Do_social_activities[Do some social activities again]; Do_social_activities --> New_friendships; New_friendships --> Re-invest_in_life[Re-invest in life]; Re-invest_in_life --> Acceptance; Acceptance --> Loss;
```

Content

How to make it work

- Think about what your audience want. What might they be going through. Keep it simple.
- Think about the tone of voice and the language and reading age.
- Images should enhance the page.
- Evergreen content is useful as part of your comms planning.

We are so sorry that you or someone you support is struggling. Here we will tell you whether we can help, or – if we can't – where else to turn.

Are you eligible?

Please forgive us having to work within eligibility criteria – we are overwhelmed by the number of families in need so have had to focus – for the moment on the following group of mums and minis:

- Must have a child under school age with them
- Must currently be awaiting their immigration status, and have no recourse to public funds. (We cannot accept those with leave to remain, EU settled status, or those with british citizenship at this time.)
- We cannot accept mums who have income from work, or other sources coming in to the home.

Yes

If you or the mum you are supporting is eligible you don't need a referral – just turn up to be registered on Mondays and Wednesdays 10am-12pm term time only.

Our address is: The Magpie Project, Forest Lane Lodge, Magpie Close, London E7 9DE

Please note we can pay £3.50 travel money to get to the project.

Please note our new address from September 9th will be: Grassroots Centre, Memorial Park, Memorial Avenue, West Ham, E15 3DB

CATCH stands for: Community Action To Create Hope

We are a registered charity based in Leeds, West Yorkshire. We believe greatness exists in every child, and through the power of positive mentorship, we can change a child's trajectory for a lifetime. Our goal is to help young people reach their full potential by ensuring they have access to the tools and resources they need to pursue greatness. It is our privilege to invest in opportunities to help them unlock that potential. Our passion for our mission grows with every young person who overcomes an obstacle, achieves success in school, discovers their voice, and unlocks their greatness.

At our colourful headquarters in Harehills, Leeds we have created a safe space for the whole community, but in particular for young people. We have a popular youth programme with over 1000 children accessing our activities. We provide a range of opportunities for sport, creativity and learning, as well as for volunteering and social action projects. We also act as a source of support, advice, and inspiration to raise aspirations of people of all ages and backgrounds.

Content

Take action

- Use Hemmingway or Grammarly to check readability
- Remember writing for the web rules
- Remember accessibility – no click here links!
- Check your stats.

Find out more

- [5 minute guide to web content writing for non-profits](#) – Digital Charity Lab
- [Hemmingway Editor app](#)
- [An introduction to accessible web content and development](#) – Jonathan Hassell webinar

4. Integrated comms

The issues

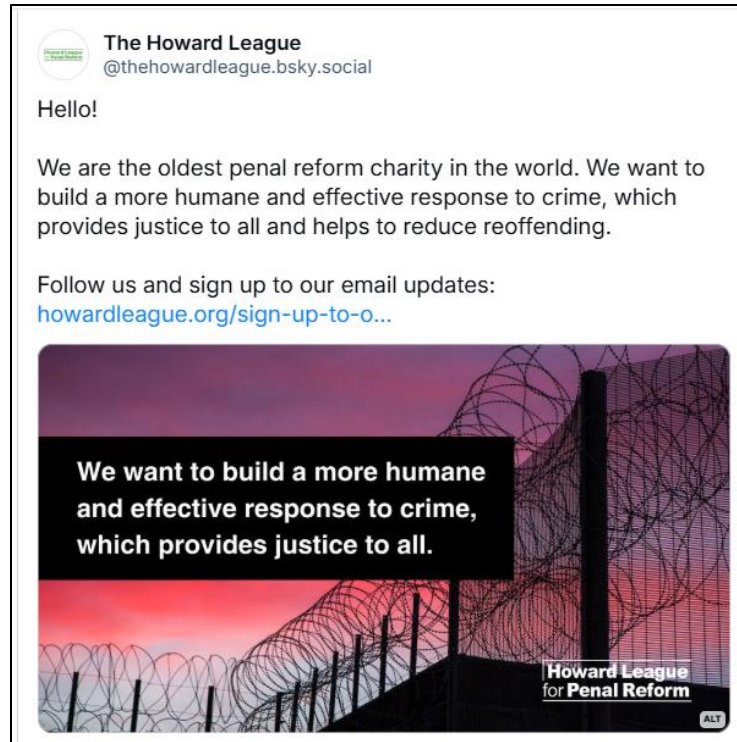
- Website and active comms are often managed separately
- Offline or off-platform promotions and campaigns not reflected on the website
- Social channels not promoted on website



Integrated comms

Check your comms

- Are current campaigns or news stories on the website?
- Can your supporter find mention of an appeal you have sent them information about?
- Are these messages prominent or findable via search?
- Does your newsletter promote your other channels?
Does your website promote your newsletter?
- Are you using tracking or mirror pages to monitor effectiveness?




The Howard League
@thehowardleague.bsky.social

Hello!

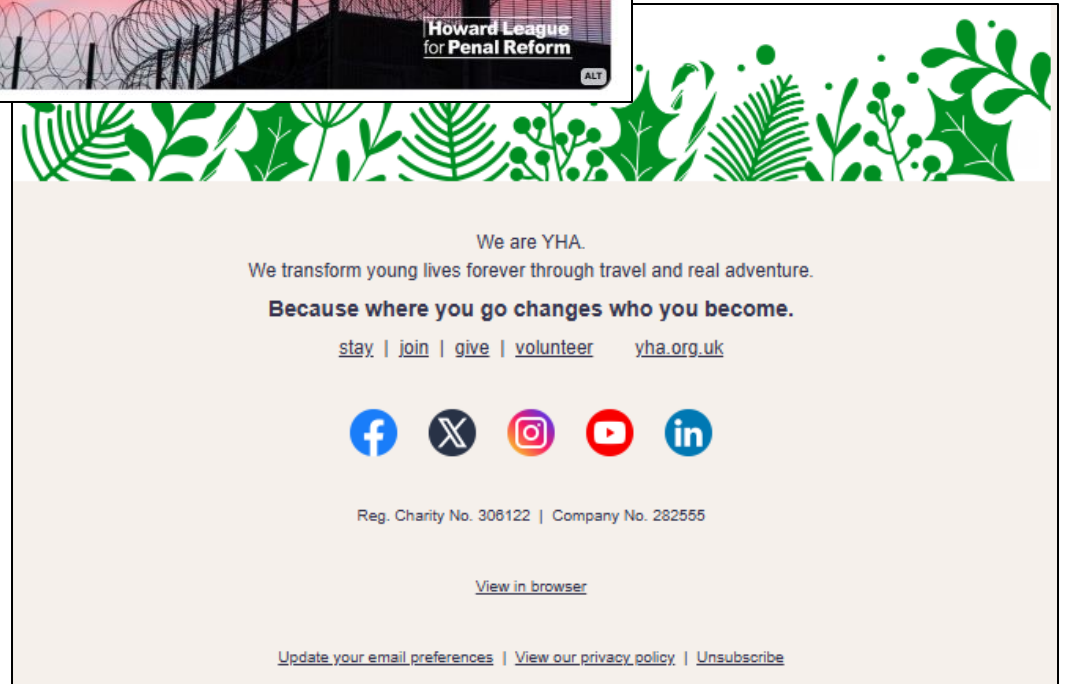
We are the oldest penal reform charity in the world. We want to build a more humane and effective response to crime, which provides justice to all and helps to reduce reoffending.

Follow us and sign up to our email updates:
howardleague.org/sign-up-to-o...



We want to build a more humane and effective response to crime, which provides justice to all.


Howard League for Penal Reform



We are YHA.
We transform young lives forever through travel and real adventure.

Because where you go changes who you become.

[stay](#) | [join](#) | [give](#) | [volunteer](#) | yha.org.uk



Reg. Charity No. 306122 | Company No. 282555

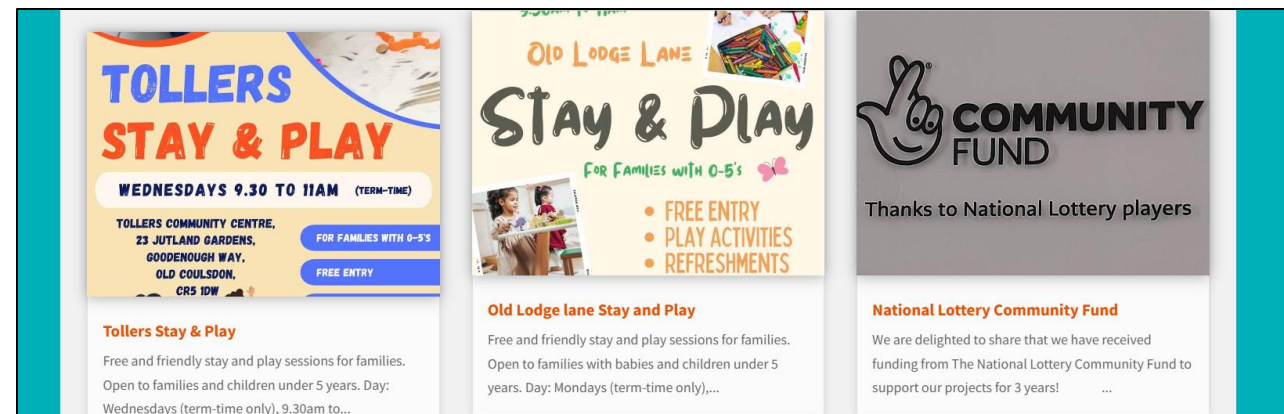
[View in browser](#)

[Update your email preferences](#) | [View our privacy policy](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)

Integrated comms

How to make it work

- Think about the user journey of your audience.
- Map out your channels and how you use them to help plan future work
- Make space for topical content on your website – a blog or news or pages you can link to
- Include a call to action in your comms which links to the website



5. Environmental impact

The issues

- The digital footprint of your website has an impact on the environment
- Poor backend systems and content design adds to the load



Environmental impact



Take action

- Check the file size of your images
- Reduce your use of video
- Avoid custom fonts
- Switch to green hosting

Find out more



- [10 ways to make your website more sustainable](#) – Digital Culture Network
- [Check your website's carbon footprint](#)

Summary - Five things your website needs to do well in 2025



01. Findability

Can people find you and your information?

> Review and boost SEO

02. User journey

Are actions easy to take?

> Remove friction and check user experience

03. Content

This content working for your audience?

> Check readability, accessibility and usefulness

04. Integrated comms

Are your comms aligned?

> See your website as the hub

05. Environmental impact

Check your footprint.

> Reduce the load



Thank you

Any questions?

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