

# Tips for setting up a website

**Planning is everything when you are setting up a website. Web designer Sue Davis talks to Laura McCaffrey about the issues that need to be considered.**

If you want to set up a website, the best starting point is to ask yourself some key questions.

**Why are you doing it?** This is a good way to focus on what the content should be. For example, you may want to make your guidelines available, and screen out ineligible applications.

**What are you aiming to achieve?** It could be improving the quality of applications, receiving fewer phone enquiries, or boosting applications to a particular stream of funding interest.

**Who is the audience?** Consider who might be applying, organisations or individuals, and how technical they might be – this might affect whether you use interactive pdfs, for example.

**How soon do you want it?** There is little point in doing it now if your yearly application deadline has just passed.

**Which other sites do you like and why?** This will really help to guide the design.

**What functionality do you need?** Some sites like to include the ability to blog, display Twitter feeds or run a database.

**What keywords might visitors type into search engines to find your site?** The designer needs to know this from the beginning to 'optimise' the site – i.e. push it up the search engine rankings.

**What are the readers' 'top tasks'?** Thinking this through helps to structure the home page, for example, including buttons '*Am I eligible?*' and '*How to apply*'. Avoid seeing the content from your own organisation's point of view – think of what the visitor wants to know.

**Does your trust have a style guide?** The website can then be consistent with printed documents in colour and language.



**Is the content already written?** Existing materials could be adapted for the web rather than rewritten. If not, who is responsible for writing content?

**What style of writing do I need?** Text should be simple language with no jargon, easy to scan-read

using short sentences and broken up with bullets and subheadings.

**Who is going to check it?** It is really worth making sure someone else reads the site before it goes 'live' to avoid any mistakes and ensure clarity.

**Who is going to maintain it?** Do you want the web designer to make changes or to run your own content management system (CMS).

## What to expect

- To be heavily involved in setting up the site – only you are the expert on your trust. You might need a two-hour barrage of questions at the beginning, then occasional questions throughout the process.
- Building a simple site should take four to six weeks. It will take longer to include an online application facility or a database.
- A simple site built by a designer (rather than an agency) can start as low as £500-600, with a more complicated one costing up to £5,000 or so. A good CMS can now cost from as little as £450.
- Agencies can charge considerably more, but offer more in return such as extensive usability and accessibility testing.
- A monthly hosting fee is normally payable.
- The web designer should provide free statistical tools to analyse traffic – this may be Google Analytics that you can also access free without designer input.

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