



## Research launched to discover how much revenue UK businesses are losing as disabled customers click away from inaccessible websites

### PRESS RELEASE

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**London, UK** – A research survey to discover how much revenue UK businesses are losing due to disabled customers finding their websites inaccessible, has been launched today by industry experts.

The [Click-Away Pound survey](#) has been commissioned and designed by Brighton-based Rick Williams, Managing Director of specialist disability consultancy [Freaney Williams Ltd](#) and associate of Business Disability Forum (BDF), in partnership with IT accessibility specialist Steve Brownlow of [Frabjous Day Ltd](#).

Speaking about the Click-Away Pound survey, Rick Williams said:

“As a visually impaired person, I use assistive technology, which is good, but companies need to think about how my specialist kit works with their website. They often don’t. I use the internet a lot to shop but will typically have to try a number of sites before I find one I can actually use. This means the first few have lost my business.

“After 20 years of legislation, most high street stores understand they need to take into account the needs of their disabled shoppers. But many appear to have overlooked how to make their online presence more accessible.”

The internet has revolutionised the way that consumers shop. However, the research will uncover just how well companies design their websites to cater for disabled consumers.

Many disabled shoppers face problems when using websites because they don’t take into account the needs of a significant number of potential users and make them accessible to everyone. This may include people with sight impairments, individuals who experience difficulties when using a mouse or keyboard and people who need to use specialist software.

If businesses fail to consider these access needs when designing their websites they are likely to be difficult, if not impossible, to use. When faced with problems using a website, disabled shoppers typically take their business elsewhere.

This major user-led survey launches on 14 January 2016 and will put numbers to the business implications of this issue in an effort to persuade businesses that they ignore disabled shoppers at risk to their bottom line.

The Click-Away Pound survey follows on from the recent Walk Away Pound report by the Business Disability Forum (BDF) and the Extra Costs Commission (ECC), which found that at a cost to business of £1.8bn per month, 75% of disabled customers had 'walked away' from a retailer's premises because they did not cater adequately for them.

The Click-Away Pound survey represents the next generation of research designed to inspire positive change among UK businesses as they shift more and more to selling goods and services online.

Rick Williams is now using his personal and professional expertise to show to business what they are missing out online. He added:

"Of the websites assessed by Freeney Williams over the past 5 years, over 70% have been assessed as 'red' on our traffic light system. This means they expose the business to significant reputational and legal risk - not to mention losing customers!

"We will use the research findings to persuade business this is an increasingly important issue for them. If the law doesn't persuade them to do things differently and think about disabled shoppers, perhaps the bottom line will.

"We want as many disabled online shoppers as possible to go to the website [www.clickawaypound.com](http://www.clickawaypound.com) and take part in this survey. We expect the results will play a key role in improving business' approach to this issue."

Susan Scott Parker, Honorary Vice President and Founder of Business Disability Forum and now CEO at Business Disability International said:

"This is one area many businesses seem to struggle with. This survey will demonstrate what we've known for many years. Businesses ignore disabled shoppers at the risk of their bottom line and damage to their PR. Why would anyone do that?"

**In developing this research, Freeney Williams is being supported by Enterprise Rent-a-Car, Business Disability Forum, Business Disability International and the Royal National Institute of Blind People.**

**Ends**

## Notes to editors:

1. Rick Williams is Managing Director of Freeney Williams. For media enquiries, please email: [rick@freeneywilliams.com](mailto:rick@freeneywilliams.com) or call 01273 327715
2. Freeney Williams Limited is one of Europe's leading disability and diversity consultancies. They work extensively in all sectors to achieve long-lasting and self-sustaining change designed to meet the needs of employers and service providers in the real world. For more information, visit: <http://www.freeneywilliams.com/>
3. Business Disability Forum is a not-for-profit business membership organisation that represents some 300 organisations that employ 20% of the UK workforce. Formerly called the Employers' Forum on Disability, the company has more than twenty years' experience of working with public and private sector employers and service providers. For more information about BDF, please visit: <http://businessdisabilityforum.org.uk/about-us>
4. In developing this research, Freeney Williams is being supported by [Enterprise Rent-a-Car](#), [Business Disability Forum](#), [Business Disability International](#) and the [Royal National Institute of Blind People](#).