NPL website- Accessibility Review

Contents

Introduction

Angela McInnes carried out a review of the NPL site from an accessibility perspective. She found that the new site had a number of issues based on the [WCAG AA rating](#) we are striving to meet.

The document below outlines what those issues were and how we will remedy those points. It will also outline activity we will undertake post launch to ensure the site is as accessible as possible.

The issues are based on which WCAG A rating they fall under.

Level A

Language

There is no language attribute on the html tag for the source code although English is listed in the source code for the CMS.

Using lang in the html tag supports a range of assistive technology including braille and text to speech software.

[See W3C language](#)

Remedy

The `lang` attribute has been added to the <head> tag of the website.

Alt tags

All images should have alt tags. All images that have meaning should have an alternative text description. All decorative images should have empty tags so that a screen reader ignores them.

There are no alt tags associated with any of the images on the home page news section. There should be empty tags for headlines one and three but the middle one contains text and should have an explanation.
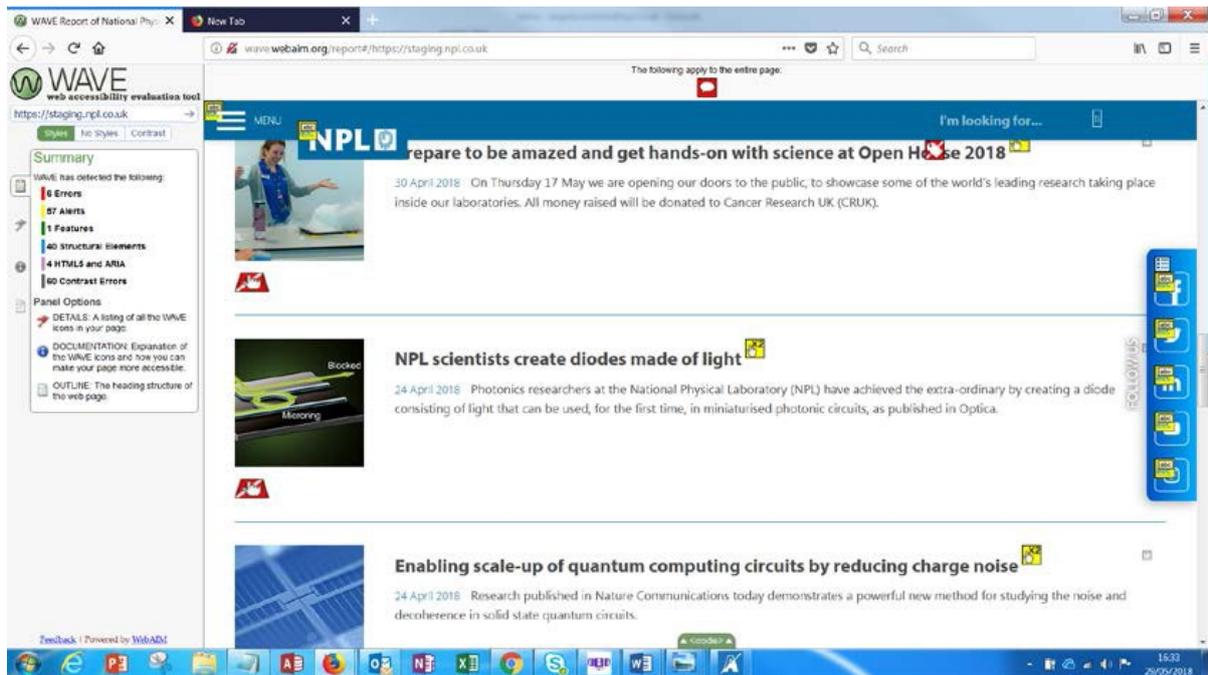
See W3C Using alt attributes on img elements

Remedy

Images used in content do have the ability to have an alt tag associated with them and we are adding these for this sort of imagery.

It should be noted that the majority of imagery on NPL is used as background decoration to header/panels/grid items that contain text-content on top of them and as such aren't considered image content with alt tags at all. These would fall under **Sensory** or **Decoration, Formatting, Invisible** in https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG21/quickref/#non-text-content and retain their context due to the text content within them.

Video on home page

The video on the home page is problematic, not only in terms of colour contrast but because there are no controls associated with it and it autoplays on a continuous loop. There needs to be controls to allow the user to disable this.

See W3C autoplay
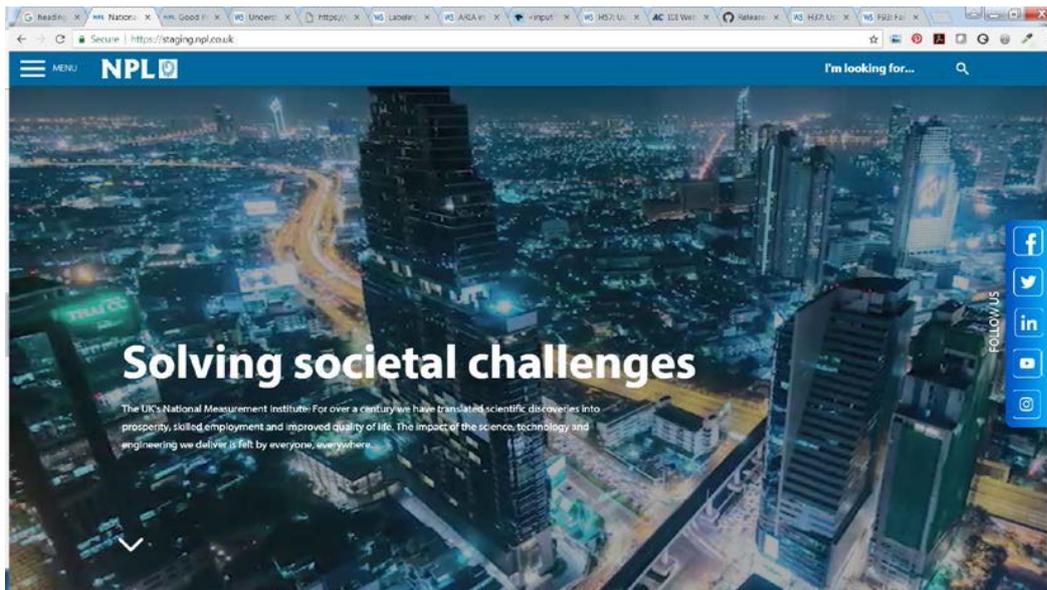
Remedy

The video in the header panel now has controls to allow the user to play/pause as required.

Update: we will not have any auto playing video in headers on the site when we launch. Post-launch we will investigate if we can implement this feature acceptably balancing the needs of all of our users with the design ethos of the site.

Search box – no label

The search box in the top right of the screen has no label associated with it in the code. This is particularly difficult where there is more than one search on the page, as below. Neither has a label.
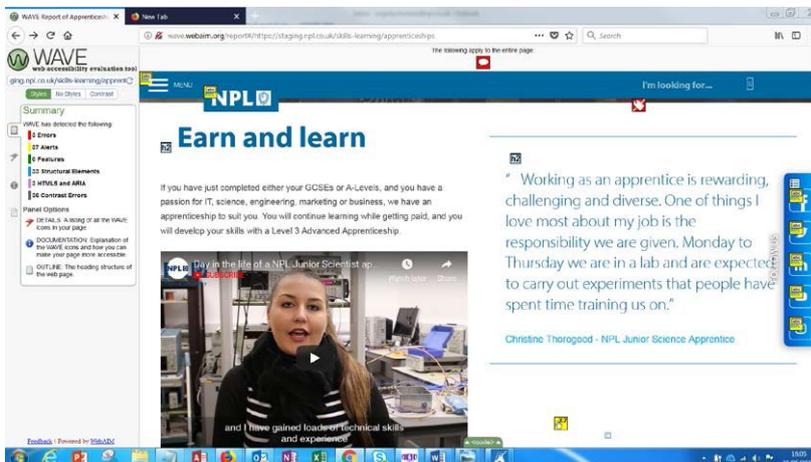
See W3C search label

Menus
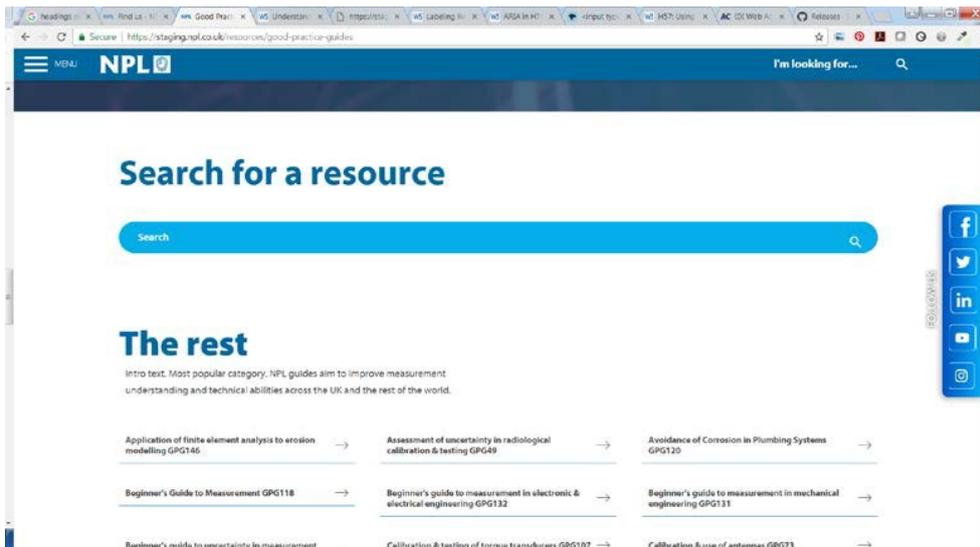
A label has been added to the site search box. The label is set to only display for screen readers.

Headings

Overall, the heading structure is good but some headings do not make sense like the quotes tagged as heading 2 not blockquote:

There are also place where something is clearly styled as a heading, if you are sighted, but tagged as paragraph text, such as "Working with you to solve business-critical problems", below.
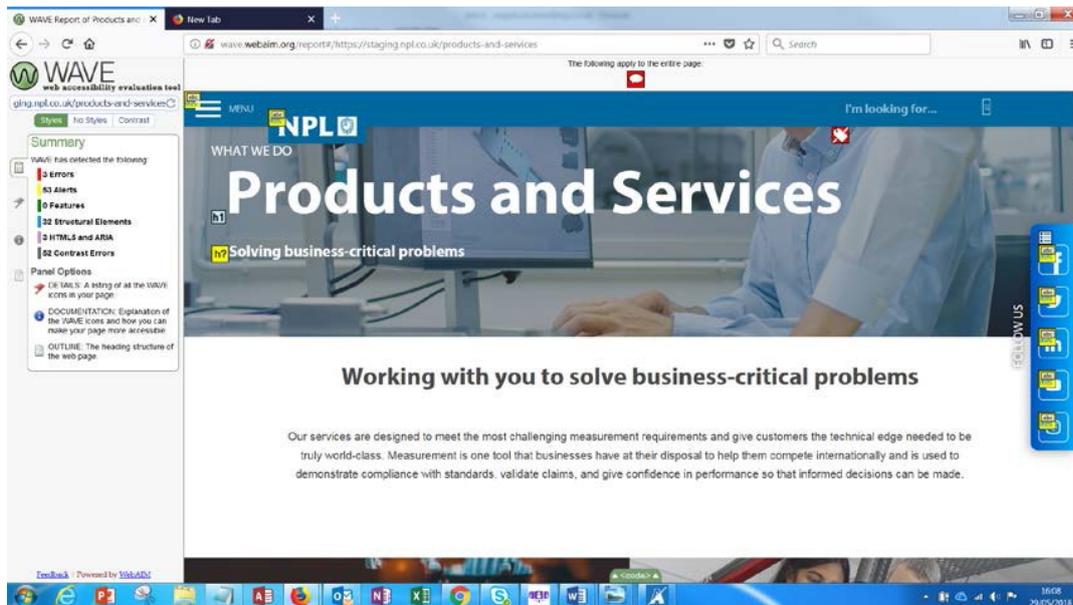
For someone visually impaired and using a screen reader this is not providing an equivalent experience, as elements which are not headings are tagged as headings and elements that are not tagged as headings are styled as headings.

See W3C styling

Remedy

We are looking into the styling of elements on the site. The example cited in the image above is purely presentational and those styled pieces of text are semantically no more important than the rest of the text. Having these paragraphs as <h> tags tend to break some of the functionality on the site.

So we are reviewing the styling of all attributes across the site to ensure that they are as semantically correct as possible especially when the page is being accessed by assistive devices and tools.

Link text

Link text should describe the link and should be unique to that link, so Advanced manufacturing or Find out more about advanced manufacturing are both fine but not Find out more, in isolation. People using screen readers may choose to "scan" a page by reading link text aloud.

Hearing Find out more, Find out more, Find out more is not a helpful user experience for them.

Where link text takes the user to a PDF document, not a web page, you should prepare the user for that by including this information in the descriptive link.
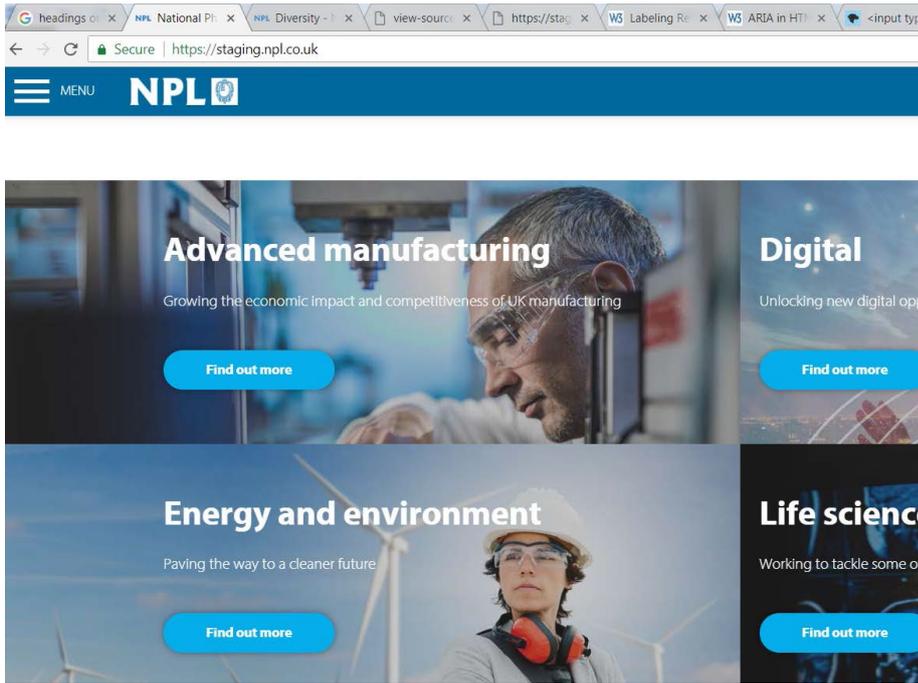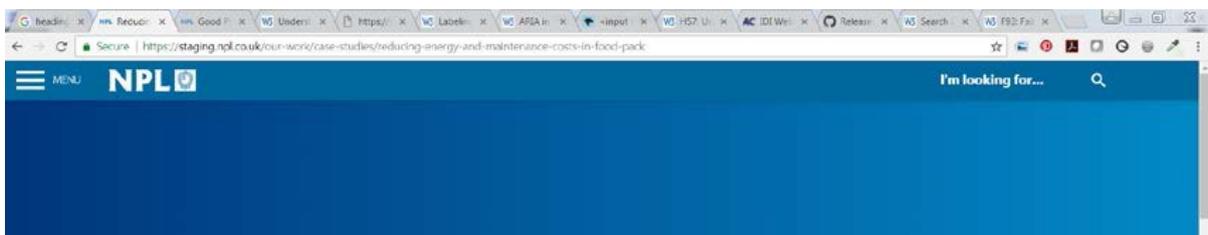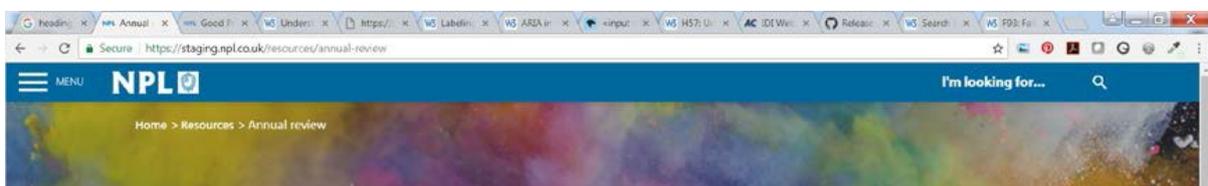
Remedy

We are going through changing this text to be more descriptive.

Level AA

Breadcrumb trail

The breadcrumb trail is not applied throughout the whole site and this makes it less useful as there isn't a consistent user experience.

Often, the user is not given a sense of how the site is organised or where they are in relation to the home page. This is disorientating.

See W3C Breadcrumb trail

Remedy

We are adding the breadcrumb to all normal pages of the site. There are some standalone pages such as campaign sites where this isn't appropriate and these will not have the breadcrumb.

Colour contrast

The use of text on photographs or video provides inadequate colour contrast at points throughout the site, as the images are often pale and the text white. This is more problematic with smaller font sizes.

There are examples of failures across the site, including on the home page.

[See W3C Contrast (Minimum)](#)
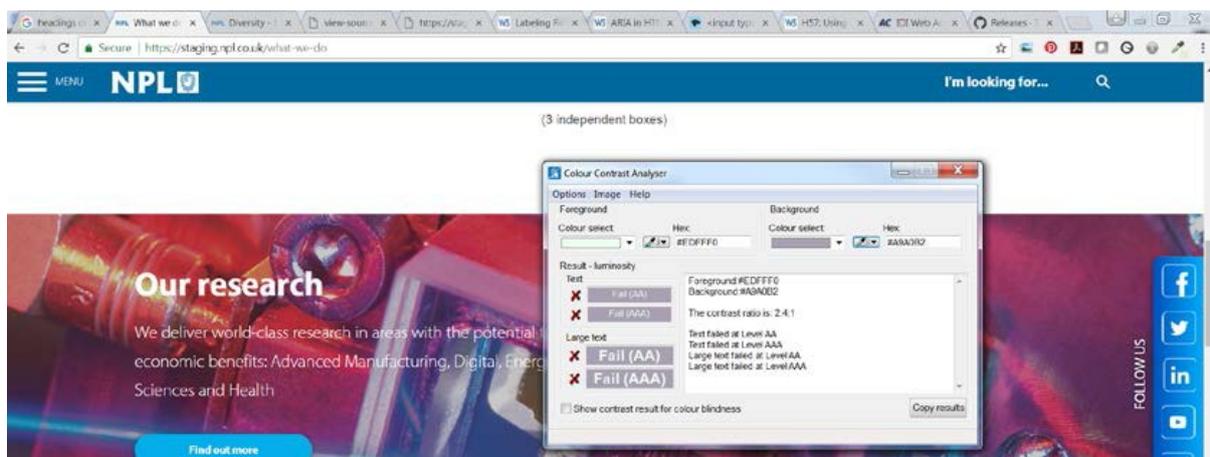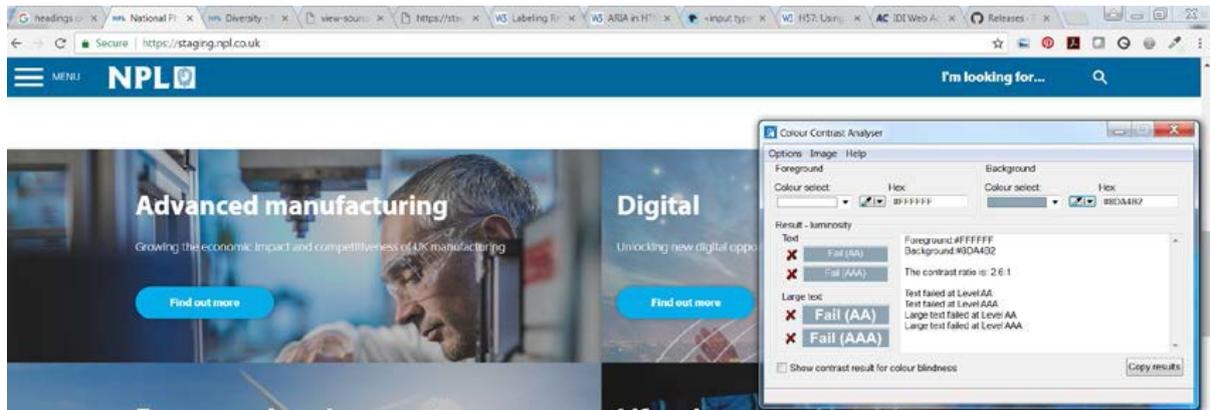
The text for the tabs (white on grey) doesn't provide sufficient contrast:
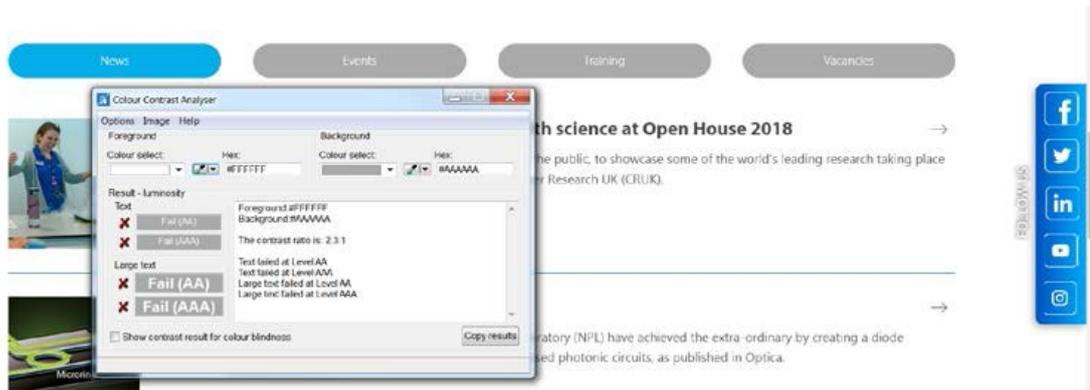
Remedy

We are selecting background images that create a better contrast with the text overlaid on them. Settings for the components have been changed to make content more readable. Images have had a darker filter added and the text had been made larger and a drop-shadow is applied.

We understand that certain components of the site can be problematic and post-launch will review the design options available to improve the legibility and contrast of the site.

Hover magnification

Like the video, I found the magnification on the hover distracting rather than helpful. Again, I would recommend testing with users with accessibility needs.
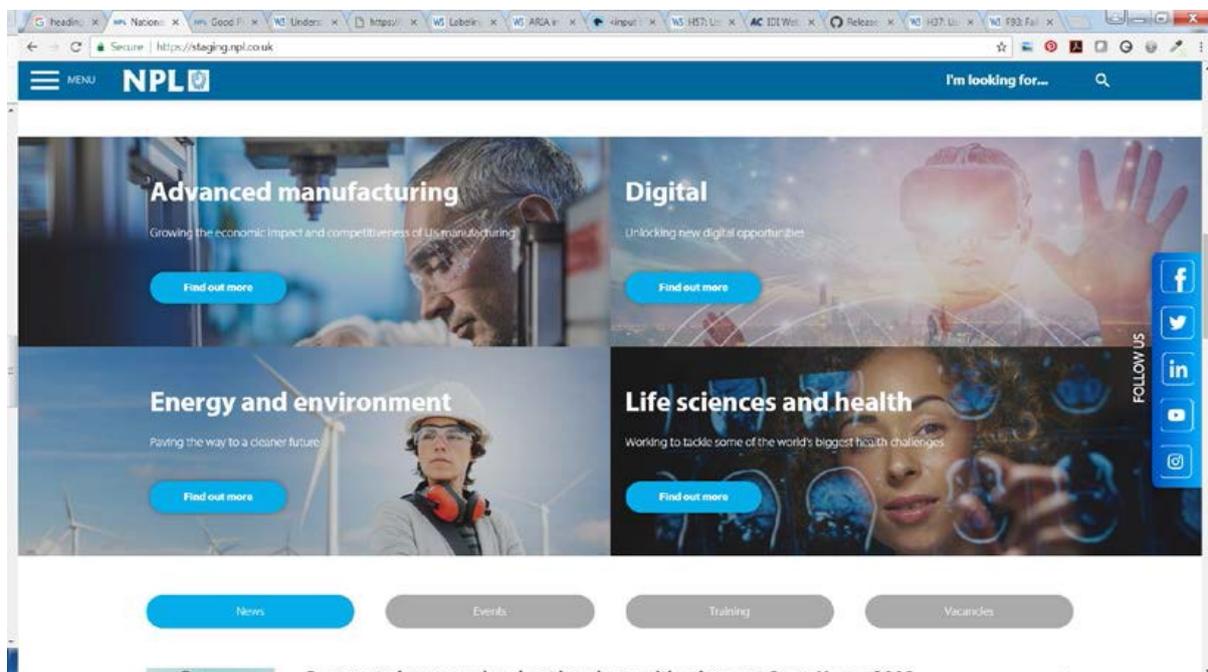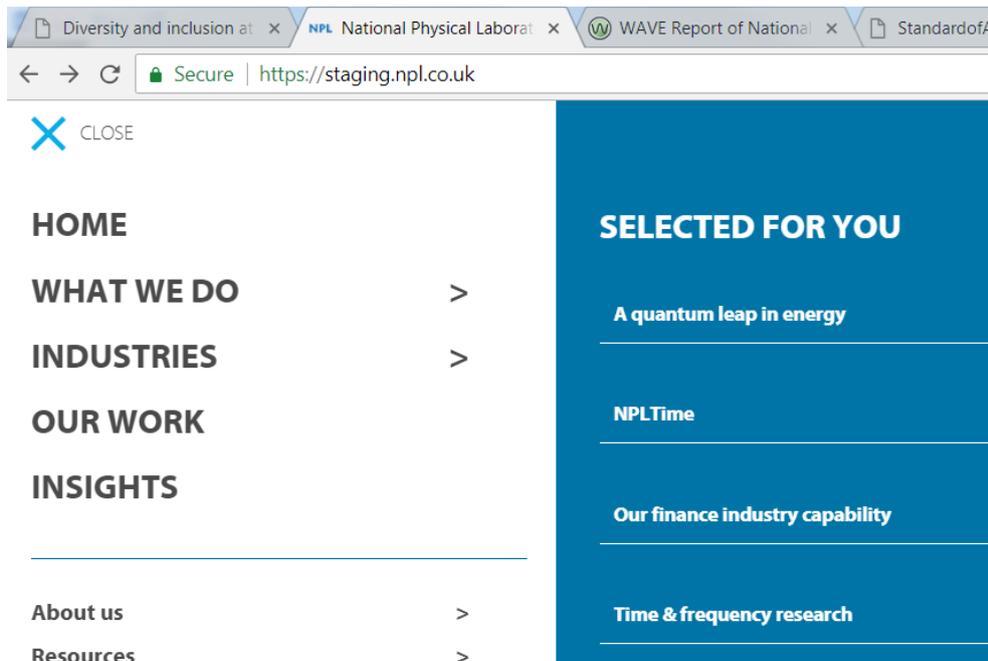

Remedy

We will address the configuration of these components post launch.

Advisory

Block capitals

The use of strings of block capitals, as in the menu on the top left, make it more difficult to read the text.

Remedy

We have removed the block capitals from the navigation. All menu items are sentence case now.

Post-launch activity

Post launch we will continue to review the accessibility of the site, and make changes as needed.

Currently we are planning to investigate the following:

- Look at the ARIA roles as exposed by the website to improve keyboard navigation
- Look at adding transcripts for any YouTube videos we create
- Review the design framework of the site to identify improvements for clarity and legibility
- Keyboard focus styling