

# Accessibility at Skyscanner

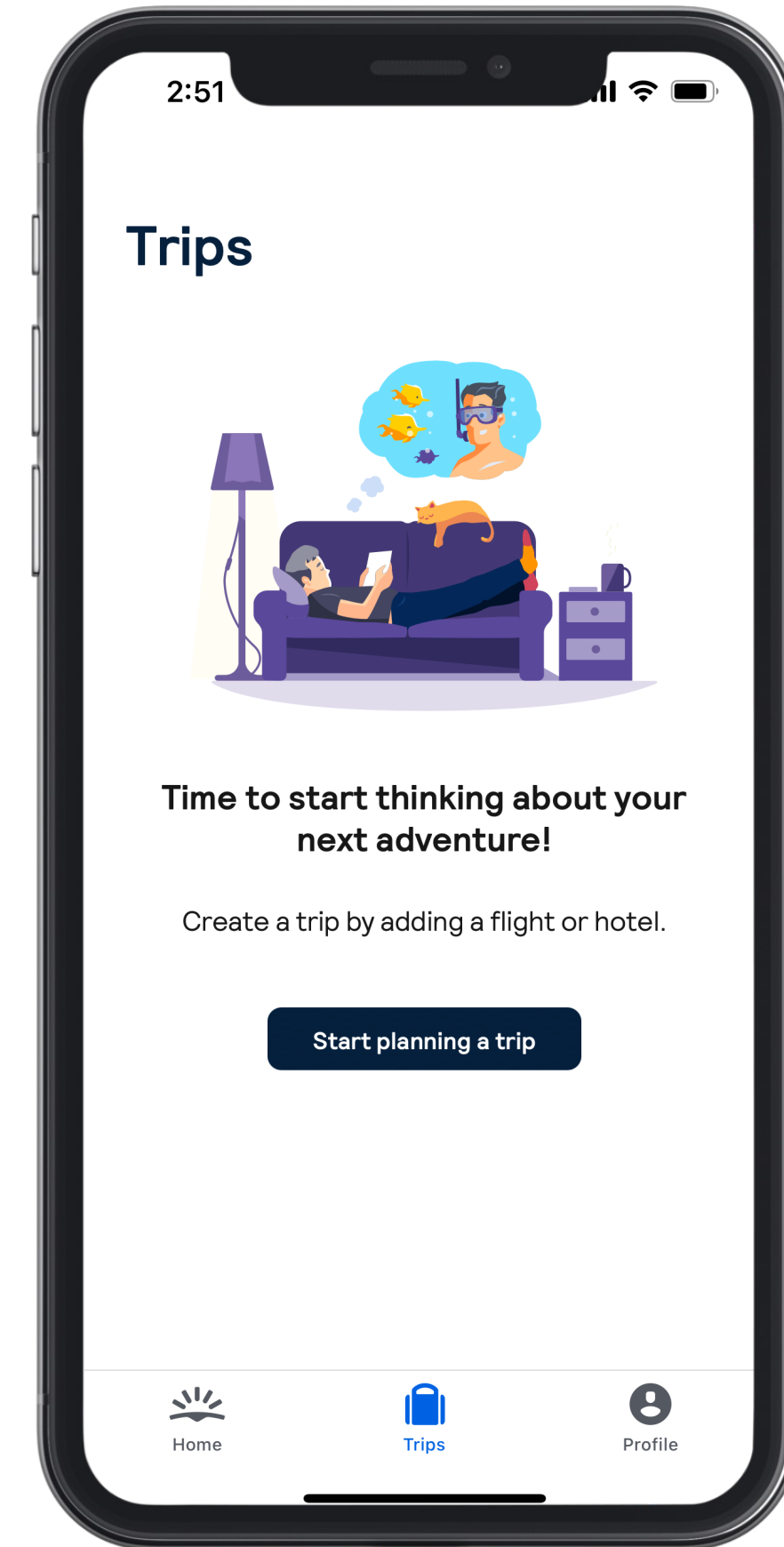
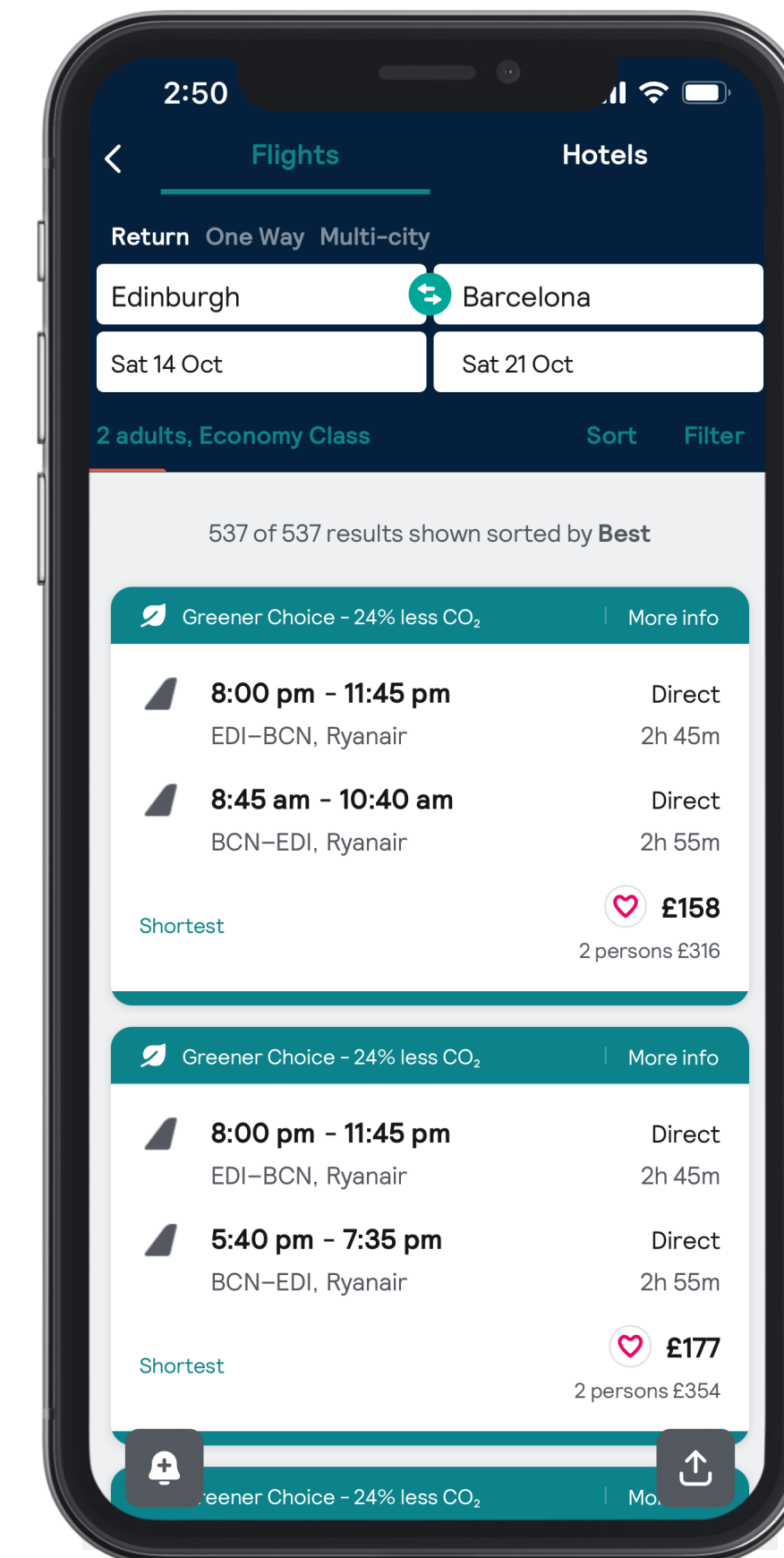
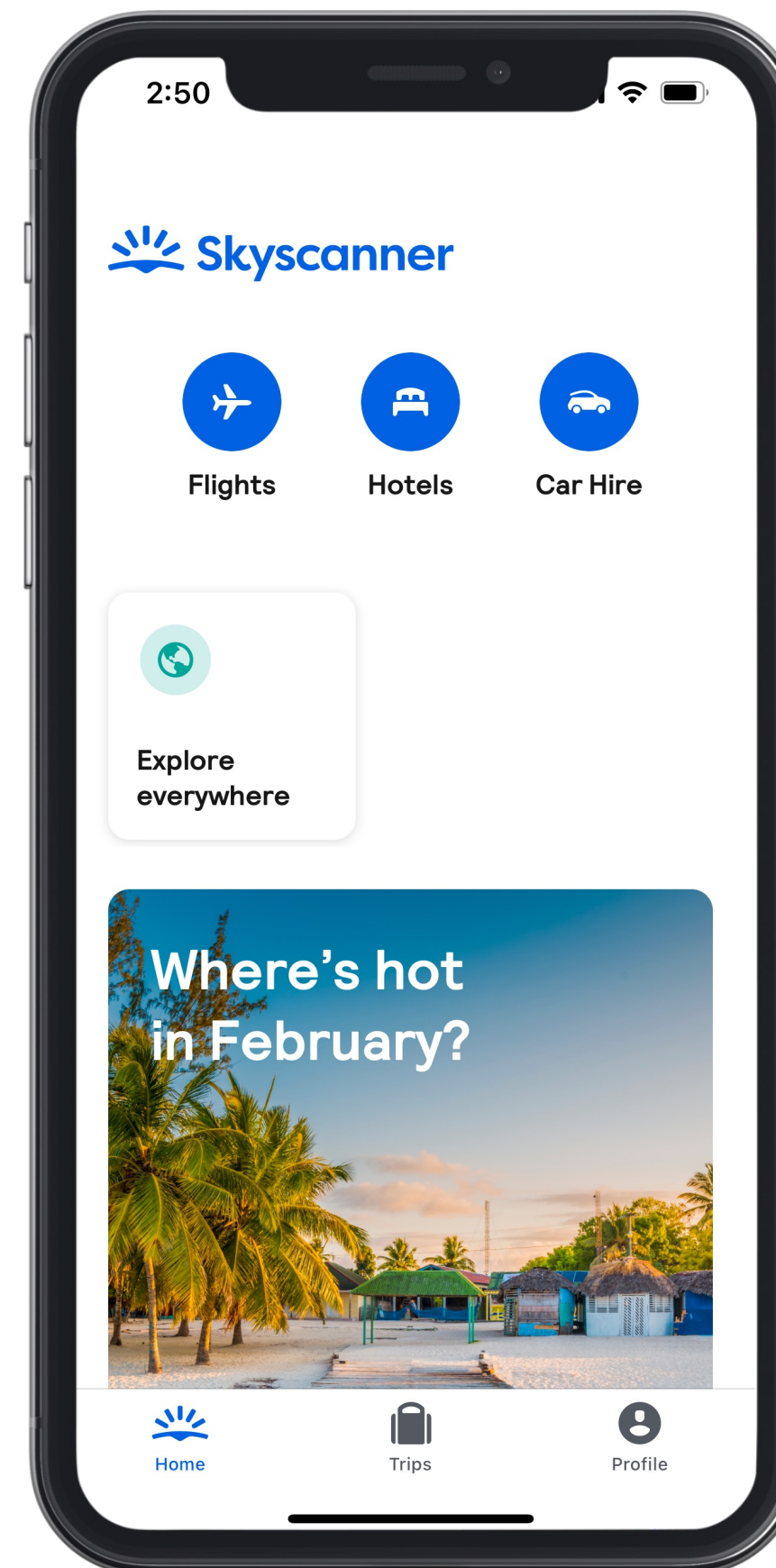
Heather Hepburn, Accessibility Lead



# About us

## Company

- Online global travel brand
- Offer flights, hotels & car hire
- 1,300+ staff
- 9 offices worldwide
- 35 languages
- 100 million monthly active users

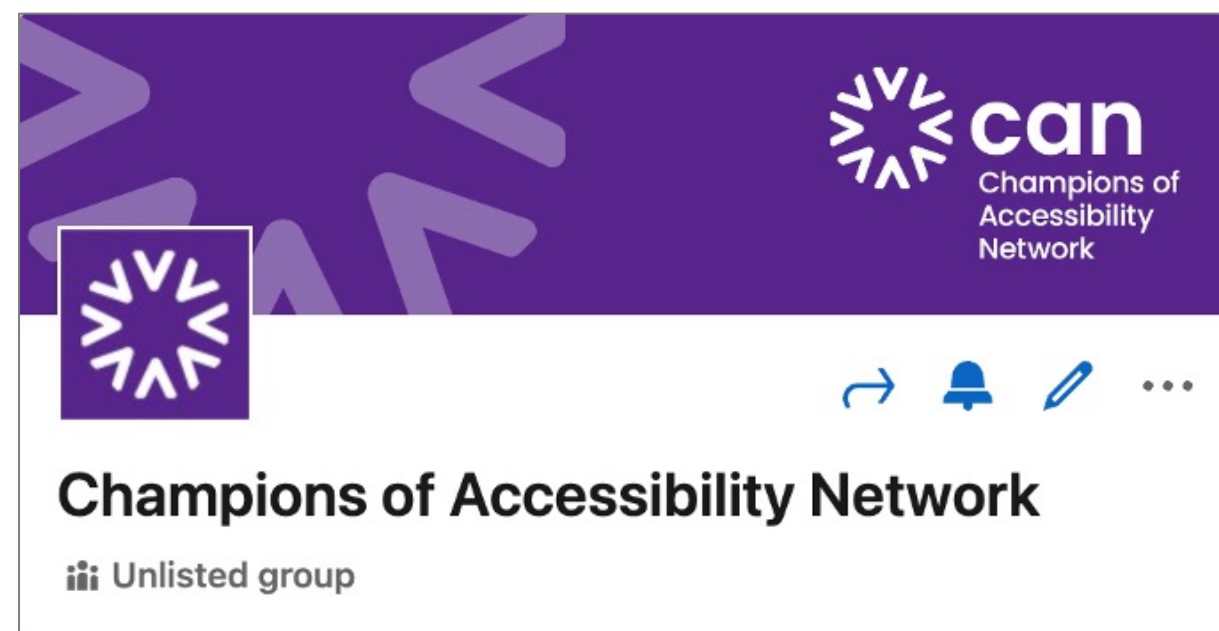




# About me

## Heather Hepburn

- UX Writer for 7 years
- Now Accessibility Lead at Skyscanner
- Co-founder of Champions of Accessibility Network (CAN)



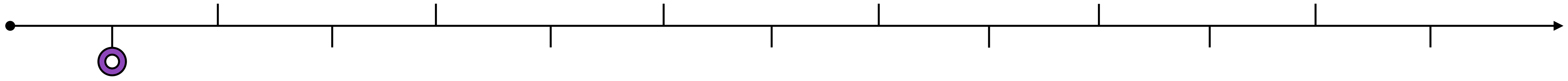
# Content

- **Our journey so far**
- **A11y improvements – case studies**
- **What's next**
- **Our learnings**
- **Q&A**



# Our journey so far

Our journey so far

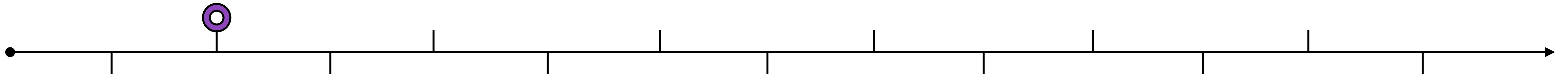


## Finding like-minded folk





Our journey so far



## Exec buy-in

**Piero Sierra**  
Chief Product Officer

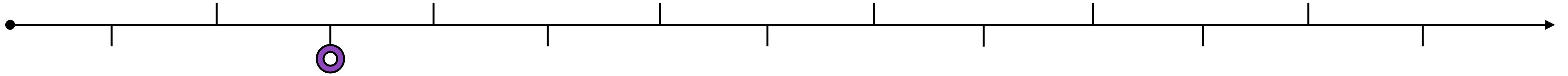


## Business Case

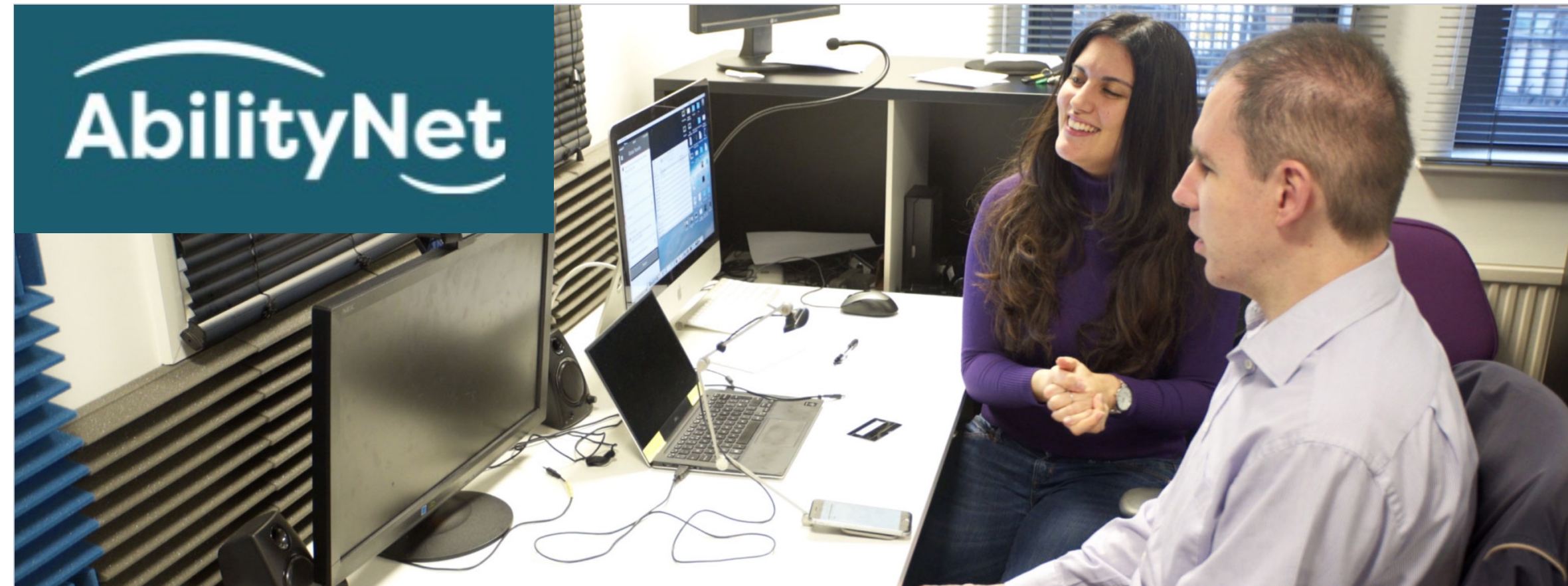
- Commercial reasons
- Legal reasons
- Moral reasons



Our journey so far



# Expert help



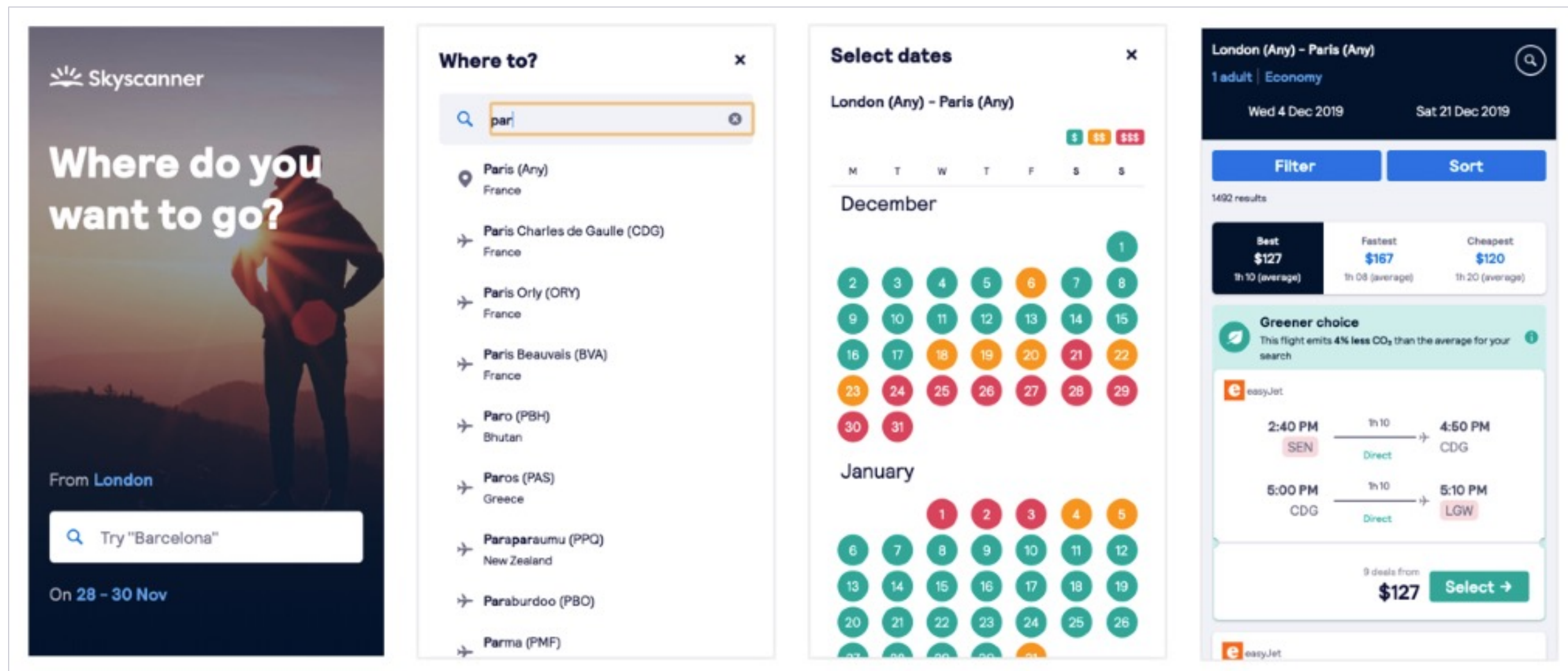


## Our journey so far



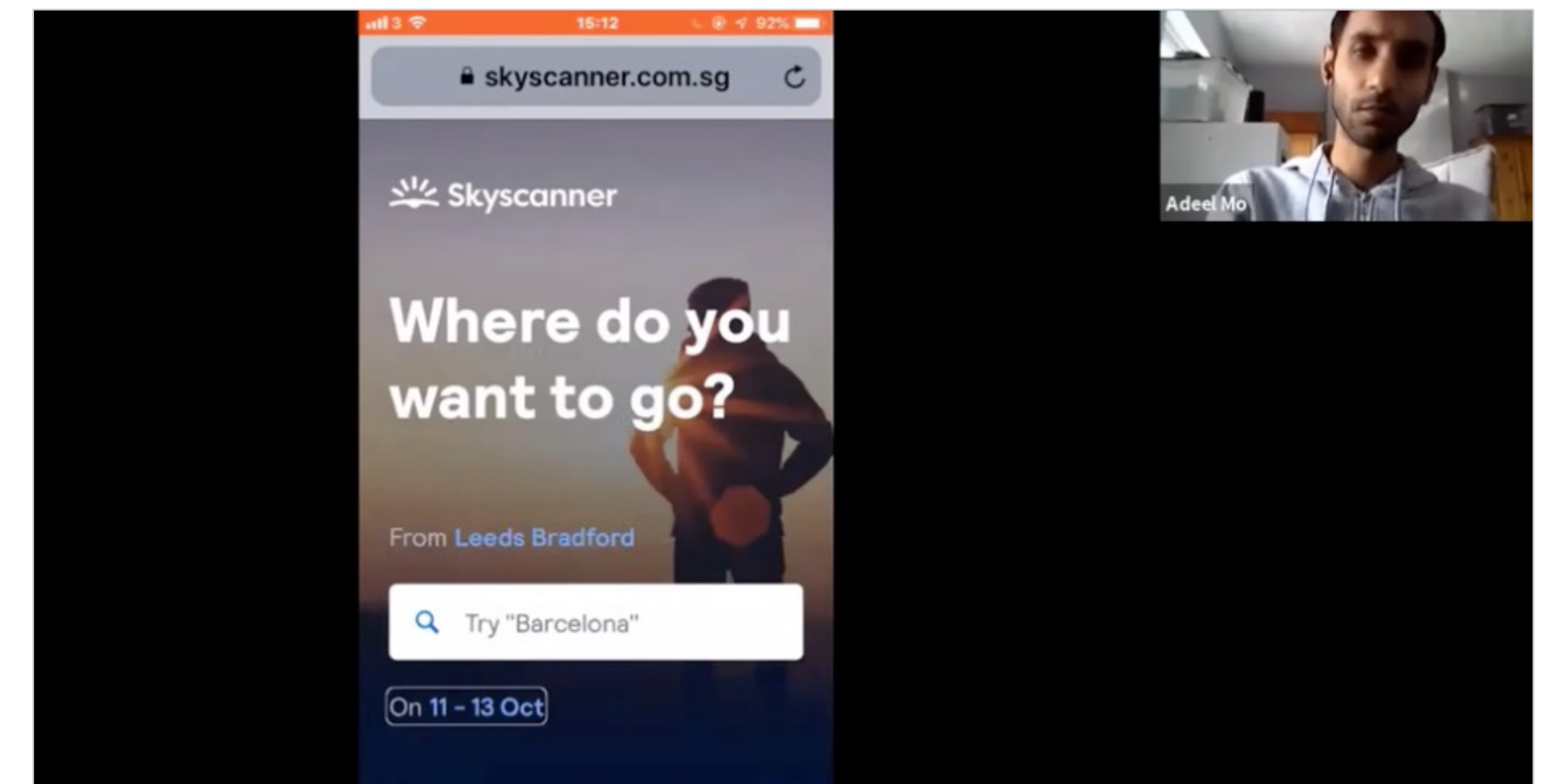
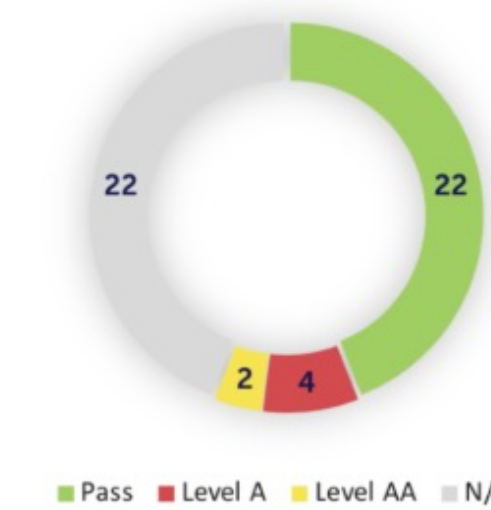
# Started small

## New mobile website

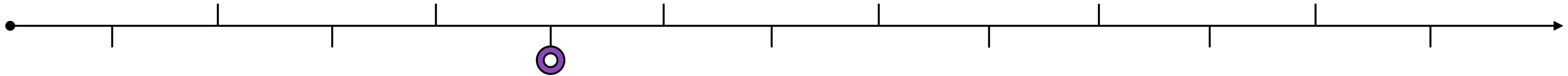


## Pass/fail for WCAG

- 22 pass
- 4 level A issues
- 2 level AA issues
- 22 not applicable



Our journey so far



## Built a strategy

Our vision

To make Skyscanner a **flagship of disability inclusion, our products accessible to all, and travel easier for people with disabilities.**

our travellers

our industry

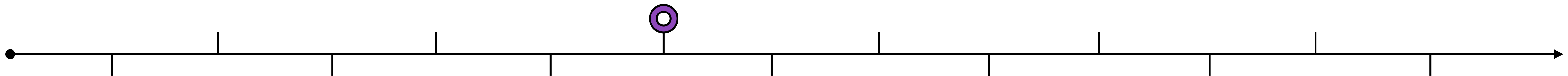
our people

Our strategy





## Our journey so far



# Resources

## Accessibility – Getting started

Created by Heather Hepburn, last modified on 05 Jul 2022

Accessibility needs to be considered at **every** stage of product development. Let's break down the responsibilities and actions required by everyone involved.

(a11y = accessibility)

### Getting started guides

- [Getting started – Accessibility for Developers](#)
- [Getting started – Accessibility for Product Designers](#)
- [Getting started – Accessibility for Content Designers](#)
- [Getting started – Accessibility for Product Managers](#)

### Design & Copy Checklist

#### Text

- Minimum text size is 16px or 14px Bold
- Text is not embedded into graphics
- Copy is easy to understand – aim for a reading level of 9

#### Colour

- Small text (smaller than 24px or 19px Bold) has contrast of at least 4.5:1
- Large text (24px or 19px Bold, or larger) has contrast of at least 3:1
- Icons & design elements that should be seen have contrast of at least 3:1
- Colour alone is not used to communicate information

#### Images / Illustrations

- Content is inclusive
- Accessibility text exists on all non-decorative images

#### Layout

- Text is broken up into readable sections
- Chunks of text are left aligned
- Heading structure is defined – H1 to H6 (just H on app)
- Field labels, hint text and error messages sit close to the field
- Placeholder text is not used (except in Search fields)

#### Interaction

- Motion can be controlled by the user or stops after 5 seconds
- Navigation elements are consistent
- Links & CTAs are descriptive & unique
- No functionality relies on a mouse or touch screen only
- Zooming in to 400% is available without losing content or functionality
- Elements are correctly labelled for screen readers

#### Output

- Figma files are marked up with Accessibility Annotations
- Final build includes your mark up information & is accessible

### Accessibility

## Our vision

To make Skyscanner a flagship of **disability inclusion**, our products **accessible** to all, and travel **easier** for people with disabilities

Skyscanner | Accessibility



### What is accessibility?

**Accessibility** is the degree to which our products can be used by as many people as possible

**Inclusive design** is the methodology that enables, and draws on, the full range of human diversity

**Accessibility + Inclusive design** = Truly inclusive products that work for everyone

### Our Champions network

- Get involved: [Accessibility Champions Network](#)
- [Accessibility: Engineering Pod Dashboard](#)
- [Accessibility: Internal Pod Dashboard](#)
- [Accessibility: Marketing & Comms Pod Dashboard](#)
- [Accessibility: Product Makers Pod Dashboard](#)

### Key content

Strategy	Activity	Tooling
----------	----------	---------

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Strategy brief</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Champions network</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Maturity model</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Accessibility personas</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Meetings</a></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Projects</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">User research</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Empathy labs</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Accessibility blogs</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Case studies</a></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">AQA</a> - Web auditing</li> <li>• <a href="#">Deque University</a> - Self-paced accessibility training</li> </ul> |
|---|--|--|

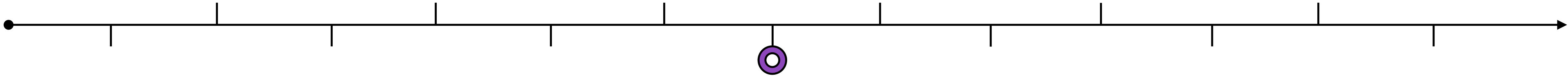
Quickstart

### How to get started

1. Join [#accessibility](#) on Slack – a great place to ask questions
2. Learn what accessibility is and why care about it – do Module 1 of the "[Accessibility & Inclusive Design](#)" course on MyDevelopment
3. Check out these accessibility guidelines (more coming to Backpack soon!):
  - a. **Designing for accessibility** – [Designing for Web Accessibility](#) by the W3C & our own [Designer Guide](#)
  - b. **Developing for web:**
    - i. [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\)](#) (version 2.1, Level AA)
    - ii. [BBC's Mobile Accessibility Guidelines](#) (suitable for apps too)
    - iii. Our [Developer Guide](#)
    - iv. Our Github guide [Accessibility](#)
  - c. **Developing for iOS** – [iOS Accessibility Guidelines](#)
  - d. **Developing for Android** – [Designing for Accessibility](#)
4. Find out what's involved in manual testing in our [Manual Testing Checklist](#)
5. Read the US Government's [Getting started: Accessibility for Product Managers](#)



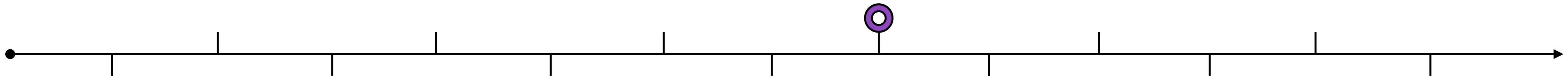
Our journey so far



# Empathy Labs





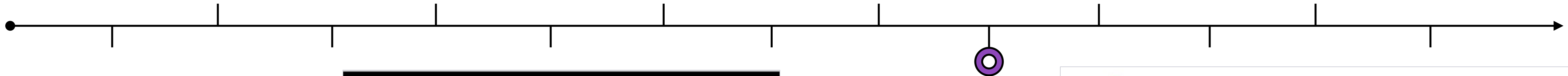


# Training

<b>1</b>	<b>Design</b>	Use accessible colours (good contrast & works for colour blindness), font size, layout, motion & interactions
<b>2</b>	<b>Content</b>	Copy is written using plain language with clear and unique links & CTAs, ALT text & hidden labels
<b>3</b>	<b>Keyboard only</b>	When using only a keyboard (no mouse or touch), navigation is clear, in a logical order & all interactive elements are reachable
<b>4</b>	<b>Screen readers</b>	Works with a screen reader with meaningful focus order, heading tags, image descriptions & labels
<b>5</b>	<b>Magnification</b>	Can zoom up to 400% (or down to mobile size 320px) without losing content or functionality




# Our journey so far



## Advocacy

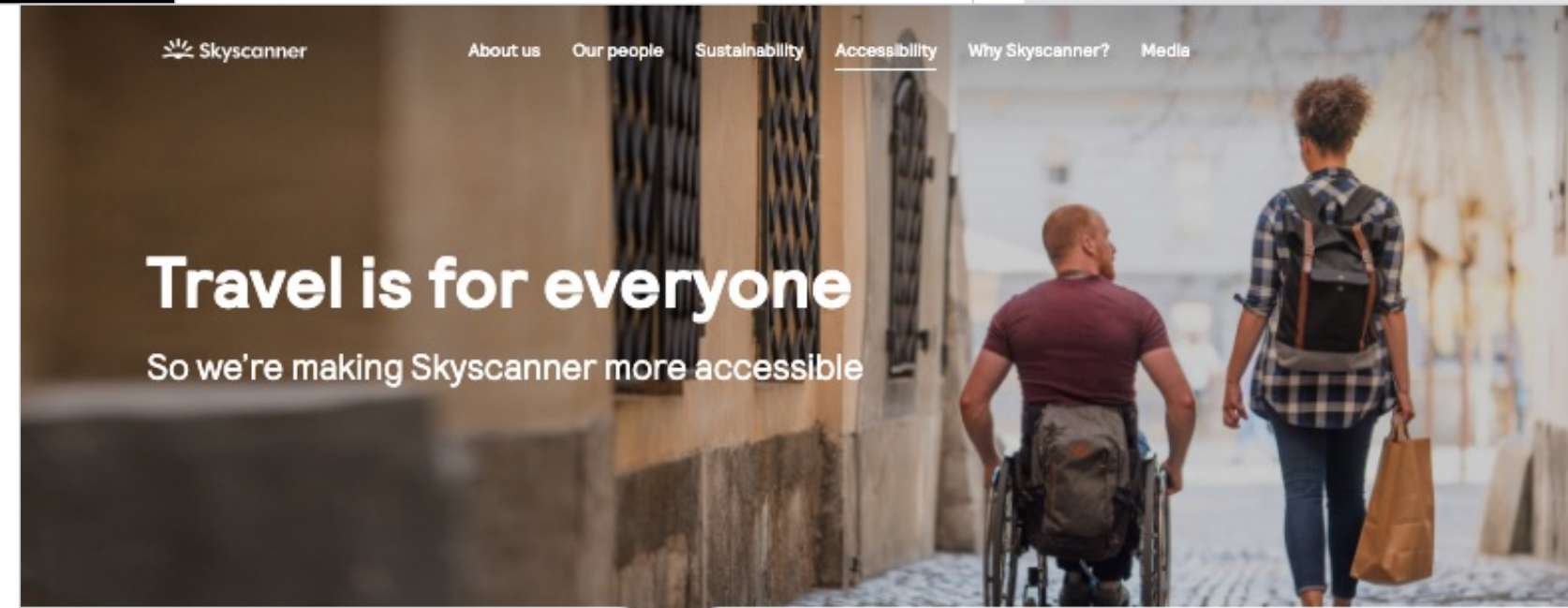


 [Heather Hepburn](#)  
Principal Designer, Accessibility Specialist  
Thu May 20 2021, 8 min read

### Reflecting on our accessibility journey

[Edit Blog](#)

To celebrate Global Accessibility Awareness Day, 20 May 2021, let's take a look at how far we've come on our accessibility journey and where we're heading.



Travel gives you the chance to get out there, explore the world and create memories you'll treasure for life. That's why we're on a mission to make planning trips effortless for everyone, whatever accessibility needs you may have.

### Here's more about our journey so far

#### Better online experiences

Our designers and engineers are working towards making our app and website more inclusive by thinking about everyone in the work they do.

#### Dedicated people

Accessibility isn't the job of one person alone. So we're building a committed team of Accessibility Champions to help enable this essential work across the business.

#### User research

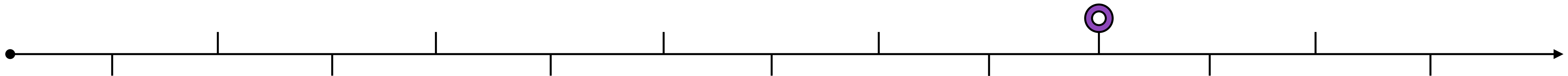
There's no better way to understand the needs of travellers with disabilities than reaching out to them through dedicated research and user testing.

#### Continual education

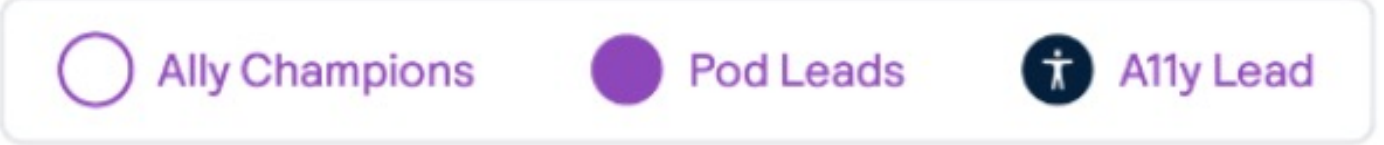
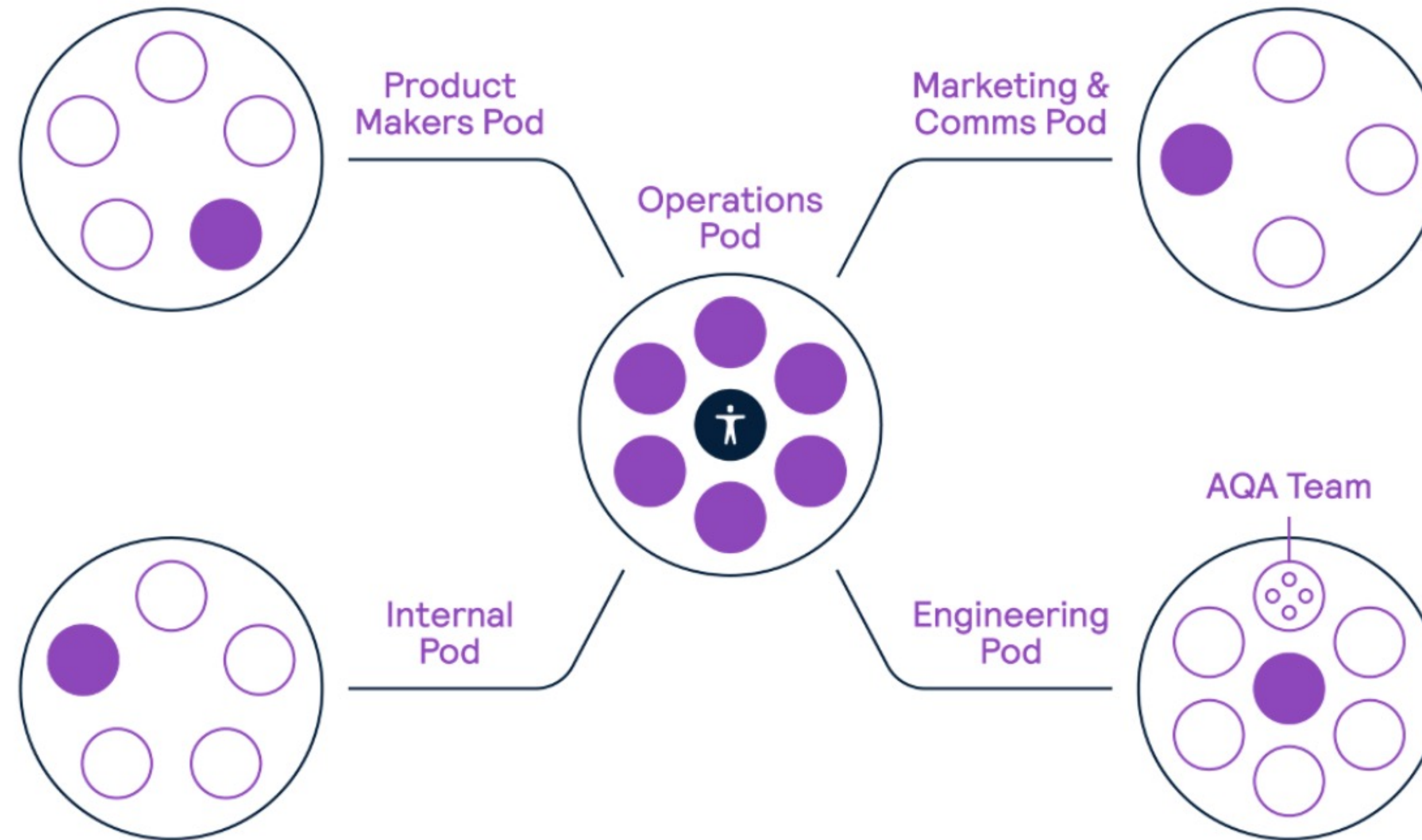
With regular workshops and training, we're not just learning how to create accessible products - we're building empathy with our disabled travellers too.



Our journey so far

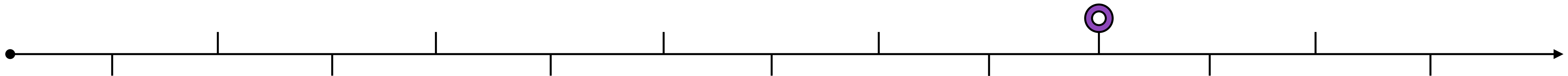


# New Accessibility Champions Network

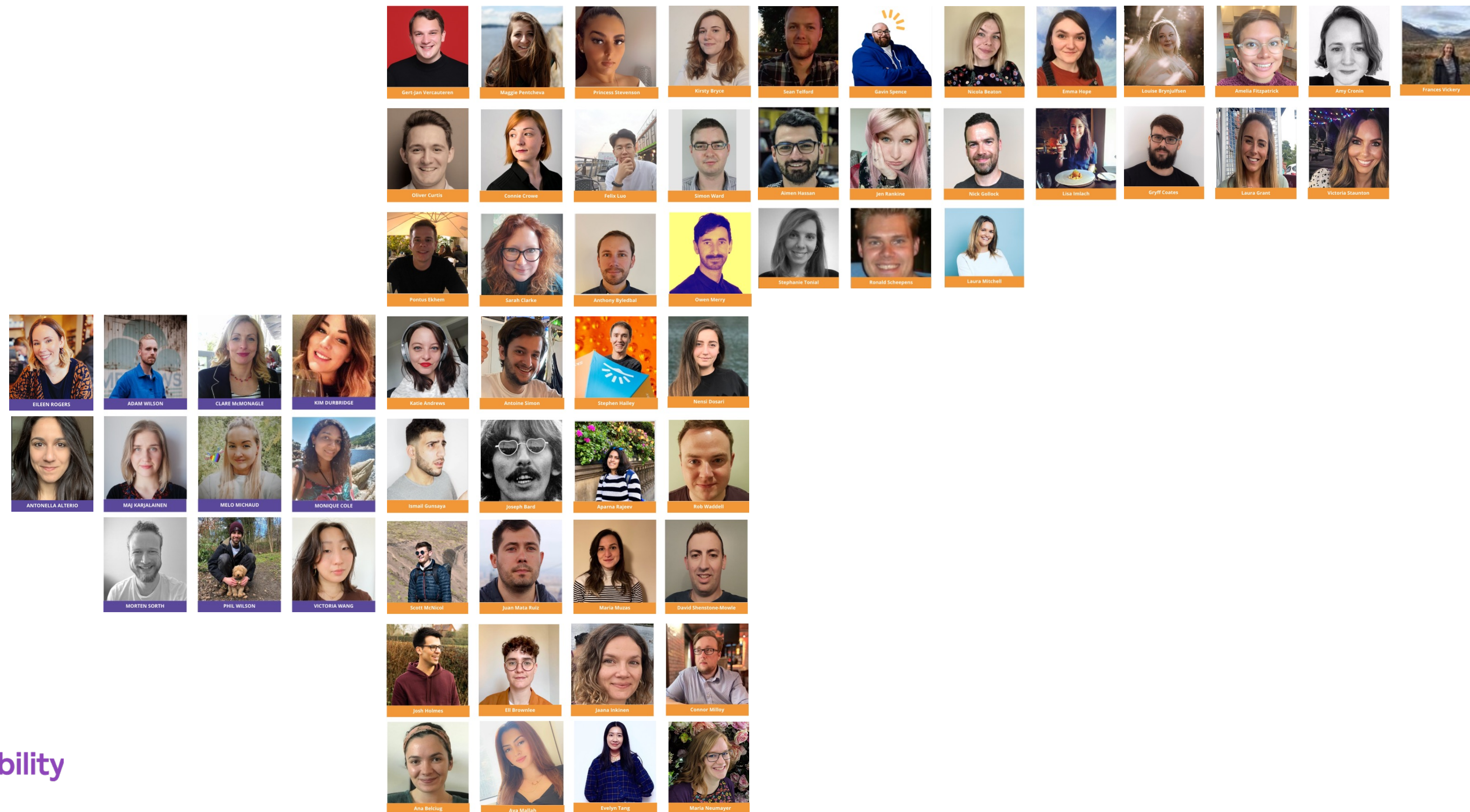




Our journey so far

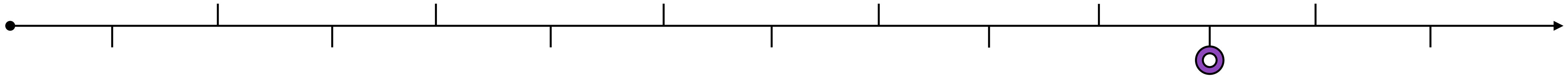


# New Accessibility Champions Network



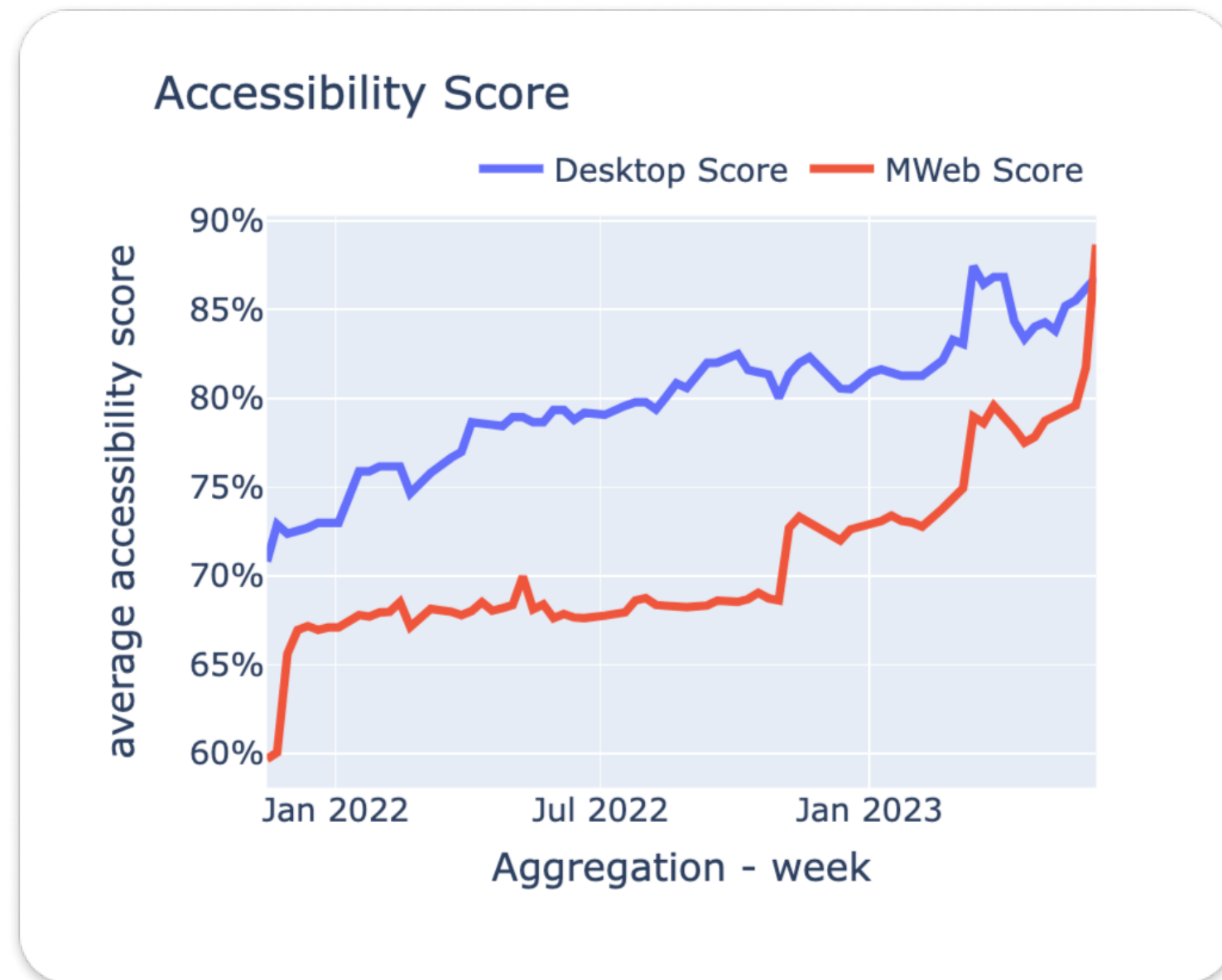


# Our journey so far

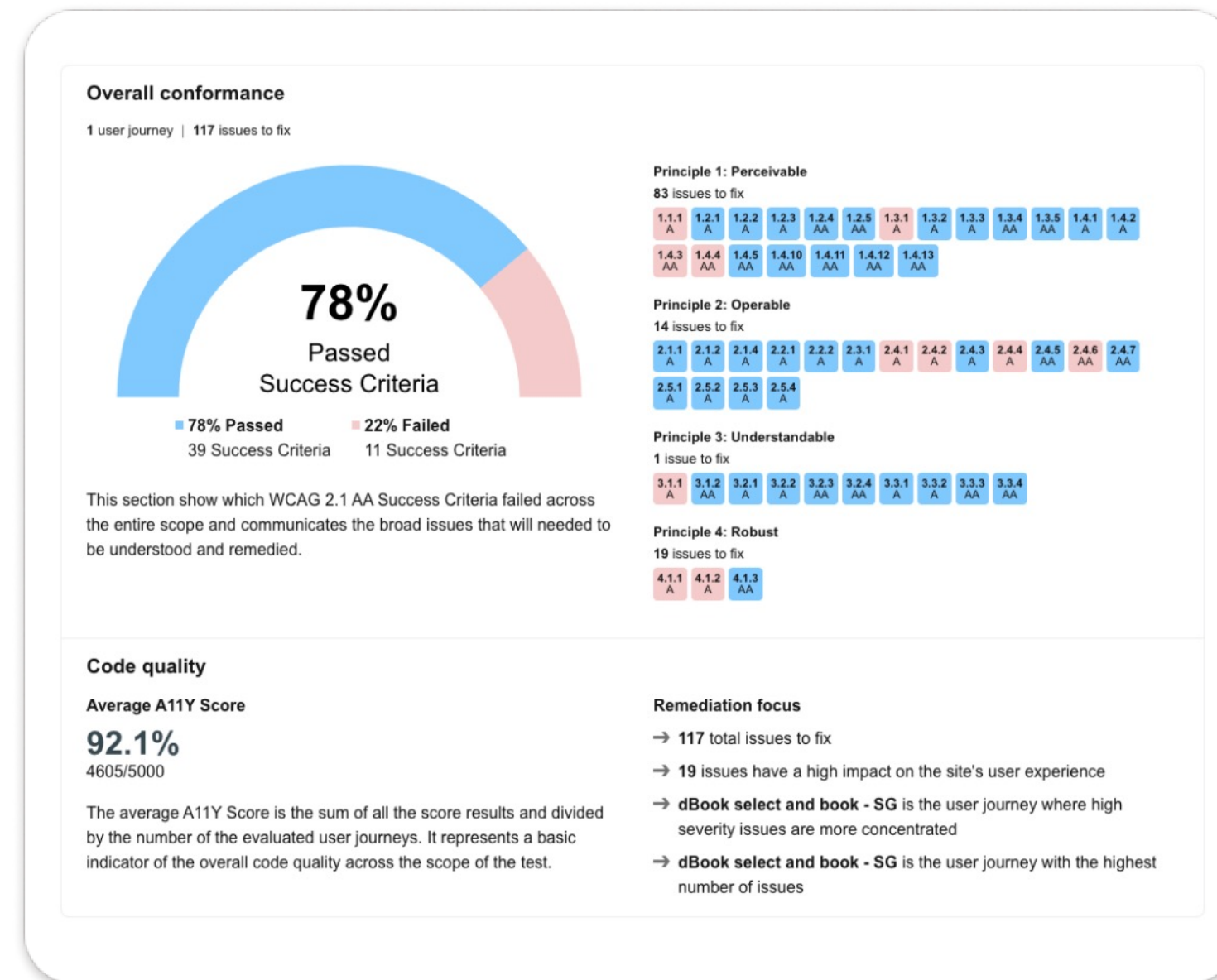


# Reporting

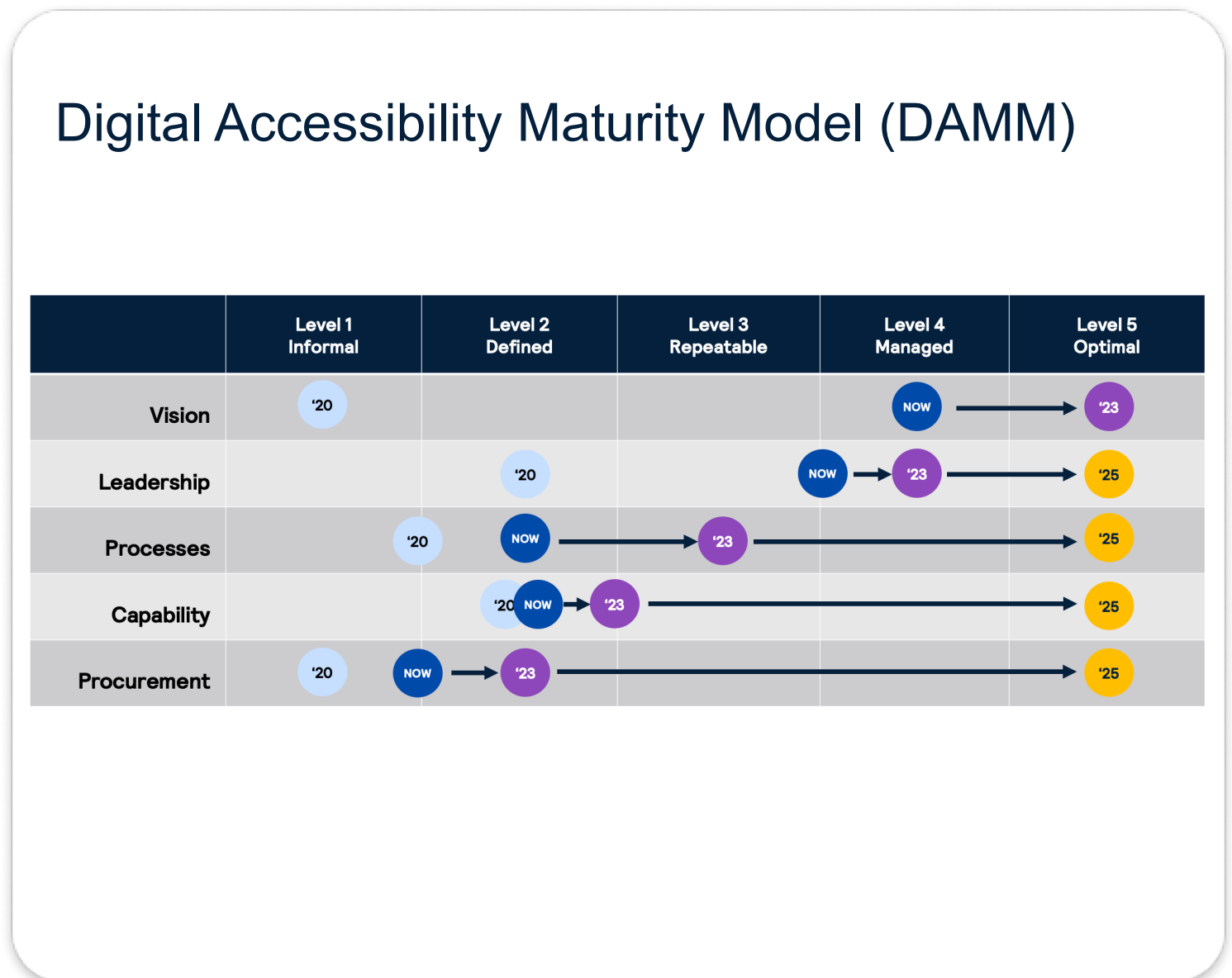
## Tracking per week



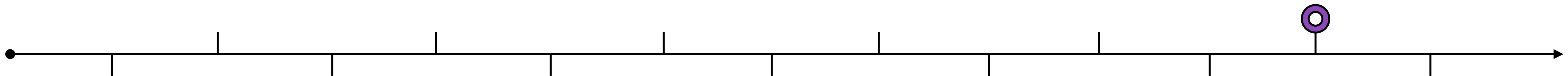
## Audit reports



## Programme performance



Our journey so far



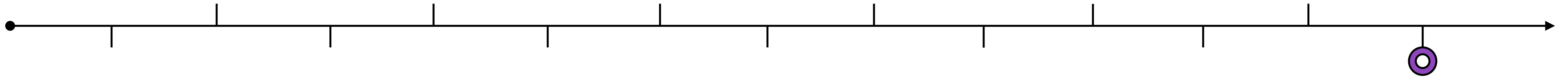
# New Design System



A screenshot of the Backpack website's Accessibility page. The page has a dark blue header with the Backpack logo and a search icon. A left sidebar contains a navigation menu with items: Welcome to Backpack, Getting started, Foundations, Components, Content, and Accessibility (expanded to show Overview, For Product Designers, For Engineers, For Content Designers, and For Product Owners). The main content area features a large heading 'Accessibility' followed by a paragraph: 'We believe that travel should be for everyone. We want our products to be usable by all, which means making them accessible for all.' Below this is a horizontal navigation bar with tabs: Overview (selected), For Product Designers, For Engineers, For Content Designers, and For Product Owners. The main text reads: 'We're working hard to create a design system that's full of accessible components and guidance on how to implement them in an accessible way. We've also created guides for specific roles – Designers, Engineers and Content Designers – to help you do this.' A section titled 'What we can do' contains two sub-sections: 'Understand the people who use our product' (with text: '1 in 5 people lives with some form of permanent disability, with many disabilities affecting how people use technology. To prevent designing barriers in our products, it's essential to know who uses them, including people with a wide range of disabilities.') and 'Remember we can all experience disabilities every day' (with text: 'As well as permanent disabilities that we're born with or acquire with age, there are temporary impairments – like short-term hearing loss due to an ear infection – and situational impairments – like losing your glasses. These can affect everyone at various times.'). On the right side, there is a 'ON THIS PAGE' section with a link 'What we can do' and two sub-links: 'Understand the people who use our product' and 'Remember we can all experience disabilities every day'. A final link 'Recognise that people use products differently' is also present.



Our journey so far



# “Positive Impact”





# A11y improvements – case studies



# Colour palette



## Case study #1

# Colour palette

## Before

**Brand Guidelines**  
Version 10

**Colour Palette**

Our lead colour is Sky Blue. We support this with three Sky Blue shades (darker) and three Sky Blue tints (lighter).

Our wider colour palette supports Sky Blue with Bunol, Monteverde, Abisko, Kolkata and Panjin, along with two tints of each of these colours.

For text and UI elements we use Sky Grey and its seven tints.

**Colour Combinations**

To ensure that our colours are always paired correctly we have created a colour combination chart, which displays all of our approved colour combinations.

As a general rule, we use dark colours or shades on light backgrounds, and light colours or tints on dark backgrounds.

Always refer to our combination chart when pairing two or more colours, and when using colour with type ensure that the colour pairing meets accessibility standards.

**Brand Guidelines**  
Version 10

**Colour Palette**

<b>Sky Blue</b> RGB: 50, 121, 227 HEX: #0062E3 CMYK: 98, 0, 100, 0	<b>Monteverde</b> RGB: 150, 56, 152 HEX: #963636 CMYK: 50, 100, 0, 0	<b>Abisko</b> RGB: 216, 144, 72 HEX: #D9534F CMYK: 100, 100, 0, 0	<b>Bunol</b> RGB: 216, 121, 89 HEX: #D94F53 CMYK: 100, 0, 100, 0	<b>Kolkata</b> RGB: 90, 72, 95 HEX: #5A4F5A CMYK: 100, 0, 100, 0	<b>Panjin</b> RGB: 209, 67, 91 HEX: #D03030 CMYK: 100, 0, 100, 0
<b>Sky Blue Shade 03</b> RGB: 2, 18, 44 HEX: #002222 CMYK: 100, 100, 0, 0	<b>Sky Blue Shade 02</b> RGB: 4, 33, 89 HEX: #004488 CMYK: 100, 100, 0, 0	<b>Sky Blue Shade 01</b> RGB: 8, 78, 178 HEX: #0099CC CMYK: 100, 100, 0, 0	<b>Sky Blue Tint 01</b> RGB: 128, 152, 225 HEX: #8099CC CMYK: 0, 100, 100, 0	<b>Sky Blue Tint 02</b> RGB: 152, 182, 242 HEX: #99B2CC CMYK: 0, 100, 100, 0	<b>Sky Blue Tint 03</b> RGB: 208, 223, 248 HEX: #C0D9E0 CMYK: 0, 100, 100, 0
<b>Sky Grey</b> RGB: 12, 18, 18 HEX: #000000 CMYK: 100, 100, 100, 100	<b>Sky Grey Tint 01</b> RGB: 18, 18, 18 HEX: #000000 CMYK: 100, 100, 100, 100	<b>Sky Grey Tint 02</b> RGB: 24, 24, 24 HEX: #000000 CMYK: 100, 100, 100, 100	<b>Sky Grey Tint 03</b> RGB: 30, 30, 30 HEX: #000000 CMYK: 100, 100, 100, 100	<b>Sky Grey Tint 04</b> RGB: 36, 36, 36 HEX: #000000 CMYK: 100, 100, 100, 100	<b>Sky Grey Tint 05</b> RGB: 42, 42, 42 HEX: #000000 CMYK: 100, 100, 100, 100

**Colour Combinations**

AA - denotes the 'AA' text colour + background swatch combination is accessible, for more information on text size and contrast please see our Design\_Guide on our Accessibility Hub.

Our old brand guidelines on what colours combinations were allowed

## After

AA - denotes colour + background swatch combination is accessible, and intended to be used this way

**Brand Guidelines**  
Version 10

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As a general rule, we use dark colours or shades on light backgrounds, and light colours or tints on dark backgrounds.

Always refer to our combination chart when pairing two or more colours, and when using colour with type ensure that the colour pairing meets accessibility standards.

**Brand Guidelines**  
Version 10

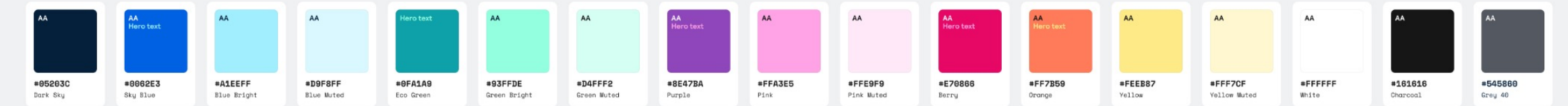
**Colour Palette**

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<b>Sky Blue Shade 03</b> RGB: 2, 18, 44 HEX: #002222 CMYK: 100, 100, 0, 0	<b>Sky Blue Shade 02</b> RGB: 4, 33, 89 HEX: #004488 CMYK: 100, 100, 0, 0	<b>Sky Blue Shade 01</b> RGB: 8, 78, 178 HEX: #0099CC CMYK: 100, 100, 0, 0	<b>Sky Blue Tint 01</b> RGB: 128, 152, 225 HEX: #8099CC CMYK: 0, 100, 100, 0	<b>Sky Blue Tint 02</b> RGB: 152, 182, 242 HEX: #99B2CC CMYK: 0, 100, 100, 0	<b>Sky Blue Tint 03</b> RGB: 208, 223, 248 HEX: #C0D9E0 CMYK: 0, 100, 100, 0
<b>Sky Grey</b> RGB: 12, 18, 18 HEX: #000000 CMYK: 100, 100, 100, 100	<b>Sky Grey Tint 01</b> RGB: 18, 18, 18 HEX: #000000 CMYK: 100, 100, 100, 100	<b>Sky Grey Tint 02</b> RGB: 24, 24, 24 HEX: #000000 CMYK: 100, 100, 100, 100	<b>Sky Grey Tint 03</b> RGB: 30, 30, 30 HEX: #000000 CMYK: 100, 100, 100, 100	<b>Sky Grey Tint 04</b> RGB: 36, 36, 36 HEX: #000000 CMYK: 100, 100, 100, 100	<b>Sky Grey Tint 05</b> RGB: 42, 42, 42 HEX: #000000 CMYK: 100, 100, 100, 100

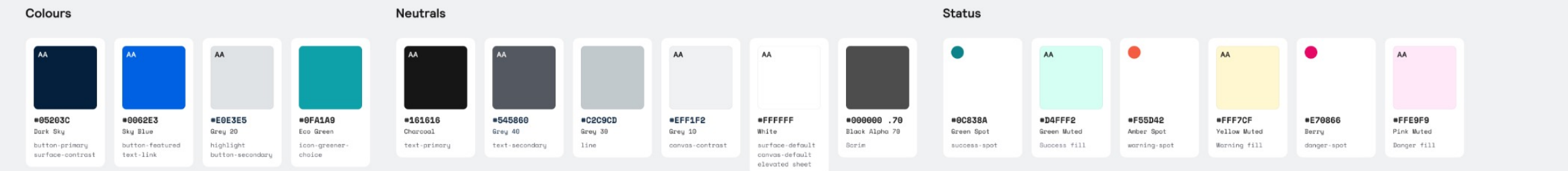
**Colour Combinations**

AA - denotes the 'AA' text colour + background swatch combination is accessible, for more information on text size and contrast please see our Design\_Guide on our Accessibility Hub.

### Marcomms Palette



### Product Palette Day Mode



### Night Mode



2

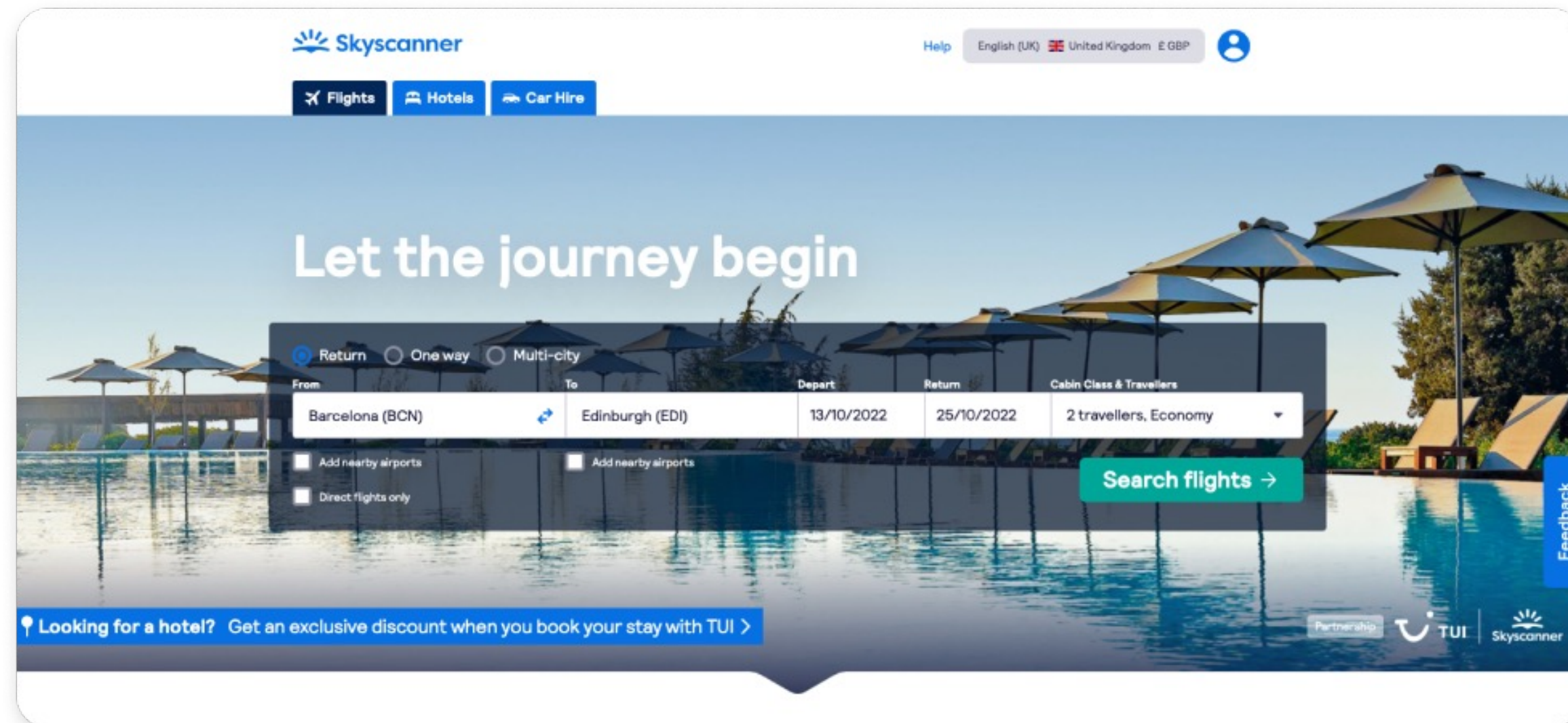
# Search Controls



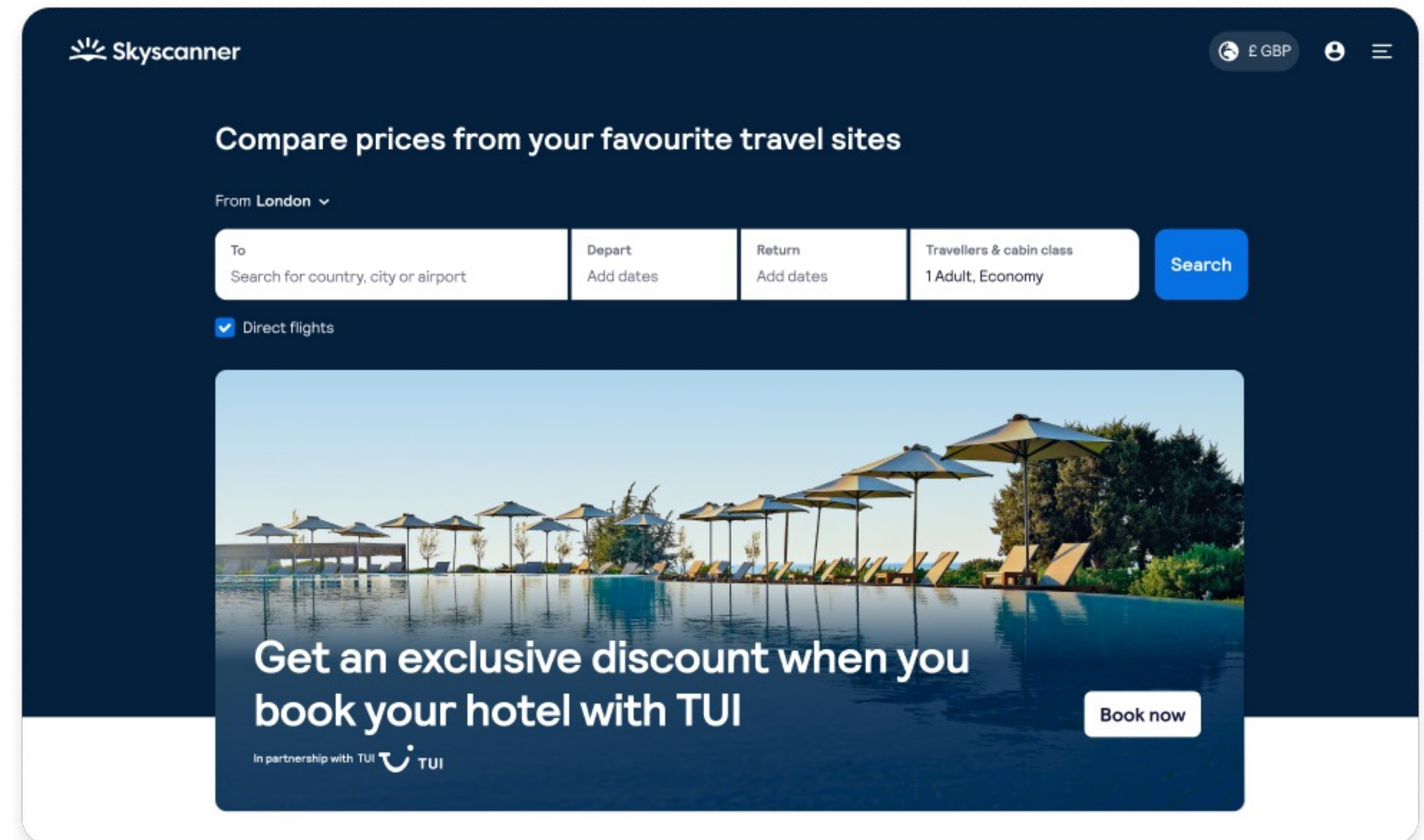
## Case study #2

# Search Controls

## Before



## After



3

**Keyboard-  
only nav**



## Case study #3

# Keyboard-only navigation

Before

The screenshot shows the Skyscanner website interface for a flight search from London to Paris. The search parameters are: London (Any) - Paris (Any), 1 adult, Economy class, departing on Fri, 20 Aug and returning on Fri, 27 Aug. The search results show 1047 results, sorted by 'Best'. The 'Best' option is highlighted with a price of £90 and a flight time of 1h 18 (average). Other options include 'Cheapest' at £90 and 'Fastest' at £118. The page includes a sidebar with filters for stops (Direct, 1 stop, 2+ stops), flexible tickets, and COVID-19 safety ratings. A 'Feedback' button is visible on the right side of the page. The browser's address bar shows the URL: skyscanner.net/transport/flights/lond/pari/210820/210827/?adults=1&adultsv2=1&cabinclass=economy&children=0&childrenv2=&destination=...



## Case study #3

# Keyboard-only navigation

After

The screenshot displays the Skyscanner website interface for a flight search from Edinburgh (EDI) to Athens (ATH) on Monday, 25th October. The search parameters are set for 1 adult in Economy class. The results page shows 114 results, sorted by 'Best'. A sidebar on the left provides filters for stops (Direct, 1 stop, 2+ stops), flexible tickets, and COVID-19 safety ratings. The main content area features a table of flight options, including a sponsored hotel advertisement and a car hire offer. The top navigation bar includes the Skyscanner logo, a help link, language and currency settings (English (UK), United Kingdom, £ GBP), and a login button.

**Skyscanner** Help English (UK) United Kingdom £ GBP Log in

Flights Hotels Car Hire

Edinburgh (EDI) - Athens (ATH) Mon, 25 Oct  
1 adult | Economy

Show whole month Additional bag fees may apply

Get Price Alerts 114 results Sort by Best

Stops

- Direct None
- 1 stop £22
- 2+ stops £20

Flexible tickets

- Only show airlines with flexible tickets

COVID-19 safety rating

- 5/5
- 4/5
- 3/5 or below

Departure times

Outbound 00:00 - 23:59

Want to know the latest travel restrictions for Greece? See travel info

Best	Cheapest	Fastest
£39 11h 30	£20 24h 05	£106 5h 45

Sponsored

Your dream hotel, right here

No need to search anywhere else. Find the best prices from the top hotel providers now.

Search Hotels →

Ryanair + Wizz Air 07:40 EDI → 21:10 ATH 11h 30 2 stops PMI, VIE 4/5 rating for COVID-19 safety measures	1 deal £39 Select →
Wizz Air + Ryanair 20:05 EDI → 22:10+1 ATH 24h 05 2 stops BUD, MIL CHANGE AIRPORT in Milan Partly operated by Malta Air 3/5 rating for COVID-19 safety	1 deal £20 Select →

Athens 25 October - 26 October

- Free cancellation
- Location 5.0/5
- Cleanliness 5.0/5

View hotels

Hire a car in Athens from £12 per day

Skyscanner Find a car

Feedback

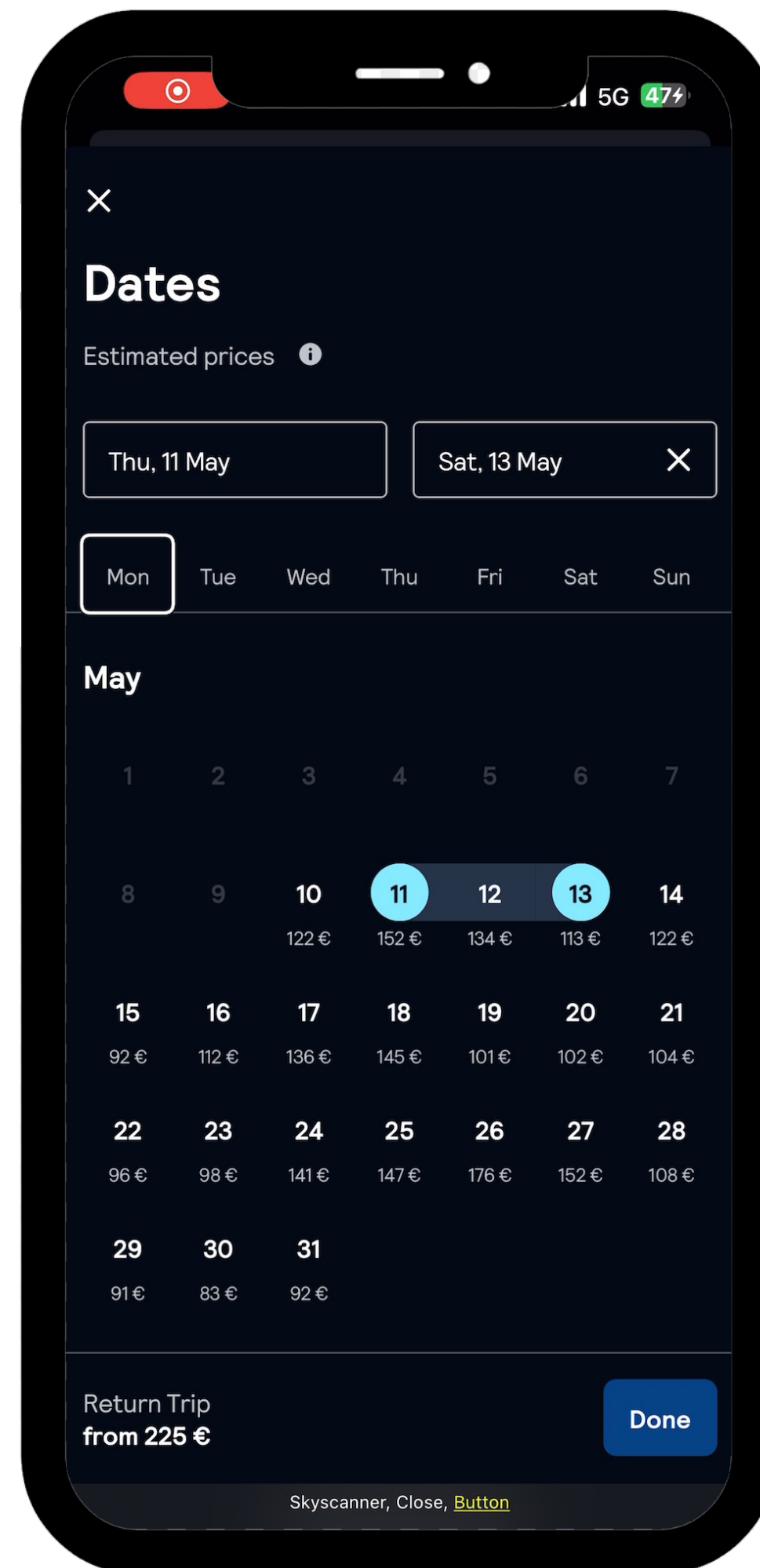


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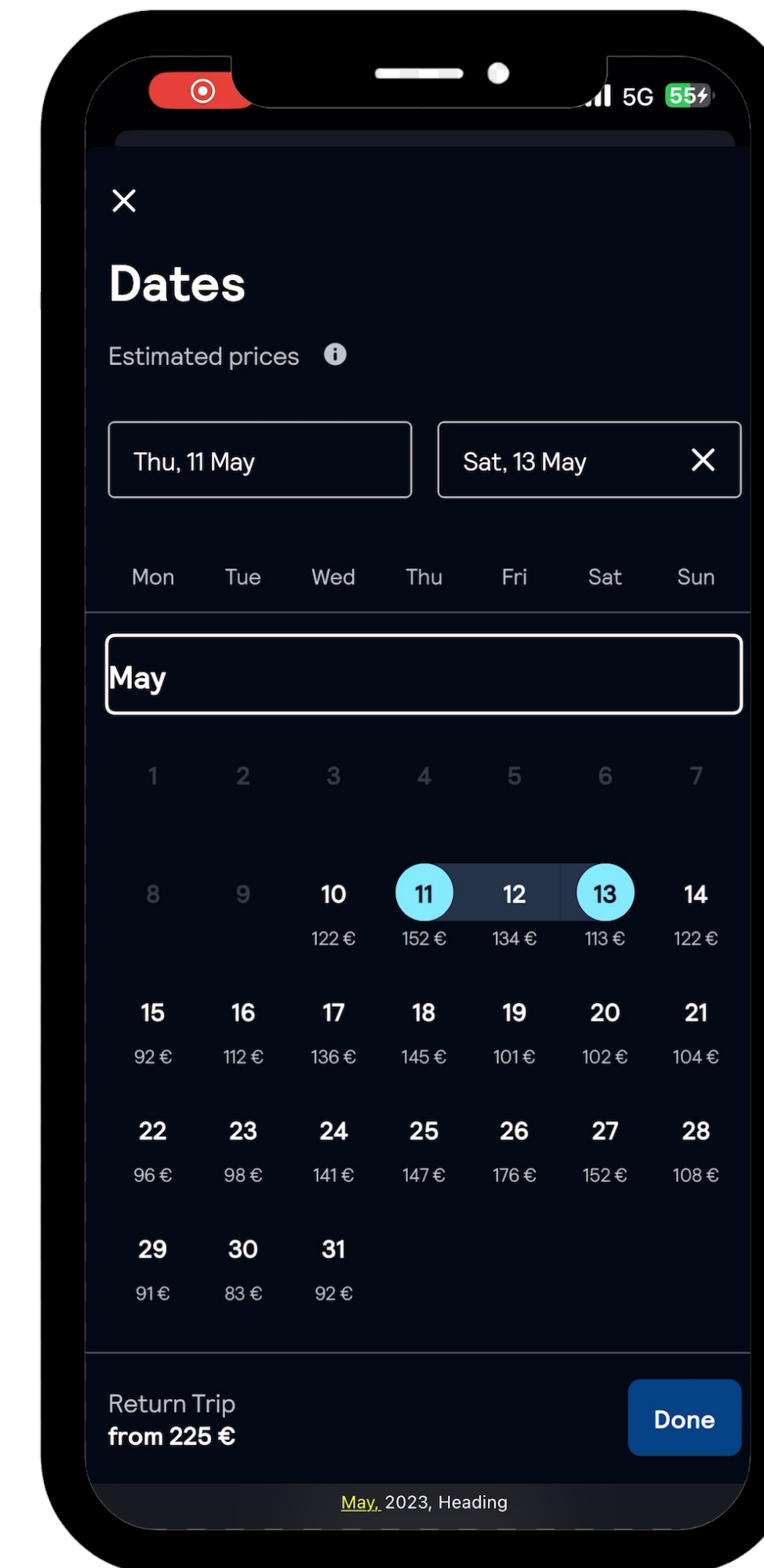
# Screen readers

# Screen readers

Before



After





# What's next

What's next

# Our 3 pillars



**Our people**



**Our travellers**



**Our industry**

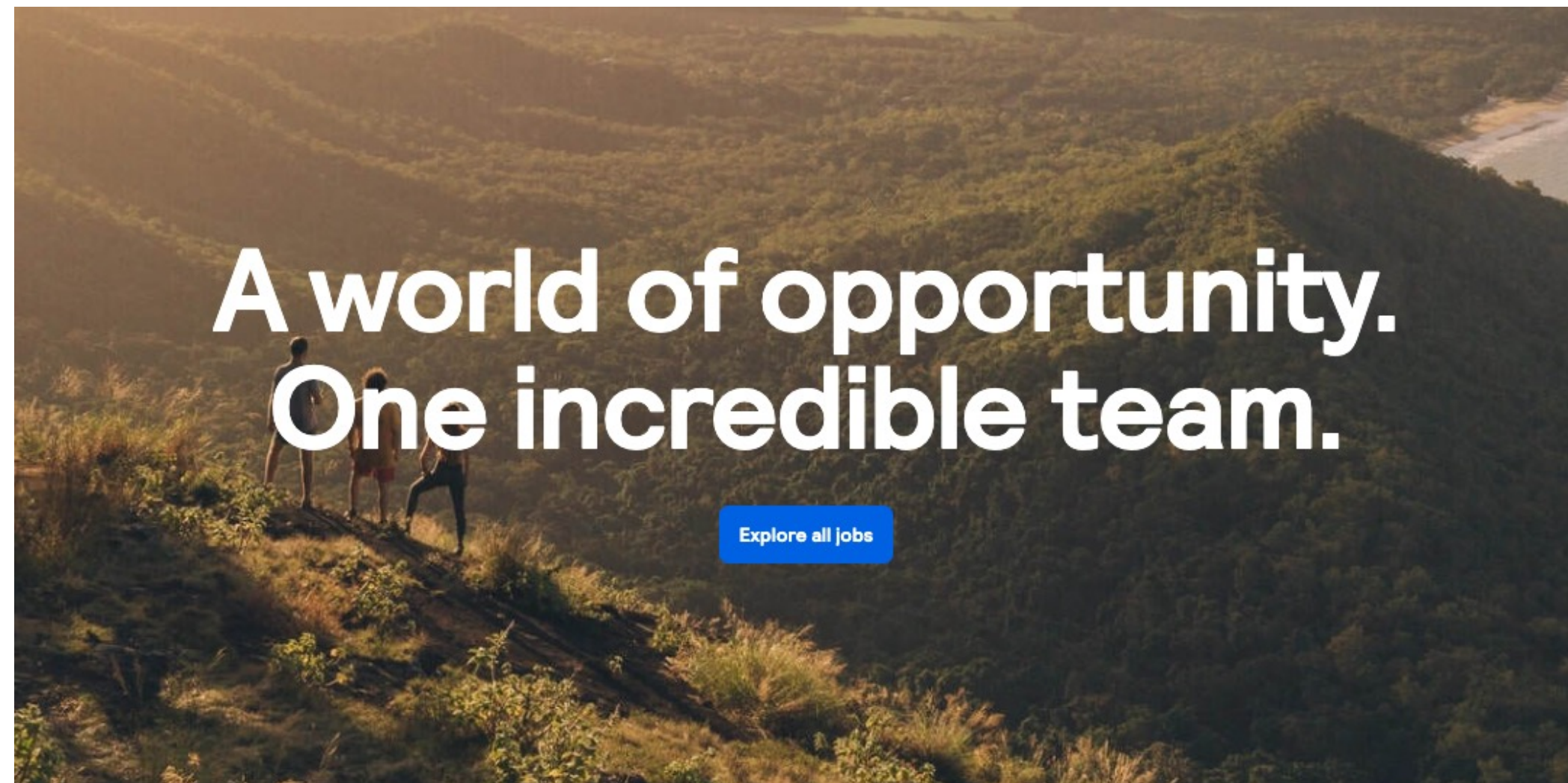


What's next

# Our 3 pillars



Our people



Engineering

## Visually Impaired Software Engineer 2 – Full Stack

 Edinburgh

Travel. It's one of life's simple pleasures. But, ooof, planning it can feel like hard work. For the last 18 years we've been on a mission to empower every traveller with innovative tools, insights and experiences that help people get to where they're going, so they can spend more time out exploring the world, and less time anxiously bouncing around 25 browser tabs and endless spreadsheets. Our traveller-first approach drives everything we do and it's never been more important than it is today.

When we launched as a flight comparison site back in 2003, we changed the game by helping travellers feel smart, like they were in on a secret, that promise hasn't changed. And today, while we're a world leader in travel, with millions of people using our products every single day we know there's so much more we can be doing.

Being part of Skyscanner means joining a team hell bent on building the world's most innovative, and helpful travel experiences possible. We're hugely ambitious and believe we have the chance to genuinely challenge and disrupt the industry.

**Collaborative. Ambitious. Empowering.**

We are looking for someone who has a visual impairment or previous experience of having a visual impairment to join our Engineering team

From flights to hotels and car hire, Skyscanner works side-by-side with the biggest names in travel to bring over 100 million users all the options they need to plan and book their perfect trip. We're already a market leader and we're just getting started.

Next stop: To help **every** traveller explore our world effortlessly, for generations to come. And "every traveller" includes travellers with disabilities.

Disability inclusion is extremely important to us, and we have an accessibility mission to make Skyscanner a flagship of inclusion, our products accessible to all, and travel better for people with disabilities. We know we can't build truly accessible products without the help of disabled

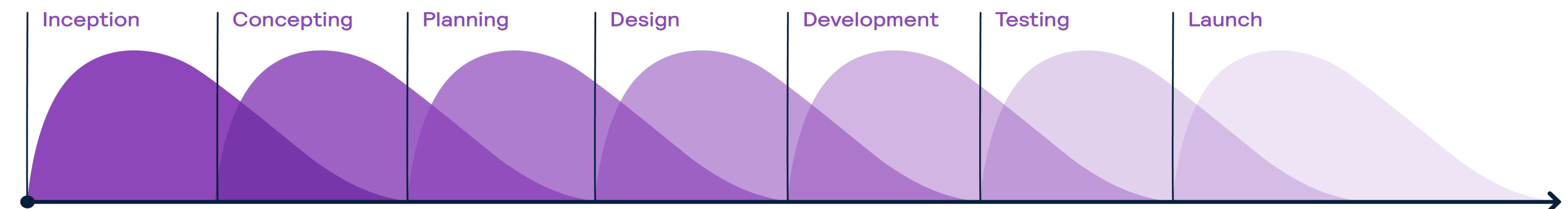
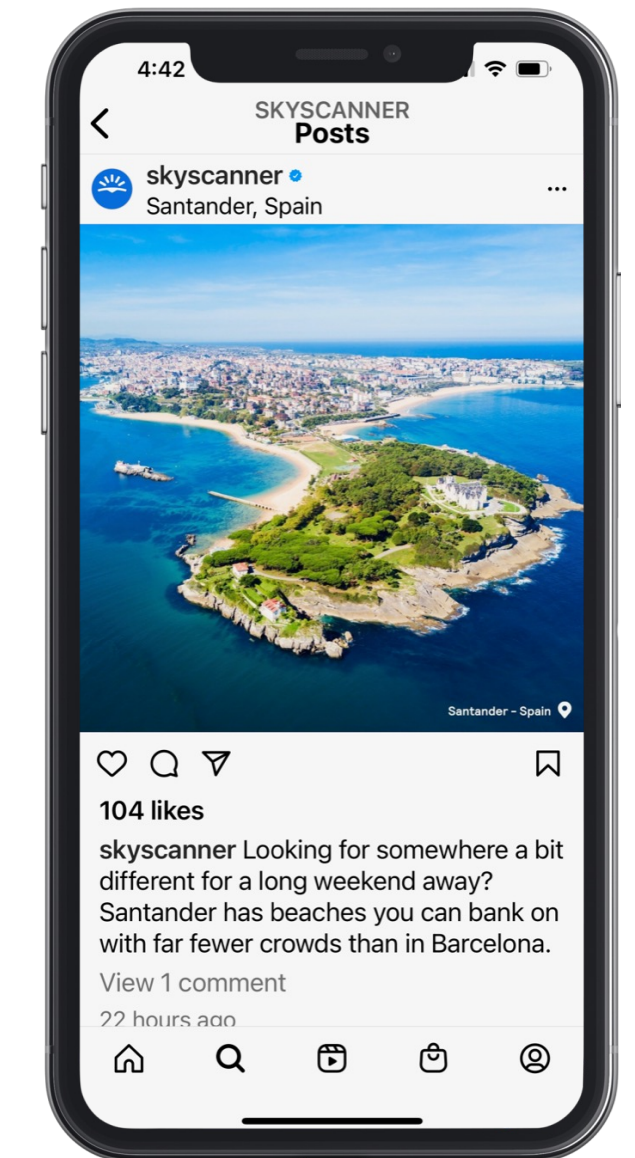
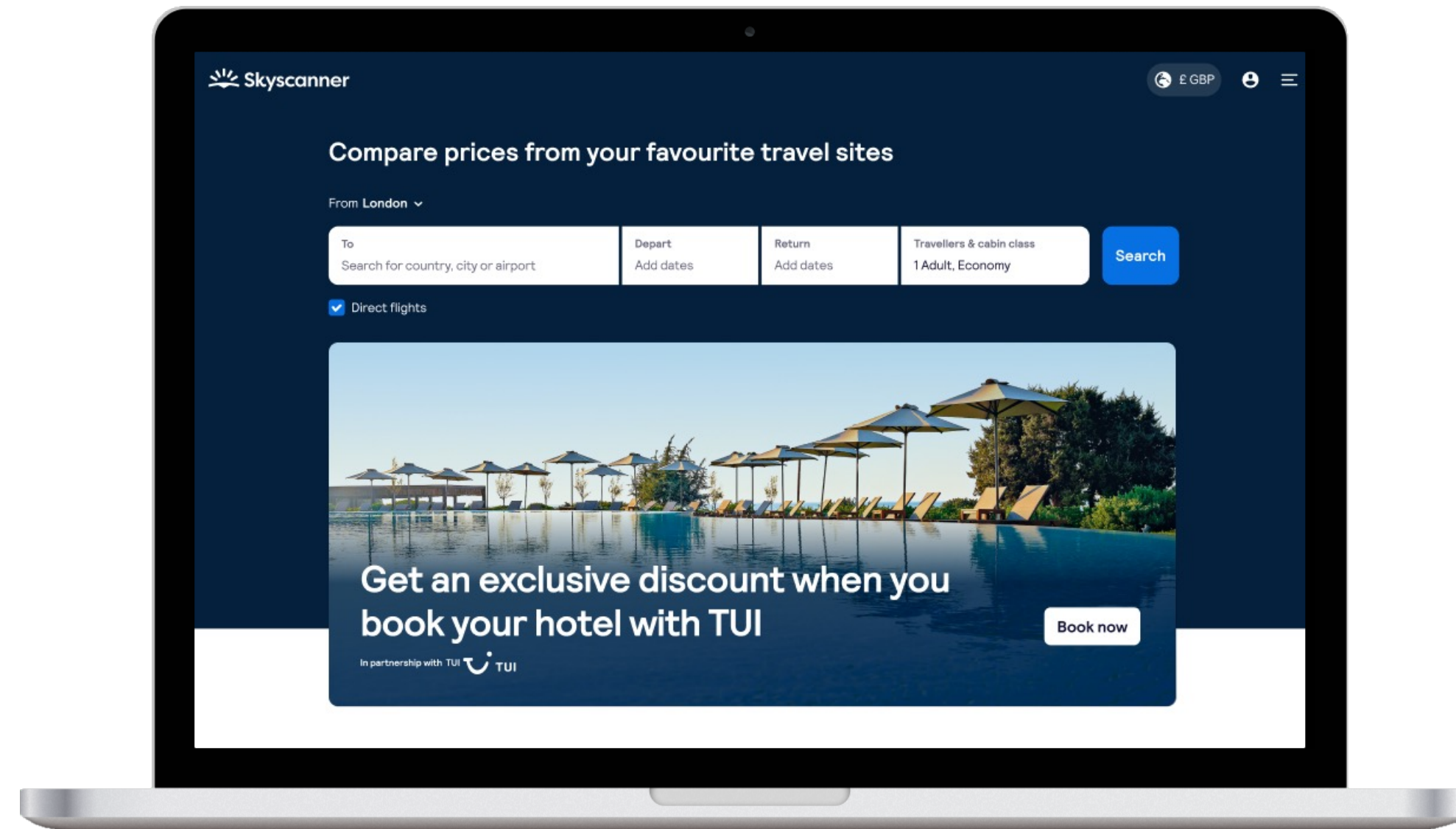
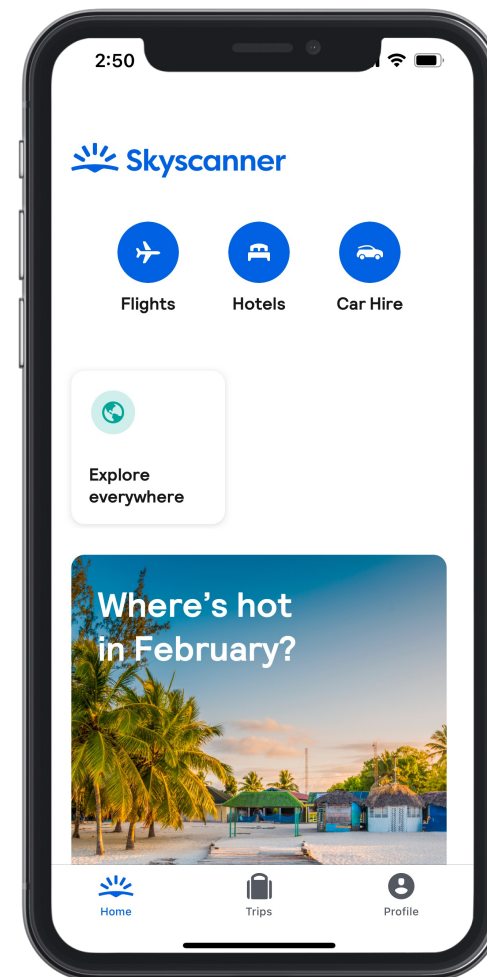


What's next

# Our 3 pillars



Our travellers



↑  
3% – 5%  
additional effort  
if you start here

↑  
>20%  
additional effort  
if you start here

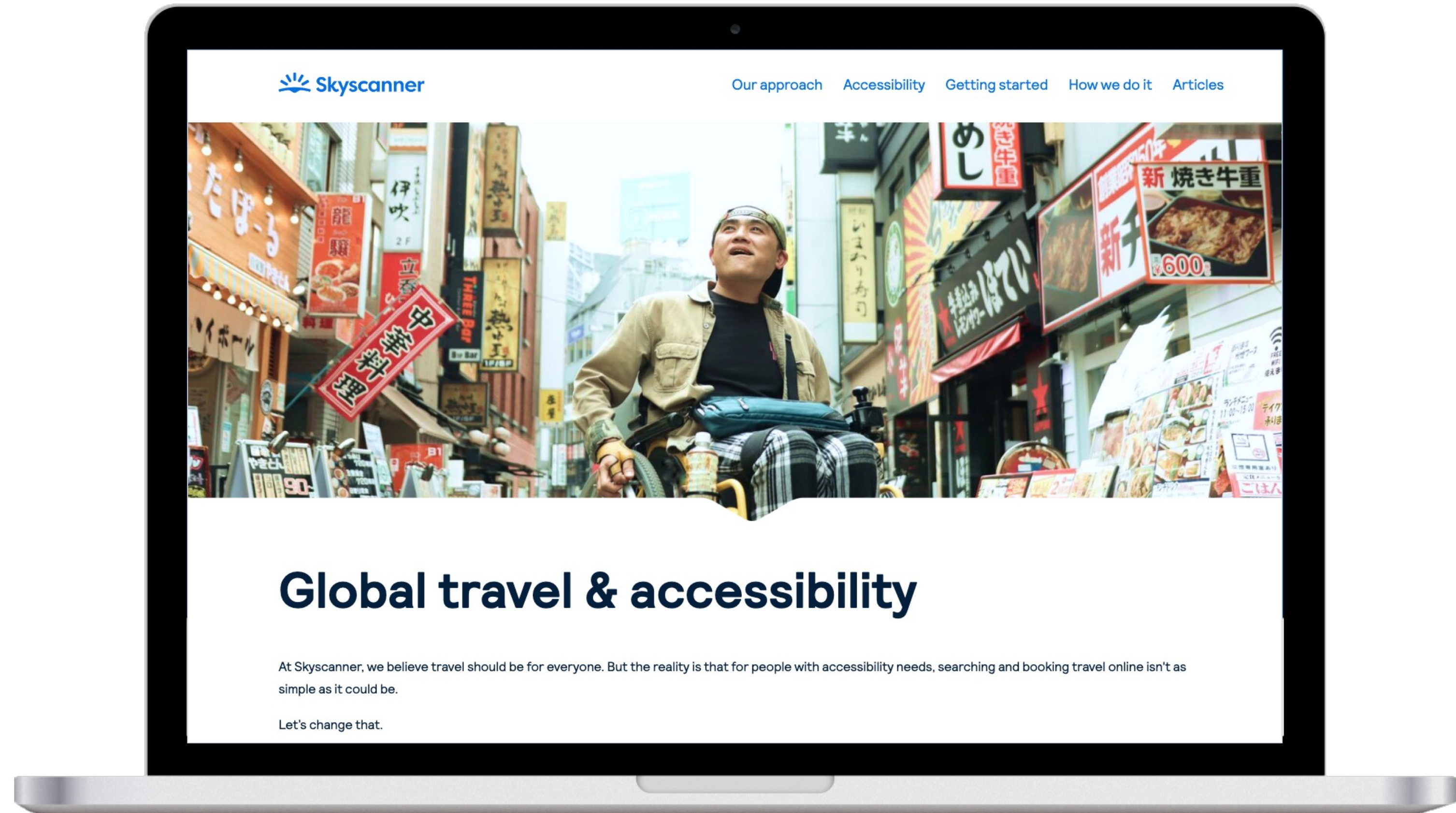


What's next

# Our 3 pillars



Our industry



# Our learnings



# Final thoughts

## Top 10 tips

- 1: Get everyone's attention
- 2: Get *all* leadership on board
- 3: Make one person responsible
- 4: Educate everybody
- 5: Understand your issues
- 6: Start a Champions Network
- 7: Build into your processes
- 8: Build into your culture
- 9: Celebrate every win, however small
- 10: Keep going!

# Final thoughts

## Connect with me:

[linkedin.com/in/heatherhepburn](https://www.linkedin.com/in/heatherhepburn)



**Heather Hepburn** (She/Her) · You

Accessibility Lead at Skyscanner | Accessibility Advo...

3w · 



If you're part of the product development process, your job is not done until you have considered disabled users.

👉 Designers – your job is not done until you have made your UX or UI work for disabled people, and included accessibility info in your design specs.

👉 Writers – your job is not done until you have written hidden copy that will be heard by screen reader users, to make their journey make sense.

👉 Researchers – your job is not done until you have tested the usability of a product or feature with disabled users.

👉 Developers – your job is not done until you have written code in a way that makes a product accessible and you have tested it using only a keyboard, on a screen reader, and zooming in to 400%.

👉 Product Owners – your job is not done until you have made sure all of the above happens (and that accessibility was part of your original requirements in the first place)

[#GlobalAccessibilityAwarenessDay](#) [#GAAD2023](#)

[#InclusiveDesign](#) [#DisabilityInclusion](#)



# Q&A