Control who can see your help center

Domain, access and SEO

Decide who can read your help center: anyone on the internet, only your team, or anyone who knows a password. New help centers start Public but unpublished, so you can get your content ready before anyone else sees it.

Who can do this: Owners and Admins

The three options

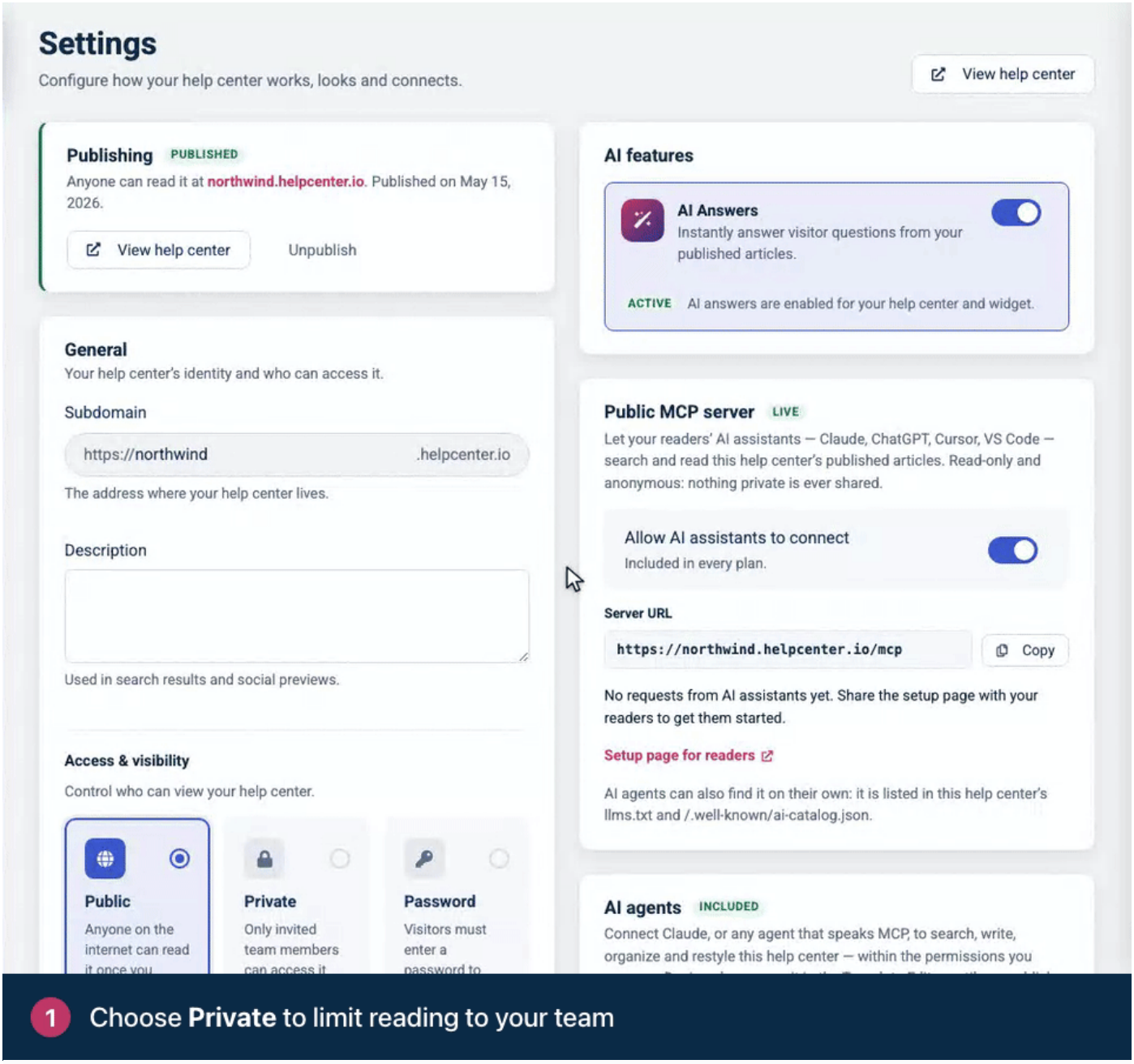
You'll find them in **Settings**, under **General → Access & visibility**.

Option	Who can read it	How they get in
Public	Anyone on the internet, once you publish it. Search engines can list it.	No sign-in needed.
Private	People on your team, in any role, including Viewers.	They sign in with their HelpCenter.io account.

Password	Anyone you give the password to.	One shared password. No account needed.

Make your help center private

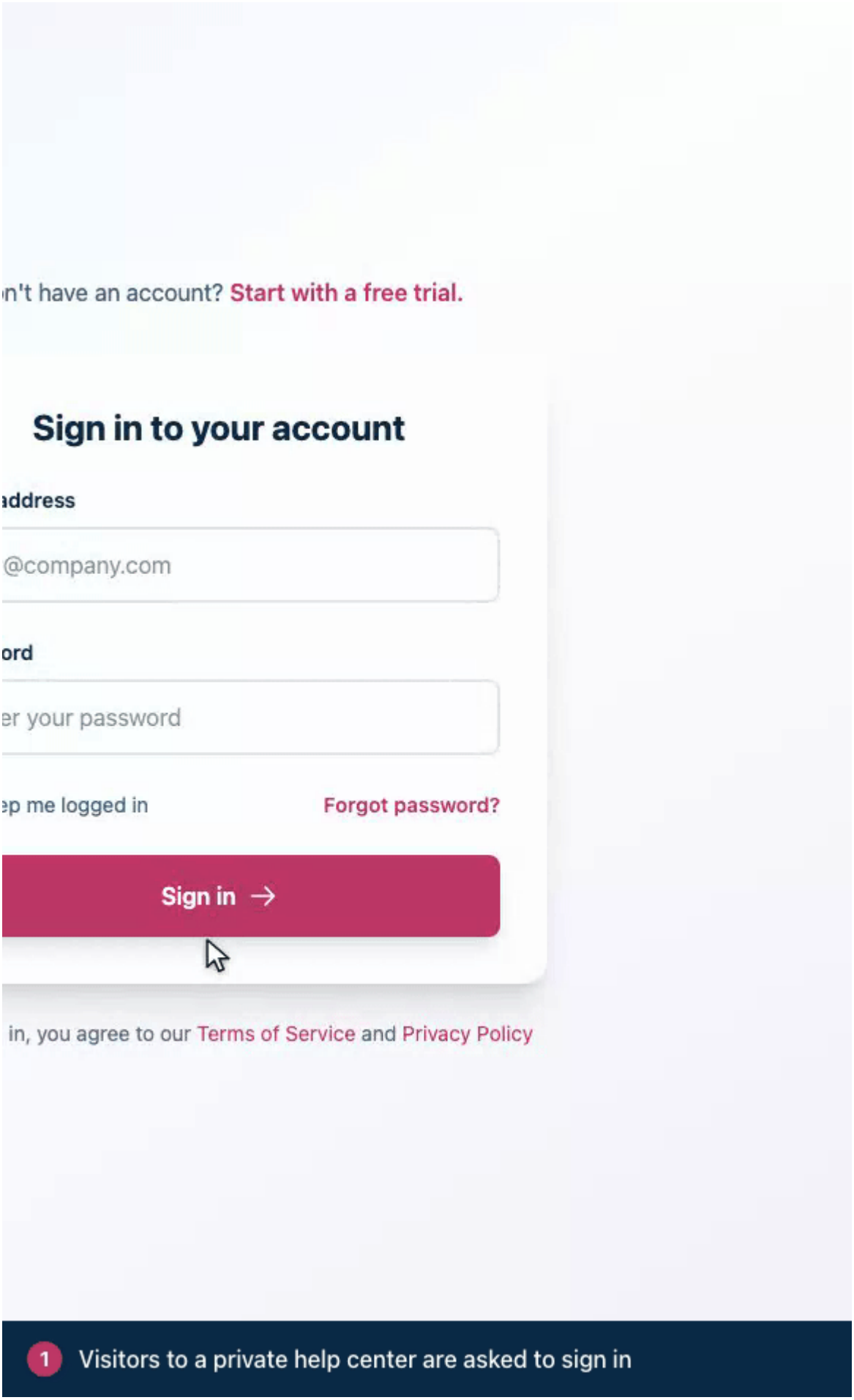
1. In the left menu, click the gear icon, then **Settings**.
2. Under **Access & visibility**, choose **Private**.
3. Click **Save changes**.



Private limits reading to your team.

To let someone read a private help center, invite them to your team. The **Viewer** role is for people who only need to read. See Invite your team.

Anyone who opens a private help center without being signed in is asked to sign in with their HelpCenter.io account. After they sign in, they go straight back to the page they were trying to open. If you use JWT single sign-on, visitors go to your own login instead.

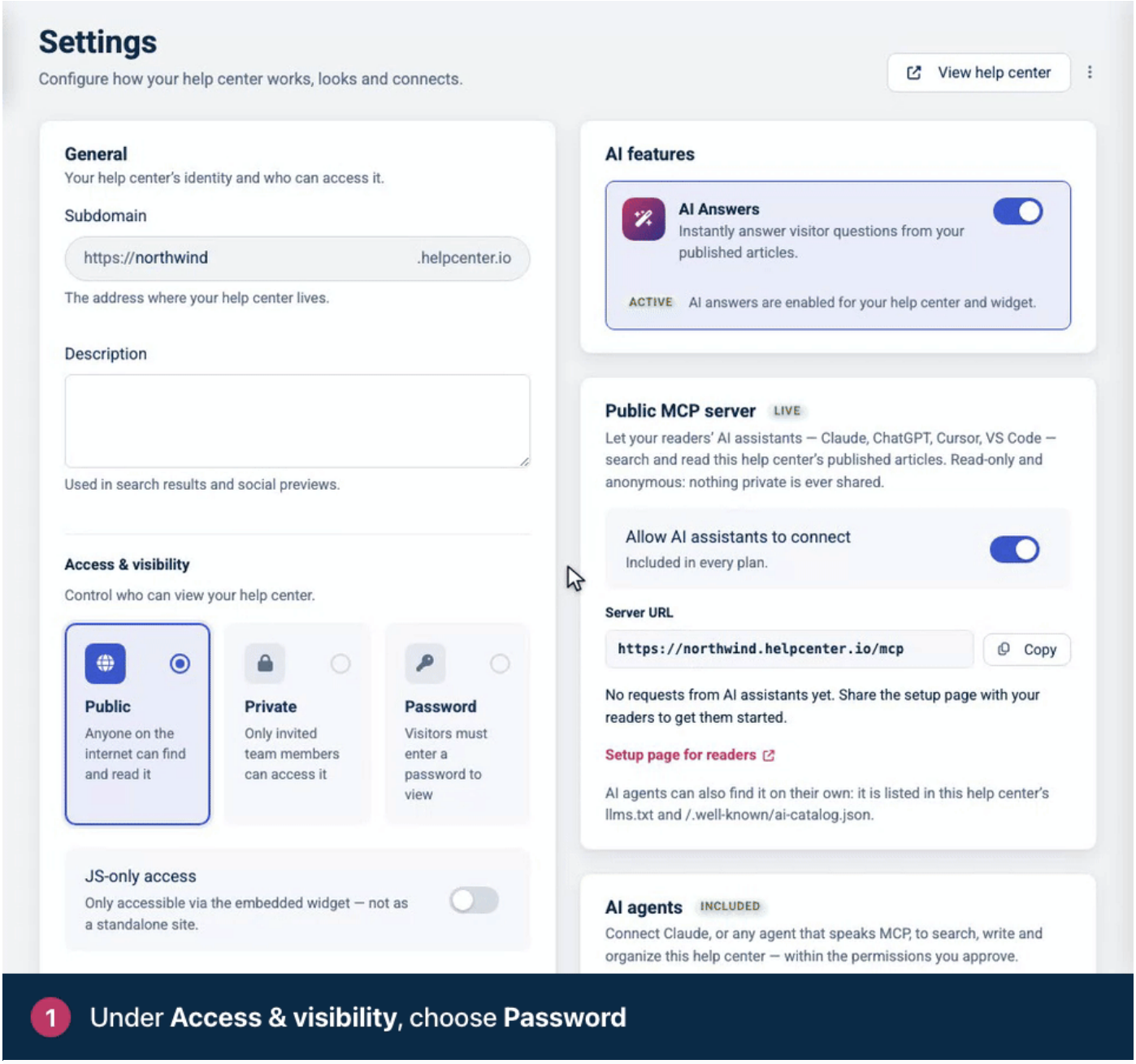

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Sign in to your account
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er your password
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Forgot password?
Sign in →
in, you agree to our Terms of Service and Privacy Policy
1 Visitors to a private help center are asked to sign in

What visitors see when they open a private help center.

Images and files you upload to articles while your help center is Private or Password protected are private too: the link a reader gets stops working after about an hour, and your team sees them while signed in.

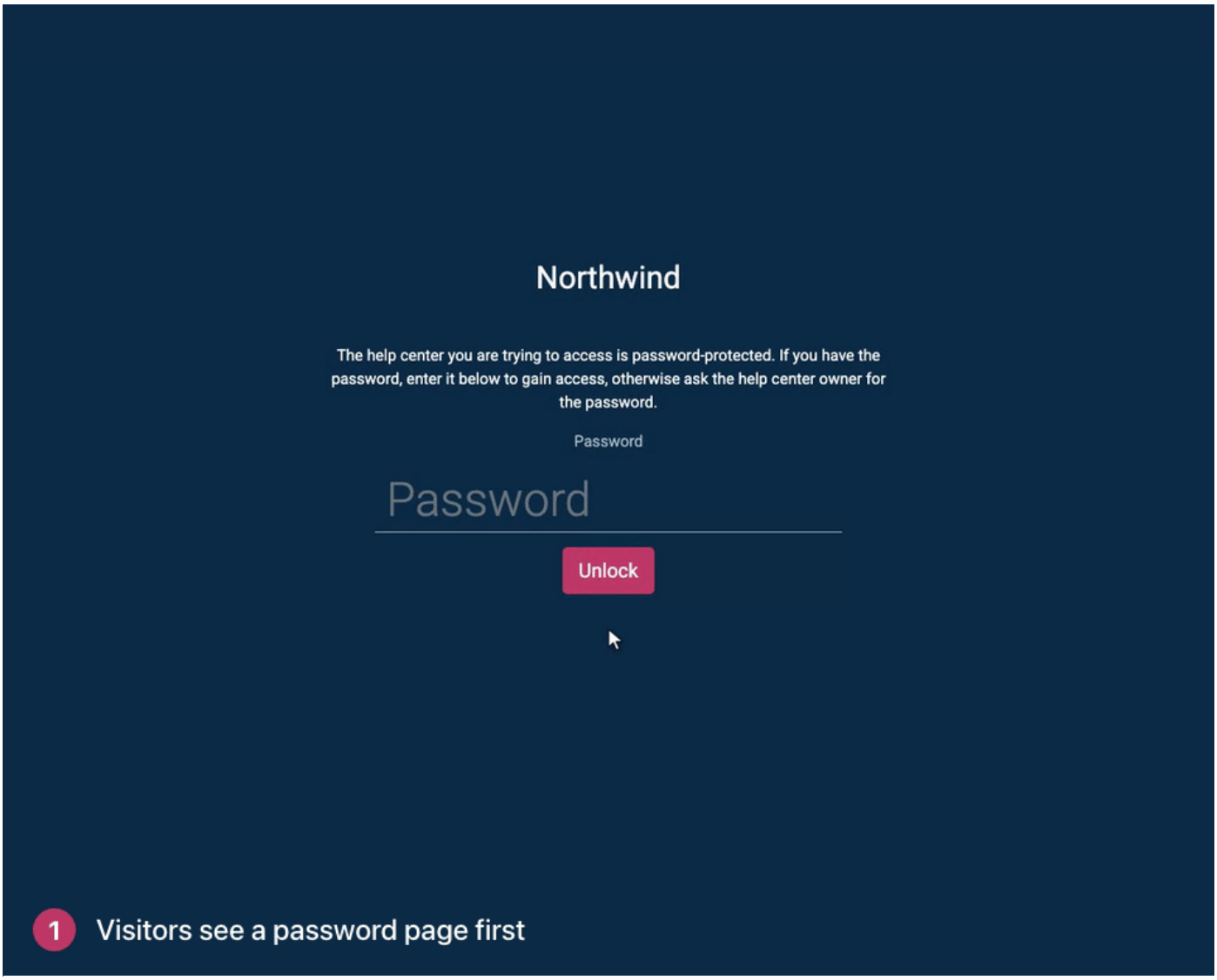
Protect it with a password

1. In the left menu, click the gear icon, then **Settings**.
2. Under **Access & visibility**, choose **Password**.
3. Enter the **Access password** you'll share with readers.
4. Click **Save changes**.



Everyone who reads your help center uses the same password.

Visitors now see a password page first. After they enter the right password, the help center stays open in that browser for up to 7 days. Team members who are signed in to HelpCenter.io skip the password page.



The password page shows your help center's name.

- **To change the password,** type a new one in **Access password** and save. Everyone who used the old password is signed out and needs the new one.

- **To keep the current password** while you change other settings, leave the field empty.

- You have to enter a password the first time you choose this option. Otherwise saving fails with "Please set a password before switching the help center to password-protected visibility."

Make it public

1. In **Settings**, under **Access & visibility**, choose **Public**.
2. Click **Save changes**.
3. In the **Publishing** card, click **Publish help center**, then **Publish**.

All three options are open on every plan. Saving Public doesn't publish it: until you publish, visitors see a "not published yet" page and only your team can read it. Publishing needs the account owner's confirmed email address and an activated plan, and the owner can activate during the free trial and keep the days left. See Publish your help center.

If your help center was published before and you switch it back to Public, saving puts it straight back in front of everyone, and Settings warns you about that first.

Which to choose

You want	Use
Help for customers and prospects that anyone can find	**Public**
An internal knowledge base for your team	**Private**. See Use a private help center as an internal knowledge base.

A customer portal for people who sign in to your product	**Private** with JWT single sign-on, so readers use their existing login (Catalyst plan). See Sign readers in with your own login.
A preview before launch, or access for a few partners without accounts	**Password**
Help that appears only inside your product	**JS-only access**. See Show your help center only inside your app.
Access only from your office network or VPN	**IP whitelisting**, on top of any option above. See Restrict access by IP address.

To keep a help center public but hide some of its content, make individual categories or articles private instead. See Make a category private and Choose who can read an article.

Search engines and AI assistants

Private and Password help centers never appear in search results, because search engines can't get past the sign-in or password page. They also have no public MCP server, so readers can't connect them to an AI assistant. To keep a public help center out of search results, see Hide your help center from search engines.

Related articles

- Restrict access by IP address
- Sign readers in with your own login (JWT SSO)

- Show your help center only inside your app
- Make a category private
- Someone can't see an article or the help center