Annie Mannion 0:01

So, welcome to the webinar on the update and the accessibility maturity model for higher education. I'm Annie Mannion, I'm digital communications manager at ability net and I'll be running you through what to expect from the session. I'm joined today by Helen wicks who is the education workplace Relationship Manager at ability net Allison from consultancy Ben Watson from the University of Kent and co founder of all April and and we also hear from the building next Abby James and during the q&a section, and for specific questions about the public sector accessibility regulations. And my colleague mark is running the slide deck. So you can access that now if you want to via our webinar page for today's session. So next slide, Mark. And just go just to go through a few house, keeping points Before we start the content, we've got live captions on the webinar provided by PowerPoints automated, too. And we have slides and a transcript available. So if you've got any technical issues, we need to leave early, don't worry, there'll be an automatic email sharing the recording and slides. And depending on how you joined the webinar, there's a q&a window. So please use the window in the main for queries or comments. And for us to address and drop them in there for the q&a later on. We have a feedback page that you'll be directed to at the end, which invites you to tell us about any future topics that you'd like us to cover in our webinars. So do let us know. And so next slide, please mark. So for those of you who aren't yet familiar with ability net, we support people of any age living with any disability or impairment to use technology to achieve their goals at home. Work and in education. And we do this by providing specialist advice services, free information resources. And I'll share a little bit more about services at the end of the webinar. And we also welcome Alistair McNaught of more consultancy, who builds on 16 years in the sector as a digital inclusion advocate. After spending 19 years as teacher and elearning adopter and Alistair's featured on a number of our he update webinars over the past year, sharing his experience and expertise in particular in higher and further education. And next slide, please mark. So here's a quick overview of what we'll be covering and with four months to go. Helen wicks will provide an update on the public sector bodies accessibility regulations and the 23rd of September deadline. You can learn about the accessibility maturity model for hire further education, that ability net and not consultants. They have developed based on an estimate North's existing model. And then Ben Watson from University of Kent joins us to describe the base successful project at his institution, the principles which were based on our models approach, and then we'll have a an opportunity for questions at the end. Can I just check Can everyone see the slides on screen? And if not, do raise your hand or let us know via the chat pane because my colleagues, Mark and Alex will be helping to answer any queries we have coming through. Great can see. see lots of answers. Okay, next slide, please, Mark. So I'm just going to introduce the first poll as we'd like to find out a bit more about your and your levels of involvement in the topic. So if you could just tell us with four months to go until the deadline how, how prepared, prepared is your organization To meet the public sector bodies, accessibility regulations requirements, are you very prepared and you're confident or you're somewhat prepared, you've got a few things left to do, or you're not prepared enough. And perhaps you're worried about missing the deadline or you're not at all prepared, you haven't yet started. And depending on how you've joined the webinar, you might find you can't see the poll, but you can respond to the question in the chat panel or the q&a. So just over half of you have voted so far. So we'll just leave it a bit longer for everybody to engage with the poll.

Unknown Speaker 4:43

Okay.

Annie Mannion 4:45

So I'm going to end the poll now and share the results.

So the majority of you are somewhat prepared. With a few things left to do at 49%. And then next, you're not prepared enough, and you're worried about missing the deadline. So hopefully, we can give you some useful pointers and tips today. That's 38% of you. And then neck and neck, you've got very prepared for a confident, which is great that 6% and not at all prepared, and we haven't yet started again at 6%. So I'm over to Helen, who's our first presenter, and to speak about their public sector bodies. Accessibility regulations.

Helen Wickes 5:37

Great. Thanks... And next slide, please, Mark.

So, as I said, we're just under four months away now from the big deadline for the regulations in September. So we wanted to give you a quick reminder of what needs to be done by that date. So all existing websites and updated internal sites must be accessible and video In order to publish beyond this date must be accessible. For each site, you must have an updated and compliant accessibility statement with the relevant legal wording included. There is a sample accessibility statement where the notes stipulate that the wording is legally required so therefore cannot be altered. You should therefore be ensuring and checking that your accessibility statements match the sections that must be kept to the same format and wording. As you can imagine, we've been working with an increasing number of universities to help them move forward with this. And one of the key themes that is emerging is although people have concerns about tough to crack accessibility challenges, such as videos and PDFs, actually some of the basic areas are an issue for many of the sites and can be addressed quite simply. Things like color contrast and keyboard navigation are easy to test and address and some of the most common issues that we are finding. With the current crisis, obviously moving learn and experience Online humans port get rounds have been swept away in the main, with online learning looking like it could be with us for some time now is a great opportunity to focus on making that the most inclusive experience possible to attract and retain the widest range of students. Next slide, please, Mark. We've been really impressed with the collaboration support amongst sector staff in terms of addressing this large project, just along with others, including Ben, my fellow panelists have been working on a crowdsourcing approach to third party site accessibility statements, which is going to be very helpful. Ben, could you just give us a quick overview of the project about how it's been really useful way to avoid all he is reinventing the wheel?

Ben Watson 7:45

Absolutely, yes, I think I think it's about avoiding duplication of effort. I think what we're talking about here is all of the third party statements for you know, where we subscribe to a platform where you no obligation Under the regulations provide a statement for it. Where it's a platform that kind of is universally used throughout the sector, and we don't make significant local adaptations to it, it seems there's a good opportunity for us to try and encourage the suppliers wherever possible to create a single statement that they are best place to do the update score for known accessibility issues rather than us all collectively having to create many, many examples of the same content. So we're using the search box platform with the lovely who is helping us with that. And I think this is a good place to do it, because that's where the Aspire project lives and those resources that measure the accessibility of of ebook platforms, so that we're looking all in one place. So what we'd really love is for people to submit any statements for any parties that you work with, to really easy process and huge Minimizing and kind of helping people to get the content on there and check the the site, make sure any of your suppliers you work with are reflected. And wherever possible if they already have a link to an accessibility page, if we could link to that, which we know then what we're, we're up against and what we're kind of reviewing. And I think longer term, there's a potential opportunity for us all to kind of create one statement or third party resources that we use in the way I've described, you know, not the ones that we've kind of rebadged and owned locally, but appear kind of links out to the paid for content. We could have a kind of gateway statement for those that says, you know, here's the local contact information if you have any issues. That is how you now link out to these third party statements on search box. And the key thing here is to kind of create pressure on the suppliers to do this themselves. It's much easier if they create the existing Ability statement with the core technical accessibility information that we need and archive is one of the hardest things to get unless you actually do an audit of it. The suppliers are best placed to provide the information and we can provide a local contact information. So it's about kind of creating that platform for a good partnership between public and private sector. So it's on them search box. Great,

Unknown Speaker 10:24

thanks, Ben.

Helen Wickes 10:26

And then also, George raids his last year of Kent County Council, and he now works for the home office as a personal hobby, which is reviewing accessibility statements to see if they are compliant and not content with having last time he evaluated 1400 public sector statements. He's gone back round once more. Let's just have a quick look at what he's what he's found out. So next slide, please mark. So we have posted a blog which was just linked on the previous slide, right and George's recent evaluation which you can read on our website, sight, which goes into much more detail about what he's been doing and why. But just briefly, we just thought the above chart shows you, however, shows the level of compliance from his previous evaluation to now. And it's really great to see the increase amongst the different sectors, especially in the universities, which is increased to just over 30%. So everyone's definitely moving in the right direction, which is really lovely to see. Next slide, please mark. This is just a quick reminder of who all the public sector web accessibility applies to.

Next slide, please mark.

And, and that's that's kind of it on just the quick update today. So these are my contact details just in case anyone would like to get in touch, discuss anything further, and also a link to one of our further information that we have on our website about for hiring federal education. And then that's, that's back to you then Annie, please for another poll.

Annie Mannion 12:00

Okay, so I'm just going to launch the next poll.

So what we would like to know is how well our teaching staff at your institution engaging in efforts to improve digital accessibility in time for the regulations define it really well after maybe an effective internal communications campaign quite well. Most stuff are engaged fairly well, with pockets of resistance or enthusiasm. And reluctantly, perhaps dangers not very welcome or not at all well, so I'll just give everybody a chance to answer the poll. Just a quick reminder, if you're joined later on, and depending on how you've joined the webinar, you may find you can't see the poll, but you can respond to the poll in the in the q&a or Chat panel.

So David, bit longer for everybody to vote.

Last few seconds Everybody. Okay, I'm going to end the poll now and share the results.

So as you can see,

it's fairly kind of middle ground and fairly well, there are pockets of both resistance and enthusiasm, that 63% of view. And then we've got quite well, most staff are engaged at 16% reluctantly changes, not very welcome at 15%. And then not at all well at 5%. But so far, nobody's really confident and in the take up for preparedness for the dead in time for the deadline on the 23rd. So hopefully, Alastair can can provide some pointers in his next presentation. I'm going to stop sharing the poll now.

Ben Watson 14:00

Yes,

Alistair McNaught 14:01

that's very interesting. And I think that's also forms a lot of the background to the next section that we want to talk about, which is, sometimes it's really hard to get people to engage with accessibility because they see accessibility as a very specialist thing. And what we've been developing over the last few months is a maturity model for higher and further education where accessibility is seen in a completely different light if we look at the next slide, and think about actually defining maturity. So maturity is when the accessible practice and policy is much more about professional culture than it is about legal compliance. And that's the switch that we've made. So it needs to reflect the role of all stakeholders not just disability team. It needs to use the language of a daily practice. It needs to be explicit about the end dependencies about the fact that my choices of the reading list as a lecturer may have implications for the library's ability to be able to provide an accessible copy. So people have to understand those inter dependencies. And it's got to relate to the core business of the institution is not about your 10% of disabled users. It's actually about all your users. And it needs to focus on all those different stakeholders as being part of the solution, not part of the problem. And I've got a picture of the skeleton on the screen there. Because I think quite often, when we work with people on accessibility, there's this sense that you do your accessibility statement. And that's it. It's fossilized. It's there in stone. And in a year's time you look at it again, and maybe tweak one or two bits of the bone, but actually, it should be about a living thing. That that continues to grow. That continues to change. So next slide. We've had lots of discussions with government digital services over the potential for unintended consequences. If there's an a kind of a fundamentalist presentation of public sector, legislation that was designed for a public sector,

environment, which doesn't understand education, so education is part of public sector, but there's 150 ish universities and maybe 300 colleges. They're on NIH on 12,000 public sector bodies. And so, we are very much in the minority but we are very different and we're different in lots of ways. So we're different in terms of size because your typical public sector body website, if you're looking at your local council, or even sometimes your town Council's county councils they may have 10s of web pages to hundreds. But a university or college learning platform can have thousands and thousands of pages. And the content on the typical public sector website is a document, an image and text. But in ha and Effie, you'll have all of that plus your videos, your podcasts, ebooks, quizzes, discussion lists, simulations, lecture capture, you name it, it's there. And so it's much more varied, much more colorful in a sense and much bigger issue. If we look at the next slide, the positive thing to take from this is that there is a virtuous circle of digital accessibility because accessibility is an emergent property of excellent teaching and learning. This was something that Ofsted identified in 2010 with a report they did saying a statement is not enough. And they showed that where teaching and learning were most effective, the requirement for additional support was significantly reduced. But what's interesting and the reason it's a virtuous circle is because good accessibility practices actually make teaching, learning and pedagogy much more varied much richer, and more exciting. So you have this circle of good accessibility creates good teaching, good teaching, has accessibility as an emergent property. So on the next slide, let's just introduce where this then comes from. Because if you take the focus on teaching and learning, as the core to what we understand by accessibility, and if we take that sense that accessibility is this emergent property of Excellence in Teaching and Learning, that's what he and Effie are surely about. excellent teaching. Learning, then it becomes a very different kind of cell when you're talking to people about how, how mature your accessibility is. So we've developed this very simple model, but it's deceptively incisive once you get to the different lenses of self reflection. But just very quickly, we've got these five stages to kind of luck stage where actually, I know a few of you have suggested your organization's are at that stage where there's no preparation yet. And basically, it's hoping for the best that nobody complains nobody Sue's you or you don't have a blind person starting your course or somebody with motor impairments trying to trying to access your website, and all its interactivities there's the lock stage. There's the tokenism stage, which is well, actually we give fantastic support and often genuinely fantastic support on a one to one basis. For students that declare a disability, and, you know approached you about getting a disabled student allowance Now that is a brilliant way of serving individual students, but it is not accessibility maturity because you're still creating inaccessible content, you're creating barriers that somebody else then has to help those students over. So that a very typical kind of university approach to supporting disabled students is quite often fairly low down the accessibility maturity model. And that's not a criticism of the quality of the support the students are getting. It's a criticism of the bigger picture of the organization that still creates barriers for disabled people, inadvertently without even realizing it's doing it. The next stage is where people begin to realize

Sorry, I fooled Mark The next stage along here is the standard stage, where you begin to realize, actually, we can make content more accessible. And very often that's that awareness starts in the elearning. team and the IT team. So they get their systems built to standards. And there's that sense of, actually, if you're going to do any teaching and learning, everything has to be compliant with these standards. And your lecturers and your teachers haven't got a clue what any of the standards mean. So there's a real risk there of people retreating from Digital, which is where we then show that the next stage beyond that is to say no, this is about ownership. It's about staff using digital resources, being encouraged to but using them wisely with guidance to maximize learner independence. And then the final stage is where you actually have disabled students co designing, learning experiences, helping you work out what would be good ways of assessment, and so on. Now, we've actually got a real life example of where somebody has worked through those kinds of levels, and done some quite transformative, transformative changes in their institution. So I'm going to hand over to Ben now, which is the next slide.

Ben Watson 22:21

Thanks, Alice. Yeah, I'm gonna kind of chronologically work through Alice's model, and describe the ages that we, we kind of gone through as a university. And I think we're absolutely not the finished article by any means. And I think actually a really important thing for doing working races models to get that kind of understanding of where you are, but also, I guess, the reassurance that this is really difficult stuff and it's constantly changing. But one thing I would say is that I think the the terrible kind of COVID crisis, not that you'd ever wish something like this to happen. I think there will be some positive benefits. To come from it in the renewed focus on online. So I think this is about kind of weaving into all of our policies that support that move to online to make sure that this is right at the center of it all. And next slide, please mark. So, if we go start working our way through it, and I really feel that 10 was never the luck stage. I think we and I don't suppose many institutions are there's always that intention to do better. And to not rely on luck, you know, I think we always knew was going to have kids with disabilities rules had a really keyed in and supportive disability unit at the university. But I suppose, you know, leading into the kind of idea of tokenism that model of of, you know, no matter how good is a disability team that kind of, you know, does all of the work around Making the institution accessible on that kind of one to one basis, as Alistair described is very kind of medical model. very reactive. And it's very much about, you know, getting the kind of CSA disabled students allowance. It's not kind of mainstreaming it's kind of a one way traffic. Whereas I think what we need to do is to start to push out from disability units. So yeah, we know, okay, we have a job to do to support students with particular, you know, particularly challenging sets of requirements. But there's an awful lot that we can do as an institution to share the responsibility for that maximum mainstreaming benefit. So moving them to kind of getting people on to aware of the kind of standards they need to meet and of course, these are all minimum standards, but I think if we can sell the message around it, you know, again, as Alistair described, this is about a good user experience, you know, Accessibility isn't a kind of a bolt on or a cherry on the cake that you do kind of, you know, if you have time at the end, if you can make this fundamental to your policies and practices. I think that's where the real magic is. So that, you know, then it makes that easier case for this to be a shared responsibility. And I think when we were in the kind of, you know, I'm thinking back a couple of years ago, when we were kind of still trying to roll this out and get that kind of buy in and that awareness from people about why this was more than just about supporting students with disabilities, no matter how important it is. It's actually just about giving everyone a good user experience, but I'm yet to discover a thing that you can do to make something you know, digital content, for example, better for someone with a disability that doesn't similarly enhance it for everyone else to you know, use typical example, examples like captions think what we had in those early days was brilliant pockets of experts. pay some some people really bought into the idea and it was kind of character driven, you know, if you had a particularly strong character in a department who really kind of message him as fired up by it, you saw great kind of early impact in those areas. So what we tried to do was to capture that those those good experiences is a little case studies. Again, it's kind of further evidence of why this is a powerful thing to do broader benefits around student satisfaction and that kind of thing to try and get people to see that it's in their interest to be involved in this and help us take this forward. Next slide, please, Mark.

So coming to the kind of ownership thing, I think a really key thing here to mention, there's it's almost, it's about as much about a lack of ownership as it is about ownership. So when I say a lack of ownership, what I mean is the disability unit or to support the well being were called a 10. You're not seen as the kind of ultimate, you know, only professor, all this work, of course, you're there to facilitate and kind of catalyzed these responses from people to want to and be able to do it themselves, you know, the best sort of inclusion. And accessibility, of course, happens when it's done at the point of delivery, and not retrospectively. And obviously, that's about building it into the natural workflows that we have. And the people delivering at those frontlines, you know, so that you're not then having to say, Yeah, sorry, we didn't, we didn't make that thing accessible. So now you need to email the disability unit who will try and put it right. That's, that's, again, the medical model. And we're really, really keen to try and move towards the mainstreaming social model. And I think a really important thing that we've seen here in this development is that confidence building that people realize that Actually, you know, to make a document accessible, although initially seems quite, you know, quite frightening if you've done it before I choose, there's relatively few things you need to do to massively improve, you know, the overall accessibility of a Word document, for example, or a PowerPoint slides. So I think once people start to gently kind of taken through how they can start to do this themselves and be kind of kept into their own destiny in that way. And you'll see that they, they don't kind of have had the issues perhaps they originally may have feared and I think another way to give them that extra support is to offer them you know, obviously tools and guidance on on how to do this. So we've been using

our own we call them productivity tools, which, again, historically I think would have just been shown, you know, to students with disabilities and inclusive learning plans. Why not just make them available to everyone. So again, that's about just ownership of all of the outputs of this accessibility. Work is belong is always owned by everyone, as well. So I think that was a really key stage. And I think we're still at the kind of ownership phase with kind of, you know, ambitions to move to partnership. And if we can go to the next slide, please, Mark, I'll give you a few early kind of things we can do in this area. I mean, of course, we've been involving students, in everything we do all about website design, all of our kind of testings always done with students with disabilities, of course, but I think, going a bit broader than that, to kind of get more kind of qualitative experiences. It's been really helpful and we've done a particularly helpful one was a diary project we did we asked students with disabilities and that was bilities. keep a diary for a week. take photographs of accessibility barriers that I faced and then to write something in the diary to explain why they took the photograph and what impact it had on their learning. And that was unbelievably helpful for going way beyond just the kind of, you know, accessibility of our web pages, but more about the whole user experience and their feeling of kind of belonging within the institution. And so I think that's going to really help one and it's important to see these regulations as a kind of springboard isn't just about meeting the minimum standards for your website, but how can we, you know, extend that to learning and teaching spaces and the whole life of the student within your institution. And similarly, we're doing things with that what allies data, looking at the module, satisfactions feedback, any clues, we can get any areas where we're missing stuff, or we're being told stuff in the data that perhaps we're not picking up through standard surveying and I wasn't very kindly included the Th e award that we won for this this inclusion work we've been doing. And I think, why is that? That's kind of helpful, I suppose it shows that there's a broader value. This isn't just about a kind of niche area that sometimes I've heard people kind of, say about accessibility work well, there's relatively few students with accessibility nature, why can't we just do it on a case by case basis, but I think this is where it's useful to show those broader benefits. And I described the th e award locally as like wd 40. Because it's, it's kind of opened the door to giving us that credibility to go and, you know, have something to say about broader learning and teaching strategies in order that we can fully embed the accessibility and inclusion message into what we're doing anyway. So that this isn't an additional message on top of everything else that people are asked to do, but it's inter woven as much as possible. So students, but well being becomes this partner This is catalyst not not The kind of ultimate point of all responsibility. And we talked about growing confidence. Our next plan, or the plan we're currently working through is to try and map our entire student journey with every single interaction with the students and understand where it happened, which teams are involved in it, and what we would need to do to make that as accessible as possible, again, for the benefit of everyone.

Alistair McNaught 32:27

Thank you very much, Ben. And there's been some information in the text chat as we've been going along, asking about, you know, how realistic is this for co partnership? You know, how realistic is it? Do we have every course being co designed by disabled students? And I think there's, you know, there's a real issue there. And we need to be pragmatic about it. But I think the example that Ben's given us is one where students have genuinely been involved quite strategically in a number of areas and that has Just lead to richer engagement. And it's actually opened up creative pedagogical opportunities. Now, just to take you through some of the elements of the model, this is going to be a fairly quick run through, but I will invite comments and questions again, as we go through. So the model takes eight lenses for self reflection, and this is one of the things that we feel works quite well because you can look at your institution you find you're doing really well in one lens, but in another lens, not so well. So the first one that we've got on the screen at the moment looks at three questions. What is the main driver? Is it minimal effort, minimal expense, or is it support for individuals that's your main driver or is it legal compliance or is it actually bigger than all of that pedagogical excellence, inclusive excellence etc

and then it And other questions like who has responsibility? Is it nobody? Is it the disability team? Is it the web team? Is it the whole organization, you're led by senior manager? Is it the whole organization, plus individual stakeholders from different different groups, which model of disability is in play? Now, I won't go through all of these elements now. But what I just want to talk about as we go through these is just to help you understand some of the ways you might use this. Because if you ask 30 different people in 30 different parts of your organization, what the main driver is in terms of accessibility, you might get 30 different answers or 30 different places, plotting out or if you ask who has responsibility, you're going to get variation. And as always, the variation tells you as much about the the organization and about what you need to do, as does the the kind of average score and so we would look at both Those or you could look at both of those yourself and begin to see, okay, most people think we're here, but this department thinks we're really way down there. What do they know? That we don't know? What are they experienced that we don't experience? And it's a brilliant way of drawing in lots of different people. If we look at the next lens for self reflection, the next slide, so is here, we got some others, what's the focus of effort? What are we trying to do? You know, are we trying to justify our non action? Or are we trying to make our websites inclusive? Are are we trying to make the whole of teaching and learning inclusive? And obviously you are, you know, many of you are trying to do all of that, you know, we're trying to do all of that and more. But again, seeing where perceptions vary across the organization are really, really effective. Amy and I did a podcast on this, and it's on the ability net website. We use the metaphor of a dot two dot picture, where everybody knows which their.is. But unless you can see the whole big picture, you can end up with one team thinking that you know, your big picture is a camel and another team thinking it's a donkey. Whereas actually, the big picture is a, you know, a very fast car. And so, helping understand where people see the organization differently in these different lenses is helpful. So this particular suite of lenses, we've got the focus of effort, the skills and expertise, whether they are identified, or whether they are located in specific teams, or whether you have much broader skills and expertise, maybe even accessibility champions or something like that. And then the other lens is which policies include accessibility now that policy was a very interesting one. And I've done a lot of work with policies in API's. And it's so interesting sometimes where people say, Oh yes, it's all in our policy accessibility throughout our policies. And then you start doing some searches for digital accessibility, accessibility, assistive technology, etc. And suddenly, nothing about it in relation to webinars in relation to lecture capture, ebooks, all those sorts of things. Next slide is another lens. And again, you can look at these in more detail. We've got lots more detail in the downloadable resource that Andy will talk about later. But we've got other issues here that are cultural. So how does the culture of the organization feel it's highly subjective, but at the same time, if it's, if your culture is one of risk aversion, and if I don't get my PowerPoint exactly right, I'm going to have the accessibility police come down on me like a ton of bricks. That's going to have one feel and more Impact compared to something where you're being encouraged to innovate, and you actually give them permission to try new things. And sometimes to fail and learn from it, we need to model to our students what we teach them. And that's, that's sometimes trying new things failing. And actually, you're learning from it. So the culture of the organization, the student digital experience, and you can only get that by involving students by talking to students getting feedback, giving opportunities. And then the last lens is the potential. Next step. In fact, that's only a selection. There are other lenses in there, and there's eight in total. But depending on where you find yourself in each of those, there are important next steps to highlight. If we go to the next slide, and just to look at some of the more detail that you'd find, if you downloaded the, the free word version that we've got. So there's a section there on the comments and the critique. So if you are have taken level three, if you are at that level three, and you've you've plotted out on all these different scales and you kind of fit mainly somewhere in the middle, then we've got more information. So, you know, focusing on standards, what's good about it, yes, it reduces your overall risks, but it can have a negative impact of unintended consequence.

So for example, because somebody who's never used video with their students before, and could massively benefit lots of students by using video, if they think oh, I don't know how to do scene description. I don't know how to do subtitling, I'm going to get into trouble. I won't do it. That's an unintended consequences. So, you know, we do encourage people to think holistically and to think about, you know whether partial accessibility can actually be a benefit for some students. And whether there's a space for that in your accessibility statement. And then we give you advice for each level. What kind Things would help you move on to the next level. And because it's culture change we're talking about, you know, it's, it's very much these are the kind of big picture focus that you might want to consider. So again, it involves everybody. The next slide is just to show that we give support as you move along each bit. We've got a series of self self support, DIY links. So we've got links to all kinds of resources, ability, net resources, education, training, foundation resources, future teacher, all kinds of other areas, things that you can do for free, and also supported services that you can either have from ability net or myself or other. There's plenty of other suppliers out there that you could also pick from. So the next slide shows a specific tool that we're in the middle of developing at the moment. In fact, we're very close to the end of developing And this is a tool. We've got some screenshots here that show you different parts. In fact, I think this was originally supposed to be one of those animated ones, where you would see each one in turn. But I just described basically, it's a series of questions that you fill in based on exactly on the different lenses for self reflection. For each one, you click on, or each individual clicking on each one will end up getting feedback on the choice that they've made, and suggested ways forward. And then on the basis of that, you will have a final report and on the right hand side of the screen, there is the overall picture of the model with where those different elements plotted out in kind of general terms. So the next slide. So that's one level of personalized support that you could work through as an organization. And do you have to kind of keep your eye on our announcements and ability notes announcements, to see where, at what point that's launched. But we're also offering personalized support, where it will spend a day with you, which will involve doing a pre survey to assess where different people in the organization see themselves. And that gives us scatter charts of scores and things that we can then work through with you. And then we'll spend some time with managers and senior managers doing reality check on Okay, you say this. So let's have a look at what other people think. Okay, is it a communication problem in that? Or is there a gap between what you say your policies talk about and what your policies actually look like when we search for those key phrases in them. So that's, that's potentially a really powerful because it's really individualized and involves a lot of different stakeholders, as many as you like or as few as you like on the day. But we can do the survey to lots of people. So that's the overall, there's lots there that you can use just entirely on your own in your own institution, lots of other resources that you can look at DIY type resources that we pointed for you, or more than happy to work with you and sit with a senior manager team, or whoever's responsible and have a look at doing a real accessibility maturity, in depth profile with you with the potential for giving you a badge or some kind of accreditation at the end of that. So I think I'm going to let me talk a little bit more about how to get hold of the model if you haven't already.

Annie Mannion 9:59

Yes, next slide please. And so thank you for that Alastair and Ben and really valuable advice and just to say that don't forget, we can help you with applying the model at your organisation. So if you'd like to have a guided session, and do call us on O1926 465247 or you can look at them the tool and download it from ability net.org.uk/he-and-fe-maturity-model and just keep an eye out on our from our E newsletter and our and on our social media and updates about the interactive model as well. And so next slide, please mark. So just say again, thanks again to Helen, Alastair, and Ben, and we're going to move on to the q&a. Now. Just a reminder, please use the q&a window. Rather than the chat panel to ask a question. So you've got lots of questions. So we'll try to cover them all within the session. But if not, we will try to put the answers to your questions in a follow up blog. And with answers seen. And reminder. Also, when we do end the webinar, there's a feedback form that comes up. So do let us know any feedback about the webinar, any comments you have about future topics you'd like us to cover? Okay, so do fire away with your questions. Just go look at the q&a panel now.

Unknown Speaker 11:39

We had a question earlier. And that said, as institutions, do you recommend linking to search box itself or accessibility statements of the individual suppliers? This might be a good time yet to ask Abi about this particular question.

Abi James 11:56

And I think it's a bit of a Something that you've got to decide what is relevant within your statement template, really, and how much information you want to provide as easily available to your students and your staff. What's important to remember is the accessibility statement has two sections. The first half is aimed at the user. So it's it is meant to be in layman's speaker description of the accessibility, how you can get any further support and how you can raise any issues. The second part is the technical description of compliance. So your suppliers statement may cover the technical compliance, but you need to think about that layman's term. That's, you know, talking to your students to your staff, actually, what's the implication for this? How can you get further support? So yes, potentially link but you still really got to think about how you want to communicate important information.

Annie Mannion 12:53

Okay, and we've got a question from Mike. Can you explain this is for Alistair, and can you explain how this relates to the BDF Maturity Model, as most universities are going for their standard award,

Alistair McNaught 13:06

yeah, that's a really good question. I'm very pleased that Mike's could have given us a chance to talk about that. The key thing here is that this model is a model that's aimed at the core function of an educational institution. Whereas the PDF award because that's that's broad, covering lots of different types of businesses, from banks, to colleges, retailers, etc. It's, it's much more diffuse in a way and it's much harder for an individual teacher, or a librarian or disability support team study skills team, etc. to look at the PDF model and think, okay, where does that fit my practice? right at the beginning, one of the first slides in my section was one that had a skeleton with it, talked about the importance of accessibility materials. based around the language that people actually use, and we find, so I would describe our our model is one that is, it's on a different scale and a different level is not incompatible. And it's not a competitor in terms of the PDF Maturity Model. But whereas the PDF maturity models got lots and lots of questions that you have to go through and fill in, and a lot of the time those questions would not have an obvious relation, you have to kind of invent in a way or extrapolate the relation of that question to, to my job role. Our model looks at it the other way around. It says, okay, we know teaching and learning is what goes on. We know that good. Accessibility is a an emergent property of good teaching and learning. So let's start from that end.

Annie Mannion 14:53

Great, and then, thanks, Alistair. This is a question for Ben. And how did you engage or educate your audience Folks, so they take ownership of their applications and services. And then another question. And are all Kent productivity tools accessible as well?

Ben Watson 15:11

Okay, thank you. The first one. We, we we have that we've tackled through procurement. We you know, so I think a really important thing here is to make sure that you're asking the right questions at the procurement stage to, you know, make it make it something that people need to think about, you know, in project plans, when they're, you know, potentially going to be bidding for a system to do a job that they know that accessibility is going to be a key question that they need to answer. So I think that's an important thing, but it's, it's already on their radar right from the beginning. So it's not something that they kind of feel that's kind of foisted on them once once you know that the project started so that was part of the I guess, the existing Put products and systems, it's been about kind of, you know, getting getting the message out there in as many ways as we possibly can. But as I said before, I think if you weaving it into these broader kind of practices, this is good stuff to do it. Now, we'll be coming regulations that we need to work to. So in much the same way, I always kind of compare locally the rollout of the regulations with, you know, GDPR, you know, and I think GDPR did quite well, in terms of publicity, I think, particularly because it was in everyone's private life as well. But I think if you can get it, get people to see those, those broader benefits so that, you know, they're not just doing it, because they want to kind of reach minimum compliance or that it will stop people nagging them, but they actually understand that this is about future proofing, the things that they're responsible for, and you know, being ethically minded, of course, forced to do the right thing. So, and I don't claim with it in every single example. But, you know, we're kind of very, very present very, very kind of responsive to, you know, people's questions to offer that kind of reassurance, you know, and also to help help them to review, you know, any returns they get from suppliers that, you know, I always find it funny, when you ask suppliers how accessible they are, they always talk about aspirations rather than, you know, where are you right now, you know, and it's, it's sometimes it's helpful to, you know, help the product owners, you know, people responsible for them locally to be able to understand you know, exactly where they are and what kind of questions they could ask. In terms of the productivity tools. I, we do our very best we always take, you know, feedback from students wherever possible. We do. We do get some of our screen reader users to test them. But I think one of the challenges with a platform like that and Pete people who spend a lot of time with x will be familiar with this is that things can change, like the wind, you know. So it does feel that they're kind of, you know, not not quite ephemeral, but not far off in some cases, and they're always changing. So I think, again, we try and make sure that there's a range of platforms and operating systems and devices covered. And we're always kind of keen to get that feedback. And, you know, of course, if we had any feedback that said, you know, this is an absolutely dreadful thing, then we probably wouldn't have put it up there in the first place. But we we would obviously take immediate action on that. So I hope that answers that one.

Annie Mannion 18:39

Great. And a question here, probably for Abi. And what are your views on having one statement for a number of sites in a digital estate covering the main organisation, website, portals, research sites, all in one statement, and this person has seen a mix in the way statements have been created for why the digital is States

Abi James 19:01

think you have to think about how reasonable it's going to be of trying to mix different technical platforms. If you are quite happy that the same responses cover everything, then potentially one statement might cover a big organisation and lots of different routes into your digital estate. However, likelihood is you will have different accessibility issues on different technical platforms or different type of content. So separate statements then become more effective to communicate to the user. So for example, I've noticed even within government departments, they are now producing separate statements for documents. So they're saying this is the accessibility of our documents. And this is the accessibility of our website, because they are two different control mechanisms as well. So the important point to come from is actually does it make sense is it actually of usable, readable since two to communicate what you need to do?

Annie Mannion 20:01

A question from Craig, any suggestions for resources, for example, demos, and that can be used to get people to empathise with users with issues?

Abi James 20:18

Can I pitch in? I think there are there are many tools out there that will try and do visual colour visual or visual disturbances. But there's always a caveat with anything that is about trying to emulate a disability that is quite a contentious issue within the disability community, that essentially you can, instead of generating empathy, you can actually be generating pity. What I find is much more effective is trying to get people to actually engage with their digital platforms in a different way. throwing your mouse you know, just take away the mouse, zoom everything in on your website. Can you use it instead? stead of trying to use some sort of emulator situation, trying to get people to put themselves in using the technology in that way, and always really good to get live

Annie Mannion 21:12

stories

Abi James 21:14

and vignettes. As universities, you have lots of people involved in your organisation and we know that there is quite a significant percentage who have difficulties and barriers. So get them to share your stories that can be just as effective and Ben's done some great work at Kent. His students talked about it, I've used it in courses. And that makes a huge impact of getting people to share their own stories as well.

Annie Mannion 21:40

Well, a related question and for Ben but also do feel free Alastair and Abby to chip in as well as how do you get disabled students involved? Because at this person's institution, they couldn't contact them because of GDPR.

Ben Watson 21:58

Really good question. I mean, I think Um, you know, it's again, if you're making, you know, doing this kind of turning it on its head and the mainstreaming thing, then your accessibility communications are necessarily everywhere so that your, your, you know, the students will be exposed to those messages throughout the life of the organisation. So I think that that's a really good way of course through your disability team you have direct contact with the students, I think would be another means of making sure that they've got the key information that they can refer students to at their fingertips as well as our Student Union has been absolutely fantastic at representing, you know, the requirements of students in all protected characteristics. So, I think, you know, students talking to students is often a really good way for them to engage, you know, much more than feeling that it's just kind of university you know, barrage of Kind of email. So I think that's been a really nice way to do it in our, um, our Student Union, we have a, you know, an accessibility network, which is very active and has its own Facebook group so that they they kind of have their own means of sharing ideas, which they can then use to canvass opinion. And then the kind of accessibility chair will kind of condense it and feed that back to us as an organisation. So I think just maintaining the maximum number of means to communicate with you is is absolutely welcome. I think a Student Union would be really good way to, to try and get them to lead on that communication.

Alistair McNaught 23:42

And that that goes right back to the heart of what what we believe, you know, the most effective approach to this is which is about culture. And so, in a way if you have if you can develop a culture working with students, not necessarily even starting off with your disabled Students, sometimes you just need to work with students and involve students more readily in, you know, supporting your digital practices. I know organisations where they've got student digital champions, I think Ben's used student digital champions in Kent, but once students are actively involved in the process of teaching and learning, and feel an ownership and a stake in it, then it's easier to get all kinds of students involved.

Annie Mannion 24:34

Great. Thank you very much all of you. And just taking at the time, I think we're going to have to end the webinar there. So if you're able to get to the next slide, please mark. And if you do have a question that hasn't been answered, we've got a few that we hope to cover on a follow up blog and with the webinar, recording and any additional information, but just a bit more information that might be of interest to you. We do run online training sessions on accessibility in particular, we've had a lot of inquiries about the accessible documents and presentations training session coming up on the fourth of June. So learn all you need to know about making your documents and presentations accessible to as many users as possible. So if you go to ability net.org.uk, forward slash training, and you can find out more. We do also have a new document remediation service, there's loads which launched recently and forward slash document dash remediation, and do tech our website for advice fact sheets, blogs, and a new helpline number which is 0800 048 7642. And we do have an higher education and further education specific accessibility resources on our website as well. So next slide, please mark. Just to wrap up, say and do check out our next webinars and our ability net live online events programme forward slash webinars and do sign up to our newsletter, a newsletter, forward slash newsletter. And just a final. Thank you very much for joining us and thank you to all of our speakers today and for taking the time out of your day. So, Bye everybody.