- Hello, I'm Abi James, I'm an accessibility consultant at AbilityNet. So, I'm here today to support the event that we are running, and also to meet all the great people that are working in the accessibility field. We learn from each other. It's such a great field to share knowledge, best practice experience. It's a great, friendly field.

- [Interviewer] And you're going to be speaking about higher education and accessibility within TechShare Pro 2019. Can you give a brief overview of what you'll be covering in the session?

- Yes, we've got a session tomorrow where we're gonna be talking particularly about higher education in the public sector and the regulations that have now come in across all UN member states and the UK. And looking at what that means in practice for organizations and also for disabled students, and staff, and users, so, particularly focusing on how there's gonna be a lot more information about how accessible services are and what that can mean from a potential student applying for university, but, also, for the first time ever, these organizations have to say who's complained too, if they've got any issues, which is actually a big issue for many people. When there are problems, how do you actually get it fixed? Tell somebody that you need some help.

- [Interviewer] And have you noticed any key trends within the higher education and accessibility field?

- So, it's really great to see organizations actually thinking about accessibility across the whole digital state. Actually thinking about developing that digital culture, accessible digital culture, because what we need for accessibility to work well is to think about it bottom up and top down. We need leadership, we've got some great sessions happening at TechShare Pro today about leadership, but we also need practicalities. Real basic essential accessibility skills by anybody who creates contents, thinking about basic people control, images, etc. How do you get that out large scale across huge organizations? It's one of the challenges we're facing and it's just really important to start seeing those conversations happening, thinking about what formats we're producing information in, challenges of PDS, the advantages of different types of more accessible formats as well. So, it's just really nice to see that we're starting to get momentum behind these changes.

- [Interviewer] And what are you hoping to learn from the event and the people that are speaking, as well?

- So, I think, obviously there's the innovation side going on. So, we've got a panel today about AI, and ethics, and machine learning, which is obviously a huge change we've seen across digital products in the last few years. That has a positive benefit for accessibility and assistive technology, but there's also barriers and threats, and the ethical side and inclusion side is really important. I'm really interested to see how the gaming side is also progressing because it's really great to see, what is a major industry taking on board? Accessibility, as well, just as important as making sure the workplace and education is accessible for all, as well, and then also virtual reality which is just cool and fun to use.

- [Interviewer] And, just finally, what do you think is most important for leaders to do to help embed an accessible culture?

- Leadership is critical. We've seen that and we've got some really good examples here today, such as Berkeley sharing about how their leadership has worked across their whole corporate environment now to say, "It's got to be better than everything to do." We've always got to have that leadership for it to be successful. So, I think it's about standing out, saying what you expect and then trickling it down and making sure that everyone within an organization understands that it should just be part of their working, professional life to make sure that everything is accessible and inclusive for everybody.