I'm going to be talking about Running Accessibility Testing Workshops.

Next slide, please.

A bit about me.

I'm the Accessibility Lead at the Ministry of Justice

but my background is being a front-end developer,

which I was for three or four years before switching over to accessibility.

I co-created three different training workshops

in this time at the Ministry of Justice.

My pronouns are they, them.

Next slide, please.

One of the main workshops that I worked on was Record a goose sighting.

This is the one I retraced on the most in this time frame.

I've run it internally at the Ministry of Justice and lots of different business areas.

I've also run it at lots of different tech meet-ups

across the country and I've recently been running it at conferences,

the Houston Design Conference,

GDS Global Accessibility Awareness Day,

and the codebar Festival 2021,

and I've been running this with James Buller who's

a senior accessibility consultant at Home Office.

The next slide, please.

What I'm going to cover in this session,

why would you want to run testing workshops?

Creating the material and then running the workshop,

and then a bit of a summary.

Next slide, please.

Why I run accessibility testing workshops?

If you're attending this session,

then you're probably already interested in doing this.

There are some three main reasons I'd like to talk through,

which are why I personally like running them.

Next slide, please.

The first one is, accessibility is very much a team sport.

As I mentioned, I used to be a front-end developer.

My role was to be an individual contributor

who would go through and identify issues

and then address them.

But as I've moved into accessibility,

into being a specialist,

and then into being a lead, my role has been more,

how can we scale this work?

The more people you train in it,

the more accessible the things

your organization creates are going to be

and the bigger impact it's going to have.

Next slide, please.

People are often also really keen to learn.

Accessibility can be a little bit of a daunting subject term for some people,

there's often a little bit of nervousness,

anxiety at the start,

for example, what if I do something wrong?

What are the impacts going to be if I don't get it right?

Though people are really keen to learn and keen to get started,

so it gives them a place to go make the start on that journey.

Next slide, please.

It helps people interpret their findings.

A story I'm going to give here is one of the first things I "fixed"

when I was starting out with accessibility as a front-end developer.

I found some radio buttons and in Firefox

when you tab through radio buttons when they joined together,

so for a yes/no question, what will happen is,

you tab onto the first one which will be either yes or no.

Then when you press tab again,

it will move onto something else.

I interpreted this as an accessibility issue

when actually it's default browser behavior.

It's how it's supposed to work.

As a general rule, you should respect that native behavior.

But I didn't realize this, so I went in and fixed it.

That didn't fix it.

My boss corrected me and said,

"I really like your enthusiasm,

but maybe let's look at this a little bit differently."

The purpose of these workshops

is to give people a safe space to make mistakes

and learn in a supportive environment.

Next slide, please.

Creating the material.

I'm going to talk a little bit about how you

can approach creating these materials that you're

going to use in the workshop.

Next slide, please.

The first point is, use your design system or branding.

It'll be familiar and it'll be relevant

to what your people are creating and working with.

It also helps make the point that

an accessible design system doesn't necessarily equate to accessible services.

At government, we tend to use a design system,

government to show services design system,

which is really good, and is WCAG compliant.

But just because it's WCAG compliant,

doesn't mean everything you create with it is going to be WCAG compliant.

The thing it helps make that point,

they can still create inaccessible things within

accessible foundation.

Accessibility Next slide, please.

Identify commonly recurring issues at your organization.

One thing that I've done,

most of the Ministry of Justices go around to the different business areas,

the different offices in Glasgow, Birmingham, Nottingham,

Sheffield, and sit down with

their teams and talk to them about what is it that they're doing?

What are they working on and what do they need help with?

By doing this review of all the different services,

I've gotten to see what the common mistakes are.

Some of them are unique to the design system.

Patents not being implemented in the way that they were

intended or maybe some issues with the documentation.

This has led to me having a list of issues that I've seen which are occurring.

These are the things I put into the "Record a goose sighting" exercise.

Which means that it's relevant and tailored to the audience.

Next slide, please.

Make it fun and friendly.

We've got a picture here of me hand-bathing some geese.

Geese tend to be a little bit polarizing.

I really like geese. I think they're great.

I found, from running this workshop,

a lot of people do not like geese.

I once had somebody come up to me and say,

"Do you run the killer geese,

recording or the killer geese workshop?"

I was like, "No, record.

Record, not kill."

But I think it's a bit of an icebreaker.

I think the icebreaker is quite important to allow

people to not take themselves too seriously.

Accessibility is a very serious topic but again,

people are sometimes nervous about approaching it.

When you're in a workshop, you start off by saying why it's

important and the impact that it has on people

but then you make that activity engaging and approachable.

Next slide, please.

Now I'm going to talk a bit about running the actual workshop

so next slide, please.

I run pilots with supportive audiences.

The very first time I run this,

it was with a small group of developers,

back when I was a developer still myself.

It was a good way of testing this.

Does this work? Does this material land?

Do people know how to engage with it?

It gives you a sense of, "do I want to keep on running it?"

Next slide, please. Create a feedback form

and factor your time into the workshop for people to fill it out.

If you don't factor the time in,

people won't fill it out after the workshop.

You'll maybe get two or three responses if you send

out a really nice email being like, "Please fill it out."

But as a general rule, if you don't factor that time into the workshop,

then you probably won't get much feedback.

It's easy to do because when trying these workshops,

people already have their laptops with them

so they already have the device they are to use to fill the form out with.

It gives people a different way of communicating with you.

Some people will come up to you and talk to you in the workshop and say,

what worked for them, what didn't but a lot of people weren't.

In this case, a variety of different communication strands.

Next slide, please.

Once you run it with your pilot group,

expand out to more groups and iterate on that.

Iterate is really key to turning workshops.

The workshop has changed quite a lot from when I first started to run it.

When I first used to run it,

I would give people 20 minutes and say,

"there are five pages,

go through, and test every single page in that 20 minutes.

Then we'll come back together as a group and go through each batch."

What we change it to over time is,

we're going to give you three minutes to do the first page.

Then we'll come back together as a group and discuss.

You'll learn about how to use the tools,

you can ask questions,

then we're going to give you another three minutes.

You're going to do the second page.

That works so much better than the original version.

I wouldn't have really gotten there

without having looked at the feedback that I got from participants.

Next slide, please.

See, I give people the chance to iterate on their testing,

rather than giving them one big chunk of time

to go through and have a go at it.

Give them small opportunities to have a go

and then lots of chance to give feedback,

and then ask the questions that they need to ask.

Next slide, please.

See, I create lots of space for questions.

I run this both in person and online.

We create space for questions.

In person, I will ask people if there are questions

if we're in a big group but I'll also make a point

to go around to each individual person and say,

how are you doing?

How are you getting on?

Do you have any questions that you want to ask?

Like here, what I've just asked you.

Then with the remote workshops,

you can't do that in the same way

but you can have this thing where you say to people,

if you want to ask a question out loud,

feel free to come up in view and ask that way

or we'll say feel free to put a comment in the chat.

As I mentioned, I run this with James Buller

and he often moderates the chat.

He can keep an eye on that whilst I'm running at something.

Next slide, please.

Create a friendly and welcoming environment.

I mentioned James Buller.

He's been great.

It's a shame he couldn't make it today but he's currently on holiday.

We run it between the two of us now,

and we have a system where we alternate who says what.

We also have a bit of discussion between us.

We'll talk about our favorite geese

in the quiet bits while people are doing the testing,

James came up with lots of different geese puns which are really great.

In terms of actual accessibility of presentations, it's made it easier for me.

So as you could maybe hear from my voice,

I get quite anxiety.

This is a little bit of a nightmare,

this talk today with everything going wrong with the laptop and stuff.

But it's really helpful to have somebody there who can take care if they need to.

It hasn't happened yet but it's good to know that there's

a backup person who can support you and be there for you as well.

We've done quite a lot together so it's really good teamwork.

Next slide, please.

I'm going to summarize some of these tips and some other things that we learned

along the way with the journey of the goose workshop.

Next slide, please.

Identify your audience and their technical level.

There are lots of different types of accessibility issues.

Some are going to be front-end-based,

some are going to be content-based,

some are going to be design-based,

and not everybody will be able to pick these out.

I made sure that in next slide is something that everybody can find,

no matter what your technical level is.

Secondly, understand their tools.

Can they use plugins?

In the workshop, we use Wave,

which is a browser-based plugin,

which is good, but nobody can use.

Nobody in administrations can actually install plugins into

their devices because of the restrictions on the laptops.

We had to find a different way of doing this.

It's fortunately, Wave has a browser-based tool so they can use this,

for understanding in advance different ways of accessing the tools is people need.

Second, they give them links in advance

so you can go in and install Waves, the browser plugin,

if they want to and also get the goose sighting [inaudible]

Get that set up on their computer.

Allow them to iterate on testing techniques rather than

giving them one big exercise and saying go away,

have go, we'll discuss, then wrap up.

Give them lots of different short opportunities to do that.

It's more engaging and gives them a chance to grow at a quicker rate.

Make space for lots of questions, really important.

Keep it really welcoming scene so

people would do make use of the space for questions that you're providing.

Next slide, please.

That is it for me.

Thank you for bearing with, there's a lot in technical issues.

Thank you to the organizers.