I think this follows on very nicely

from George's talk earlier on,

about some of the things that further education are really good at,

and things that universities occupy a little bit further down the road on,

and about some of our own collaboration's in the way that we're going

to share knowledge and experiences

and hopefully, overall, improve student's confidence to apply

to higher education and promote their independence.

Jo, do you want to introduce yourself?

Yes, thank you Ben.

Welcome to delegates.

I'm Jo Campbell, director for SEND at the EKC Group of Colleges.

If you look closely, there are six colleges within

the EKC group that are all in the photographs above.

What I'm going to do very briefly,

is just give you an overview of the support

provided for young people who come into further education,

who were coming to the EKC Group of Colleges,

which is in the East of Kent.

What I'm going to tell you about replicates to a certain extent

what happened to provision across the country

in other further education colleges.

Of course, there are differences,

but actually it's generally what our offer is in FE now, thank you.

We have the universal support,

which is for all young people.

We have mentors who are working

as an advocate for young people,

and they'll have a case load of young people

that they are primarily providing welfare support

and are also acting in some cases,

as safeguarding officers as well.

We have a whole team of additional learning support staff

who get information about young people,

ideally before they ever arrive,

and this will be on their support needs.

So that we can then share that

with teaching staff and with support staff,

who can then be better-informed

about actually meeting the young person's needs.

That additional learning support team

will meet with the individual young person and discuss,

and this is mostly with 16-year-olds.

What do they see that their needs are?

What do they consider are the best strategies

for staff to take to meet their needs?

We have dyslexia support tutors,

and some of this you will also find

within the HE learning environment.

Staff who have to undertake exam access arrangements

and to assess young people to see if they need support

in undertaking their exams and linking with the exam bodies.

We have IG careers officers and then

we have industry liaison officers who are working with employers.

Because in the main,

the focus of further education is to prepare young people and to provide training,

vocational training, that will lead to employment at some point.

That's part of the young person's journey.

We have well-being centers and we offer counseling

and bespoke support for young people.

As per what's happening across the country,

in schools and in colleges,

and in HE, we have an increasing number of young people

who have mental health needs.

It's important that our staff are equipped to support young people,

and in some cases families as well.

We recognize that we've got a number of young people

who need more than the universal support,

but they don't need it all the time.

This targeted support that may well be

with speech and language therapists and specialist tutors

really focusing in and working with their teaching staff to

support teaching staff to have the skills to meet the young person's needs.

Thank you, Ben. Now, we have many young people who need more than the universal support,

who need more than the targeted support,

who really need a personalized level of support and

that's where we are providing a lot of additionality.

If I just give you,

just very briefly, an idea on numbers,

we currently have at the EKC Group,

613, young people with a really high level of need.

That will be young people with a whole range of different conditions and needs that

need to be met and support that needs to be provided to

enable them to engage with further education,

but also require more than in-class support.

For a number of young people that's about supporting the preparation for

adulthood as well as additional work to prepare young people for employment.

We have personal social achievement activities,

which may well include,

travel training, shopping and life skills.

We have some young people who are working at pre-HE program,

what we would call level 3 level of study,

who really want to learn the skills,

have friends and want support in how to develop relationships,

how to build confidence to actually travel

to a town independently or with a friend,

or to meet someone at the weekend.

We have a whole range of support services,

some of which we need to bring in.

This is qualified teacher for visually impaired,

teacher of the deaf,

working with our Kent Communication Assistive Technology team,

Kent Association for Blind.

These will be services that are likely to be offered,

possibly with a different title in another local authority,

physiotherapists, occupational therapists.

In Kent, we have independent travel training support for young people,

but we recognize that these are services

and our support is what we've been developing and increasing for a number of years.

Actually, it is time to move on.

It's time to be more inclusive and we need to look at

new ways of enabling young people to be more

independent and to work with other bodies and I'm delighted to

say that we're partnering with Ben and

the Kent University at the moment to look at how we can do this.

As further education providers,

were on the journey towards meeting

regulation requirements and embedding accessibility by design.

But you'll just know from some of the language that I've used

some of the titles that are actually on this slide on the screen here,

they're really old hat and they're not titles that we necessarily

want to be using or even should be using now.

Qualified teacher for the visually impaired.

Now, I don't know whether we've got any visually impaired people in the audience here,

but I'm not sure you'd like to have that terminology impaired.

That's not really acceptable these days,

and there's a lot that is conveyed in language

that we need to reflect on and do differently.

We need to express and use language that is much more inclusive.

But we also recognize that we're almost in

a bit of a trap here because we've got families and parents,

sometimes who fought for many years

to have a label that brings with it services.

That's a challenge, but our role as professionals is to become more

inclusive and that's expressed through our language. Over to Ben.

Thank you, Jo. Where we've been thinking about going next

is part of what we do with all of the public sector bodies in Kent.

We're all trying to share our knowledge and awareness

and the progress we've made towards meeting regulations,

but I think as you saw earlier from George's slides,

I think further education isn't as far down the road

as some of the other public sector bodies and in discussing things with Jo,

I think we've identified potentially one of the reasons in that further education

is absolutely brilliant that that localized support the one-to-one support,

it far outstrips I think what a lot of

HE providers are able to offer or it certainly equals it.

But I think they're absolutely at capacity meeting

that particular set of requirements,

which has meant they've not had an awful lot of

wiggle room to absorb some of this new way of

looking at things and meeting the requirements of the regulations,

so perhaps that goes some way to explaining

some of what George has found.

The university has made a little bit more progress down that road.

So what we're doing is identifying ways that we can share,

things where they can be shared,

and the ultimate aim here

and I think Wayne demonstrated this beautifully earlier on,

was that if we can get people to be more

confident in their use of technology I think that is a path to

independence and to a potential level of being able

to pair back some of the intensity of the localized support,

allowing people to overtime

and as they feel comfortable gently prepare

to absorb more and more tools and techniques,

into the way that they go about their study,

to further promote independence.

Through things like digital accessibility policies,

which in Kent as much as possible,

we're hoping to identify a common digital accessibility policy template

that all public sector bodies in Kent could subscribe to.

Now, of course, there will be lots of local vocabulary.

The way that departments are structured will be

subtly different and I'm almost certain that part of

some of the challenges that further education faces

that they probably don't have big teams of people

running their virtual learning environment.

Possibly the person who does the website

may also do the virtual learning environment.

There's a real issue with resourcing.

But what we were hoping to do was by having

a common understanding of some of the key things that we're

hoping to achieve in terms of what looks good in digital accessibility circles,

that will further prepare the groundwork for us

to be able to develop more shared training.

Because when we then offer that slightly more generic training

to give people a general introduction to how to be accessible,

already, some of the common vocabulary will have been ironed out.

So we all understand what we mean when we say,

digital accessibility and something about the scope of the regulations,

and how they're being applied

beautifully by that approach is that of course,

we're better able to share resources,

and as Michael demonstrated brilliantly earlier on,

some of this stuff is right out our fingertips in things

that we all have access to every day if only we knew about it.

Some of that guidance doesn't need to be highly

tailored to each individual organization and I think we can

template enough of this so that we can reach much

more far and wide and develop a common standard,

almost a minimum standard that we're all bringing each

other up to these the same levels of confidence together.

I think that's a really brilliant opportunity.

Certainly, what we're doing with Jo's team

is to be sharing more about the things we've already done.

The procurement questions we're asking are relatively easy to transplant into

the procurement processes within East Kent College group and of course,

the level of understanding to

double-check the responses we're getting from suppliers to say,

actually that's a really good answer,

that gives me confidence that this supplier is indeed meeting

the appropriate levels or whether we need a bit more unpicking.

It's a shadowing job I guess but also sharing

the way that we go about doing auditing the statements that we've written, I think,

again, could be shared at a certain level of well,

this is how we've gone about dealing with that particular type of

issue and this is what we've put down for a way to

work around that problem because we know we can't

immediately fix it across our whole digital estate,

but we can put in these sensible links to tools that the people could use to get

a better experience while we continue to address some of

those accessibility issues on our road map.

As we say, ultimately,

this is about trying to promote their independence so that

we can have students in further education who feel that when they go to higher education,

whether they go to Kent or anywhere else,

that they have the skills and the confidence in the practice of doing

independent study that will support them in what would be

a very real expectation of them when they get to higher education.

I think ultimately this is about public sector bodies in

geographical regions or even if it's just by

type lots of different local authorities working together.

Lots of FE colleges working together to share what's common among us,

which is an absolute desire to do the very best

with the most limited resources that we will have.

That's where we're heading and that's working

really well and it's a mutually beneficial relationship because

as I say Jo's team is so incredibly strong and the one-to-one support

and the user experiences of students that we've learned tons from that.

It's a brilliant relationship and I'm really excited about where we go next with it.

If you have any further questions,

of course, we're trying to answer them in the Q&A.

So please add them to the chat.

But Jo and I are both happy for you

to contact us directly if you'd like to talk to us more

about immediate ways that you could join

our merry band and get involved. Thank you very much.