Talking Mats is one method – a low tech method – of communication that can be used with people with learning disabilities. It’s really good because it is easy to use, although it does probably require some degree of training and education in its use.

It uses picture symbols and a mat, and what it helps is to focus the person with the learning disability’s attention to whatever the topic or the decision in hand might be. And with the use of the pictures it facilitates that person to make a decision as to whether they are happy or they do want or like something, whether they are unhappy or don’t want to do something, or whether they are not sure.

What I would say is that it’s not a tool that would be used with everyone. The person would have to have a certain level of spoken understanding - usually around two to three key words - and the health passport or any information that would be provided to a doctor would hopefully indicate if that would be then a suitable mode of communication for the person that they would maybe be interviewing.