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START AUDIO

Interviewer: I'm going to start recording if that's okay.

P5: Yeah, that's fine.

Interviewer: As a warm up to these interviews I've been asking people to say what's the most important thing for their organisation

P5: What's the most important thing in relation to my organisation? Generally? Or in relation to ThoughtCloud?

Interviewer: You can interpret that how you like

P5: Smart Skills I suppose is all about amplifying the voice of disabled people, all sorts of different levels so I suppose at the individual level, at the local level, at the regional level at the national level, so kind of individual collective and how we help people to amplify the voice, we do that in all sorts of different ways, including I suppose people's families and carers and I suppose ThoughtCloud knits into that very nicely cause it's one more way of easily and regularly getting people's thoughts and things about their experiences

Interviewer: And that's why I've been asking that, it's this idea of giving voice to people

P5: Yeah, absolutely. The politics of language are extremely complicated but if disempowered people have had their voice taken away they can certainly fight for it back themselves,

people, people fight for the vote, people fight for rights all sorts of ways and in that sense sometimes groups of people take what is due to them and other folks find that really difficult to do that independently so I guess sometimes we work with them and then the language changes to 'give'

Interviewer: A contentious way of looking at it, at power relationships, so I've been using that term recently. I'm trying to think wider around what the system means and I think this idea of 'giving voice' is what it should be about. For me it's about how we can do that digitally, but I think you guys have expertise doing that generally

P5: I suppose the nuances of language might suggest that helping people find their voice is a better turn of phrase but that's slightly more cumbersome, takes up more words when people should use shorter words

Interviewer: Yeah, that's true, I have a ten page limit. I think that's really, in terms of my whole PhD, that term needs to be deconstructed a little bit. But, I understand that it's important to all the organisations that I work with. So, I don't know if they are thinking because I'm talking about ThoughtCloud that that is what they should say or whether that is in the values of the organisation, where the organisation comes from, if that makes sense

P5: I think that people having access to their rights as full citizens and finding their voice are very closely linked. One could use either set of vocabulary I suppose. In the context of ThoughtCloud I understand that people use the kind of voice vocabulary rather than the rights vocabulary

Interviewer: That's interesting and something for me to sort out. We don't have a lot of time, it would be nice to talk about that for a long time, hopefully we can in the future. But, really the general

question is, if we think about ThoughtCloud as a whole system now: we've got the tablet, but there's also the website part of it, so if we think about that as a whole system, do you have a sense of how that's being used, or how you are using it or?

P5: I'm going to kind of limit my role and responsibilities, my role isn't fully about contract compliance, it's not about the annual report, it's not about funding bids, it's not all about that sort of, I don't have so much in terms of the exterior push of the organisation. More of my role is inward looking, so I'm going to do a slight copout and say that, that role rests more with P3. In terms of the bit that I am familiar with and connected to, I think that picking up ThoughtCloud and using it seems to become fairly mainstream I hope, certainly the friendship group that I sit in on every week seems to use it routinely.

Interviewer: Really? Who does the friendship group?

P5: C6 and C13, it's their last one today

Interviewer: It's their last day today

P5: No, no. Last friendship group today. I've suggested that they should set up the ThoughtCloud in a different room today, because thus far people are reluctant to give audio or video comment. So I've suggested that it be set up in a different room with another colleague to help facilitate people using it in giving their views just to make sure that people are as, feel as free as is possible in the circumstances just to share a kind of report about what they have been through. And I've seen it used in the weeks I've been there, so yes, I think it saves us some time, effort, energy, resources, we don't have to reinvent some sort of paper questionnaire and then help people with something which might of itself be a bit intimidating.

Interviewer: The tablet...

P5: Yeah

Interviewer: ...or the questionnaire?

P5: Well, physical paper questionnaire can be a bit intimidating, if you can't read very well

Interviewer: Well I've helped people fill them in

P5: Yeah, yeah

Interviewer: And I've criticized the way that they are used when I've written about it since part of the justification for ThoughtCloud is that their voice isn't filtered in anyway, if you help someone fill in a questionnaire you might be changing what they say, and I've done that myself, 'did you mean', I'll just

P5: And the purity of the voice that we hear, in a sense there's no such thing as a pure voice cause we are interconnected people, we're not kind of islands I suppose, and people, disabled people come into Skills with a whole history with maybe complex relationships with other people and power systems and structures and life experience and just to say to somebody: 'Right talk to us with absolute truth' is a nonsense, so we always accept tat there are layers of complexity I what people tell us. You might argue that there is no such thing as truth anyway.

Interviewer: Well that's getting quite philosophical, what is truth? What is your belief about the underlying structure of knowledge, do you have an ontological framework?

P5: I do, I've now come to the conclusion that the only notion of absolute truth is the entirety of the universe, because that from the beginning of creation to now is a kind of continually developing organism and if one was able to, it's not possible, but if one were able to see that from the outside one could and interpret it fully than that might be an absolute truth but for us

as smaller than a kind of grain of sand compared to our earth...

Interviewer: Well the Earth is a grain of sand and we're living on it

P5: Absolutely, absolutely, it's far too complicated to actually be able to, for us to get to any notion of the truth

Interviewer: Yeah, are you familiar with complexity theory, which is something that, I mean I'm not but my other supervisor, he's very interested in, he's very knowledgeable about how charities and care organisations sit in relation to each other and he wants me to understand it as a complex systems. It's like what you're saying there, certain people come here but they are bound up in power structures and other organisations and all these organisations are competing in some way, so he is more interested in thinking of how, if you change one thing over here it affects the whole system, it's very interesting, things I'm still trying to get my head around. How did we get onto that?

P5: Truth

Interviewer: Yeah, so it seems like we're hovering up feedback

P5: Yes we are

Interviewer: That's a term that you used before

P5: Yes, yes, that's very good

Interviewer: And it's great that you are thinking of ways of setting the tablet up so that people can have their voice less obfuscated, cause I think most people for convenience are just holding the tablet up and going 'Say something quickly' and you get this interview dynamic, few preserve the initial vision that we had for it, just you and the tablet. There was a problem with that last year when we did the sort of short study, there was

someone talked about being bullied, so if you are doing that, if they are unsupervised is it important to keep an eye on what's being recorded just incase anyone is?

P5: Yes, certainly, many of the people that come here will not be able to start the recording process and end the recording process by themselves, it's something that they are familiar with like their own TV at how they might be able to start it and switch it off so there is likely to be someone else turning it on. For today I'm hoping that C6 and C13 have arranged someone who is not C6 and C13 or me to do that. So, it's still not entirely unpoliced or people may not experience it as being entirely unpoliced.

Interviewer: Do you know if it's been synced recently

P5: No I don't

Interviewer: Do you know how to do that

P5: I did go onto the website once

Interviewer: Yes you have been on the website

P5: Probably a couple of months ago, so I probably haven't synced it, I haven't synced it no

Interviewer: We had a look at it, yeah you should go on the website, because I was looking at, I'm pulling the numbers out, how much it's been used, in four months it's been used, and if it's not been synced it's not the latest data, but I think it's been used at 44 individual events. I'm not sure what that jumps up to

P5: In four months

Interviewer: It's even higher than that for the whole year. I log in to make sure that there's nothing we need to report, but when you log in for Skills now it's quite a big page of stuff to go through, so I

worry now that you've got a lot of work essentially just leafing through all that

P5: Maybe we could set that as a task for a student on placement to do something with our feedback

Interviewer: Was C13 a student, cause you asked, at one point I got a request to give her a log in

P5: Yep, she was writing some feedback about the Keeping Well course that she had been running with P6 in order to get the information about the course she needed a log in

Interviewer: And do you know if she did?

P5: Well she's written the report

Interviewer: And have you seen it?

P5: I have seen it

Interviewer: Is there anything in there you think came from ThoughtCloud, was there any feedback in there? I'm just interested

P5: I don't know Interviewer

Interviewer: Cause I think P3 has used some for [Social Group] application

P5: Application? Okay. So, P6 is in the office today so you might ask her, she'll have paid more attention, I read the final report with a view to C13's performance as a student rather than as a view to learning about the Keeping Well. So, my eye on it does this help me to assess C13's competence not, does this help me to discuss with P6 Keeping Well which I have no role in running or managing.

Interviewer: Okay, so C13 isn't here anymore is she?

P5: No, she's gone

Interviewer: I should have talked to her at some point maybe I can get an email for her. I do actually have formal questions. Has the system changed or impacted the way that the organisations collect feedback

P5: Yeah

Interviewer: It has?

P5: Well yeah, cause I would have been saying for instance in the friendship group which I do have responsibility for I would have been saying to the students that they need to be brandishing bits of paper every time, with pens and biros for the folks to tick boxes and write stuff and I haven't been doing that, I've been saying have you got ThoughtCloud?

Interviewer: Cool

P5: So, yeah

Interviewer: You're quite an advocate for it, you're pushing it? ThoughtCloud?

P5: Yeah I think I am

Interviewer: You're like a champion of the system?

P5: Is that right? I think other folks use it as well

Interviewer: I don't know

P5: I mean 44 in four months isn't me

Interviewer: Yeah, I know people are using but I'm interested in how an organisation communicates using it, how everyone learns to use it, not how you should use it but how that's happened, that's not totally clear to me, I mean I haven't spoken to everyone yet but it's certainly interesting from my point of view, cause the term you talked about before was organisational culture, so thinking about that, is that, is organisational culture

is like a thing that charities just adopt, is there a known organisational culture or is it specific to one organisation that you have control over?

P5: It's specific to one organisation, different not for profit organisations working in the same sector will have a different feel to them which will reflect their particular culture

Interviewer: Yeah

P5: Definitely, and those things can be changed, yeah. Sometimes it's difficult to change them

Interviewer: That's interesting, so maybe it arises from the way an organisation is configured, or is it something that arises from the way a charity or an organisation is set up, or is it something you have control over?

P5: Those two things are linked so the way you set an organisation up links to your ambitions and your aims and your hopes. But the organisational culture is partly about the underlying sort of paper work, memorandum agreement, your articles of association whatever it is, how do you come together as a group of people come together as an organisation, thought about what you want to achieve and written it down and part of it is about how we then implement that and then a huge part of it is who are the people on the ground who are leading the organisation, so the leaders in an organisation are not always the people with the most positional power.

Interviewer: Okay

P5: People can come from many different places within an organisation and the culture is, in part, set by those people, the people who lead. Did you ever seen the Winterbourne View panorama program?

Interviewer: No

P5: Okay, so sit down one day when you're feeling emotionally strong, with a big box of tissues cause it's, it must be four years old or five years old now, so it's Panorama and it's the Winterbourne View expose and in there you see some really strong evidence of kind of sub cultures in organisations. So, cultures, sub cultures of abuse of disabled people so the organisation wouldn't say that was their culture, but in particular teams on a particular floor of that institution there was awful sub cultures that was led by the power people, those leaders were not in a position of power, they were people who had strong personalities, that's a really horrible example, it's a pretty strong example but it's an example of pretty poor leading and pretty appalling outcomes. Yes, so organisational values and what an organisation feels like is quite complex, it's much more difficult to improve that than it is to destroy it.

Interviewer: Okay

P5: And like your tower of Jenga blocks you can, it takes you a long time to build your tower it takes no time at all to knock it down

Interviewer: I think that's interesting then. Like there's something that exists arising out of the way it is configured at the moment. It's interesting

P5: How it is configured and the people

Interviewer: That's kind of what I mean, people as part of the configuration, the way something is set up, the culture while it might be controlled in some sense by values going one way, there might be a culture, it seems like what you're saying, there could be a negative underlying culture based on people in positions of, not of power, the way it works on the ground. It's just, when you put a community of people together it's a complex entity.

P5: It is, but if you can keep hold of the, a shared vision and I think that we're probably quite good at that at Skills and the primacy of people's rights and their voice and if the discussion and what you do are all closely linked to that, then that really helps keeps the organisational culture on track

Interviewer: Cool, yeah, so I guess then I suppose what I would say is how do you get a digital system involved in that?

P5: Well absolutely, I mean it goes back to the opening question that you asked me, that we absolutely want people that we work with, disabled people to be at the centre of our thoughts at all times that we are doing stuff and that goes down to when we're trying to drive down the cost of our telephony system, you know the telephone system has to work for disabled people who are ringing up who are unsure, so we make sure that there is always a physical person on the end of the phone and it never goes to voice mail or somebody's extension, it's always, 'Hello, this is Susan, how are you can I help?' Right? So, if you're driving down the cost of your telephony system, you are absolutely are arguing, not for the cheapest system but the system that will deliver what you need but is the cheapest system. So, if you keep the primacy of what you need for your purpose in all your conversations and ThoughtCloud is part of that isn't it cause it's gathering feedback from people that we work with cause we want to say, (a) your view is important and (b) your individual and collective views will be listened to and if things need to change because of what you say then we'll try and change them, so digitalisation is absolutely in there.

Interviewer: Yeah, so that's, I think that part of it is working, the collecting feedback, I'm just not sure we're really.

P5: Using it

Interviewer: That's why I'm like, 'C13 put it in a report tell me about that', or P3 has got a funding application

P5: Yeah she's definitely put one in the for the social groups including, or maybe she hasn't maybe she's...

Interviewer: Yeah, yes, what I'd really like to get to at some point, cause there's no reason we can't keep developing the system, I mean you call it 'you said, we did', is there a way we can furnish that, build that into thoughtcloud, feeding back feedback who leave feedback? I mean I've tried to think about putting it in the system with buttons you can press to make feedback public and stuff, that's maybe not the most appropriate way of doing it. It would be good to think more around that end of it.

P5: Yeah, well that's very interesting and it's a good question, cause would any organisation always want have some control of what was being fed back out in public, so if we happen to run a course, whatever the topic and for some reason four people on the course found it really difficult and didn't enjoy it and their feedback was stringer and louder than some people's feedback would we want it to go unedited or unmitigated back into the public domain, this is what Skills are doing? People might have doubts about that.

Interviewer: But, you know that would be a test wouldn't it, of the organisation in a way

P5: Tripadvisor and whatever else are based on that in a way. If you believe them to be honest.

Interviewer: And yes they're definitely, people go on there and ruin it, yeah, I guess what I'm really saying is, we wouldn't make it unpoliced by you guys but would there be a way of making the system almost using the system to make the work you do here more transparent to the wider community? If that's even really

important. Does that really matter? Or do you think you're quite transparent anyway

P5: I don't think we do enough external communications stuff, I think you know the website is not up to date. Facebook is a little bit better, perhaps.

Interviewer: You've got Twitter

P5: Yeah, we tweet

Interviewer: You don't have Youtube

P5: No

Interviewer: I don't believe, you should get a Youtube channel

P5: Do you think

Interviewer: Yeah, cause there are some films floating about and we can add a link on the website

P5: Yeah I think the department of health asked us to do a three and a half minute version of our Mindfulness film so that could go on Youtube

Interviewer: Yeah, I'm doing a video with the [Social Group] next week

P5: Yeah, yeah, I also just as a passing thought wondered about a Smart Skills app, so that you can quickly plug into a little bit of feedback about what's just happened, or what's happening next week. There are people who come here who use smart phones.

Interviewer: That's what I was going to ask, cause I, yeah...

P5: It's not the majority of our constituency, so it may not be cost and time effective to develop a system just for 15% of the people who come here.

Interviewer: Well, you know

P5: Other people, parents, carers, paid people would use it.
Although a lot of paid people don't have work smart phones,
so they would be relying on their own smart phone

Interviewer: Do you think the majority of service users probably don't have
smart phones do they?

P5: Who do you know who are service users who come here, tell
me a few names?

Interviewer: C2?

P5: I think he has a smart phone

Interviewer: C3

P5: No

Interviewer: Louise

P5: No

Interviewer: C3

P5: Yes

Interviewer: Chris

P5: No

Interviewer: You can tell me everyone's digital access, that's interesting

P5: I can guess, C12 doesn't, C7 does. You know, I mean that
quick count was four, three, that may not be representative

Interviewer: It doesn't just have to be smart phones, what about internet
access do they have computers at home?

P5: Well the digital divide tells us that older people and disabled
people and people that are not in employment and at the lower
end of the economic scale are less likely to have access. Plus
we have our planning Cafe, two downstairs that don't even get

used but then there's the issue of who's at home and how do I sit there and potter on and learn

Interviewer: That's what I said to C3 it's not going to cut it doing this for an hour and a half once a week, if you want to get good at it you need to be doing it all the time. You can teach people anything but if you don't reinforce the learning. Anyway, I think you need to go actually. What would be the best thing? So, I've got other stuff around if there's a duty to respond to feedback but I think we've covered that.

P5: Can I give you an example about my nephew C14, have I spoke to you about C14?

Interviewer: Yeah, I think you have, he has a learning disability?

P5: He has downs syndrome, he's 15, he's in mainstream school so he's the most disable child in his school and his presence in that school makes disability ordinary for all the other kids in that school which is great and his birthday parties have some disabled people and some non disabled people, it's just C14's mates, it's really cool. C14 has a smart phone, he can't spell, he can't write, he couldn't write, 'Dear mum, how are you? From C14.' We as a family have a Whatsapp group so that we share the occasional line or picture or, 'I'm off to my sisters' or 'I'm off to the market, it's a bit windy I'm worried all my pots are going to blow off the table.' Whatever, and C14 creates community amongst the family by instigating Whatsapp conversations, so he'll be sitting there in the morning before going to school, he's had his breakfast, he's patting the dog, he'll send a little video clip of himself with the dog and we will answer, 'Hello C14, how are you, you're off to school, I'm off to the market, it's really windy I'm worried, ooh careful of your pots.' And we get into conversation because C14 electronically initiates it, so asked about digital applications in a charity that works with disabled people and I think that technology is a

huge resource that is grossly underused. C14's school does not understand that they will improve his quality of life by helping him to use his smartphone better. The smartphone voice recognition recognises some of C14's speech better than I do.

Interviewer: So, I imagined that he left a video on Whatsapp and then you leave response videos?

P5: I don't often do videos on Whatsapp

Interviewer: So you're replying by text

P5: Often, we're replying by text

Interviewer: Did you say he had difficulty reading?

P5: C14 has difficulty reading

Interviewer: So how are you having a text based conversation?

P5: Some of his communications to us are just jumbles of letters

Interviewer: So, if you replied, I just mean you don't reply to him in text do you?

P5: Yeah I do yeah, 'Hi C14, good to hear from you, hope you have a good day, it's sunny here, I'm off to work.'

Interviewer: And he can read that?

P5: Probably not, but what he knows, he can probably read, 'Hi C14', but he knows there's a message coming in or addressed to him or when he looks at his phone he can see that he did one at 8.28 and someone else did one at 8.35 so he started a conversation going and probably at some point his mum or his dad or his brothers will read them to him

Interviewer: The phone could probably read it to him

P5: There you see, absolutely, we don't use technology nearly enough, no where near

Interviewer: But that's a lovely example of using it to create a community

P5: Absolutely, C14 is brilliant at bringing people together, they were off camping recently and the last day he got all the kids in the camp site together in a football game in the middle of the campsite apparently. But, through Whatsapp, despite a insignificant learning disability, C14 had brought his Uncles and Aunts and Nephews and niece together and in more regular contact with each other and that's an example of how technology, when it's used thoughtfully can really help disabled people I suppose and it seems to me that ThoughtCloud is part of that huge opportunity.

Interviewer: Yes, absolutely, I think we need to think about how we can make it better, basically which is why I want to do that workshop next week which you are coming to. I think you need to go now. I dd have one last section and it was because this hasn't been in the conversation before, but do you have a sense of what the people who use this organisation think they're doing when they give feedback? If that makes sense?

P5: Gosh

Interviewer: That's a big one isn't it? It's speculation, how can we know what other people are thinking? The reason I'm asking is the workshop I did with Bright Times, they knew what ThoughtCloud was but I pretty quickly stopped using the word feedback and started calling it sending messages and we did a paper based thoughtcloud where they made letters, but I was been confident they knew what feedback was, I just wondered if you had any thoughts on what, obviously some understand more than others

P5: We know that proportionally people disclosed safeguarding issues much more when in Skills House than in other places, so we know that people feel safe here. And when people feel safe it's okay to share, speak in ways that they don't feel safe to share or speak in other places, you know? So, people are a little bit more comfortable with sharing stuff. And I know that people, disabled people, that have been socialised into all sorts of systems, they've been socialised into being clients, where systems around them control all sorts of stuff in their lives, and part of that being socialised into being a client is giving feedback. So, whether, two different experiences of sharing your views are described there: One is that at Smart Skills people feel proportionally more relaxed than other places and the other is generally their lives people learn that they are expected to talk about themselves, these are my deficits, these are my problems, this is what I'm good at and they're expected to give feedback. Although I can definitely think of some people that come to Skills who would understand that giving feedback is about helping Skills to do a better job, but I can't with my hand on my heart say that that would be universally true

Interviewer: Yes, interesting to try and understand what people think it is, what it's for, but that's maybe a bigger conversation than two minutes. I'll just struggle with that one for the rest of my PhD.

P5: Yeah, good, and I would like you to reach any point of clarity on your on going questions.

Interviewer: I'll get back to you

P5: Okay good, thank you Interviewer.

Interviewer: Any final thoughts? This is what I ask routinely at the end

P5: Oh just very glad that we're working with on this

Interviewer: Oh good, I'm very glad to be hear and thank you for all your time and patience, I know you're very busy

P5: Absolutely fine

Interviewer: Thank you

P5: Cheers