

**File:** 2016-04-04\_P1.MP3

**Duration:** 0:30:58

**Date:** 19/08/2016

**Typist:** 776

START AUDIO

Interviewer: Hello P1.

P1: Hello [Interviewer].

Interviewer: Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed.

P1: No problem.

Interviewer: I appreciate that. Just to get the ball rolling would you mind introducing yourself for the recording and telling us a little bit about the work that you do?

P1: I am P1 Howe. I am the co-ordinator of the charity Bright Times. We are a user-led charity that works with people with learning disabilities. We provide social activities, such as cycling and gardening, but also we do a lot of work with disability hate crime, such as training the police and making people with learning disabilities aware of disability hate crime.

Interviewer: Excellent. Thank you for that. As I mentioned before, the project is largely about feedback and new ways of doing that. Maybe making it easier and maybe creating more of a dialogue between yourself and people who use your services, or whichever way you want to use feedback, whichever is helpful to yourself, to Bright Times. Can you tell me what feedback means to you? What is feedback to Bright Times? What form does it take? That sort of thing.

P1: At present I would say, and since I have been here, it has been anecdotal. It is a case of people coming up and expressing how much they have enjoyed something or saying that they have not. We have evaluation forms when we are training other people but I have never really used them with anything that we do.

I know that has been an issue because lots of funders, because we are funded from different funding charitable trusts and stuff like that, they like to know how you are going to get feedback. This is an ideal time and project. It has fitted in lovely with what I need and what you need really, yes.

Interviewer: That is how feedback is collected. You said you do forms with trainers.

P1: We do short evaluation forms when we are doing the police. I will be totally honest with you, at times I do not really have time to read them and I feel guilty about that. For instance, I am in the process of writing to the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for some more money. What I will do is I will

stick in a couple of the quotes that we got from the evaluation forms.

Interviewer: So actually what they have said?

P1: Yes.

Interviewer: That is cool. That is with the police. You do not do it with the people that do the cycling group, for example? You are chatting with them all the time so you have got a good idea of how [Crosstalk 0:03:11].

P1: I do get a good idea. For instance, we had one lad who came last week and he first of all told us he had not cycled before. It was not true, he had cycled before. What he also did not tell me was that a year ago he fell over and broke his hip. They found out he had osteoporosis. It is probably not a good idea for him to be cycling because if he does come off it he could be really in a serious state. Through that I have evaluated that it is probably not a good idea to come on a two-wheeler.

This is another thing, I have tried in the past to talk to them and say, "How much exercise did you do beforehand? How much exercise are you doing now?" These are people with learning disabilities and anecdotally they can tell you stuff but if you want to measure stuff it is a little bit more difficult.

Interviewer: I have found that as well. I am around so I hand out feedback forms. You handed out a feedback form last week. I think [Louise 0:04:29] was filling one in. Was it for the yoga?

P1: No. That actually is not from me. That is from Age UK.

Interviewer: Yes, the Age UK woman.

P1: It is a horrible form.

Interviewer: Louise was like, "Can you help me fill this in?" It was like rate these things from zero to ten. She said, "I don't know. What's the difference between six and seven?"

P1: That is the problem, I think. For me, the best is just talking to people and this is where this project comes in handy. One thing about Bright Times' members is they love doing videos. Whereas, myself, or you might go, "Right, well, I'll do it but I'm not going to actually put it on video." They would be happy to do it on video and you get more out of them.

I suppose how to bring that down and if I was putting that kind of information onto a charitable trust's application, that would maybe be a little bit more difficult. You could still use quotes which I think is an effective way.

Interviewer: Definitely. That is a little bit there and that has led into my next question which is why you want to collect feedback.

P1: The whole thing about it is that people give us money. They want to know that we are spending the money wisely and they want to know it is having some kind of beneficial effect. It is a pity that [Malcolm 0:06:17] has got osteoporosis because he would have been great; the fact that he was very enthusiastic and he has got back on the bike and stuff like that. There are other people who have done exactly the same.

Interviewer: Do you see any other things that you could use feedback for? One of the things that I hope to address with this is people leave feedback but sometimes they do not know what happens. They feel like they have left feedback and they do not know where it goes or what it results in. One of the things I want to build into it is a way of sharing feedback back to the people who leave the feedback.

P1: What you will find, especially if people leave a video, they will want to watch it.

Interviewer: Exactly.

P1: Whereas I would not want to watch a video of myself. That would be horrendous. Whereas the Bright Times' members would happily watch it.

Interviewer: I would like to do that at some point; once they have done it maybe show them a bit of the feedback, if you are happy with that as well.

P1: Yes, definitely.

Interviewer: One of the other things would be getting your response to the feedback. People say anything on feedback. Sometimes it might be ideas for new projects or things that they would change in current projects. Is that something you could see responding to? How would you respond to that or would you?

P1: If people said, for instance the Bright Times members' meetings, I do not know if they would but if they turned around and said that bit I do not particularly like. That would cause me concern and I would want to know more. I would want to know why they did not like it and what they think would change it.

Even though I am the only paid worker, it is their charity. It is a user-led charity. The majority of people on the committee are people with learning disabilities. Granted, they make joint decisions with everybody else but I think it is important to listen to what they have got to say.

If they are not happy with something then I would try to change it. That could be day-to-day, week-to-week, year-to-year, whether it is meetings or AGM's. Annual General Meetings, if they think, "I do not really like that," I will listen to anything that they say.

Obviously, with this I have a record of it. They might say stuff to me, I think it is great, I forget to write it down and it is gone.

Interviewer: This way, hopefully we will have lots of stuff for you to have a look at. If you did see something, you said there you would respond to it if it was a concern. How would you follow up on that? Would you just go and speak to the person? Would you investigate or something?

P1: Yes. I would look at it. I would take it to the next meeting.

Interviewer: To the whole group?

P1: To the whole group and say, "This has been mentioned. Does anybody else feel the same way?" If they did I would say, "Have you got any ideas as regards to change it?" Invariably people do not, sometimes they do but invariably they do not. Then what I do is come up with some options and say, "Which one would you prefer?" Then it is a vote. The only trouble with that is you are never pleasing everybody. You are trying to please the majority at the time of the vote or whatever it is.

Interviewer: That could be interesting because maybe you could show the video at the meeting.

P1: That is the thing. This is always an option.

Interviewer: If they were okay with it. I think you would want to double-check with whoever left it. I think that is the good thing about

Bright Times, it is a real community. You know everyone individually so I think if there are issues that come up you can maybe speak directly to that person but also if you do want to do something with the feedback, say, share it.

P1: If the feedback is personal about an individual, if they do not like the way somebody is behaving or something like that then, yes, I have to deal with that on a one-to-one basis as opposed to putting it round to the group.

Interviewer: Definitely. At the moment when the videos or the audio comes in you have a password. It is just you than can see it. If you were going to share it further obviously you have control over that. No one else can. I do not know if there are other people you would give access to it to have a look at.

P1: Only if I thought it would benefit them or Bright Times really. It would have to have some kind of like, "Have you heard what so-and-so's said. I think this is really, really good and I think we should share this. Are you okay with me sharing it?" Generally, people would be more than happy from that angle.

Interviewer: That, as I say, is something I am going to build into it in the next month or so. There is a button that you could press which would make it public. That would mean that anyone who came to the website could have a look at it. I am just letting you know that would be an option. You do not have to use it.

It is just that, because we are trying to create dialogue around feedback. You can leave a comment on the video so you



would not even have to have a group meeting. You could just make it public and say, "I have had a look through your feedback. I have responded to some of it. You can have a look at it on there." That is something we can talk about in the future.

You started to talk about having come across things that may be more negative in terms of the feedback that you got. Can you think of an example of when you have had negative feedback and not necessarily tell me what it was but if something negative had happened, how you do respond to it at the moment? Is there a process in place?

P1: I cannot think of anything but there certainly is not a process in place. There is only me so I would look at something and if I thought that something needed to be changed then I would just change it. There is no process as regards I do not have to go and see anybody.

The management committee meets every three months. If I needed to talk to them about anything in particular I could but generally they stay away, if you like. It is the people without learning disabilities who are on it. I do not usually have to get in contact with them.

Interviewer: Maybe negative feedback is a bad example then. I think what you will find a lot with this, what we have found before, is that a lot of the time people just say, "It's great, it's great." You do get those really nice quotes that would be really good for funding applications as well. Obviously the odd thing that comes in, some things can be a bit negative so that is why I was asking about that as well.

P1: If it was really negative, if it was something that I thought was to do with the way I was running Bright Times then I am mature enough, brave enough if you like, to call the management committee and say, "There is an issue here and I want this sorted." I am the kind of bloke who likes to get things sorted. I cannot just have things swimming about. That would make me feel uncomfortable. If it was something really serious then, yes, I would change it.

Interviewer: A better example might then be, not on negative feedback, can you think of a time when you have taken action based on something that someone has said? Not necessarily negative but just an example of a thing when things have actually changed based on what people have been telling you or the feedback you have been getting. Definitely they have said this, we are going to do this now, we are going to do this differently or we are going to change the way we do something. It sounds like it is more organic than that.

P1: Yes, the whole thing about it is somebody would say, for instance, with New Year's Eve dances. We dance in the New Year's Eve parade. I picked it up that they really enjoyed that.

Interviewer: That is good positive stuff.

P1: I said, "Well, would you like to do more dancing?" "Yes, yes, we'd love to do more dancing." That is when I got in contact with Dance City and said, "What's the crack? How can we get

them involved?" I then, when they told me how much it was going to cost, because cost is also a big issue with people with learning disabilities, it was going to be a fiver a session for eight weeks. I then went to our management committee and said, "Look, I think we should subsidise this so it's two quid a session." We got at least the eight that I was after. We might not have got the eight if we did not do that.

They did the eight weeks' course, subsidised, and really, really enjoyed it. Then we had our next New Year's Eve come up so this time we are now going to go to a bigger project and look for more money to fund the whole thing. That will be a year, three terms, of a dance project which I am in the process of putting a bid into the Arts Council at the moment. I suppose, like you say, it is an organic thing.

I do have to think of ideas myself because not always will the people who I am working with come up with the ideas and I have to keep this project going. If I just sat back and waited for them, it could go stagnant and then we would not get funded.

I had a chance to go down to North Shields and try some adapted bikes which were three-wheelers and trikes and stuff like that. I went down there and he got really, really confident. I was very surprised and I said to the guy, "You haven't got a two-wheeler, have you, that we could try?" He said, "Yeah, yeah."

He went away, came back and the majority of the people who were on there got on this two-wheeler and cycled. They were like, "Wow, this is the first time I've been on a bike for 20-odd years. This is great." "Would you like to go on it again?" "Yeah, yeah. I would love to go on it again." That is what has turned into the three cycling groups that we have, the experience that gave us and we adapted.

It is all more of an organic thing. People try things. Some things just do not come off and that is it.

Interviewer: In what way do they not come off? People do not turn out?

P1: People do not attend as much and you have not got as much enthusiasm there. For instance, the gardening, we have three, two really I suppose now, maybe three when it gets a bit better weather. We have three people who are keen and because of that I want to start that we garden every week in the Exhibition Park.

I really want to have our own project where we are doing old people's gardens. The way I am looking at that, that is a different kind of development because I know that I am not going to get any more people from Bright Times but I do need new members. The idea is to put out to Social Services and the like and say, "We're running this project. We need people to do gardening."

[Aside conversation 0:19:15 - 0:19:50]

Interviewer: So the gardening. You were talking about getting more people in.

P1: Yes. This was a really good idea. I thought we would be able to get loads of people involved with it. It does not look like that so I am looking at it from a different angle now. I am looking at it as a way of bringing in people. I am saying to Social

Workers, “If you have individuals out there who really like the idea of gardening, we can provide a gardening experience for them. It is free. They’ll get taken to the garden and do whatever jobs they’re going to be doing. So it is an activity that they might enjoy doing.”

Within that I have thought, “How and what do I do?” We have got the gardeners. What do we do with other people from Bright Times? The idea is that it is an older person’s house, they can go in and talk to the older person while the rest of them are gardening. That is my plan.

Interviewer: Have you done the gardening already or have you had people along doing that so far?

P1: No. We are still in the Exhibition Park. I am going out tomorrow to visit two gardens with a guy from the Park Ranger Service. I will go in there and have a look, he will go in there and he will have a hell of a lot more experienced look at it.

Interviewer: Cool. That sounds good. Hopefully then, if that does get off the ground, you could see people leaving feedback about that.

P1: Yes, definitely. We have got cycling on this week and we have a Bright Times members’ meeting on this week and I will be using it then.

Interviewer: Excellent. Any time you think it is helpful have a go at it. Obviously, any technical problems as well let me know; it is a new system.

We talked about negative things and then how feedback might change something. Who would you think of as a typical audience for feedback? I think I know the answer to this one already. Who would be the main audience for feedback collected?

P1: You mean who would want to give feedback?

Interviewer: No. Who would want to see the feedback? Is it just yourself? Is it just funding bodies?

P1: If you are being recorded and you are on film, people with learning disabilities will want to see the film back. They will want to see themselves doing the feedback. Funders; I would mention in the funding application form that this is the way we monitor and you could look at this any time you like. I do not know, could we send it to them?

Interviewer: This is what I was saying about making feedback public. If there was a video you wanted to share, and the person that was in it was happy to do it, there is a button you could press that would make it public. On the ThoughtCloud website, it is not on there yet, but there will be a public feed, if you like, page. If you click on that it will show them all of the companies that are using ThoughtCloud that are happy to share anything,

if you click on that then it will show you anything that you wanted to share.

P1: We could show them the route to get there?

Interviewer: You could say, "You can go on ThoughtCloud and see under our own ThoughtCloud page, there is this feedback there." You could share it like that. Would that be a way?

P1: That would be fine.

Interviewer: I was thinking when you were talking about getting other people involved with the gardening project that maybe you would want to share it with other organisations or maybe Age UK. I know you work with them as well. Can you see it going beyond your own monitoring processes to other organisations who do similar sorts of work?

P1: Yes. Exactly. What I was amazed at, we get hits on Facebook of 300. One we got, for a dance thing, we got 600 or something like that. Recently with Malcolm getting on that bike, for some reason, I do not know whether he knows loads and loads of people but there was like 1,136 hits. How does that come about? Do you know what I mean? There is a potential for this to expand people's knowledge of us.

Interviewer: Exactly because you were talking about attracting more service users as well. I do not know if there is a way, you

always get tested when you hear people saying how good it is. Maybe you could share that as well.

P1: Definitely.

Interviewer: Maybe that would attract people into it. That would be cool. The last thing is just really about this idea of sharing it with the group. Obviously you are developing it from stuff that you do, the services Bright Times provides by speaking to people. How would you imagine something like this could include people in that conversation a bit more or do you feel they are already included in the conversation about services? Maybe that does not apply to Bright Times because it is led by the people who use it anyway. They are already involved.

P1: They are involved. For instance, I have just thought about this now, I always put together a PowerPoint of bits and pieces for our AGM. I know for a fact everybody would go, "Yes." "Would you like me to show you talking and telling people about how wonderful Bright Times is at the AGM?" Nobody is going to say, "No," for that.

Interviewer: That is cool. Maybe then, it is just trying to imagine how it might fit more easily or where the best fit is within the work that you do with ThoughtCloud as a system. You have these meetings with them where you pose ideas and stuff so in some ways the people you work with, their voice is already being heard because it is very democratic sounding. Earlier on you were saying you vote on it and everything like that. Maybe you could take it along to those meetings as well.



P1: I will be taking it along to lots of meetings, all meetings really I suppose. It has a lot to do with time.

Interviewer: Yes, because this will take up your time to use it.

P1: Also, for instance, what we get is people, as soon as the meeting has finished, dive out of the door so they do not have to do the cleaning up. You have got people who dive out of the door because they have taxis. It is about leaving those few minutes.

Interviewer: Having the time?

P1: Yes. If every one of them wanted to have a say, I would have to extend the meetings. If you had about 12 people all wanting to have a go, and maybe in the beginning it will be like that. Maybe it will wax and wane as it goes on.

Interviewer: You mean if everyone records on there?

P1: Yes.

Interviewer: You could put it on a stand at the door. That is the idea with it.

P1: I will do that but odds on people will be asking me to set it up for them. What do I do? But once they get the hang of it... Also, there are a lot of people who like to see themselves on TV so in the beginning it could be quite boisterous.

Interviewer: Good.

P1: It is good, yes.

Interviewer: That is what we want, definitely. If you do end up with everyone leaving messages, being able to respond to every one is maybe unrealistic.

P1: People will come on and say stuff but the majority of the time they will be saying stuff just to say stuff to be on the video. I am going to have to weed through and sort out the wheat from the chaff.

Interviewer: You are creating work for yourself.

P1: No. Hopefully those bits of wheat will be fantastic and I will be able to use them. It does not happen with all the funding but there is a particular community foundation that always asks about monitoring. Some of them what they do is just send you a monitoring form, like that one on the top there, but others say, "What is the monitoring process?" I just make stuff up half the time but this will be great because I will be able to say, "This is the monitoring process."

Interviewer: Yes. This is the official monitoring process that I do.

P1: It is very, very helpful. It makes my job of making Bright Times look a lot more efficient, better. That is good, that is going to be really good.

Interviewer: Excellent. That sounds like a good place to end. Just lastly, is there anything else that has occurred to you while we have been speaking, anything about feedback that you want to add, anything that you have thought about that has popped into your head?

P1: No, not that I can think of. Once I show people at the beginning of the next members' meeting, I will show people what it is. I will show people how to use it and at the end of the meeting, hopefully I will try to finish a bit earlier, and say, "You know it's there, you know how to use it, if you have problems give us a shout." What will probably happen is you will get people who will want to be on it but they will not know what they want to say. I have not got a problem with that myself.

Interviewer: Obviously it asks people questions but we have found that people ignore the questions but they usually have something to say. I think what you said before is totally right, it is the wheat from the chaff problem but every so often you get gold.

P1, that has been fantastic.

P1: No problem.

Interviewer: Thank you very much. I will stop this now.

END AUDIO

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