**File: LocalOffer-InterviewP4  
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START AUDIO

P4: My name is P4 I am an [anon.]. I was brought into the Local Offer project when I approached groups who were responsible for the Local Offer because I have a role within the [anon.]. I was already responsible for managing [anon.]. I think that is it.

**Interviewer: A nice simple summary about what you do there. Do you want to say a little bit about what your daily job accounts for outside the Local Offer, the bits and bobs that you do?**

P4: I have got a bit of a random combination of work. I responsible for the services directory and on a day to day basis that involves a little bit of contacting organisations and making sure they are keeping information up to date. Making sure that I have a team who support a number of different functions. We are the [anon.] team. There are a couple of assistants in there who will help me check information that comes in and enhance the stuff that we have got on the directory. That tends to be childcare or organisations telling us about changes. They would log in to the website, make some changes and we approve them, so that is done on a daily basis.

Then I have quite a lot of meetings about how to improve the information that we have got or make partnerships with other people who are providing information and try and link that up. I think it is constantly trying to make sure the amount of manual updating of information that happens not just in our team but across the board is as little possible, but the quality of information that we can get about listing services as good as possible, so I do that. When I do that I tend to talk to IT or other directory solution partners or the Communications Team in the city council, Sure Start, or leisure or people like that. I also manage the relationship with the software provider for the website, so there is a bit of, “I would like this to appear differently. This is or isn’t working.”

Then I do that information that is in the directories, a lot of childcare information and I have a responsibility around childcare sufficiency as well. I would extract a lot of that information once a year and pull reports on it and talk about how we can use the information we have got about how much childcare is in the city and what the quality of it is to try and identify or create a report that is meaningful to people about the amount of sufficient childcare in the city.

**Interviewer: Is that to commission new services, to get funding or is that just a monitoring [thing 0:03:08]?**

P4: It is a statutory duty that was from the Childcare Act about the local authority having a responsibility to manage the market to an extent or to monitor the market. The only way that we really do it is by publically publishing this information. The idea is that if you can see that it might influence changes like the quality of childcare from Ofsted grading isn’t as high as neighbouring authorities, is particularly low in this area or whatever. It might influence the way that the local authority provides services to improve quality in childcare. It informs whether there is enough places to make the free two, three and four year old funded places that are available through central government that we also do the funding for in my team. Whether there is enough playgroups and enough nurseries for people to be able to get that free education.

Mostly it has been published with a view to if a provider of afterschool clubs noticed there was a gap in that area they would put one there. It is more about giving people the centralised information that we have got, distributing it to childcare providers and publishing it so people can make those changes themselves. The public might want to request childcare in a particular place or something.

This year for the first year, what they have always done in the past they have had a childcare sufficiency team and we would provide some of the information they would work separately and they would survey hundreds of parents as well and do various things. This year we are doing it a bit differently and we are bringing in some planning information that we have got, using different parts of the council better and using national surveys that have been done a lot better, so I am not duplicating things. Also so we can say, “Great Park is expanding, we are expecting this many more. They are all three, four and five bedroom houses so they will probably have a load of kids in them.” We are noticing these patterns with number of kids in schools. We have got better information than we used to have or at least we are joining the information up a bit better. That is a project that I am working on at the minute.

Then the other parts of my day to day job are answering questions from schools about school admissions, so children moving from school to school or transfers happening. I help with those processes and I answer queries on those. A lot of the work that I have done recently is about trying to design processes that work quite well and quite easily to say these are the preferences and this is where people live. We used to have manual processes making great big piles of documents and photocopying six times everybody’s school application and then making piles for each school and stuff. There has been quite a lot of work to be done to turn that into something a bit more robust and that a spreadsheet can do, although neighbouring authorities still do it in the piles of paper way.

**Interviewer: Old school way. (Laughter)**

P4: Yes, so I do a bit of that and a bit of similar stuff with free school meals. A bit around free school meals, school travel and school admissions I tend to go in and help my colleagues with process improvement or how to use spreadsheets or data to help what they are doing.

**Interviewer: Wow, it sounds like you have got a lot that you do.**

Interviewer 2: Yes.

**Interviewer: Absolutely amazing.**

P4: Yes, it is a bit weird isn’t it?

**Interviewer: That is all that you do. Do you have days doing specific bits or is it…?**

P4: Yes, if I want to spend a lot on the Local Offer I just hide because the thing about the Local Offer is it doesn’t split into days, but we do plan over the year and there are peaks and troughs especially in the other work. There will be times like before Easter we found out that we didn’t have enough school places for all the children in the city. At least there were more place pressures than we expected there to be, so we had to do quite a lot of work on projecting what would happen if we expanded this school or that school and how that would influence how many people got to their closest school, that kind of thing. Then you have to take a couple of weeks and just do that. I am also part-time, so I am the equivalent of four days a week term time only.

**Interviewer: Blimey, so it is even more…**

P4: Disparate, most of the time it is school admissions stuff comes in peaks and I can do that. Telephony and reporting and support I can do over a couple of days a week and the Local Offer and Family Services Directory stuff I can do over a couple of days a week.

**Interviewer: So there is a lot of work that is involved in updating, maintaining and finding information as well for the resources.**

P4: There is although that is something to an extent I have tried to delegate. Oh, I haven’t talked about training. What I try to do for the Local Offer and the Family Services Directory is to do a lot of making relationships. There used to be 12 of us in the Families Information Service Team just doing Families Information Service stuff. Now it is pretty much me with a little bit of support.

We used to go to every event that we could think of and stand there in front of a table of leaflets every time. There were inevitably always more professionals there than there were parents or members of the public. They would be useful for collecting flyers or for networking, but not really for much else. I have tried to really reduce the amount we do that, but still go to the ones that would be actually useful where we would reach and target people.

When I do that I am trying to make connections. With the Local Offer I am trying to make specific connections with all the organisations that I think are important and I will generally just gather as much information as I possibly can. I try to empower the team to check the information updates that come in. I tend to do the sign up bit and once they are signed up and agreed then I can pass it to a couple of the guys in the office who would just make sure they are physically able to log on and able to upload and can pass their information over.

With the Local Offers stuff I have also been doing the champion training, going out and talking to people about how to use the site and the Information in City stuff which was quite similar about partnerships and working with other directory providers. Again with that we have developed a training where we can go and talk to people about how to use the site and what it might be useful for. Practically get people over that bump of physically settling down with a mouse and using it for something that they might find useful, because unless they do you find they never come back to it. The updating bit was quite intensive at the beginning of the Local Offer process but I have tried to invent as many processes now and an audit process in the background that can be done by the assistants in our team so I can do a bit less of that.

**Interviewer: Wow, it sounds like what a bloody challenge. (Laughter)**

P4: It has been exciting though, I much prefer the…

**Interviewer: When it first got started did you initially get involved because it was under the remit of Family Information Services or because it was a similar type of thing?**

P4: Yes, it kind of came from my worry and frustration that we generally tend to duplicate directory products. I saw that happening a lot and I try and keep an eye on what is happening in terms of duties and seeing the duty coming in. I had read about it and felt strongly the information we had already gathered. Especially we had a two year or 18 month part-time member of staff who was a parent of a child with a disability who came in and specifically tried to capture as much information as she could about the services that we had in [anon.]and that was already in our directory. I felt like to not use that as the starting point for the Local Offer work would have been foolish. So I kind of went round saying that to a few people for a while and that didn’t really work.

In the end I asked for a meeting, I brought my manager along and asked for a meeting with [anon.]and [anon.]and said, “I think that you are looking for solutions for the Local Offer and I recognise what you see in our directory may not be what you want to achieve from the Local Offer. I still think there is a synergy in the work that we are trying to do and the information I have got should be useful to you. Can I come and be involved in trying to find the solution?”

I was very aware at that point I thought they would be thinking I would want to steamroller in to the directory and I didn’t want to do that. I did want to find whatever the right solution that people wanted to do would be. I also positioned it as, “We have got this Information in the City partnership and the Information in the City partnership has other partners who also provide directory solutions. So providing other information doesn’t necessarily mean that you need to be in direct conflict but gathering the information again would be really silly.” It turned out they were delighted I had come forward and said…

**Interviewer: That someone would do it. (Laughter)**

P4: Yes, I think they saw me as being able to see the technical way that it might manifest itself. I think they were struggling with imagining what they might come out with or where the information would be stored. Just the concept of how or what it could be I think they were struggling with. I think they saw me as a techy, which I am very much not in any true sense of the word.

**Interviewer: Technically capable or knowledgeable.**

P4: Someone with a general understanding maybe is I think more accurate. That was great and then they invited me to the next steering group thing and we talked about some of the options and started doing some of the consultation. But by that stage the group had been going for quite a while. I think it was March, April, May sometime when I came in and things had to be in place for September.

**Interviewer: So you got involved not long before [anon.]and I started coming to meetings then.**

P4: Yes.

**Interviewer: Blimey.**

P4: Like the meeting before or something. I really wasn’t involved for [Cross talk 0:14:23].

**Interviewer: That is amazing because I have always assumed that you ran the show.**

P4: No, I just kind of steam rolled it. I got involved, I can’t remember which one was my first meeting I can look it up, but very much at that stage. I then helped with the consultations with [anon.]and then said, “Open Objects, who will provide ours? One of the people who might be able to provide this…” Certainly in the period of time that we had to do what we had to do it seemed that was a good solution.

**Interviewer: Then when started coming to the meetings it was around the time that Open Objects was just being talked about, so that would kind of make sense.**

P4: Yes.

**Interviewer: Thinking about the relationship between the Family Information Service database, directory and Local Offer. What do you see the difference being between the Local Offer and that subset of services that are already on FIS?**

P4: The main difference is the Local Offer has the descriptive advice and information element to it which the Families Information Service information doesn’t. It is much more interactive and multimedia because we are presenting it in that way. Descriptions of processes, what it should feel like and what you should expect. Links to process documents, links to EHC plan documents, videos of people, so there is a lot more of the descriptive narrative information. That is the principle difference and that has a lot more editorial difficulties for me.

**Interviewer: I was going to say it must make it a lot more difficult to get that sort of information mustn’t it?**

P4: Much more difficult because it also tends to be cross organisation, so who can tell me what the life of an autistic child should be like in relation to these types of services? It is easy to ask a service to describe what they do but to describe the process of navigating a number of services doesn’t belong to anybody necessarily and is quite difficult to do.

I have recently shoehorned my way into a new set of meetings that are about the advice and support element, which is separate to the Local Offer but is called the advice and support element of the act. We are talking about creating a group that again informs the sufficiency of services, but also can support each other and identify where there are problems or gaps in the services and inform what is happening. That group involves people like Health Watch, North East Special Needs Network, [anon.] at Parent Partnership and Disability North. So I am hoping that group can help inform this information piece on an ongoing basis.

We have got a group who are constantly answering information and advice questions, I need to see that link up with maintaining up to date information and advice passages. Basically for that stuff I ended up just writing it myself and then sending it off to people who were saying, “Does it make any sense?” With the exception of things like complaints or the more formal kind of stuff where we have policies and things written and people wrote it in. How an education, health and care plan should happen and should feel the \_\_\_[0:18:03] information around that I just wrote.

**Interviewer: Is that because the organisations or services providing you with quite decontextualised or quite ambiguous or abstract information?**

P4: It is mainly because of the level of generality that we are dealing with. You are actually going quite far in seniority for who is responsible. So who is the responsible for the overall summary of what an education, health and care fund should be like? Actually the person who is responsible for that is either [anon.] who has gone or whoever is leading that group. Similarly it also links to communications and people’s descriptions but because the Communication Team in the city council is now so small the responsibility for describing services or duties lies within the services themselves. That function doesn’t exist as such, so it ends up a low priority item of work to be done in a very senior person’s in-tray almost without exception. Unless they are particularly diligent or a communicative writer then it just doesn’t come through.

**Interviewer: Or know what is going \_\_\_[0:19:27].**

P4: Yes, exactly. So I found that very difficult to get that information, but that is the main difference. That information is supposed to be a window onto the other service information behind it as well but be descriptive. Then of course there was specific new search criteria, functions, categorisations and tagging that we used to describe Local Offer information that we hadn’t used in the more general Family Services Directory like types of need is the main one.

**Interviewer: How did you generate those categories? Was there something top down?**

P4: Yes, within education and the new act there was a new standardisation set of descriptions of six types of need, so I just stole them.

**Interviewer: And you are just following those through to start with?**

P4: Yes.

**Interviewer: Then when you were first… Sorry I am bombarding you with questions now. It is interesting to figure out how it all came together, which I guess is the point. When you were first trying to get services and organisations in the Local Offer database how would you actually go about getting people on there?**

P4: Approaching them?

**Interviewer: Yes, was it a simple case of trying to get in touch with them or were people getting in touch with you?**

P4: A bit of both, mostly the first one. Having done the consultation it felt much more legitimate to be able to approach people. Some of the categorisation issues and things we had asked lots of parents and they had said, “It is at changing school that I really find problems. I am trying to look for this information.” Then I would take that information generally and use it to target the organisations that I wanted to list themselves.

I think that was one of the key strengths that the steering group had. I would have had absolutely no chance of getting sign up if it weren’t for the fact there were these key individuals who felt embedded in the process and signed up to the offer willing to champion the processes for me. Once Judith had done it and then said to Skills for People, “Do you know what you really need to be doing this.” Similarly parents talking about it and how important that was. Hamish at [anon.]College doing it and then it was a lot easier to say to other people, “Right, okay…”

There was a statutory duty for a lot of the services, so on the statutory services it was easier, but again I wouldn’t have got the schools to do it properly. There was project done by the SENCO lead [anon.] who specifically got her SENCOs to say, “This is what you need to do.” Gave the schools a deadline. Originally they didn’t use the process I would have had as my favoured process. They didn’t put it all directly on to the site for me and things like that, but she engaged them and made sure it was there. I designed the process around it where they would have to go back, check it and save it to make sure.

For me because part of the sustainability of the thing is about getting them to sign in and getting them to upload their own information and making sure they receive notifications to say, ‘It has been three months since you checked things.’ I went to one meeting I think about transition that was staggering because I was trying to get all this information about transition that I still haven’t got and I don’t think really exists because they are trying to change the processes around it. Somebody said, “Do you remember when they did that website?” Somebody pulled it up and it was an extraordinarily detailed really fantastic piece of work that had been done two and a half years before. It really wasn’t long ago and it seemed once the project had finished and it had dropped off people’s radars it just seemed very futile. That really spurred me to make sure that people were seeing there was a hump of project work in order to make the connection with the people who saw the value of this information being put together. Then that they would hopefully maintain it into the future.

We also did that thing of making sure that nothing could appear in the Local Offer unless it had been refreshed or reviewed since the September when the Local Offer supposed to go live. Unless you had fresh info you weren’t allowed to be in. In terms of approaching organisations I had help and warm introductions from a lot of the key organisations because that steering group were good and knew who most of the people were that I needed to do. [anon.]helped as well with his seniority sending out, “You need to do this and these are the duties around this.” It didn’t really help for health but for education and voluntary sectors, education \_\_\_[0:24:30] in particular that worked quite well, so that was the main bit.

Then the champion process has been quite useful so people have enjoyed being trained as champions and I have genuinely found the feedback has been very good about how useful they find the service. Part of the duty that I sign them up to as champions is I say, “I want to spend two hours showing you how to use this information. I feel like you will be able to signpost people much more effectively to services to get the right people to the right services at the right time more effectively and empower people to be able to make their own choices. Empower people to understand what the processes that they have to navigate in these kinds of systems especially around education.

But I can’t do it from my ivory tower, I need it to be an across the board understanding that we all have a duty to families to make the right information available to them and that they should have to do as little rooting around as possible. If you are committed to that idea and if you agree that is a sensible place and this is the place we are going to put it then I want you to agree that you will keep your own organisation’s information up to date. That you will talk to families and use the service with families, agree that you will feed back when there is problems with the information. Use the, ‘This information is not correct.’ button that we have installed or other ways of feeding back problems so that it can be responsive for people’s needs and can continue to keep going.” I think that is pretty much… And encourage other people to make sure the information is up to date.

In return we I will be as responsive as I can and get back you immediately if you give me feedback. You can use this for translating information and for passing service information on and it should be useful. That was quite well received and people who had come along to those would then tell other people, so 60 or so people have come so far.

**Interviewer: That is loads of people that is great.**

P4: There were three at the first one, four at the second one and then 17 at the third one, so that was good.

**Interviewer: What do you have to be to become someone who provides a service or is an organisation that appears on the Local Offer? Has there been anything in terms of tensions of what should go on there and what shouldn’t?**

P4: It kind of links a little bit back to your last point, most people I had to approach for information. A lot of national organisations who are very specialist approached us directly. They tended to be boarding schools or things like that, which is fine if they have a very specialist requirement or if they meet a very specific need. But if they are just a very much more expensive version of what we have got in [anon.]and a lot further away then they are not necessarily useful to have on.

We introduced quite early on and I was able to build on I had the data requirements anyway or a very crude kind of tick box process that I use for the Family Services Directory. You get a box if you are free, a box if you are voluntary sector, a tick box if you are particularly relating to children and families and a veto if you are gambling or drinking, so those kinds of things. But generally if it is available in the city then we would put it on there. If it is available outside the boundaries but there isn’t an equivalent service in [anon.]then we will put it on there. But if it duplicates services that we have already got in the city then we wouldn’t put it on there.

**Interviewer: So if stuff that is in say [anon.] if it is the same… When you say the city do you mean the city council boundaries?**

P4: Pretty much, yes. For example Useful Vision their stuff is quite North East based and I would include most of that stuff because they are fairly foremost in the activities provided for children with visual impairment. I wouldn’t put [anon.] Parent Partnership Service on there because if you are a [anon.]resident you would be using ours. What time is it by the way?

**Interviewer: It is 1:30.**

P4: Okay great, I have to go at 2:30.

**Interviewer: Oh bloody hell we have got loads of time, in that case I will go even slower. I think that is an interesting point there if we think about [anon.] and other local authorities, has there been much sharing information between different authorities?**

Interviewer 2: Do you want some water?

P4: Yes I would love some, thank you.

**Interviewer: Interviewer 2 could I have one as well please?**

Interviewer 2: Yes.

P4: We have a cross border meeting. [anon.]was going to a few and I went to one specifically with the idea of sharing information across border, but unfortunately there weren’t that many people there. The people who were there were collecting the information in a very different way. They were all just writing it into WordPress type of thing, they weren’t using the kind of database that I am using. The idea of sharing information wasn’t great, it wasn’t very well received. They were coming at it from quite a different perspective, generally from the Parent Partnership perspective or communications perspective and just hadn’t…. North Tyneside were there and a lot of what they have done is just list, ‘These are the main services.’ Here is health and a link to the NHS Choices website for example.

**Interviewer: Oh really?**

P4: Yes, I found that a bit disappointing. [anon.] were a pathfinder organisation so they have done an awful lot of work. You know how Information Now is a much better website than mine in that it much more cleverly links the types of services that will be useful to the advice articles, but it does that in a dynamic way and you can then search for services. This was done without that searching for services and everything being duplicated in the way that they wrote it. Their technical capacity for sharing information technically wasn’t really there.

So we kind of agreed, I suggested that especially for special schools and things we should share information across the border. We all kind of agree that was a good idea. It transpired the way people were doing it generally meant you could share that information by just going on their website and copying it was as useful as it would have been. Durham was slightly different and Northumberland have been different, so Durham are also using Open Objects, so there is a possibility [0:31:52].

**Interviewer: I assumed a lot of the councils were using Open Objects but quite a few have gone for WordPress versions or…**

P4: Yes, they were just [compiled 0:31:59] and written by their own city council people or just the people who were there on that day so the South Tyneside, [anon.], North Tyneside and Durham. Durham were doing it, Durham were keen to share information but they don’t share a border with us, so I wasn’t as keen to jump on the bandwagon. At the time Open Objects were saying there was going to be a £5000 administrative fee to set up these feeds and whatever, which to me seems a bit ridiculous because they will do harvesting for you for free as part of the licence that you have got. I think as consumers we could quite easily put enough pressure on them to do if for free.

I was waiting for Northumberland to do it. In Northumberland they have been a bit behind and they haven’t really got much information together yet, but they are an Open Objects user. As far as I have got with them is [anon.]who is doing it I think came down and spoke to me about what we were doing, how it worked and asked for a copy of what should be in the Local Offer document and that kind of thing. They very much felt at an embryonic stage but potentially they would be, so I thought it would be worth them. I then couldn’t see anyone immediately bordering us that would be useful.

**Interviewer: Have any of the other councils done anything like the Local Offer champions or is that something that you…? Is that a very [anon.]thing or…?**

P4: I don’t know, certainly I haven’t heard of other people doing it in the same way. They might be calling it something… They are definitely all going out and training and talking about their Local Offer. But whether they have tried to empower a network of people to work in the same way as we have I haven’t heard of anybody else doing it.

**Interviewer: That is amazing because it seems like that such a powerful thing. I think that was the kind of realisation maybe about six to eight months ago when there was this thing about there is often the focus on it being a website and it is not a website. It is not something that you just put up there and people use you have to have people out there talking about it and using it.**

P4: Yes, absolutely and it should be dynamic. This idea of it being a moving reflection of what is actually existing in the city that you have to engage with. I think that has been one of my biggest difficulties in communicating anything about the Local Offer is how people are very fixated with the mode of delivery and find it difficult to understand the concept of the information as a whole. It is a website but it is about having hold of that information, about feeding information into that website, about extracting information from that website and about engaging with it. It is not just about the information being in that website but I can feed it to somewhere else. The information is actually in the database in the back end, it is not in the website.

People really struggled, people don’t understand enough about the underlying principles I think to become familiar with it. They don’t think of their own information as a commodity in itself or as something that… They think about their services, they don’t think about… Maybe they think about marketing or maybe they think about there is a lot of, “But if you only [it were 0:35:44] Facebook.” These are other ways of getting the information out but the information is the information, so that is something that I have really struggled with people.

**Interviewer: Do you think that is a misconception of what Local Offer or things like are or do you think it just technical knowhow?**

P4: I think it is just technical knowhow. In the school admissions side of the work that we do we deal with people who work in school offices quite a lot of the time, school admins. For the first six months of working with them we get quite a lot of calls about, “This spreadsheet is broken because…” You find out that they just needed to widen a column a little bit. We have 30 or 40 of those calls. I think that people massively underestimate the understanding that people have of the technology. They know how to do what they know how to do but they don’t understand it. I think that is a bit of a problem, so people think the Local Offer is a website and it doesn’t help when I say, “I am here to talk about the Local Offer here is the website.”

**Interviewer: Yes, it is quite easy to be drawn into it as being that thing.**

P4: Exactly, it is.

**Interviewer: How do you explain the Local Offer then in that case?**

P4: I try not to bring up the website first of all. I try and use the champions as the basis of the local offer, describe the champions as opposed to the information that is provided through that process. I always start by talking about the context and saying, “The government realised that if they are going to give people a load of choice then choice is meaningless without information. If I put you in Rio de Janeiro and said, ‘You can go anywhere you like for dinner tonight.’ It makes no difference to you because you don’t know what that information is.” For a choice to make sense people need to know what is out there but they also need to know context and descriptions about what is out there.

The government started by saying, “Let’s tell them about education, health and care and try and put it in one place. Try and explain what that means to a family so they can make choices.” I tend to talk about it in terms of imagining a personal budget kind of situation. Then they realise people have now the choice to spend money on education and social care but they could spend it on Scouts or they could spend it on other services. All of a sudden it started small and it gets bigger and bigger and bigger. The idea is you are in the middle of this information about the services that are available to you. The more you understand it and the more you know about it the better the choices you can make, so that is where I generally start. Then I say, “Here is the website.” (Laughter)

**Interviewer: But that is it.**

P4: Then in the champion training I tend to talk about, “Do you agree with that principle and do you think it would be useful? Okay then if you agree with that then this is what a champion would do.” And then I make them say, “Yes, I am going to be a champion.” You can leave if you want to, it is not a cult.

**Interviewer: I guess one of the important things there then is personal budgets is a really great example and this ecology of information that people can have at their hands to inform those types of** **decisions. I guess that means people being aware that something like the Local Offer exists. How have you been dealing with that at all throughout the course of the project so far?**

P4: Promotion has been fairly poor I think. I haven’t managed to jump through the hoops I needed to jump through to get the physical promotional materials. I have been fairly reliant on word of mouth, connections to that body of people in the steering group and involved in the processes generally from the consultation groups and the champions.

We also had a big launch event, so we tried to say to people, “We are going to communicate with every parent who has a child with a disability in the city. We are going to invite them to come along and see what is available to them, a Local Offer live type of concept. If you want to be involved in this, which we think you will because there will be loads of parents there. As a precursor to being involved you have to have updated and uploaded your information within the Local Offer.” Then the idea was that I would demo it through the day, which I kind of did once or twice. It was market placing and it didn’t work in the way that I wanted it to necessarily to talk to people, but I left it on a big screen in the corner so people could look. That raised the profile with providers, I should have said that earlier but I am sure you can… That raised the profile with providers.

We tried to communicate with every parent that we could and also North East Special Needs Network and Contact a Family put it in their newsletters and every SENCO was encouraged to tell every parent in the school and that kind of backfired a little bit. What we know very clearly is our target audience is specifically these children, so where someone has an education health and care plan or a statement we know who they are. We have got a lovely promotional situation there where we know exactly who we are trying to target. Then you have got a few more who are slightly on the windscreen, they are slightly less… You can’t see my hand doing that can you?

**Interviewer: P4 is moving her hand in a circular fashion.**

P4: Yes, their needs are maybe slightly less severe or complex, so they wouldn’t be all the way statemented. Those people we don’t have as much information about, so we wanted to make sure it was… But we are not only providing information at the extreme end of the spectrum we are also going a bit further down. We want to encourage SENCOS to say actually tell everybody about this because this may be useful to lots of parents. There may be some people who are undiagnosed who find this useful. But some schools then put it in their Friday letters. One poor dad rang me up and said, “I think the school are trying to tell me my child has a special need because they have invited me to go along to this event.” I was like, “That is not how they could communicate this to you. I promise you that…”

**Interviewer: Well, you never know.**

P4: Cop out.

**Interviewer: Subtle hints.**

P4: So that is interesting. Promotion happened mostly in that way and we will try and do a lot more promotion with actual events, leaflets and fliers. I have done some co-promotion with the Information in the City providers. They get to talk at more events than I do and they go to more outreach places, so we have kind of reached an agreement where you bring a trickle or banner and you represent three organisations instead of one and it is more efficient in what we do.

In doing that it ended up the NCBS being in the health forum and talking to the voluntary sector providers about we were doing and about the Care Act and I was able to slip the Local Offer in as a conversation piece there. Again new Ways to Wellness workers who have just been employed for social prescribing and support by the CCG. They were very keen to build their own directory of services that might help patients that they were talking to. We were able with the Information in the City partners to go, “Don’t do it yourself, use ours and we will come and train you and we can get the Local Offer stuff in there too.” So quite a few useful channels just by already existing within that world.

**Interviewer: So in that sort of situation would it be the social prescribing people, would they mainly put their services on the Family Information Service database or would they be used…? How would they…?**

P4: They would use it mostly. Often in situations like that they would be looking to maybe provide or encourage people to go to activities or do exercise or attend groups and things. They will often be dealing with a whole family or a bunch of needs. The idea would be mostly if one of the members of the family needed childcare if it was the Families Information Service bit or had a child with a disability then they would be able to look at all this information and find things that were local or useful to this family.

I think the idea of Ways to Wellness is they are looking more holistically at the needs of a family group or a lot of the troubled families. Looking more holistically at the needs of an individual and everyone around them. So by having access to a lot of information about a lot of different services maybe try and pick up on other things that might be beneficial to that group.

**Interviewer: It sounds like it is getting to the idea that people can access the underlying databases, but they have their own portals to entry. You don’t think of Family Information Services or you don’t think of the Local Offer but you do think, “I have been directed to this \_\_\_[0:45:40] Ways to Wellness.” Then there is a layer on top of it and it is sucking in the right information from other databases.**

P4: Well exactly, people think of the Families Information Service and think of childcare, which is what we did historically. The Active Inclusion Unit and welfare rights are all updating every welfare rights drop in that is in the city into that database because it is useful for families, but that is the only place where it is actually on an events calendar. There is a lot of places where that information – exactly. There are so many information advice and support workers in the city and if you can empower them to look in the right places or find the right information it doesn’t matter what the source it, just get the right services to the right people.

**Interviewer: I suppose also making sure stuff is not missed and put on the… They have a lot of knowhow of what else is available that might not be on the databases.**

P4: Yes, exactly. So they are exactly the people who can first of all use it to… I think that is partly why it useful to have the print and translate and other functions because if you feel like you already know a lot of information it is still a useful way to actually share the information and if you are doing [Bell rings 0:47:00] that then you are engaging people who feel like they already know the information and who can inform. (Laughter)

**Interviewer: That is new, that hasn’t happened before, it wasn’t us.**

P4: Is there like a secret doorbell downstairs?

**Interviewer: I have no idea what that was.**

Interviewer 2: I think that was evacuate.

**Interviewer: There is actually a doorbell on the front door, so that might be the doorbell.**

Interviewer 2: No, we can’t have that all the time.

P4: You can’t, God that is a bit scary. \_\_\_[0:47:29] scared of heights.

**Interviewer: We are nowhere near as high as your one.**

P4: I know but I can’t really see out of my one without climbing onto the thing, which I don’t do often. It felt high when I was looking down, anyway.

**Interviewer: Something that we haven’t really talked about is a big component of the Local Offer as I have always understood it is feedback. So feedback things that are missing but is the idea to capture feedback on specific types of services as well maybe?**

P4: Yes, I have struggled with that. I feel like what we have delivered so far can’t necessarily do everything. What we have built in a ‘Can’t find what you are looking for?’ bit to the directory searches, into the searches that people do and trained that into the information champion training. With an idea that if people identify a missing service or people identify there is the need for a particular type of service that they would use that process to send it us and we would then publish that comment.

This whole how are we going to publish information, how the feedback is going to work and how that links to commissioning is the real and present challenge really. There is an extra element to that, so I thought, “That is quite useful, we find that out and if it works then people can send that stuff through, which is fine.” But there is a whole extra level of research that needs to then done because somebody needs to work out if there is a gap and that doesn’t sit anywhere. There have been a couple of them that I have received for the amount of work that it takes to do that and the duty to get back to the person who has told you about it in the first place and broker them into services.

**Interviewer: That is twice now.**

P4: Everybody is just \_\_\_[0:49:25]. (Laughter)

**Interviewer: Everyone is just like….**

Interviewer 2: Everyone is trying to work out what it is.

**Interviewer: I think it is that front door bell, I bet it is the front door bell. I found it \_\_\_.**

Interviewer 2: Someone get the door.

**Interviewer: No, just leave it.**

P4: They are all too clever to think it is doorbell.

**Interviewer: They are all computer scientists, plus [admin.] who is just lazy, we will delete this bit from the transcript. (Laughter) Do you want to talk through one of those examples, have people got in touch with you?**

P4: So people have got in touch but actually that is more through an enquiry level, so there has been two things. One women felt there wasn’t enough specialist services for her dyspraxic son, like activities. She was saying, “This focus on inclusive stuff is all very well but I want a place where my son is not going to be embarrassed to be himself.” So I looked and she said, “I can’t find anything.” I said, “I don’t think there is anything.” So I did that research and then she said, “Can you tell me where to go to start something like that or what to do?” I thought, “Shit, I don’t know whose job that is.” Don’t transcribe shit.

I said, “You have got Dyspraxic Association there is a contact here.” Then she was talking about an activity in a particular age group and a particular type of venue and I said, “From what I have got and from what I can see I think Nuns Moor might be the right kind of venue for you and that might work. Actually Nuns Moor have an access grant that would fit with that.” I don’t know what I will do about publishing that, I just know that she told me there was a gap. She then told me that she wanted to fill the gap. I gave her the information that I thought would be useful and also put her in contact with the Get Connected provider who is commissioned by the authority to do sports things that are inclusive who strongly feels that she shouldn’t be setting up a group.

**Interviewer: Felt that she shouldn’t?**

P4: No, because he wondered about what her skills were or what the demands of that were going to be or how she would manage to meet the needs of the other parents. He felt that inclusive groups are the way to go and that is the way the local authority is funding. He was worried about how she was going to approach it or what she was going to do. He said, “We can invite her along to some of the sessions that we do or we can talk to her about how we structure what we are doing and give her advice.”

**Interviewer: That is a really tricky situation to find yourself in because obviously it is almost seen as a little bit political what is going on there as well.**

P4: There is definitely an element of politics about that. I want to be helpful and I suppose that is the bit about to what extent do we have the responsibility to manipulate the market in the way that we want or just to give the information. I gave her a range of stuff and kind of said, “Good luck with it.”

**Interviewer: Have you heard from her again since?**

P4: No, I haven’t. It has not been that long and I would say it would take a while to do that kind of thing. Then the other one was a lady who felt she didn’t have many services for epileptic children, so I looked for that. It took me ages to find there isn’t much stuff, there is some and the stuff that there is wasn’t on the directory.

**Interviewer: So were you doing Google searches and things?**

P4: Yes.

**Interviewer: Blimey.**

P4: It is quite easy to find out if it was on the directory, but it was a gap in the information I had managed to collect in the Local Offer and I need to remedy that. Google searching and then ringing national organisations and saying, “What do you know of that is happening locally?” Quite often [anon.]texts 0700 whatever, somebody’s mobile number. You know they are specialists in that specific disability so they probably are the best person to talk to in the region. Then North East Special Needs Network have been feeding in some useful stuff.

I feel like that advice and support group might be a better place to capture some of those discussions because they are working so closely with families and trying to signpost them. Especially people like North East Special Needs Network who are signposting to a wide range of services and with quite a number of families, so would be much better placed to say, “This is a reasonable amount of services for this family compared to the type of need or compared to what we would expect for another similar family. Whereas there is not much available for these.” It takes a whole lot of background knowledge and information to make those judgements.

It is another thing just to publish straight flat comments, but I haven’t really had any straight flat comments yet. The problem I have got with the commissioning guys is they don’t want to hear what the services say where there is a gap because they feel that is maybe an echo chamber of problems. One family might meet a bunch of services and that problem might be amplified or somebody might grow to feel that is a gap and then be looking for reinforcing information, so they want the pure family level responses to the services or to the service provision \_\_\_[0:55:19] to that, but they haven’t got any means of collecting that.

**Interviewer: What do you mean by pure responses?**

P4: I mean directly from families I think is what they want.

Interviewer 2: Like videos of them talking about them?

P4: I don’t know, I don’t think they have even thought that far. I think they just basically feel that when they are talking to services that they already commission there is a problem with asking people who are in service delivery already whether they are commissioned or not to help identify where there are gaps in services. Even though those people are probably best placed to answer that question in the city as a whole.

This kind of came to light through that bid to become more \_\_\_[0:56:09] and hopefully those two conferences they are going to provide will give us some other ideas I suppose of how to do that. For the first time Commissioning are offering someone to go along to those, which has been something that we have missed from the Local Offer group. Commissioning haven’t given us anybody to come along to that to say, “These are the ways that we can see channels working that would influence our decision making process.”

**Interviewer: Is this the [hack 0:56:36]?**

P4: No, it would be the letter with the national database they were trying to do.

**Interviewer: Oh yes.**

P4: The application was written by the head of commissioning and she said, “I want to know what families really feel about services and I want to know directly from families whether they feel there are gaps in services and what problems they see in the way of services.” I am worried about receiving that information from workers basically.

**Interviewer: But in the context of Local Offer there is the opportunity there for it to come from the families isn’t there?**

P4: There is.

**Interviewer: I know at one point there were conversations about Trip Advisor type models and all sorts of things.**

P4: There are two different elements isn’t there. There is one about the quality of the provision of the actual services that already exist and one about the gaps. I was focusing more on the gaps bit because I felt that was something that I could actually physically do. We reviewed the duty again and again and I think there was a kind of feeling in the end that the duty was, if we are talking about quality of the offer, maybe the offer as a whole as opposed to the quality of individual services.

We surveyed lots of families, we considered whether to talk about the different levels of quality with individual services and talked to a lot of authorities who had done that, who had installed Trip Advisor types of functions. In general the other authorities said they had no problems with it. They had originally monitored everything that came through, but actually people had used it very carefully and responsibly and been quite appropriate and that it was quite useful. There were very strong concerns about using that kind of work.

I think particularly one of the biggest concerns was as a local authority. It we are publishing a local authority list of services out there do we have enough families using these services to be able to give a measured response to what is happening? One bad response from a service which maybe only meet 15 families a year could have a devastating impact on that service. There was a lot of worry about doing it that way, but we do need to effectively continually consult and continually gather the comments of families. I still don’t know how we are going to do that.

**Interviewer: It is the commissioning hole really. It is funny leaving the market to kind of fill the gap only works if those that are already established in the market can support it. Particularly when it is like voluntary organisations, there is a weird tension that you were talking about a minute ago in terms of someone who is really willing to do something but they are being steered away by other people, “Just use our services instead.” is one way to defer that.**

P4: Yes.

**Interviewer: Also because Commissioning operates in a world where as much as they probably want to listen or as much as they are told to listen they are still commissioning things like a year or five years in advance aren’t they.**

P4: I am not sure it is as long as five years now. The process is very intricate and they constantly struggle with the balance of how much it is okay to ask, how to engage an organisation and how complicated to make the process. It is a little bit about the performance measures and things they gather as well. Making those comparable, but then making it so there are things that can be published. I don’t know and I think they would probably consider… I don’t know to what extent they would consider performance data they gather or the comments to be publically available or appropriate for public sharing.

They certainly have to publish how much they are spending on each of the services and all that kind of thing under European law, but I don’t know to what extent they publish how they feel the quality of those services are or how they manage them. They are certainly not set up in a way that you would expect from other commissioned services. I come from an outsourcing background originally and you would always have a client services manager or something like that coming down saying, “Have you seen the stats this month? You really want to…” Making you scared and managing that relationship and that is not necessarily the way that it works particularly in local government, so I don’t know.

I am hoping the availability of a commissioner’s time for two specific days to just sit away and think, even if we get no ideas from anybody else just the process of being out of the environment and encourage them to think just about that will be really useful. I was hoping the work that you guys might be able to support and provide would be useful to that. We talked about a wall of whether we would look at forum type of opportunities.

But one thing I did convince them that could feed in to this. One of the funded groups is Pass it on Parents and Pass it on Parents have their Facebook page to a closed group of parents. I reached an agreement with them but we are yet to make it work. They would tell me about every new service they heard about but they would also cross link the information to the Local Offer. But because it was a closed Facebook group with a forum thing underneath it then that would an opportunity for parents to say, “I liked this.” Or, “I didn’t like this.” That would be a place where we could potentially gather some of that information from parties who are using those services. We could take that information and publish it potentially even though it is a closed forum on Facebook.

**Interviewer: It raises lots of questions doesn’t it in terms of how you would do that. You could think of ways of representing the discussion, but in ways which detach it from the individuals.**

P4: Yes, that would make sense. It is always an issue with open data and that kind of thing. We are talking about a certain number of parents. In the complex needs stakes that is only 350. The children are across a certain number of age groups so when you get to identifying who is using each of those services of which age group it is going to get pretty easy pretty quickly to work out who that is.

**Interviewer: Who said what, absolutely that is something I hadn’t actually thought about. It is a very small world in any city but [anon.]is not the biggest of places either.**

P4: No, especially in that complex sphere.

**Interviewer: What do you think is the biggest challenge so far for the Local Offer or for your experiences trying to get it up and running and the biggest challenge going forward?**

P4: Definitely the biggest challenge going forward is the comments bit.

**Interviewer: So how stuff gets published, what gets published and what gets responded to?**

P4: Yes, the forum conversation element of it. There is the requirement for realistic consultation, so when we consulted the first time we were able to say, “We haven’t decided yet what we are going to do about this, this and this. What do you think?” Then able to say, “Okay we are making judgements based on your decision.” There is not going to be resource to change much about the Local Offer website itself in the future. In order to consult I want to consult and listen to people but not give them a false hope of things that may change. Not say to them, “What do you want?” and then go well…

**Interviewer: You can’t have it.**

P4: “What do you want for dinner? I have already made lasagne.” I don’t want to do that, so that is an issue. How to realistically gather comments and how to frame those in terms of what we identify quality as being, how closely we link quality to an individual service or to a provision in the city in general. Also the banding of needs is something I find quite difficult in relation to this. We always talk about disabled children and particularly because we have an enabled parents’ forum there are actually five or six parents that you hear the voices of again and again. They tend to come from particular socioeconomic groups. They also tend to have children with similar types of disability.

I am not sure how many people I have met who deal with blind children. There are so many different types of disability and need, so that is the challenge. You have got a very small population but a very wide breadth of experience within that population. Without actually going and interviewing every single one about how they feel it is going to be very difficult to capture that. Then how to feed it into this longer-term commissioning process. How to get commissioners to really understand and think differently about how to meet those needs or what meets those needs.

Also there is the element like we saw earlier within disability and special educational needs there is often a challenge between what people think they want, what people actually what and what service providers think people should do. The path towards an outcome isn’t as straightforward as we are expecting in other providers. Often people aren’t sure what kind of service or what kind of support would be best for each individual.

That also feeds into quality. It may not be about quality it may just not be what you want or what you need. It is very tricky and I don’t know to gather that information effectively, how to make it meaningful and how to make the council responsive to it. Especially given on-ish the record that Commissioning have not even sent anyone to one of the Local Offer meetings yet. They very much seem to be of the impression, “Well bring us the information and we will decide what to do with it.” That is why I am pleased that there is a process of embedding going on now of hopefully how to meet that challenge.

What has been the problem historically is hard to capture as much information as we wanted to within the timescale and resources that we had. I say we, hard for me to capture as much information as I wanted to. It was very hard to gather advice, guidance and information from the right people. It was very hard to engage health. That is all under the same banner I suppose as trying to gather as much relevant and up to date information that can be maintained.

**Interviewer: I suppose one of the challenges there is the fact that you had to do it in the first place. Whereas I imagine the vision of these things is that…**

P4: Of course, people do it for themselves.

**Interviewer: Because they will see the value of it.**

P4: A lot of people have but the advice stuff not so much. I think with health as well it is just the incredible naivety of the local authority to just talk about health like it is one thing. I can be in the office next to somebody and still not consider myself to working alongside them. There tend to be health representatives but is it from the hospitals trust, is it a CCG, is it a GP, is it from community health? There are so many bands of those things.

I think part of the problem is we are saying it is an education, health and care thing but really it is an education thing with elements of health and care brought in. There are still other assessment processes. It hasn’t eliminated the need for assessment processes to happen in health or education.

**Interviewer: Why do you think health haven’t engaged at all?**

P4: I think we failed to find the right people. That is what other authorities have said when we spoke to them. As soon as you find the right person it all slips in.

**Interviewer: Is the right person a particular role or is it someone who actually just cares?**

P4: Has a passion for that kind of thing. I think first of all it needs to be more than one person dependent because of the diversity of organisations that you are dealing with. Secondly, it has to someone who has the right passion. I have got a feeling if I push a little bit further at the door of community health, school nurses, health visitors and that kind of group they may kind of come on board because they give a lot of first level information like that. That might be the place we should have been looking all along to get more of that support.

I think the concept, the name has also been a problem in engaging people because without exception when I do the Local Offer champion training people said, “I came here not expecting it to be useful and not really understanding what it was about and I left thinking it was going to be useful.” We haven’t communicated the concept well enough and I don’t really know how to.

**Interviewer: Being a bit more optimistic what do you think has been the greatest thing about the Local Offer so far in terms of what it has done and also what the real opportunity is going forward?**

P4: We have had some lovely feedback from parents saying, “This is really what we need and it is really going to change my life. I can really see the benefit of this and it is going to be something really useful for me and I will use it all the time.” In general there has been a very positive response. I know that often I am there so people aren’t necessarily saying \_\_\_[1:11:46]. I am encouraging negative comments and feedback and we haven’t had much. That might be because I am there and people are polite, but generally people are quite willing to bash the council on these occasions for things. In general people have been very committed to the idea of putting information in one useful place, sharing information, networking about making sure that we all keep informed and so that we can keep each other informed. That has been a really positive thing.

The Local Offer has been one of the catalysts for change in the way the organisation as whole and the city council I think has looked at information and how to keep information. I have been saying similar things about how we use information for a long time with the Families Information Service. We felt very much like a silo and not really engaged in this. The Local Offer has put that idea of good information, probably alongside the growth of the internet, the use of Google and people getting information online. There is a lot of social changes that have gone alongside it.

The idea that now all of a sudden Sure Start are redoing their website so that it can feed information straight into our directory and Local Offer stuff. That kind of change wouldn’t have happened before. The information would \_\_\_[1:13:15] city stuff the Hackathon probably got more exposure and more understanding because of the national promotion of this type of thing definitely through all of those things. Hopefully reaching more of that information and advice support worker or interested person body of people across the city. Hopefully driving more people to use it to finalise services to get people into services.

The other thing that is really hard is to identify… I would love to be able to more accurately measure to what extent it is successful in not just making people feel like, “Oh I didn’t know that before.” But actually taking it all the way through to, “I feel more empowered. I accessed services that I wouldn’t have accessed otherwise. I accessed services sooner.” It would be lovely to be able to identity if that is actually happening.

**Interviewer: So not feedback on the service itself but just on its implicit impact.**

P4: Exactly and from what outcomes it is able to deliver.

**Interviewer: Almost like referrals.**

P4: Yes, because that is the aim. If it doesn’t do that then it is just a website. If it does improve the way that people access the right services or stops people accessing services where they are able to self-serve. Less people ringing with a level one enquiry and more of the right people with a level three enquiry to North East Special Needs Network for example would be a brilliant measure of success.

The other thing that was very satisfying for me was to go to the North East Special Needs Network, your child has just been diagnosed kind of event. But it was particularly about schools and education but also services and activities as well. They brought along all the people they thought were the most relevant speakers to talk to this group of families about who was out there in their lives, what the decisions were going to have to be or what services they would need to access. I sat through the whole thing and there were three or four speakers and everything they said and every service they listed was all in the Local Offer. I was like, “[Phew 1:15:35].”

**Interviewer: You were there checking each guide to make sure.**

P4: I got to stand up at the end and go, “Everything that you have heard already is in this information resource that you get.” That was like, “Phew.” Really good. There have been times when it is the opposite of that but nothing quite as fundamental as that, so it was good.

**Interviewer: Brilliant.**

P4: It has been really fun.

**Interviewer: Really? It seems like it has been very hard work to me. You have gone through it all with a twinkle in your eye and a smile on your face P4.**

P4: Yes it is because it takes me out of school admissions. (Laughter)

**Interviewer: Yes, loads of paperwork. I imagine it is fantastic to see it come to something which is a lot more than many councils have been able to do which is the remarkable thing. Although I think being passionate about that type of thing really helps.**

P4: It has, it has been hard to do definitely. Having a band of people across sectors with your back trying to make sure it has been done and pushing it forward as well was really good. Although I felt like actually we wanted to make as much of the decision making happen there as possible. The combination of the fact the decision making had to reflect the consultation and the fact I had to just run away and do it meant there probably wasn’t as much decision making happening in that group as we had hoped or thought. That is not to say it wasn’t beneficial in any way, it was. It is great to see it come to fruition. It will be lovely to have another little launch in September and then see what happens.

**Interviewer: It is not finished. It is not a task and finish.**

P4: Never, when I talked to the board the other week I said there is a project element which gets it up and running and then there is a maintenance element which is about constant consultation and change and everything. The project element is just getting the website working and establishing what a [training thing 1:17:45] looks like and what the promotion materials look like and we are nearly… At the end of July that should be done. Then it will need just this constant support, which they seem to be willing to do although not to give any more money for.

**Interviewer: Of course not.**

P4: Luckily I don’t really have many different things to do in my role so hopefully I will just have to squeeze it in the side there. It has been good. I think it was great having you guys involved too because that caused us to do all sorts of reflection back on ourselves and it was a catalyst for some of the Information in the City stuff and all that stuff and the open data stuff.

**Interviewer: Hopefully there is lots more to do there. On that note Interviewer 2 have you got anything you want to say at the end? I notice you have been writing lots of notes there.**

Interviewer 2: You did mention there is a database at the back end and the Local Offer is one way of accessing that, is there another way? Can that information be pulled out of the database directly by anyone?

P4: Not by anyone. I have got reporting functions that can bring it out in various different ways. For example we are thinking about putting Information Now and the Family Services Directory into the same database by having the information [feature in two places 1:19:09].

Interviewer 2: Yes well that makes sense to eventually bring it together and in all the different portals pull out the staff that is tagged the way they want, that would be amazing.

P4: Then there is a widget bit but at the moment they have to come through me if they want the information. But potentially the Hackathon thing makes the information publically available somewhere else, which I don’t have control over but I know it is not public domain information.

Interviewer 2: Theoretically if people want it to populate a map they could have that.

P4: Yes, theoretically they could do exactly that.

**Interviewer: Theoretically Interviewer 2 could have access to it.**

Interviewer 2: [anon.] would like it basically.

**Interviewer: Of course.**

P4: So this is the Help and Connect thing.

Interviewer 2: They have got a community map on their website already which is broken, well a little bit broken.

P4: This is where I get into the old dance of ownership because I have said to [anon.] a while ago, “First of all your Help and Connect map is by a ward and I don’t think people search by a ward although they maybe do. You have got a volunteer who updates that information all the time. I would love for you have your volunteer working in [anon.] but I can give them a log in to update the information on our directory instead and if you do that I can give you all the \_\_\_[1:20:30] of that information.”

That is what I do with welfare rights, housing and people like that, “You are information can appear will appear in here, can you manage it yourself and then I let you do what you want with it.” It would be good if we were going to do it with [anon.] again it would be good if it was something that I could feed regularly so it would be a renewable thing as opposed to a one off and then for them to work on it separately.

Interviewer 2: Renewable \_\_\_[1:20:59].

P4: Yes exactly.

Interviewer 2: You want to just say, “Here is a widget you can just embed. This is our map, we are happy to have your information.” That makes logical sense.

**Interviewer: Actually a lot of the information on their map having looked very briefly at it. I didn’t get as far as the map because that bit of it is actually broken. They give you a list, it is like the pub where** **there is a safe space or there is the library. It is kind of like well actually…**

P4: Help and Connect but then there is the wider group of information providers and I should have invited Help and Connect along to it and I didn’t. There is the Safe Space project and that is kind of updated and that has got all the pub bits. I don’t have all of that stuff in and I suppose that maybe they would want it. We talked to …

Interviewer 2: You could have both. They could still have theirs and still update it with yours.

**Interviewer: They could have your bit and a thing on \_\_\_[1:22:04].**

Interviewer 2: Obviously there are data standard problems in terms of how it is tagged and everything like that presumably.

P4: A little bit, Friends Action North East have you seen theirs?

Interviewer 2: [anon.] were like, “Look at their map, we want that.” We looked it together and we went, “Ohhh.”

P4: Friends Action North East also signed up. I had a workshop with Friends Action North East, Information Now who aren’t so relevant, Health Signpost Directory, MESMAC who do sexual health stuff. I can send you the outcomes of that, and Patient Information Centre. I got all of those people to sign up to the principle that we would share information from each of our databases together into a central repository if possible. The open data thing was going to be a first tester for how that might work.

We tested to what extent we could collect information in the same way and talked about aligning fields and things. Although there would be a tagging categorisation issue sometimes a lot of the stuff we were doing was quite similar. We were saying the ideal would be to get to the point where you all say, “This is my category one information which I can cast iron grantee you is brilliant and I am going to put all up that and I will get libraries to do that. If we all have different areas of expertise all put it up into the same place and then draw down what you put then that would be really cool.” It would be great if Help and Connect wanted to be a part of that kind of thing. I think there is a data standards problem with some of that as well about how it is maintained or how much is updated. I think they have got one volunteer who goes in periodically and updates them.

**Interviewer: Yes, they have all sorts of issues with their website at the moment apparently.**

P4: So they are welcome to have a widget and they can have a feed although if they are going to have a feed I would prefer it if they helped me maintain the quality of the information as opposed to just extract it.

Interviewer 2: Well that seems fair.

P4: I think that is kind of the deal.

Interviewer 2: They should get a new volunteer there that does that.

P4: Yes, sacking volunteers is always a…

Interviewer 2: They don’t have to sack them.

**Interviewer: Interviewer 2 is going to be volunteering there a little bit over the summer.**

P4: Are you?

Interviewer 2: Well yes, [I can’t see anybody 1:24:46] going to work in there.

**Interviewer: I think they were a bit like, “You want to come here?”**

Interviewer 2: They get volunteers. They get a lot of students, they just don’t get a lot of computer science students. I am going to hopefully just spend time there, but what they would be very happy for me to do is have a look at their digital stuff.

P4: Have a look at their website.

Interviewer 2: Yes.

END AUDIO