**Parent Interview5**

**Date: 19 Dec 2022**

**Duration: 0:15:13**

Interviewer: Preamble

So I thought we could start by just generally talking about what you think it is like for people living on low incomes these days and any observations you have around that or thoughts you have.

Parent5 Like I say, I think I might be classed as a low-income family. I am on Universal Credit. It is hard. It is very, very hard. Even just trying to live. It is very hard with very little money. Especially added costs for, just say for instance, like a dentist. Stuff like that makes it harder.

Interviewer: And so might that deter you from going, even if you felt like you needed to go or one of your children needed to go? Is it something that might influence you?

Parent5 Well, it wouldn’t affect the kids, because with the kids being under 16, everything they get would be free. But on Universal Credit apparently it only covers some stuff.

Interviewer: For you yourself?

Parent5 Yeah. So if I had to pay for that extra treatment I wouldn’t get it done.

Interviewer: And are there things apart from the treatment itself that might make it difficult for you, because there is a cost associated with going to the dentist or the doctor?

Parent5 Can I just ask what you mean please?

Interviewer: So some of the things that we thought might be an issue might be that to get to the dentist or the doctor you might need bus fare or a taxi. Or there might be a cost that is not actually the cost of seeing the dentist but the cost of getting there in the first place.

Parent5 See, for the doctors and the dentist I only live five/ten minutes away from both. But if it is, say, the hospital, then that does kind of, “Right, well, I can’t pay that,” because I need bus fare or taxi fare to get to the hospital.

Interviewer: Have you had experience yourself of accessing healthcare over the last few years, with your children or for yourself? And anything that has come up around that in terms of the expense of that.

Parent5 Actually, yes. My daughter has just turned six. So we are going back to over six years ago now though. From six months old she was in hospital once or twice a week. And this went on for months and months. It was bronchitis every time. And where I lived it cost about £30 in taxi fare.

Interviewer: So that was the way that you travelled to and from when you went to visit?

Parent5 Yeah, because they would always say they would want her seen in an hour. So if I had to get a bus it would take longer, because I would have to get two buses.

Interviewer: Absolutely. So that was the only way you could get there within that time, yeah. So that was sort of an emergency, when you needed to get down there quickly. And then would she tend to be admitted and stay in the hospital? And would there be visits then when you went to see her and so on?

Parent5 No. When she did get admitted, obviously I was allowed to stay with her. But sometimes she wouldn’t. Sometimes they would give her the nebuliser she needs and then send her home with inhalers and steroids. So that would be another £30 taxi fare back home.

Interviewer: And then would you be going back in for a check-up or would that be done locally?

Parent5 They got done locally.

Interviewer: Right. So that wasn’t such a problem, if you could just walk to your GP, I guess.

Parent5 Yeah.

Interviewer: And then did you have other children at the same time as well? So would you have to take them with you?

Parent5 Yes. I used to have to take my son. Obviously, that is just money in itself, because for the wait times obviously we would get hungry, so I would have to pay vending machine or café prices.

Interviewer: And did you find there was food available, affordable food?

Parent5 Hospital food is not affordable. (Laughter)

Interviewer: And so how did you manage that? Did you just have to try and find the money to…?

Parent5 Yeah. I just had to find the money. My mam would help us out a lot. My daughter’s grandad would help. But it is still too much to pay back.

Interviewer: Yeah. It is very expensive. Any time you have to buy food outside home is expensive. And I think hospitals are expensive, aren’t they? So was this an issue because you had to go quite frequently as well?

Parent5 Yeah.

Interviewer: So you were going quite often with your daughter. And how long did that go on for? Was that just when she was a baby?

Parent5 Yeah. She finally grew out of it when she was three.

Interviewer: That is still quite a long time, though, all that time.   
  
So there was no provision made for you or your child that you took with you for food while you were there then? You just had to find the money to pay for that yourself?

Parent5 Yeah. I think once or twice when they brought [child name’s] food round they would give [child name]- They would give my son some food.

Interviewer: Right. So sometimes-

Parent5 But not every time.

Interviewer: And when your daughter was staying in, when she had to have an overnight stay, was there any support there for you? Or were there any things that made that difficult for you?

Parent5 Well, hard. Single parent having to get another- Like my daughter’s grand-nan. Having to get her to come and sit with her while I could take [child name] to my sister’s house. So that would be bus fare back and then bus fare back again.

Interviewer: And were you working at all at the time? Was that an issue?

Parent5 No.

Interviewer: So it wasn’t as if you were having to schedule around work and take time from work [ \_\_\_ 00:07:48]?

Parent5 [No].

Interviewer: Did you ever have to go in an out-of-hours? Was it ever in the night-time or outside normal hours?

Parent5 Yeah.

Interviewer: And was that any different? Were there particular problems around that?

Parent5 Just waiting times.

Interviewer: And I guess if you were taking taxis anyway, whatever time, it didn’t make so much difference, but yeah.   
  
And did you feel like you were kept well informed about what was happening?

Parent5 Yeah. But towards the end of it I just knew exactly what they were going to say, what they were going to do. I knew the procedure off the top of my head.

Interviewer: You knew it all already. (Laughter)   
  
Did you feel like they communicated with you in a way that was appropriate, that you understood?

Parent5 Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay. That is great.   
  
I am just trying to think what else.   
  
So have you got any other thoughts about accessing healthcare? Whether it is going into hospital with your daughter or getting to GP appointments. I know you have said that is not so much an issue with it being nearby for you. But from other people that you know maybe, for other families. Have you any thoughts on things that they might find difficult?

Parent5 Well, if I take my mam, for instance. My mam can’t leave the house. She is on- Is it PIP? If she leaves the house she has really bad panic attacks. So she hasn’t left the house in over 10 years.

Interviewer: Oh, no. The poor thing.

Parent5 When it comes to doctors appointments for her they won’t give her a home appointment.

Interviewer: Oh, really? And she can’t go out to go to the doctors?

Parent5 No.

Interviewer: Even if you went she wouldn’t feel happy?

Parent5 She couldn’t go. I mean how bad it has got is where she has been on the same antidepressants for seven years and never had a medication review.

Interviewer: Oh, dear me. And she can’t get anyone to come out. So they just keep repeating prescriptions, do they?

Parent5 They all keep saying she has to go to them. And no matter how much I am explaining down the phone that she cannot…

Interviewer: Yeah. Oh, that is not a nice position to be in, is it?

Parent5 No.

Interviewer: And that is not to do, though, with anything to do with the cost of going. That is a different issue, isn’t it, if she doesn’t feel able to go out? But yeah.

Parent5 Yeah.

Interviewer: And is there anything else that you can think of or things that you think might make it easier for you if you were going to hospital with one of your children?

Parent5 Ooh. It is a tricky one. I definitely think inside the hospital price wise it needs to be brought down. Because if you have got to leave in a rush, even if you have got to go in by ambulance, and if you have only got time to grab a change of clothing, nappies or something, you haven’t got time to make a flask of coffee or a sandwich, crisps. I think, ideally, hospital prices should come down a bit.

Interviewer: Yeah, I know. And I think it is not top of your priority list, is it, if your child is sick? You are not thinking of those things anyway when you are just dashing off, yeah.   
  
So would you say that the main expense for you would be-? Well, the taxis. They are hugely expensive, aren’t they, to get you there in the first place? But then when you are there it is the cost of getting food for yourself and for your other children.

Parent5 Well, luckily, now I live closer to a hospital.   
  
I would say the dentist. Where if you are on benefits it doesn’t cover every treatment. And I think the dentist is really, really expensive.

Interviewer: Oh, no, it is. Yeah, I agree. It is very expensive, yeah. And, as you say, not everything is covered, is it?

Parent5 Unless you are pregnant.

Interviewer: Oh, yeah. That is right. If you are pregnant, yeah. But otherwise it certainly can be an expensive business.

Parent5 Yeah.

Interviewer: So maybe the dentist is, for you, where you would feel that that is more of an issue in terms of the cost of going. Because you never know as well what they might say you need when you get there, and that has an impact.   
  
It has been really helpful to hear your experiences. Do you have anything else that you wanted to talk about in relation to healthcare and access to healthcare for families like yours? Or is there anything you wanted to say? Anything that we have…

Parent5 I don't know. My mind is like brain fog [Crosstalk 00:13:16].

Interviewer: That is the thing. Well, the mind is like that anyway, but I know it is supposed to be a thing with COVID, isn’t it? Because I always think I don’t think I would know if I had COVID because I am so brain foggy anyway. (Laughter)   
  
I have, I think, gone through what we wanted to ask you about, and it has been really helpful. So it is really just if there was anything else that you thought of. Any other problems that you think families living on low incomes might experience in terms of getting healthcare. Anything you were aware of that anybody had mentioned or anything like that.

Parent5 [Crosstalk 00:13:56].

Interviewer: But don’t worry if nothing springs to mind. I think [Crosstalk]. Sorry.

Parent5 [Crosstalk]. I was saying I can’t think of anything.

Interviewer: Don’t worry at all. That is great. You have been really, really helpful.   
  
And is Abel still fast asleep then? Aww. Well, he looks very content at the moment. Maybe he will stay like that for a little while and you can have a rest as well, Resp.

Parent5 Oh, no. I need him to wake up so he can go down for his proper nap after his dinner.

Interviewer: You never want them to sleep too long at the wrong time, do you?

Parent5 No.

Interviewer: Well, I think unless there is anything you want to add, Parent5, I will just leave it with saying again a really big thank you. Hugely appreciate it.   
  
He was just waving there, Abel. Aww.

Parent5: Oh, bless him.

Interviewer: He is just waking up now. Bless him. Aww. Well, we shall let you go [and look after him 00:14:54].

Parent5 Thank you.

Interviewer: Thank you very much. That is really helpful. Thanks, Resp. Bye.

Parent5: Take care.

Interviewer: I will just stop recording, if I can work out how to do that, Saffia. Stop there. There we go.

END AUDIO