

File: 2016-05-05_P3.MP3

Duration: 1:04:19

Date: 22/08/2016

Typist: 783

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Interviewer: Okay. Good morning, P3.

P3: Morning.

Interviewer: Thank you for being interviewed again. Just the usual way of starting would be if I could ask you to introduce yourself for the recording.

P3: I'm P3. I'm the Chief Executive at Smart Skills.

Interviewer: Thank you.

P3: Is that all you need?

Interviewer: That's good. The next bit says, 'And the work that you do', but I think I know quite well what Smart Skills does now.

P3: Okay.

Interviewer: So, just in terms of, straightaway, bringing the conversation round to feedback, are you just able to tell me what feedback actually means to the organisation? So, literally, things like what is it, how is it collected, why is it collected, what is it about feedback that makes it an important part of..? Or is it an important part of what you do?

P3: So, [I think there are 0:00:58] three parts to that question. One is why is it important, and then what do we do, or what would we want to do, what it should be and what it actually is. There are three different things.

Interviewer: Yes. So, if we start with what it means to the organisation.

P3: Why it's important?

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: So, as a charity, because we're funded by public funding, we have an obligation to be very open about what we do and to work within our constitution. Our constitution sets out who our beneficiaries are and how we want to benefit them and what we're going to do. As a charity, you have an obligation to stick within that and to evidence that you are doing it, and also to evidence to funders that you're making good use of public money-

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: -or charitable funding. That's probably not the most important.

The most important, really, should be that we're set up as a charity with those aims, and the most important thing is really accountability. I suppose it is to the public, but in relation to our beneficiaries.

Interviewer: Why do you say that's the most important?

P3: The most important thing is that you're achieving those outcomes for the people that you're supporting. That's our reason for being here. So, we need to check that we have a reason for being here and problems that we think we're tackling and helping with. It's a bit pointless if we're not achieving those things.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: I would say that's the most important thing. So, the most important thing is that we have a reason for existing, and we need to check that we're achieving that. Then, the only way we can work on that at all is that we have public funding, and then, secondarily, we have to be accountable to our funders. Because it's public money, a lot of it, we're accountable to the public, as a charity.

Interviewer: Yes, and you said that comes out of the constitution. The first part of it. What it should be about. Being accountable.

P3: Yes. So, any charity is set up for a reason, isn't it?

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: So, Skills was set up by a parent of a child with learning disabilities who saw some injustice in the world and thought of a way to tackle that-

Interviewer: Okay.

P3: -which is why we have people themselves leading the work and doing a range of things. So, when a charity's set up, its constitution sets out all of those things: who the beneficiaries are and how the charity will benefit them.

Interviewer: Yes. That's interesting. I don't think we've actually talked about the origins of Skills before.

P3: Right.

Interviewer: So, she saw injustice in the world. That's interesting.

P3: Yes. I've written this story down in one of our reports. I can give you a copy of that.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

P3: Years ago, when we were celebrating 25 years.

So, C4 was actually an American, but she was living here at the time. She had a daughter with Down's Syndrome who was then, I don't know how old, but I think a young teenager.

It was set up in 1983 when the world was really different. So, [you had 0:04:13] a lot of people living in institutions, disabled people attending separate, segregated schools. And then going onto segregated day centres where they would be doing meaningless activity and have very few rights, very little access to the things that we all value - employment, jobs, relationships, activities - and really isolated, often. Either within their own homes, because they wouldn't be able to have those social activities, or because they'd gone to segregated schools with friends who lived miles away, and/or literally isolated because they were in hospitals.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: There still were a lot of people living in hospitals in 1983, even though the government had started the move a decade or more before for people to move out into the community. But her vision was about disabled people themselves educating the people who support them. The first things she did were

speakers' bureaus, so, helping people learn how to speak in public and be campaigning and training social workers and nurses. Going along to their college courses and speaking to them. Helping people to do that, which we still do now.

So, for instance, a very common cycle would be what the Geordie Mums... So, the Geordie Mums came along to a self-help group really. It started off with things to just help them feel more confident and better about themselves. They had - so, that particular group - such low self-esteem, experienced so much abuse, such horrible lives, had their children often taken into care that they were particularly in need. So, that group... Very patiently, people worked with them on things like doing creative things or feel-good things like pamper days.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: They made a calendar. They'd photographed them after they had makeovers and gradually got them talking more and more about issues, until now... The group still does some of that, but it also trains midwives and people who work with young families.

Interviewer: Oh, wow. Yes.

P3: So, that would illustrate the sort of thing we're talking about. So, people experienced bad things in their lives, which we often called 'lived experience' now, and those people are often called 'experts by experience'. So, they're experts in what

happens to people in that situation, and then they use that to train other people.

Interviewer: Yes, so, supporting them and helping them with what they do, and then also taking that and educating the wider community in what their lives were like and how that's affected... Yes.

P3: Yes, and one of the important parts of that is people contributing to society, because if you are disabled-

Interviewer: Oh, yes. Okay.

P3: -you've often been on the receiving end.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: I talk a lot about wellbeing and resilience, but resilience being the ability to bounce back when things are hard. You're less likely to have mental health problems, for instance, if you're more resilient, and resilience comes from really having relationships. That's one of the most important things. Money and your health and stuff are important too, but relationships... Without them, you're not very resilient.

And relationships where people aren't just paid to look after you, but where it's a reciprocal relationship. The point being, where people are giving something, they feel better about themselves.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: So, we all do, don't we? But people with learning disabilities often didn't have a chance to give, because they were always on the receiving end and they don't have very many opportunities... They haven't, historically, had their voices heard, and so on. So, for C4 Cook, that was...

Interviewer: She could see that.

P3: Yes. She could see that. She also wanted to support people like herself, families, to enable their sons and daughters to grow up and let go, because of that stereotype of people with learning disabilities particularly being like children.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: There still is a Peter Pan Club, which is a social club for people with learning disabilities in Newcastle.

Interviewer: Okay.

P3: A child who never grew up. (Laughter) That view of them being sweet and innocent and never really growing up. "Aren't they sweet?"

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: She was aware from the side of parents how letting go of your children becomes more difficult, I suppose, when you're more worried about what the future holds for them. When the services they are likely to receive or the isolation they're likely to experience is...

Yes, and the services aren't necessarily as good as they should be, and all these stereotypes abound. So, you're more fearful.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: So, she wanted to support families, as well, through that. So, we still do a lot of that as well.

Interviewer: Cool.

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: Yes. That's funny. I don't think I've heard about the, yes, roots of it before.

Just to bring it back to feedback... (Laughter)

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: I guess that's always been a part of it, then. Has that always been there? I guess, as funding's changed, maybe feedback's become more central.

P3: Really, almost morally, it should always be there.

Interviewer: Morally speaking, it should be.

P3: So, those stories that I've just told you about what she saw, but also, say, for instance, I used the example of Geordie Mums. If I'm working, or even if I'm a volunteer, trying to solve those problems, then I want to know that what I'm doing is working, don't I, for their sake and my own? All the energy I'm putting in, but then it widens out to all the...

Not all charities have funding, do they?

Interviewer: No.

P3: But, mostly, I would say they have some funding.

Interviewer: So, it's not just about funding.

P3: No.

Interviewer: No.

P3: Well, we've got an important job to do, because there's something really wrong, and if we're not doing that job, or if all our efforts do nothing to tackle the problem, you need to know that, just to be effective.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: So, it's morally, but also it's just about being effective, I suppose, and not wasteful of your time and energy and just letting the problem carry on.

Interviewer: Cool.

P3: Then, if you have funding, then it becomes... So, all the stuff I said at the beginning is really important. You've got to be accountable to your funders.

Interviewer: Yes, and the public, in some way, if they...

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: Well, I don't know who the funders are, but it must be public money in some cases as well.

P3: Yes. Exactly, although in being registered as a charity, I think you are then accountable to the public.

Interviewer: Okay. Yes.

P3: There's lots of guidance and things you have to do if you're a charity, and the Charity Commission regulates that. So, we will have to work within certain boundaries anyway, of our constitution. That has to fulfil certain things, to be a charity, and then, once you are registered as a charity, there are lots of other things you have to do, and good practice would be account...

So, we do have to produce an annual report of what we do and our accounts, and one of the things, for instance, is if there's a risk to the survival of the charity. The board has to think about things like that, and the reputation, and things like that.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: You have to publish in your accounts if there's a risk to you surviving financially.

Interviewer: Okay, and then does anyone read that? (Laughter)

P3: Funders do.

Interviewer: Okay. Yes.

P3: Yes. I don't know how many people... So, one year, a few years ago, our auditors put what's called a note on our accounts, which means it's a little word of warning to people reading them. .Basically, it said in very long words, if the organisation doesn't sell Key House, it might not survive.

Interviewer: I think I read that report, actually. Yes.

P3: Yes. That was bad news for us, that was, and you do quite a lot of things to try and avoid that happening. Obviously, managing things well, but when we got to the position where we didn't have many reserves left, we would think about what date we published... This isn't really relevant, but you really have to be careful.

Then, the following year, until the next year's accounts had been published, which, thank goodness, they were quite quickly, there was a bit of concern about what funders would think. Some funders will not fund you if they think that you're a risk.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: So, they'll want organisations that are safe and secure and responsible and well managed, and part of that is the evidence that we're being successful.

Interviewer: Yes. So, you've got accountability, really, to funders.

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: Accountability to the public.

P3: Accountability to beneficiaries is probably the most important one.

Interviewer: Okay. Beneficiaries, as in..?

P3: As in the people who... So, the Geordie Mums.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: So, our constitution says our beneficiaries are disabled people and their families.

Interviewer: Okay.

P3: So, we almost really make a promise to them, don't we? That we're set up to do a certain thing and they can trust us. So, to get their trust. That they can trust that we're doing something that's helpful to their lives.

Interviewer: Yes, which they know, because, well, it's about the relationships they have with the people here, then, I guess, or within their group or within the people who lead those groups.

P3: What? How they would know about it, you mean?

Interviewer: No. Just what makes them feel secure and makes it feel like it's beneficial to them.

P3: Well, the immediate people who we support... Yes. I think it's...

Interviewer: The point I'm getting at is, it's not through a feedback process really, at the moment, is it, that that would happen?

P3: Yes. So, I was going to say, you have the immediate people who use our service and come here to Key House or to the other places we work round the region and have a good experience. They might tell others.

It does take time to build up trust. So, the Geordie Mums are a good example. The group would struggle to speak to each other at the beginning, let alone train professionals. So, it

takes time to build up trust, but those are the individuals that we're meeting now, but the beneficiaries aren't just the individuals who are involved now. It's anybody who might potentially be involved, and also it's the wider cause.

Part of what we're doing is, not just helping individuals one by one, but also acting as a voice for disabled people, or supporting them to act as the voice. So, to influence services and improve the world.

Interviewer: Yes. Influence services here, or more broadly? At a council level? At a government level?

P3: Both.

Interviewer: Okay.

P3: One of the things about Smart Skills is, although it's not in our constitution, one of the things we always say... If I write down our aims, it will often include the word 'innovation' or trying to find new ways to make the lives of people with learning disabilities better, and their families'.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: It's a thing about trying to find new ways. That's something we've been known for, and we've been lucky enough over the

years to have people who've been at the forefront of what's happening around the country-

Interviewer: Okay.

P3: -about people with learning disabilities. Therefore, we've continued to come up with trying new things.

So, the mindfulness course is the first of its kind in the country, and this working in partnership with a local NHS trust. The way we're doing it is a bit unusual. So, we're trying it out.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: Now, it shouldn't be. You would think it's just common sense, but the way health and social care is delivered is quite strange. (Laughter)

I can go into that more if you want to know a bit more about that, but the point being... Yes. So, we try and... I've forgotten the thread of what I'm [asking 0:16:51]. What was the question?

Interviewer: We were talking about the Geordie Mums.

P3: Oh, influencing.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: So, who are we trying to influence?

Interviewer: Yes. I would like to talk about healthcare and social care and how those two things sit together, maybe not in this interview, but later on.

P3: Yes. So, well, influence is really, really important for the cause as well as for our organisation to thrive. So, it happens at all different levels. So, locally, a council might consult people here about something they plan, or a council might do something. We will gather from families and people with learning disabilities that it's something that people are not happy with or it's going to affect their lives badly.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: The sort of thing that happens is that the council's allowed to be built a huge care home that young people with learning disabilities are going to go in, and that's not the way people want to live. They don't want to live in a huge residential place. So, we might end up supporting people to complain about that.

Interviewer: So, advocate for them.

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: Some of the things that Smart Skills has done and created over the years - and this is what I was saying about the innovation - were Quality Checkers, mindfulness. And some of the stuff to do with personalisation is stuff that has then been taken on nationally.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: So, Quality Checkers was an idea we came up with here, and now, 10 or more years on, there's a national association. Suzie is the chair of that. I'm on the board. There are hundreds and hundreds of them all over the country, and the government is about to say that all areas should adopt Quality Checkers and its services.

Interviewer: Yes. Wow.

P3: I know. It's great, isn't it?

Interviewer: Yes. That's really cool.

P3: Quality Checkers are checking that services make the reasonable adjustments they should to include people with

learning disabilities, just as they would have a ramp to allow wheelchair users to...

Back to the beginning and the reason for existing is, the reality is that people with learning disabilities face a lot of health inequalities.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: So, obesity's a huge one, but loads of other health issues where they'll die younger than other people or they'll have less healthy lives. Not because of their learning disability, although obviously some conditions do result in those things, but because they don't get the help they need.

So, they don't get the screening they need or they don't get... Quite often, some illnesses... They call it diagnostic overshadowing, where medics don't pick up that there's a health issue because everyone's just focused on the fact that someone has a learning disability. So, for instance, they're not getting the checks on their kidneys that they should do, because they're living in a hospital for people with learning disabilities.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: That's an example I came across, and it's a really serious condition that you need checked regularly. That sort of thing.

Interviewer: (Laughter) Have you lost the ____ [0:19:58] again?

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: No.

P3: We're talking about innovation, aren't we, and how we influence things?

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: Oh, yes. So, that was the example of Quality Checkers. It went national. The other example that we do all the time is that there are, continuously, strategic bodies working on improving the world for disabled people. And we're particularly focused on people with learning disabilities, full time.

So, I do a lot of going to very long meetings that are about trying to change how local health and social care services are supporting the needs of people with learning disabilities. There's a particular programme focused on people who end up with [behaviour that challenges the system 0:20:39].

Interviewer: Okay.

P3: We can talk about, in detail, what happens there if you want to. A particular thing happens where they end up getting sent

further and further away from home to more and more institutional care, which doesn't suit their needs, doesn't help them get better. It just gets worse and worse, but also puts them at risk of abuse. But one of the things I wanted to say about feedback-

Interviewer: Yes. Bringing it back to feedback. Yes.

P3: -in relation to that is Smart Skills... So, one of the reasons for feedback... I haven't really done them in a very good order of priority, but it's for the organisation to keep going and keep doing its good work.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: One of the things we have been very poor at, and a lot of charities like ours have been, is PR and letting people know what we do.

Obviously, any feedback and, especially nowadays, clips of film that can be used or even voices that can be used on the internet are really important, and we haven't been very good at that.

So, Quality Checkers is a really good example, because we came up with the idea. It was taken up by lots of other people, and then some other organisations would take the lead on it or be better at publicity than us.

Interviewer: Yes. Like who? Just other charities?

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: What? They have a PR department? (Laughter)

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

P3: Yes, or they've just got a person who's got time to do it perhaps, or has the skills to do it.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: In small organisations, you've got the same person, haven't you, working out the HR policies, doing..?

Interviewer: Well, yes. There are people who... That's just their job, isn't it?

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: Just marketing.

P3: One of the tricky aspects about it is competition between different charities, but that's not the main thing. I think the main thing is about letting people know what we're doing.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: Being able to tell people how good it is. A range of people. So, to tell disabled people and their families what opportunities there are, and it won't be just our organisation, because Quality Checkers is around the country now. So, the things we're doing and that they work.

So, mindfulness, for instance. If we can have some clips that make people think, "Oh, this is really interesting," and, "Oh, it seems to have had a good effect..."

So, we've made a film of the creation of that course, and on it are people saying, "I used to get really angry. So, I used to throw the remote control at the TV. Now, I don't." That goes to the heart of this current programme of care. That's trying to help people with their difficult feelings, rather than ending up so that they deal with their difficult feelings by throwing the remote control or hitting somebody.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: That sends people down on a really bad path in their lives, if they deal with their feelings like that. The point being, we've come up with something that seems to be working.

Interviewer: You need to tell people. Yes.

P3: We need to now tell people in order that it can continue and maybe even grow, and possibly, like Quality Checkers, go over the country.

Interviewer: (Laughter) Yes. Well, that's really interesting, around the innovation that you guys have been able to do, and that's amazing that it's caught on. You've actually got loads of ideas that have come out.

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: Yes. How did they come about, really, is actually what I was thinking when you were talking about it. Would there be a role for feedback in a process like that?

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: Finding out from people what would be a good thing to do. I know the majority of feedback's not going to uncover stuff like that, but...

P3: It is central.

Interviewer: It would be amazing if people left information this way and you caught that information somehow. So, the feedback feeds into your whole idea around innovation, developing new things, because you're obviously creating new things here.

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: Are they coming out of conversations that you're having with people here?

P3: Yes. The views of people with learning disabilities and their families are absolutely central to it all. So, what you have is an organisation that has always attracted, and therefore continues to attract, people who are like-minded and almost always are people who are really good at hearing. They really get it, that the people with learning disabilities and their family/carers should drive what we're doing.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: Where possible, they drive it [literally 0:25:32]. They are the workers, paid workers and the volunteers. Not as much as they should be, but that people with learning disabilities and their families drive the whole thing...

So, it's really listening to them. Not presuming what they want; continually listening to them.

Of course, we've been doing it for so long that we know some of the things they want. So, I can confidently say that people don't want to live in very large residential care homes, which is quite key, because now, again, to save money, they're beginning to be built.

Interviewer: So, it's gone backwards.

P3: You're beginning to have people who look at them and think, "Oh, well, that would be quite nice, for everyone to be together."

Interviewer: Oh, and you're like, "You've been moving away from that for..."

P3: Yes, and sometimes it's the best of a bad lot. You have to accept something you don't really want to, because there's nothing better. But it's come from the views of people with learning disabilities who, over many years, would tell us they wanted their own front door. They wanted this, that...

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: Or they're lonely in a... Whatever it is. They're things we're very confident about. Yes, people do want jobs. Yes, they do want relationships. They're no different to the rest of us in the things they want. So, that's all come from listening to people.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: So, it is at the base of all these...

Interviewer: The interesting thing for me around that, then, is... It's all really interesting, but in terms of the project is, how is that captured? That's not written down. Right? That's anecdotal evidence that you and the other people who work here have in their heads. Right? Because they've been working with people for years.

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: If you left, you've got so much knowledge and so much experience, down to individual relationships with people that you have who use the services.

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: Then that...

P3: That will go.

Interviewer: Yes, and that must happen a lot.

P3: Some of it's written down, over years.

Interviewer: Oh, so, yes.

P3: Years and years and years of consultations.

Interviewer: Oh, you're putting it in reports, aren't you? Yes. Are you quoting people verbatim in reports or do you just write [what they say 0:27:38]?

P3: Yes. That would be one of the things. It's interesting, because technology's moved so far that it's really changed... One of the things that's really striking about the way we would have worked years ago, and you still sometimes see occasionally, is that all our course reports...

Say we did a course to teach people about something: their rights in the community when they moved out, because there were people living in long-stay hospitals moving out. We would work with them about what you can expect in the community. And we would use what they told us then to do training for staff who were working. When lots of people who had lived in long-stay hospitals came out, they didn't understand very much about living in the community.

So, say we were doing that. We'd say to people, "Tell us what rights mean to you," or something, and then we'd write it all down in their own words. Our staff were strictly told that you do not change anything. One of the things that people would get tempted to do, if they weren't working for an organisation like this, is to correct grammar and things like that.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: So, everything was written down, word for word, on a flip chart, which must have made the process quite slow. So, you'd be going round. You know, "Yes. What it means to you. Yes," and usually with a picture, because people can't read, often. So, you're drawing pictures, you're writing it out word for word, and then we used to produce a report at the end to give to our funders. All the words were typed out. It's a great, thick thing. We don't do that anymore.

Interviewer: Yes. Why not?

P3: Because it's so unwieldy, I think. One of the important things for doing it was that it had people's words, in their own words, and we've still got some of the old reports. We've had a few clear-outs since then, but...

For instance, in the very first annual report that Smart Skills had - ancient, typed on an old typewriter, pieces of paper like that - it says, 'We want jobs. We want friends', and it's word for word. It's got quote marks.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: So, usually, our annual report has some direct quotes from people through it, but it's quite laborious. And you're right to say that I know what's in the attic are all these things that people said in 1983, but most people in the team wouldn't know, and you do lose...

The memory is quite hard to keep, whereas I think, because it's a piece of paper and it's not very easily accessible, a report that was on paper... Of course, more and more, they're on our server, but it's quite hard to find your way round and to find those things.

I see it all the time that people don't see the feedback that's been given previously. So, I think films are a bit more memorable.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: I guess there is the same risk that if you have loads of them - film clips and audio clips - they could get lost and buried.

Interviewer: Yes. I know.

P3: But it's easier to remember what people have said, I think, when you've heard someone say it rather than read it.

Interviewer: Definitely. Yes. So, what was that? Was that an event? You were talking about how you've got people's own words and you wrote it all down. You collected it all.

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: Was that an event you did specifically just to get that, or is that just feedback that's been gathered over the years?

P3: A mixture of both.

Interviewer: Yes, but couldn't you just have an event where you were just like, "Just say what you want"? Even put ThoughtCloud at the centre of it, actually. This is what I was thinking when you were talking.

P3: Yes. I think it's a good idea.

Interviewer: Just get people to say, in a minute or less, "What do you want?"

P3: Out of life, or out of Skills?

Interviewer: Yes, and just make that the event. Just getting that. It may be an interesting thing to do.

P3: Yes, and I think there'd be a role for that, in that the clips are quite useful. If we're trying to influence things and we're not very good at PR, then anything that helps us with influencing in a simple way... Film clips are really helpful, aren't they?

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: The only thing I would say about asking people what they want generally in their lives is what will come back is relationships, jobs, houses.

Interviewer: Yes. You know it. Yes. That's interesting as well.

P3: So, in that case, we know some things. The film clips will help us to get that message out to people. So, not just for the benefits of our organisation and to help us carry on benefiting people; they'll be telling us what problems are out there. It's actually for raising awareness purposes.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: So, what I didn't say at the beginning that would have been helpful is that, in the constitution, it talks about raising awareness quite a lot, education. It's not the most up-to-date

language, but it talks about education and training and awareness raising of disabled people and of families and of the public.

So, in there very much is raising awareness. Like C4 was saying about training professionals, it's also raising awareness among the public, where you can. So, where you go into schools and tell people about the lives of people with learning disabilities.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: And try and tackle bullying, for instance.

Oh, I've forgotten what the thread was now again. (Laughter)
____[0:32:41].

Interviewer: (Laughter) Communication again, isn't it? I was just talking about people's voices.

P3: Oh, yes, because you were talking about, "Well, if we just ask people what they want in their lives." Yes, it would be useful. Yes, we'll know a lot of it, but we can't be arrogant and think we know it all, because things might gradually change.

So, for instance, it might be that more and more people are finding they're having to share homes with people they don't want to, again, to save money. Or it might be that we'd find that people who are living on their own are saying they're lonely, and we hadn't thought they were or something.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: So, I don't mean to be arrogant and say we know it.

Interviewer: No.

P3: The same things will come up, but it doesn't matter if the same things come up, because we can use that as a tool to raise awareness about the lives of people with learning disabilities. Pull at the heart strings of whoever it is. We can use that with young people, with just members of the public, with employers, to try and encourage them to employ people, etc.

So, you can use those as a tool to promote the ideas and to promote the organisation.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: Also, we could, and what we used to do is, every year... Again, as the organisation's become bigger, it's become that bit more difficult. So, we've always had this committee called Programme Committee with 20 or so people with learning disabilities.

Interviewer: Is that the committee I met?

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: They probably haven't met since.

Interviewer: Oh, really?

P3: Yes. We've been struggling with time and getting things organised to get them meeting very often, but they would, every year, historically, get together. I used to ask them, just like you said, what they want in their lives. What was good, what was working their lives, what wasn't working, and then ask them about what we should do about it.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: Then, I would write the work programme for that year based on what people had told me. It was literally what people were saying was going on in their lives and then what they thought the organisation should do about it.

So, they were very influential, and they were treated as a sub-committee of the board to decide our work programme.

It became more and more complicated as we grew and we could tackle more and more areas. More and more people were tackling more areas and government policy caught up.

So, there were more opportunities and we had to listen more to government policy.

Interviewer: How did it catch up?

P3: Well, particularly in the middle of the 2000s, there was a thing called Valuing People, which was a whole government policy.

Interviewer: Oh, I might have seen that, actually.

P3: It had two rounds. Yes. It was really key to people with learning disabilities. I've got [the 0:35:09] versions if you want to have a look.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: It changed things quite a lot. So, we'd already had a movement for people not living in a hospital for a long time, and we'd already had some anti-discriminatory stuff [on 0:35:24] disability discrimination. But people with learning difficulties were often left out of that.

So, you had a very big lobby from people with physical impairments who created disability discrimination legislation and campaigned against people with physical impairments living in care homes and things like that.

Interviewer: Yes. Activists.

P3: Yes, and you'd have people who... Okay. So, someone who could be a solicitor or a university lecturer or an MP who does need 24-hour support, but doesn't need to live in an institution for that... They just live in their home and have the support that they need to do their job.

So, there was a big campaign against people... That's what was happening. People just moved through the system of they had to go to a special school and then they'd go into day centres and always be segregated. No aspirations for them.

Obviously, some families fought against that and some people managed to rise against all the odds. I suppose people with learning disabilities often still got viewed in that way, because they weren't going to become solicitors or MPs. So, they were still suffering enormous inequalities.

Valuing People had four main principles. That people should have rights. They should be included in society. That includes contributing to your society and everything.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: I can't remember what the others are. Control over your life, because people with learning disabilities often have their lives controlled. So, often, with their benefits, they don't get to spend them themselves.

Interviewer: There's been a lot of change around that as well, hasn't there?

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: You do workshops on... Is it personal budgets?

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: Yes, and there is more flexibility there.

P3: Yes. These are really important changes.

Interviewer: Cool. I should probably read that document. (Laughter) I think I've seen it.

Yes. Okay. We covered quite a lot there. We probably don't need to talk about what feedback is, because I think we've talked about where it comes from. So, often, it's anecdotal, but quite often it's written down.

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: It goes into reports.

P3: And they're rather unwieldy, aren't they?

Interviewer: What? The reports?

P3: So, they're unwieldy. They're hard for people to know where they are, because they're not all in an easy place.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: In the past, they were literally paper reports, but they're very long, for instance. So, it's not easy for our staff to use them for any of the purposes that we've talked about, in a way. It just becomes unwieldy, but also, it's not particularly engaging for the public if you're trying to convince...

It might be alright for a funder, to send a big written report, but if you send them a bit of film, they usually just really like that.

Interviewer: Yes. (Laughter) It takes up less time and it communicates... I don't know. It's a much more nuanced format. You're communicating stuff that is difficult to convey, I guess, in a textual way.

P3: Yes. Well, for instance, that mindfulness project. We did film it all the way along. There's a 40-minute film, but it's just been condensed down to a 4-minute film, which is going to be shown at a national conference.

Interviewer: Yes. Oh, cool.

P3: That you can get enough over in a 4-minute film is amazing, isn't it?

Interviewer: Yes. I think you told me about that before. Where is it? Is it online?

P3: It's not yet. No.

Interviewer: Okay. Is it not allowed to go online?

P3: Yes. No. We can put it online.

Interviewer: Okay.

P3: I think I'm not sure what to do with it.

Interviewer: Do you have a YouTube channel?

P3: No.

Interviewer: Okay. You could get a YouTube channel.

P3: I don't know how to do it.

Interviewer: You know how to get a YouTube channel. It's the same as a Twitter channel. Not a Twitter channel. That's not what you call it. You just sign up for YouTube and then put videos on it.

P3: You show us how to do it.

Interviewer: Okay.

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: If you think that's right. You've got on the website now, 'Here's our Facebook. Here's our Twitter'. There's no reason why you don't have a, 'Here's YouTube'. Most people will. I bet if we look at... I don't know. What's an example of another charity [friend 0:39:33]?

P3: Your Voice Counts would be a similar one.

Interviewer: Your Voice Counts.

P3: Certainly, the bigger charities will have [one 0:39:39].

Interviewer: I wonder if they just have...

P3: Can we just..?

Interviewer: What?

P3: Oh, I just wondered whether you were happy just continuing to record.

Interviewer: Oh, no. That's fine.

There's one.

P3: Yes. Oh, no. You see, they haven't got a good website.

Interviewer: Oh, no.

P3: You see, you find charities... That's a really good...

Interviewer: Probably, we shouldn't get sucked in to looking at websites.

P3: No. Let's look afterwards.

Interviewer: But I think you'll find that a lot of them... It's right there on their social media. They'll have YouTube.

P3: So, that's like a space in YouTube where it's just all the videos from that organisation.

Interviewer: Yes. So, you would just set up a Smart Skills YouTube channel. I have a YouTube channel. Basically, an account on YouTube is just called a channel. So, I used to make short films and stuff. This is not well looked after. You'd have your logo in there and you'd have a back... The same as all your other stuff.

P3: Then, you'd just tell people the link?

Interviewer: Yes. That's it. Yes.

P3: Can you have 40-minute film on YouTube?

Interviewer: Yes. I think so.

P3: It's a bit of a priority, [that, isn't it 0:40:40]?

Interviewer: I've never put anything that long on there, but yes. You could just set up YouTube and then, yes, you can embed YouTube videos in your own website so that it would be in the website.

We could click on a thing and it could be there, or you could just have the link to it, like we were talking about.

P3: Okay. Brill.

Interviewer: Yes. Have a think about setting up a YouTube channel.

Okay. We wandered off topic there.

P3: Well, I can send you the link if you want to see those films, by the way.

Interviewer: Yes, but if you wanted to put them online right away, I would just recommend setting up YouTube and then tweet, you know, 'New film on the Smart Skills YouTube channel'.

P3: Okay.

Interviewer: Or Facebook it, or do it everywhere. Add a thing to your website, or email me and I'll do it. (Laughter) Well, I can't tweet and Facebook for you, but I can add things to your website.

P3: Yes. I can put things on [the website 0:41:34].

Interviewer: Yes, and you can do that as well. Okay. Well, how did we get onto that?

P3: (Laughter)

Interviewer: Yes. So, we've covered that. Well, we've covered this first bit.
(Laughter)

P3: Yes. So, how is feedback collected currently? It might be useful just to say a bit more-

Interviewer: Okay.

P3: -because I was talking really about the past, wasn't I?

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: At the moment, people use a variety of things, but they're mostly using paper at the end of a meeting. They might just ask people to put their overall view, like, "What do you think of the event?" on a Post-It note on a poster. It then has to get typed up, which then goes into a document somewhere, which maybe doesn't get used at all or gets used by me to put quotes in the annual report or to tell funders.

Or they're using more formal sheets that say, "What did you think about today? What did you learn? What was best? What wasn't so good?" and things. "What about the venue?"

That gets collated and typed and put into a report and might not get used.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: Then, at the end of the year, when I do the annual report, all this needs to get collated, and people have collected it in all different ways. I just get them to fill in a form and send it to me, and stories, in writing.

Interviewer: Stories?

P3: Yes. Stories that I could put in.

Interviewer: From?

P3: We call them stories, but really just like little anonymous case studies.

Interviewer: Okay.

P3: So, [in stories 0:43:04].

Interviewer: From people...

P3: Yes. So, Gail might say, "Such-and-such a person was in a really difficult situation and they'd lost their home," or something, "And I helped them find a new house," or something like that.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: Stories that illustrate what we do, because individual case stories and qualitative information like that are just so important. That's what captures people in your annual report, and funders... What they would want to look at is, is it sound financially, and then they would quickly read through the other bit, I would think, about your annual report and what's good. What will capture them is anything that looks a little bit different and stories that just come from people and are really powerful, usually in their own words.

Interviewer: Yes. ThoughtCloud has captured powerful stuff, as far as I'm concerned, that people are really impressed with.

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: But it's not been the feedback... There's the testimony stuff. People have used it to say something else, because they can.

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: They can say what they like. But yes, sorry, I'm conscious of the time. Do you want to end there or will we carry on for another five minutes?

P3: Yes. I've got twenty minutes.

Interviewer: Are you sure?

P3: Twenty-five minutes. Yes.

Interviewer: I don't think we need to go back into why you collect feedback. We've been over that there. Oh, yes. How might you respond to feedback?

P3: Okay.

Interviewer: Well, I think we've said that already.

P3: It depends what level of feedback. What we haven't said, and there is one example...

Interviewer: Well, this is it. I'm starting to think feedback's a multilevel thing, isn't it?

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: It's not just...

P3: Individual feedback. This happened right at the beginning of doing ThoughtCloud. If you get individual feedback from somebody and they're not happy-

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: -then you've got to deal with it.

Interviewer: Well, that's what we were going to go on to.

P3: Oh.

Interviewer: That's fine, if you want to talk about it now. When it is negative. Yes.

P3: So, we respond to individual feedback if there's a concern, for instance, but usually what we're doing is seeing how people have experienced what we do in order to make it better. And in order to promote what we do, which we've already covered.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: Have we covered that, do you think?

Interviewer: I think that then goes on to be, can you think of a time when you've changed something as a direct response to feedback?

P3: Yes. Negative, particularly, is one.

Interviewer: Well, that's where it started, but actually it doesn't need to be negative. It could be positive, if that springs to mind more.

P3: Well, last week, I went to a meeting with a group of people with learning disabilities and their supporters. They were complaining about a meeting they'd been to that had been organised by Smart Skills.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

P3: So, I took that really seriously and thanked them and wrote down what they said in their own words. So, I've dealt with it. I've talked to the person who organised the meeting and we've worked out how we're going to improve things next time. I've drafted a letter to send back to them to say, 'Thank you for your feedback. I'm really sorry this happened. This is what we're going to do to make it better next time'.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: We'll do those things, and it's really important. In fact, I asked another group, because we support another group that was at the meeting. So, I was able to ask someone else, "What did you think of the meeting?" and I got similar feedback. So, then I had two groups of people saying that they hadn't found this meeting very helpful.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: Most importantly, they hadn't felt they could take part.

Interviewer: Okay.

P3: So, inclusion. It wasn't easy to understand. It really wasn't a piece of work that we were proud of, but I was able to take it really seriously and respond to it and improve things. I've made a promise for it. I've dealt with it really quickly. So, there'll be a letter going out, and it will be within three or four days of them having told me. I've taken action. It's sorted.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: Well, hopefully it's sorted, because we'll have to do better (Laughter) next time, but that's really important. So, that's two groups of people who could be quite vocal in the region. So,

one reason is, of course, we want to make our meetings to involve people. That's the reason we're here, but secondly, our reputation.

Interviewer: Yes. That's interesting.

P3: If we get a reputation for having a meetings that are not easy to understand and where people don't feel they can take part, that will lose us work.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: I touched on this earlier. Funders won't want to fund us, but also, we're often competing against others, and it shouldn't be that a bit of gossip affects your reputation, but of course it does.

Interviewer: Yes. Absolutely. Yes. The competition thing is quite interesting. I never would have thought...

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: You think of organisations that are doing social good. The idea of them competing against each other doesn't seem to fit in that picture.

P3: No, and you talk about it at great length. It's been really quite destructive in lots of ways.

Interviewer: Okay.

P3: In some ways, people would argue that it gets the best value for the public money.

Interviewer: That makes it sound really capitalistic.

P3: Yes. Well, it is, the way it happens, I think.

Interviewer: Yes. (Laughter)

P3: It's meant to get the best value. Some of the things I have to put in, to be fair - about tendering, for instance - mean you don't really necessarily get the best value, because you can't talk to the person. You can't have a negotiation.

Interviewer: With the people you're tendering to?

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: So, if you're a business and you're asking three companies to quote on making you widgets or something...

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: So, company one does it really cheaply and company two's expensive, and then there's one in the middle, but there's something you like about the more expensive one. You can go back to them and negotiate, can't you? "We really like what you're doing. Can you do it for a bit less?" Or you can go to the cheap one and say, "We wouldn't mind if you put your price up a little bit but you made the widgets a bit better, and you could just make the spec a bit higher or something."

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: Tendering for public money is not like that. You put in your bid, and it might be 60% judged on quality and 40% on price or the other way round, but there's no discussion.

So, for instance, if the questions are badly written on the tender document, which they quite regularly are, you can ask questions via the website that everybody can ask. But you can't have a discussion with the organisation to say, "Oh, I think there's a better way we could do that," or, "Do you realise that we're already funded to do some of that? You don't need to..." Or anything like that that would actually make better use of the money.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: So, it's quite difficult, but one thing I didn't say earlier I should have said about using it... It's not just about promoting us. It's about applying for funding. Very literally, if you apply for funding, more and more - Big Lottery, for instance - will want to know what previous feedback you've got, very specifically.

Interviewer: And how you're collecting it. Yes.

P3: Yes. All funders will be pleased to hear feedback from somebody and what they've said. You often wouldn't get a chance to send a film clip. That's one thing. So, we would have to probably transcribe something, but some of them will take film clips. Some of the bigger funders, like Big Lottery, probably will, but they won't give you funding unless you've got evidence either that you've done it before and people liked it or didn't like it, or whatever.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: Or that people are asking for it, and need it. So, both the ways we're collecting film... So, that ThoughtCloud information now and the way you suggested maybe we could have an event where people just came and said what the issues were. We could have an event and say, "What are the issues?" or we could have an event that says, "We've been thinking about

loneliness. Can we have your feedback?"

Then, we can go to a funder and say, "We've got this project. It's about helping to stop people being lonely. This is what people have told us. Thirty people gave their views, and here's what they said."

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: If it was a really big funder, you could send a film in that collated all of those or something.

Interviewer: Okay. Yes. We should think about doing something like that.

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: That would be interesting for me.

P3: So, that was an example.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: Was that a good example?

Interviewer: Yes. They were both good examples.

P3: Somebody on ThoughtCloud left a message that another member of the group... They hadn't been happy with something that had happened at the meeting. Somebody hadn't treated them very well, as well, [in the really early days 0:52:00].

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: Another service user.

Interviewer: Oh, yes. Was there action taken around..? What that when-

P3: So, I think we talked to the people.

Interviewer: -someone said that they felt bullied?

P3: Yes. It was quite a while ago now, but we would talk to the people involved.

Interviewer: To the individual who left the feedback?

P3: We would talk to them first, usually, and then I'm pretty sure what happened is that we talked to the other person as well.

Interviewer: Okay.

P3: Some of the people who are actually using this bit of the service... They know each other. They've come to know each quite well. So, sometimes, it's just about helping people get on with each other.

Interviewer: Yes, or is it smoothing over relationships between people?

P3: Yes, which sounds a bit strange, to be doing that with adults. I suppose it does happen sometimes with two colleagues. A manager has to help, but it is more common with people with learning disabilities, because they're not used to having as...

Interviewer: Well, don't they just express it better? If you don't get on with someone at work, you don't complain. Who would you tell?
(Laughter) Do you know what I mean?

P3: Well, you might if you felt bullied, though. Wouldn't you? You would tell your manager if you were bullied.

Interviewer: Yes. No. You would. Well, yes. So, it's exactly the same really. Yes. You would report...

P3: You might, in a meeting, say, "I'm really frustrated, because you've done this, this and this."

I suppose what's happened to people like us is that we have learned what's appropriate behaviour.

Interviewer: But in that case...

P3: I think people haven't had the opportunities, because they haven't had jobs. They haven't been to college. They have sometimes been to college. But they often haven't had as many opportunities as we have to go to a job interview and know what you would say when you go in the door, and things like that.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: So, then obviously their behaviour isn't...

Interviewer: You're exactly right. At work, you know the procedure, basically.

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: Yes. If you felt bullied, you would tell a senior person.

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: You wouldn't necessarily know in Skills who... Either you wouldn't know that that's a procedure in the workplace - well, it's not really a workplace - or they might just not know who to tell.

P3: Oh, yes. The person complaining. Yes.

Interviewer: That just happened opportunistically, because ThoughtCloud was there.

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: That was one of the really interesting things that happened.

P3: And because it doesn't constrain people in what they're saying.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: It would be quite interesting to compare, if you gave it to a group of social care professionals, how they would answer the questions. They'd probably answer the question more specifically, whereas, as you noticed, people just say what they want to talk about.

Interviewer: To put on. Yes.

P3: Like politicians.

Interviewer: I'd say a vanishingly small percentage of people pay any attention to the questions, and that might just be the way it's designed. Maybe it's not good enough. I think people see the first screen, and then it's just saying, "What did you think of the event?" Then, they press the coloured button that they want. Green or red, or whatever.

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: Then, there's this other question that comes to them, but all they really see is, "Oh, I'll leave a voice or video message." So, they don't see the second question, and they've got the original question in their mind of, "What did you think of it?"

P3: One thing that occurs to me, and I should know this, Interviewer, but does it, or did it ever, have a voice that reads the questions out?

Interviewer: No. It's always been fairly simple. Yes. That would make sense. Right? How would you do that? That's adding another interaction. Oh, you mean it just automatically does it?

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: Yes. [Crosstalk 0:55:25].

P3: It just says... And then you could have a mute button. So, if people don't want to have that. So, it would just say, "What did you think of the event?"

I think that is probably going to be a key thing, because quite a lot of people can't read.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: So, at the moment, it relies on Gail saying, "So, what did you think of the event?"

Interviewer: Yes. Do you think a lot of people can't read?

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: The majority?

P3: I don't know, actually. Yes. A lot of people. It might be a majority.

Interviewer: Oh, wow.

P3: Or they read a little bit.

Interviewer: (Laughter) That's definitely a design problem.

P3: It's interesting. I realise I should probably know, but I would never presume a person with learning disabilities could read.

Interviewer: See, I just presumed...

P3: In fact, if you work in advice and information, which I did before - I worked in a similar thing to a CAB - you never presume anyone can read really. So, when you had an application form for something, I would say, "Do you want to fill it in or would you like me to give you a hand?"

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: So, I would never say, "Here's a form."

Interviewer: "Get on with it." (Laughter) Yes.

P3: Then, if you can't read, you've got to admit it.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: If people have name badges, I'll say, "Oh, do you want to make yourself a name badge or do you want a hand?"

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: "Do you want me to do it?"

Interviewer: No. It's interesting, because I do. Obviously, I just assume everyone can read really. Yes. I should get some training.
(Laughter)

P3: You should train ____ [0:56:54].

Interviewer: I should get some training.

P3: Right. I'll need to find out how many people can read first, and then I'll train you.

Interviewer: Okay. Right. Yes.

P3: Yes. If you think about a lot of people you might meet, like some people who are volunteering here, they can read a bit.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: Like Diane or Duncan. Obviously, they can use a computer, but if you think about the people you see in meetings, a lot of them won't be able to read, definitely.

Interviewer: Okay. I'm very conscious of the time now. The last big question was, who do you consider as the audience for feedback? Obviously, it's funders. I think what I'm getting at here is this idea of feeding back to...

P3: The people who have used the service.

Interviewer: Yes. So, engaging people. Actually, I've put other organisations as well. So, can feedback be used to make links between organisations, so they could work together, providing services?

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: But the main one is really creating a dialogue with the people who it's important to.

P3: Yes, and I think that it's a bit of a gap. When I reflect back... So, I told you we have this cycle of asking people - that's every year - what they think. It's got more and more difficult to do that, but we try to collect the views of people [too 0:58:11],

because we're very good at that, but we forget to tell them what we did as a result.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: I think that we're guilty of doing that. And why I like it being in film and audio... Obviously, there are issues if you're deaf or you can't see the pictures, but for most people there are issues about the written word. Therefore, being able to show them something and tell them what we did about it. I think there's a gap about telling the people who actually use our service...

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: So, I think the feedback should be for people who use our service more, who have given us the feedback. We ought to respond to that more than we do now, and what you're suggesting is that we could put the piece of film... Then, actually say how we responded.

Interviewer: Yes. Well, the thing that I'm thinking of at the moment is building it into the website so that people can just look at it anytime.

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: But it's if they would do that.

P3: We could actually use the tool to put in the feedback. I know we could just make a film anyway, but just saying, "We heard lots of people saying..."

Interviewer: Yes. Like, "You said, we did," sort of thing, which I've seen in other places that I've been. They just have it stuck on the walls and stuff.

P3: Yes. They have it at IKEA, I think.

Interviewer: You've got it in here?

P3: No. IKEA.

Interviewer: Oh, in IKEA. Yes. Actually, feedback is just everywhere now, I guess. We did talk about, ages ago, maybe having a tablet in the foyer so that people could have a look through it. We could do that, couldn't we? You're worried that someone will pinch it, aren't you?

(Laughter)

P3: Yes. I would be. Years ago, we thought about having a TV screen in the foyer.

Interviewer: Yes?

P3: Right? It's a café area and a reception area. So, we had thought about having a screen, like you might have in a GP's waiting room or something. I'm not really sure what it would have on it, whether it would tell you things Skills is doing, but it could have [crosstalk 1:00:17].

Interviewer: They have one of those things at the uni, and it's got the weather in a bar down the side and it's got the latest news scrolling along the bottom of it. Then, most of the screen, though, is upcoming events or someone just got an award for something. Yes.

P3: Yes. If people want to sit and listen to stuff, I don't know.

Interviewer: I don't know. It would be interesting to put the tablet down there and just have it open on a web browser on the stand. You'd need to plug it in, though, if it was going to be on all day.

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: We could get a nice banner that says, "Here's ThoughtCloud here."

P3: Yes?

Interviewer: They don't have to. They could use it for whatever they wanted.

P3: Are we asking people to give their views on their way out or are we asking them to see what other people said?

Interviewer: No. Not give their views. Have a look. Have a flick through the feedback that's already been...

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: We could do that.

P3: They probably do make tablets like this, but it's a shame there isn't...

Interviewer: Yes. Well, they have them at uni.

P3: [This was 1:01:19] really expensive.

Interviewer: That looks a super-expensive tablet.

P3: But that's because they're fantastic.

Interviewer: Yes. That would be really cool.

P3: That's what you need, isn't it?

Interviewer: Yes. I think they're very expensive. I know. These are the biggest ones that you can get. I know. They're a bit small, aren't they, for that kind of public thing, I guess. Well, that's something to think about later on, because I would really like to start using it in that way.

P3: I love the idea, because, for instance, yesterday, in our building there were meetings of commissioners. They're the people who decide how public money's spent.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: If you impress them, then you have a much better chance of being funded.

So, there was a room full of commissioners yesterday, and everything we could do that makes them notice us and think, "This organisation's really good," is valuable. So, for instance, and it sounds a bit cynical, but it happened to coincide with the Geordie Mums coffee morning.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: What was fantastic about that was, for our organisation, those two things happening in the building gives a really good message. But really importantly it was because the Geordie Mums could talk directly to the commissioners. So, on a different level that wouldn't necessarily benefit our organisation, people with learning disabilities talking to commissioners is a really good thing to have achieved. And it wasn't deliberate; it was just a coincidence that it happened on that day.

Interviewer: Yes. That's cool. That's the amazing thing about a place like this, a serendipitous crossover like that.

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: Yes. Okay. Well, we can have a think about that for later on. So, the audience for feedback is everyone really.

P3: Hmm.

Interviewer: It's commissioners, service users... Although it feels a little bit like the service users are the ones that don't really...

P3: We haven't been doing very well with the thing.

Interviewer: Yes. They're bottom of the list (Laughter) for who gets the feedback.

P3: In a way, yes.

Interviewer: Yes, because the place has got to be opening. Yes.

P3: No, but it's easy to get sucked into just thinking about money and PR, like a business would want to market itself.

Interviewer: Yes.

P3: We're terrible at that, but it can be easy to get drawn down that and forgetting that you've taken views from people and you really ought to report...

I try to remember, if I've written a funding bid and people have asked me what they think for it. I try always to remember and thank them and tell them that we got the money. Even that can be tricky, because you're so busy, like, "Yay. We've got the money. Let's get on with the project."

Interviewer: Yes. Totally.

P3: It's really important to remember [crosstalk 1:03:56].

Interviewer: Thank people. (Laughter)

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: Yes. Okay. Wow. Anything you would like to add about feedback that's occurred to you that we haven't talked about?

P3: No. I think we've covered [it].

Interviewer: We've covered a lot of stuff, and there's a lot of other interesting stuff that we could talk about again as well.

P3: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay.

P3: I'd love to, when you get back.

Interviewer: Yes. When I come back. Excellent. P3, thank you very much.

P3: Thank you.

END AUDIO

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