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START AUDIO

Interviewer: ... yeah, looks like it's working. Okay. Hi P3.

P3: Hi.

Interviewer: Thanks for being interviewed. I don't think you need to introduce yourself. Em. I have these like warm up things, but I guess we don't really need it cause we've just been chatting. It was just to say, what you think the most important things are to Smart Skills as an organisation?

P3: Em, it's about empowering people with learning disabilities particularly and/or autism.

Interviewer: What does the term giving voice mean to Smart Skills, if anything?

P3: It means a whole range of things, our beneficiary group, people with learning disabilities, autism and their family carers tend to not have as much say in what happens to them individually in terms of how they are supported or how they're not often represented in the media and they don't have as much chance to influence as other groups.

Interviewer: Yeah. Cause that's one side of Skills actually, isn't it? Like, people can learn, statutory organisations or government or

whatever, can learn from the people that you work with and they do, like there's training that happens isn't there? Where...

P3: Yeah, sometimes people here are... a typical journey of someone here is that they won't be very confident but they'll join one of our groups or go to a course and they'll become more confident themselves, and more able to speak up and then will be willing to speak up for a group or deliver training. It's quite similar if you think about any group of people who are oppressed in some way. If you think about women, as a group, will get together and then be more confident, you know historically, then become more confident and then maybe start to campaign for something, even if it's your sort of mum net type campaign, or radical feminist campaigns, all of those things will often come out of various people meeting together and becoming confident. So, but as well as the training we deliver, some of our people who have been here for a long time will be involved in, either being consulted but sometimes even more significantly: what they call coproduction, helping people in positions of power to shape local services, or even to have the ear of government about what should happen.

So, [Health Group] is a good example of that. [Health Group] will be looking at individual health services and trying to guide them make their services more accessible for people with learning disabilities and there's real reasons for doing that because the death, people with learning disabilities die something like 13-20 years younger than other people. And a lot of that is because of health inequalities, they're not getting the right support with their health, so they're disadvantaged, for example. So, [Health Group] will help individual GP practices improve but also will C8, who is one of our volunteers and myself [3m:18s]