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P3: Right, okay. So my name's P3, I'm a mum. I've got three dyslexic kids. I'm dyslexic myself. My experience of schools and meeting their needs wasn't very good. So out of that, I started going to a [anon.], or I go to a number of different things, so specifically a dyslexia group.

I attend the [anon.], and for the last 18 months, I've been part of a Local Offer group, introducing changes to the Children and Families Bill, the new law.

**Interviewer: Sorry, I'll just close this.**

**So what sort of involvement have you had with the parents' groups, then? Have you had any high-level involvement, or running group sessions?**

P3: No. When I go to the dyslexia things, I'm there as a user in the main part of the things, but you do get caught up into other things. And you find information out because of that.

So you know, one of my kids, we paid for private tutoring, and we had support for them, so had contact from other things that were going on there.

There's another charity, [anon.], and they ran - still do run - like parent information evenings and that. Those kind of things. Really, it's a one-woman hero who is battling to do what she can do on very little resources.

And then, because you feel obligated in some ways to support that, and to support other people to be able to have those resources and those things, to be able to do as well, it's also important to know- I'm a nerd, I read everything, other things.

I started off coming to it because I had enough background knowledge to find out, and I just wanted to know what the choices were with my kids. But I got to the point where I'm following debates in Parliament, I'm following the committee meetings on what might happen in the laws or something, and watching play-back telly as live recordings.

And that is just one aspect of where I've gone for information, and found things out, and there are all kinds of resources there that you can find out if you are looking for them, and if you know where to go for those things.

I'm at [anon] because of [anon.] . She came to [anon.], she was giving a presentation on the sort of changes that were happening at that point, and other things. And after that, she came up to me and said, “You're really knowledgeable. [anon.] have got a [anon.], go join it, because they need people that are knowledgeable.”

And I personally was at that point trying to find out from all kinds of people how the Children and Families Bill would play out, and who was going to be responsible for it. So I ended up at the forum, and then I found out through out through there that they were the parents that were going to be, you know, helping out, and they would be the parent reps on those things, through that.

And then, so through that, through a series of things, I'm in- as I said, I'm one of the reps on the Local Offer group, as part of that. So education, really, is my knowledge, and what works, and what parents want, and those things.

But you do have to add on that being part of that adds in whole other layers that really- that you end up being part of, or supporting, because there's a whole myriad of other things to do with social care, to do with health, to do with that, and you end up getting caught up in things.

**Interviewer: A lot of complexities, I imagine.**

P3: Yes, there are a lot of complexities. Who is delivering some of the things is complex, you know.

So through that, because for me, it's about young people, it's about parent carers having information so they can make choices and things. And that's often dismissed, but it's really important, and it's often the thing that parent carers will say at the end. When we may have found a solution, and come to it, and they will say, “But I've wasted all those years, you know, to get to this point.”

And that is the most frustration. Or they feel as though they've failed, because they may find out when the children are older, oh, well they could have been doing something when they were younger.

And the majority, if not all, special education needs or disabilities, everybody professionally knows early intervention works, the sooner the better. To be able to get support, getting the right support, is really important and key. And you can't do that if there is not good information at the beginning.

**Interviewer: So you said that's quite often dismissed. So do you feel some people dismiss the importance of the information, or choice?**

P3: Yes. So in the talk about my own personal views on parents and the things, there's a lot of consensus with parents, with their frustrations, and how things happen. If you look at it en masse as a group, and people doing sort of research things, charities speaking on behalf of those things. And everybody recognises that, and says, “Oh yes, you know, they are frustrations.”

But when you get to an individual level, and if you've been battling to get, you know, the school place, the right school place for your child; or if your battle is over whether you get an educational psychologist assessment or not; or if it's that, you know, you might get some social care support, it can be a whole myriad of different reasons or things. Or you may just not know, you may just be, “There's something not right,” but you don't know what it is, and you don't know why. And if you set out to try and do something about that, you can be caught up in that.

And so when you're talking about the bigger things, “Oh no, that doesn't matter,” and they'll dismiss sort of other bits of information, because you'll have held on to the one thing that you've wanted.

There's no absolutely right or wrong answer for the things, on a lot of these things. Lots of them, if you're on the autistic- if you're autistic, now, you know, you said you're on the autistic spectrum. If you're dyslexic, it's on a spectrum. And then you just have personalities, other things; the severity of every single kind of educational need.

And then you have personality, you have all those other things. What's right for one child is not right for another child. To be able to do that is complex.

So you'll get some people who will be going, you know, “No, it's this that's really important, you know, that's got to be done.” And then you'll get maybe another parent who will be like, “No, no, it's got to be this. This is really important.” And sometimes that can be sort of frustrations, sort of over, you know, those things.

You can feel not listened to. There's no system where there's a clear route of saying, “If you've got a complaint, this is what you do.” Or, you know, “If you've got an idea how it could be better, this is where you go, this is what you do.” There is no route to do any of that, and it often plays out in sort of the other situations and things.

**Interviewer: So in the[anon.] , then, which I'm assuming, is that like regular- is that like a regular meetings?**

P3: That meets once a month.

**Interviewer: Okay.**

P3: And we all say, “This is important,” and especially at this point, the[anon.] is dysfunctional. I cannot tell you all the reasons why; I may end up telling you some of the things. But it doesn't work, and it is dysfunctional.

Personally, I've been going to that for over two years now. I could possibly say I realised that after half an hour of the meeting of this [anon.]. But in fairness, it took me three months to realise this thing was dysfunctional.

I personally have tried to get it functional in all kinds of myriad different ways, that have taken up a huge amount of time and other things. I have talked to random people, I've harassed people at times at the things, and it's still dysfunctional.

**Interviewer: In what ways is it dysfunctional, then?**

P3: You may or may not get minutes to a meeting.

**Interviewer: Yes.**

P3: You may get them when you arrive at the meeting. In theory, there was meant to be a system, how to get things on the agenda. Every single parent who attends feels they can't get things on the agenda.

So then the meetings turn into other things, because it is most likely most parents that attend would say the local authority's agenda gets put on the agenda.

**Interviewer: Okay.**

P3: I didn't know all the reasons why, half an hour, two years ago. But I put questions round, and harassing, and also the experience of other people asking me about how things function, and saying, “Do you know what happened there?” You found out a lot of information.

It has come together out of a series of people. All the different parents have come there through a different route, and a different reason. So some are there because- I don't know the exact date, but from 2008, oh, what was it- 'Better Together, Everybody Equal'? And that gave them a whole load of money, a whole load of new things, new thinking, research and the things.

So that was [anon.] LA looking at the parents and saying, “You know, we've got all these new things that we're doing. Help us, you know, decide what we're doing with the things,” you know. And I don't know all the things that came out of that, but you know, this was good news for parents, and those things. And those frustrations about how things worked, and you know, and different things, and how you found out about things, and all those things that come.

And then, maybe connected to that are things- there was the Family Information Service, which in some ways, the Local Offer website has been built onto that, and other things from there. But parent carers felt that they wanted, you know, a place where they could get information and other things, and this just wasn't just special education needs.

So a database was built. There was an office, you know, people were recruited to go out and find out everything that went on in the local authority, and put it all on one place. You could ring up, and you could get somebody to search it for you and things, and other things to be able to do. And parents came from that, as a managing thing for that, you know, how it was good.

Just before I joined the [anon.], that got massively cut back, and other things-

**Interviewer: Oh, really? Okay.**

P3: The parents were hugely positive about that, they were hugely positive about that service, and things. And they fought to try and say, “You know, this is really important. We need this kind of thing.”

But the decision was made that that was- so I don't know all the circumstances, because that was pre-me, I just know that that happened.

**Interviewer: Basically it had an impact, because people- I assume people still talk about it, it sounds like.**

P3: It had an impact on parent volunteers' willingness to join in with things. Then there was a proposal to close down a short break service, it's not [Chipping View 0:15:53] any more, but it was at the time- this was a brand new service that had, I think I'm right in saying, came out of the 'Everybody Equal' type things.

It was a brand new facility, it was excellent in terms of accommodation and things. The parents had fought for that, they'd been part of the planning of the things. I think it was roughly five years old or so, or less than five years old. In the parents' terms, this was, you know, a great thing that was going to be there for 30 or 40 years.

**Interviewer: Yes.**

P3: And it was proposed that that was getting shut down and closed. That caused a huge reaction from the parents. So the parents didn't necessarily know each other, and a group of parents formed to be a campaign thing.

**Interviewer: So is that how the [anon.] came together? Or was that-**

P3: No, there's aspects of all those people at the [anon.].

Then along comes politics, (Laughter) and things that are going on, and out of some of the things that parents- this is not just in [anon.], it's country-wide- so lots of the city local authorities, who have the money to do things, out of parents, you know, well, actually, you know, us having a voice, us talking to things has worked really well. We want to demand this as a right for everyone.

So that connected up with the Children and Families Bill, and the changes coming to Parliament, and parent groups and the charities all were on board with that, to try and make it positive as possible with those things. And the Department for Education put up money so that, for that stuff to do, and the things.

So some local authorities had never had a [anon.] before, and this was their first experience. So that started happening from about 2011.

[anon.] has got these different sort of- that they then say, “We've got this pot of money that we can have, that we can use, this will be great. I know as a local authority we already spent some money on this, but at the time it was £10,000, the things that you'll get. We'll all join together on the things, to be able to do something.”

So it isn't that people were not unwilling, or didn't like that idea. So you know, the- you know, say, the professionals or the local authority liked it, the parents liked it. And again, this is all pre-me, I don't know the exact details of all the things that have happened to it.

In some ways, I've joined and found it because that's what I was looking for, and that route, and for things to be able to do.

And then there were a few other people, that either people have known, or have randomly found it. It's not easy to find, you want to be directed to it. (Laughter) It's not very transparent, exactly, you know? Even who it is for. Sometimes that is for very good reasons, because they want to include everyone.

**Interviewer: Yes.**

P3: Sometimes that has an effect of then frustrating everyone, because nobody quite knows its purpose.

**Interviewer: So I suppose, from my interpretation, the purpose of the forum, because it's run by the local authority- is it run by the council?**

P3: It's comp- right, this is a complicated process, right?

So, the Department for Education's point of view, how these new [anon.]s with this lot of money, is these things are meant to be independent of the local authority.

**Interviewer: Okay, yes.**

P3: It's mean to be parent-run. It's meant to be- you're meant to be those things. So the local authority, for example, can't sign for that money, or okay the money. It works in [anon.] because [anon.] , from [anon.] , she goes through them and the charity, and officially they are the sponsors of it.

[anon.] comes from the charity, in terms of like sorting out the finances, and takes the minutes at the meetings. If it wasn't for [anon.] , and the things, I'm saying it's dysfunctional. It just wouldn't even be there, I know it wouldn't be.

That is not an easy thing for them to do, because their job is made really difficult, and their job is not made really difficult by the parents; it's made really difficult by the local authority.

**Interviewer: Is that because they're pushed towards doing certain activities, or doing certain- spending money in a particular way?**

P3: They're not told information. And then, if you don't know the information, what's happening, you end up caught into these things. I genuinely think they're trying to find out the things, it's one of the things they do.

They do have lots of information, it's not that they don't know things altogether.

**Interviewer: And by information, do you mean information related to services, or things that are available? Or is it information about processes?**

P3: It's probably all of those things, to be honest. As an outsider, it's hard to know if they've got any system of communication to the local authority at the Minute. (Laughter) It’s hard to know, sort of things. You're volunteered to something, you're sort of aware of what you can do, and you're aware of your own understanding.

But people have come to me, and asked me, “Do you know what's going on? Do you know these things?” who have worked at the local authority for many years. And it's like in the sort of coffee break gap, and I don't mean in like a really serious way, but it's, “Do you know how these things, or are you just making, or why that's decided?” Just general question things. And the conclusion is, “Nobody knows how this works. Nobody knows what it's for.”

Everybody's there for a different reason. Why that is, in some sense, there's a general consensus that people feel it's important to have it. It should be there as a function, that is, the local authority should be there, and should be playing a role, and sorting these issues out, the problems out, that are going on.

So they try to hold on to that, and the things, and then they try and find their own way. I'm guilty of this, I try and find my own… I say “guilty”, is that because sometimes I don't even know- I don't know if that is helpful.

From a parent's point of view, I am blunt, I will tell some people who know. I have tried to tell this to people, you know, who might be able to sort this out, and to sort out the issues, and the things.

But most people don't feel confident going there. Most people don't feel sure of, you know, how these things are, what the right things. Lots of them, it's their only experience of those types of things, and so you just take it as normal that-

**Interviewer: This is how things run.**

P3: How these things work. And then they get worried about their- sometimes other things, like we'll have too over-professionalised, only I'm shut out of the things, and it's that understanding that you need more serious things, otherwise the thing doesn't function.

**Interviewer: It's just chaos, yes. So on the [anon.], then into the Local Offer, were you the rep for the Local Offer? Is that kind of how it works?**

P3: Yes. So me and [anon.] are the [anon.] reps. Together with the local authority, and [anon.] , they decided that they were going to, for this work-stream, process other works to do. They were going to invite a number of parents: some parents that went to the [anon.], but other parents as well.

There was a whole discussion over, you know, “This is what we're going to do, this is how we're going to work.” There were several strands of a work-stream, it's feeding to a board. They decided that there was going to be two reps on every one of the work-streams, and two parent reps on the board, with these changes.

**Interviewer: And this is all to do with these SEND reforms.**

P3: This was all to do with the SEND reforms, and the Children and Families Bill. There's other things that go on at the Forum as well, and they're all different business. But this was decided at those things.

Parents thought that was a good process. I was new to everyone then, and the things, or whatever. And I knew sort of what was happening, and things going on, because- I'm reading my updates from the Parliament thing, I'm reading the Council for Disabled Children's website, I'm reading the Pathfinders' report, and this is what our conclusions are, and what we need to do.

So I'm just aware that, you know, that this is going to have to happen, and those are the things happening.

So me and [anon.] were part of the Local Offer part of it. There was another stream, which was the Education, Health and Care Plans, and I would say, both from a parent's and a local authority point of view, the Education, Health and Care Plans were really important to get right. You know, I'm not disagreeing with that, I don't think anybody would be.

They were coming in to replace statements. This is, you know, about getting assessments done, about working, you know. There's lots of statutory requirements in those things. There's loads of changes coming in for those things, and they knew that they had to do all those things, and this was, you know, that was really important to sort out. They had parents on board, they had parents fed into that process and the things, and part of that thing.

But what happened- and it was decided, or it was told, that the [anon.] would act as the conduit for all this information for the parents. All these different work-streams would feed back to the [anon.].

So if you went on a work-stream, you know, you would feed back what information was going to the things. You would get feedback from the board, then, and things, to be able to do- I sort of- you know, how to say- optimistically, I thought, “Oh, they'll be doing something about sorting out, making this functional, so it can work at this point.”

**Interviewer: Yes. The updates would be like a project update, it wouldn't be necessarily a- I guess it's not like an update on what you've found out, it would be an update- if you came from a Local Offer meeting to that [anon.], it would be, “They're setting up a database,” you know, or they're- is that the level that the kind of updates were?**

P3: Yes, well, what I'd said, and did happen for a while, was I'd said, “From these things, we've got to simplify it, because you know, there's 20 things on the agenda sometimes, of these, you know, meetings.”

It's covering a whole range of things. There's never any parent that could represent all the things that are covered in, you know, in these meetings, and the things that are said.

So they're- yes, so- what was I saying? I've lost track.

**Interviewer: You were kind of saying about the updates, and you were saying your role within the work-stream-**

P3: Oh, yes, okay. So, right, yes. So I'd said, “Oh, look, what we need to do in every work-stream, if we have a system of saying, you know, three items that were important at the end of the meetings, and those things would be fed back, you know.” That was done for some of the time.

I was also suggesting we needed a system of, like, how other people brought views to us, if the things is, you know, of what gets said, what happens, what gets done. How you feel supported if you think there's issues. Nothing was ever done about that.

**Interviewer: So did that feed back into them, so from the[anon.] back to the Local Offer group, for instance? Is that what you meant?**

P3: Well, just, like- so, just like, as a random example- at this point, this is me not knowing anything, you know, what's going to happen, all those things, but you know- but this is all volunteers, you know. In lots of ways, you might be an expert on your child, you might be an expert on your experience, you might have lots of knowledge on a certain area, but you know, there's no guarantee you've got any knowledge for exactly what's happening on the area that's going to be discussed, necessarily.

So if something's coming up as an issue, you know, where do you get your information to know what's happening for that, and who's going to click- so then, who do you go to, if you think, you know, you haven't got information, and the things, and feel supported from it? Or if you just, you know- parents' experience of joining these things or whatever can be overwhelming. The vast majority of people are confident going to them, so they can feel like, as if, “Oh, I've really been able to get my point of view across.”

The other thing that is like really striking is, we're all there because of disability or educational needs. In terms of equality, and how you would support a parent if they would have a disability or an educational need, it's non-existent.

**Interviewer: Within the group itself?**

P3: Yes, within the group itself. So it isn't even that I've wanted- it's not that I personally have wanted something to happen to support my needs, but I know that there's an awful lot of things that you can do to support a dyslexic person in the workplace, because I'm going to all these things, and I'm reading these things that you can do.

And then, so I'm saying, or suggesting, or asking, you know, “Well, if we want a parent who may have needs themselves, how do we support them?”

There have been no parents where a particular physical need that, you know, was like difficult to, and the things, but there's not even anywhere to say, “I've got this.”

**Interviewer: Yes.**

P3: “I might need support in this way.” And this is something that-

**Interviewer: Just to kind of get my head round that, I think it's a really important point. So it's almost- I think what you're saying is that the[anon.] itself, because by the nature of the people that might be coming to it, you know, they might also need additional support.**

**And actually, in order for the[anon.] to operate properly, because the idea is you're meant to be expressing and sharing views, then you need to be responsive to what the people's needs are.**

P3: Yes.

**Interviewer: Within that actual setting. Yes, I completely understand that.**

P3: And so, and that, it's just not there. (Laughter)

**Interviewer: No, that's-**

P3: I am quite aware, from my background and other things, I knew I had a background in disability, I knew the issues and the things I need. So I just know why these things are needed.

**Interviewer: So it's things like providing information in advance, so people can go through it and kind of feel as though they can construct their views beforehand.**

P3: Yes. But this is not only good- somebody might have a real need for this, but this is great for anyone. This is how a normal business place works and functions, this is how anyone who wants to get things done works and functions.

And I would say, that is being asked for by all the parents, but it's not necessarily being asked for in a coherent way, because people don't know what to ask for.

**Interviewer: Yes.**

P3: And people- these are all parents who have got all this really busy life. They're trying to sort the things, and a bit more, again, as I said, people who might have done something about it.

But the irony of it is that most people are there because fighting for their own individual children's needs has been such a difficult, unsupportive process, and the place we've come to get that support is functioning in the same way.

And that is disastrous, because there's people that are really trying to do things, and then the messages that get out to the wider group of parents is like, “Oh, I don’t know. You know what, I don’t really understand,” are the kind of messages.

**Interviewer: Yes.**

P3: So I personally- I had a conversation with [anon.] , I don't think she'd mind me saying this, more than a year ago or something, and I was talking about the issues, and the stuff to be able to do, and like what was happening, or whatever. And she had said to me, “Oh, well, do you know anyone that would, you know, volunteer, come, and recommend them?”

And I said, “Oh, to be honest, [anon.] ,” as I just thought of people that I did know, and I thought, “Oh, well, you know, maybe, if they found out what was going on.” And I said, “But I wouldn't recommend anyone to come to it.”

And she didn't laugh. Actually, I think she looked more in horror than laugh. And she said, “Well really, that says it all.” But that is just a personal decision I've made. Other people have chosen to recommend people to come, and have gone to a great deal of effort to support people, and encourage people, and support each other in sort of coming to that as well.

**Interviewer: So for the Local Offer, then, how was the Local Offer received within the [anon.] group?**

**Because always my interpretation of the Local Offer is that in a way it's trying to respond to a lot of these problems about a lack of information, and a lack of awareness, by providing a resource for people to go to.**

P3: Yes. So within the very small group of [anon.] people, the politics are all the small politics, of all of that that's going on.

When I talked to you about work-streams, some didn't take part at all. Some people went to meetings, and then the meetings went on, and then they got disbanded. They felt frustrated.

There was this emphasis on the Education, Health and Care Plans, and in some ways, the Local Offer was the functional bit. Within that group, generally,[anon.] might say it slightly differently- but I feel confident,[anon.] generally, that worked, you know. And within that group, there was a lot of consensus over the issues, and the problems within that group, you know, with the parents and recognised parents' frustrations.

Parents on the- they're positive about their, you know, the kind of the website thing. There's been changes, as in, if you're just randomly coming to it, and you're looking for advice and support, you know, you might go to [anon.] . And through some of those changes, they've offered information events for what is happening that are well-received by parents coming to it, and sort of saying, “Oh yes, you know, I understand a bit of those things happening.”

Out of that has come doing different things, you know, possibly in different ways from other things, working out of that as well, to be able to do. But there's this- but there is definitely that sort of frustration of those things going on.

And the vast majority of people, Education, Health and Care Plans are a very small percentage of the things. They're very important, you know, but I think it's about 2% of school-kids may get one. There's another, bigger, 20% plus of special educational needs that won't get anywhere near an Education, Health and Care Plan.

**Interviewer: So they're in kind of a messy, uncertain area, aren't they?**

P3: Yes. There are differences between your experience as a parent, in education regards, to if you're at a special needs school, or a mainstream school. Mainstream parents don't get anything, in terms of support-wise, or knowledge things, in the main. So there's sort of a different sort of frustration.

So some of the training things, you know, and the people who have been involved with specific things, they're really positive about it, and can understand that those things are happening.

But collaterally, there's a whole load of services going that they're caught up into as well. It's not very clear it's even being done in a very good way. It's not been communicated in a good way. Often there's this high amount of stress. And some of the cuts and things, it's the same lot of parents.

On these really small things, sort of from an outside, that- I'm a bit guessing, I think it's true- the general person would go, “Oh, well of course we'd pay for that, of course we're providing that.” You know, “Of course we'd have to do that.”

And that, after coming from this sort of, you know, 'Everybody's Equal', there's all these positive things, you know, you're being listened to. You know, you can't help but feel like, “Oh, well, you know-”

**Interviewer: “What does it matter?”**

P3: Yes. And I absolutely, genuinely support parents for feeling that way. And if you're feeling as if, “Well, look, you know what, I don't think I can do anything yet,” or, “I'll be better off doing that thing.” I think, you know, that is better.

**Interviewer: So the Local Offer, I guess, is trying to- well, at the moment, it's a database, really. It's like a list, isn't it?**

P3: Yes.

**Interviewer: But the idea is that you can see where- what types of services might be provided in certain areas.**

P3: Yes. So nobody knows, no parent understands how it will help them, or how it will improve- obviously the database thing is there, they can see that. The people who have been involved for a long time, they see it as, “Well, really it's just the Family Information Service thing that we had before.”

This is not just parents, there are professionals working at the local authority- it's quite interesting, because I went to [anon.] once, at Local Offer training, and it was people I'd not met, that you don't know, that are doing everyday jobs. And it sort of came up in conversation, they were really mad about the Family Information Service going. There was obviously- I don't know if bitterness is the right word, but there was this sort of regret that that had happened.

And in some way, I told [anon.] to spin it into a positive story, but I think- because it is the truth, because if it wasn't for the Family Information Service being there, [anon.] comes from there. She has been able to build it because that was there, and we need to tell people that.

We need to say, “I know it all looked like as if it was disappearing, there may have been slightly wrong decisions, but we're all where we are at, now. There's a legal requirement to have this now.”

And [anon.] have possibly been in a better position than others to get that information, to have that part of it, which is a good and positive thing, and you know, can be used by people to be able to do those things.

**Interviewer: So trying to make it into a positive that it just exists in the first place, almost.**

P3: Yes.

**Interviewer: Do people feel, because I suppose, you were saying that people think it won't help them, or it's not for them?**

P3: Well, just generally, just general impressions, you know, everybody has this thing of saying, “Oh, well it's just moaning parents,” and things, or whatever. It can appear that it's just rants and complaints and things, and I'm really mad this has happened to me at times.

But absolutely, genuinely, most parents don't want to get involved in that. That is one of the reasons why the [anon.] thing isn't talked about and sorted out, because it's quite a stressful process to go through to say, to put yourself on the spot and say, “Look, you're not doing that right, you know. I know I am the non-professional here, but it's not working.” So these things aren't said openly.

But then, privately, people all talk about that. There's been no opportunity put together where that can be sorted out, and those things can work out. The people employed, the people who are in charge of that thing, they're psychologists, so they have training. People know this. They work in social care, they've spent years. This is not people that don't know how to run a community group, how to be supportive.

There may be genuine reasons why they're not doing that, or there's no capacity to do that, or it's not happening. But people know. Whether they know how bad it is, I'm not completely sure.

**Interviewer: So I suppose it's interesting because like the Local Offer is, at the moment you can see it as a list, and a database.**

P3: Yes.

**Interviewer: The idea is that it's used as a way of getting feedback. And I suppose in the long term, in the legislation, or the- I can't remember the exact name- the reform act, anyway, that was going to introduce- the point is, it's meant to kind of be used as a way of highlighting what isn't being provided.**

**I don't know how you feel about that so far, and about that going forward.**

P3: Well, I tell you what[anon.] asked, the best way of the feelings, because I think he's more generally like what most parents sort of feel, as it's-[anon.] feels really frustrated on those exact things.

He feels, “Well, I've spent this time, and it's all been about a database. And I thought I've come along to support having better things, and better options, and to be able to say, 'Look, this is how it doesn't work for, you know, for people, for parents, for young people. This is why, you know, the process of going and getting the information, getting an assessment, getting your needs supported, it doesn't work for you.'”

And he feels ignored. Interestingly, again, I don't know how the new work-stream is exactly working at the minute. At times, we've been fed bits of information. I personally don't think it's set up in the right way to be effective; you know, there's no clear way what role parents are playing in it, how they're representing-

**Interviewer: These are the new groups that they're putting together, going forward-**

P3: Yes. (Laughter) But I got a thing from [anon.] , saying, “Oh yes, keep Wednesday, you'll be on the Local Offer thing.” Then sort of hinted, “In part of the discussion about something else, maybe you and[anon.] will just stay on this.”

The parents haven't really had a say on that, or been able to give their views of what they want to happen at this point, but it wasn't even very clear what they were asking from us, and how we do these things.

And then from my point of view, when I think, “Well, this is dysfunctional, this system, and we've got to sort that out,” There are a number of parents who feel like, “We just need to sort out our own things, what we want to consult about, rather than what the local authority's agenda, over what are those things going on, why are we even getting involved in their things, whether this might happen or not happen.” And all those kind of things.

**Interviewer: So there's quite a lot of- there seems to be quite a lot of frustration or concern about how those feedback mechanism elements, or like kind of the-**

P3: Yes, how they work.

**Interviewer: Yes, how will they work? Because so far, has there been a feeling about what would be ideal? What do people want?**

P3: We've never been allowed to have that discussion, (Laughter) so I cannot accurately tell you.

**Interviewer: Yes.**

P3: I haven't even got into it. But alongside all of these things, right, this feeds into a regional network of parent carer forums. It feeds into a national network of parent carer forums. I've gone along to them, that's sensible.

**Interviewer: Yes.**

P3: It might not be perfect, you know. It might be, if you get minutes, the agenda, you can follow the thing, and it makes sense to the things that are going on. Obviously, you know, everybody has got different issues.

**Interviewer: So does like the [anon.] group, and [anon.] group, I guess, come together with you?**

P3: Yes. Yes, I think it's about 10 local authorities, it's the North-East region. As a parent group, that's supported by Contact a Family, the Department for Education pays to support it. There are rules for that, you know, so that's where the grant money is meant to be supporting this process.

So that gets £15,000. From the Department of Education's point of view, that money is getting spent on making these reforms work, making sure that the wider group of parents know these things are happening. Making sure the parents that are going to the meeting are supported. You know, other things happening. That's what they think that money is getting spent on.

There's some understanding of that at the [anon.]. I've tried to give that understanding, sort of over the thing. But I would say, there's possibly only a couple of us that understand that is what's happening there-

**Interviewer: The bigger picture of it.**

P3: Yes, and understand why it's important. I'm not saying to people, you know, can have their own views whether it's important, or works or anything, as well, but just even understand the process of why that's happening, because they're there because the centre was going to close down, you know.

**Interviewer: Yes.**

P3: Or they're there because the taxi never turns up, you know, every morning to pick the child up, and you've got to sort this out. They're not there because-

**Interviewer: They're there because they actually have a problem that needs to be solved.**

P3: Yes. Those things, you know, that have all, you know- and really, that's what they're trying to solve and to sort out.

**Interviewer: Yes. I suppose on a related note, how has kind of consultation worked, in terms of the Local Offer specifically, with the parents?**

**I mean, there's been the[anon.] , and you and[anon.] have kind of come back and forth- I'm really sorry about this noise going on, as well.**

P3: Sure, no, that's all right. Are you still okay?

**Interviewer: Perfect timing. We probably need to wrap up in a few minutes, don't we? 11:20 blimey, we've been chatting so much.**

**But yes, so kind of, has there been consultation mechanisms where like the local team have come together with parents, or with young people, and kind of talked about the thing going forward?**

P3: Right. There's been- I keep calling them a network, it's because, you know, once I get past three letters, initials go out of my head. (Laughter) Even though I know them really well.

**Interviewer: [And it's to do with 'NS' in their name- 0:54:41]**

P3: Yes. Right. So the network, the things from them. Parents are really positive about them. There is also sort of another group that I pass on to the parents that are part of the Forum. People are really positive about them, as well. There was a coffee morning thing.

**Interviewer: Yes. That's literally where people pass on information and so forth.**

P3: Yes. So the sort of thing in place, and where- so lots of things, you know, if you want to find out where to go swimming, and things get put up, and those messages. That's really important and key that people know that, and people feel really positive that happens.

**Interviewer: Yes.**

P3: So when I'm saying about all these other things, there are some things that are happening and working, and why people keep going, it's not, you know-

**Interviewer: Yes. It's interesting, though, because those are kind of more driven by groups of parents, as well, aren't they? So, 'Pass It On', for example.**

P3: Yes. And it's important to know that the network came out of, maybe 10-plus more years ago, of parents saying that we need to get together, that we need our own information, support and resources from the team centre. The things that it- so that came from, you know, from that kind of thing.

So the network mainly does individual advice. Anybody who uses it is really supporters of SEND, really appreciates it. It may not have answered the problems, but that is- there's been a survey recently of what works for parents, and that came out really highly. Any of the individual sort of advice things, that came up, and parents, you know, valued, wanted, worked. The 'Pass It On' parent coffee mornings, people like that, and those things that happen. And I think, you know, that's good, the things to be able to do.

It's- the dysfunctional happens when you get this other group of parents, who are like, “Oh, yes, you know what, I've got this thing, I've got things that I want to try and change, I want to try and make better. I'm willing to join in, to help represent that voice.” And that's where the system falls down.

**Interviewer: Yes, to the point where it's not-**

P3: There's, sort of, a disconnect.

**Interviewer: Where it's not about- I guess I would call it, like, informal sharing of information. It's actually about improving things, or changing things, that's where there's a bit of a problem.**

P3: Yes, and that's where people's frustrations come, or whatever. Again, I don't think [anon.] will mind me saying this, or whatever.

More than a year ago, [anon.] - well, a number of parents were there, but [anon.] was that one that was really pushing the things. They'd had this real issue that there was this meeting that a general information meeting, but the local authority were putting on, and saying, “This is what is happening now for your child.”

And because I wasn't there, it wouldn't be to do with my kids, I shouldn't have been there, you know. I only know the issue, not exactly what it was meant to do or anything. But it was to do with them saying, you know, “These are the changes that are happening.”

[anon.] and another, and other parents, they'd thought it was about what would happen 16-plus, and the things, and those changes-

**Interviewer: And planning for adulthood, and the transition, yes.**

P3: Yes, and all of those things. And they've got children that age, and it's a concern to them. They thought that it was about- that's what the meeting was about, that it was those things.

That meeting ended up with people walking out of it, staff and other things, and not really going ahead, because the parents were really angry at it, because basically- I'm not even sure, maybe it was about Education, Health and Care Plans, I don't know.

But basically, they came, the professionals came, like, “This is what we've got to tell you about the agenda.” But everyone sitting there thought it was going to be about something else, and then they said, “Well, we want to talk about this instead.”

And they were like, “Oh, no, but we've got to do this, because of the things, so we're not set up to tell you about that.”

So[anon.] was really mad about it. He was really mad about that. These things happen. It's, you know, they're frustrated, it's not right to treat people that way, or whatever. He was absolutely promised that even though it- that it was understood he was really angry about it. I have to say, this wasn't the first time this was the experience of things happening, for all other myriad of different parents and things.

But it was absolutely, definitely, and things, and[anon.] had said, “Yes, but that got said before, and nothing gets done about it.” And he was absolutely, definitely, that he would get an answer to, you know, “Look, why that-” the Forum would, like, “Why that had happened, you know, what issues there are about these meetings, and people not understanding what they're about. What we can do about it in the future, and you know, and see where we were from that awareness.”

[anon.] is still waiting from a reply back from that.

**Interviewer: A year on.**

P3: The person who was possibly going to do that has retired. There are new people in the thing.[anon.] has given up on those things, or whatever.

**Interviewer: Yes.**

P3: And also, they- somebody employed to be in charge comes along and tells us that everything's wonderful, and isn't it great, this experience? So you go through this experience of them telling you, “You're wrong, you've just misunderstood, that you're frustrated that these things aren't happening.”

**Interviewer: So it's kind of like they put up these events to kind of- I guess they're framed to people, advertised as consultations on a change, about a specific thing.**

P3: The biggest problem is, no-one is told what they're for. They're told it's a meeting, people come to their own conclusions over what it's for.

One of the solutions that was tabled a year ago was, you know, that thing about people being advanced things. I could understand both points of view on this thing, but I can't even remember what, you know, it was exactly. But at the time, I could understand, you have empathy with both groups.

But the problem was, you know, the professionals have some responsibility to tell people. You've got to tell- you've got to have key people to be getting those messages. Use the [anon.] for saying, “Look, this is what this meeting is going to be about. If you've got other issues, this is where you can go with them instead. I understand there's a lot going on at the minute; we've allocated 15 minutes at the end of the meeting to take note of those things, of what you want to say.”

But what ends up happening is that the professionals stay in their own world. I use that term very loosely, as these things go.

**Interviewer: Yes.**

P3: They've got their own thing of what it's about. The parents have go their own thing of what it's about. There might even be, you know, a number of subsets of views among parents, of what the meeting is they're going to. And then everybody goes into this confusion, everybody gets angry about it, and leaves, you know.

But then, people do complain about that, but then nothing happens. Nobody comes back to you. And the Forum is meant to be for the things, and then you get told, “Oh, yes-” (Laughter) then you get told it's all wonderful.

**Interviewer: Everything is perfect. Everything is not frustrating.**

P3: Yes, they're so-

**Interviewer: You think you are frustrated, but you're actually not.**

P3: So that is absolutely disempowering for parents. So it'll be a regional feedback thing, which [anon.] are part of, parents, other things or other, you know, everybody's feeding back with what's going on, and happening, and other things, or whatever.

You know, one of the parents was asked to do the presentation. It wasn't done in a way any of us parents asked for it to happen. The parent doing it felt really unsupported, didn't feel good about doing it. But at the end of it, because she felt like misled, and that she hadn't, you know, given it justice, because she thought there were other things happening, and other people were saying other stuff had been organised, and it wasn't.

And then, so, their decision was that they just weren't getting involved any more, because they didn't want to be put in the position again were publicly they felt foolish.

**Interviewer: Yes. I guess it seems a bit tokenistic, you know, “Oh, there's a parent doing a bit of a talk.”**

P3: That is exactly what happened, because as much as the things- so this used to be, before my time, it used to be a mixture of professionals and parents, and the professionals decided it wasn't useful for them to go along and to attend any more; for genuine reasons, and sometimes for things like, that it was meant to be parent rep, and their chance at the things, and those requirements on it were put in, the things that happened.

But what does happen is that it's a handy set of people that if you've got all these things, “Oh, right, okay, we've got to do this task and this item. Oh, we've got to have-” And then they'll come along.

Or it might even be things that, suddenly they'll pop up. You're not told in advance whether you're going to be making a decision on this, you may know. Or, one parent might know, because of being at this other thing, but it's not in advance.

But somebody will come along, going, “Oh yes, well we're asking you if you'll put money towards hosting, you know, our parent, like getting people to come to this thing.” And you do want other people to know the things, or whatever, so you sort of go along with that. But you're not really actually part of that planning.

And often, as just other- if you've just happened to come to this randomly or whatever, you're often talking about personal, family things, and things that are quite stressful. It's often quite a hard thing for people to do, and quite a hard thing for people to do emotionally.

And so these parent-professional things or whatever, things will go, and parents are sharing things, and parents often feel that's traumatic at the end of it. I mean, that's maybe too strong a word, but I think sometimes it is, that it is traumatic.

And we offer no support, as a Forum, to anybody doing that. And often the experience is often like of just silence from professionals, or embarrassment. And I can understand and empathise with the things, well, you've got to do that to keep on working, you know, there's tasks to do, there are things to be able to do. But you know, the Forum should be able to offer some kind of thing, and-

**Interviewer: Yes.**

P3: And people genuinely, that is what they want to be able to do. And because of all the complexities of things not being done, and possibly some people not understanding; I'd say, you know, a key thing is not really understanding the issues or the complexities, or not realising what chaos they're causing, and that they're stopping these things happening. It leads to, that that isn't done, and things, and it all keeps going on.

If you talk to people, and then there are some people who have tried to sort these things out for 10-plus years, not from a parent, and the things. And some of it comes back down to how the local authority works, how that functions, how the professionals think.

And then how the- money. I know we all need money, we're all like fighting over resources. But it is, and there this hierarchical thing where somethings are really valued, and I'm not sure personally they're the things that I would value, that are important. But that's just my personal point of view of these things.

Then that system is there, and all those things are there, and they had, you know, staff to manage these things or whatever. And then, what's come along is that the staff have been taken away, and lots of these things are only one person now, or seems to be. Or definitely much smaller.

But there, you're suddenly added an extra role onto your job, in the reorganisation. Most people's- this is possibly a bit exaggerating, and just a very random generalise- these people were too busy, and we're complaining, and there's not enough hours in the day to do the jobs that they had to do.

**Interviewer: Yes.**

P3: And then you go to a meeting, and you're told, as part of this reorganisation, now you're also responsible for this other thing, which just doesn't get done.

**Interviewer: Right, yes. I know.**

P3: Nobody, there is nobody who can tell you what the clear system is of sharing information among staff. Howard at the network has tried to sort that out, and point it out. He did a chart thing, of the [myriad map 1:10:39].

There are other parent groups that go on. It's all interconnected, the Forum, we don't know who they are, going to them. We don't know when they're meeting, we don't know what they're saying.

**Interviewer: Yes. There's lots of issues there, to do with just general transparency, then, and-**

P3: Yes. And there is- say the parents who understand the things, and if you talk to them, what they'll say to the other things is, that you're going to, you go to these things and you realise there's this real fear there.

**Interviewer: Yes.**

P3: There's this fear from their- and you're a bit guessing what, you know, the exact fears are. But it's this fear of, “Oh, there's parents coming along. They're wanting something that is excellent, and we're treading water. We've got no idea how this is going to be happening.”

And that puts people into- obviously I know there'll be other kinds of different personalities, or whatever, but that puts people into defensive sort of things; and that transparency thing, it doesn't put people in a good position to be able to be transparent about those things.

And then, there are just real practical things. Lots of people that have been in charge of doing this, [anon.] was supposedly in charge of running this whole project board. Then that changed, it was some- I'm not exactly quite sure of the details, but my understanding is that it comes from like an accountancy background, and not necessarily the education or social care background, you know, of all those complexities, or those things managing it.

Key people who, you know, parents valued, professionals valued, have retired, have moved on to other jobs, have been moved, have been loaned out to consultancy, in terms of saving money. And those changes have been happening in sort of parallel, in terms of budget cuts, and there have been other changes.

**Interviewer: So there's lots of uncertainty, so even if you provide feedback, who does it go to, and actually, then, where does it go?**

P3: The whole way special education- the way social care, the way education works, who is responsible for it? The accountability structures, you know, have massively changed over the things. So the thing is that, really, the local authority has lost its accountability, and has lost the functions.

So a lot of it is now- so like for example, special education needs budgets are paid directly to the schools, mainly, now. And they're meant to be responsible for themselves.

But that meant that the services- and if you're an authority like [anon.], who is a big city, and had got extra money, sometimes because of poverty and the things, and you got extra money because of some of those indicators and the things, that had big budgets- were doing things that were, you know, were thought of as good, you know, there was evidence to prove that they were good, and things were working. And then all of a sudden, you lose the capacity to be able to do those things.

**Interviewer: Yes.**

P3: And then you're stuck with this thing where there is no even provision of service. So there are some schools that have psychologists or speech and language people employed in them. If you're a parent, you've got randomly selecting the school for your child. You've got no idea which mainstream schools they're in, you're not told. You don't know, there's no system to tell you.

If you've got really high need, and you're really lucky, you might have a social worker, or get some advice to get your knowledge into making those decisions. The vast majority don't.

**Interviewer: Yes, the vast majority just follow a process. You kind of assume, you know, you get what you're given in a way, don't you.**

P3: Yes. And then most people's experience of support or needs comes from schools. And the school may- it's still highly likely, I've actually tried to find out real data on this, and \_\_\_[1:15:40]- but it is highly likely you might have a school leadership team and a SENCO that has had absolutely no training in special educational needs at all. You may have been doing the job for many years with no training.

And this is not to put any blame, you know, on those one people, or those small teams of people, especially if you're at primary school level for things as well. You may be just randomly guessing that this might be a good idea to do. You could be absolutely convinced, because you're only getting one or two kids at the things per year, that need those things. You may have no training on how you share information, how you run groups. You've come from a teaching background, you might be really good at teaching-

**Interviewer: Yes, I know there was one issue where like even SENCOs didn't know what Local Offer was, you know. Or like that it existed, even at one point, for instance, as an example of that.**

P3: Yes. So parents, at the ground level, what parents get really angry at is that they go where they think they're talking to experts- because you don't know, do you, when you're at the beginning of this system. You think, “Well, they've got professional teachers.” You don't know it's all like that, and that they haven't put in any kind of system for people to have knowledge, or the things about it.

And often your experience is that your told this is fact, that this, it has to happen that way. And you believe them.

**Interviewer: Yes, of course you do.**

P3: Later on. Or, you find out, “Oh, well, that was just completely wrong altogether.” So you might go to some kind of support group, you might have an assessment that your child is dyslexic and go, “Oh, I'll try and find out.” And then you find out everyone's having the same problems.

**Interviewer: Yes.**

P3: In a different way. And none of it is transparent. So none of the things, and it is not easy to ask. We don’t collect what is a good way to share information. We don't collect what- if parents do complain, we don't collect it at a school level, we don't collect at a local authority level.

And then, there is meant to be a system, that if you've got a complaint, that you can go to the local authority. But most people's experience is that that just gets lost into this myriad of, you know, other things.

And people feel on their own. They feel like they're in a maze, and it's like this has been said for years. They feel unsupported, they don't feel like there's any signposts for what way to go. And that is what is really damaging to the things, and ends up having an impact to the things.

So just from my own personal example of the things.

So I've got my child, as I said. I've got nephews with dyslexia. At the beginning, I didn't realise I was dyslexic myself, so it's complicated-

**Interviewer: Yes.**

P3: How we find these things out. Until my kids were, and the things. This is seven years ago, now, right at the beginning.

So I look, and I find out that these are the key, you know, say five things that you can do that are really good, here's the five most damaging things. And I find out that my child's experience, and the school's thing, it's not because they're set up to actually harm my child, or all dyslexic children, but they're doing the five things that you should never do.

**Interviewer: Right.**

P3: And you're thinking, and from that, and then you, you know, you stick to the things I know.

**Interviewer: So in a way, it's quite interesting- I'm really sorry, I think we need to-**

P3: Oh, I know, I know. Sorry, I know, just tell me if there's too-

**Interviewer: No, it's good, no, it's really- this is why we record these things, because there's a lot of stuff to take in, you see.**

P3: Yes, well, I know. My husband tells me, \_\_\_[1:20:26]. (Laughter)

**Interviewer: But there's lots to kind of- I think there's lots of interesting stuff there, around actually how you could almost empower parents with information to go into like meetings with people who they are assuming are experts, but kind of almost to challenge them a little bit, or maybe to kind of go, “Well, I've looked up all this.”**

**I'm sure some parents do do that, but you often get like knocked down, maybe, but it's almost-**

P3: Yes. Well, what happens is that you get a few people, sort of say like me, so I know this. My experience was particularly horrendous. I'm not saying it's like most people's experience.

So there is not time to get into it, or the things, or whatever. But the school chose a vendetta against me, and I've got no idea why. Well, I can guess at the things, or whatever. You know, I can guess it's that thing of feeling fearful. You think you're a professional, you think you have to have all the answers. But I don't actually know why they did that.

There was- or at some meetings, there were just these personal attacks on me, you know. There were just things that you think-

**Interviewer: Is this when you were a parent, or when you-?**

P3: This is me, a parent, going to a meeting. So it's not necessarily- I don't know why, anyway. Because it started off on a really small thing, or something, and then you start off just saying, “Oh, yes, look, you know, but you know, it's much better.”

And to me, it wasn't about me. To a certain extent at the start, my husband's like, “Oh, well, you know, it's difficult for them, you've got to have some understanding for them, and to have sympathy for them,” or whatever kind of thing.

But you know, all these difficult things happened. But you know, in one meeting, I've gone and I've said, “Look, you know, I don't think the individual education plan for my child is really working.” And I'd written it down carefully, because I knew how these things were. And I was saying, you know, “This is the reasons why we think the plan doesn't work.”

And this is an example of one of the things that was really obvious, is she'd had this target for 40 key words. But the private tutoring has given her three. It's all sounds, syllables, sort of thing; 40 sounded ridiculous.

**Interviewer: Yes.**

P3: But the next one, suddenly the target, they couldn't give you any accurate thing, of saying what their actual scores were, because the schools didn't do any of that, or keep spelling things, or whatever.

**Interviewer: Really.**

P3: And then, but they were telling us really she was getting no better, at the things, or whatever. Then they put the target up to 100. And then it went up to 150. (Laughter)

**Interviewer: So it's not actually been responsive to actually her needs.**

P3: Her needs, or other things. And then, we're paying for other stuff, where they're doing three. (Laughter) That's really difficult for her, so the idea that she's going to be doing 40 of these things is just-

And this, from my point of view, and this has been hugely damaging to my daughter, to all my kids in different ways, that those things are happening, just because you feel bad.

**Interviewer: Yes.**

P3: Because you get- you keep getting told, “You've got to do these things,” and then you can't do them.

So this is the point I wanted to get to. I didn't get past to the end of that conversation, where I'm told that I'm damaging to my own children. I'm damaging to- and not, like, in a calm voice like this, this is shouted at me, screamed at me by, you know, the SENCO, who is the leader, with another teacher present, that I am damaging to my own child, I am damaging to all children in this school, and children everywhere in the world.

And it's one of the points with the things is, I'd prepared myself, there's a lot of things I'd expected. For personal reasons I was on my own that day, at that meeting, because of our personal circumstances. And I sat there, and I thought, “You know what, I wasn't expecting that to happen.”

**Interviewer: Yes.**

P3: And my reaction, and my reaction was, I said, “Look, I can understand those things, but it's not about you personally or professionally. I'm just trying to voice my child's concerns, and get it right for my child. That's where I'm coming out from. You know, you might disagree with me-”

A lot of other stuff was shouted at me then, and they said, “We're not having a meeting any more, we're not holding the meeting anymore.”

And that is just absolutely damaging, because you leave it, you know those things are just carrying on for your child. You've not been listened to, you know, those things.

**Interviewer: Yes.**

P3: Experience of those things. And that is what is sometimes more damaging.

And from parents like us sort of point of view, the thing is, we weren't expecting the school to do it. You're realising the bigger picture thing, that these things matter, and you can't- but our expectations were that we were going to sort it out, if they gave us the information. There's loads of things that we could have done more and better.

But we spent- and there's no absolute rights or wrongs of this- but we ended up, in particular me, I spent a great deal of time emotionally supporting my kids through that. And you just get to the point where you think, “You know, this is just absolutely ridiculous.” Because then you don't get time for the things that they really do need, and supporting them in that way.

**Interviewer: Yes.**

P3: There's no way to collect any parents saying that. I know that other parents have those, you know, not to the same extremes of things, have those experiences. But there's no mediation, anywhere for anyone to go to for that.

**Interviewer: Yes, and I guess it's- and I guess the really important thing is it's not just collecting, but also then that going somewhere, and actually it being responded to.**

**You know, that's the difficulty, isn't it? You could collect everyone's experiences, in almost like a- you know, you become a database of people's kind of frustrations with having these similar type of experiences.**

**But then, it's actually, who does that go to? Who is it in the organisation that kind of, like you say, mediates it, listens to it, thinks about how they might change things for individuals, or for everybody.**

P3: Parents' expectations is, you might know what it is, but you think there's something there.

**Interviewer: Yes.**

P3: And lots of parents get to the point, and then they find there's no-one, and no-one is looking into this.

And some things have got better, if you follow these things anew. So you know, [anon.] , and things- SENDIASS I think her title is now. You might get, you know, advice from there. You might be able to go to someone independent, and get advice over what needs that is outside of that school thing.

There is a requirement for SENCOs to have training, now, but only the newly-appointed SENCOs, which is why there's a mismatch.

**Interviewer: Yes.**

P3: Some schools may have training, and some schools may not, they may presently. So there sort of are changes there happening.

But for me personally, because it's not my idea for the things, [anon.] in 'Big Pharma', he changed. I'm not a science background at all - he changed my view towards science. It isn't me who understands about science past 14 at school.

And I'm, like complexities, but- and there's things like evidence medicine sort of base, and he'd done a project of saying to them, saying like education needs to get- we need places where we're finding what works. And then we use those things, and like in data- you know, hospitals, I'm not quite sure if it was the '50s or so, where it used to be based on the experts' professional view, and it wasn't necessarily all the data and the evidence, and it's combining those sort of things.

**Interviewer: So evidence-based education, or even just trying to do best practice, for example.**

P3: Yes. So at the minute, teachers are caught up in this, because it'll be a political plaything, of where someone will decide this is the thing. Nobody knows if it's any good or not, but there's almost like this command on high for some things. “Oh yes, you'll be doing that now.” And then you- but whether it's worth doing, or any good, nobody knows.

And there's various- and then there are some things, where they're researching the things, and then they just get cancelled.

**Interviewer: So you're finding out how they work, and then you just don't do them anymore.**

P3: Yes, because the funding changes. So at the minute, lots of the things that used to happen at local authority level, and some things because universities have to be like evidence-based, and some of the teaching things and whatever there was, you know, things that worked, and there was sort of a system then to support it.

But now, it's like every school can make their own choice. They get a special educational budget, they don't even have to spend it on the special educational needs kids. They may be choosing how the money's spent with no knowledge at all. No parents are-

**Interviewer: It would be interesting to make that transparent, wouldn't it, kind of like-?**

P3: That is what it's meant to-

**Interviewer: Okay.**

P3: This is what this part of this thing is meant to be solving, and doing, and then it's all open.

**Interviewer: So is that in the reforms act?**

P3: It is part of it. The whole ethos behind it is that all these things are transparent, because all those changes have happened, and we've got to know what goes on and happening.

**Interviewer: Oh, I know.**

P3: But there are all kinds of things that make people not want to make it transparent, and the things.

END AUDIO