Interview adult other RCH6 MARCH 2024 HB/CV - DEPTH - 60 MINS

[Other comments: Average quality audio recording. The Respondent's general manner of speaking made some of his speech unclear and, at times, inaudible. Transcript edited to clear speech only, with ellipses used once to indicate missing speech.]

**[Aside conversation before interview begins]**

**So this interview really it's in two halves. The first bit is just about your thoughts about memory-keeping and memories and the second half is just your thoughts about that idea of a digital archive. So it should take about 45 minutes. If there's anything that doesn't make sense or that you think I don't want to give an answer, that's absolutely fine. So what we're doing is just trying to get a sense from people who are working directly with children, just their views on record keeping. So I'm going to ask you a really hard question to start off with and [A\*] and I were both saying, this is really hard, but if I had met you yesterday and said, I'm going to interview you tomorrow about memories and I'm going to ask you to bring something like an object or a photograph that reminds you of a really good time or a really nice memory, what would you have brought with you today?**

In relation to work or just my life?

**Anything. Life, yes.**

Probably some kind of family photo. Or I've got a wee teddy, Blue Ted, that I got when I was born, that I've kept throughout my life. I've still got it. It just brings memories of family. He's not got much blue on him anymore, he got cuddled that much when he was young. Aye, so there would have been a photo of me and my wee Blue Ted. I've still got that sitting in my bedroom.

**Right, so the teddy you've had all your life.**

I had it in my cot. There's a wee baby picture of me somewhere, of me in the cot in hospital with Blue Ted and I've still got them.

**He's been there all the time.**

My whole life, yes.

**You were saying he's a bit worn away.**

He's a bit worn away, and tatty, and he's got a wee hole in his leg. Still Blue Ted. He's still got that importance, just the memories of my childhood and everything, because I've had him right through. Aye, it's funny.

**Then you were saying there's a photo of you.**

With the wee teddy with loads of fur on him! [Laughs]

**You've both changed.**

Aye. So he's just this wee teddy.

**So it's evidence that he…**

Do you know, I don't even think about it that often until you've said that. He just sits there, and I've got a couple of wee things my kids made at primary school, wee models and things they've made, and I've got a couple of photos of my mum - I lost my mum a few years ago - and my dad, and things, and then I've got wee Blue Ted sitting [?just can't see me 0:03:04.5].

**In the same area. Yes.**

Aye, it's almost like a wee corner with stuff on it. It's really nice.

**So things that you've had right from all the way through your life, and you were saying there, it's almost like you can just sort of take it for granted.**

Aye, he just sits there. I see him every day, but I don't really think about him every day. I look at him and I think of him as a teddy. It's just like a wee heirloom, a wee thing I've got I've always kept.

**What would it feel like for you if you went home and it wasn't there?**

Probably be devastated.

**Yes. So although you're not every day going, there's my teddy…**

No, it's not as if I still take him to bed and cuddle him! [Laughs] He's just a wee sign of - he's been with me all my life. I've got quite an addictive personality as well so [unclear words 0:04:08.9] because he's always been there.

**Yes, so to lose him would feel like that connection to the past…**

Aye, kind of.

**Great. Thank you. I know it's funny what pops into your head when you're asked that question. It sounds like there's that corner you've got something from being a baby, travelled with you all through life, and then you've got things of your own children.**

Aye, it's just wee daft things. It's a wee train and a clay model, just a head with eyes. It's just a wee thing, a silly thing the kids made. I've got two boys and it's something when they were younger they made, and it's always sat there. Do you know when they're sat there, and you don't want to move them now? It's just sat literally on this thing in the corner in their bedroom. This high chest of drawers I've got, and it sits in the corner. I've got a couple of photos and Blue Ted and a couple of wee models! [Laughs] I don't think about it. It's not something where I look.

**Yes, take them for granted.**

When you clean them, and you pick them up, and you put them back down. That kind of thing.

**So you're not actively remembering every time they're there, but if they weren't there, you would notice and you would really feel something about that.**

I would notice, aye.

**The other thing I was thinking when you were talking was so much of the different memories you've got are connected to people as well, then.**

Yes. I think most memories are connected to people. You remember places by who you were there with, don't you? Don't get me wrong, you remember places because they're lovely and things like that but it's who were you with and spending time with the people and family who were there, whatever. That's how you do remember places.

**Yes, connected through people, and feelings sometimes. How you felt.**

**[Aside conversation 0:06:10.5]**

**Okay, so the objects that you were thinking about there, they're in the corners of - do you ever show them to other people?**

I don't think so.

**Would your boys know about Blue Ted?**

No, they know. My immediate family, my wife, and my boys, and my dad would know I've still got him. I've got two brothers seen him. I think they've still got things as well from their childhood as well. It's not something I would like [unclear words 0:06:55.0]. If it came up in conversation I'd say I've still got a wee teddy from my childhood. If it came up in conversation.

**Of course, aye, but the people really close to you know who Blue Ted is and what his significance is.**

Aye. I've quite a lot of stuff like that. When I was young, I loved Star Wars, and I kept all my Star Wars figures growing up. Then when my boys were a certain age, they started playing with my Star Wars figures. They were in my mum and dad's actually when my mum was still here. My boys were younger, they used to go down the stairs and my Star Wars figures were all still there.

**So it's almost like they were making memories with the things you had made memories with.**

Aye, it's not so much me, I suppose my parents. My dad's quite a hoarder anyway, so they were just still downstairs in a box, and they ended up playing with them as well.

**What did that feel like for you? Give me my toys back! [Laughs]**

Aye, I was playing with them as well. I was like, oh, I remember that such and such as well. It was great.

**Right. So you remembering with your boys made a new memory for your boys.**

Aye, so it was lovely. They were playing with what I was playing with 30 years ago.

**That's lovely.**

It was. It was nice.

**So this is going to be a really hard question because you've just come here, but maybe actually thinking about [K\*] because you've just not long left there. Is there any particular memories that you would want to keep hold of from your time at [K\*]? Are there things that you…?**

I think the memories you keep hold of is through the kids that you worked with. I still keep in touch with a lot of kids I've worked with over the years, regularly. A lot of kids I still talk to. When the kids will come into the house, we had a photo album, we always bought a photo album. It was like a journey. From day one we had photographs and just writing a wee caption, if I took them out, a wee caption or whatever. The time they leave we always gave them this photo… Back years ago, we started doing photo albums, but it was a case of when they were leaving always saying, 'Did we get any photos?' [Unclear words - over speaking 0:09:15.0]

**Yes, scramble.**

So we said, well, why are we not doing this right from the word go? Why don't we start from day one, and then add to it? Then if we get a second one, we can keep adding to it, and then it means when they're leaving we're not scurrying about looking for photos from two years ago when they first joined us. So it was already there. It was almost like their journey through the service. It was really nice and quite personal. The kids really appreciated it.

**So the kids liked it when they got it. Would they be looking at it while they were with you?**

Aye, so we'd sit and look through it and have a laugh with the kids. It was all funny stories and things that you'd probably forget about if you hadn't recorded it at the time.

**So was that kept in the living room, or would it be…?**

We kept it in the office, and we just added it. The kids knew we had it. Sometimes they would ask to see it and things like that. Then we changed the recording system for case notes, as we used to call them. That's a few years ago. It sounds horrendous, doesn't it? Case notes, so clinical. Changed to daily diaries. Almost overnight, you were writing in the first person, and because you were writing in the first person, people automatically started writing really kind of, oh, we had a lovely day today, we've done this and that. Stuff that you probably wouldn't have put in a case note because it was very clinical. Then it started to be really about their day, and their thoughts and their feelings, and what we enjoyed, and spending time together. It was a lot nicer than the old case-note style.

**Got up, had breakfast, went to school.**

Get through routines, went to school. Then when it was a really bad day it was sweets, and when it was a really good day it was like that size. I can imagine the kids coming back in 20 years' time and reading that saying, how come I had a really good day there and you never wrote anything, but I had a really bad day there and there's two pages.

**What was my good day, yes. How do you find that in terms of when the day is less good, when you're writing in the first person?**

I think again, you're more writing about thoughts and feelings rather than behaviours, and what led… I suppose you're maybe writing a wee bit about the behaviour, but you're maybe also touching on the reason for the behaviour, which probably wasn't done before. It'd have been before, he had a really difficult day, he kicked off and he broke things, and he assaulted somebody. Now, you're starting to think about, well, what was that about? Oh, you were really struggling. You had a really difficult phone call with your mum, or a really bad visit, and you really struggled with that. Then you're writing almost like a story. So it's not just about you were really bad today. It's more about you really struggled today because of this reason.

**Yes, there was something behind it. Yes.**

Which again, if you're thinking about kids coming back in 20 years' time asking to read their records, then there's more information there, and it's not just about, you weren't a bad kid, it was just sometimes you really struggled because of X, Y, and Z. Yes. I think that's important. It's really important you're documenting that properly.

**Just like you say what's happening day-to-day, yes. So thinking back to the photo album then, were there photos in the daily diaries? Is that part of the daily diary?**

Some people do. So, you can keep photos in the daily diaries as well. Probably not as common, but some people would do it. There would be photos in their [K\*] journey as we called it. It was like their care plan, wee things about achievements and things like that in there. There would be photos in there. A lot of the photos would be photo album type things.

**So, the photo album was given to the child when they left, so did the child then become responsible for…**

Yes, so they took that away with them.

**Does [K\*] keep a copy of that?**

No, see that's what we need to get better at I think as a whole. Even things like the photo album because you couldn't put photos of other kids in it. It was like they'd a day out at the - wherever you're out - and there's a group photo of you and all the other kids and staff, but you weren't allowed to put that in because of GPDR [sic] whatever. They make excuses. Whereas the mainstream view of an activity or when they're there, a trip can need photos of your pals from school, and nobody would bat an eyelid. In care, for some reason, we can't be given out photos of other kids.

**Right. We'll maybe come back to that if that's okay. Aye, it's a total frustration.**

Aye, which is a grey area because I suppose there's a lot of kids with non-disclosure and things like that. We need to get better at it, I think. Seeking consent even. If you need to get consent from whoever to say, is it okay for this kid to take these photos away with them of your kids? Are you happy with that? There must be an easier way round it.

**A way around it, yes.**

It's not quite there yet, I don't think.

**I guess what you're saying is that bit about so much of day-to-day life is with other people - it's not on your own - and then you get this record of your time, and it's all on your own.**

Aye, or you'd have the staff in the photo, but not your peers, not the kids that you spend the time with.

**Yes, that you lived with.**

Which is daft because they've all got phones now, and they're all taking photos of each other anyway.

**I was going to say they'll all have photos.**

That's what I mean. So, they've all got photos of each other anyway doing things, but it just can't be on an official document because it's got [S\*] or [K\*] or whatever on it. So, aye.

**What would happen then? What's the worry around that?**

I think it's just something that's always been. I think if you've got consent from people, then I don't see where the problem lies. As I say, there might be kids who… We've worked with a lot of kids with non-disclosure and things like that. So, if maybe a photo ended up on social media or something like that and the wrong person seen it, they could maybe put two and two together and come up with… That way, so…

**So, non-disclosure is that idea of children who can't have their address.**

Aye.

**It's got to be withheld for their own protection.**

Aye, putting photos maybe on social media and people recognise where they are, but it's the world we live in now.

**So, what would the risk be then? What would the risk be of a group photo being out in the world? Who is the risk to, I suppose?**

The only thing I can think of is non-disclosure about somebody seeing that photo and saying, oh, that's such and such. I know where they are.

**So, risk to the child.**

Other than that, it's not any different from people putting school photos and things like that on to the mainstream. It seems to be a care thing, isn't it? It's interesting because there will be kids in mainstream schools with non-disclosure, and you need to get photo consent from mainstream school. We do get photographic consent as well, but it just seems to be that thing about giving kids photos of them with other kids. It seems to be a bit of a grey area, which is a bit strange.

**So, there's uncertainty, and the organisation errs on the side of caution there.**

Aye, I think so. I don't know. We touched on this in [S\*] the other week when I was talking to somebody. I think there was a discussion going on around it about photographs and taking photographs, and taking photographs of kids with your own phone, and then transferring it over to some other phone. Everybody was talking about using the house mobiles to take pictures, but you're not always going to have… You want to capture a moment if you're out and about, and you want to capture a moment if somebody is doing something for you. There's also issues about having photographs of kids on your phone, which again, it's up for debate. I suppose it's one of those ones. It needs further discussion probably.

**So, there's a lot of tensions then, like what you would want to do almost instinctually.**

Aye, I think there's a bit of fear with people as well taking photos on your own personal mobile and what that means. Should you have them? Should you not? This is a job, right, but working with people, you're working with kids, and you're spending time and you've got relationships with these kids. I'm spending more time with these kids than I do with my own kids. So, you're going to want to capture moments. You still love them and care for them, so you should be able to just go [makes sound 0:18:10.6] snap.

**So, there's risk to the child. There's risks to workers, then, to be seen as not professional or not good. What about risk to the organisation?**

I suppose it's very similar. It's about consent and that crossover between their personal… You know, with your personal mobile, it's for your personal stuff, and the professional side to that is… I think if you're taking the photos and transferring them over, I mean, I think the rule of thumb is if you take a photo, you send it, and then you delete it. It's that whole thing of your own family as well. I've been out, enjoyed myself with one of the kids and I've took a nice photo, then why can I not just then go home and say to my wife, oh, we had a lovely day today. Look, we were out, and we spent a lovely day at such and such. You know. It seems to be that grey area that we've not quite - aye - [?bucked 0:19:12.2] through yet for some reason.

**Yes, so there's a real wall almost between work and home, even though it's so relational.**

They're so intertwined as well, aren't they? There's been loads of things over the years, like having kids spending time with your family. Like, see if I was going to a football match, and I had a spare ticket, I'd just go and pick one of the kids up and take them with my family. I think we're getting better at that. Christmas was always one as well. We had a boy years and years ago, he'd no family. He'd nothing, and he was the only person in the house. I says, 'Can I just come and pick him up and I'll take him to mine for Christmas dinner?' In my view, there was no major risks there because he was coming to my house, meeting my family, and he was there. I says, 'I'll drop him off back later on.' It was like, no, you can't do that.

**So, what do you think the organisation…? What is their nightmare scenario then?**

I don't know if it's maybe the whole care enquiry and things like that. I think they're looking at a protective and risk-averse type of… If they just don't let it happen, it limits the risks type-thing. I think there has to be some kind of common sense and come and go at times. I suppose the reality is as well, there has been people in the past who have taken advantage of situations like that and abused kids. I suppose that's where your - as an organisation point of view - you're probably trying to protect yourself as an organisation, and say, well, if it's a no, that can't happen. Are we going to take your risk of taking kids out, but you take kids out on a one-to-one all the time, so what's the difference?

**Yes, so there's something about being seen to be safe and no risk, but the reality of the job is that it's full of risk. There's no real way around that. If it's going to be relational, and it's going to be really caring, then yes, it's going to be risky. Thinking about [K\*], was there anything that…? Any objects or photographs or anything like that that you've take with you to remember…? You were saying you've got pictures in your head of the people…**

We've got a thing called [KC\*] on Facebook. It came about because we'd a lot of kids trying to add staff to their Facebook accounts, and the official thought was, no, you can't be doing that. So, we created a group called [KC\*] which has got most of the staff on it and it's got a lot of kids on it that used to be in [K\*]. It's a way for them to then communicate with the staff in, I suppose, a safe way. I have got some kids on my Facebook - my personal Facebook - older kids now. Some of them are like 30, in their late 20s and things like that. They've added me in later life, and I've added them, and I still keep in touch with them and chat with them and meet up with them.

**Do you think there is a…?**

A cut-off age.

**Like that, it gets easier to do those things in a way.**

I think so. I think when they first leave your care, I think that [KC\*] stipulates that they need to be 16. So, when you leave care and you're 16, you can join this. So, I don't think I'd be adding kids to my personal Facebook when they've just left.

**Yes, so 16, 17.**

Aye, but as I say, it's been years that have added me that have been on [KC\*], and then they've added me, and I've accepted them. There's so many kids now in their 30s, and they keep in touch. In fact, I had a kid the other day. [L\*] must be his late 20s. He's probably about 28, 29 now, and he had actually messaged me. It was a couple of weeks ago, actually, and he's message me and said, 'See that restaurant you took me on my 16th birthday in [G\*], was it such a…?' He had a photo. It was some kebab place, kebab, one of these places. He was like that, aye, that's it, that's. He says, 'Oh, I was done in [G\*] with my girlfriend. I thought that was it. We went in and I thought, this is where you took me for my 16th birthday.' It was lovely. That was 12-13 years ago, probably.

**Right, so he has a memory…**

Aye, and he's went specifically to try and find this place.

**And he checked it out with you.**

He said he was in [G\*]. He's from [A\*]. He was down in [G\*] for the weekend, and he was telling his girlfriend, and they went specifically to find this restaurant. Lovely. That was just lovely. It was really nice.

**Great, and lovely that he was able to check. There was a way of him being able to check with you, was that the place? Is that right?**

It was really nice because, obviously, that memory and that connection.

**That's lovely. I've gone off at a wee tangent there. There's such a debate isn't there around Facebook…**

Yes, social media on the whole.

**Yes, the challenges around that.**

I had it years ago as well. I used to manage the day centres, the day education and day services in [K\*], and we had created a WhatsApp group for the kids and the staff because they were all there for their education during the day. Then, they were going home and home at the weekend, and they created this WhatsApp group. It was frowned upon, to be fair, to be honest with you, because kids were contacting staff out with what… There was that whole thing about protecting kids and protecting the staff, but they didn't have anything else. They didn't have any support network out with the school hours. So, it was all done with the best intentions. Listen, if you've got issues or a problem, put a wee message on the group. There were all on it. It's not like it was individual messages. They were all on it. They could message the WhatsApp group. The kids could message the WhatsApp group to say, can you phone me? Can you maybe play a bit of sport? It was kind of frowned upon because we were communicating out with working hours. So, it's a grey area still.

**It's really messy.**

It is. The residential kids always had somebody 24/7 there, so even they were at home, there was always somebody there to support them. The day service kids were these poor wee souls that, out at the weekend, didn't have a…

**Had nothing.**

Had nothing, even if they were struggling. They had no support at all. That was why we…

**Set it up.**

Come up with the idea and set it up. We ended up having to shut it down because it was frowned upon.

**Right, frustrating then to…**

We found ways round it, but. We ended up having people on call, aye.

**Right, so there was just always somebody…**

Waiting on call, aye, but…

**Interesting. Aye, like that tension.**

[Over speaking 0:26:10.7] If it was your own kids, and they were … pick up by phone, go [makes sound 0:26:13.7].

**I've stuffed up. Come and get me! [wry laugh]**

So, why are these kids different? I get the whole risk averse side of it because there's been so much happened in the past and things like that, but there's, aye…

**It doesn't sit well with you.**

If I'm on call, and a kid phones me, that's okay, but if I'm not on call, and a kid phones me - the same kid phones me - that's not okay. So, I mean, it's a bit…

**Arbitrary.**

Aye, that's strange, but I can see both sides of it, to be fair.

**So, that's a lovely example of that young person contacting you about that moment in his life. Have you had other experiences of young people trying to get information about their time at [K\*] with you?**

Not so much trying to get information like official recorded documents. I've not really had that. I've had parents and things like that trying to get stuff. It's more kids just phoning, just reminiscing almost. Kids would come back and visit, and we'd always have an open door. If the kids phoned, can I come down? Can I come and visit? Then we'd come in, and like just always reminiscing and the daft wee stories that you forget. Just, aye, do you remember that time, and oh, aye? Just reminiscing about things that we got up to and things that we done, and camps, or holidays we went away on, things like that. Aye, it was good fun.

**What do you think they're doing when they're doing that? What are they getting from that experience?**

A lot of them come back for support. The kids used to come back quite regularly because they needed just a wee soul. When he was jumping in and out of prison, and he didn't have many people in his life. It was almost that supporting. That's all he had type thing, and he would come back regularly. Then, he would end up back in jail, and he would phone, but you wouldn't see him again till he got back out, then he'd come and visit you again.

**So, when he was reminiscing, was that about fun times, good times?**

It was fun times. I think the reality is for a lot of these kids, being in care is the best time of their life because when they leave… Especially a place like [K\*] because it's almost the end of the line. They've been jumping about all these care settings, and then they end up in [K\*]. They're so damaged, a lot of these kids, and it's like the best time in their life. It's the only time they've had opportunities to go on holiday or opportunity to do certain activities and had money! [amused tone] Food. Then, they leave, and Throughcare is still a shambles, isn't it? It's always the first service that gets cuts, but in my opinion, it's probably one of the most important services because you invest millions in a lot of these kids over the years.

**Absolutely, a lifetime.**

You have a kid in care for ten, twelve years, sometimes longer, and you investment so much money. You're taking about five-and-a-half grand for a placement, so you're investing millions and millions of pounds. Then you're going to sink or swim. It doesn't make sense.

**It's crazy. So, that coming back… I suppose I'm thinking when you're talking about Blue Ted, it's like that, where's the points of connection?**

It's some memories of good times, isn't it? A lot of it's their memories of good times.

**Yes, and sense of who they are. Like, who was I then? When you were describing it, you were saying that remembering with them, you remember things you'd forgotten.**

Aye, absolutely. Like all the wee stories, and things we got up to, and just daft things that used to happen. It was just having fun. A lot of kids, when they move, they don't have fun anymore. It's a shame. It's heartbreaking when you think about it. So many of these kids, where they end up, and some of them are just surviving, some of them don't survive. Some of them end up just incarcerated.

**So, that remembering together, it's a reconnection then as well.**

It's revisiting that time as well. You're almost transporting back into that time and having a laugh and joke about it. Just great fun. Just remembering a lot of things.

**I met a woman that I'd worked with - I would have been 22 or something - she would be 14, so the gap wasn't really that big. Then, she got in touch with me, really out of the blue, about ten years ago, and aye, she was saying, 'Remember that night you did my hair.' She was going to a Christmas dance, and I was like, 'God, I do remember that.' She was, 'Oh, I never forgot that.' It's often like those everyday things that you're not necessarily thinking, this is a big deal thing that I'm doing. It's funny.**

The thing is with difficult times as well. There's something about laughing and joking about difficult times we've had. I remember a kid coming to see me and we were joking about. We were playing football one day, and he had dived. One of the kids hit a shot, and when he dived, he missed the ball and the ball hit him in the face, and it smashed his glasses! [amused tone]

**Oh, God!**

So, I started laughing because it was funny. Then, because I was laughing, he went for me. It was chucking it down with rain, and I'd sent another member of staff that wasn't playing, had away back to get his umbrella. I remember this kid has went for me, so I'm trying to hold him, stop him attacking me in the rain. It was all slidey [sic]. Then, I saw my member of staff running back with his umbrella, but the time he got there, he was that knackered from running that he couldn't help. We were just laughing and joking about that, do you remember that [AF\*], might his brolly and he was knackered. It was just funny. It wasn't funny at the time, but just thinking back to it. I remember that time I attacked you because you laughed at me because my glasses got smashed. It was funny. It was great timing. There's been a lot of things like that, aye, about just being kids. Things they couldn't manage, and kicking off, and being aggressive. The reason behind that, and thinking back to the reason behind it, going like that, oh, I remember that.

**That's so interesting, isn't it, about at the time of the thing happening, it wasn't fun, and it wasn't nice. Then, having a bit of distance and the opportunity to remember it again, it's being remembered in a different way.**

Aye, absolutely, and laughing about it because it was just a ridiculous situation. It's a funny situation.

**Right, how are we doing for time? I'm not wanting to keep you…**

Ten past twelve.

**Brilliant. Right, so the second half of this, then, is just thinking about this idea of the living archive. With the folk in Germany, there's a wee bit of software, which basically, is like an album. It's a digital album and adults and children can upload videos, photos. It's like a poor man's Facebook, basically, but it's totally restricted. The functions of it mean that the restriction could be put on it so that people see only the time - like the years that they were there - kind of thing. The idea is that that follows people all the way through their life, so they can go back at any point.**

That sounds amazing.

**Yes, so that was the idea based off other interviews, that's what was created. It's not been straightforward as you can imagine. Thinking about that as an idea, that digital place where children can have it forever, access it forever, and share responsibility for what goes up there, what do you think about that as an idea?**

Aye, I think that sounds amazing because you can lose a photo album. You can lose phones with memories on them and photographs to your phone, but if you've got somewhere - up there somewhere in the cloud - you can always look at the cloud.

**I think it is a cloud! [laughs]**

I still don't get it.

**No, neither do I.**

I still don't get it.

**That's why I always feel nervous about talking about this digital archive. Like, don't ask me how it works.**

I suppose once it's out there on the cloud or wherever it bloody… I don't where it goes. I've never understood where it goes. Just somewhere. Somewhere…

**America.**

Aye, probably into some big like… Aye, that they can access because then they can never lose it. It's always going to be there. It's memories that are always going to be…

**Accessible, yes.**

Think about people that have house fires and things like that and they lose all their family photos and all that. It's so devasting. You hear that all the time.

**Nightmare.**

So, if it's out there, digital, it's always going to be there. You're always going to be… You can never lose it.

**Something like that, who do you think would use it?**

I think a lot of it would need to be driven by the care staff because they're the ones living in the life space with the kids, and they're the ones that would be updating the information. It would need to be monitored somehow, I would imagine. That could technically - say your daily diaries, for example - that could be their life. Every photo was on there. Every wee interaction goes on there. Your day, good or bad, as long as it's written in the first person and constructive. That could take the place of your daily diaries eventually because you've got this digital log of their journey within care. It would be ideal if it would follow you from place to place as well, so it would be a national thing… Have you got as far as that yet? Is it…?

**No, I mean, there are things now that are apps that kids can set up that were designed for children in care. I guess this one, the idea was about it being… So, care records tend to be written for an individual, and this is thinking about us as a group. So, we live as a group, and do stuff as a group. A bit like a family, so we've got this group thing. We've got this group place, so it probably wouldn't…**

Right, so it wouldn't be individuals. It would be…

**No, it would be like the group. It would be like, here's a photo of us up the woods.**

The only thing I can think of with that is that when does that change because groups change all the time. Kids leave. New kids come in. So, the group dynamic is changing all the time, and the individuals change all the time. So, when does one group begin and one group ends.

**Yes, so that would be a real challenge in terms of access.**

They don't all come and go at the one time. It's not as if you've got five kids moving on, and a new five come in and this is a new group. The group changes constantly. Our group's changed - in the four weeks I've been here - our group's changed three or four times.

**So, having a time, time isn't going to be enough then as a boundary of… It's…**

No, so we need to always be the individuals and the groups. So, they need to have an individual file - whatever you want to call it - with the hub group - his group - because that group might change several times, but it's your time within that setting is what you're capturing, rather than the actual group you're living with. You could be the only person left in the original group by the time you leave. Do you know that way?

**Yes, so there has to be a way of accessing…**

Capturing the individuals. They're time within the setting, not the group's time.

**But they're all the different groups that they were with.**

So, it's there because they're always going to be part of the group, regardless of how many different people have been in it.

**Yes, so they could have been in six groups.**

So, it would need to be the individual, and all the groups that they've been in within their time within the setting.

**Right, yes.**

Does that make sense?

**Yes, it does make sense. So, there's something about… Yes, so what would happen if it was just done in years then or timeframes that somebody potentially would see… Have access to a photograph that they maybe only knew some of the people in it and not others.**

Or if there was difference done in years. You might be in there for… You could leave in the middle of January, so if you're in the that year group…

**You've got…**

You've got 50 weeks of not being in that group. You've got access to that 50 weeks of a group that you've got nothing to do with.

**What's the pros and cons of that?**

I don't know. Would you still have an interesting in looking at stuff from a group that you've moved on from?

**Yes, so it would be like, I'm not going to bother looking at that because I don't know any of those folk.**

Or still keeping in touch with people that have been in your group and tracking their and monitoring their progress.

**What happened?**

How things might have changed as well. Maybe changed for the better or the worst, and you're saying, oh, why is he doing that now? He didn't do that when I was here sort of thing. I don't know. I suppose there's probably a discussion that's… But I think it would need to be attached to the individual.

**Right, yes, so for you, the block to that is more just that would somebody be interested in it.**

Aye not so much interested. I just think - I don't know - should they have access? Do you ever go into Facebook and just look at a stranger's Facebook page and look at all their photos and…?

**Honestly, I probably do! [amused tone]**

A total complete stranger.

**No, because you end up [makes sound 0:40:39.9] going down a rabbit hole, don't you?**

Unless you're just being nosey, which people do, but have you actually got an interest in that?

**No. So, do you think people's natural instinct would be, och, I'm not going to bother looking at that? I guess one of the other challenges to setting it up like that connects to the point you were making earlier about right of access. Should a child see a photograph of another child in [S\*] that they don't know necessarily lives…? Or they don't know them.**

There's photos go up on the Facebook page, isn't there? [S\*] put things up.

**Right, so [S\*]'s got a Facebook.**

They put things on Facebook about things they've done. There's a [S\*] page on Facebook. I'm not 100 per cent sure if the kid's photos go on that, but it's things like charity… Seeing things, like donations to charity and things like that, and photos of maybe some of the staff and handing over a cheque. All that kind of thing. I don't know if there's kids on there. I know there is certain schools that do that because I know that one of my kids I worked with in [K\*] went to [AS\*] and they've got a Facebook page. They're always posting things about how they're out kayaking or whatever they're doing and photos of the kids all over their Facebook page. So, obviously, they've got consent to put those photos on.

**So, consent feels like the biggy [sic].**

There you go. So, those kids could then go on to Facebook, lift those photos off there, but they can't actually say there's those photos of his because… It's mad.

**Right, it is mad. So, consent feels crucial, yes.**

I think you should always get consent anyway. Even if you've got photographic consent for kids, some kids don't like getting their photo taken, so as much as you want to capture their time, it's sometimes not… They don't want their photo taken in certain situations, or they don't want their photo taken at all, which can be right hard for us as carers because we want to be able to document and chart their life within the setting, and if they don't want…

**Yes, so one of the functions on this is you can pixelate a face. So, if you've got a group photo and you've got five people in it and four have given consent, but one hasn't, you can pixelate.**

Aye, even that's a bit…

**I know, it's a bit naff, isn't it?**

Aye.

**So, consent would come from the child. Who else do you think?**

I think consent would probably come from whoever has got the parental rights, probably the department and the child. It's how they consent to get photos taken, but then they've got a non-disclosure or something in place that they shouldn't be getting their photo taken. Not so much the photos taken, but the photos shared.

**Yes, so that trumps everything, really. The parental rights and responsibility, whoever has that final say, really.**

So, it's a bit of a minefield, isn't it? It is.

**It's a minefield. A total minefield, yes, and I guess that's definitely what…**

I think the idea, in principle, we think's great, but I think, certainly… I would have thought it would be each individual has access to their time slot within the setting, and no more and no less.

**Yes, and who do you think should look after something like that? Is that a young person or an adult or both?**

That's the $64,000 question. It would have to be - I don't know - it would probably need to be overseen by adults, I'd imagine, because we've got kids that are so young sometimes. They couldn't oversee something like that, but it would need to be monitored, I'd imagine, to see what's going on there as well. Whoever's uploading the information would need to, I suppose, it'd probably be an adult, and it'd be checked by whoever's overseeing that, whether it be house managers, or I don't know.

**So, there's a bit of moderation. Somebody's got to keep an eye on the chat and keep an eye on what's going…**

I think so. That's not to say that every daily diary is read by anybody other than the person that's written it. Information is duplicated everywhere, so you're reading it in different places. So, there's nothing to say there might be daily diaries cutting about, but they've got information on it that's probably not particularly well-written nor the best language. Do you know what I mean?

**Yes, but a check and a balance, probably by an adult just to…**

I would have thought so. The thing with the electronic system, you could probably set up some kind of system that looks for buzzwords as well and things that shouldn't be written. It's a way of monitoring and auditing the…

**What kind of things would go on an archive like that, do you think? What do you think people would find useful?**

Probably like photographs, fun things they've been doing. I don't think all the negative stuff should go on in. Things like safe holds and all that kind of stuff. I think all the fun stuff and really important stuff that's important to the kids, not important to us. It would need to be something that they'd look back on fondly and look at. They might have some wee bits and bobs in it about things, the struggles they've had, but I think as long as you look at it and coming from the aim that we've documented their struggles in a way that they've come out the other side of it, and this is how well you've done. There's a lot of other things that, I suppose, it's again, there would need to be a wider discussion about things like loss and bereavement and things like that. Where does that get all stored because that's a really important time within a kid's life?

**Totally, because I was thinking that tension between individual care record and then the family album. I guess often people think of the family album as like their birthdays, the holidays, the… I guess one of the things you've got me thinking about was beginnings and endings. There will be lots of endings here. Children moving on. Staff moving on. What would it be like having something like that on a group place, like, this was [R's\*] last night and we all went for a McDonald's or something?**

Then somebody's like, oh, my last night, we didn't do that. Or somebody's last night; we were at the caravan on their last night. My last night, we just had a meal in the house, so it would like…

**Yes, that's not very fair.**

Aye, there's loads to think about.

**Yes, like a family, isn't it? Like, that's not fair; he got a better…! [laughs]**

Aye, that's exactly what it's like.

**Yes, he got a better time than me, yes. So, what do you think some of the barriers would be to having a digital album like that? What would get in the way of that for [S\*], having something like that there.**

I think having the parameters of what was on it. That would need to be quite clearly defined, I think. What's it for? What's it used for? How are we going to use it? Time frames, if you're talking about groups, groups changing. That's a huge… That's what I was saying, it'd almost be like, there would need to be five, almost, at any given time within the house because each kid would have their own file. Their own bit of it, and all of it would be - the five of them would be running at the same time - and it would be the same, but yours would start after mine because I came in after you. Mine would finish before you because I left before you left. So, you would have that slot there. Aye, so I suppose you could have it all running in the one document, but you only get access to that slot when you're here.

**Yes, and that's because of…**

I don't know. It just doesn't…

**It just doesn't feel right.**

Aye, because otherwise you could have it… You would have access to the [?drive 0:49:25.0] for 30 years. If you done it in years, you would maybe have access to a year that you've only been two weeks part of. Do you know what I mean? Well, all youse [sic] have access to three. You've been here for maybe 18 months, but you've got three years' worth of information you can look back on, but you only joined halfway through that year, and you left halfway through that year. So, it's almost as if you've got these dates… You access through the dates that you came in and the dates that you left, but I don't know.

**So, a challenge is around that access, who gets to see what and why is that, and thinking that through, what would that, yes?**

Relationships as well, because kids leave and they've got really strong relationships, say, with a certain member of staff, and it's their favourite. They're really strong. Then, if they've got access to the information after they leave and they're seeing this member of staff spending all this time with…

**Someone else.**

Another peer or whatever, or somebody they did or didn't know. What emotions that's going to have for that child. It's like the rejection, and do you know what I mean. So, I don't know if that would be counterproductive, them being able to access that. Seeing that, oh, that's my…

**That's my person.**

That's my keyworker, that's my safe person, but they've moved on because they've now got this other kid they're spending a bit of time with.

**Yes, and what's your thought about - so something like that is potentially accessible throughout life - so you'd have a person who lived in [S\*] 50 years from now, able to go back to their bit?**

I think that's lovely. I think it could be really nice, but again, it could be a traumatic period within their life as well.

**Yes, absolutely.**

So, do they want to be going back and looking at this? A lot of people would.

**What do you think about staff being able to have access to it for 50 years, or should staff stop having access to it once they leave?**

I know. What's the difference between staff and kids? So, if I've got access for the next 25 years, 30 years, and why can the kids not? It's like, aye, it's a minefield. I don't know the answer to that. I've just left [K\*], and I still keep in touch with a lot of the people I worked with. They're still getting in touch with me, and I'm still getting…

**You're still on the connection.**

Pictures sent with kids. The staff had one of the kids at a football match the other day, and they're sending me pictures. Aye, so I've still got that connection. Eventually, all those kids that I worked with [K\*] will move on, and I won't have that connection. I'll still have the connection with the staff there, but not the kids. So, I'll probably be less interested in the kids - the new kids - because I don't know them, and I've not got that bond with them. I still want to keep in touch with the staff team and see how they're doing.

**If adults were given the same idea, well, you were here from this point to this point…?**

Aye, your timeslot.

**So, that's your time slot.**

Aye, that would probably be better.

**But you can still keep that time slot for the rest of your life. Does that sit better? Yes.**

I think so. There's also a bit about - and for the kids as well, I suppose - the people that are here while they were here. Even although you've moved on, there's people here that you still knew, so should that timeslot extend till the last person leaves? Then, you've got the staff that might be here for the next 20 years, so do they get access to it because they'd liked that staff member? They want to see how they're doing for the next 20 years as well. It's like the answer's out there, isn't it? It's a really interesting concept, actually. It's got me really thinking. In theory, it sounds really…

**I suppose that's the thing like you were saying, it's almost like you start to pull on a thread and you, oh, God…**

These relationships don't end. They don't end just because you move on, so…

**Yes, but you wonder if that's why organisations go, this is kind of messy, so…**

They just leave it.

**Yes, not just like this, but just generally because it is all quite messy, isn't it?**

I think this is the kind of stuff that we need to be looking at because we're in 2024, and technology is now mind-boggling. Everything's going to go digital at some point. It's about how we, aye use that to our advantage and track people's lives, I suppose. Youse are doing that… You're doing it yourself. Facebook and social media and that. It's like - I don't do it myself - but there's so much… I just use Facebook to be nosy like a lot of people, but I don't really upload anything to it, but people have got their whole life on there.

**I know.**

People's whole lives on… Lived…

**Live through it almost.**

Through Facebook and Snap [sic] or whatever you call it.

**Snapchat.**

I don't even know how to use that.

**And Instagram. Aye. It's a different way now, isn't it?**

It's a different world. Even kids. My two boys. My oldest boy's nearly 17, and the youngest is 15. They don't talk about… It's all about getting people snapped now. Oh, I got a girl snapped, and you're like, would you not just ask them for their number? Nobody phones now, dad. What? Will we text them or will we Snap?

**Oh, my God. Aye, crack on! [laughs]**

Aye, a lot of them meet through Snap. They don't meet through… What's that?

**I know, and they can just find people.**

Aye, it's wild. It's wild.

**I know. Brave new world. Right, well I think, if that's okay with you, that's all the questions I have. I don't know if there's anything else that you think, oh, I thought she would ask me about this.**

No, do you know what? I'd no idea that this was about this digital kind of… What are you even calling it?

**Digital archive.**

Digital archive. It's a really interesting concept, but it's…

**I mean, for us, I suppose it's more as researchers thinking - because we're not into like development or whatever - it's more through creating this thing, it's raised all of these big questions about the tension, I suppose, between this idea of lifelong connection. Of proper loving relationships, and how does that match with how we hold on to memories? So, something happens when we think about for ourselves how we use objects or images or whatever to keep a sense of ourselves in our own story. As soon as we start to think about that as a record, it's like a different part of our heads kick in. So much of it does get shaped by legislation, policy, GDPR.**

I know. A lot of the language as well.

**I totally get why, but…**

Like, [over speaking 0:56:25.9] record. Keep on looking at my records.

**I know. Exactly, yes, and it is a tension because there is an obligation, and it's right that there is a formal record kept because the State is caring for these children. The State needs to be responsible and held accountable.**

It's almost like there's two parallel records, isn't there, being kept? There's the official records with all the jargon and all the shit and stuff that is written in a certain way. It's just nobody wants to read. Then, there's this parallel record which is like the softer version of this record kind of mirroring each other. Being the more personal, like this is thoughts and feelings, and what we done and fun, and this is just like… All the records kept are always negative, aren't they?

**Yes, but I think there's almost a third one, to be honest, which is like being a kid. Like the sort of stuff we do for our own kids. All the certificates, and all the wee cards they've made, and the drawings they've done.**

It's all filling the gaps.

**Where do they go?**

I know.

**Where do they go?**

I don't know.

**So, I think for care-experienced adults, yes, they want answers about who my family was, why was I in care? What happened when I was in care? All of that, but they also need to have this is who I was as a kid. This is stuff I loved to do.**

Aye, absolutely.

**This was an achievement, and…**

I think they are getting better at that, but going back ten, fifteen, twenty years, it was like… A lot of that stuff wasn't getting documented. It was just case notes.

**It's interesting. At the historical archive, the really early bits, like 1920s - around that time - because they were writing, never thinking that anybody…**

Anybody would read them.

**Kids would look at them. There's quite a lot about examples of the adults not getting it right.**

Is that right?

**Yes, so there's one about such and such happened, and Mrs Smith lost her mind! [laughs]**

Is that right?

**Yes, and in a way, I think that's a much better… Sometimes, adults don't get it right, but records often, it's almost like the child is dislocated from everything else. It's just all about them, but actually, they're existing…**

There's a real fear about adults writing about their thoughts and feelings. I've brought this up numerous times because in [K\*], we'd the safe crisis management. [?They pay for 0:59:15.8] like you after a safe home. One of the sections on it was about your thoughts and feelings, and nobody ever wrote; I was really pissed off.

**I totally could of…**

I was just fucking angry because he assaulted me…

**Murdered him, aye, totally, yes.**

And he's hit me with something, or he's threw something at me, and I was absolutely really pissed off. Nobody's ever going to write that because they're scared if it then comes back and says, oh, right, so you were really angry that time.

**Yes, so you can't manage your anger, yes.**

Or like the kid's maybe made an allegation or something, and they're, oh, right, you're saying you were really angry here. There's a real fear about putting your own honest thoughts…

**Absolutely.**

And feelings down on a bit of paper because somebody will then pick it up and say, oh, right, what's that about?

**Yes.**

So, you were really angry.

**The honest bit is about, I didn't get that right, you know, like when I picked you up from school, I was a bit grumpy, and then you picked up on that, and…**

There's something really powerful about that. I've always said that. See if you're wrong, admit you're wrong and apologise to the kids because the kids will really appreciate that because they'll go, oh, you're human. You can get things wrong, too.

**Also, this is how you do it. Like, this is how you…**

Absolutely.

**Anyway.**

**[Thank you, and wrap-up continues]**

**[END OF TRANSCRIPT]**