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I: Okay, so the recorder is on. Okay, so first of all, can you tell me, so it's the Wolves Foundation isn't it, that you work for?

R: Yes, that's correct, my role is the health and wellbeing manager at the Wolves Foundation, so the Wolves Foundation is the official charity of the football club but we get all of our funding comes from external sources, whether it's through the Premier League or through local councils, CCG, things like that and we run a variety of different projects across the city of Wolverhampton, ranging from football activities to get young kids engaged to education activities.

So, we actually have our BTech programme and a degree programme, we have disability sport, we have inclusion and easier activities. We run a lot of work within primary schools in the city and then obviously my role is all related to health. So, we have a mental health programme, we do dementia groups, diabetes education, loads of different stuff and then obviously period poverty falls under that area as well.

I: I have no idea about football related stuff, whatsoever, is that something that just Wolverhampton do or is that something that lots of clubs do?

R: No, so pretty much all football clubs will have some form of community foundation department that all do very similar work across the area they work in really. So yes, some clubs have quite a big foundation or community department, others are a little bit smaller but yes, they all pretty much all have one.

I: Because I have seen things about putting products in toilets and stuff and quite a few different clubs are doing that but yes, I didn't realise that there was more of an outreach type community.

R: Yes.

I: That's interesting, anyway enough about other clubs, we'll go back to yours. So, this interview is being done in three stages, so it's like the pre-COVID situation, then the lockdown bit, although I appreciate, we're now back in lockdown and then what services look like at the moment and going into the future. So, can you tell me, what sorts of things did you do before March, what would a typical period poverty thing look like for what you guys do?

R: So, it was focused really on providing the free products in the stadium, so obviously in all of the concourse toilets, all the female concourse toilets, we have free sanitary products in and then also in our corporate areas that we use on a regular basis, not just for games but also on a regular basis for events and parties, obviously external people can book the venue and all of that.

So, they're all provided in those areas as well and then in addition to that, we were also donating, on a regular basis, to local organisations in the city. So, Project Give and the Homeless Period, we were donating some products

to there as well, so they could be distributed wider because obviously something that we've always been conscious of is, if people can afford a match ticket, then they should be able to afford some sanitary products but we're also aware that it doesn't always work like that.

Obviously like I said, we have people that come for events and stuff that aren't necessarily purchasing anything and then obviously just being able to donate those products to other organisations as well, always helps.

I: So, do you have funding to buy those products yourself?

R: We were given some funding by one of our partners, Pay Care, so Pay Care are a big health organisation within the city and they gave us some funding to be able to purchase the products.

I: Have you got a relationship with them then, how did that come about?

R: Yes, I mean we've been working closely with them for quite a number of years but they're director is also one of our trustees and they're a patron as well, of the foundation.

I: Yes, that makes sense. Okay, so that was a set-up think and ticking along quite nicely, I presume and then when happened during lockdown when everything stopped?

R: So, obviously as soon as fans weren't allowed in the stadium, we had a lot of products just sitting there, so we waited and just waited to see what was going to happen with regard to spectators in stadiums and all of that and I think we're probably all aware that it's probably not going to happen for at least the near future. So, we're just conscious that there's products sitting there that is in a damp stadium, although it shouldn't be too much affected, you couldn't go to a much better use.

So, we donated all of our remaining stock to Good Shepherd who are a homeless organisation within the city that the Homeless Period work very closely with. So, initially we were going to donate to the Homeless Period, the Good Shepherd and Project Give but the Homeless Period was kind of like, well you may as well just give whatever you were going to give to us directly to them Good Shepherd because that's all we'd be doing anyway.

Then we also gave some to Project Give as well, like we said, it may as well go to somewhere that's needing it at this time, rather than it sitting in our store room and then obviously once we're aware of spectators coming back in, we can start to purchase some new products instead.

I: Yes, so is that what you're still doing at the moment then?

R: We did a one-off, we just did a big bulk donation, so we cleared all that out and gave it all in bulk, it was a bit of a news story actually, on our website, I can always send you the link over to that if you wanted?

- I: Oh yes, that would be great, thanks.
- R: And then, we got a couple of quotes, I think Project Give were saying that a lot of their stock had depleted through lockdown and so that helped to boost up.
- I: Yes, that would be great if you could send that over. Okay, so you're just waiting then really, aren't you for stadiums and that to open...have you opened the corporate side of things, like the bookings and stuff, are you going to be opening those again before games start happening?
- R: I'm not 100 per cent sure to be honest, I think we have a restaurant at Molyneux and that had opened for one day a week but I'm not 100 per cent, obviously at the moment, that's closed but I'm not 100 per cent sure what the plan is post-lockdown two, whether that will be reopening, I'm assuming it will be. So, obviously we'll be continuing to supply, we've kept the products in those toilets, where people will be accessing them. Then it's just waiting really for the news on when some spectators can get back in, so we can start to replenish stocks really.
- I: Do you feel like that's it then, you just have to wait for business as usual?
- R: To some degree, yes. It's difficult, I mean we could potentially do another one-off donation, but we'd have to get some products because we've cleared it all out and the plan would probably be, do it all in one go. So, purchase it in bulk and give some, again to the charities as a bit of a donation and then some obviously to restock for ourselves. We're all working from home at the moment, so to get deliveries and all of that is a little bit trickier. But it's obviously something that whenever we can, we like to be able to get some more out to those charities because like I said, we're conscious that it's in the stadium, it's a very limited number of people necessarily.
- I: So, how did you get the products to the places, like you ones that you already had, when everything went into lockdown, how did you manage to sort that out if everyone was working from home?
- R: We managed to do it before the second lockdown, so we did it in...when did we do that? October time, so early to mid-October, we just went in and cleared it all out and boxed it all up and then got it out to the charities. So, we tied it in quite nicely before we were all stuck at home again.
- I: Just as everything was starting to look hopeful and we just went back down again.
- R: Yes, exactly.
- I: Do you have any idea of how many people actually take the products or use them in normal service times?

R: Unfortunately not, obviously as always, I'm sure other clubs have the same issue is that some people will use it as it should be and it's there for those that need it and all of that but unfortunately we also have some toilets within certain areas of the stadium that are constantly cleared out, every match day and it's often quite early on. It's not that people are needing it; they're just taking it completely.

So, either somebody is in real need but like we've said before, it's a constant thing every game and if they're coming to regular matches, then they've got the funds to be able to buy a match ticket, so unfortunately not everyone shares it, shall we say, for what we'd like it for. But with regards to numbers, I'm not 100 per cent sure.

I: But you restock them?

R: Yes, we restock it anyway and obviously it's just one of those things, unfortunately that you don't want to, you want to be able say, no you've used it all now, you can't have anymore.

I: I don't think I've got anything else to ask you now because you're so reliant on...

R: No, as I say, we're probably a little bit different in the fact that we are very much just trying to have them within the stadium and obviously give a few donations out but with regards to more outreach stuff, solely focusing on period poverty, at the moment anyway, we don't do that much. So, I don't know whether...I can't remember who gave you my contact details?

I: It was [REDACTED]

R: [REDACTED]

I: Yes.

R: Have you been in touch with Project Give?

I: I have, I'm waiting for them to get back to me.

R: Okay, I was going to say because they obviously do a lot more outreach stuff, similar to [REDACTED] and they're potentially, probably someone better to speak to, I probably haven't helped you that much with regards to what we do.

I: No, you have, it's good to get a range of things because the project is covering literally anything and everything in terms of how people have been accessing products or things like education and stuff, before lockdown and then most of that has had to change significantly and we do know that the putting products into football stadiums and sports places was one of the

more successful easier ways that people were starting to address problems. Then obviously, like you say, that's...

R: That's the thing, I think obviously as much as we can, we want to branch out, if we can any further but obviously at the moment, it's a little bit difficult but even in normal times, if we can support those organisations at the moment, in the city that are doing that, then we'll do that as long as we can really.

I: Yes, it's great that you've got someone on the board and a trustee that's got an interest in it because that really helps too, doesn't it?

R: Yes, definitely.

I: Okay, so the final question then is, do you think there's anything else that we've either not talked about or that you think that's important to highlight about period poverty in general, during the pandemic situation?

R: I don't think so, I think it's a big credit to the organisations that are doing a lot more outreach and I think obviously the pandemic has probably increased the issue around period poverty and the fact that people are obviously losing jobs and financial difficulties and all of that and it's not always going to be as easy. I never realised it was such an issue, to be honest until we started doing a little bit more on it, I hadn't realised how much of a problem and issue it is, you just assume that everyone can afford to buy sanitary products because they are so essential.

But yes, it is just one of those things really of hopefully the people that are in need, are getting the stuff. It's just one of those things, again we do a lot of work with the Good Shepherd and it's one of the things, you always think about food donations and all of that but you completely forget around the women that are homeless, they've got no access to sanitary products whatsoever, unless they're accessing these services. So yes, it's definitely an eye-opener.

I: And I guess as well, with the first lockdown and all the public toilets and everything was closed, so it's even more difficult for people that didn't have access to shelter to even just go to the toilet to be able to do something.

R: Yes, definitely.

I: Right, well I think that's it then, [REDACTED] so thank you so much for your time.

R: That's okay, apologies if it wasn't quite what you were needing but I'll send you the link of the donation we made and then yes, hopefully it's at least something extra for you to put in.

I: As I said, I'm trying to capture every single possible way that people have been supporting people, pre-COVID and the way that the pandemic has either made people adapt things or like in your circumstances, just stopped

what you've been doing. The stopping what you've been doing is actually been quite common, so people that work with schools and that, obviously have not been able to do much, so I'm just trying to capture anything that I possibly can. So, I really do appreciate your time this morning.

R: No problem.

I: That's been great and yes, if you could send over that article as well, that will be brilliant.

R: I will do.

I: Right, well enjoy the rest of your day and have a good week and thanks so much for your time.

R: No problem, take care.

I: Alright, take care, bye, bye.

R: Bye, bye.

End of transcript