

# Transcribed by: 1st Class Secretarial Services

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- I: There we go, right, okay. Okay, so, can you tell me then, [REDACTED], about what the Real Period Project normally does, kind of, pre-lockdown what would you be doing?
- R: Sure. So, pre-lockdown we were just coming to the end of a big piece of work for Bristol City Council where we were doing...developing their Period-Friendly schools programme.
- I: Right.
- R: So, we were doing teacher training; so, we were just about, we were just getting close to launching the guidelines for schools through the Bristol Healthy Schools programme. And, we were also running some workshops with teenagers on menstrual cycle awareness and wellbeing and we were planning to...that was a piece of, it was like a trial that I'd done and I was planning to analyse the findings from all of that and then start pulling that together as a programme that schools could offer. I wasn't sure how that was going to go, but it was...I wanted to develop that further and put a...
- And also, I was planning to speak to the University of Bristol have a PhD internship programme. And I was working with a researcher who was volunteering with me from Cardiff who works in Bristol University. And we were planning to put together, she had worked, we'd worked together on developing this, oh, it's all so hazy, it's all so long ago now.
- I: It's a long time ago.
- R: A logic model, is that the right, yes, a logic model and a...
- I: Yeah, that sounds right, yeah.
- R: ...I can't remember the rest of the term but, anyway, yes she had been working on...we'd been putting this piece of, not research, together because the sample size was too small. I was only with four small groups, but we ran it as a pilot and we were intending to put out the conclusions of our pilot and, you know, look to...look for some funding so that we could then test it more widely and get this PhD internship. Because I'd spoken to the programme leaders and they were really keen on working with us and felt that they would, it would be a project that would be eligible for that programme. And to get PhD to...PhD students to take some time out to look at the impact of the programme...
- I: Yeah, that would have been great.
- R: ...as a whole, to get it more widely spread around. So, that's what we were up to before March this year. It was all kind of in progress.
- I: And then what happened?

R: So, then...then, the schools all closed and Bristol City Council, the people in Public Health, I mean, to be fair, the...through, you know, budget cuts and everything over the last few years, the people who were managing the Healthy Schools Programme had been whittled down to about two and who were also managing multiple other things...

I: Yeah.

R: ...so, their time was limited anyway, even before COVID sort of put a spanner in the works. But, basically, immediately the school closed Public Health just shut the Healthy Schools Programme down; they just concentrated everything on what was necessary, you know, looking after the wellbeing of peoples and things like that. So, they...I contacted them a few times and each time they said, this is not a priority at the moment. We are...we're not doing anything about it.

So, that guidance for schools never got out. Although, I have just heard that they are planning to, they are just starting the Healthy Schools Programme back up again and they are planning to release the guidance in March, so that's fantastic news. It's not been lost, which was what I was really most afraid of.

So, and also, from a personal level, I am a nurse and, I am a community nurse, and our workload, it didn't increase at the time, although it did subsequently but, you know, all the stresses and pressures of what COVID was going to mean for our service, you know, I was just exhausted outside of my work. So, I just had to...from a personal level, I had to press the pause button myself on any of the development work that I was working on. You know, analysing the findings from my pilot and things like that, I just...just didn't have the capacity to do that in my own life.

I: So, how many...

R: And, I didn't contact the University to extend it in the schools because all the schools were shut, so, I couldn't even progress with doing any of that with the schools beyond that anyway.

I: So, how...how does the Real Period Project work then, in terms of, so, you lead it and then do you have volunteers? How many people...?

R: So, at the moment, there are...it was...it was myself and Charlotte [inaudible - 0:04:41.6] who we started it together and then she left a few years, a couple of years after we started it and I brought in two more directors about a year and a half ago. But, we all do it in our spare time really.

Over the last winter, I was working full-time on it, on the project because I had the funding to do so, but...and...but most of the time I work as a nurse and I fit in the Real Period Project work around the outside, just simply because I couldn't afford to live on what it was bringing in.

I: Yeah, yeah.

R: So, I've been working on it since 2016, trying lots of different things. I've had different pots of funding, different things, it's all been fantastic; but in the end I had to find other work in order to fund it and, yeah, and then come March my work just took over unfortunately. And my...my fellow directors similarly, one of them wasn't able to do any face-to-face work, so she was struggling to make ends meet with what she was doing; so, her focus was there. And the other was a parent and had four kids at home all of a sudden, so...

I: Yeah.

R: ...and also, didn't have time. So, it was mostly me who was working on those projects as well. I, [inaudible - 0:05:55.3] did have some involvement but it was mostly what I had been working on myself. And it's just a classic case of, you know, fitting it in round the edges.

I: Yeah. And then you still didn't have time to fit it in round the edges?

R: Yeah, exactly. So, I started my nursing job back again in January, with the intention of working on the project two days a week, but the reality of how my nursing job was from March onwards meant that I just didn't have the capacity to do much. And it just was so much harder because all the schools were shut. So, all those conversations I would naturally have been having couldn't happen anyway because the schools were just, obviously, focussing elsewhere.

So, it was the combination of the two really; my personal lack of capacity and also, the fact that all the, the kind of development conversations and carrying on with relationships that I would have been having wasn't possible.

I: Yeah.

R: Because everyone...everyone's focus was on...elsewhere, you know.

I: Yeah.

R: Very much, well, understandably.

I: Yeah, yeah, the priorities definitely hugely shifted, didn't they?

R: Yes, absolutely. I did hear from some schools who I'd been working with beforehand asking, we had some conversations about how they could carry on providing products. And so, that was quite good in the early days; it was just a handful of schools who were...who were keen not to let that slide.

- I: Do you know what they did?
- R: Yeah, they did...they did things like, when the...when the families came to get their...their food tokens or food boxes, depending on what the schools were doing, they would have a table with products there and everything at the same time.
- I: Oh right, yeah.
- R: But they were struggling with how to do it because of not being able to let families inside the building.
- I: Yeah.
- R: So, we just were coming up with a few different ideas, but that was only a very small handful of schools and what I...what it seemed was that what I'd, you know, because the free products, the launch had only just happened, you know, very shortly before. And we were still trying to get the message out to everybody and it just felt like a lot of schools just never found out about it. When I spoke to the guy from PHS, he just said the take-up had been terribly low.
- And just, it seemed like schools would have wanted it if they'd known it was there but it was just, there didn't seem to be any way to reach them and their priorities were very much elsewhere.
- I: And it was, yeah, the roll out of that was bad anyway. And now it looks like they are trying to use it as an excuse to say, oh well, you didn't bother to take this up, so we're going to take the money away.
- R: I know. I know, that's what I've been afraid of all year to be honest; it's very frustrating.
- I: Yeah. So, again it's, you know, the findings from this project and what people are saying, just the difference between how Wales and Scotland, I mean we all know how Scotland have managed to crack it. But Wales are doing really well with how they've got the funding and rolled it out and it's like, what the hell is going on in England? It's just...just ridiculous.
- R: I know, I know.
- I: And then...
- R: Yeah. And, actually, that's another...another thing as well that I was involved in the True Poverty Task Force. I was going to those meetings.
- I: Yeah. And they stopped...
- R: To the education...

I: Yeah.

R: ...stream; and we had been, so the last meeting I went to, I think, was in February, and we'd been planning...we'd just...we'd just got to the point where we were, we'd made the proposal of what we were going to plan. I'd been working on another logic model, actually, for that, with somebody from...what was it, the Sex Education Forum. Yes, so, I'd been working with her on that and we were going to put out, we were asking to put out to tender for...oh gosh, I can't even remember now, it was so long ago.

But anyway, we'd decided what it was that we were going to do; we were going to do a...some of the group were going to be focussing on a language changing campaign, asking large leaders to change their language around menstruation; particularly around product manufacturers and influential people in the field.

And then, another group of us were working on putting a tender together for an Education Gold Standard guidance basically.

I: Yeah, okay.

R: So, what good education about periods looks like and how to do it. So, a kind of straight-forward simple document. We were wanting to put that together. So, that was just coming to the point where we were like, right, okay, this is what we want to tender for. This is what we want to do. We want to have these things running concurrently and then the March meeting was cancelled and the entire, everything since then has been cancelled.

So, I have tried contacting the GEO and the convenors of the education stream and had nothing back.

I: Who was...

R: And, more recently, I did hear from Kate, from Sport England, and she said she's been trying and has had nothing, no response.

I: Yeah. Who was leading the education stream, can you remember?

R: Yeah. So, that's [REDACTED]...let me just...let me just open my computer and get her surname. So, it was a combination of Sport England, PSHE Association and, let me have a second...Binti International.

I: Okay.

R: So, it was, it was [REDACTED] and, oh, hang on a minute, let me open this up.

I: Don't worry, I can...I can find out, I just didn't know who was on the education one, because I am on the research and evidence, like evidence and data stream.

R: Yeah. So, it was [REDACTED], from PSHE Association and [REDACTED] from Sport England and [REDACTED] from Binti International.

I: Yeah, okay. Yeah, lots of people have said, I've spoken to a lot of people that were on different streams of the task force and everyone is like, yeah, it's just...collapsed and...

R: Yeah.

I: ...you know...

R: I mean it was pitifully funded in the first place, but, at least it was something. And, what was frustrating, it was starting to become more frustrating, the expectations that were being placed on those of us who were in each of those, you know, streams of what we were, what they were asking us to do and the very small resources they were providing for it.

It almost felt like it was kind of an impossible task to start with, but at least it was something and it felt like...I think everyone seemed to think that this was important enough work that, you know, I think, what we'd got to was the potential of putting in, I don't know if it was this whole thing, anyway, that's another subject, that's another subject, I won't go into that.

But, it was frustrating and it was, there was this whole lack of clarity around competition guidelines and who could apply for the tender work and all of that kind of thing. But, at least we were come to the point where we were...where we were like, right, okay, this is what we think would be really good. This is what we propose; this is what we'd like to do next, and then...and then, obviously, that's just...I don't know that that will ever start up again. It feels like it won't. It feels like it's been like, oh, that wasn't successful, so back to the product roll out.

I: Like the, yeah...yeah, I'm hoping, again, like with the findings from this, just like we'll have that evidence and then it can hopefully help boost that, coupled with Scotland and their success.

R: Absolutely. I think it...it will be really good, I mean, you know because, do you remember that meeting we went to that Plan organised in, I think it was in Birmingham wasn't it, about a year or two ago.

I: Yes.

R: And we talked about the importance of having this sort of Gold Standard of Education and how to put that together. And I just think, the task force, whilst it was underfunded, was at least, you know, it was a group of

people who were in that field and who could oversee the formation of that, bring in...and there were lots of...the real group of...and the people in the steering group and everything, you know, it had the potential to actually create something, to be really valuable and a standard across the whole country.

And so, it is still needed, you know, because otherwise we are still in this position where everybody is just doing their own thing and I am thinking, I'd really like to develop what I did for Bristol City Council and make that widely available. But then, so is everybody doing that; I'd much rather do it eventually and feed in what I know to something centrally and be like, right, brilliant that's done, you know, we don't have to do it individually with every different council. It doesn't make sense.

I: No, it doesn't. Especially when some councils don't do anything...

R: But being able to [restart that - 0:14:40.3] and to be able to get that work done with that central support, I think it's vital. Otherwise we're just in this, everybody, every man for himself situation again, which just doesn't work.

I: Yeah. I completely agree. Okay, so, how are things looking at the moment then with schools being back and now we're in this kind of in and out lockdown situation?

R: Yes, so, I, as I said, just, in preparation for speaking to you today, I just decided to, I thought I'd try again speaking to the team at the council here to find out what is going on; and, for the first time, did get a more positive response, which was really encouraging because, prior to that, she'd always been no, not a priority. You know, very much talk to the hand, like now is not the time.

I: And is that to pick it back up in March that you talked about earlier?

R: Yes, so she said they are planning to release the guidance through Healthy Schools in March, Period-Friendly Schools' guidance. So, that's their plan. And, I expect that they'll probably do that because I think they are hoping that, you know, I mean, who knows how open schools are going to be and where we are going to be at over the next six months?

But, I think there is this new normal that we're in, that schools are in and out and in and out, and so, I think, it seems to me, but obviously, I haven't had a long conversation with her, but it seems to me that they are recognising that, you know, the need for schools to have support around SRE and things like that hasn't gone away and, the kids are in and out, but they are still having to have PSHE and they are still having to have SRE and all these things, so they need, they still need that support.

So, I feel like, from locally in Bristol that that guidance will go out. I feel like next year one of the...on of the things we'd like to do is just to put together all of the pieces I was working on last winter as a programme



that schools can access. I'm not entirely sure how that's going to look at the moment because we need to find some funding from somewhere for it again.

I: Yeah.

R: But, I mean, there's always a balance with this of schools ability to pay for something.

I: Yeah.

R: Willingness and ability to pay for something.

I: Have you had any discussions like with the council? Would that be like a contract with you to...how is that working?

R: I'm not sure that they've, I mean, I'm going to speak to them, but the reason why they were so keen to fund what we did last winter was because last year, so, 2019, at the beginning of the year, they named Tackling Fuel Poverty was one of their three focuses for the year.

I: Right.

R: So, as part of the One City plan, [REDACTED], one of their councillors, she is really passionate about it and put it to the council and they, they all voted unanimously to support it. Of course, this year they've moved on to other priorities and so every year they will be on different priorities, so, they had some funding that was earmarked for it. I think originally it was going to go to providing product in schools, and then, myself and a few other people were saying to them, you need to have education in this, not just product.

I: Yeah.

R: And then the British Government said that they would provide products in schools in England and so they said, ah, brilliant, we can use the money we were going to spend on that to do other things. So, they set up a system of donating and collecting products around the city and I am still waiting to hear back from somebody in the council about how that's, whether that's still happening. The website is still up and running, but how live that is, given everything that's been happening this year, I don't know. I'm still trying to find out.

I: Is that website on the, on the council; I might see if I can tap in there?

R: Yeah, so, it's called oh, [periodfriendlybristol.org](http://periodfriendlybristol.org) I think. Let me just find out. Yeah, that's it, [periodfriendlybristol.org](http://periodfriendlybristol.org); so, it's...I mean, it's a really great initiative they've set up. Basically, they've partnered with quite a lot of the large things like financial...financial businesses and stuff in the city,

who work in this big One City plan; and some of them helped manage the logistics of how to get donations to these collection points across the city.

I know they had like a big tech drive where they got lots of different designers coming in to design an app and a website and a web map and things like that to actually manage to...for people to be able to find out easily where to go. So, it was really, really good and I'm really still trying to find out what the progress on that is, because it is up and running but, actually here there's a notice that says most of our donation and collection centres are still closed due to COVID-19, please contact your local foodbank if you need to access period product.

I: Yeah, okay.

R: We'll keep you updated as our corporate partners begin a phased return to work, blah, blah, blah. Yeah, so, it's like, I think everything was just paused. It's...I think the thing that's been so frustrating is, we'd built up such head of steam by February. They'd just launched this website. You know, there were people, they were just trying to get more and more partners on board and people who would help them. It was this lovely system where you just typed in your postcode and then it told you where, near you, you could go. And it had a little thing saying, they're in the toilets in the third cubicle along, or something.

I: That's amazing.

R: You know, told you exactly where you could go, so that if you didn't want to, you didn't have to ask anybody where to find them.

I: Yeah, that's so good.

R: It was really nice. It was a really lovely system. And you could be...you could, you know, volunteer to be somewhere where people could come in and get them. Or you could just go in and find them yourself. And, so that was just beginning to start and the school thing was, you know, we had all these good relations going on with the schools, and all of that was happening. And then, all of a sudden everything just sat down, so, I think it's...it's frustrating because it feels that we have to start, not from zero but, it's starting a long way back.

I: It is, isn't it? And, if, like, because priorities have shifted so much as well. Like you said, it was very much on the agenda before and it's probably been pushed right down to the bottom now because of all of the other stuff that's been going on.

R: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, when you consider that millions of children aren't really able to eat, then, you know, it just doesn't, it just doesn't seem so important.

I: I know.

R: Even though, obviously, it still is. It's a huge issue.

I: And it's still linked to poverty, isn't it?

R: Absolutely, it is.

I: And accessibility.

R: Absolutely. Yeah. Yes, definitely. I mean they're all...yeah, but there we go, it's just...

I: Yeah.

R: It's...

I: Everyone, literally everyone is like, we were gaining such momentum, February/March and then, yeah...

R: Yeah.

I: It's just, it seems to be the...yeah, the pattern but maybe, you know, with Scotland now, it's kind of back in people's minds again, so maybe...

R: Yeah, I know. That's what I...when I saw the news about that, I just thought, okay, this is...this is like a little ray of sunshine. As you say, hopefully we can...at least it gets back in people's minds again. People go, oh yeah, that thing.

I: Yeah, yeah.

R: And, which like again, I was so encouraged when [REDACTED] said that they were planning on doing, on, you know, actually getting back and doing it. Because I think they recognise it is part of their, they know it's part of their Healthy Schools thing and they wanted to get...

I: Of course, it is, yeah.

R: And, you know, Period Dignity throughout this whole Period-Friendly Schools programme, so that lots of the different, all the different areas would have guidance that would help towards promoting Period Dignity. And, we also developed this guidance and like a kind of self-...self-...I can't think of the word right now, but like a tick, a tick-box thing, that's sounds like lots of rubbish, but like a questionnaire that you can do about your school to see how period-friendly your school was. And then, within the questionnaire there were suggestions about, what about this, what about that?

And so the plan was to have schools fill it in, send it to Public Health, once they'd read the guidance and implemented some of the things; so, then

someone in Public Health would check it, decide whether there were any areas that they needed to work on. Hopefully not; hopefully the schools would do all of that first, and then, when appropriate, the schools would get their period-friendly badge that they could put on their website or whatever.

I: That's so good.

R: So, that was the plan. I'm...I don't know exactly how much of that will be happening come March, or whether they will just release the guidance and that will be...that will be it, I don't know. I mean, that...hopefully it will be a little bit more than that, more than just a guidance but we'll see.

I: Yeah. It sounds so brilliant. I really hope that it does get picked up like in the way that you envisaged it, like the whole thing.

R: Yeah.

I: Rather than people just getting guidance and going, okay, well, we've got that now.

R: Exactly.

I: And then nothing happening.

R: Exactly. Yeah. And, one of the things that we noticed was that, you know, the schools here, there were schools who were really interested and who had a member of staff who was really keen on it anyway and they were all the ones who came to the training. And, of course, there were loads and loads of schools where they were just like, oh well, that's, you know, that's not for us, for whatever reason.

So, we were trying to figure out how to reach those schools; make it really...it was just an on-going challenge of how to make the guidance worthy, like actually useful and helpful, but not so big that it put people off.

I: Yeah, yes.

R: Because people who are keen would have read it all, but the people who were not, who wouldn't be there anyway, would just be like, oh God, far too much and wouldn't look at that. So, you know, getting that balance is tricky.

And, I think even more so now; you know, because there's so many priorities and so many challenges and depressions; and so, you know, less teachers on the ground, like all of this, because of people shielding and stuff. So, I think the need to make it really simple and straight-forward is even greater.

I: Yeah, definitely.

R: Yeah.

I: So, I think, I don't really have any other questions to ask you, other than, do you think there is anything else that is really important to highlight about period poverty in the pandemic just in general?

R: I think we've probably mostly covered it all. I think there's only...there's maybe one thing that just keeps niggling at the back of my mind when we've been talking, which is...and I can't tell whether it's just my hang up; I think, I mean everything often, everything comes with period education poverty, all of this comes back to menstrual shame, and I think that because everything was stopped, everything was building up steam and then stopped back in March.

I have felt myself at times over the last year feeling like I can't...I mean, all the way through all my work, every now and then, because I've done quite a lot of stuff for different social entrepreneurs and stuff like that, and they've been doing all these really worthy projects and things, and I've been thinking, God, you know, there's so much more important things in the world than talking about periods surely. You know, and then being like, come on, that's ridiculous.

That's just a silent thing and that's just menstrual shame, come on and I just think that has increased. I have felt myself often thinking how can I bring up the subject of menstrual education; people are worrying about getting food on the table, like it's just not...it feels like...and that feels to me linked to menstrual shame. Like it's, you know, people don't want to hear about it. It's a bit yucky and...you know, all of that. I think it will have put us backwards in that.

Because it seems to me that all the young people I met over the last, you know, before COVID, because when I was meeting them in schools, the ones who were really engaged and who were willing to come along to sessions about menstrual wellbeing and stuff like that had got engaged because of being passionate about period poverty.

It was like the awareness of their peers not being able to afford period products got them over the hump of talking about periods, and then they started to be interested after that. I don't think, I don't think we could have got period education, you know, menstrual education and period-friendly schools on the agenda without period poverty becoming a...the awareness of period poverty becoming an issue.

I: Yeah, yeah.

R: And so I think that what I've experienced with, and my fear is that because there are so many more pressing issues and people's health and wellbeing and...and financial security and housing security; like the basic bottom of Maslow's triangle of need, hierarchy of need, you know, those

things feel so important just now that even though, actually, as a menstruating person...

I: It is part of...

R: ...it is part of that, but, we've had to fight so hard to get that even vaguely recognised in good times. So, now we're in these, and let's face it, with Brexit and recovery, I mean, financially things are not looking good for the next ten years or so. So, it's this funny mixture of period poverty is going to get worse because of that, because all poverty is likely to get worse because of the situation, so it's, you know, in terms of access to products is going to be an issue.

And raising it as an important enough issue to pay attention to will also be hard because there's so many other competing demands. And then, putting menstrual shame in there just kind of puts the final silencing on it. It's like, okay, so, you know, you've had your little chat about it. You've had your day, now can you shut up about periods because we've got more important things to talk about. I think that's, that, for me is what's really sort of driving...so that, yeah, I can't think of the right words. But that, for me is an issue.

I: Yeah. I think that's true of a lot of people that I've spoken to as well is there's that fear that, as you say, we're kind of doing it ourselves now. It's not really a priority compared to, it's like, when you put it in that broader context with poverty in general, and wellbeing in general, and those are like the two key issues that we're dealing with at the moment in our society, aren't they? It's like...

R: Absolutely.

I: ...when you put it back into that broader context, maybe that's the way that, that people will, you know, still be listening and take it forward?

R: Yeah, absolutely. And I just think it's...it then really, really then it knocks heads up against the menstrual shame, which is so endemic.

I: Yeah.

R: I mean, I'm a practice nurse now and so I have, I'm starting to get, do my smear training in February and I do things like give people depot injections and stuff like that. Well, not quite yet, but I will be and, you know, people, the women that come into the surgery and that's...almost every single woman that comes in is like, oh gosh, I feel sorry for you having to do this job.

You know, because the nurse I'm with is always saying, do you mind if somebody is here with me, she's just learning the job and they're like, oh God, poor you. Every woman, every woman is just like, you know, this must be...and even the nurses I work with sometimes are a bit like, you

know, if they're like, I don't want her to come in when she's on her period. I don't want to see that.

You know, it's just...it's...it's so...it's just so accepted and so many women are on hormonal contraception, which is totally fair enough because, for all sorts of different reasons, but there's so much of a turning away from it as something a bit disgusting and a bit gross, that's it's just...I think, like I said, period poverty being on the agenda and people getting excited about it would manage to circumvent that a little bit. But, while it's difficult to talk about period poverty with other things, then you really hit against the fact that people just don't want to talk about periods. They don't want to think about them. They don't want to talk about them.

I: And, if in healthcare settings people are still having those attitudes as well.

R: Yeah.

I: Have you, just on a, I mean it is linked, so you being in the nursing area now, did you get any kind of sense about the de-prioritisation of women's reproductive healthcare during lockdown?

R: So, at the time I was community nursing, which was mostly with elderly people; but, from what I gather, no. Actually, in terms of smear testing, they...they very much were told to carry on with that.

I: Oh really.

R: And in fact, in fact I spoke to a practice nurse in another surgery and she said that they had a massive backlog of smears before lockdown and because so much, so many fewer people were coming into the surgery, they actually caught up on their backlog.

I: Oh wow.

R: So, they actually, yeah; so, they've actually been, I think very much the message has been increase the number of smears, increase, you know, don't slow down, don't cancel them. And, at the moment, with this COVID vaccine, you know, on the horizon to be rolled out, our practice manager is talking about trying to keep those of us in treatment room still prioritising, you know, seeing women for their reproductive health as much as possible, and not side-lining that.

The more long-term condition checking up, that kind of thing, has been lowered. You know, the annual checks, things like that. They haven't been happening with the regularity they would normally happen. But it seems to me that women's health is still a priority.

I: Is that the same with contraception as well?



- R: Yeah, yeah. Absolutely, yeah, those appointments haven't been cancelled. They are seen as priority.
- I: That's good. That's not been the same in other places. So, that's nice to know.
- R: Yeah, well, that's certainly what I've experienced here. But, I mean, I'm very new in it. I've been there about six weeks, but that's what I'm being, certainly what I'm being told. And that, I was employed because, for two reasons; I'm an extra new member of staff because they, they are not able to see as many patients because we are taking more time in between to clean everything down.
- I: Yes.
- R: And then, they are envisaging that once we're not taking so long and everything, their numbers are supposed...they are supposed to be increasing the number of smears and baby immunisations as well. But, smears and baby imms are the priorities apparently for getting through the GP surgery; so, we will be increasing the numbers going forward as well.
- I: Right. That's really good to hear.
- R: Yeah.
- I: And it's also reminded me that I've had my letter about my smear test so I must sort that out. Yeah, I know. It's not that time already is it? I'm sure I've only just had it done.
- R: I know, yes.
- I: It goes really quickly.
- R: How quick the years go.
- I: Yeah, it does. Anyway, on that note about something that's, yeah, about smear tests...
- R: Yeah.
- I: ...have you got anything else that you just wanted to add, or do you think that, are you happy with what we've talked about and what we've covered?
- R: I think that is the main thing, but the two big bits of work that I was doing in the project that just had to stop and it's difficult to start them back up again in terms of getting schools' attention, you know.
- I: Yeah.



- R: I'm not even going to attempt it until next February or March; I just think there's no point in...I mean, it's Christmas so nothing is every sorted over Christmas anyway.
- I: I know, and then it's a short term, isn't it? The...
- R: Yeah, exactly.
- I: ...the first term back after Christmas.
- R: So, losing momentum is a big one and then the task force was a really big one that we could have done some, you know, it was supposed to be culminating to have produced this big piece of work by now. And, obviously, yeah, I think that's a real loss.
- I: Yeah, yeah, you're definitely not alone in either of those experiences and thoughts.
- R: Yes. And, of course, the roll out product as well, for that to have sort of died in the water and not, you know, to...I mean, I've been trying to push it and tell people about it but, you know, one person is just, we need there to be, yeah, I don't even know how you do that, but that just feels so important, not to go, oh, you don't need it.
- I: Yes, yeah, exactly.
- R: Yeah, because the schools I spoke to, when they, you know, all the ones that came to the training, they really needed it. They were, you know, a lot of them were, some of them didn't so much, but a lot of the schools were like, yeah, we...we...our parents really, really need this, they really need it. Yeah, so they were very grateful that they were there.
- I: Yeah. Right. Well, thank you so much for your time and it's been lovely to catch up with you.
- R: Yeah, likewise. Likewise. I hope it's been helpful.
- I: Yes, it has been very helpful. As I said, lots of people have been involved in the Period Poverty Task Force and it's something that everyone is like, well, what on earth is happening with this? And people are trying to get in touch with, you know, government office or the people that are leading on the different strands and, yeah, they are coming up with the same kind of barriers. So...
- R: Yeah, yeah.
- I: Yes. That's unfortunate.
- R: Yeah, definitely, definitely, just to keep trying.

I: Yeah, of course.

R: And, hopefully your research will be really helpful in highlighting that need?

I: Yeah, I hope so. I'm going to make sure that everyone knows about it.

R: Yeah, definitely, definitely.

I: It's like we'll then see what happens.

R: Have you spoken to [REDACTED] at all, from Bristol City Council?

I: No, I...

R: She's not very easy to get hold of to be honest with you.

I: I'll put her down.

R: Yeah, if you can get hold of her I would speak to her because she's the one who spearheaded the whole campaign here, the Period-Friendly Bristol thing; so, even if she, yeah, she's really passionate about it; so, yeah, if you can get hold of her or somebody in her team at least then that would be great.

I: Yeah, I'll have a go. I'll have a go.

R: Do you need me to send you her e-mail address?

I: That would be great, if you...yeah, if you don't mind.

R: I'll get that, sure.

I: Fantastic. Right...

R: Good luck, keep us posted.

I: Thank you. I will do. And, have a good rest of your day and stay safe.

R: I'm glad to hear that somebody is still doing period poverty related work.

I: Oh yeah, there is, there's quite a lot of us that are still doing...chipping away.

R: Yeah, flying the flag, thank you.

I: Okay, no problem. Take care [REDACTED]

R: You too, bye.

I: Bye.

**End of transcript**