Researcher BN: Right, lovely. So if we could just start by going through your demographics so gender, and age and, erm, where you volunteered at and what your role was.

SP7: 73, and, obviously female. I'm er, divorced. And I volunteered, oh I volunteered for years. Yep, my first volunteer role was, erm, at the, well what I called then, I was only there in my early 60s, was er (name of location) Community Center.

Researcher BN: All right. (coffees arrive) Ah thank you.

SP7: Well at the ladies, old ladies luncheon club

Researcher BN: Ah okay.

SP7: Erm, so I used to do the bingo and, things like that.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: And help serve the meals.

Researcher BN: Uhuhh.

SP7: And, I, I was in (name of location) link, which was the first advent of, the, voluntary services getting together. That changed over to, well, healthwatch. And healthwatch is now done by PCP, erm, Pioneering Care Partnerships. And, when it was Healthwatch, erm, that would be up to three years, up to three one years ago.

Researcher BN: Right.

SP7: Yeah, PCP had just come in I think.

Researcher BN: Uhuhh.

SP7: Erm, we used to be more proactive and get out there

Researcher BN: Ah OK.

SP7: And, oh and I also did prior to that, er, I, I was on the over 50s forum at (name of location) Council. (coffee arrives) Thank you. Erm, and, and we were all civic minded people that, you know, wanted to know what was going on. Spread the word, what we could get out of the Council.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: We also did a loneliness questionnaire.

Researcher BN: Oh right.

SP7: Which, that was the first time they started going down the, ‘oh well, we've sent 100 out, to our staff and they've sent some out to somebody else’, and I said people, you're not getting to the right people. I'm fighting for the old people, by then (laughs), yeah. And, and so I said, you need to be out there, and me and my friend who has sadly died, we went out to all the old people's clubs that we knew about. (milk arrives) Ah that’s fine, thank you. (Name of location) social club they had a afternoon for pensioners, places like that.

Researcher BN: Uhuhh.

SP7: Erm, and the luncheon clubs, and anywhere we could find old people. And, they have to do paper questionnaires, and some of them just couldn't even do that (laughs). But they were the people that we needed to get to.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: So (name) and I used to fill all these forms, and we got a, I think they only got about 626 replies.

Researcher BN: Only! That’s still quite big.

SP7: Yeah, but we did nearly 400.

Researcher BN: Oh wow.

SP7: Because, and that’s what got me, was the fact that, it wouldn't have worked if it, if we haven't got..

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Such a lot. And, and, well, whether it did much good, it did put a few more formal arrangements in, erm, to the activities for old people. But by then, erm, Healthwatch, I, I don't know I think I, then, I actually got into the, the questionairres to go out to check care homes. To see what people were putting up with in care homes.

Researcher BN: Ah okay.

SP7: And, and you, they had a right of access to care home. And they, you were given, they were given 20 days to reply, to our er, questions. And that we put to them. And it seemed that we were getting, different or, well should I say, more searching responses than CQC were getting, because they were just ticking boxes and things like that.

Researcher BN: Ah OK.

SP7: Yeah. But I was, I was well, well I’ll say I was good at that, being searching because I was a visiting officer for the department of working pensions. So, for all I was just looking at financing in them days,

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: …we did, we did do a holistic service inside, and force people to places.

Researcher BN: Ah OK.

SP7: So, it became easy to me. Erm, and from, from then on, oh and then came in, we continued doing that, we used to have regular meetings with all the volunteers and we'd say what we've done and what they've done. And they all came from different areas and, different charities, I mean, there was er, food hubs, er cafes, food bank people, all sorts of things like that all got together. But, then COVID came. And I found it, difficult, well, I didn't know what to do with myself.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Erm, because I have COPD and I have arthritis as well. Erm, and it affected me mentally to be quite honest because I was so, from being so active, as active as I could be with me health problems, I just became one of the old people (laughs). You know what I mean, I don't like it. Yeah erm, so that was, well, a couple of years of torture. We did try and keep in touch, but by then PCP had taken over fully. Healthwatch is still around, but in, I don't know what format it does. Erm, I know it does do, it helps people, er, put complaints in, gives them advice on complaints. It still signposts services. But it’s, I don't know whether it's actually attached

Researcher BN: Ah okay.

SP7: ..to, to PCP, or, or whether their running alongside each other, because I've not actually got back into it to that extent. Erm, because everything went online,

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: ..and I am a complete technophobe, I admit it (laughs). And so, I, they’d send me things but, I couldn't take part, because, well, for one I didn't have the interest.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: And, and er computerized business, because I like to be out there, with the people.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Er, so, as a user, I think I, what did I tell you I’d done, I can’t remember.

Researcher BN: I, well I wrote some down (laughs). Erm CAB, healthwatch, Butterwick Hospice, AgeUK.

SP7: Now, butterwick hospice was very helpful to me, I’d been going as a COPD group, member, erm, and we just went on a Monday, er Monday morning, and we all got together and had a damn good moan (laughs)

Researcher BN: (laughs) Yeah.

SP7: An er, had a massage, but, I was having trouble at the time because I was also the main carer for my mam.

Researcher BN: Right.

SP7: Who died last year.

Researcher BN: Oh, I’m sorry.

SP7: Erm, 97.

Researcher BN: Wow.

SP7: She had dementia. And she wouldn’t, wouldn’t move out of her home. And it was very, very difficult.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: And I had a sister who, funnily enough, is a social worker. 16 years younger than myself. And she just didn’t want to know. How on Earth she became a social worker I don't know.

Researcher BN: Wow.

SP7: So the pressure on me was, really bad. Erm, because it was obvious that mam couldn't cope. But, she was determined she was going to, so it all fell on me. In amongst all the volunteering and whatever else I was doing

Researcher BN: Ah so that was all at the same time?

SP7: Yeah, well, I, I was just passed myself, I was worn out, and, and there was a counselor at er, at the, and, and she, she just listened.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Erm, and we got through it and that was it but, er so, that, so that was a help. And er CAB, I’ve only used for advice on, a problem with a neighbor next door. Whose conservatory leaks all over my drive.

Researcher BN: Ah (laughs)

SP7: But I never got anywhere. I live and live let live and I don't want to fall out with the chap but it is, he’s..

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: I hate to say it he’s very young and I’m just the oldie next door. So, that's that. But he has now got himself a nice girlfriend, so she might calm him down.

Researcher BN: Yeah, whip him into shape (laughs).

SP7: Mmmm.

Researcher BN: And Age UK as well?

SP7: Erm, AgeUK, what have I done with, what I did with, more with AgeUK is, I, when I go to these seminars and workshops and, erm the roadshows, erm, they always have leaflets and, and that, and I, I always take a full comprehensive thing of leaflets. Erm, so that, if I'm telling people, because they still ask me because I used to work with the civil service and I was, I knew,

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: I thought I knew everything. So that, if I ever give out any advice, I, I give it out from, you know, what I've researched.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: I don't just, you know, say how it used to be because that's no good.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Erm, so, and, and then, AgeUK also had, what they call a breathe, breathe easy group, which again is just like another social group,

Researcher BN: Uhumm.

SP7: Erm, and, I got some of the people, that only had ever been to the Hospice, to go to the breathe easy group as well.

Researcher BN: OK. Just as a bit-

SP7: A bit more social, you know.

Researcher BN: Yeah. Ah that’s nice.

SP7: Because, I think, I, I feel badly because I understand the problems after going through the COVID, of what loneliness is like.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Because, I mean, I've got my son, but he's in London. So, that's another story (laughs). But anyway, there you go. The funny thing about that was, I went down to London and I had such a traumatic journey down, er back should I say, to cut a long story short, I complained bitterly, because I am a complainer if I feel I've been mistreated, and I've now got, four first class tab-, er,

Researcher BN: Tickets?

SP7: Tickets, tickets.

Researcher BN: Oh well that was good.

SP7: From Mike Ross, who's the senior transport manager at, but, but the thing is, they're all on strike now so where can I go? (laughs)

Researcher BN: You can’t use them. They’re going to be out of date by the time you can go (laughs).

SP7: Well, yeah, they last a year. But, er, (name) said do, do come down for Christmas mam. And, so I'm hoping to get down there for Christmas. But it's saying it online if you do it, here’s me online, no good. You know you, you book your ticket and that, and you pay for it. I don't have to pay for it 'cause I've got these stamped tickets, I’m going to have to, I’m going to have to drill down to the station to find out how to do it.

Researcher BN: Yeah, all the bureaucracy (laughs).

SP7: Yeah, so. So, but erm, I, I think it must be nice to have your family around you. And that's why I felt so isolated, in the er,

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: And, because my older sister died, I don't bother with my younger sister after the carry on she had with my mother. Erm, but, what was in that last one?

Researcher BN: Er, ah it was the breathe easy group. Oh and Healthwatch, general advice from healthwatch.

SP7: Well yeah, now, we, as I say we used to have more meetings, so it was easier to, swap ideas etc. But now PCP have, a different idea, they do, they have invited me to go to the, the meetings, once things opened up

Researcher BN: Ah OK.

SP7: ..and I think it's on a Tuesday morning once a month, erm, that they’ll, they’ll get together. But, they send out things every week, I don't know whether I can get them up on this because it, with Wi-Fi and all, I'm not sure. (brings out ipad)

Researcher BN: Mmmm.

SP7: Let’s have a look. (goes on ipad) Yeah. If you look at the, SCC,

Researcher BN: Oh yeah.

SP7: That, they send those out regularly, to keep you up to date with what's going on.

Researcher BN: Yeah, research and things as well.

SP7: Yeah, so they, they, they're now looking at, more as though, whereas we used to band together and, do things, and discuss them, now, they tend to say, well, just look at your own area.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: If there’s more of you to cover other circles, erm, they’re just saying, you might have a circle of 30 friends or whatever, acquaintances. So as long as you keep them all, er, up to date with everything we're telling you.

Researcher BN: Ah OK.

SP7: And, and, I'm getting to see, wider things erm, like, like gambling and all sorts of things they send me and I’m thinking well, I don't know any gamblers. (laughs) So, and then my latest, interest if you like is, U3A.

Researcher BN: Oh yeah.

SP7: University of the Third Age

Researcher BN: I spoke at one of those (laughs).

SP7: Did ya, yeah.

Researcher BN: It's part of a team.

SP7: Yes, yeah.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Well, so, I've been looking round, to find out, because, they're getting shorter speakers. I haven't been there since last, about 6, about six months. But, erm, some of the, some of the people that they get to, talk, I mean, one man spent an hour and 10 minutes talking about, the house he lived in, yeah it was built in 1780 or something like that. And, and who'd lived there before, it was just too long.

Researcher BN: Yeah (laughs).

SP7: And too boring (laughs). I mean half an hour would have been interesting, but he had these pictures of old men and old women and I'm not, can I, can I leave now (laughs). And I'm trying gently, as a newbie really,

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: To see if we can get things that are more, even if you had like shorter talks, like if, if someone like you came and talked about your, ideas, half an hour’s long enough,

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: ..and then it gives everybody time to socialize. Because, they've got it now, and I was quite surprised that, yes, within the U3A they also have lots of, well I should have brought it, they have about 20 little groups within the main new U3A, er meeting. But they take place outside of the meeting hours.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Er, you get together, but, it's quite, awful for people that come on their own. And everybodys sat there just waiting to listen to this, person who's gonna talk, and then, so they don't get to socialize and that's what they go for.

Researcher BN: Yeah, yeah.

SP7: I mean, there was a lady came and, and she'd, she'd moved from Bishop Auckland. And, she was there on her own. Family didn't live close by, and she came in, and she said ‘oh, I'm just new, can I sit here?’ And I was fuming because, a friend, a neighbor said ‘oh no, I'm saving that seat for someone’ I thought,

Researcher BN: Aww!

SP7: So, so I said I'll tell you what I said, I'll move up and I’ll sit and talk to you 'cause, I'm soft as a brush really (laughs), and, and I mean we've become friends and she said, I would have walked out.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: 'cause I felt very, I said well, and she said, I was so relieved that you did what you did. (laughs) Yeah, but I want them to say, let the, let the man come or the woman or whoever is doing the talk. Let them come when we've had half an hour to have a cup of tea or, or can we have half an hour to have a cup of tea after they've gone? It doesn't have to be so instructive.

Researcher BN: Because they've come for the social aspect, yeah.

SP7: Yeah, yeah.

Researcher BN: So what, when you were volunteering, what was your day to day role, was that the collecting information or?

SP7: Well, we, we used it we, I, I mean er, I've given a, a talk before, or we used to go to all these roadshows, you know, where all the services get together, the Councils run them. Erm, and, and you’ve got all the stalls,

Researcher BN: Oh yeah.

SP7: ..that people go around, all the stalls and things like that,

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: ..and you get your leaflets and you get your advice. Erm, I was one, I was at one the other day, that was all, that was last Tuesday I think, erm, Stockton council that ran it, and it was all the services getting together, erm, to discuss the new regulations for warm homes,

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: …help it, help through the winter with the crisis as it is. And, they, there was roadshows there, Healthwatch was there, PCP was there. There was a, there was even a, a drug counselor there, with all of his little bottles of drugs and..

Researcher BN: Oh right.

SP7: so, I used to take part in that.

Researcher BN: Right.

SP7: Erm, for Healthwatch, we used to also, go and, on our table in the library, in the entrance to the library, and explain who we were, and what we were doing,

Researcher BN: Ah okay.

SP7: And, and how we could help people if they had problems, or come to us if you need advice or, signposting about this that and the other, if there's anything we don't know we’ll find out for you

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: And things like that.

Researcher BN: So was that was your day-to-day role?

SP7: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Researcher BN: OK.

SP7: I mean, I didn't do it every day.

Researcher BN: Yeah, yeah (laughs).

SP7: I mean, I did do it every day when I was working.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Because we, we were, we were trained to be holistic, even though we were actually looking at the (name)efits side.

Researcher BN: Uhumm

SP7: Yeah, yeah.

Researcher BN: Ah OK. So what did you like the most about volunteering, before COVID?

SP7: Erm, well, it did me good, and I think I did some good for other people.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: So, I have always been one, one to help other people. So, you know, some of the people you don't want to help (laughs), they come to, to the service counter, but, yeah.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Yeah.

Researcher BN: And what did you find the most challenging, aspect?

SP7: Of it?

Researcher BN: Uhumm.

SP7: Er, reaching out to the people that really needed it. You can't just send old people an e-mail or,

Researcher BN: Uhumm.

SP7: ..something like that. They need, and they understand, personal contact more.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: They’ll absorb more. So, and, and I’ve, you know, I’ve been serving people, well, 43 years I did in the civil service.

Researcher BN: Wow.

SP7: Yeah, and I got my invite to see the Queen’s Garden party (laughs).

Researcher BN: Wow, did you go?

SP7: Oh yeah.

Researcher BN: Aww!

SP7: Yeah, it was, it was that was funny we’re going off the subject now but, my son had just finished law school, and he was going for a trial at a firm, and he had, he’d only just started. Erm, and then we got the invite, and he, he, he asked, could he go? Er, could he have the afternoon off? They said, well, you've only been here a couple of weeks. He said, well I know, but I, you know, I've promised my mam and they must’ve thought, yeah right. And I said well, what's so important? He said, well, I'm taking my mam to Queens Garden party, he said. He said, do you know, that was the best thing I ever could have said, that was him in from then, because they’re all posh where he works (laughs).

Researcher BN: Yeah, they would have loved that (laughs).

SP7: Yeah, he said, I went up in their estimations. So, I, I said you didn't tell him why it was because I’d slogged for 40 odd years. It wasn't anything special, but yeah, so.

Researcher BN: So did you, do you think it was, did you take things from your role in the civil service..

SP7: Ah yeah, yeah.

Researcher BN: ..into volunteering?

SP7: Well, yes, it, I, I'm, I'm, I'm happy just, to, me I’ll talk to anyone (laughs). And, and I'll talk to people if I think they need, talking. And, and I, I think I learned, not to, you know, that well, I, I learned to just try and give them advice without bullying them into it. You know what I mean?

Researcher BN: Yeah.

Sp7: Saying well you'll make of that what you like and, this is just, you know, things you can do.

Researcher BN: Yeah

SP7: Yeah, yeah.

Researcher BN: Definitely. So what did you talk about with people that came to the stalls, for example?

SP7: Well, well, we’d, we’d, basically, they told you their problems, so you, listening is, is as important as talking I think.

Researcher BN: Uhumm.

SP7: Erm, and they, they’d say ‘oh well you know I can't pay my electricity bill’ this that and the other, and, and, and we'd say well there are schemes and things like that, and we’d just signpost like we wouldn't say ‘oh well you have to do this, you have to do that’.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Just advice.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Yeah. Er, friendly advice. And supportive advice.

Researcher BN: And how long would these conversations tend to last?

SP7: Just depended if there was a queue (laughs). I mean if there was nobody in and they wanted a really good natter they got a really good natter, but it there was a queue, obviously you’d say well, there's a leaflet, go and see that, you know, it might be CAB or, Mind, or..

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Or, yeah, the blind. You know, we, we had it all at our fingertips. And I still have a bedroom full of leaflets (laughs). But I’ve I get I think, no, that's gone, that's gone, you know, because as things change, you can't give people old leaflets and things like that.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Erm, I've also got, erm, independent age, they send me leaflets when I ask for them.

Researcher BN: Ah Ok.

SP7: Yeah.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Erm, and the over 50s forum is starting again, opening up rather than being on zoom. So I'm going to start going back to that.

Researcher BN: Oh great, so that'll be in person.

SP7: Yeah, yeah. Because you get your own, you get your own friends, within that, that all have similar they, they, they’re like me, they want to help. Don't wanna be busybodies I just want to help, want to be, want to help.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Yeah. So you form friendships with people with the same interests.

Researcher BN: That are also volunteering or in the same group, yeah.

SP7: Yes, yeah. And I think a volunteer gets as much out of the work they do as the people they help.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Yeah.

Researcher BN: Definitely.

SP7: I certainly did, because when I finished work, I, I just felt useless.

Researcher BN: So is that what motivated you to go into volunteering, or what was it that, made you start volunteering?

SP7: Exactly that. I thought well what do I do with me life now?

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Because by then (name)'s all settled down in London. Got his job, and that was it.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: I mean, I worked till I was 63. Erm, and I should have finished at, well, you could finish it 60. But er, (name) was still at college then, and it was when it was £600 a month, so I, I put down the hours. So I, just so I earned 600 pound.

Researcher BN: Yeah (laughs)

SP7: And as soon as he’d come out of that, erm well the I er, I gave up work at 63. But I thought, well, oh no, I'm not just going to sit at home and.. I, I go to craft classes and things like that. Well, which I enjoy, and,

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: ..and I've always, you know, helped people, made things for people. At the moment I'm doing dozens of poppies?

Researcher BN: Oh yeah (laughs).

SP7: Er, for a girl over the road because she’s like a churchy person.

Researcher BN: Uhuhh.

SP7: I can't say I'm a churchy person, but, I've been making I’ve, I've made about 80 poppies for the alter.

Researcher BN: Oh great. So you’re busy with that (laughs).

SP7: Well that keeps me busy when I am having to sit down.

Researcher BN: Yeah, yeah. So when you were seeing people in person, was it, did you ever see the same people twice, or was it always different people that you were seeing at these stalls?

SP7: You had your regulars.

Researcher BN: Ah right.

SP7: That would come in just because, to get a pen or a, you know a pencil or, or any of the freebies you were giving away. Funnily enough, the other day when the firemen were at the last road show where I was at, and they were giving out these er, plastic, (pauses as a group enters the room). Hello there (to the ladies who entered). We’re just looking at who you are.

Ah I, I work for like Stockton council.

SP7: No because this young lady is interviewing me about, er, voluntary work.

Researcher BN: The voluntary and community sector, yes (laughs).

SP7: I haven’t seen, I haven’t come across that lady before. But as you can see, I'm not backward in being forward (laughs) yeah, yeah.

Researcher BN: So yeah, you had some regulars. Would you speak to the regulars?

SP7: Yes. Yeah, yeah. So, I mean I’ve done everything you know, say from, bloody Bingo to, quizzes to, you know I'll do anything just to keep people happy.

Researcher BN: Yeah (laughs).

SP7: So.

Researcher BN: So did, like health and wellbeing ever come up in these conversations, when you were a volunteer, with people coming, say to the stalls, things like, alcohol, physical activity, smoking, diet, did those conversations ever come up?

SP7: They did but not being, not being er, good at everything you know, I, I wasn't aware, in any depth of a few things that I was discussing with them, so I had to always go with, go with the advice in leaflets and common sense really.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: You can't get too technical in any queries people, erm,

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: I just try my best. A lot, a lot of people were, like nervous and depressed, depression and such like, and, and we used to sit with them longer and, and, I urged them to try and get out and about and say, well we're glad you've come today and this that and, you know,

Researcher BN: Uhuhh.

SP7: So, that's all you can do, but, not being, not being er, a, a master of everything, it would be wrong to get in too deep, as a volunteer

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: And if you had any concerns, you'd pass it on to, like that lady’s obviously got something to do with the older people. So, you'd pass on any concerns you had.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Erm, so.

Researcher BN: So how did those conversations come about? For example like when you said if someone was depressed, how did that, how did that conversation start?

SP7: (sighs) It was more monetary people used to come. And, and then of course, and then of course that, that was easy for me because, I could go back to my old training.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: The only thing being people are so, er, it is now that the, I mean the department in Stockton, the, the working, they used to be the Department of Health and Social Security and then working pensions, the office is closed altogether now. So, where do old people go?

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: You know, you can’t get to them on the phone. A lot of them haven't got, erm, IT. They, they’re abandoned.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: So, for someone to, to just be able to listen to them, and try and get them through the minefield, and, and basically, a lot of the time it's just, well you'd have to go to CAB.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Citizen’s Advice Bureau. Erm, and the, the voluntary agencies have taken over, from, from a lot that we used to do and, and even CABs overworked.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Yeah.

Researcher BN: So..

SP7: I mean I’ve, this, a way out for people that are abused and then they've got the charities for, er, Autistic children and, and all sorts it's, Charities are the only thing keeping the, the poor and the disabled and the elderly going.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Because I think. They feel abandoned. Yeah, but that’s just, I mean that’s just our lives isn’t it, you know I'm one of the lucky ones because I’ve worked 43 years. I've got a good pension.

Researcher BN: Yeah (laughs)

SP7: But I really feel for those that don’t.

Researcher BN: Yeah

SP7: Yeah.

Researcher BN: So would you say money was more of a conversation?

SP7: Money and health.

Researcher BN: Money and health?

SP7: Yeah, yeah. Sometimes a lot of the time you'd get council services, er, you know the, the electrics off or, you know, there’s holes in the wall and things like that and, but it's, it's all a case of referring, referring to the, the right people

Researcher BN: Right

SP7: Yeah.

Researcher BN: Yeah. So how did the conversations come about? Did they come, did they start the conversation about health or did you start it?

SP7: Well some of them are just, some of them, the, some of the old robes they know exactly who’s who and, who they can have a natter with and if they can get anything, but, others would just say, well, what do you want? Because they’re sat in the door as you go in. Well we don't want anything. We’re just here, erm, so that if you had anything you wanted to discuss with us then yeah, well, and, obviously when you’re sat at a desk like if I was sat in there, I wouldn't feel as though I could talk like I have done, in amongst a load of people like that. Erm, so you were never really in a position, I have done it once or twice in the library, where I've left the colleague I’ve been with and gone and sat with someone quietly. But you can't get in too deep..

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: ..when you’re just on a table, waiting for people to come past and ask you about your leaflets and, and what you do, and what you can do for them.

Researcher BN: Yeah, definitely.

SP7: So you can’t be too deep. And if it's something, that’s more serious, I would then have to go to the, the paid employee of the you know because, because quite often there would be someone, a worker there with you.

Researcher BN: Ah okay.

SP7: And, and then they would take it. And with healthwatch, what, what we used to do is, we had like little postcard things and if, if there was things that anybody brought up, er, like problems with NHS, police, social services, any, anything. We would write it down on one of these postcard things and, and ask them to sign it. That would be all, like, sent back to the admin staff at Healthwatch and if they, they didn't deal with individual problems as such, erm, apart from giving advice and, and signposting you, but if it became a trend, like if six people have said, the fella that works for the Council comes but he does nout, he never does out for me, and the house is still in a bad, well then, Healthwatch would say, right that's a trend, it needs sorting. And they would er, the main team would send off, erm, and, and get some, something done about it, they’d say well, this is going on..

Researcher BN: Okay, yeah.

SP7: Yeah, yeah. And they, I mean Healthwatch, I can't say about PCP because it was only starting when I left and I’ve not really been back into it, but, they had like, er, there was healthwatches in, like nationally.

Researcher BN: Ah okay.

SP7: So they’d look at national trends as well, yeah.

Researcher BN: Trends, yeah. So when you said health came up regularly, what aspects of health, was there any themes or patterns?

SP7: Hospitals, hospital transport. Erm, home care, erm, disability in general, you know, facilities for disabled people.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: More things like that.

Researcher BN: Yeah, rather than diet and alcohol and things?

SP7: Yeah, and, finding out where there were little groups that they could join, for like minded people with similar problems.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Just getting out there and discussing it with, other people, sharing the same, I mean actually when I went to the Hospice, I went to the volunteer, to see what went on at this Hospice. Even though I had COPD myself, I'd never ever thought of going to a er, to a group like that.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7:Erm, and, and they, they were such a nice group and, and then, so of course I did decide to sit down and talk to them as, as a group. And then, one fella said, well you sound as bad as us (laughs). He said, why don't you come and join us? These beggars could do with livening up he said (laughs). And I thought, do you know he's right, and I did join the group, and that was a time when I was, stressing about me mam as well. And I was glad I had.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: So basically, I was invited into that group, when everyone, actually I’d gone as a volunteer.

Researcher BN: Ah OK, so that's how you started going to that group?

SP7: Yeah, yeah.

Researcher BN: And then what about the Age UK group? How did you get into that, the breathing group?

SP7: (long pause) I can’t really remember… yeah. But, and, and the over 50s group, before it went on, and, online, that, we were all, we were all fighters for Stockton at the time, all like minded people. And we used to go, we used to go around the er, we’d go to the recycling center and walk around the bin lorries and things like that (laughs). So, the volunteering can be very interesting.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Yeah.

Researcher BN: Uhuhhh.

SP7: Had it got you out and about, not just with, with your own age group, you were, you were going all over different places.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Seeing how things were done so that you could explain it to other people.

Researcher BN: Yeah, which makes sense, doesn’t it?

SP7: Yeah, yeah.

Researcher BN: So how did the conversations about health and mental health tend to go? Did they go well, did they, were they received well?

SP7: Oh, a lot of the time they were saying, er, you know, you’d get, well, what's the bloody point? Nobody does, ey I’ve said that myself.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Yeah (laughs), what's the bloody point? You go to the doctors and er, and they don't want to know, and you go to the hospital and they don't wanna know, I just, and so, if people are disgruntled, you just try and calm them down and, well, I asked them to be patient and I mean, it's worse now, I would think it's horrendous now trying to do it. But, or you'd say, you'd say, well, is there another avenue you could go, and you know, and something like that

Researcher BN: Yeah. And what-

SP7: Yeah. Explore different things, how you could alleviate these matters. I mean, as, as well as that lack of money was a big thing. But you'd point them out to different charities.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Even way back when, and I mean charities are in the forefront now, but they weren’t so much then. But, erm, it, it was just information and listening.

Researcher BN: Yeah

SP7: That's what the conversation was about.

Researcher BN: Uhuhh.

SP7: Imparting information, receiving information, and passing it on if it needed to be passed on. Yeah.

Researcher BN: Uhumm. And when you say it would be horrendous now what do you, what do you mean by that?

SP7: Well, you you're getting a lot more people that are, purely brushed off. That, you only have to look at the budget yesterday (laughs), don’t, don’t ya? Erm, they, they’re giving the, they’re giving the shareholders the, the rich people more money back. But, but they're not er, following through, I mean they’ve ditched the social care, erm, money that they were going, to do the social care that's gone, erm, and, and then er, well, now (laughs), it, it, it doesn't bear thinking about what poor and elderly people are, are gonna have to put up with.

Researcher BN: Yeah, I know.

SP7: I mean, again, I'm quite happy that I can afford it. But, I, I worry about the people that can't.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: And they feel they’ve got no, no one to turn to, and that's why the charities are trying to pick up, you know, all the dregs you know and,

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: To get, see them through.

Researcher BN: So do you think your role might be different in any way if you came, if you went back after COVID, now?

SP7: Well, yeah, again, you could just listen, I don't know that it would be any different 'cause you, all you can do is listen, and try and find ways to help people through.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: It's the same, only it will be a lot harder.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Yeah.

Researcher BN: So was there anything that stopped you from talking about, health and wellbeing, with people?

SP7: No, no, not myself, I'm not embarrassed about things like that.

Researcher BN: Yeah, nothing?

SP7: No.

Researcher BN: And is there anything that would help, would have helped you be able to have those conversations with people?

SP7: (long pause) No, I don't think so. I mean, I've always been quite, I suppose it, with all my training from the civil service I, I was used to people higher and lower and,

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: …I mean, I've, I've talked to employers and rich people, and I’ve talked to drug addicts and, so, all sorts so, yeah

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: ..and you have to learn to deal with people.

Researcher BN: Yeah

SP7: I think you have to be a people person to be a volunteer, put it that way.

Researcher BN: Right, yeah.

SP7: And, and you, you have to accept people, as they are, and if they, if, if they think it's something that matters to them greatly, you have to go along with it, even though you might think it's trifling

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: For their own mental wellbeing.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Yeah.

Researcher BN: So kind of flipping it on its head as you as a service user at like say the Hospice or Age UK,

SP7: Yeah.

Researcher BN: …how would you feel if a volunteer talked to you about health and well-being? Or would you want to have conversations about health and wellbeing with, volunteers or people that worked there?

SP7: On, on a one to one basis, but not within a, a big, you know, yeah.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: A big room or anything, that’s why I was uncomfortable to talk like this, in there.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: So.

Researcher BN: So if it was one to one?

SP7: Yeah, yeah.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: I mean, it just depends on the person, if I didn’t take to that person and I just thought they were a nosey begger and they, they weren't gonna do anything with that information, I just wouldn’t, I’d clam up.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Yeah. I think you have to feel comfortable with someone. I mean, I felt quite comfortable talking to you but I maybe wouldn't have talked to some people like that.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Yeah.

Researcher BN: Uhumm. And is there any, specific topics that you would want to talk about, as a service user, erm, around health and wellbeing, mental health?

SP7: Yeah, I think mental health is very, well it’s opened up now.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: But it, it is difficult to talk to. But I mean, I admit I've been through lonely, times during the er, during the, in COVID. Because I've been such a people person.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: And, and not being able to go out, and not having my son around, erm, and even my nice, nephew, erm, they only live round the corner but, you know, they could only come and stand in the garden and have a bit talk but, it's so strange.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Horrible. I mean, how would you feel? You’d be at college were ya?

Researcher BN: Over COVID? Yeah, I moved back with my parents. (laughs) that was interesting.

SP7: Yeah, yeah. And of course, not seeing, not seeing (name) for a long time, it was terrible.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Yeah, so. But, to me, yeah, I, I, I have low periods, I think most people do, because usually it's because, I mean, at the moment it's because I'm waiting, I want an operation on my neck. I’ve fallen over four times since May.

Researcher BN: Oh no.

SP7: But, you just have to put up with it don’t ya? And, they say, that's another thing that stopped me doing some of the things, my own health.

Researcher BN: Yeah, yeah.

SP7: But I won't let it get me down.

Researcher BN: That's great. (laughs)

SP7: I have got me mam (laughs), I am like me mam really. She wasn't giving up and she lived till 97 (laughs).

Researcher BN: That’s good (laughs).

SP7: Yeah, yeah. I remember taking her to a dementia club, so I had insights into dimensia obviously, and she, I’m taking her to this club and, she said, I'm not going there again. I said, what do you mean, it's nice there, she said, no it isn’t, they're all stupid (laughs). Daft as a brush (laughs) and I’m thinking, ah please stay there for an hour (laughs), it would give me a break!

Researcher BN: Yeah a break for an hour (laughs).

SP7: Yeah! Ah dear, but there you go.

Researcher BN: So is there anything you wouldn't want to talk about as a service user, with people that worked or volunteered at the groups?

SP7: I wouldn’t discuss like sexual problems or anything like that.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: I mean, if there's any form of abuse or anything like that, I'd, I’d try and steer them in the right direction. But as far as, and I mean I have talked about some, wonderful things in my job in the civil service, you know. Erm, and, and you’re paid to do it but, no, I wouldn't like to, I don't like to, and, and I don't like to, like you’d go into the, into the civil service and, and they, they’d be (illegible) While they were talking you know, and then one day I would come in and they’d asked for a bed. And this woman had asked for a bed and her daughter came in and said, where's uncle roger put me bed? (laughs) So, she said get out! And actually, this, this fellow that she, she didn't live with supposedly but I think she did, had, had taken her bed down and put it in the washhouse. So that they could claim some money

Researcher BN: Get another bed, oh.

SP7: Yeah. Ah yeah we got all sorts of things like that (laughs). So the little girl was outside crying as I left. And the door was open to the washhouse, and there was the bed. So they didn't get the bed, but I did report that like to social services, that, you know, that child might have been in, difficulties, yeah.

Researcher BN: So you probably brough all of that experience to your volunteering. You can deal with anything (laughs)

SP7: Yeah, yeah (laughs).

Researcher BN: Yeah, yeah. So what about, erm, like the other people in those groups, do talk about health and wellbeing with them more so than, erm, people who work or volunteer there, or, or not?

SP7: Which, we talked more with, with, with our own moans (laughs).

Researcher BN: Yeah (laughs).

SP7: In our groups.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: But, they were a diverse group, so I mean if, if we’d come across anything and we did discuss it in the meeting, and again we, there was no names or anything like that it, erm, so, if we wanted to come up against a particular problem, well then if we discussed it, they’d all throw in their bits of, how they would have dealt with it or, yeah.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: But I, I've never really had any trouble with anyone I interviewed, because of my experience beforehand I think.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: But as a, as a, as a, a new volunteer that had led a sheltered life, it possibly could be upsetting.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: But it, it didn’t upset me.

Researcher BN: Yeah (laughs)

SP7: Yeah (laughs)

Researcher BN: And, so you mentioned when you were a volunteer that, finance and kind of housing and things came up..

SP7: Yeah, yeah.

Researcher BN: Was that initiated by them or you?

SP7: Usually them.

Researcher BN: Right.

SP7: Yep. No, everything that, everything I talked about came from them. I didn't put anything on them.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: I only put advice. And, and listened.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Yeah.

Researcher BN: And how did those conversations tend to go? Did they go well, was it useful for them?

SP7: (long pause) You couldn’t, you couldn’t really tell. I mean, I know when I used to do, because these, like when we were sat in the library, or when we were in the roadshow, you maybe didn't see that person again. But I know, when I was doing me volunteering in (name of location) and doing the Bingo, and feeding them and..

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: The counselor organised it all.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Erm, she, she made them meals, soup and bread and a sweet, you know. And, and you built a rapport with those old dears. And, and they would tell you, you know, all their problems, family problems and things like that, and money problems and, and you, you felt like a source of comfort for them that you were taking, you were taking notice, because some of them had family that, they didn't bother with and things like that

Researcher BN: Ah okay.

SP7: ..and so it was, it was good, in a longer term way, that they could, they enjoyed your time with them.

Researcher BN: Ah OK.

SP7: So, but that, that's because you had, you were seeing them every, every week, once a week.

Researcher BN: So do you think that was different to your volunteering at Healthwatch in that sense.

SP7: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. No Healthwatch was it and PCP. And it's, it's transient really, isn't it?

Researcher BN: Mmmm.

SP7: So, yeah.

Researcher BN: So do you think, in terms of conversations about health behaviors, and wellbeing and mental health, that was more so within the, the volunteering role with the bingo and things, rather than, healthwatch?

SP7: Mentally, yeah. But even then, I couldn't do anything physically for, for, for those ladies.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: But mentally, I could just be there for them. But I mean, there's a lot more urgencies now. I mean, I was surprised when I saw this, er, you know, big chunky fella like a chunky fella, with a beard, with all his bottles of drugs. I couldn't believe it. And, and the, he talked so well, erm, about, you know, what he was up against with the, the druggies in the town and that, you know.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: And, and that, when I first started volunteering, it was under the counter on this drugs business, but now he's out there, banging his drum all over the place, and I think that’s wonderful.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Yeah. And I, I suppose you need a big, big, strong fella like him (laughs). You know.

Researcher BN: Yeah (laughs).

SP7: So, I, I think the volunteers are doing a wonderful job.

Researcher BN: Yeah, definitely.

SP7: Yeah. And where would we be without them?

Researcher BN: Well exactly (laughs). So do you think it's, an appropriate environment, kind of the voluntary sector, to talk about health and wellbeing, and finance and housing?

SP7: Well, you can talk about it, but you can't, you're not an expert, so you can only go by advice, can't you?

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: So. I mean the, the, there's a lovely lady goes around giving talks on er, arthritis. And, and she's, but she's knowledgeable and very trained. I couldn't go round and give a talk about arthritis, part from it hurts (laughs).

Researcher BN: (laughs) Yeah.

SP7: Yeah, yeah. So you can only, you’re a layman aren't you? Trying to fill in for, the missing professionals. You’re just that link.

Researcher BN: Yeah, yeah.

SP7: Yeah.

Researcher BN: So as a service user, for the COPD group and, with AgeUK, do you think it's an appropriate environment to talk about health and wellbeing in that setting?

SP7: Well, they did, they did in there. But again it was general, if you got somebody in that was doing the talk, I mean we, we had the multidisciplinary team come in, and talk, erm, when that was set up. And, and yeah, but then they don't do specific cases in an environment like that, it's just general advice.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Yeah. If someone pert-, asks a pertinent question and is quite happy for them to answer that within the group, they'll do it, but other than that they won't pointedly, you know, say, well what's wrong with you and this, that and the other.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: It has to come, it has to come from the person themselves.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Yeah.

Researcher BN: So is it always as a group you’ll talk about health and wellbeing, in that setting?

SP7: Yeah, yeah.

Researcher BN: Yeah. And is there anything that would help to have conversations about heath and wellbeing, in those kind of groups?

SP7: I think the fact of, if you're all in it together, it's more helpful. You know, you, you wouldn't want a blind man, a deaf man, and someone with arthritis all in a group, because they’d all have different problems.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: So it's relating to, you know, people that are in your position.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: But then again, when it comes to loneliness, erm, and isolation. Obviously, you’ve got all sorts of people that were having the same problems.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Yeah. I'm afraid (illegible) erm, me and my friend, erm, because we had gardeners, her garden’s behind mine and we have a gate through, and we do, both have high hedges. So we used to sit in my garden or her garden. And, we kept each other good, you know. ‘cause shes four years older than me. But, so, we were isolating, in a way. But, I mean, she always made her cup of tea and I made my cup of tea and we sat at the other end of the table, so we were isolating.

Researcher BN: Yeah (laughs).

SP7: But we were cheating. Well Boris was having his party wasn’t he!

Researcher BN: Well exactly! (laughs)

SP7: Yeah, so, it's just, as an older person, I would say, don't give in. Keep on going for as long as you can.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: I mean, I had two back operations when I was 42. And, and the surgeon said to me then, you can either sit back and end up in a wheelchair (SP7) or you can get out there and do it.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: And, and you know, here I am 30 years later.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Yeah, yeah. So, it's all attitude.

Researcher BN: Oh, definitely.

SP7: There again, I haven’t had the financial pressures that, that people are put in now, yeah.

Researcher BN: Yeah. And-

SP7: They, they were going to pension off when I was 43. I was like, I’m not going! (laughs) Yeah.

Researcher BN: So is there anything that, would stop you from talking about health and wellbeing in those, kind of group settings?

SP7: It can be an imposition on people if you force it. So, it has to come from them, I would say. You, you can gently probe. But, you know, you can't say you tell me this, you told me that when it’s, whatever is personal to that person is, yeah, you have to respect that, yeah.

Researcher BN: Uhumm. And, as a volunteer, how do you sense that, do you use previous experience, or?

SP7: Well I use personal experience but, I think if you, if you’re too probing, they’d just go wouldn't they, if they're not, confident and they're not happy with it. The same as I, I just fled out of that room because I wasn't, I wasn't ready to talk like this in front-

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Especially seeing as, there’s often friends of mine go in there anyway.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: So.

Researcher BN: So do you think it's about the setting as well?

SP7: Yes, yeah, yeah.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: That's why I wondered why you didn't want to come to my house because I mean I only live up the road, but. You know, you would, you would have been quite welcome.

Researcher BN: Aw I didn't want you to put the heating on, I was worried about the cost of living!

SP7: Oh for goodness sake (laughs). I could have given you a blanket (laughs). No, funnily enough I’m on a fixed plan erm, contract until September the 23rd next year, so I'm still on the list.

Researcher BN: Ah so it’s not gonna go up.

SP7: No, I’m saving a fortune! (laughs) Yeah, yeah.

Researcher BN: Ah good.

SP7: Yeah, I've got, I've got about 580 pound in credit. And I had 300 back, because I said you’re not having it all (laughs).

Researcher BN: (laughs) Well that’s good.

SP7: So you could’ve come.

Researcher BN: Aw. So when you were volunteered, what kind of training did you receive in, talking about health, wellbeing, housing, things like that?

SP7: Oh, we did, we did, we had a, a course, one day a week, for about four or five weeks. From a lady trainer, I can’t remember her name. But, a lot of it, it mirrored, what I'd had in the civil service. How to come across to people, and how to listen, that's more important than what you say, and things like that. Yeah erm, and how to overcome, people’s stress, or overcome their objections if you've said something that's a bit, you know, interfering, yeah, it, it was, we did have good training through healthwatch on that.

Researcher BN: Oh OK.

SP7: Yeah. And, and PCP, er, from what they've said, I haven't actually read it yet, but, since I’ve been introduced back into that, they've sent, they've sent me a thing, advice for, I don't know whether I can find it on here (holds ipad), I won't, ah I won't be able to open it because it's not online. Erm, advice for volunteers. And how to treat people and that.

Researcher BN: Oh right.

SP7: But that's an online instruction where I, I prefer to talk to people.

Researcher BN: Yeah, yeah.

SP7: Yeah.

Researcher BN: So, are you familiar with like the term like brief health intervention, or, making every contact count, have you ever heard of either of those?

SP7: Well yes, yeah. Make every day, make every contract…

Researcher BN: Yeah it’s a bit of a mouthful isn’t it, we just call it MECC.

SP7: So, so what, brief health, so what’s that one then?

Researcher BN: Just basically what making every contact count is. So, I was just wondering if you’d hear of those terms, either one, or received training in them?

SP7: No, no, I'd, I'd, make every contact count, yes.

Researcher BN: OK.

SP7: But that, that again, goes back to me visiting duties at, so I've just, you know that’s, do everything properly, in a way, and act diligently and, in a way customers will be comfortable with, yeah.

Researcher BN: So is that when you worked-

SP7: Well, yes, so they did just change the name haven’t they so,

Researcher BN: So is it making every contact training that you received?

SP7: Yeah, yeah. Well, it probably wasn't called that when I received me training. So in, in, in essence it would be that. But it wouldn't be called, but I can recognise that as being similar to what I have.

Researcher BN: Oh right, yeah

SP7: Yeah, yeah.

Researcher BN: And do you remember if it was useful, if you took anything from it?

SP7: Well, obviously 'cause I was quite successful in my role. And, and I didn't come up against many, erm, events, that, were a problem.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: So.

Researcher BN: So, did you receive making every contact count training as a volunteer, or was that just..?

SP7: No, I think I, through my job. I can't recall, whether I, we did that as a topic in, in the healthwatch training.

Researcher BN: OK.

SP7: Erm, so I can't, I can't recall whether we did, but it wouldn't have, it would have gone over me head anyway because, I’d be the clever one really, I know I’m not (laughs)

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Yeah, sorry.

Researcher BN: Yeah. So in terms of any training you, if you went back to volunteering that you'd want they receive training about..

SP7: Oh I’d take training.

Researcher BN: Oh OK.

SP7: I’d quite happily take training now. Because-

Researcher BN: ON, having those conversations?

SP7: Yeah, because things have changed and people have changed. I've changed I suppose, I have a different attitude now to when I was out there with me, brief case, yeah. Yes (laughs)

Researcher BN: Oh OK.

SP7: Being called names I mean, it wasn't the easiest of jobs I tell you.

Researcher BN: Yeah (laughs) I bet.

SP7: Yeah, yeah.

Researcher BN: So what kind of training do you think would be useful, as a volunteer?

SP7: Handling difficult situations. Erm, (long pause) not promising more than you can achieve. Er, well, having a friendly, approachable attitude. Is that enough? (laughs)

Researcher BN: Yeah (laughs)

SP7: You’re testing me brain now.

Researcher BN: Yeah. Okay, so you think, it would be useful?

SP7: Oh yeah I’d take, I’d take training now.

Researcher BN: Yeah. On any specific topics around health and wellbeing, that you would want to, have more training on? Talking about those things with people?

SP7: Probably, 'cause I haven’t come across a lot of it, the mental health training. Erm, the problems there. Erm, and again, social isolation and, how best to deal with it in the current circumstances.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: 'cause people can't afford to get about and, and, well even down to bus transport. I'm getting about the country down to train transport when people can't come and see the people they love.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: So, and then bus strikes for a fortnight on end. It's, it’s no wonder people are struggling, yeah.

Researcher BN: Yeah. And is there any other resources that would help, alongside training to have those kinds of conversations, as a volunteer?

SP7: For everybody to be a good neighbour. And try and start, more neighbourly, like it was when I was a kid. I mean, I lived in a village and I can go in anybody’s house and nobody bothered, nobody locked the doors, it was wonderful. I was one of the lucky generations.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Yeah. Considering how it is now. Everybody was aunty or uncle, yeah (laughs).

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: But I mean, even during COVID, I mean I live in a, a cul-de-sac and there's, there’s 16 houses, but, I found during COVID, that brought us all a lot closer together, and, and me being one of the older ones, people would say ah (SP7), I'm going out, we had a WhatsApp group. I haven't been on a WhatsApp group. Yeah, and we had a WhatsApp group and, they’d say ah well I'm going to Tesco, or somebody do you want anything, well I’m doing this. They’d never done it before and I've lived there since 1977. Yeah, but I mean everybody had said hello, and they’re friendly but, they never offered particularly to help.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: But, it fostered such a lovely, and then we still do it now,

Researcher BN: Ah, that’s nice!

SP7: ..not to the great extent, but, we, so we are a lot closer now, than we were before COVID.

Researcher BN: Oh, wow. So that's kind of a positive impact.

SP7: Yes, yeah.

Researcher BN: Ah, OK. So do you think, having training in, kind of brief health conversations like what we've been talking about, do you think that would ultimately improve the health and well-being of people that come to see you, as a volunteer?

SP7: Er, (pause) yes, it can be, you can't do any harm. As I say, if it makes everybody more comfortable, to, dealing with this, or, so being, brave enough to bring up concerns, saying, well, I wouldn't dare do that, how would you approach it, and things like that. So Sharing, sharing ideas, within training, is, good as far as I’m concerned.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP7: Yeah.

Researcher BN: Oh OK. So do you think it would be a good thing?

SP7: Yes, yes.

Researcher BN: Well that was everything I had to ask you. Is there anything you want to add, or you feel like, we haven't talked about enough, or?

SP7: No, no. So, so, when, when you say you do your talks, how, what do you talk about then?

Researcher BN: Well, hang on I’ll stop this.