

Q = Julia

A = Violet C (Rainbows Group leader)

Q Thank you very much for consenting to this. So just a word of explanation at the beginning, when we are talking about technologies and in this context we mean things like the actual devices, but we're also thinking things like media content, website content or popular culture type things that they might have encountered through those devices and also making robotics or you know, creative things they might do, scratch and coding and so on. So all those things, 3-D printers, anything like that comes under, so it's a very broad view of what we are talking about with technology, just in case that is relevant. And when we are talking about play we are talking about adult-led, child-led and sibling-led play.

So first of all if you could just give me a bit of background about the activity or group that you run, the Rainbows, in other words, what does it do and also sort of how often it runs and who funds it and that sort of thing.

A OK. Well I run the Sheffield Rainbows at [local church] and that is the first rung on the ladder for the Girl Guiding community and we have children there from age 5 to 7 years old before they subsequently move on to Brownies and then Guides and 14 to 18 is the senior section. We meet once a week, we are a charitable organization but we fundraise all our own money or we can apply for charitable grants. The girls pay a nominal fee a week to come and join us which covers us buying our resources, subsidising, it is generally subsidising costs for trips, we can't unfortunately ask them to not pay anything for all the trips. We have to pay a yearly rent on the building and all the staff that are there, the adult staff are all there voluntarily. We have 15 girls at any one time with us and we have to have a 1:5 adult ratio for the girls.

I have been involved in Guiding since I was a Brownie myself. And then I progressed through that to be a Girl Guide and then took my leadership qualifications to then... And now I run my own unit. Yeah.

Q Lovely and how long have you been running this one?

A Ten years in January.

Q Fantastic. That's great, thank you. So what sort of things do Rainbows do in their sort of weekly sessions and what are the kind of aims with regards to Rainbows?

A The main aim of Rainbows is to provide the children with opportunities that they wouldn't ordinarily get themselves at the home or within the immediate family. One child a few years ago when she was in my unit, her face absolutely lit up because she realized that they were going to take the baking home that we'd done because where we are geographically we are classed as a deprived area, being on the border of [two north Sheffield suburbs]. Some of the children that come to us come from a wide variety of backgrounds and four of five different schools, so some of them don't get those experiences at home. It's about fun, making friends, developing new skills, becoming independent young women and giving those girls a safe space and a voice to air their feelings, thoughts, issues, particularly probably as the children get older but obviously we are governed by our safeguarding policies and things like that as well, if we feel that there are concerns, god willing I've never had to deal with one yet, but we have to keep our training and everything up to date and all of our records and everything as adults and all of our information about the girls themselves is becoming

ever more online as well. We have an online system logging all of the details of the girls and all their badge work and all their personal details on a system called 'Go' and obviously each leader has their own username, login, passwords and I can access the details at my level and obviously able to access the higher up within Girl Guiding you go you get given more access to that.

Q Yes I will come to how sort of your own use of technology as part of the organisation. So just thinking about Saskia, how often does she usually come to Rainbows?

A Well we meet weekly and her attendance is very good. Even before Katie came to help as a parent she would come every week as would her older sister, Stephanie, so yes I've had both girls and yeah they come every week and they seem to love it so, yeah.

Q What sort of things would Saskia typically get up to each week, you know, as part of the session?

A We do all sorts really. We have a wide and varied programme and before the programme changed it was the four jigsaw pieces which was look, learn, laugh and love and that was the ethos of Rainbows and to some degree we still look at those sorts of things but it's just been rebranded into the new programme. It's all you know, we do the arty crafty stuff, we...the idea is now that the badge book and the programme is maybe 60% of what we do in unit meetings and the Father's day and Mother's day, Easter, Christmas, all those sorts of other things that we look at is the other 40%. As a unit we decided when the new book came out we weren't going to try and run two alongside each other while one phased out and the other phased in, we were just going to roll with it and we knew where we were from the start with the one programme. Again, it's learning the things Saskia would do would be sort of a mixture of activities that the girls would suggest themselves in our Rainbow chats at the start of a term. We as adults would meet to do the planning meetings and allocate some weeks as blank weeks and the first meeting back the girls would have a chat in small groups and put their ideas towards the programme and we'd slot them into their, the ideas being that they can work as individuals, work in small groups and work as a whole unit and just expose them to all those different types of ways of working with people and cooperating. I don't know what else you want me to, is there anything...

We try to sort of enable in every way possible, we try to go out once a term, we took the children bowling this term. We might go, we generally go to a park in the summer term, we've been to the cinema before, we've gone to the arena to watch Disney on Ice before. Yeah, we've done all sorts of things with them. Again, just to provide those experiences.

Q It seems then sometimes that part of the sessions there's often there's a little bit of play or game or something like that, is that sort of a regular...

A Yeah, they like to have a bit of a game, yeah, just to break it up. Sometimes the other week one of the girls taught us a new game.

Q Oh yeah, what was that?

A It was called 'Sharkey, Sharkey'. That was a game they'd learnt elsewhere and they taught it to the rest of the unit. Sometimes they'll play one of the old firm favourites, yeah, it's just, we like to do a mix of us taking the lead with them and them, we've run weeks before where two of the Rainbows have been in charge of all of us.

Q Oh gosh, what for the whole session?

A Yeah. They've had to go and with their friend they've had to plan what we're all going to do and we do it as well and give them the ownership and if they need a little bit of guidance then we'll step in but they've had to go and buy what we need, they've had to go and bring it in, they've had to start the song at the start of the session and end it at the end and give out Olivia, the mascot, at the end and be the leaders. Other units might run it differently but again they may get other experiences elsewhere and for a lot of our girls they don't, they don't. And we find for our demographic, some of the girls, as they get older, might just go to Guides with their revision books and sit in the back and just revise in a quiet space because home isn't the right place. So yeah, it's really interesting and empowering for them I think to have that girl only space.

Q Yeah that's really interesting. I mean the session seems to have a bit of a structure to it so at the start, so there's obviously stuff happening at the beginning and it seems that there was a craft activity and then there was the mascot and then there's the game and sort of some circle time so different elements seem to make up the whole.

A I mean it does change depending on what's going on and I'm sure that you'll notice a difference in styles to Fiona and myself when I lead next week. Are you coming back on Monday, they'll, there's naturally people are different and different styles and the girls respond to us all differently...that's natural human interaction isn't it? So...

Q Yeah, absolutely. So it's got that flexibility within the overall ethos of the ???

A Yeah. To be honest I'd be lost with, you know I'd be lost without the team because I couldn't run it by myself with all my other hats and my job and the boys and everything else and we do work together and I think that's what, I'd say we're a successful unit and yeah I think we do them proud and they do us proud as well. They really do do us proud.

Q That's lovely. So just can you think of a time when, has technology featured in any way, small or large, not necessarily as a central thing, but do you ever use technology in any of the sessions in any way, can you think?

A I haven't really in the sessions, we are using technology any more in communicating with parents. The shift in terms of letters and consent forms and things and sending photographs. We have a private Facebook group and the parents are on that and I feel that...

The information sharing of what's going on in the unit, I think they like being involved in knowing what's going on and what the girls are doing once they're with us and then also similarly with the new programme, sharing things with, because part of the new programme is, a third of it is, they do an element of it at home and so they can share with us what they've done to earn the badges and I just find that's quite a successful forum for parents. They might send it on the group or they might just send it me on a messenger message to my personal Facebook, just to say 'Oh have they done enough to earn their badge?' So I think at the moment, I mean, Geocaching and sort of GPS and things I know that's in the programme but we start at stage one and two and it goes right the way up to six and so it's a very structured thing to avoid the repetition and build on prior skills. It's very, in a way they've taken away a lot of the school structure and some of what is done in the

Rainbow programme is what's been taught at school and maybe a bit of embedding in a different way so it is interesting and it's just unfortunate I've not got an example to give you.

Q No that's fine, you've given an example with the Facebook. I'm really interested in that. Do you find that that's more parental involvement through technology, rather than the girls themselves engaging as it were with the parent or on behalf of the parents through their Facebook pages do you think? I mean obviously the parents have to have a Facebook page in the first place but I just wondered if you see any involvement from the girls themselves?

A I can't think of an instance whereby maybe the child's sent me the photograph on their parent's, they've not said to me 'Oh this is from X, Y or Z' but that's not to say that I wouldn't encourage it, it's just that we've not had that opportunity yet. I mean...they'd all quite happily sit there on an iPad I think. I think the knowledge at home and things and use of tablets in general and use of digital cameras and things, there may be some sort of photography element that we've not got to yet that might come in...

Q In the programme? Through the badges and so on?

A Yes. I mean there's nothing to say, they did a self-portrait, a self-portrait thing whereby it said 'Look in the mirror', but if they looked at a photograph, that's using another form isn't it? There's nothing to stop them doing that.

Q So how far does this reflect the policy of the parent organization and how far is it more of a local and personal approach? It sounds like you're just easing into the, what's been the new programme I guess.

A Yeah, the new programme, yeah. And like I say it's designed to build up...

Q Yeah is there specific stuff, is there technological stuff at the Rainbows level do you know or is that still to be investigated?

A I think there is, but like I say I've not... I'd have to have a look online and maybe send you a message with the link on.

But I know there is as they get older, so there will be something somewhere in there as a building block when they get ...

Q As a starting place, yeah.

A And I think it would be in the 'Skills for my Future' but if I find it this week I can show you the elements for the next...

Q Thank you. That would be great. I suppose it's early days for you in terms of embedding that and I think you were saying before the voice recorder came on that you were, sort of working perhaps on the older style, you know sort of the older style jigsaw and things.

A Well we abandoned, as soon as the new programme came in we made the decision to stop, we weren't going to run two programmes alongside. We went on training as to how it works and there's three elements to the programme now, whereby there's an interest badge, a skills builder element and then there's unit meeting time. Now the interest badge for Rainbows, there's two choices and that's the bit that they do at home and to earn one of those

badges there's three things that they have to do to earn the one badge. Obviously as it gets to Brownies and Guides that changes. The skills builders are A4 cards which you might have seen floating around when you were there last week. If not, I can show you when you come back. So there's the skills builder element and you have to do one of them to pass that part. There's three parts to each of the six elements and then you have to do three hours of unit meeting activities as well and it's designed, the programme is designed to take two years to complete but I've had one Rainbow who is really enthusiastic and she's already done four of the interest badges at home and she's not been in Rainbows that long but she just loves it. She loves it and we've got to catch her up now.

Q That's lovely. So just thinking about your own experience, do you think you've used any websites or apps or got anything from those that you've then used in a kind of face to face way actually in the sessions themselves?

A I might have found resources to print off and use with the girls for like making things or looking at information and reading about things, you know, maybe about guiding around the world or different foods around the world and things like that. I would use it personally in that sort of way as a tool and obviously information recorded about the girls that's changed massively now, it's all electronic. In terms of the girls using it...not so much. We, unless I ask the parents to bring it in to use with us, we haven't got it in our building to freely...

Q Because you're just in the church hall aren't you?

A Yeah. It would have to be them bringing it in from home for us to be able to facilitate that.

Q Do you ever sense them bringing in knowledge or ideas that they themselves, you know is there ever any influence of kind of technology use, things they're bringing in, games, or names of games or popular culture hero characters, latest films, is there ever any kind of reference to, yeah, popular culture?

A Just in everyday conversation?

Q Yes or in what they do and the things they suggest.

A Yeah they're always talking about their interests and 'Oh I saw that on YouTube' or you know, 'Oh SnapChat' or 'Have you got an Instagram?' you know. They're very aware of it even if they don't use it themselves. They are aware of what it is and how it is used.

And I know we, but internet safety generally is a massive thing with children nowadays isn't it? And we have to, we don't, we drip-feed it in because ultimately they're with us to have fun but staying safe at the same time and obviously we don't drum it into them but every time we feel you know, this is private information or whatever, we talk about it and we say to them in the book with Olivia where they take home and write her diary we say 'Oh you can take photographs of what you've done or you can draw what you've done with Olivia this week and write her diary, that's up to you'. Now the majority of the time they do actually draw. Now whether that's because it might cost mum and dad to print the photograph off and stick it in because if mum and dad are taking a photograph on their phone, like I say we are in a deprived area, some children we have to give them spare uniform, parents really struggle to buy the tops. I'm not very strict on that. Other units are quite strict but I just ask them to just to have the polo shirt. They don't need to have the full shebang that

some parents do but I just say if they've got the top, any red bottoms from wherever is fine, whatever's in your capabilities to be able to provide.

Q Sorry just going back to the photos, if that has ever happened would you be careful about the photos having other children in that aren't anything to do with you know maybe members of the family who've got caught or a friend who's not part of the Rainbows group, are there any rules around that?

A What that the parents stick in Olivia's [a doll which one child takes home each week] book?

Q Yeah in Olivia's book. Is that a problem or is it fine?

A For me obviously the parent sticks the photo of their child in because they're happy for that to be in but if there were other children in the photos or that the parents had stuck in I would just verbally check that that child was OK to be in the book as well. Obviously we on our paperwork we have a box for sort of internal photographs of children for safeguarding and then we have sort of a tick box for publication further for that so maybe like Girl Guiding Sheffield documentation or further afield than that. I haven't yet come across any of my Rainbows that have refused photograph consent.

Q So are you taking those photographs of them on your phones? The adult helpers? Is that how you document...?

A For our own personal group?

Q Yes.

A I take them and then I upload them onto the private page for parents to see what's going on. I take the photos. Like I say, there's no parent at the moment that's refused photographs of their child.

Q Right so this is the Facebook page that you mentioned is it?

A The private page, yeah.

Q Yeah, that's right.

A But that's only...

Q That's a private group isn't it, a Facebook group for your particular unit.

A Yeah.

Q Yeah so it's, yeah it's really interesting communication there, so you're communicating what happens perhaps during the sessions or on an outing or something like that?

A Yes and there are a couple of Facebook pages for Girl Guiding Sheffield and so things like Remembrance services or camps or activity days that children have been on generally,

Rainbows, Brownies, Guides. Obviously if there was anything in particular, because they like to hear what all the units in the county are doing. They do get put on there as well, but obviously with parental consent to share the photographs wider than...

Q Oh I see. That's how it works is it?

A Yeah.

Q That's really interesting. And so in terms of just documenting in photos, is it more the sort of special things like an outing or a camp that you might photograph or would you ever take some of these sessions themselves?

A No I photograph the sessions in every week.

Q Do you take photos every week? Or more or less?

A Well most weeks, you know, if there's something going on in the meeting place I will take photos of that as well, like they did, they made puppets and then they did a show and so I recorded the shows for the parents to see and I uploaded those.

Q Was that a video rather than a photo?

A Yeah and then photos of them like cooking or planning a story, climbing in the park, just dependent on what they're doing, I'll try and capture it for the parents to sort of really see what they're doing and the feedback's really positive on that.

Q I was just going to ask, so will people like it and comment?

A Like it, comment or just you know yeah and I think that...

Q Yeah so is it mainly the child's family that will comment or is it the mums or is it everybody will comment on each others?

A It's mums and dads, but obviously it's only them that can see it. Obviously I can't control, if they...if they choose to share a photo of their own child then that's fine and I've never yet had to ask a parent to remove a photo with another child in because if I have taken photos of children, I don't know, making their promise or something and the parents are obviously really proud of that and they want to share it with their friends on their own page which is fine. I mean I know that all my parents have signed consent to say that they're OK with photos but I've never had to chase up with that so I'm lucky that I think my parents are quite savvy with information sharing and know that we are quite savvy about information sharing as well.

Q Yeah, so that must be a bit of a difficulty because you don't know if they, so presumably like the promise it might have other faces in the background.

A Yeah.

Q So they might be able to use that on their own personal Facebook page, or they have probably.

A Yeah and I think...

Q Or they have probably done that.

A They haven't done the promise, that was just an example, but if they had shared the video of their child doing the play you know, I would have said you know 'Can I just check with parents first before you put that on your page?'

Q Yeah, so you tend to just react and ask and just double check. Yeah and it's been OK.

A Yeah.

Q It sounds really interesting.

Q Oh that's brilliant. It's a really interesting thing actually isn't it? So what kind of, so it's other parents kind of commenting on other peoples' children as well as their own, is there a bit of a conversation would you say?

A Yeah because we're all, because we're all in the same group all the parents see all the photographs so I could... I'll get my phone.

So this is us. So it's a private group and that's all the parent members there, so I put consent forms on there to print off and bring in for trips and parents will comment on them. Information sharing about various events coming up so I've done like the Christmas service and Remembrance service. A parent uploaded photos of her daughter selling poppies at the local Morrison's there. And that was her uploading her own .... That's another one of my ??? Fiona.

A We went bowling so I put some photos up from bowling.

Q Oh that's lovely and you get some comments back on some of those?

A Yeah so...

Q Yeah, 'Thank you' and 'We enjoyed it' and that sort of thing.

A Yeah. And I think it's just a really, a bit of badge work 'Express yourself', they're writing their own story about...so sort of doing their planning and.

Q And this is just at the church hall then in one of the sessions?

A Yeah, yeah and I think it's like there, Saskia, yeah so she did some work at home and I brought it home just to look at and see if she'd passed the badge. She had and then that also not only lets Katie and Saskia know she's passed the badge, it shows other parents what they need to do with their child to pass the 'Interest' badge.

Q Oh so maybe providing a bit of inspiration.

A Yes.



Q Sorry do you mind I'm just following up on that...

A That was the 'Family Tree' Interest badge, so she had to draw round her hand and five people in her family that helped her, people in her family tree, so Stephanie and her mum and dad and granddad.

Q Oh drawn a tree, yes I've heard all about these in all of our visits, so that's lovely.

A And then sort of she had to think about different names that people in her family have so her dad there, so 'Daddy' is also 'Mr N\_\_\_' and 'Matt' and I can't quite read that last one, [nickname based on surname] I think that one says.

Q On so a nickname, maybe his mates, yeah, oh lovely.

A Yeah so, I use it for all sorts of different reasons.

Q Yeah it's very interesting actually, yes and it's a bit of a conversation and a good way for folk to communicate with you and there's a lovely photo ???

A A lovely one there, yeah.

Q Looking proud after taking her Promise and receiving the first 'Interest' badge. I mean do you think it creates a bit of community across the parents as well would you say? Or not? I just wondered.

A Yeah erm...

Q Or perhaps they know each other already?

A Some of them do know each other already.

Q They were from different schools I think you mentioned earlier.

A Yeah. I know there was a camp, there was a camp in the summer, was it this summer or last summer? It might have been last summer, time just flies and one parent really wanted her child to go to the camp but she couldn't drive and for insurance purposes we can't be one to one with a child in our own car so we can't transport. We'd have to have two adults with a Rainbow. So she asked if anybody would, if one of the parents would give a lift to her daughter and they did and so it's good for all sorts of...

Q Oh so it's a good channel in that way.

A Yeah. Yeah. For us it works, for other parents they might prefer the old style sort of notes, information, that sort of thing but I think it's nice to see what the kids are doing and I know my son's Beaver group there's a page for that and they share photos of them doing things as well and what they've been doing and...

Q So do you get training on this as part of your, you know leadership training? Or has it come in since more or less you did that?

A What using Facebook for sharing?

Q Yeah particularly.

A No because that's just something we've chosen to do ourselves.

Q So it's based on bringing your own knowledge of Facebook to that situation aren't you then?

A Yeah. We get training on...there's four elements to the training programme. So there's the planning of a wide and varied programme, attending meetings and running the unit. There's reading the relevant documentation to the age range that you work with and obviously if you moved units there's certain bits you'd have to redo as age appropriate to that...

When I did Rangers, because I do Rangers as well, I had to do certain elements again for the older girls.

And then there's like a first aid bit and accounts.

Q And is the training face to face or is it an online training? Or a bit of both?

A The leadership qualification is you're assigned a mentor to guide you through it. As part of that there is some face to face training that you do, like your safe space training is face to face. You have to do a first response training which...unless you do something and you can prove that you do something first aid related at work that is an equivalent thing, you have to do that as well face to face. Obviously the safe space stuff is all the safeguarding stuff. There's a lot of online stuff as well but the qualification, the training for the qualification, there's also a lot of just face to face chatting with your mentor, providing evidence maybe of activities you've done with the children, so probably a pro forma of something that you've done, to say that that's an activity you've planned. A bit of evidence is like a term's worth of the accounts for the unit.

There's a tick list at the back of the book for the first aider and the building check.

It is good and some of the training you have to update maybe every two or three years.

Q Because obviously technology is our focus, I'm going to keep coming back to the Facebook page because it's fascinating actually and I'm just thinking about yourself as a Facebook user, because obviously you're quite experienced with Facebook you feel confident with it and, yeah, I mean how long would you say that you personally have been using Facebook?

A I've been using Facebook oooh....when did I, maybe about 12 or 13 years when I put my page on.

Q OK and was that your idea? How did that Facebook group at the Rainbows come about? Was it your idea?

A I think we just had a bit of a discussion and thought what the consensus would be between us as leaders first, we've got a separate, I mean my, we've got a separate page just for leaders and I upload the planning documents onto that and then we highlight sort of which leader's going to be planning and running the activities that week so we have a separate thing

for that or we might just sent a group message and we just put it to parents and it just drip fed in really and it's just become part of us as a...

Q It sounds as if it's really embedded as a practice now.

A Yeah.

Q So roughly I mean how long do you think it's been going the Facebook group for the parents?

A The group?

Q Sorry you've just put your phone away.

A No, it's fine...when did it...when did it.... It must be...back to 2016's here, yeah, created the group July 2016. So three years.

Q Oh brilliant. Yes and do you find that all parents are not all parents but all families let's say, are they all on the Facebook group? Do they enjoy it?

A There's one family that isn't but we have text message, we can text as well. We have each others' numbers. So like if a child's not going to be able to make it for whatever reason, if there's been an emergency or whatever then they can just send me a text or a private message if it's more personal you know. They might post on the Facebook group and say 'Oh I'm really sorry they can't make it'. Yeah.

It's just a shame I can't really talk to you much about the way that technology is used with the girls as such because it's...

Q Yes it's all about to unfold but at least we're here at the start, so that's good. I mean would you say that there's been an increase that this new programme...from what we know of it because of the growth and the spread really of technology in all of our lives would you say this programme is trying to take account of that?

A Oh absolutely. I mean the programmes change in line with the times and I know some leaders can be resistant to change. Obviously I roll with it because I'm used to things changing, I think that's an age thing as well. Things change more frequently now, whereas the older leaders, I think familiarity's their comfort zone and I think you just have to be, as a person generally nowadays, in all areas of life, I think you've got to be a bit more open to change haven't you and I just go in with the attitude to Rainbows that as much pleasure as I get out of doing it, I'm doing it for them.

Ultimately, that's what I'm doing it for and if I, yeah, everything's a bit daunting when it first changes isn't it?

Q Of course. But then we adapt.

A We adapt, yeah. In my work life we're in the process of going paperless and that's terrifying some of my colleagues.

Q Yeah. You said you were a carer, is that it?

A Yes.

Q Respite home?

A Yes. Children with disabilities.

Q Just to contextualise what you were saying, of course.

A Yeah. All of our record keeping and care notes about the children's respite with us is all going to be going online and that is going to happen and it's just enabling us to deliver a better service as a council really because all agencies involved with the children can see everything that's going on.

Q So it's like you with that Facebook page for your helpers, you know, it's actually like an archive and stuff and documentation that you all need to see together. It's like keeping important documents together.

A That's on the Go system. Everything about the Go system, yeah, that's a separate thing. All of us as leaders can see and read, but I can edit for our girls because I'm the leader in charge. But my staff can see it.

Q Yes I understand. Yes. But your own planning was on the Facebook for the leaders, is that right?

A The planning is just a Word document that's taken as a pro forma from the Girl Guiding website and because they provide so much for us and we get quarterly magazines and everything, I'll admit I'm not the best at keeping up with reading it.

Q It sounds like there is a lot to keep up with actually.

A There is so much. So yeah you download that or you download the consent form for whatever, you do the planning and then I will post it onto our leaders' page so everybody's got a copy of it and go from there.

Q And, sorry, that was the Facebook part wasn't it? The central stuff.

A Yeah the information and record keeping about the children...

Q Yes. That's on the system.

A And parents now as well instead of it being an old fashioned pencil and paper system there's no 'Oh my daughter's interested, can you put her name down for when there's a space', it's all digital. You have to log on to the Girl Guiding website and register your child's interest or there is a strand for registering your interest as a parent / helper, so then, so Katie would have had to log on to Girl Guiding and register Stephanie. I get an email to say 'You've had a new enquiry on Go, can you touch base with this parent to let them know you've received their details', so I will log on and say 'Hiya, I've got your message about your daughter X, I'll be in touch again when we've got a space' and then that stays on my database for my unit and then I'll see who's next. Some girls I've had on my waiting list since they were newborn.

Q Is that the Google hub or Alexa you've go there?

A Alexa, yeah. So it's, yeah, my husband's a sound engineer so he's very into his technology.

Q Oh I see. Oh you've got another strand there.

A So that's another way Guiding's progressed technologically speaking as well. So I'll look at my list and I'll consider 'Right, how old are the girls? Who's been waiting the longest?' There are unfortunately circumstances whereby they're nearly seven, so I'm going to put them on the Brownie list.

Q Oh on the Brownie list, of course.

A So I pass them on and transfer them to the next unit. So again that's all digital as well.

Q Yes, no that's really interesting. So that's covered very well all the questions here about other uses of technology in the organization.

A All our training records are on there as well. All our personal details and all the trainings we've done. If we've attended there's an administrator in the Girl Guiding building, I don't know if you've ever seen it. You know near the roundabout. If you look there, opposite, other side of the roundabout there's the Girl Guiding building.

[Speaks to son using Alexa speaker] He loves technology, my eldest.

Q How old are they?

A Four and six.

Q Sorry you were saying about the building.

A So there's an administrator that works voluntarily for Girl Guiding Sheffield who keeps all our records and things up to date. We fill out the attendance and then it's all logged on there as to...

Q Gosh, quite a big job then isn't it, all of this?

A Yes, it's massive, yeah.

Q It sounds very integrated.

A Yeah. Yeah.

Q So just going back to the use of technology in the sessions, I know you basically don't really use it very much.

A Not very much, no.

Q You talked about taking photos but I did notice when they were singing the other night that they were using someone's phone just to sing along with some of the song that they had been rehearsing I guess for the service, is that right?

A Yeah.

Q There was kind of a bit of dialogue at the beginning I think and oh they had to say the names of all the Reindeer and then they sang 'Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer' so I just wondered if you ever did use technology to provide music in any setting?

A Yeah to provide music and things like if we put a bit of party music on or something like that but again that's more, that's more us using it as opposed to the girls which, again, I'm really sorry I can't help you out too much with that element of your research.

Q It's having an effect on them isn't it? It's part of the whole thing so I'm interested in your use of it for them if you see what I mean as well as your own use of it.

A Yeah and we they're not fazed by it you know if we're using it, what did I do the other....? I played a game with them and then I play this game with them whereby I just named four corners of the building, four different shops and they have to run to a shop and then what I did, 'I've got a text', I had my phone, I was like 'I've got a text, that shop's shut because there's a flood so you can't go to that one' and they all found it absolutely hilarious and they'd obviously heard it because Love Island was on at the time and the adverts ping up don't they on the telly? And it's like 'Got a text!' and they, I think it's just in life in general with young people it's just one of the ??? isn't it for them with the...

Q And they've obviously responded with familiarity and sounds like there was a bit of laughter around that.

A Yeah, they found it hilarious. And then I was like 'Oh got a text! That shop's shut now but that one's open now but those two are shut' because obviously if I pick a shop and they're out then there's less girls to play the game so then you have to be creative as to how to sort of bring the game in a bit, so I'm like 'Oh well that shop's shut because they've got no bread' or 'That shop's shut because the car park's full' or whatever and just being really creative with it and...

Q Yeah. So was that premeditated then because it sounds like it just occurred to you or you just did it without thinking about it.

A Yeah, just made it up.

Q What, spur of the moment?

A Yeah, yeah.

Q And then after that did you find that you were incorporating that because you knew it got a good response? Would you do that again?

A Well that was just a one-off. I think you know you've got to be creative haven't you when you're working with children. You're a bit of an actor aren't you more than anything anyway when you're working with children.

So you have to put all of your issues to one side don't you really and... Yeah but I think I've got the confidence to do that with my skills with teaching and working with children in my job as well. I think all of us as leaders bring different things to the table. I'm the one that can I guess put on a bit more of a show for them.

Q No that's great and I'm sure they love that and it's, you know obviously that really hit home just for that momentary piece of humour to it.

A Yeah. They do, they...most of the girls know where the line is and I just bring it back and know how far to take it and, yeah, so.

Q That's really good. We've got a set of questions here about just your general perceptions about technology and media.

A Personally?

Q Yeah are you personally and I suppose how they might impact a bit on what they do at Rainbows or not and you mentioned a little bit before we began to record so probably this is a good place to recapitulate some of those ideas. So I'm wondering if you think any technologies or media associated with technologies are particularly positive or negative for children?

A I think obviously the use of, the use of media is such a positive thing generally but there's got to be such an emphasis, personally, on education of children and young people, how to be safe when they're using it, you know, in all areas, in all guises; school, home. My eldest son is autistic and he got particularly obsessed with YouTube and so we uninstalled it because it was creating behaviours that could just be eradicated through removing it.

Q Was that because he liked it so much he just couldn't come away from it?

A He couldn't come away.

Q Or was it because he was copying what he saw?

A No. He would not come away. He would quite happily sit there and watch YouTube all day and so we removed it.

Q Are you OK again to have that recorded and we're talking about your boys which is not perhaps where we had...

A Yeah because this is from my perspective, so yeah.

Q Thank you. That's generous of you.

A I think no it's fine. We made the decision, my husband and I, to do that and I think, I think generally everything in moderation is a healthy way to be as much as he likes the technology and he'll play on the Switch and stuff, he goes to Beavers, the boys go swimming,

they do after school clubs as well. They are very active in other ways and we just try and give a balance of everything and I think education is the biggest thing. But I did mention pre-recording that I'd said certain games and certain apps and things like you can play chess on a tablet, you can play Connect 4, you can do all of that. But you can do it with the physical thing as well. You can bake on a Kindle, on an app on a smart tablet or a phone. But where's that family time and experience? Even if you just get a box of just add water, you're not even doing, it's all there, you don't have to weigh and measure all the ingredients and stuff. I think if you're not careful the children are becoming less exposed to that side of things as well and those life skills are important. You can kick a ball on a, you know, on an app on your phone. There is still such an important place for all that side of life as well.

Q Yes, so you're not advocating not having it online but you feel it should be complemented by the physical.

A Absolutely. They need to see... They need the visual, they need the auditory, they need the kinesthetic. They need an exposure to all of it and that's what we've tried to do at Rainbows because families don't always have the resources, the time, the financial means to provide those sorts of things for their children. I mean we try to do as much as we can with our boys and be as rounded as possible and our parents, the children's grandparents, my father-in-law exposes the boys to looking at motorbikes and looking at cars, he's a mechanic and so they get to watch him doing that. My mother-in-law is an amazing baker so she does that and we get the benefit of eating it.

Yeah. I do little bits of baking and things with the boys but I want to give them that special memory of doing that together as well. That's a nice grandson-grandma thing to do together. My parents, my dad's the crazy one that's getting a scooter for Christmas and going scooting with them.

And I think you know all those sorts of, it's an exposure to variety I think and technology most definitely has its place in that. A lot of my technologies was self taught because I was at school when it was, you know, one laptop every week round the whole school and if it came in your class you still weren't guaranteed to have a go on it because you know, there's thirty children in a class and then the television being wheeled round the classrooms. Yeah that was my experience of that sort of technology. I mean we were fortunate that we had a computer at home, but I'm sure other families weren't that fortunate.

Q So it sounds like you think technology is important.

A Absolutely important and technology like you know, Lego and Kinect? and things like that, that sort of technology as well.

Q Toys as technology but toys in the physical world.

A And robotics and remote control cars and one of my sons has got a, it's like a Rubik's cube type thing but it's a digital thing and it's got all different colours and the little digital bit will tell you the colour combination you've got so many seconds to turn the, to turn everything round.

Q Oh gosh I haven't seen one of those. That sound great.

A I'll have to find it. If you're interested I can show you it. You have to turn the blocks round to get to the right colours and copy patterns and things.



Q So it's like a challenge.

A Yeah. But he's equally as happy sat doing a word search. He loves word searches at the moment and again you can get them on a Kindle or a tablet. My mum's tablet has got them on electronically but he saw a book of word searches in Asda and it was £1.50 and I'm like 'Yeah', it's just, you know it's such a valuable tool but I do feel that it's important to...

Q And is your main worry, is it about sort of as you experienced with your older son, the sort of the obsessive use of it, is it that they can't you know put it down, is that your main concern or do you have other concerns as well?

A I wouldn't say it's a concern because we've controlled it and we limit it but I could see how...

Q I mean that sort of shaping a more general concern about for young people.

A Yeah. I think if generally if people don't balance it with their children and see the value of all the other stuff as well then it could dominate and you know the skills of letter writing, writing thank you cards, all those skills that are so important and so personal, just to be sent by an email or a text or whatever. I love getting letters in the post, you know? And those sorts of things, those sorts of things will die out if... do you know what I mean?

Q Yeah being replaced by emails and, texts and things.

A Yeah, emails and texts and things. It's amazing but there's a place for all of it, you know. The boys like sticking the stamps on the letters when we're doing the Christmas cards and posting the Christmas cards. They'll come to weigh a parcel and pay the, you know, and I like to expose them to that and even if their understanding of it isn't fully embedded yet. The exposure's there and sort of online shopping and things. That's quite scary in terms of the amount of people that are increasingly out of employment because people are shopping more online, you know.

Q Yeah and that's a concern you feel...

A I would much rather go and stand in a queue at Asda than go to a self service, because technology is taking people's jobs away in certain areas of life. So yeah, I don't know how you feel, if you feel the same, but that's my personal...

I once did a safeguarding training as part of work and I was there with my deputy manager and they were showing us a picture on the slide of different apps and there was one, there was two or three I didn't know but there was in particular and it was a calculator or it appeared to be a calculator to a parent. The child typed in a code on the calculator and it opened up a private chat room and it was, there was children had been using it and it raised major concerns and safeguarding issues with those children and who they were talking to and what images were being sent, without parents' knowledge, thinking oh you know just looking at the screen you think 'That's a calculator' and it isn't. Children now, because they are so savvy with it, and the development of those Snapchats and Instagram and all that sort of thing, they're so savvy at sending and don't always have the knowledge as to what, you know it's all nice being able to send photos to your Rainbow group but if certain images you know, all the sexting and all those sorts of things that technology, if that gets into the wrong hands

somebody's only got to Google your name after a job interview, goodness knows what comes up.

Q Yes that's another impact indeed.

A You know it can have massive implications for future employment can't it? Because I don't know if you've ever Googled your name and whatever comes up on yours you know.

Q Yes that's right. I imagine it's being thought about in relation to the girls in the guiding movement. And of course the boys in the Scouting movement as well, trying to as you say back up and reinforce I think you mentioned earlier what's happening in the school curriculum with it.

A Yeah I think we are, I think schools are realising that those things you know that the shift has changed massively with regards to the fact that children do do a lot of activities out of school and there are other adults other than the parents and the teaching staff in the school that do know these children, maybe not as well but they see different sides to them because for us it's more relaxed, they behave differently when not at school, there's not a learning objective to finish, there's not a lesson structure as such, obviously ultimately by the end of the meeting time you want to have finished doing something and the new programme for us, there is a structure. We have lots of A4 sheets, laminated sheets which are ultimately a really detailed lesson plan with everything on it and the links are there.

Q Well that's really interesting actually to see how it comes in. I just want to turn the conversation back, to the idea of play and creativity. I'd just like to come back to more positive side and whether you feel that play with using technology is a creative thing or can it support creativity?

A Of course it can, of course it can. The boys have got, you know, those V-tech first cameras and using digital cameras, you know they can do colouring.

Q Oh the colouring in ones is it? Yeah.

A All different sorts of things.

Q Apps and things like that?

A Yeah, you know looking at, they've got some CBeebies ones and one of the options for like, I don't know it's Octonauts or Paw Patrol or something and they can colour in their own pictures and they can screen shot them. It does foster creativity and in terms of improving hand-eye coordination, motor skills, all that sort of stuff, definitely. It is such a positive tool. My son likes playing on the Switch. My husband sets it up for him quite high so he's not always falling off when he's doing his Mario Kart.

A My son loves doing the driving on there and the other one is beginning to take an interest and sort of electronic toys for little ones and learning creative play in that way.

Q Does your husband get involved in their play or do you?

A Oh yeah we do yeah, he's better on that than me but I can just about manage Mario Kart but you know doing all of that and

Q Yeah, on the Switch and ??? Yeah I can see.

A Yeah we play to our strengths.

Q That's the only way to do it.

A Yeah I think, again I think it's all so important you know.

Q Do you see either here or in the Rainbows or in your own family life, do you think certain types of technology or certain apps or certain websites or games or media content, do you think that aids sociability in any way, do you see the more social play with certain ones compared to other ones, I don't know, compared to YouTube or there's such a range isn't there, so...

A Well I'm sure that as the boys get older they're going to be messaging their friends aren't they and all that sort of stuff. My husband talks to people on his Xbox account that he's never met that live all over the world and I'm like 'But are they really friends?' He'll be like 'Yeah we've known each other quite a long time' because he's a big gamer.

Q Yeah so he brings all that experience into your...

A He's met up with one or two locals. I'm like 'But what about...' I...

Q You find that a little bit difficult.

A I just don't get it. That's just my personal thing. I'd rather sit and read a book or sew or whatever.

He likes gaming and guitars, that's his remit, yeah. I think for the boys, obviously school communicate with us using apps in terms of sending messages and emails and they have like a reward system called 'Class Dojo' so if the children have done anything particularly good and they get points for it, I can look on there and see how many points they've done and I can communicate that with them and say 'I know you've had five Dojos today' or...I mean there is an option for reporting bad things but generally that doesn't happen because the teachers with them only being in Key Stage One, it's still very open door and foundation stage as well. So the parent, the teachers will generally grab you for a chat as opposed to putting it on there at the moment, but obviously I think as they get older and parents are less and less in the classroom, you know, if there's any issues to report then that would communicate with us as well. What else? Other apps...

Q What about the, you mentioned about the YouTube but that seemed to be less of a success as it were from your point of view.

A Yeah. Again it has its place, but for us it created negative behaviours for my son with autism and sometimes we've, the other one is getting better now but he would, when he was younger, he would replicate behaviours.

Q That he was witnessing on...

A Yeah that Simon was displaying, he would be copying, he would be copying what Simon was doing as a reaction to it and actually no, you're just doing that, you know, for some form of attention, negative or positive. It wasn't something...

Q Was it an emotional display of some type?

A Yeah because sometimes particularly, we're OK at the minute, but if Simon's going through a bit of a blip and the way he reacts, he's very placid, very happy or absolutely, there's no in between and when Levi was younger, because he is only four, trying to, he was copying because he didn't know anything else.

Q Of course, looking up to his brother and so on, yeah. Sorry again I just want to remind you I am recording this so don't, if you want to stop at any time please do say.

A No it's the way, the use of technology, we have to be quite, we have to give the timelines, the countdowns for Simon because he would just go absolutely over the top. There was one, you know, my husband said 'I'm going to throw it out the window. We don't want this behavior anymore and if the telly's gonna be the reason, it's gone'. And I'm there like 'Don't do that'.

I think, mainly I think you can get different, you know, tills, little finger operated tills for little ones can't you and we had an interactive desk thing that provided experiences and scenes of different environments. It was a jungle one and a classroom and all sorts of different things for the children. They've outgrown it now, we've just sort of sent it away.

Q What was that?

A Like a V-Tech thing with a seat to sit on and it provides an exposure to an environment that you know a child might not have ordinarily, you know they might not have gone to a theme park but whereas a slide or a, you know, an exposure to things but there's a lot to be said for the real life stuff as well is my main thing.

Q Thank you so much. It's been absolutely fascinating.