

Speaker 3 (00:00)

## **Lexi Interview**

Sarah Hughes (00:00)

Workie Ticket Theatre is proud to present our bonus episodes to complete series one of the Woman Up podcast. This includes four real-life interviews with some of the women who inspired our audio plays. Episode six, Lexi and Leslie. These podcasts contain adult themes and some strong language.

Sarah Hughes (00:29)

Lexi, we have known each other for how long now? How long do you reckon? Three, four years. We've started. Yeah. But you don't have to do a posh voice. You can just talk in your normal voice.

Lexie (00:41)

Right.

Sarah Hughes (00:42)

How long do you have known each other for? Non silent. What a terrible, terrible. I'm just trying to make you feel relaxed. I left that on purpose.

Lexie (00:54)

About four years.

Sarah Hughes (00:55)

About four years, yes. So I come and work in the College where you attend and you keep trying to get rid of us and I keep Boomerang back.

Lexie (01:06)

Last I checked, I was one of the ones that helped you back.

Sarah Hughes (01:10)

Yeah, you were. Last time I nearly left, Lexi got his back. So that was fabulous. So you know that I've got a massive soft spot for you because I think you're absolutely brilliant and I think I thought it was just because you're as crazy as I am. Well, it's similar. Yeah, it is. I think we've got a similar sense of humor, haven't we? But I know that when this whole pandemic started, I was really concerned about a few of the leaders here, but you in particular remember emailing Sarah and Karen and checking in on you a lot. So I thought you'd be a brilliant person to interview for this podcast to hear about just a different perspective and a different experience. So are you happy to tell us a little bit about the different conditions and things that you live with daily?

Lexie (02:02)

Yeah. Okay. So I have autism learning difficulties, one of which is Irlen syndrome. There's not much kind of knowledge around that yet. It was thought to just be an issue with requiring a colour overlay on top of things to break up writing, but they're starting to understand that actually it just affects all of kind of social processing. And I also have mental health, so I have post traumatic stress disorder, chronic depression and anxiety.

Sarah Hughes (02:39)

So you do amazing need to keep going like you do every day, coming in here, dealing with all of those things. Obviously, even before covid came along, they were probably difficult enough to all deal with in conjunction. Can you tell us a little bit about where you were living before COVID hit and what your situation was like then?

Lexie (03:03)

Yes, actually just over a week before I was in the process of moving and I actually got settled into my new accommodation just four days before.

Sarah Hughes (03:18)

Right.

Lexie (03:19)

So I was living in a shared accommodation with two other girls and support workers coming in every single morning for 3 hours and then like another hour or two for the other girls. As well?

Sarah Hughes (03:31)

Yes.

Lexie (03:33)

And then I moved to my own flat literally four days before everything kind of closed.

Sarah Hughes (03:40)

Yeah. And were you keen on moving your own space?

Lexie (03:45)

No, it was something that I've always talked about quite positively about, but in my head, like, quite far off in the future and kind of with a lot more planning involved, but I didn't really have the best, kind of, like, working relationship with me. Social work didn't get on with their great. So, I don't know, maybe just, like, miscommunication and maybe just lack of knowledge around kind of autism. And she didn't really know how to go about the whole process.

Sarah Hughes (04:24)

She thought you might just adjust to it like that.

Lexie (04:26)

I think she kind of went down the route of how a lot of people think to deal with people with mental health, which is kind of drop them in it and then put the support there to help the situation, because they often kind of have the assumption across the board that if you give somebody with mental health time to process something, you're giving them time to get more worried and kind of build up the barriers to prevent it happening, whereas that can be the case. But with autism, that time to process it is crucial.

Sarah Hughes (05:02)

So important.

Lexie (05:03)

It's the difference between the person actually wanting that thing to work and not.

Sarah Hughes (05:09)

Yeah.

Lexie (05:10)

So, yeah, it kind of just fell through and 1 minute I was like, it might be happening and the next minute I was like, literally being told that I could pick up my keys in a couple of days and to start moving me stuff.

Sarah Hughes (05:25)

So you went from a really structured kind of environment where you were coming to College. You've got a pretty good support network here at College, haven't you? And then you had the two girls who you were living with and then the support coming in every day and then suddenly, less than a week later, it looks like, what, what's the new set up?

Lexie (05:48)

What was the new set up there a block of 28 flats. So my own contained flat within that building, one bedroom joined kitchen, living room and a bathroom. Really nice flat and everything, but just no kind of confirmation on what support I was given, what the official hours were, who was going to be

providing them. And literally, just as we were going to start having those talks, I was informed that actually the company that was supporting me would not be able to come in at all. They were being completely withdrawn due to COVID. And the situation was you couldn't even, like, you don't even feel like you could get angry at people. You almost felt like it wasn't your right to get angry at people because how could you tell them to put themselves at risk? But at the same time, I was in this flat, I've been in there orbit four days, couldn't actually remember me way to all of the access point, in and out point. There's three different entry points and I didn't know all of them. It's like the block of flats has been built on a Hill. So the way the complex works is you've got free entrances that take you out onto Level Street.

Lexie (07:13)

And I was like, well, how do I get to the main entrance? It's not going to take me to a cul de sac where I'm going to have to go down a load of cobble alleys to find my way out.

Sarah Hughes (07:23)

Yeah. And in terms of practical help, so knowing actually where you were geographically and where to get to shops and did you feel safe to go to shop?

Lexie (07:34)

Well, I don't really independently go out. I do fence out sometimes during the night I have insomnia, so sometimes I will catch taxi to a local area more out of boredom than anything. Yeah, but I don't really go out during the day because it's too easy to get overwhelmed.

Sarah Hughes (07:53)

So were they still practically supporting you in terms of your food shopping and essential trips out? Nothing?

Lexie (08:00)

No. I literally just got a phone call. Not even somebody come to the door. I literally got a phone call telling me that all they could do was call and see if I was okay. And when I said to them, how do I go shopping? They said, well, somebody could talk me through making a list. And then I said, well, how do I put my washing machine on? And they said, well, somebody could talk me through how to do that. And they said, well, problem is I can't see the stuff on the washing machine as best as what I can see. There's a circular dial that's writing around it, which I can't see, which is very common with a Irlen syndrome, not being able to see things in a round form. So like clocks, things like that are kind of a. No, no, I got on really well still do with a lot of the staff.

Sarah Hughes (08:52)

So I would say the staff in the support accommodation.

Lexie (08:55)

Yeah. Because two of them were the same staff that had worked with me at the previous.

Sarah Hughes (09:00)

And were they supposed to call in daily?

Lexie (09:06)

So in this new place, the hours were to be decided. But when they were told to back off is all they were told themselves was that they could not come anywhere near the property. It's all they could do was call us.

Sarah Hughes (09:19)

So I know that you've got a brilliant support network here of other largely female staff here who've been fantastic for you. I think haven't listened since you very first started coming here. Did they step in and how did they step in then?

Lexie (09:42)

So within the same day of finding that out, I was, for want of a better word, losing my mind. I was all over the place. I was panicking. I have a habit of kind of stamping everything up to worst case scenario, end of the world sort of situation. So I was calling and I'm like, I'm not going to be able to have any clean clothes, so I'm not going to be able to Cook.

Sarah Hughes (10:11)

I think it felt like the end of the world for a lot of people who were in much more comfortable setups than you were in.

Lexie (10:21)

Not irrational and in your own home was chaos. So it was like, well, hang on a minute. I have absolutely no idea where to start. And I've got some really great people around me that work at this College that kind of said, look, don't worry about the funding. Don't worry about that. We'll support you. We'll get in touch with social Services. We'll let them know what's what and work out the funding at a later date. But right now we'll do whatever we can. And before I knew it, I had twelve, if not more. But I think like a regular sort of 12 hours where people are coming in to support me, kind of off their own backs, if you like. The company kind of just decided to help.

Sarah Hughes (11:15)

Okay. And in terms of kind of practical support, what did that look like? What were they coming in to help you with?

Lexie (11:24)

So I had a couple of different supports from the College, two being female and actually one being a male support worker. And I got on with all three of them. Absolutely great. And I was getting help to go shopping to collect my medication. I was getting my medication from a new pharmacist. And they had also just found out they could no longer separate medication into Blister packs for you. So the first time that we went, they just gave me a load of boxes. And so we bought a kind of cheap put your own set up weekly pill box. And it was kind of blind leading the blind. But we kind of work together just to figure out what they can put everything in on, what times the days stuck some coloured dots on them just to recreate kind of what the Blisterback used to look like.

Sarah Hughes (12:30)

Yeah.

Lexie (12:31)

So I had support with that bills. I'd been obviously just moved into a new place, didn't have any of my bill cards, didn't have any idea what even electric company I was with, just no idea kind of where anything was going to. And it was just kind of starting from scratch with everything.

Sarah Hughes (12:53)

And how did you find some people say that the Lockdown days went really quickly for them. They might have sat and binge watched something, or they went on really long walks and found a new little routine because part of your mental health is that you don't sleep very well. I wondered what those days in Lockdown felt like for you.

Lexie (13:18)

Sure. After the initial shock of everything, of moving into a new place, getting support from the College, if anything, the first lockdown, I don't know if it was just the relief of getting support finally by people that were specifically trained in autism rather than the sport had had the previous two years from people primarily trained in mental health. And that's not minimizing anything that they did, because I did meet some absolutely great people from my previous support team, but this support was bare in so many ways, and I think that kind of combined with almost less pressure in the world to kind of less expectations for people to do much. The first lockdown, to me, just felt a bit hazy, if anything, just kind of time just kind of rolled. If you had asked me what day it was, I would have never been able to tell you.

Sarah Hughes (14:28)  
Yeah.

Lexie (14:29)  
But after the first probably two, three weeks of kind of the initial shocks and everything, I don't really have any complaints about the way things went from there.

Sarah Hughes (14:41)  
That's great.

Lexie (14:42)  
It kind of just settled into its own pattern.

Sarah Hughes (14:46)  
I think you hear that a lot about a lot of teenagers as well, who maybe struggled with going to school or going to College. And then all of a sudden, like you say, that pressure was just taking off and it almost allows you to kind of think about the smaller things in life, doesn't it? Yeah.

Lexie (15:07)  
I really love my routines. The more that I've got to feel like an element of purpose in my life, the better I feel about myself. But it was just a different way to do anything. And also there was, I don't know how to say it without kind of sounding selfish in a way, but there was almost a relief that everybody was on the same level for one.

Sarah Hughes (15:35)  
Absolutely.

Lexie (15:36)  
Like often when you have mental health and things like that, you feel constantly like a walking outside. Even when you've got so much support around you, you feel like the person that's always noticeably got an issue. But suddenly the whole route was on even keel, we were all bricking it. Yeah. We were all completely new to the situation, completely thrown in.

Sarah Hughes (16:00)  
Yeah.

Lexie (16:01)  
And there was a sense of community in that. I've never been the sort to randomly kind of hang out my window and say hey to neighbors and stuff like that. But going out for the clutter carers and just the people always asking if you were okay, people always offering, she needs a toilet, she needs the basics.

Sarah Hughes (16:26)  
They all just smiled and said hello to each other more in the street, even when you're out for a year.

Lexie (16:30)  
Yeah. There was just a completely different atmosphere. Everything just felt more together in a lot of ways. In the first lockdown specifically, that was kind of my sort of feelings on it. We all stuck together and whatever was going on, we were kind of all just pace.

Sarah Hughes (16:56)  
Yeah. It was a bit of a leveler, wasn't it, for everybody. I'm quite interested in hearing what you think might be the experience, though, for somebody, say, who was in your situation, who had some complex needs that they need help with and didn't have a place like this College where people go the extra mile and we'll do things for you, do you think the mental health service could have picked up and met those needs?

Lexie (17:27)

My overall kind of experiences of the mental health service pre-covid were never that positive. There's always been more people that needed help than there ever was. Of those to give the help, the balance was never there. The resources have never been there. The money has never been there. But during the first kind of stages of poverty, also with the fact that I moved into this new building where a lot of people had mental health, needed support, things like that, I kind of actually got me kind of first insight of what it's like for people that don't have these places. And without saying any names or disclosure, anything like that, I actually had a couple of conversations with a support worker who was under the impression that these people were already isolated. So really, why would this bother them? And you had these people that they weren't isolated by choice, people with mental health, none of them choose to coop up. It's a coping strategy. It's a safety net. It's a way of not being a burden. It's a way of dealing without getting picked up and told that you might need to go into hospital or you might need to be sectioned.

Lexie (19:02)

You might need to come up to a drop in weekly that you probably don't want to do. So they isolate. They box themselves up and wait. And usually that's somebody coming in and giving them the Nag to kind of go out.

Sarah Hughes (19:24)

Eat or get in the shower.

Lexie (19:26)

It's actually at the end of the tunnel that weekly glimmer of hope, and that was all taken away. That was gone. There was no weekly glimmer. There was no one telling them when it was going to end. A lot of these people didn't watch news, didn't keep up to date with things that were going on. So really, I just had no idea of what was happening. And I do remember seeing a couple of people that just kind of looked like walking ghosts. You'd see people kind of pop to the side entrance of the building and stand at the tip of the garden and then walk back in. They just look like a shell of a person.

Lexie (20:14)

And do you think that things are returning anywhere to what they were pre-covid in terms of people getting more support?

Lexie (20:25)

The company had withdrawn that I get support from have come back. Mental health services have started seeing face to face again. But really saying that it's returned to how it was before COVID is not really that big of a compliment.

Sarah Hughes (20:47)

Exactly.

Lexie (20:48)

Because before covid, it wasn't all that great.

Sarah Hughes (20:51)

Yeah.

Lexie (20:52)

And I don't know a time personally, wherever it was. So we're still a long way off. And a lot of the problem now is that those that are left are so deflated and so overwhelmed and losing those last bits of passion for the job that they've got the help that is there just feels like you're an inconvenience to the person giving it.

Sarah Hughes (21:23)

Which I'm sure to a lot of them, that's not how they would want to make you feel.

Lexie (21:31)

Probably not, but it comes out, they're only human and we're only human.

Sarah Hughes (21:35)

But I think the other thing, thinking about it from the aspect of specifically women, most of those social workers, carers. A large proportion of them are women and it might well have been that they've also been trying to home-school kids. We know that in a lot of the cases, maybe the mams have been on their own, maybe the dads are the ones who have done the jobs that have been more practical, hands on, especially in this second lockdown, I think, where a lot more jobs were classed as key workers. So all the blokes who worked in construction and who worked on buses and trains and the trades went back out. And possibly some of those females who were in the more traditionally caring roles were trying to meet the needs of their clients whilst also potentially juggling a lot at home.

Lexie (22:35)

The other problem is the system they work in. A lot of people have left. A lot of people are no longer in the position that they were in.

Sarah Hughes (22:45)

You said something really interesting about South Tyneside earlier.

Sarah Hughes (22:49)

Can you remember?

Lexie (22:49)

Yeah. As far as I'm aware, we currently have one qualified social worker in the mental health team in the Self time side. And from my experience alone, since Lockdown, I had two new social workers that have both left, and that is just since the first March lockdown.

Sarah Hughes (23:12)

That gives you an idea of the strain the service is under, but the social workers themselves, I guess, must be under.

Lexie (23:22)

I mean, I've been lucky in the respect that I have now got a CPM. That is what the CPM stands for, community psychiatric nurse.

Sarah Hughes (23:36)

That wasn't like a quiz question, by the way. It was just in case people listening didn't know what.

Lexie (23:40)

No problem. I was trying to remember the first word. I think they were initially clinical psychiatric nurses and now they're community psychiatric nurse. And I've been lucky that I've actually got a good one. And I've had a couple of decent ones and I've now got one that I feel like it might actually stick around because I've had gone through quite a few of them. Hard not to take it personally sometimes, but I think I'm up to me six or seven and I'm quite settled with this one because she's very good at her job. So I've had some kind of, what's the word? Routine and dependency structure with the CPN now. And even during the lockdown, she made the calls. She offered the highest level that she could offer from her end, which I definitely appreciated. But just as much as I'm sure they would agree, during lockdown, they were told they couldn't do face to face contact. And it's almost impossible to assess someone's mental health over the phone.

Sarah Hughes (24:56)

Absolutely.

Lexie (24:58)

One of the key things that you could put across the board in mental health, regardless to what condition you might have. One key thing is we can mimic, and everybody does it, whether you've got a

diagnosis or not, whether you've had a glimmer of mental health or a lifelong experience, we all can mimic feeling. Okay.

Sarah Hughes (25:28)  
Put on our best self.

Lexie (25:29)

Yes. We can also make ourselves sound okay. So to assess somebody's mental well being, especially somebody that's reluctant to tell somebody else when they need help, it's almost impossible to do it over the phone. So when they did start restart face to face and everything, I think they've just been playing catch up on themselves, finding out all these people that they've spoken to that seemed okay but were anything but okay.

Sarah Hughes (26:00)

And I've fallen between the cracks quite a long time. Yeah. Do you know how the two girls we used to live with got on?

Lexie (26:09)

I know how one of them got on more than the other because one went to a higher level of support, like almost, I think, just like a step down from residential. So quite similar to a residential set up. And then last I heard, that lady was doing absolutely fantastic. She'd found somewhere that was ideal for her. Like, she should have never really been in a low end support. So it's great that she's gone back to that. And I'm actually fortunate enough that one of the girls I lived with lives in the flat upstairs to me.

Sarah Hughes (26:46)

Yes.

Lexie (26:46)

And we've actually remained friends.

Sarah Hughes (26:49)

Good.

Lexie (26:50)

And she's really fantastic girl. But also one of these that never complains, you know, something was bothering her, you would never know.

Lexie (26:59)

I would never know.

Lexie (27:01)

She does her best to kind of keep up beating that she was affected in regards to being able to see her kids and things like that during the lockdown, because both for our kids with other family members and she's got very good connections with them.

Sarah Hughes (27:19)

You weren't allowed to go in there into a house that you didn't live in.

Lexie (27:22)

Even if you have a set up like that, which I just can't imagine, I really can't wait. To me, that would be like dangling something that means everything at the end of a fishing Port and telling you that you can't have faith at the other end. But she coped amazingly with it. Also, like myself, I have OCD tendencies, and she has battled on and off with OCD. So almost being told that all that cleaning that you were doing for your whole life, washing your hands religiously checking door handles, stuff like that. Suddenly that was a reason suddenly everybody had to do it. So I think people with OCD kind of went the next level up.

Sarah Hughes (28:17)

Oh, I thought you might have been going to see there that you went, well, we were right all along.

Sarah Hughes (28:21)

You see.

Lexie (28:26)

When you're a bit of a Germono phobe, you quite often walk around and think some people would just wish they were more like us.

Sarah Hughes (28:34)

I mean, it'll be interesting to see what the stats are on OCD in a year's time.

Lexie (28:41)

Oh, I definitely think that anybody that's maybe been tipping on the OCD is now going to be in the frames of it.

Sarah Hughes (28:50)

Yeah. And in all aspects of the mental health service, you're probably going to see that because people who had borderline anxiety crept up and people who had tendencies that live all right.

Lexie (29:05)

It's like with any mental health, if you're thrown into a situation that is going to escalate that condition, the longer you're in that situation, the more likely that you're going to move up to that level within your mental health and probably stick there for quite some time. And I think I also know somebody with agoraphobic sort of behaviors, and I think that this has maybe been too much of a godsend for them not having to go out. And now suddenly, regardless of whether the whole world's vaccinated, they may just staying for goods now, I don't think God sends the right sort of phrase.

Sarah Hughes (29:52)

I think give them a viable reason.

Lexie (29:54)

Yeah. Almost giving somebody the okay to act upon those sort of feelings.

Sarah Hughes (30:05)

It made them seem a lot more rational.

Lexie (30:07)

Exactly. Yeah.

Sarah Hughes (30:10)

So they were talking about the good things that came out of it. And I love the fact that you felt like you had like a really good community around you, both from here and to a certain extent in your building as well. Any other good things that you can take away from it, it's hard, I think.

Lexie (30:31)

But, yeah, good wise, actually. I've always struggled a lot with kind of healthy eating, my weight issues like that. And suddenly every activity was an outdoor based one, which was kind of heaven for somebody like me. I need support to go out, but the whole world is going out.

Sarah Hughes (30:56)

Yeah.

Lexie (30:56)

So there was a lot more opportunity and a lot more people that were like, oh, I'll take you for a walk. Suddenly I was in my element. I had a neighbor who was actually linked to the College that I go to that

was like, oh, 07:00 in the morning, let's go for walks. So we were doing routes along the river. I was just in my element with that.

Sarah Hughes (31:19)  
That's great.

Lexie (31:21)  
So that was definitely a positive to come out of it.

Sarah Hughes (31:24)  
Yeah.

Lexie (31:25)  
Also big parts of autism is kind of like sensory overload and wanting people to keep a distance and stuff like that. So the idea that it was compulsory for everybody. I can't deny that I was having a good giggle seeing people line up and half the space out.

Sarah Hughes (31:45)  
As much as I always wish they had been watching the huggers like me have to sit on their hands.

Lexie (31:50)  
Yeah, it was a bit of a relief. Almost go into shops and stuff like that and less people in them. Everything was kind of more routine and rigid.

Sarah Hughes (32:04)  
I was kind of like the one way systems in the co op.

Lexie (32:08)  
Yeah. Although I have to admit I've definitely gone up the wrong arrows a few times.

Sarah Hughes (32:14)  
Every time. Every time for me. But I always get told more than that.

Lexie (32:18)  
I think was just the kind of more people were on foot, less traffic was on the road and everybody was spacing out. It was great.

Sarah Hughes (32:28)  
I think some of that will definitely hang around for quite a while. So you might get to keep a bit of.

Lexie (32:33)  
Yeah. I've got a joke for some of my friends that Covid has made it that they won't be able to hook me for the next ten years. I'm hoping that I can hold that whole space in the queues thing.

Sarah Hughes (32:47)  
You only stand behind.

Lexie (32:50)  
Yeah, I kind of like that whole bit too close.

Lexie (32:54)  
I quite like the little elbow bump bump with a stranger from the good old days.

Lexie (33:00)  
And there's me just thinking it's typical of people to still come up with a way that you have to greet involves some form of physical contact. There's been no physical contacts. It has to be okay, you can't shake hands. So let's switch into an.

Sarah Hughes (33:17)

Right back to where we started. I think you're fabulous. I obviously am really biased and just think that you can go on and achieve loads of things, despite all of the difficulties that you've come up against. Have you got any specific hopes for the future or ways that you hope that you might feel in the future, things that you want to achieve?

Lexie (33:42)

I think my hopes would probably be around some miracle that the system will improve kind of in autism and mental health alike. Hoping that there's going to continue to be a community out there for people that battle with one or the other or both and just enjoying things that I didn't think were that important before. Maybe go out on more walks, soak up every bit of the weather I can do well, yeah, definitely. It's kind of like saying things like this. It just changes your mindset of what's important, doesn't it? Just the little things. Enjoy the little things, all the little stuff. Definitely no big goals, just the little stuff.

Sarah Hughes (34:41)

Sometimes the little steps are more achievable, aren't they?

Lexie (34:46)

Yeah, definitely.

Sarah Hughes (34:47)

And they all add up. I know we've talked in the past about thinking about kind of that miracle in the way that the service works. We've talked a lot about how someone like you, who is so able and bright and sharp, but you're kind of constrained by this system because you absolutely could work and do work but could work more and go on to do big things. But you then would be less eligible for support, which you need for your mental health.

Lexie (35:23)

And that the system is very much determined by you're either too unwell or not unwell enough. People often sing the phrase of person-centered, but without swearing or anything, it's really not very true. It's a loadable, then it's not very true. The system isn't person sent it's very much stereotyped into sections. And if you don't fall well into one of those sections, which in my opinion, almost everyone takes elements from each section, I don't think anybody falls into just one. But if you don't fall like I talk well. So I'm often told by people in the social services system, mental health services system, you may have autism, but you talk really well, so you can't need all that much support. And it's crazy.

Sarah Hughes (36:39)

Ptsd and things that you need the support for.

Lexie (36:45)

Autism. In my experience, a lot of my friends who have autism and myself, we can talk. We can all talk well, not everybody with autism is either mute or high function genius. We don't fit into one of those ends. Most of us are somewhere plotted around in the middle of the flat. And the system isn't built for us yet. Not people. Yeah. And also in mental health, it's built for the two extremes. It's always determined on a progress rate, how quickly you get better, the steps that they think you should be making, not the little steps that you may be making. They're not seeing.

Sarah Hughes (37:35)

Yeah.

Lexie (37:36)

And there's often that worry as well. If you progress like you want to, if you go on to do the things that you desperately want to do, will they suddenly turn around and go watch? You don't need help.

Sarah Hughes (37:50)

You're too able.

Lexie (37:51)

Now I may go and do my volunteer job and work in a cafe and be around an amazing community, but that doesn't mean that I can go home and turn my washing machine on.

Sarah Hughes (38:03)

Yeah.

Lexie (38:04)

Well, that doesn't mean that I will start going to Asda at 12:00 during the day and doing the full shop by myself.

Sarah Hughes (38:14)

And it doesn't mean that you won't go back over and have those bad episodes.

Lexie (38:20)

Exactly. Even the support needs to be there and it needs to be there with no strings attached. It needs to be there without people sending around the same if you go so far, we pull it all away. Or actually, if you get worse, we move you into this and cut off all of your independence. The system is flawed and it's saying you're damned if you're doing, damned if you don't. So much applies to the social services and mental health systems and even the LD support systems. So it's hard to make goals when you're defined by that when you're defined by almost waking up every day and hoping and holding on for dear life to the support you've got.

Sarah Hughes (39:14)

Yeah.

Lexie (39:16)

I find it very difficult to want to progress because there's always such anxiety attached to it and such worry.

Sarah Hughes (39:26)

Yeah. As well. Because of the support you've got outside of those services, through College and through all these great friends that you've made, hopefully you will keep progressing in whatever way, whatever progress looks like to you without kind of them needing to be involved in that too much. All of these kinds of social progressions that you're making are hugely important as well, aren't they?

Lexie (39:59)

Oh, definitely. And I am lucky. I'm one of the lucky ones that has so many people around me that sees every bit of progression I make, whether it be something so small that I myself don't even notice.

Sarah Hughes (40:14)

Joining in with Zumba.

Sarah Hughes (40:16)

Yeah.

Sarah Hughes (40:16)

After seeing you'd never join in with Zumba, ever in your life.

Lexie (40:21)

Exactly how I'm actually looking for a group of my own today.

Sarah Hughes (40:26)

She loves what happened. Honestly, she loves. Zumba, that was Mint. You were absolutely brilliant. Thank you very much for talking to us. Wise and insightful, always wise beyond the years. Thank you,

Lex.

(40:44)

### **Lesley Interview**

Sarah Hughes (40:51)

So thank you very much for letting us come and have a chat with you today. I'm chuffed to bits that you said yes. Would you just introduce yourself and tell us what you do here, Ms. Lovely, please.

Lesley (41:02)

My name is Leslie. It's Leslie Henderson. And I'm suppose the founder, if you want, of the Toby Henderson truth. Toby Henderson's. My son is my youngest son. And Toby has autism and a profound learning disability. So it was set up 20 odd years ago because of Tobe, because there was no out there, really. And here we are. It's actually 20 years anniversary. This is the opening of the first centre, but I think we're formed as a charity in 1999 thousands, honestly, thousands and thousands of children and families later.

Sarah Hughes (41:43)

And practically, what do you do for those families?

Lesley (41:47)

What we do now is quite different to what we did do. And I felt quite sad when I walked through these doors today because looking through into the family room, it's horribly empty. And there's a sign up there that says, this is where the magic happens. And I feel that the magic is not happening here at the minute. And I worry that will the magic ever come? Well, don't get me wrong, we are adapting to helping families and probably busier now than we've ever been in terms of support. But it's the direct work with the children that has had to be withdrawn and how that will be able to look like when we go back. Because what we did and what it's flagship was, if you want, was early intervention through intensive interaction with children with autism or suspected autism. And that just does not bloody mix with social distancing. You've got to intensively interact with somebody, you've got to be all over my garage, otherwise they won't even know you're there. Over these last 16, 70, 80 months, we've talked and talked again about how it might look and we might get a bit of a decision and then something else happens and restrictions and change.

Lesley (43:14)

So I still at this moment, don't really know how it's going to how it will change.

Sarah Hughes (43:21)

So at the moment, are you trying to offer support remotely?

Lesley (43:24)

Yeah, it's a huge amount of stuff on Zoom. I mean, we see a lot of training workshops and actually that Zoom has really played strength, because when we were doing the training workshops, we got two sites. So you've got quite a couple of big rooms. You can have 20, 30 Max, 40 people in there, probably in South Shields. But now when we do our webinars, which are just those, but over Zoom, you can be reaching 80 people. It's a bonus, it's a plus. And the mams and the dads don't have to get childcare. They can just sit, have that cup of tea and they're still engaging and watching it and they're still getting the information they need. So that's been a bit of a plus. The other thing that it's been a plus for in many ways is that we've been able to continue the social groups. So we have mates. We didn't have this before. We have mini mates, mates, juniors, made seniors and made Samuel, Toby's language socially. And then we have sibling links as well, siblings, superstars. And I think certainly for meds seniors, it's really played to the strength of autism. It really has.

Lesley (44:53)

Because you see kids and young adults engaging over Zoom in a much more engaging way than natural habitat. It's like, yeah, that's close to their strength. So you see in the relationships forming that they've known each other for the last three years, but you've never seen them get on as well as

what they do now. So that's been a bit of a plus. But there's lots of other things that aren't plus at all. So many families in crisis, really. And I know that crisis means different things to different people, doesn't it? And what might be my crisis is not somebody else's. But we've seen and heard of such a lot of horrible things like regression in general skills. You've got your 1314 year olds who are going back to playing with Thomas the Tank and all they're doing is they're just trying to look after themselves. These are people who thrive on structure, familiarity, routine, knowing what happens next. And that's not in there anymore. And so that gets taken out on mums and Dads, but takes out largely on mums who are the primary carer. They're the ones that always have been the brunt of any challenging behaviour, because I was for Toby, if he was going to lash out and anybody lashed out to me, because as far as his thinking, was that you should be able to sort this out for me.

Lesley (46:38)

So if I give you a bit of a duff and up, you'll sort it increase in charge of behaviour. You've got the regression skills, you've got hugely increased OCD behaviors. Again, just trying to get a bit control in their life. A lot of restricted eating, right. A lot of verging on real disorders, because that's always one thing that was one thing that Toby taught me really early on is that if your life is windy, out of control, one of the main things and the first things you can do is restrict it's what you put in your mouth, in it, what you're eating, your drink. If you want to have control, you can control that without anybody else's input. So that's been a huge one. But also for those who are probably more able and who can possibly talk it through mams and dads at this stage, they can't say when it's no easy answer. Our autistic kids and young people, they need answers and need something that's going to use in a visual support now and then board. But you kind of say what's on the then. Yeah, for us, there's no what's on there.

Sarah Hughes (48:12)

We all want the then

Lesley (48:14)

Yes, really. I know it's been hard for everybody, but obviously I'm going to say it because of the people and the families that I work with. But I think they've had it really tough.

Sarah Hughes (48:28)

They haven't really had absolutely no respite.

Lesley (48:31)

Oh, God, no.

Sarah Hughes (48:33)

I mean, what would they have previously before the pandemic, what would have been the parents and specifically the mam's outlet for a bit of respite for themselves.

Lesley (48:43)

Being able to go and see their mates. Yeah. Being able to go for a coffee, maybe with somebody else, being able to talk through with somebody else.

Sarah Hughes (48:53)

hand the kids over to family members, I suppose.

Lesley (48:57)

And to be able to get a hug off somebody if things are times are tough. The one thing I found really difficult on the Zoom is we had to adapt to using it. Jesus, I'm 63 years old. I'm not computer most literate person, but we did adapt to it. But I found it horrible watching somebody on that screen that was so upset. And you can't even put your hand out to them because that's what this room was always about. That's why people sat on that set, because if they got upset, I always had a box of tissues because I'm all having got a box of living tissues and the dog would come and sit on money. And that was a big part of what we did, providing comfort. Yes, absolutely. And it's a comforting place to come into. We're not clinical. This is usually a Golden Labrador around here. He's not clinical. You get covered. You'll know, when you started from that city, you're going to be covered in Labrador head.

But that was a lot of the beauty of it. And I don't know. It's hard to change, but it's hard to change. And it's changed successfully, as successful as it could be.

Lesley (50:21)

And probably, I think, maybe reaching probably four times as many people.

Lesley (50:28)

Greater numbers, but in a different way, much greater numbers.

Lesley (50:33)

Yeah. And random phone calls as well, is a big indicator of how difficult things have been. Is you would take a phone. I mean, if you go on our website, it screams children. It screams we're a children's service, but phone calls from somebody from a fella down in London who had a problem with his rented accommodation, he didn't know where else to ring.

Sarah Hughes (51:08)

Yeah. I think that's a huge thing that we've seen from it is that there hasn't been adequate sign posting when the face to face services have gone. So it's caused a lot of certainly in some of the autistic adults who I work with, a lot of panic and worry that was unnecessary.

Lesley (51:32)

Yeah. I'm having a meeting on this afternoon, actually, with 'autism in mind', who we share the building with, the autism hub in South Shields. So, I mean, I've had a lot of conversations with Carol over the time, but I'd be interested to hear where they're actually apt for going back.

Sarah Hughes (51:55)

Yeah. Because something that worries me a little bit is that once all of these social distancing and measures have been relaxed and all the rest of it and the rest of society gets back to normal, what you don't want is to go back 40 years and have people with disabilities being separated from the rest of society again. And I think that is a danger. I'm already hearing from different service providers and say, no, we probably won't meet face to face even this year. So it's tricky, isn't it, that balance between protectors health and trying to give them some semblance of normality that everybody else is getting back?

Lesley (52:41)

Yeah. I think everybody's emotional well being to be affected. It could not be.

Sarah Hughes (52:50)

No, absolutely.

Lesley (52:52)

With how the world has changed. And now I think it's I used to say right in the beginning that was this pandemic sort of ruled itself out. It went one of two ways for kids with autism and young people with autism and their families. So, at first I used to think, well, for the ones that hate school, it's the champion, lovely. You don't have to go no more. But they may also compartmentalise. And suddenly mam has got to become teacher. And these are kids that struggle with doing a bit of homework now and again. There seems to be like a crisis in services provision. There's a lot of people, I think, becoming overworked, possibly underpaid. So we're hearing of reports of huge amounts of people leaving both NHS and other factory services. So even if parents had access to something before, it's even more limited now. Yeah. And we talked about respite, and respite hasn't existed for kids with autism, autism for a lot of years. So we used to have a really busy play scheme here for years. It was brilliant. In actual fact, Carolyn came to start that off. I had to come back from London, and at one point it was so busy.

Lesley (54:29)

It was fantastic and it was wonderful restaurant. The families. Kids got opportunities that they would have never had. I mean, one might have been two to one, three to one, but we were staffed with

amazing people who were really good at what they did. And just over the years, they cut social services, cooked back and they cooked back, and they were saying, you can't have that anymore. You can have just one day a week instead of the two days a week. And it got to at the end, we were running a play scheme, which was a ridiculous word for it because it had two kids in it. And the criteria for those two kids there was that one actually had leukemia as well as his learning disability.

Sarah Hughes (55:17)  
That's how he qualified.

Lesley (55:18)  
Yes. That's how bad you have to get to be able to get some rest bite. So we were considered to be expensive, but we were expensive because we were a quality service and they were well looked after, well cared for. They had great opportunities. But I don't think anybody does now.

Sarah Hughes (55:37)  
I think in terms of, as we were just saying earlier, respite services for adults still there, because a lot of the time they might have elderly parents are in the social care system and so on, but their children are maybe their adult children are more a better fit for respite, but for younger children. I thought about this so much through the pandemic because none of my three children have additional needs. But I needed some respite and there was nothing there in terms of being able to pass them over to grandma for half a day or whatever. And I thought so much about your parents at that time and how.

Sarah Hughes (56:21)  
Absolutely. Yeah. Right at the beginning, there was no bubble. The bubble didn't exist, did it?

Lesley (56:33)  
No. And also those parents possibly were dealing with kids who were terrified of what was going on. And you don't have the same option and opportunity to rationalize it in the way that you might do the case in mainstream education.

Lesley (56:51)  
Yeah, I know. It was horrible for me because I live on my own and it's just me and the dog. And he's lovely, but he hasn't got a lot of chat. Just unfair. He's a great company, and I do talk to them, which is all things.

Lesley (57:11)  
I wouldn't worry about that.

Lesley (57:13)  
Yeah. Because the bubble didn't exist. So I have two grandchildren, but it was more upsetting that they could just come to the window.

Sarah Hughes (57:28)  
Awful. It's confusing for them to take in. Yeah, I know. We were talking a little bit earlier before we started recording as well, and you were happy to talk about it a little bit about you lost your second son not long before the pandemic in a car accident. And you then had to go through that first anniversary.

Lesley (57:59)  
Minute that would happen. And it was horrible. It was absolutely horrible because the bubbles didn't exist. And that's why I couldn't even see the kids and they couldn't see me because they look at me. Certainly his daughter, she looked upon me as her link to her dad because obviously I still live in that family home, which is she's almost surrounded by him when she's in there. And I found that was really hard, but it was even worse going through the anniversary of his funeral. Yeah, that was terrible because it was the night before thinking this is what was happening then. And then on the day of the funeral, it was reflections on I knew what was happening at 01:00. I knew what was happening at 02:00. I would have been there now. I would have been.

Lesley (59:01)

Stretching out in front of me.

Lesley (59:04)

Just me and George. Awful, horrific. But I got through it. And if anything, it taught me what to expect this year. And it will be slightly different this year because hopefully with a bit more.

Sarah Hughes (59:23)

Comfort and love around you. Not that love wasn't around you, but physically you'll be able to be with somebody this year.

Lesley (59:31)

Yeah, it was funny. Yesterday we're in the garden and obviously I had four boys, so the garden was a big thing for them. And it's a big random old house with a terrible well, it used to be a lovely garden, but it's hell upstate now. But there were always because there's a lot of trees in there. There were always climbing trees. Casey likes to do that now. She was teaching Brooklyn how to climb a tree. But my son was a rope access technician, so he used to do things up at height. There's a big tree at the bottom of the garden, which is like a protected tree, so you mustn't cut it. And he used to climb up that tree on his ropes. And we were in the garden yesterday and we went up the back and there was this sea. Forget me not. And I've been in that house for 25 years and I've never seen forgetting Mods. Forget me not. Never seen them in the garden before. It was really odd because where he's buried. In the graveyard. Beautiful old graveyard. But one of the first things I noticed when after he had been buried out, I went to visit the grave is walking out.

Lesley (01:00:59)

You walk through and there's loads of forget-me-not in the and I don't know? Did they have the plant for them? I don't know. No idea. They probably want to self seed and things. There's like an area that was like a carpet of them. But I've never seen them in my garden. No, never. And it was right beside that. It was sort of underneath that tree to climb.

Sarah Hughes (01:01:20)

So I think you obviously come across as a really strong person. You've been through so much in your life and still managed to set up this fantastic organization. I wonder how other people who had possibly less to think about in terms of their work would have coped with that situation in that period of isolation.

Lesley (01:01:50)

There are no options. Yeah, there's no option. I just kept saying tell myself that one thing you can't stop this time passing. I know that time will pass. I know that this is going to be a hard day, but tomorrow will come. Yeah, it will be. Because you can't stop it.

Sarah Hughes (01:02:09)

I bet you say that to your parents as well, who you speak to when they're having those.

Lesley (01:02:14)

Yes, it is. And you also think about what you think about things that you can change and sometimes. But then it's not always been the case. This time I thought that you can change. I always said we can change your environment.

Lesley (01:02:30)

You can go somewhere for a walk.

Lesley (01:02:33)

This time you couldn't really always change your environment.

Sarah Hughes (01:02:36)

Yeah.

Lesley (01:02:37)

But the girls have done such a lot of brilliant work about emotional well being with the parents, so they really, really have. And the other thing it's taught us is to be a bit more social media conscious.

Sarah Hughes (01:02:54)

And I mean, think loyal companies will have learnt that.

Lesley (01:03:02)

For the first year we went from being 17 to four. And so you've got me in Widginton, you got one in Gosforth, one in Blyth and one in Morpeth. And we were holding together. What started off was 400 families at that point.

Sarah Hughes (01:03:21)

Wow.

Lesley (01:03:24)

And it was full on come on Friday. I think we're all on my knees because it was such emotional stuff. What you're dealing with such emotional stuff and absolutely full on. And when you work from home, you've got nobody I haven't told the dog. And you're sitting beside us all the time. But you don't stop for a cup of tea.

Sarah Hughes (01:03:50)

No. You know when it kind of has that live chitchat, which makes it up.

Lesley (01:03:55)

Because when I'm in here, that door is always open and never shut that door so that as people are coming in and out, I'm always there to say hello or they can come in the door whenever they want. And I think that was relentless. And I was worried about all four girls.

Sarah Hughes (01:04:15)

Yeah. Really. Did you think in any way being that busy might have actually helped you, though, in terms of your own grieving? Did it give you some sense?

Lesley (01:04:32)

But there's always a point where you do stop thinking about work and you're alone with like, oh, Jesus Christ, that's what happened again.

Sarah Hughes (01:04:48)

And it was such early days.

Lesley (01:04:51)

I think I'll probably feel like it is always early days. Yeah. I thought I remember when there was the day after he died, I'd been up all night and I was really shaking, not just shaking but really shaking. And my oldest son actually obscure he was at home because he lives in Birmingham and he'd come home just for a couple of days and he was staring at me mum's, but the property is still there. He's staying at Mum. So when the police came the door, I was able to go and get our dad, thank goodness. But I remember dad saying with that day, Mama would have to call in the doctor. The doctor is going to have to come out and see. You can't be like this. So the doctor came and I remember him saying that, he said, well, obviously you're going to be off work. And he said, you need to be off for quite a few months. I went: few months? I can't be off for that long. Nah, surely. No, not in May. I'll be fine. It was really right. I've lost my dad and I think I've lost my mother currently because she's got dementia.

Lesley (01:06:24)

But it's nothing like your child. Nothing ever will be. And I don't think it'll ever go away. Do you just learn to. You can't even assimilate it. I can't get the right words to say to explain. He accepted. He

wouldn't have accepted it.

Sarah Hughes (01:06:52)  
You shouldn't have to.

Lesley (01:06:53)  
No. Maybe you just get used to the knowledge. Don't want it, but you have to get used to it. You have to whether you want to or not. Yeah. But it's been really hard for everybody.

Sarah Hughes (01:07:12)  
Well, I think that's a generous way to call it in. It's been hard for everybody because I certainly think you and definitely a lot of the families who you work with will have had a completely different experience of it.

Lesley (01:07:27)  
Who would have ever thought? And we just opened the Hub on the 10 January and so she was the autism 10th January. I remember sitting there with a couple of the lasses saying, have you heard about that? It needs to look about Japan or something like that, where it's not going to bother us. And then the next thing I remember is sitting in those chairs again saying, I think the government is going to say something about this. Six weeks and shut. Yeah, we're temporarily closing.

Sarah Hughes (01:08:13)  
Did you get a lot of influx of panic from parents in that, you know, that point where you knew the schools were going to close and you knew everything was going to shut down and you were just waiting for them to see what happened? Yes. The toilet rule time when everybody had kind of seen what happened in France and Italy and Spain and you knew it was coming and you almost just wanted to rip the plaster off.

Sarah Hughes (01:08:40)  
Did you see the parents starting to take that in to know when we saw it more?

Lesley (01:08:48)  
Was it this time last year when there was a bit of relaxation yes. That's when there was a massive, massive panic.

Sarah Hughes (01:09:00)  
That's interesting.

Lesley (01:09:01)  
That was a massive panic of going back. How were the kids going to cope with going back? That almost had to get used to not having the routine and all the narratives. I think at that particular time there were things changing, like almost on a weekly basis, because I think at that time we'd ease back at unfollowed some girls and were in here like a couple of days. I remember the first day we walked in, we were still the four of us. We decided to meet here just to be outside in the garden. And I've got T shirts done with mini team tour beyond. We've developed a couple of hashtags because why would you say the same thing to each other? I speak to you later now. Yes. Two hashtags on there. And I remember walking in, the four of us standing wide apart in there, and just don't be certain to start a cry. Yeah. It was horrible. It was nice, but horrible. Yeah. At the same time. But we're all right. After we went to the garden.

Lesley (01:10:22)  
Had a selfie, a socially distant selfie. Distant selfie.

Sarah Hughes (01:10:28)  
Yeah. I wanted to ask you just the last thing really that I've got that I wanted to ask you was about how your Toby coped and how your relationship with him changed, if it changed at all during the pandemic.

Lesley (01:10:47)  
Toby's autism.

Sarah Hughes (01:10:48)  
How old is Toby?

Lesley (01:10:50)  
Toby's 27. So Toby's autism affects him in a way that he's very these days as he's become more of a mature man. He's very matter of fact. Poor example, probably. But the first time I had some blood taken, I said to him, this is what we're going to do, Toby. There's going to be a needle and it's going to go in there and we're going to pull some blood out and some kids would go and Toby is like that's okay. Because you just explained to us what's going to happen. So very matter of fact, it's not necessarily understands the words, but he's very accepting. It did bother him to start off with, though, that he was because he's very physically active. He likes to go down every morning. The routine was power walk down the bridge where the seat in Delaval Hall and back. And the cost we weren't allowed to go out. And then they did east of us. It was really wobbly about that. And Tuesdays is always hiking day, so they would go out for a good ten to 15 miles walk. And again, you weren't really supposed to be out. But then when they lifted the restrictions for people with autism so they could go out and about, it was fine with that.

Lesley (01:12:19)  
He's very matter of fact as well, in the way that as long as his needs are being met.

Sarah Hughes (01:12:27)  
In terms of practically being able to go and see, was that always I've seen him three times. No. I've only seen him three times. You didn't get to explain everything to him.

Lesley (01:12:38)  
He staff did, presumably, yeah. I mean, he's got profound learning disability, so his capacity to understand things is limited.

Sarah Hughes (01:12:54)  
How has that affected you, though? Only seen in three times over what has already been an incredibly difficult year. And how do you feel that, should that be handled differently? Should you have been able to have more access to being able to see?

Lesley (01:13:09)  
I think that it was horrible. It's horrible. But you've got to look at the bigger picture of people being safe and it's not as much as you want. There was really one very upset. So the first time I saw him was he came the brought him here at Christmas and I met them in the car park, but I could just look at them through the window, but we exchange presents. It was awful. And then the next time I saw him was his birthday, so that was the Christmas. His birthday is February, and another one of his cars brought why we came here is that Al didn't have to drive very far, but also it was explained to him that he couldn't come in because mom was going to work, so he accepted that. So that's how we did it. Again, sorry about that. But this time he got out of the car with Claire and they walked over to me and I was just getting his presence out. And so they were standing well back, which was fine, but it was just amazing to see him. But then I walked around to the back of the car to get the other side to get his presence.

Lesley (01:14:49)  
And as I walked past him, he went.

Lesley (01:14:56)  
And I'm saying to Claire, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm really sorry.

Lesley (01:14:59)

He touched me and she said, I thought, Why am I apologising? My son just want to reach out to me. But then what's happened is, now I know that I've just checked with them last week what the party line is, I'm seeing them now and obviously you can only go in, like in a six, so there's only four in the house. My worry is that I can't drive to Seaton Delaval. At the moment. I can't face.

Sarah Hughes (01:15:34)

I will get you drivw you to Seaton Delaval any time you want, you've got no shortage of people when you're ready if you want to make it happen.

Lesley (01:15:46)

And then I wanted to. I sort of found out about going this weekend and I bottled it.

Sarah Hughes (01:15:54)

So what's that about?

Lesley (01:15:59)

I really don't know. I made a lot of excuses up in my head because.

Sarah Hughes (01:16:05)

Are you worried about taking something into it to any of the people who lives with? Or....

Lesley (01:16:11)

No, it's about me being frightened to go out, going somewhere, and I think I would be all right if I could take the kids with me, but I can't.

Sarah Hughes (01:16:29)

So maybe it's about. I don't know, that kind of Changing The environment a little bit And meeting outside.

Lesley (01:16:39)

So The Other Thing That Happened Last Week Is That It Was Going To Be My Grandson's. Well, It Was My Grandson's Birthday. He Was Born The Day My Dad Was Born, Which Was Last On The 10th, And We Had It All Planned That We're Going To Have A Little Barbecue And In The Garden, And There's Going To Be A Couple More Of Like By Alex's Met, Who's Got Kids, really. We'll Be Socially Distanced, And I've Got This Goody Big Asteroid Coming Up. Burgers, Sausages And Crackly, Suns And God Knows What Dark Food Cider, Which Has Never Had One In My Life Anyway. And Then The Night Before, Alice Gets An Email From School To Say That Brooklyn's Got Isolated Somebody In His Class, So She Did A Lot Of Flow Trust Straight Away. Negative. It Came Back To The Kid Is Positive The Next Day. So Brooklyn's Isolated, And She Keeps Doing Another Full Test, And He's Fine.

Sarah Hughes (01:17:47)

This Is The Thing, I Think That Playing Into A Lot Of People's Anxiety, Isn't It? You Just Planning For Things And Investing Financially, But Also Investing Emotionally In Making That Commitment To Doing It. And Then The Tables Turn And It Makes The Next Attempt Even Harder.

Lesley (01:18:07)

And Then That Same Night, Because I Haven't Seen My Son Birmingham, Obviously, For All Of That Time. The Last Time I Saw Him Was Before. Was It Toby First? Before, apparently Something Like that. So I Haven't Seen Dan. But Dan That Night Was Saying, I'm Going To Buy Some Tickets Tonight To Come To The Weekend, Ma'am, Because I Think We're All Okay Now. You've Had Both Your Vaccines. I've Had Both Of Vaccines. And he Was Going To Buy Them That Night, But I Managed To Ring Him To Say That Because If He Comes, He Wants To Save The Kids, So He's Coming This Weekend And Stuff.

Sarah Hughes (01:18:57)

That's Good.

Lesley (01:18:58)  
So that Would Be Nice.

Sarah Hughes (01:19:00)  
It's Little steps, Isn't It? For Everyone, really, but Even More So If You've Had A Really Extra Tough Time Of It. Smaller Steps, I Suppose.

Lesley (01:19:14)  
Yeah, It'll Be Lovely And Coming, But It'll Be Very Difficult see him go. Yeah.

Sarah Hughes (01:19:22)  
Hopefully Things Are Going To Get More Often, Not Less Open, And All Of Those Catch Ups Will Become More Frequent Rather Than Less. Thank You So Much For Talking To US. you've Ruined All of us.

Sarah Hughes (01:19:49)  
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