**I: There you go. So just as a warm up and start off with the questions. What makes you think it will be useful to participate in this interview?**

P: So we know that food and diet is a really important part of managing diabetes and I think it’s an interesting angle to specifically kind of focus on that group because you know meal planning and record keeping and stuff is such a popular topic anyway but to look at it from a health lens and how it helps people to manage their condition and to look after themselves in terms of their condition I think is a really interesting way of looking at it and I suppose from my point of view if it can help people to, you know, make healthier choices or, you know, maybe even improve their condition in a number of different ways, it’s of benefit really.

**I: Brill. You’ve been involved in the project, you said it was already a bit of a while ago but what was your role exactly? I think I know a bit about it but can you explain?**

P: How I was involved?

**I: Yeah.**

P: I think the main thing that I can remember is I was asked to write a quote for a blog… I think when they’re, when the project was announced, the platform and ourselves [unclear 0:01:29] we both kind of did like a blog kind of announcement that there was a piece of research that was happening and I provided like a supporting quote for that.

**I: Okay.`**

P: What else have I done? I’m delving into my brain right now.

**I: That’s alright. It might come off when we’re discussing about the different things.**

P: I think you mentioned there was a survey that you did with users, I think I looked at some of the questions for that survey. So it’s kind of been quite light - kind of broader things I was involved in. I haven’t really looked into the sort of development of the platform or anything that kind of thing.

**I: Oh, okay. And how long have you been a [anonymized]?**

P: What year are we in now?

**I: 2021. Time flies.**

P: About eight years.

**I: Eight years. And how long have you been working at Diet UK?**

P: Five years.

**I: Five years. Okay, brill. Just to give us a bit of background about your experience and you’ve embedded in the organisation well I think. So are you familiar with the screen share option through Teams?**

P: Yeah.

**I: Would you mind logging into the platform on your desktop or laptop and then we can just go through it a bit together.**

P: Bear with me a second. It sometimes- the wonder of technology, it sometimes takes a little while for it to load up.

**I: There you go. I can see it.**

P: Can you see that?

**I: It’s exactly in the community we need to be in for this interview. Perfect.**

P: I have had a bit of a look around, yeah.

**I: Oh that’s brilliant. Thank you so much. While you were going through the platform did you enjoy it? Were there certain things like, you know, the elements like the shopping list or the meal planner or the recipes itself that you really enjoyed?**

P: Yeah so I guess I found it…the features that I liked about it was the fact that you can, you know, choose a recipe that you want and then you can save it and drop it into a meal plan and then you can then see like your shopping list, your ingredients because I thought it was really helpful to have one place where you could do all of that kind of planning. And, you know, it would sort of help people to look at what ingredients they’re buying across the week and kind of try to I suppose help with sort of managing the amounts of different things that you need to buy and that sort of thing, you know you can see that you’ve had something for dinner and then you can repeat it for lunch that type of thing. I think that’s a real benefit of meal planning. But I liked that you could then kind of make that into a shopping list. I think it just helps people see, I suppose plan but also look at the variety of different foods they’re having across the week as well.

**I: Yeah.**

P: One thing I did kind of notice was that lots of people, if I’m on the recipes at the moment, filtering things…so we’ve got a recipe section on our website as well and the filters are quite popular, and I found that quite hard to find. So it’s just something to kind of consider. If someone wanted, you know, to look for a specific meal or, you know, they had specific kind of dietary considerations I think it’s really good that there’s such a broad, once you’ve found them, there’s such a broad selection of things that you could filter by but it was just finding them.

**I: Yeah, it was not standing out for you instantly, like how it was presented. Okay so that’s something maybe that could potentially be improved.**

P: Yeah.

**I: Were there some things you didn’t really like or something where you thought there also might be room for improvement or…?**

P: Erm…I guess the main thing for me was, because I know this is all kind of new [generated] content so I guess it’s kind of what sits behind that in terms of what criteria are used to say that a recipe can become part of this particular community. So these are supposed to be recipes that are helping particularly people with diabetes to make healthier choices, how is that green? How can we be sure that they are healthier meals? And I know that there is the platform generated health score but I kind of had some thoughts around the, you know, nutrients that were used to sort of come up with that score.

**I: Okay, yeah. I think we have some questions related to that as well because as a [anonymized] I think that would be some of the things you `would carefully watch and monitor really. So yeah, did you find it easy or difficult to use the platform overall? Were there some elements, I mean I know you mentioned the filter was a bit hard to find in the first instance but like the planner and the shopping list was there anything that was not intuitive for you or wasn’t easy to use?**

P: No I mean I’m not the most tech savvy person. I’m alright but I found it quite easy to use, you know, I think the homepage perhaps was a little bit overwhelming in terms of the amounts of different communities that you can join, and you know, finding your way through which recipes you might be interested in, you know, there’s quite a lot of information sort of thrown at you I guess.

**I: Yeah.**

P: But the actual functionality in terms of once you’ve found a recipe and then being able to save it and put it into a planner, I thought that was really good. Yeah, I quite liked that.

**I: And comparing the homepage to like the Diabetes Friendly Meals Community did you feel like the amount of information was just overloading or it was a bit less because it’s…**

P: Let me just find it again. I think it’s perhaps, I don’t know if it’s the layout or maybe the fact that, you know, the writing is on the picture. It’s not kind of, do you know what I mean? It’s not that accessible in terms of being able to read what it is.

**I: Yeah. So would you suggest different headings as well or just the presentation of…?**

P: Well probably, you could, yeah, I mean you could maybe look at grouping recipes and then having different headings, that type of thing, to kind of help people find what they’re looking for.

**I: Yeah I think it’s because it’s also quite a big platform I think and it’s growing with communities, it’s just finding a way to, you know, make that information visible but in a structured way kind of. So I think once you’re in the community you can filter what you’re saying on certain recipes but yeah, I think, you know, it’s a valid point to say that maybe the homepage might be a bit… coming across as overwhelming because there’s a lot of information and text and pictures so thank you.**

**If we go more to the dietary aspect. So do you think the recipes represent enough variety and healthy food options for people with diabetes and then specifically in the community, this community you’re heading up?**

P: So I guess one thing that I’m always going to sort of jump to is that, you know, like the tag and stuff that says low carb, amazing flavour sort of thing sort of suggests that everybody with diabetes needs to have a low carb diet whereas, you know, we know that that works for some people but the important thing is really the types of carbohydrates that people are having and portion size, that type of thing. So that was one thing that I noticed. Then I guess if we look at the variety of the recipes, I suppose there’s not… what stood out to me is that there’s less in terms of the sort of Asian and kind of African Caribbean, you know, the BAME kind of audiences, I don’t know if I’d say that there is a lot of variety in terms of recipes here for that group of people. Then sort of if you…I guess if you go into one of the recipes looking at like the…I felt that some of the recipes, the nutrient score, the health score, didn’t necessarily reflect how healthy that recipe actually was.

**I: Okay.**

P: So I don’t know if that’s because of the nutrients that have been used. So like here for example, this recipe gets a score of 5.9 and to me the only thing really that would be a negative is the salt.

**I: Okay.**

P: So yeah, I just wondered what the kind of justification was behind having all carbohydrates being a negative impact. I know they’ve got the fibre here as a positive so…

**I: Yes I think they give just a small explanation on top about the guidelines for that but yeah, I’m not sure exactly how they calculate it so yeah, I think it’s a valid question to see how do they come up with a low score or a high score of health, looking at the ingredients yeah.**

P: Yeah it would be interesting to know how users actually, how people actually use that score, how much kind of weighting they put on it in terms of helping them to make the decision about the recipe itself. You know, when we’re developing recipes we have criteria that we use to kind of establish whether it would be sort of suitable to go onto our website. So we use like the traffic light colour coding system which is obviously quite widely known about in the UK and it’s something that people are quite familiar with and we also sort of use our nutritional guidelines as well as kind of a basis to what recipes we’d be looking at. So I just sort of would wonder what the kind of criteria is behind that health score given what people are familiar with in the UK and the kind of evidence I guess.

**I: Yeah because I think like you mentioned it’s like user generated but I think also there are some recipes at the bottom. The first recipes that were posted are actually from Diabetes UK as well. So yeah I mean it’s nice I guess to see other people posting there but what you’re saying you don’t really know how that health score is calculated and if it really truly reflects the nutritional value in the dish.**

P: Yeah. I guess it’s that and then I suppose the other thing is like I was sort of saying at the beginning, it’s how….so obviously it’s user generated but is there any way of kind of having some...I guess something that I noticed is there’s no like blurb or opening information about what this community is for and what’s the types of recipes they’re looking for and that type of thing. There’s no sort of, it just feels a little bit like people could add anything they want.

**I: Yeah. There’s no quality control on it.**

P: Yeah, whether that’s really kind of suitable or helpful.

**I: Yeah, and I think you were referring to the traffic light system as well. I think they tried to use, with the health score, they tried to use the green, amber and red as well so I think they tried to represent it as that as well in those categories but yes just what you’re saying the question is how did they come to that score. So yeah, I think that’s a valid point as well.**

**And also, in terms of diabetes friendliness, I think under the nutrition per serving there’ something more about the glycaemic index and loads, I don’t know if you’ve noticed that. Is that something, you know, what are your thoughts about that in terms of the context of diabetes?**

P: Yeah, so it’s interesting because, you know, it is something that… I guess it depends on your type of diabetes as well, so, you know, we know that glycaemic index can be a useful thing for some people with type two diabetes to help them to kind of lower the [unclear 00:16:25] so that it doesn’t have such an impact on their blood glucose levels but then for people with type one diabetes, they’re kind of counting the amount of carbohydrate that they have and matching their insulin so they might be more into [feeding] their glycaemic load I guess. But something that I’m kind of quite conscious about is that if you get a person to focus on one thing, so you know if they focus solely on the glycaemic index of a meal or food, you can lose sight of the overall healthiness. So like, for example, the glycaemic index of a chocolate bar would be quite low so that’s because it’s got lots of fat in it whereas…so it might be a choice in terms of its index being low but actually in terms of how healthy that food is, it’s not quite reflected just by that food. I wouldn’t want someone to focus solely on just that one factor. It would be about the overall, the completeness of it.

**I: Yeah.**

P: So I can see the benefits of having something like a health score because I know that is a type of food labelling that’s being used in other countries across the world, so I can see how it could be useful. I think it’s just how they come to that score and how that is kind of communicated I guess.

**I: Yeah. And is there anything else in terms of the nutrition? I mean I think your colleague was also mentioning, you know, the servings. She said it’s normally presented per serving. It’s this idea what is actually, you know, how many grams and how much stuff is in there but yeah I said, you know, you can change the servings. I mean do you have any thoughts about that or that it should be per more on the gram instead of per serving or…?**

P: I think it’s useful to give the information per serving. I think it’s also useful to reflect how many servings are considered… you know, how many servings that dish is supposed to be. So, you know, it’s alright kind of saying that this for nutrition information is for one serving but there needs to be some kind of reflection of what proportion of the whole that one serving is, like this is a recipe that serves four people and this is the information per serving sort of thing. I think that’s quite a useful thing. Because we know portion sizes are quite a difficult thing for people to kind of understand and to know what the right portion size is for them. So I think some indication of this is a recipe for four people and this is what the nutrition per serving is based on four people eating this.

**I: Yeah, because for me, if I can just be blunt, for me one serving would just be for one person, yeah.**

P: Yeah, I suppose the recipe that I’ve got up now, this pizza recipe, you could quite easily look at that and say oh well that’s just one serving so it’s okay if I eat the whole pizza kind of thing. So some sort of indication that actually this is meant to serve two people, four people.

**I: Yeah, I think…I guess that also depends on how calorie dense it is maybe or how nutritious it is.**

P: Yeah.

**I: Yeah, I think portion size, what you’re saying, you find it’s important to also, that portion size is reflected and what is a healthy portion.**

P: Yeah, yeah exactly.

**I: Okay, that’s interesting. Is there anything else around like more the nutritional end of the recipes or how information is presented that you think could be better or different, or is actually well presented?**

P: There’s a lot of focus on here about, you know, keto, low-carb, sugar-free. I just wouldn’t want that to deter some people’s understanding of what a healthy diet is, that sort of thing, you know, yeah.

**I: Definitely. Okay and in terms of your expectations of the platform. Do you think it would support people with diabetes in planning their meals more efficiently using the meal planner and the shopping list and the different recipes?**

P: Yeah, I think it could, yeah. Obviously there is something about kind of, you know, this will be suitable to a certain audience, it won’t work for everybody is what I’m getting at in terms of, you know, this is a bit kind of generalisational but, I think it would work for younger audiences that are more kind of used to this kind of tech savvy. It reminds me a bit of Instagram.

**I: Okay, yeah. It very picture, yeah…with the pictures.**

P: Or Pinterest, you know, that kind of setup in terms of having like a really bold picture and then like a small amount of text, it reminds me a little bit of Pinterest so I think there will be certain audiences which is great.

**I: Yeah.**

P: And then, you know, I do find it really useful just to be able to click on and save a recipe and then something that might make it even [inaudible 00:22:44]…once you’ve clicked on a save if you can then, all from like the same page, if you could then add that straight to your meal plan, do you know what I mean? Instead of having to go into the planner and then selecting a recipe, if you’re on a recipe.

**I: Yeah, so I think if you go recipes you can actually with the three dots, I think you can add it to your shopping list or your planner. I think you’re actually able to do that.**

P: Yeah. I guess what I was meaning is that is if you’re in a recipe, so you know you’ve come from like the community and you find a recipe and then you’ve already pressed save but once you’ve pressed save if it came up do you want to add this to your meal plan, I think it would just make it a bit quicker.

**I: Okay, yeah. And that’s on the three dots here if you add it to, I think, no. Ah okay so you want to have it, yeah so…**

P: If you press save and then….

**I: Yeah, yeah, okay.**

P: Oh wait, oh no it does, it does.

**I: After you save this, yeah, okay, yeah.**

P: That took me a little while to figure that out.

**I: You learn as you go along. I mean I had things where I was like I didn’t really know you could do that, but yeah.**

P: Yeah okay good point. So in terms of the planner and the shopping I think the planner itself will just kind of help people to…I mean it has the potential to help people kind of be thinking more proactively about what they’re eating rather than just making decisions on the spot or last minute kind of decisions or whatever so it gives you that kind of forward thinking so that perhaps you can then decide about a range of different, you know…it potentially could help people to make healthier choices but I think in order to be able to make those healthier choices the recipes in themselves need to be healthy to start off with so I think there’s something about educating around what is healthy and something around the kind of, I don’t want to say rules but the sort of management of what goes into the different groups I guess.

**I: Yeah, no that makes sense and in terms of your expectations, do you expect, well that’s in your answer I think, that people actually make healthier food choices. I mean you’re referring to it has the potential but it actually needs to start with the foundation around what is a healthy meal and those recipes need to be healthy. Did I interpret that correctly?**

P: Yeah. Yeah, so I suppose just by presenting someone with a range of recipes and then the option to make a meal plan that doesn’t necessarily mean that the choices are going to be healthier. It might just mean that they’ve planned well. Whereas if you’ve given someone the kind of education or an awareness about what is healthy and then you present them with recipes that you’re confident are healthy and then you give them the option to choose those recipes and plan, then they’re more likely to make healthier choices. But I think, don’t get me wrong, some of these recipes definitely will be healthier choices, but it’s just that kind of management around what gets added to the community and how the health score is worked out in terms of will those kind of recipe selections then actually mean that someone’s got a healthier diet. There’s a set back from that as well I think.

**I: Yeah, I mean this is also a related question, so would you then expect also, given that all the recipes would be a bit healthier or it would only be the Diabetes UK selected recipes, would that actually have the potential to impact the diabetes management of people so more in terms of diabetes related health in terms of their blood sugar level and their weight and overall health? Do you have any thoughts?**

P: Food is a big part of diabetes management so if say we were doing meal planning and choosing healthy recipes that meant that someone’s overall diet became healthier, then it does have the potential to impact on their long term blood glucose management and then also, you know, their blood pressure and cholesterol and their future risk of complications and that would be a combination of making sure that their whole diet was choosing healthier food as much as possible and if you could start to encourage that through doing meal planning then that’s a step in the right direction, that’s my view on it.

**I: Yeah, thank you. And then one more question before we can stop screen sharing or you can just leave it off. Would it support people in their food shopping experience do you think using the shopping list as well?**

P: I mean, yeah, I think one thing that I’ve noticed with…I haven’t really used this shopping list, I haven’t really delved into it very much, but one thing I have noticed with other kind of similar tools is that they don’t always collate the ingredients. So, if you choose two recipes but they’ve similar ingredients in them you might see them appear twice in your list instead of it being collated into one quantity so that’s one thing that I’ve noticed. So you’d want your list, so say if you’ve got, I don’t know, I’m going to say bananas because they’re there, if you need two bananas but you need two bananas twice you want to see that as four rather than it being…

**I: Two separate entities, yeah, I get that. Okay, so yeah you would think it has the potential to make their…**

P: Yeah, yeah and there’s something about kind of affordability as well so one thing I did notice with the recipes is that, I suppose if they’re kind of user generated it depends on who’s coming up with them I suppose but there’s something about the recipes not being too expensive. So there’s a chance that there could be lots of ingredients in the recipes that are a bit more on the expensive side, you know they might not be everyday recipes; they might be more something that’s had less frequently or whatever. So I don’t know if there’s any way of the recipes having some kind of costs put against them or if there’s a way of encouraging people to choose more sort of affordable ingredients or giving suggestions about giving adaptations to the recipes that kind of thing. One thing we do on our recipes is we give kind of what’s called Chef’s Kit and it’s just kind of swaps that people can do that will mean the recipe will still work but it gives them alternatives for different ingredients.

**I: Okay.**

P: So yeah, I think that helps with kind of managing the cost because if you wanted to use the meal plan, there’s a chance you could like populate it with lots of different recipes and then it turned out being quite expensive so maybe we could have set…or there could be some kind of content around how you can cook and have something for dinner and then for lunch the next day, you know, and save kind of food preparation and cooking and chilling things properly.

**I: Yeah, okay.**

P: I think that’s all kind of useful stuff to help people meal plan better so that they’re not kind of trying to have new things every single day and that kind of recognition that you can repeat things throughout the week, that type of thing.

**I: It sounds very practical as well. I know in the shopping list once… because I mean I tried a spate one several times but I know if you have a shopping list you can actually replace, you know, individually you can replace an ingredient that I think is more on the level like oh you have olive oil from a certain brand, there’s a cheaper version of the Tesco own brand so in terms of like the same product but I don’t know if they give suggestions for you need to use a different kind of oil instead of the olive oil for example so I’m not sure. So there are some things you’re mentioning that are not incorporated I think. And they will give you a price but that’s at the end when you already have your shopping list ready to put in your basket so yeah I think you’re more mentioning like if you could have that visualised before that step when you put it in your basket I guess.**

P: Yeah so I think it’s more on the recipe- on the actual recipe page itself that’s kind of how much does this recipe cost. So if this gives you kind of like a rough estimate of your stuff is this price, do you know what they’re comparing that to, where they’re getting that information from in terms of the price, do they use a specific supermarket or…?

**I: Yeah, I think they have a list of supermarkets they collaborate with because you can also shop on aisle so you have certain routes in the store so you actually follow the route which is most efficient time wise. I think it’s Asda and Tesco and there’s, I think two other shops that are related to that and I just wanted to pick your brain as well because you’re mentioning budget as a thing which seems to be important and how would you relate that specifically to people with diabetes for example?**

P: Oh okay. So I guess when you’re thinking about…One aspect of it is that when you’re creating meals and meal planning that type of thing, there’s no kind of one size fits all correct diet for everybody with diabetes and we wouldn’t kind of say this is a diabetes diet so when you’re meal planning you’re actually creating meals for your whole family. So one part of budgeting is making sure that you, you know, it’s making your budget fit to your whole family, so that’s one side of it I guess, it being affordable from the whole family kind of point of view. And then I guess in terms of type two diabetes at least I suppose we know that type two diabetes is more prevalent in lower socioeconomic status [unclear 00:34:45] communities.

**I: Yeah.**

P: So that’s kind of some of the factors to kind of consider is that the types of people that we’re trying to reach for this content potentially could come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

**I: Okay, yeah .**

P: So that’s a factor as well.

**I: That’s really useful actually to have your thoughts on that as well I think also in terms of improving and making it more accessible for people.**

P: Yeah, and accessibility of these types of websites is if it’s specifically aimed at people with diabetes, you know, there have been like…so like visual impairment, eyesight loss and that type of thing is a complication of diabetes so making sure the things are readable, user friendly, visually accessible is quite important for that community.

**I: Do you think the platform specifically succeeds in that for this group or do you think there’s room for improvement?**

P: I think it goes back to what I was saying before, I find it quite busy the starting page and you know where you’ve got, so like this big picture here where you’ve got the writing on top of the image, it’s not that easy to read so I think there’s probably room for improvement.

**I: Okay, that’s really interesting.**

P: [unclear 00:36:21]

**I: Yeah I know. I think you’re colleague also mentioned the visible aspect in terms of font size and font used and you’re actually mentioning how the recipes and the communities are presented so I think that’s definitely something we can hold on to to maybe improve the platform for this specific group. It seems like a minor thing, but I think it can make a massive difference for people with diabetes so definitely. I don’t have specific questions about the app itself but more broader questions related to it but you can just leave the screen open if you feel comfortable with that.**

P: So we don’t need this up…oh I’ll just stop playing it. It makes my computer run a bit slower. There we go.

**I: Brilliant. And I think we touched upon this already because I heard you mentioning, because I wanted to know if the reach and how user friendly and if it’s open for a more general audience also, you know, in terms of the age groups so for young and older people, in terms of ethnicity and also in digital literacy, I think you’ve touched upon all of them. If I can correctly summarise that you said I’m not sure it might be more for the tech savvy people so who are a bit more, coping a bit better with technology and then also you said it might not reach the more ethnic minority groups and it’s also a bit more suitable for younger people. Is that how I interpreted that correctly?**

P: Yeah. I think we’re always quite surprised by, so when we’ve done kind of user testing and that kind of thing, you’d be surprised as to how tech savvy older generations are and I think that, you know, you can make an assumption that older generations don’t use technology but I don’t think that’s right anymore. I think we’ve kind of moved into a digital age. I mean lots of people are using smart phones and all that type of thing, so I don’t think it would be right of me to say that the older generation as a whole wouldn’t use this platform because it definitely will reach some older people. But I think in terms of kind of the style of it, it felt more like kind of Pinterest or your Instagram that type of thing that would perhaps be more suited for the younger audiences. And I think it’s just that thing, because it is online not everyone has access to the internet and, you know, don’t have the resources potentially to be able to have the more high tech phones or laptops or whatever. So that is I guess something to consider, yeah.

**I: Yeah. How would you think we could improve the platform for like an older audience, I mean if they have a smart phone or a laptop in that case and also around the ethnic minority groups? Do you have any thoughts on that where you can elaborate?**

P: I was thinking in terms of kind of …erm…reaching older audiences…I think just maybe something about, like we were talking about in terms of the layout I suppose I think we mentioned you could kind of use sub headings and that type of thing, so you could break it down a little bit so that people can see well these are breakfast recipes, these are lunch recipes, whatever, and it would make it a bit more easier to navigate or perhaps make the filters more prominent that type of thing. And I think certainly that accessibility in terms of font size, colour, resource that would help in terms of those groups. But then I guess something that we have kind of found out though doing some work with certain ethnic groups is that even if perhaps the older generations aren’t active in technology, they might be using a younger family member or, you know, a son or a daughter or whatever might be finding this content for them so it’s perhaps just really defining who it is that you’re trying to target with it and then just doing the user testing and making sure that it does reach that community and encouraging them to share it with other people. I think the pitfall is you try to reach too many people and then it doesn’t suit anybody.

**I: Yeah, it’s finding the balance I guess, yeah.**

P: Yeah.

**I: That’s really helpful actually. Did you learn something specific when you were going through the app or were you like no I’ve seen this all before?**

P: Well I haven’t actually looked at the app to be honest.

**I: Oh, it’s the same as on your desktop. I downloaded the app myself on my phone because I think it’s easier just to have it with me on the phone but yeah, the platform, did you learn something specific or...?**

P: I mean I think something that is good about these types of user generated things is that obviously they’re coming from people that are living with the condition themselves so it’s obviously relevant to that person and then it could be useful for other people in a similar situation. But I suppose there wasn’t any kind of, or there might be but I didn’t find it, there wasn’t any sort of like forum, a sort of chat function where you could like share your tips and have conversations with other people about…because one of the big things with living with a long term condition is that you don’t get regular access to health care professionals and therefore you’re kind of managing the condition yourself for a long time so having access to be able to tap into other people in the same situation as you is really important. So, you know, our forums are really popular and if you’ve got this kind of community that are trying to build these diabetes friendly recipes is there a way of adding in that sort of chat for conversational kind of side of things?

**I: Yeah, I think you’re almost referring to like a kind of peer support or something.**

P: Yeah.

**I: Because you just recognise things from other people and what you’re saying like giving useful tips and advice about how they’re prepping and coping with their condition but also what would be a good meal.**

P: Yeah.

**I: Yeah I think I was quite shocked actually by your colleague saying I think there are a lot of people who don’t have access to like you as a [anonymized] and I think they’re on the waiting list for like a year or so and it’s just what you’re saying, it’s more self-management but on the other hand it’s quite complex and it takes behaviour change I guess to really establish, you know, a healthy meal and healthy menu so yeah, that’s insightful thank you.**

**Do you have any other suggestions for improving the platform apart from the things you already said around the health score and for like the ethnic groups but also for the more older people? Is there anything in general to add or was that…? I mean you’ve been quite [helpful] already....**

P: I can’t think of anything else. There’s nothing immediately coming to mind. Yeah, I think, I’ve already mentioned it I think, but it’s just that education piece. Do you just want this to be solely user generated and people take it for what it is or if they want it to lead to proper healthy behaviour change, is there any kind of scope for that sort of education piece around what is healthy, what recipes is it that we’re looking for in this platform? Do we want to provide any kind of blurb or sort of instructions around what types of recipes can go in this platform and that sort of thing.

**I: Yeah, I think your colleague actually mentioned the same thing. So after having chats with both of you I think there are some common themes that come across as well. Would you recommend this to people with diabetes?**

P: I think I would probably need to delve into the health score a bit more and understand what the criteria is behind that health score and I think I’d want to know how people are using that health score to help them with their decisions around whether are things are healthy. And I think I would- I think my honest answer is I would with caveat. Is that fair?

**I: Yeah. I mean you can be as honest, the more honest the better for us because it actually helps us to improve it as well from your professional perspective.**

P: My main concern I suppose is if I go into that diabetes friendly community, I’m not sure that I would necessarily recommend all of those recipes as a healthier choice to people. So my main thing is that I could quite easily click on one of those recipes and see a recipe that wouldn’t fit our criteria and if it doesn’t fit our criteria then it’s not necessarily something that I would be recommending to my diabetic patients.

**I: Yeah, I think that’s very clear and of course you’re also talking from your perspective as a [anonymized] which is the whole purpose of this interview so I think fair place. It’s something we definitely need to consider I think and we’ll come across. Yeah, I think one of the participants mentioned something about nutrition value as well, how he wanted to have it presented and there are some differences between type one and type two so yeah I think we have some common themes already. Would it be interesting for the Diabetes UK learning zone? Would the platform fit in that context do you think?**

P: I think it could, I mean I think if it was, you know, we have like food hack modules and stuff like that so I suppose that’s kind of providing you with the information. I suppose it ties a few things together a bit I suppose in terms of the education round what is healthy and then going on to then plan your meals, so the two things work together quite well. I think there would need to be some, it’s that like filtering of the recipes beforehand to make sure that they are meeting that criteria so some kind of- I don’t like using the word regulation and rules, but it always is that principle I suppose around this is what makes a recipe healthy and therefore you should only find these types of recipes and this sort of thing.

**I: Yeah and in terms, I think you were referring already to some existing applications, I mean are you aware of similar kind of applications for people with diabetes or is this very unique in the market in that sense?**

P: I haven’t seen anything particularly where you can create a meal plan, not specifically for diabetes anyway. I think there are things where you can look at recipes and then build a shopping list from recipes but again I don’t know whether they’re necessarily specifically for diabetes, I think it’s just something that is available.

**I: Yeah.**

P: Yeah I think there are more things now you can look at…add ingredients to the shopping list.

**I: Yeah, okay. And one of the last questions is around the influence of COVID and the pandemic. How do you think the COVID pandemic affected the use of the platform among people with diabetes? Any thoughts?**

P: I would say to start off with…so the beginning of the pandemic people, you know, there was this time where there was food shortage and, you know, panic buying…

**I: Yeah, definitely.**

P: …so I would say initially in the first few months of the pandemic people probably weren’t thinking in terms of meal planning. It was just kind of what is available to me, what have I got in my store cupboard and what can I buy and then I’ll just make something from it as opposed to oh I need these ingredients and I’d like to buy this and that, so I would say it probably had a fairly big impact to start off with in terms of just food availability. But then perhaps as things have gone on and, you know, and that sort of initial food shortage has kind of tailed off, I think COVID has kind of shone a light on - well it’s reemphasised maybe the fact that being healthy and eating healthier foods and managing your weight is a really important part of your overall health. It’s not just about certain conditions. It’s important in terms of immunity, in terms of general wellbeing, how you feel, your emotional wellbeing and I think COVID has probably brought back that to light again. So people might be thinking more mindfully about what they’re eating and also obviously we’re all spending more time at home so we don’t have the option of eating out as often and we can’t grab lunch on the go and that type of thing, so everyone’s having to cook more at home, so just by that general kind of nature of it I guess people will be wanting to have more variety and that sort of thing so I think it probably brought it kind of forward in people’s minds more than it probably was before.

**I: Yeah, put things in a different perspective I guess. So on the one hand you’re saying the beginning it was more about bulk buying and not even checking if it was healthy, you know it’s just the food, is it available, and then after that when there was enough supply as well and spending more time at home with the opportunity to cook and I guess more healthy and think about, you know, you’re overall health from a more holistic perspective, it could have increased the use of such an app as a tool.**

P: Yeah.

**I: Yeah. Okay, well that’s very interesting. Before we close do you have anything else to ask or like remarks or thoughts you want to share?**

P: I don’t think so at the minute, no.

**I: You can always email afterwards if something pops up in your mind and you think it’s important. But yeah I’ll just stop recording because we’re wrapping up now. So thank you so much for your time. It was really great talking to you and hearing your perspective on the platform. I have a chat with [anonymized] booked tomorrow because she was involved in the project from the start but as I said if anything pops up in your mind… I will make a note about, you know, how we would refer to [anonymized] because I think that’s quite a valid point you were making. My colleague is ordering some Amazon vouchers as well, so as a thank you we want to offer you a £10 small gesture voucher from Amazon but I think it will come through next week or so because it needs to go through our financial approvement processes but hopefully next week I can send you something. Thank you so much for your time really, very insightful. Enjoy the rest of your day.**

P: Yeah, you too.

**I: Thank you. Nice meeting you again.**

P: Thank you.

**I: Thank you. Bye.**

[ENDS]