

ORAL HISTORY RECORDING TRANSCRIPT

'Fighting for our Rights' project

Surname	Albright
Given name	Cindy
Date of birth	1938
Place of birth	United States
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Q: So this is an oral history interview with Cindy Albright by Jen Kavanagh on Monday 5th June 2017. The interview is taking place at Cindy's home as part of Kingston Centre for Independent Living's 'Fighting for Our Rights' project. So thank you very much for being interviewed, Cindy. Could we start with you stating your full name please?

A: Cindy Albright, age 1938, that makes me 80 next year, address, I'm in Chessington, it's a very nice home, adapted with a lift and all the handles and bars or whatever you can think of, which I'm very grateful.

Q: Whereabouts were you born?

A: I was born in the United States, but I think it was sort of wartime, things had got a bit funny, and so people had to go back to their own countries or something, and this is the story I know, and I was re-registered. I don't even know if I'm the same age [laughs]. And I was registered in Colombo, which was Ceylon then, and then I didn't live there that long but I was, moved back and I've been here for 56 years now. So my children were born here and whatever.

Q: What were your parent's names?

A: Harry and Lucinda, my mother, Fernando.

Q: And what were their professions?

A: Father was in the diplomatic service, and mother sort of interfered [both laugh].

Q: Excellent! And whereabouts did you go to school?

A: Mexico, America, everywhere, but I went to school sort of--, he had to travel you see, so my brother and I, we were taken to different countries, we had tutors and so on, you know. So education wasn't all that fantastic, and I had been to school but not really educated at school except private tutors are

boring, you know, but I used to take part on various sport but that was also--, it's sad situation, but I did get the education however. I don't have any degrees.

[mobile phone interruption]

Q: So what age were you when you finished your education?

A: Oh God, do you know, I can't remember. I had gaps, I did languages, I did Spanish, I got the O' Level in Spanish. When you're finishing school in Switzerland all you did was walk up and down with a book on your head and how to courtesy either to the Queen, you had to do the proper thing, and to the Duke it's different, and to some other lord you had to, you know, these stupid things, but, okay, and we made fondue and high tea stuff you see, so it doesn't apply to where I am now [both laugh].

Q: So what did you end up doing once you'd been to finishing school?

A: I did work for the police department and then I worked, oh, selling tea as a representative. Then of course I got terribly ill at the age of 29. I had Jackie then I had Carolyn and she was only about, it was after I had her, but we don't talk about that, but something happened to me, I had to have a total hysterectomy at my very young age and didn't have radiotherapy or chemo then, I had solid radiation treatment, and I have been ill now for 49 years. They did, first they said I was going to pop, six months, they brought it down to six weeks. They woke me up, I was in the hospital one year and seven months in the Fulham, which is now the Charing Cross, and they said, "We've found a drug, we've got nothing to lose. Only thing is, if you do take it your body will be destroyed." So I took the drug, lost my eyesight. Well I dropped the hair because of the treatment of course, and various other bone problems, so the body is, so it's 49 years I've been like sick ill. In the meantime I had treatment, I still worked. I worked on the totalisator but it was a casual job, which was good, race courses, you know, I was the supervisor for the jackpot. And, but then you're allocated so you can have two days off, they paid you sort of like daily, but it was good enough. Then I became, when I was disabled I was sent to the--, oh I did love it, Crescent Resource Centre, there were some beautiful people, ran beautifully, we had lunch there, they used to pick you up, it was all done by the local authorities. And I have started taking art. Once I got the hang of it then my godfather's--, my godfather's dead but his son still sort of helps in other ways, generous for my birthday because they know I have no money, and Christmas, so if I needed something he'd buy. So he got me going with Bob Ross and he paid for me to--, oh, this is me you see. [indicates paintings]

Q: Oh wow!

A: Yeah, see, I'm an artist, qualified, and an instructor, the American painting, so I can still do it you see, so. And there it is, I was in Kingston Council and I had a lot of problems because, a) I had homecare, [gasps] it was a nightmare. I had a lot of personal problems and you're lying there, this is embarrassing, on a wet bed on a floor sheet, this is so embarrassing, and they would come, I would lie there and I'd wait, quarter past ten, ten past ten, they'd come in and say, "We've only got 15 minutes." That really got me so depressed. I wasn't very--, despite my illness or my blindness I was still able bodied, and I had to prove--, I'm terrible, I had to prove, prove, prove I'm great. You can't walk but you crawl and prove I can do it. So that's what kept me going really. Really what kept me going is this Independent Living fund.

Q: So when did you first find out about the scheme?

A: I had this problem, I think bless her, Kat Turner, she walked in and said, "What are you doing?" I said, "I'm still waiting for somebody." Oh, I couldn't move much. "Oh gosh," she said, "Something's got to be done." The next thing somebody else came and saw me, and then I joined Jane Campbell, Kay Trujillo, that lot, for this Independent Living scheme, and Ali Kashmiri, so we're going back quite a few years. I've aged since [laughs]. Jane Lawrence, you know, we had meetings. They started before it before I joined. Then a thing called KADP started, which was Kingston Association for Disabled People, didn't get a lot of

money but my gosh I could get my care. I had a couple of good girls in the Crescent Resource who was looking for work to look after, it wasn't enough what they were doing there for lunch time, so these are clean, lovely girls. So I got them and they paid you so many hours, I can't remember how much, it was very little but still they were happy, and you know the girls, I was prepared to give them the key, and oh! And then gradually it became--, Phil Levick was there and he must have sent the lady with one of my--, well I don't know what she was, Marie Martin, she must have been a care person 'cause Kat Turner didn't come, and she was representing the Independent Living fund. So when she came and saw what I can do and I can't do, oh my gosh, excuse me, this pollen's got me a blocked up nose, and she gave me extra hours. So I got the Independent Living fund, Independent Living scheme. I didn't have much to do with the fund people, you don't see them except once a year, but if you're lucky, but they left you alone. But the KCIL, not KCIL, it was, hang on, after KADP it was ILS, Independent Living Scheme. Then of course--, oh, I used to go and help the KADP, we had little, tiny little room in Fife Road, was it, or somewhere? We used to get--, I remember putting things in envelopes and sending it off, and you could hardly breathe, you know. Then we moved to that other place where there's a plane engine hanging--, oh my God. Yes, yes, the office was there. I used to wheel my chair round it because the Spitfire engine was--, used to have the aerospace don't forget, so that building had something to do with the aerospace [laughs], and there's this hall, and this is engine stuck up on top hanging on some chain [both laugh]. So we had a little place there, I remember going there and helping out. And we were trying to raise money, trying to, you know, talk about things and so on. But I did enjoy it, then of course it became a little bit--, we graduated into bigger--, we only had a handful of people, finally Richmond was interested, Sutton was interested, so we ended up going to--, and then we formed these meetings, it was a--, oh, my brain's gone now. I was in the committee with Margaret--, no, sorry, with Kay Trujillo, Ali Kashmiri, Jane Campbell, Jane Lawrence, myself, nobody else, just the--, we used to have meetings and take it over, for the user group it was, you know. And we used to discuss--, and things ran beautifully. I can't, I really cannot, oh, we were very, very lucky because years ago if you were disabled you were shoved in the back room and you never, you pretended there wasn't anybody around. I mean this case was the front row, if KCIL had--, if this Independent Living hadn't brought this out, the awareness, we would have still been--, because some of the other places, they're still suffering. So we had some good--, we'd got the odd one who used to run the--, which wasn't good enough, but it changed my life. Once or twice, yes I have to admit that I, the girls are grown, I can't anymore, cut it short. My girls don't know about this, my psychiatrist knew about it [laughs], but I'm alive because of them. I was free, my gosh, I was free. I had the girls that I wanted to come to help me. Do you want to go shopping? I mean how lovely is that? Oh yes please! I could feel my own stuff and buy, oh look at that! I never got that chance. I mean before I got ill, certainly. I said, "Oh that's cheap, I'll have two of those," you know, sort of, I don't know, chicken legs, whatever. Oh, I'm only--, bring me some cheese, you know, but there's a collection of cheese, I can ask for a small piece for me. I never got that, and there was nothing wrong with me [laughs], I had a life of riley. I slept, I ate, they allowed me to do this and I was, who was I? Nothing, but they did that. They gave me the independence. I didn't kill myself, they saved my life, this is not bullshit, I mean this is true. I had enough, people do get like that. But because your Christian background, I'm a Catholic you see, and you try going for God and then suddenly you hate everybody. And then I was sent, because of that, these mobility people came and examined me, a doctor. I had to go to a little place somewhere near the river, they examined me and they thought--, they pensioned me off because I couldn't work. I had very bad eyesight, I couldn't work, so I pensioned me off at a very young age. And then I was put into this DLA. If not for this KCIL thing I wouldn't have got anywhere, I wouldn't have known what to do. People treat you very badly, some of the others. You can't do that, you know. So then you went out, you went on boating trips for heaven's sakes [laughs]. You went on picnics, you went here, you went there. But I love the meetings we have, but the problem is nobody wants to come for the meetings. So I was prepared to, if they gave me permission to ring all the other clients or members from the office, well I would have sort of threatened in a way saying, I hope you realise we're going to lose this if you don't turn up and if nobody turns up for these meetings. Why bother have meeting? Why bother having us at all? We go back to the old system [laughs]. I was going to do that, they didn't mind, I say do what the hell you like! I just want people to come for the meeting, it's beautiful food. Some of them come at 12:30 'cause that's the food time. Have you been to our meetings?

Q: I haven't, no.

A: Oh you haven't, in the Dutch Reformed Church? You know, Maria they bring some beautiful Marks stuff, you know, lovely sandwiches and fruit, and we enjoy it.

Q: What is the purpose of those meetings? What do you discuss?

A: All about, well I marvel at things, or maybe there is something that we need to bring out about, to do with some of the rules that the council is putting today, and there's always a representative that would come there, and he said, "What nonsense is this?" You know, are you joking? You know, let us be as we are. You see we don't even fiddle any--, okay, now we have to pay by BACS, that's fine. But only unfortunate thing is I have a neighbour who is prepared to come at night when I live on my own, who come and help me. All right, I went on the floor and the stupid thing just went [makes whooshing sound], you know, the press button [laughs].

Q: Oh no.

A: So what do I do? Well I was crawling but then I hurt myself, but I managed to ring her, I managed to crawl and get her, and I remembered the phone number, ring, and she did come, she did come, and I gave her the number for the key for her to get in you see because I've got the key outside. Now, it's only half an hour, you can't write a cheque for half an hour can you? Oh give me your bank statement, I'll put the fiver in. Fiver doesn't buy you--, might buy you a couple of loaves of bread, you know, what I mean? I disagree on that, but it has to be done, you know, if that's what--, but they are very strong about that, no, no, not even £5, you have to pay tax on it. So somebody bringing some stupid rules into this. But now I'm being harassed, I have been doing so much goodness for this KCIL, I boosted it, I have told everybody about it and a lot of them are happy with it, and now the council doesn't know what they're doing frankly. You see because one care manager would come, we have been sending, you have a time sheet for each PA, name, signatures, how much, many hours, what you pay, balance, and if they're--, last year I gave back £1,400 because I didn't use it. I could have used it to go to Brighton and back, but why abuse it? I'm allowed, I could have said, "Come on, get your car out, let's go to Brighton, fish and chips, go down the lanes, I'll pay you." I didn't do that because I'm so grateful. So, but then other care manager's saying, "Why are you signing the papers?" We've been doing since day one, but how many years is it, '80s? So they have no knowledge, they are trying to frighten you, they have no knowledge whatsoever, they are angry as to why I am sending my bank statement and the care sheets to the KCIL office. I'll have them! What are they going to do if I send it to them? Oh, pay packet. No, I want to be independent, I'll pay my own. But they want the pay packet to do it, and it'll cost money for them to do it. Well give me independence, let me do something, I can write and I've got sight now. Still it's one of the nicest things. I think that this must have saved a lot of lives frankly, I think so, which is a wonderful, wonderful--, but things are getting tight now, and they're using the government, I don't know why. And this lady said to me, I said, "Are you trying to tell me--," see, okay, I've got oncology problem with my eye, it's too close to the brain so what the heck, you know, I'm old now, but it's still a worry, problem. I used to go every, when they discovered it I used to go every three or four weeks but now it's only every six months. I had treatment, so the carer, I can't expect the carer to drag me with the wheelchair, get into the bus, get to the Surbiton station and three different trains and then take me to the--, we'd have to get up at five 'o clock in the morning to do it [laughs]. One day I have been in the chair, not Moorfields but the lift wasn't working and we had to get all these men pulling--, oh please, don't! And then bringing me back the same--, I don't think so. So there is enough money left, so I hired this car, which is a cab guy, I mean I've known him for--, and they're trained, so he'll take me to Moorfields with my badge, he can with my appointment, we can park out there, there is this place, he'll wheel me in. He can even take me to the loo, open the door, turn me round and he'll stand out there without locking the door. He'll bring me my tea, we have to go to third floor first, then the second floor, then the fourth floor, then rest, have lunch and go down. 'Cause it's different, oh, cameras and I don't know, gadgets looking to see where the cancer is. He brings me back and piece of cake, the hours, and so he goes as transport as well as care, and it's cheaper than taking a carer.

She's saying, "Well can't you use hospital transport?" I would love to find out if somebody will send me hospital transport all the way from Moorfields in the other end of London. They don't know what they're talking about! I am knocking on 80 and now they're wanting me to cut my hours, to, if I go for the oncology, I have to go there because they're the only people that can help me, and she has got the, argh, [makes growling sound] to tell me, can't you? And then she said, "Oh, you'll be having too much--, I've been doing this for nearly 30--, oh, too many hours for you in the morning, and I said, "Oh yeah." Said, "Well what do they do?" I said, "Well this carer comes in and freshens up in the summer, you know, opens the--, comes upstairs, first and foremost to straighten these two fellas out, my feet." I don't feel this one because I've got neuropathy. So she's got to move it about a bit otherwise it pulls, I've got spasms. So she's got to put this special cream while I'm still in bed. Then she's got to yank me out, and I like it like that, and the frame is there and I hang on to the frame. She follows me and we go into the loo. She says, why can't we get an electronic bed that will stand you up? Then what? Do you know? She sent me the OT to go and have a look if I could have an electronic bed to stand me up. And how the hell, who's going to do the draw sheet and stuff like that? This is where I think, I think somebody's got to--, they are spoiling the Independent Living scheme, they're going to ruin it. I even said, "You want to take some hours off? Take it, but give me the freedom." We've never abused it, never. So grateful, we never abuse it because look at the way I'm living. So these are good people. That office, we, every time, John, Robert, we've got a problem, we ring them up. Have you tried ringing the council up? You don't know who you're talking to because the other person, oh, they left. So I had the OT on Friday, he laughed, he said, "I've seen you, Cindy," he's helping me with the kitchen cupboards and stuff, you know. He said, "Why am I here?" I said, "I don't know, darling, you're supposed to look at the bed." You know, I have had an electronic bed, it didn't work, who's going to lift, put me up? So somebody's got to talk to, I'm going to do this. John Smyth was going to come and speak to me. He's already spoken to Kay Trujillo and Jane Lawrence and they've upped the hours! [Laughs] I mean can't the people peel the potatoes that come in the morning so that you'll have it in the evening? She's telling me how to run the life, but KCIL never bothered, they knew how many hours I wanted. They fail me as to how to get up, what do I do? Yes, I can butter my toast, and they gave me those hours and they even increased it. And now they're going to cut that and they have no idea. So somebody ought to tell the local authorities, don't do this. Because all the good things that KCIL, with their money of course, you know, the local authority money, they're ruining it.

Q: What campaigns have you been involved with over the years?

A: Oh my gosh! I went up to Downing Street [laughs] for all sorts of things with Ali got chained into the--, and all about going to work, and it mainly I did to the local MP and stuff you see about this homecare, please. I think they had a lot to do with it, the, who were the MPs? I can't even remember. I think mostly it was the Tory in Kingston until things went wrong [laughs]. Oh we are back to the Tories again, the blues. But even our man, the Liberal, he's good. You go to him and talk about things and he did it, but I gone in, no one's spreading the word, I went to the Sutton meetings, Independent Living meetings. They're good but they used to have it all over the place. Then I used to go to the London--, the--, horrible place that nobody wants to go and that's where we had our meetings, Greater London, and I represented the Kingston, talking about the Independent Living scheme, that's all I talked about really. Oh, very nice do, Brixton, that's where they--, [both laugh]. Well it is when you're waiting for the cab, you know! [Both laugh] I shouldn't say that! My carer was frightened to stand there, ay! He said, "Can I have a ride on your wheelchair?" I said, "No you can't!" [Both laugh] So if you go out, we didn't have mobile phones. I did have a mobile phone but it's a crap, you know the ones in the beginning, and then the cab man loses us [laughs], you know, and then they go back, and she won't go on her own! Anyway, sorry, I mustn't set you off, oh, not all that, I don't know, but all I'm saying is that Independent Living saved my life. I don't mind talk about it now. If they didn't come to the rescue I would have gone, but I have been so happy, I've achieved an awful lot. Thanks to the Independent Living scheme I've achieved a lot.

Q: What are you most proud of that you've achieved?

A: Come on, I'm an invalid. Even my own cousins, they wrote me off. They only came to see me to take me shopping because they can go shopping with my disabled badge, they can park the car so they lug me along. I know that so I stopped all that, yes [laughs]. A couple of cousins younger than me, they said, "Oh Cindy, would you like to go shopping? The sales are on," you know, and they are posh. I said, "Oh yes." So they lugged me in, I had a chair, they're doing all their things, why? Because the badge is handy for them to park their car. Nobody wanted you. All your best friends disappeared after a while because I was a hassle. And all the time, every time I went out it was different, different hospitals, so that didn't work because the home care won't take me to hospital. Or then use hospital transport. You've got to be ready at eight 'o clock and your appointment is quarter past two [laughs], do you know what I mean? It's--, I did it, I did it, of course I did it, but my life opened up when this--, oh yes you can, do you know you can? I said, "Can I?" Well yeah, if you want to go to the pictures once a month, once a week you can do that. I said, "Really?" [Laughs] Where do you want to go? Flower show in Hampton--, and I did go, you can do that. But with home care, oh! So you see what a difference it made into a person who did well in her lifetime and suddenly you're struck down by a dreadful disease, couldn't even take care of your own children. My mother in law had them when they were little, never saw...go to school the first time. [Interruption in background] That's an unidentified person walking in! [Both laugh] Is she wearing glasses?

Q: Yes, shall I pause it for a second? [Pause in recording] So could you tell me about some of the times when the council was implementing new charging and what you do about campaigning around that?

A: Well we went to several meetings many years and finally the last year I was so despondent. It was a very cold day, I went for one. The second one I didn't go. I knew, I knew we were going to lose it. That I think is unfair, and okay they say you can have an assessment done, what's the difference? You know, yes there's more money going out because--, you see we don't have any centres to go to so I'm here, I have to have the heating on. Trust me, if you've got bone problems you have to have the heating on. So all that is money, gas, and so--, no, no. The service charges, it went up and up, I mean you know, I think what they're doing is you get some disability allowance from attendance allowance, they're taking it away. Okay, still got my carers. But now they're making it a little bit too much because the money I get, pension credit, no matter what because there is no--, I have got a few pounds saving, that doesn't count. But when you've got to pay, if it's five weeks then you've got to pay £400, you know, that sort of stuff. 100% is a lot to pay to get the carers you see for this. So I can sacrifice if they take off a few hours, you know, what's to be done? Don't go out, don't do this, don't do that, count your hours. But they must not reprimand us 'cause we will be broke when we have to pay that much money, and it's sad. Let me tell you something, I put the money in. If these carers don't turn up, or, a, they can't come in, that's the point, if they've got a terrible cold or any disease they can't come in to the house. They still lose money 'cause I have to have somebody else. If they don't turn up because they couldn't get up in the morning or whatever, they don't get paid. Even if they turn up and say, "I'll send somebody else," and I have to pay that one and not this one, so that money gets collected. I am putting money, and at the end of the day they're taking the left over money back, that's what hurts. See, you're collecting the money for them and they're not--, 'cause I still--, and the first thing that the care managers do, their not interested in anything, it's, are you paying the service? Are you paying the--, what is it? What's wrong with these people? So I think the Independent Living fund, can they interfere? They can't, but the council is making a very big mistake in sending this bunch of new care managers to cut everything off, bad. So do I fight again? I don't think so. I've done enough and I'm grateful. I think it's the young people will have to do it now. You're fighting the council really, not KCIL, KCILs on your side, but they have to see reason. So I'm, no more. I will still boost up meetings and stuff with KCIL, I love it, I tell anybody what a wonderful life it is. But fighting council, I'm not going to go, do anymore. The last one I did was this last time when they lifted the, when they were going to charge you, I don't know, 100% or whatever.

Q: Can you explain what that means, the 100% charge? What is it 100% of, what is that?

A: Yeah, no, we pay a service charge, like it went up, I was paying something like £170, sometimes £160, sometimes £170, now it's £200 and--, it's going to go up. 100%, it is a lot of money. How would you-

FS1: Your contribution? What do you mean?

A: Yeah, 100% of, you know, what I have to pay.

IV1: Right, okay.

FS1: Everybody pays different amounts don't they?

A: Yeah, it's a lot of money.

FS1: It's all sort of--,

A: Yeah, so that's--, and it's sad if you don't use hours. I've already put that money in then I have to return that money back to them.

FS1: They're not going to give you a refund are they?

A: No, no they won't. And then--,

FS1: Which is why I think John always says to you, spend it.

A: Yeah. See the thing is, there's a lot of expenses for somebody like me, there is. Sometimes you've got to get funny shoes, it's all expensive, everything is expensive for us. I don't like wearing those funny panty pads given there, I want my comfort, I pay my own, buy the normal ones, you know, just to be comfortable really. And I don't like that man bringing it in and leaving it outside the doorstep, everybody knows I'm using panty pads! [Laughs] And then KCIL is, I can't fault it, how can I fault it? Oh, I wrote a big A4, the joy of living with independent fund, it was in a magazine.

FS1: And you did a DVD as well didn't you?

A: No, I told her about all that. And three times they filmed me, three times. So can you get in there and get it?

Q: Yeah, we will definitely have a look, yeah, yeah. Can you talk me through what some of those, when you went to the meetings at the council, what did they involve, what was that like?

A: Most of the meetings we had our own, the KCIL meetings, and then they used to put it to the council, which we wanted. The council made it always to do with putting up the service charges, so used to keep up, go, go up, you know, go and listen in the big place in the Town Hall, everybody turns up, the members of parliament, the whole lot, mayor, the lot. We were lucky last time and I knew this year, why hold a meeting? Why tell us? I knew we were going to lose it, so last year we did. Still, we can scrape because we've got the KCIL helping us. God forbid if we lose KCIL and the social services takes it over, because they have no idea and they hire and fire all these care managers. Care managers have no idea and they are like gods telling you what to do. Now, you get a KCIL person come to you, what a big difference. They might say, "No, you can't do it," but you can ask.

FS1: They can give you the same answer as the council but they'll say it in a totally different way.

A: Careful, this is being recorded [laughs].

FS1: It doesn't matter, it doesn't matter.

A: It doesn't matter.

FS1: But you know, that goes a long way I think, you know, and you relate to it better don't you?

A: Yeah.

FS1: If you're told, [soft tone] "Oh well no, actually you can't do that." [Raises voice] "What are you doing that for? Can't do that!" There's a big difference isn't there? And that's how she's been spoken to.

A: She was down here with my iPad looking at my personal account. Her job was only to come here with my lady who was involved in the Independent Living fund, for her to say, "Yes, we pay Cindy so many hours." To say, "Yes, this is what we pay," otherwise they won't pay. If you didn't pay me that much they won't pay, so she's here to represent me for the council saying, "Yes, look, we pay this," and then she'll say, "Okay," she'll look at my papers and bank statements and stuff. But she was first day out, first time, never done anything like that before, and she said, "How are you paying?" And she wanted my bank--, and I'd just had that operation, I was having my sling, I'm lying here, oh shit, yeah, I will lie--, and I said, "I've just come back from hospital after a nasty operation." "Ah well," she said, "You're going to lose it." So I said, "So be it." See the difference? This is why we worship KCIL. They'll turn you down if you ask. I mean there's a holiday scheme for instance, I have to be very honest, if I go to live with my sister, I mean I've already paid for the plane, Cindy you fool! Well where are you staying? Send me a bill or something, you know, so much, it will cost you so much to--, I can't do that, staying with my family, why should I ask her for a bill? You know, but when I said, "Well can't I give you my tickets?" They said, "No, we can't do that, it's too late, you've already bought the ticket so you had the money to buy the ticket." [Laughs] If you were staying in a hotel, that's different. Let's see the hotel, you know. So they'll say, "You can't do that." But any problem at all you just go--, for other things, nothing to do with care. If you want to enquire about something you ask them and they'll tell you, because when I was passing through one day one of the blind ladies, they had--, my sight was really bad, the keypad was all yellow and, "Oh," I said, "I can see that!" They told me exactly where to go and to say who you are and you're getting mobility's and you can get it. You see they help you that way.

Q: What changes do you think you would like to see in terms of the provision that's offered within Kingston?

A: Changes? I think if I had a person two doors next to me, just for half an hour, I should be able to pay £5 to that person instead of writing a cheque or putting it, give your bank details, put £5 in. Middle of the night, you know, you can't do that, I think that is unfair. Today £5 would buy you two loaves of bread and that's it, and that is not right. Apart from that it's just the council putting up the rates. I can't criticise KCIL, it gave me a new life. I know the local authority was involved in this, they provided, but it was beautifully run by the people, except just the odd one that was saying [laughs], "Oh please, she's gone!" The odd person who was the boss. Happy times, boat rides, meetings, nice food, people don't realise and they don't turn up. Send them a letter bomb, they might come then [both laugh]. I can't say anymore but I do wish you could go in there and get what I have to say, what I do. They film me going here, enjoying myself, just marvelling at this wonderful scheme.

Q: Well I'll definitely find that and make sure we add that to the project.

A: It's a job well done, you know, that office alone, what is the local authorities going to do if they--, they said, "Oh well," well the care manager say, "Why are you sending these things to them?" I'll have it, like hell. So okay, so they might as well close down the KCIL, God help me [laughs].

FS1: No one to talk to then is there?

A: Talk to! [Cat comes into room] Hello! That's my prince.

Q: He's beautiful.

A: Now he's not all that shy is he?

FS1: No, he's getting better.

A: [Talking to cat] You've got to go to the hospital soon.

Q: Shall we stop it there?

A: Yeah.

Q: Is there anything more that you wanted to say that I haven't asked you?

A: Not really, it's just I have this strange feeling I don't think KCIL can help us quite a lot now 'cause I think they're frightened, sorry, not--, they're cautious to say yay or nay, they have to get information from-- , I don't know what's happened there but I've noticed that, they're frightened to say yes or no. Apart from that, I don't know [laughs], looking at the door knob [laughs]. [Talking to cat] Why can't you climb the window like you normally?

Q: We'll let the cat out and I will stop it there, thank you so much.

A: Did I talk through my hat?

[END OF RECORDING – 47:00]