

Official Community Visitor scheme

Case study

Thank you and bye

Marco lives in disability supported accommodation he shares with two other young men. He wears bilateral hearing aids, has an intellectual disability and is on the autism spectrum. When the OCV first met Marco, he had a Go Talk communication device, but there were issues with the programming, and he was unable to use it. The OCV was concerned about this as Marco's human rights did not appear to be being met.

It became clear to the OCV that there were many situations in which Marco could not adequately describe or communicate what he needed or wanted, where pain was located, or what might be wrong about some aspect of his day-to-day life. He would often scream at staff, lash out at whoever was close to him, refuse medications, and cry.

In her visit reports, the OCV repeatedly raised the issue of Marco's communication needs. How do staff communicate with Marco and he with them? What assessments and recommendations have happened to improve Marco's level and consistency of communication?

Subsequently, a speech pathologist and a signing coach were engaged, and are now playing an essential role in assisting Marco to develop his fluency in key word sign. They have been able to focus on Marco's capacity for language, speech, comprehension and expression, and help him develop further. Marco's Go Talk device is working and he is showing interest in learning to use it.

The service has organised training for staff in key word sign and using Go Talk. There are now key word sign posters around the house. Marco's behaviour is more settled and the OCV observed that he seems much happier.

On a recent visit, for the first time, Marco greeted the OCV with her name, and clearly enunciated the words "sit down", pointing to where he wanted her to sit and talk with him. Marco said "thank you" and "bye" when the OCV left.

