

Sam's Story

For babies, children and young people who cannot express their wishes due to communication difficulties, lack of understanding, or an assessed lack of capacity, non-instructed advocacy ensures their rights are always promoted and protected.

Meet Sam, age 12. Sam has difficulty communicating his views, needs, and wishes due to a diagnosis of autism. Sam's story is a hypothetical case study based on our advocacy experience and evidence.





Due to his autism, Sam has difficulty communicating his views, needs and wishes.



Sam's teacher has picked up on some concerns. He has missed several school days, asks for more food at lunch and has fallen asleep in class multiple times.



The local social work department is alerted and decides to do some checks. They believe Sam's needs are not being met at home.



Due to Sam's communication needs, a referral is made to Who Cares? Scotland for advocacy.



Sadia, a Who Cares? Scotland advocacy worker meets Sam.



After meeting Sam and his teachers, the Talking Mat was selected as the best option for Sam to communicate his views.



Over several visits, Sadia helps Sam express his views using the Talking Mat toolkit.



She takes a photo of each completed Talking Mat to track Sam's consistency and changes in opinion.



Sam shares his thoughts on his well-being. Some things he likes, some he dislikes and some he's unsure about.

These views are then compiled and shared by Sadia at his Child Protection Core Group.

This continual relationship-based independent advocacy ensures Sam's voice is heard in all meetings.

Sam and Sadia continue working together, using sub-mats to explore the topics he is unsure about.



Sam looks forward to his chats with Sadia, knowing she listens to him.

Thanks to non-instructed advocacy, Sam's rights, needs and wishes are being acknowledged and respected.

Advocacy will continue to support Sam as his needs evolve. His voice will always be represented.