



# A Sunfield Case Study

## A communication journey, with Sunfield's Speech and Language Therapy Team

### Introduction

This case study follows the communication development of a student called Geoffrey, supported by the Speech and Language Therapy Team at Sunfield. Geoffrey benefited from regular Speech and Language Therapy input, monitoring and advice, which was implemented throughout his time at Sunfield.

### Background

When Geoffrey arrived at Sunfield, aged 13, he found it difficult to communicate his needs and emotions. He was presenting with increasingly challenging behaviour and his parents were finding it difficult to look after him effectively at home. Geoffrey had not received Speech and Language Therapy input since he was at primary school. During Geoffrey's first three months at Sunfield, his communication skills were assessed in detail, and an individualised plan was devised and implemented to support him.

### The Journey

From his assessment, it was found that Geoffrey could vocalise single words but they were very unclear. He used a few key signs and had basic literacy skills. He could respond to being asked what he wanted but did not always initiate communication.

The Speech and Language Therapy Team supported Geoffrey to develop his communication by implementing PECS, the consistent use of signing, and the consistent use of visual back-up to support understanding and expression. They also focused on building Geoffrey's confidence in communicating, and in training staff so they could effectively communicate with him, and respond to his needs.

Over time, as Geoffrey's communication developed, he began to initiate communication more spontaneously and was able to form symbol sentences containing up to 4 - 5 words e.g. 'I want toast and Marmite'. He also started to lead adults to the computer and then started typing short sentences in order to communicate. A range of different communication aids were trialed with Geoffrey and the iPad with the application 'proloqu2go' was deemed the most successful.

### The Conclusion

When Geoffrey left Sunfield he was confidently using a variety of means to communicate: sign, gesture, single words and the iPad with the application 'proloqu2go'. The iPad provided Geoffrey with a communication tool; a voice which could be understood by a wide variety of people. This allowed him to create and communicate a wide variety of messages, at sentence level, to anyone he chose to communicate with.

You can find out more about the Speech and Language Therapy Team at Sunfield by visiting the Psychology and Therapies section of [www.sunfield.org.uk](http://www.sunfield.org.uk).