

A week in the life of an OCV

By OCV, Peta Meyerink

Monday

My day starts early as it's a fair drive out to the house I am visiting. I have visited this young person several times before, but this will be the first time at this particular house. The young person recently moved as a result of an increase in aggressive behaviours that were placing her at risk. Her new house is in a more rural setting and it takes me just over an hour to get there. Given a recent escalation in Shawna's* behaviour this visit had been scheduled with the caseworker.

On arrival, I am met by the caseworker who asks me to park at the end of the driveway and walk up to the property with him. He explains that the young person, Shawna, has started to throw rocks, and cars are often the target. At the house I note that several of the front windows are smashed. He informs me that Shawna is not currently at home, as she has gone to the library. She should be home soon.

This gives me an opportunity to speak with the caseworker about Shawna, her current circumstances, and how she is settling in. I can also review the client files before she returns home. After an hour at the house, Shawna has not returned. The caseworker attempts to contact the support worker with no success, so her return time is now unknown. I spend a little more time reviewing files, but with Shawna's return time unknown and a lengthy drive back home, I decide to leave.



Tuesday

I have some family things on today so I only check my work emails quickly and respond where I can, in between other household tasks. I set time aside in the evening, after my kids have gone to bed, to start writing my OCV visit report from yesterday's visit. There are a few concerns I want to raise, and am pleased that the caseworker was able to answer most of them during my visit.

I like that the OCV role is flexible and I am able to get my work done around my other commitments.

Wednesday

I have a couple of visits to houses that are a little closer to home. My first visit is to a house with a young sibling group living there. I visit the house as an unscheduled visit and I spend my time talking with the young people and playing a game of UNO, while we discuss how things are going. The young people talk to me about school, some planned activities coming up. Aside from a request for a new trampoline, they say they are happy at the house. I spend some time in the house office and look at client files and speak with staff on duty before I say goodbye and head to my next visit.

As I am almost at my next visit I receive a phone call from a youth worker at the house. I pull up down the road from the house to take the call. The staff member tells me that there has been an incident that day with the young person, and due to their escalating behaviours it is deemed unsafe for me to visit. Generally, I try not to schedule my visits, but support staff at this house had let me know that this young person's mental health had been up and down, so a scheduled visit has been arranged. I thank the staff for their call and note this visit as a futile visit.

With a bit of extra time up my sleeve, I decide to have some lunch and go through my work emails. I check a few things off my 'to do list' and make notes on other things I need to follow up over the next few days. There is an email from a complaints officer regarding a recent complaint I submitted, and a request for a time to discuss the details. I plan to work from home tomorrow completing the visit reports from my recent visits and following up on the outstanding tasks, so I add this phone call to the list.

I decide to do an unscheduled visit to another house not far from where I am. Both of the young people at this location don't go to school so there is a good chance they may be home. I drive the 10 minutes to the house and

knock on the door. Yelling can be heard from inside the house, and I realise it's the young people letting the support staff know that someone is at the front door.

I spend my visit speaking to both young people. They both express a frustration at the appropriateness of their home, and raise several concerns with me. I attempt to speak with the staff who are present about the concerns, however they tell me they are new and don't know much. Client files are provided to me, however the information in them is significantly out of date and due for review. I thank the young people and staff for their time and leave the placement feeling frustrated and concerned. There are a number of concerns I have about this house and I make a note to discuss these with the Manager of the OCV Scheme at the Ageing and Disability Commission tomorrow. I drive home thinking about the visit I just did and my concerns for the young people there.

Thursday

The first thing I do is contact the Manager OCV Scheme to find a time to discuss the previous afternoon's visit. She responds quickly and we both log into Microsoft Teams to discuss my concerns over a video-call. Even though I work remotely and in isolation from other OCVs and OCV team staff, it is great that I am able to contact via video call and discuss my concerns. The conversation goes longer than planned but it makes me feel better. It's decided that I write up my OCV visit report and send it to service management outlining my concerns. Dependent on the service response received I may need to escalate my concerns as a complaint with the NSW Ombudsman. I make a note to write up concerns in an email to the Manager OCV Scheme, outlining the concerns in preparation for escalating the matter. My 'to do list' for today just got considerably longer.

I spend time working on writing and submitting my recent visit reports, and reviewing service responses recently received. At 3pm I have my scheduled phone call with the NSW Ombudsman regarding the previous complaint I submitted. Before I know it the day is over and I realise I never wrote up the new complaint email I intended to. I make a note to jump back on after the kids have gone to bed and get what I can done; the rest can be completed on the weekend.

Saturday

I head out in the morning and undertake another visit. Chayden* is in a great mood when I arrive and tells me how well he has been going. He is excited to tell me that next week he will be attending school full-time. This is a great achievement for Chayden. He asks me if I can help him with organising more regular family contact with his brother. I let him know that I will speak with the staff member on duty and raise his issue in my OCV visit report. While at the visit, the staff member lets me know that this is something Chayden's caseworker is working on. I note it down for follow up in my OCV visit report. I drove home with a smile, thinking about how far Chayden has come and the achievements he has made in the time I have been visiting him. This is one of the satisfying aspects of this role.

When back home, I log on to the computer, and work on the email I need to submit the possible new complaint and send it off to the Manager OCV Scheme. I submit claims for all the visits and hours I have completed this week to ensure that I get paid and I think about the young people that I have visited over the past few days. I realise that this week ended up being a lot busier than I planned.

*The names of residents have been changed to protect their privacy.