

How to Write a Self-Advocacy Letter:

The Benefits:

- Communicating by letter gives you time to consider what you want to say and how you want to say it;
- Writing a letter takes away any risk that you may be overcome by emotion or nerves and not be able to communicate your needs clearly and respectfully;
- A letter creates a clear paper trail which can't be edited, misunderstood or forgotten.

The Process:

- Whether you are handwriting or typing your letter, there is a certain way to set it out so that you don't miss important details (see the following page for an example letter):
 - At the top left corner of the page write your full name and below it your address;
 - Below your name and address write the date in full;
 - Then you include the name, organisation and address of the person you are sending the letter to;
 - Then start your letter by formally addressing whoever is receiving it, such as "Dear Mr Helper". If you haven't been able to find out the name of the person you need to write to it is ok to simply state "To Whom It May Concern";
 - The next step is to write the body of your letter. Try to keep it short, factual and to the point:
 - The first paragraph should introduce who you are and why you are writing;

- The following few paragraphs should detail the issue, how it is impacting you, and what you have already done to try and resolve it;
- The last paragraph should include a very brief recap of the problem, and what you hope to get out of writing your letter;
- Finally end your letter simply by stating: “Sincerely” or “Regards”, before signing your name.

Things to Remember:

- Try to keep your letter as short as possible, without missing any important information;
- It's a great idea to get someone you trust to read over the letter to help you check for any mistakes, make sure you have said everything that's important, and that your letter is respectful;
- Always keep a copy of any letters that you send for your own records;
- Consider whether you send your letter by registered post so that you are able to track it to ensure it has arrived.

Example Only

Ms Hevi Rekani

Sender Address

City, State, Postcode

(write date in full here)

Mr Helper

Company Name

Company Address

City, State, Postcode

Dear Mr Helper

My name is Hevi and I have been a client of your service for the past 18 months. In that time I have made use of support workers from your service to help me attend therapy appointments in the community. I am writing to you as I have become unhappy with the service that I have been receiving recently.

At first I was very happy with the service, I was getting consistent support workers that were always on time and very helpful. In the past few months I have had a different support worker nearly every week and they are often late.

I have rung three times in the past month and spoken with Bronwyn on reception. Each time she told me she wasn't sure who was rostered on for me that day so couldn't help with providing contact details for that person, so I would just have to wait until they arrived. On the third occasion, I said I wasn't happy with this

response and asked to speak to someone else but was told there was no-one else to speak with. I am starting to feel very stressed each day that I have an appointment, not knowing whether or not I will be able to get to it on time.

The inconsistency and lateness of your staff is impacting me negatively and I am hoping for things to improve so that I don't have to find a new support service. Could I please ask that you contact me by phone (0404 XXX XXX) to discuss how things can be improved so that I am receiving a better service from your organisation.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter, I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Hevi Rekani