# Guide to preparing a support worker letter

## Support worker letters can be included as part of the evidence provided when requesting access to the NDIS. This is an opportunity for the support worker to summarise their observations on how mental health conditions impact the life of a person that they have been working with, and to provide more information or clarity to the evidence provided with the access request.

## Why are support worker letters important?

One of the main benefits of [well written support worker letters](https://www.tspforall.com.au/download/11) is that they provide a snapshot of the evidence that has been gathered and are a cover letter for the application. When read alongside the completed Evidence of psychosocial disability form they can help an access assessor clearly see how mental health conditions impact a person’s life. They also let the assessor know what to expect from the application, what information has been gathered, who provided the information and any gaps or inconsistencies that need to be clarified.

## What information could be included?

* Your role, how long you have been working with the person and what type of support you provide
* A list of other supports the person accesses in mainstream and community health systems
* A description of informal supports (family, friends, others) and how they support the person, particularly noting where this support is essential for daily living (e.g., person would face substantial difficulty without the support)
* A description of the way that the person’s mental health condition impacts their everyday life focusing on the NDIS life domains affected
* Anything else that you think is helpful to ensure the access assessor can navigate the evidence that has been provided (e.g. Refer to page X where clinician A has stated…..)
* Any other information that you think would be helpful to ensure the access assessor can get a clear picture of the person’s life and to assess their functional capacity.

It is not necessary to include any details relating to trauma histories or abuse, information about other health issues that do not meet disability criteria or suggestions for support needs. Further tips for best practice when providing evidence are provided in our [online training modules](https://www.tspforall.com.au/resources).

## Using this template

This document is a guide to help you put together a support worker letter and consider the type of information you might want to include. The italicized text give some guidance for organising the information and should be removed for the final version. If a section doesn’t apply to your application or you want to add more sections, please add/remove as required.

**Remember – the NDIS is designed to support the specific needs of a person to allow them to work towards their NDIS goals. The NDIA requires individualised information to correctly apply the access criteria to the person you are working with. You should use this as a guide only and personalise your letter accordingly.**

Print on your organisation’s letterhead and templates

 [date]

To whom it may concern,

**Letter in support of NDIS access request for [person’s name]**

My name is [staff name] from [organisation name] and I am assisting [person’s name] with requesting access to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Evidence summary

* State that person has a psychosocial disability (and secondary disabilities if applicable)

Comment broadly on areas of life that are impacted by mental health condition (briefly, you will expand on this later)

* Highlight any key evidence that addresses the criteria e.g. “Clinician A has provided information regarding the applicant’s treatment history and likely permanence of impairment. Clinician B has provided their insights in a report following treatment which confirms Clinician A’s observations.”
* Include any comments that are relevant to understanding the evidence provided or expand on the context for the person e.g., difficulties with service engagement, discrepancies in the evidence and why these occur.

Current supports

I have been working with [person’s name] for [xx months/years] in my role as [role] for [program/organisation]. Through this work, [person’s name] currently receives [describe support type] support for [number] hours per [week/month].

[person’s name] also receives support through the following services:

* List other mainstream or community services accessed
* [service]
* [service]

And [describe informal networks and support e.g., lives with partner who supports person to……]

Functional capacity

Throughout the time I have been working with [person’s name], it has become evident to me that [mental health condition] significantly impacts on the [person’s name] ability to function at home and in the community on a daily basis. The attached [Evidence of psychosocial disability form, LSP-16 assessment, other functional assessments, or reports] document [person’s name] day-to-day difficulties [note. If there is a discrepancy between any assessments and your observations of the person because, for example, they lack insight into the impact of their mental health condition, comment on that here].

Based on these assessments, and my experience working with [person’s name] I believe that they have substantial difficulty in the following domain[s] as a result of their mental health condition [remove those not relevant]:

* Communication
* Social interaction
* Self-management
* Learning
* Self-care
* Mobility

Additional information pertaining to these domains is provided in section B of the Evidence of psychosocial disability form *[and further clarity is provided below] .*

*Depending on the level of detail you have provided when completing Question 6 of the Evidence of psychosocial disability form part B you may want to also write one paragraph per relevant domain that clarifies how the person’s mental health impairments result in difficulties for that domain. Consider:*

* Which activities within that domain a person can and cannot do as a result of their psychosocial disability.
* If the person is able to perform an activity within the domain because of support they currently receive (e.g., catch a bus only with their carer present) clearly describe how the person would function without that support.
* Describing the difficulties as they occur on an average day, avoid terms like ‘when unwell’.
* Describing difficulties arising from the person’s mental health condition only.
* Linking the description back to the LSP-16 responses.
* Using examples e.g., Frank is very anxious when going out in public, if people try to talk to him he x,y,z…

Concluding statements

As you can see from the information provided [insert your conclusion regarding how the person meets the access criteria]. If you have any questions related to any of the information stated above or you would like to discuss things further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

[your name and signature]

[your contact details]

**Attachments**

* *list the documents provided as evidence for the application (e.g., Evidence of psychosocial disability form, other reports or letters)*
* *Consent form signed by [applicant’s name] stating [details of the consent].*

*Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is correct at the time of publishing (September 2020). The information provided in this document should not be relied on instead of other legal, medical, financial, or professional advice.*