



**Community Housing**  
INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION **VICTORIA**

# WRITING A LETTER OF EVIDENCE /SUPPORT

NDIS Factsheet | July 2019

# WRITING A LETTER OF EVIDENCE/SUPPORT

This resource is to assist housing workers to write a letter of evidence/support for tenants seeking to access the NDIS or in the planning process, detailing the assistance they need to maintain their tenancy.

Usually health professionals provide evidence for an access request but, where this is difficult to obtain (for example, if a client has not had a relationship with a GP or health service), other people who know the person can help build a picture of long-term disability and functional impairment.

Before preparing a statement of evidence, talk to the Local Area Coordinator and any support workers who may already be assisting your tenant with an access request about what information will be useful.

In preparing a statement of evidence/support, the advice is to:

- only report in relation to your area of expertise
- connect symptoms (the impact of the disability) to function (what they can or cannot do) to support requirements (what is needed to address the limitations on function).

It may be outside the scope of your role and expertise to make statements about the symptoms or impact of the person's disability. However, you can report on the behaviours you observe, the impact on outcomes for the tenant and the type of support that would assist this (including support that the person has received previously).

It can be useful to think about functional impact in relation to a person's tenancy in the following key areas:

- **MOBILITY:** unlikely to be directly related to a tenancy issue, although a lack of mobility could contribute to difficulties in maintaining a house or property.
- **COMMUNICATION:** may be an issue if the tenant is unable to have a conversation or initiate support when required, which could impact on their health and safety.
- **SOCIAL INTERACTION:** poor capacity to initiate and develop social relationships may impact on a tenancy where it leads to difficult relationships with neighbours.
- **LEARNING:** difficulties with planning or memory could contribute to issues associated with paying bills or rent or undertaking tasks of daily living (such as self-care or home maintenance or other responsibilities).
- **SELF-MANAGEMENT:** difficulties with managing household responsibilities such as cleaning, laundry, self-care, budgeting and problem solving could lead

to the home environment becoming unsafe (for example, creating a fire risk or hygiene issues).

- **SELF-CARE:** this is unlikely to be directly related to a tenancy issue.



## INCLUDE IN THE STATEMENT

- Length of time that you have known the tenant or how long they have been a tenant.
- What support has been provided to them in the past (for example, you could name the previous support agency and, if possible, describe what they delivered and make a link between this support and success of the tenancy).
- Whether there have been any issues over that time in relation to managing the tenancy or what has been working well (for example, the impact of the support that has been received in the past).
- The lack (or presence) of natural supports, such as family, friends and neighbours, and their impact.
- Support you can reasonably be expected to provide.
- The behaviours you observe, the impact on the tenancy and the support required (see Table 1 for some examples).



You can **download** an editable version of a **sample letter** from our website at [chiavic.com.au/ndis](http://chiavic.com.au/ndis)

### Additional resources

For more information on the type of information the NDIA needs to support an access or planning request see: The NDIS guide **Completing the Access Process - Tips for Communicating about Psychosocial Disability**.

**Table 1**

**EXAMPLES OF TENANCY-RELATED LINKS BETWEEN BEHAVIOURS, FUNCTIONAL IMPACT AND REQUIRED SUPPORT**

<b>Behaviours noted</b>	<b>Functional impact</b>	<b>Support needed</b>
<b>Has difficulty remembering; can be disorganised.</b>	<p>The tenant does not take the rubbish out regularly and the house gets very smelly. The neighbours complain and the tenant refuses to leave the house. This impacts on the tenant's hygiene and social connectedness.</p> <p>Rent (and other bills) are frequently not paid.</p>	<p>Weekly house cleaning support.</p> <p>Ongoing assistance with budgeting and financial management, including some oversight and prompting to ensure bills are paid.</p>
<b>Has difficulty making decisions and often thinks people or services are taking advantage of him.</b>	<p>Will not purchase needed goods or services, such as new furniture or household goods, such as blankets or cooking equipment. Sometimes will not trust that the housing worker is acting appropriately when repairs/ maintenance are required.</p>	<p>Weekly contact with a support person to assist them to identify issues and make decisions and reassure them that the decision they have made is OK.</p>
<b>Aggressive to neighbours</b>	<p>Is unable to form a connection with neighbours and other people in the local community and, when unwell, can become aggressive. Does not appear to understand how their behaviour affects others.</p> <p>Is very socially isolated and has no-one to call upon when they need assistance.</p>	<p>Social skills support to help get along with the neighbours.</p> <p>At least twice weekly social activities away from the home to develop social networks.</p>
<b>Socially anxious and will not contact the housing worker even when there are significant issues.</b>	<p>Does not report damage or other faults with the property, leaving them without important services.</p>	<p>Support to identify what help is needed and assistance with communicating everyday needs.</p>
<p><b>Rarely leaves the property, appears very anxious when outside.</b></p> <p><b>Has difficulty moving around has poor mobility due to weight or long-term injury.</b></p>	<p>Is unable to go to the shops to purchase food and other groceries. Is known to ring the housing worker and say that they are hungry or have run out of something important.</p> <p>Sometimes the neighbours will provide food when asked, but this is not appropriate and they have made complaints about the tenant being a nuisance.</p> <p>Has no real social connections and relies inappropriately on neighbours for assistance.</p>	<p>Assistance to get out of the house more often, including prompting and hands on help to get themselves ready to go out and go shopping once a week.</p>
<b>Obsessively hoards newspapers and magazines, lacking awareness of the potential danger this poses.</b>	<p>When it is no longer possible to move around the house freely, the tenant is not able to use the kitchen and bathroom, which impacts on their health, hygiene and personal safety (due to fire risk).</p>	<p>Monthly assistance with clearing excess rubbish.</p>

## NOTES ON USING THIS

## SAMPLE LETTER TEMPLATE

- Use this sample letter as a guide and delete or complete sections as appropriate. Customise the text in brackets.
- Use Option 1 if you are providing information to support planning.
- Use Option 2 if you are providing information to support an access request (noting that this is unlikely).
- Only provide information that is relevant to the tenancy and that falls within your area of expertise and experience. This means you are likely to be limited to describing behaviours and functional impact, rather than providing evidence of functional impact as a result of disability or condition (which is usual for an access request).
- Recommendations for support may need to be general in nature and focused on assisting the tenant to maintain their housing and tenancy.
- Use language which is respectful of the tenant. If appropriate, best practice would be to involve the tenant in the preparation of the letter.



You can **download** an editable version of this **Sample Letter of Support** for use by Housing Workers or Community Housing Organisations (Word document) at [chiavic.com.au/ndis](http://chiavic.com.au/ndis)



### PLEASE NOTE

This format and advice is yet to be tested.

It is based on sample documentation for carer statements and evidence statements to be prepared by health practitioners for supporting access applications and planning for people with psychosocial disability and anecdotal evidence. It has not been trialed.

Any feedback or advice based on your experience would be welcome.

Contact Jess Pomeroy at CHIA Vic at [jess.pomeroy@chiavic.com.au](mailto:jess.pomeroy@chiavic.com.au)

# SAMPLE LETTER OF SUPPORT TEMPLATE

Tenant address

Tenant date of birth

Application Number (if relevant)

Date

To whom it may concern

## **Re: Letter in support of NDIS Access Request/Planning for [tenant]**

I am writing this letter to provide information about the support needs of [tenant] in relation to maintaining a successful and stable tenancy with [Community Housing Organisation].

[Tenant] has been a tenant of [Community Housing Organisation] for [x] years. I have known [tenant] for [x] years. I last met with [tenant] in his property [for a property inspection; in response to a complaint; other issue].

[Tenant] currently receives the [Disability Support Pension/Newstart Allowance/etc]. [Include any other relevant information you may have about the tenant. For example: unemployed/type of employment/no family or social supports].

At the time of entering a tenancy agreement with us, [Tenant] had a diagnosed mental illness/disability. [If possible explain how you know this, for example, part of eligibility for housing; receiving support from a particular agency, you had contact with case manager from mental health service etc]

[Tenant] currently/previously received support from [agency] under a [supported housing/transitional housing program]. The supported housing program is for people with a psychosocial disability who need support to live independently. The type of support that [tenant] received included:

- [being taken to the shops to purchase food once a week]
- [regular practical support to clean the property]
- [social activities away from the home]
- [reminders to pay the bill]
- [help with budgeting]
- [assistance to make and get to health appointments]
- [in home/live in support]

These supports [no longer exist/have been replaced by/are to be replaced by....]. This support is/was vital in ensuring [Tenant] is/was able to successfully meet their tenancy obligations, including to [state reasons why, for example, to keep the property in reasonable condition, pay rent and other bills on time and get along with the neighbours].

Since this support has changed/not been available [Tenant] has [list issues, for example, been in arrears x times, received x complaints from the neighbours, concerns about state of the property].

### **[Option 1: support for planning]**

As a Community Housing Organisation, we are committed to the model of separation of tenancy and support. This provides for important safeguards for our tenant's rights and responsibilities and our mission towards safe and secure tenancies. As a Community Housing Organisation, we take the role of a social landlord when carrying out our duties as a tenancy manager, ensuring tenants are treated in a fair and equitable way. We manage tenancies with sensitivity for our complex need tenants, however, our business depends on the responsiveness of support providers to assist our tenants to live independently. Adequate support is vital for maintaining the tenancies of clients with complex needs.

I understand that [tenant's] NDIS plan will be based on [his/her] goals. However, as [tenant's] housing worker, I am also aware that [he/she] may not be fully aware of the significant support [he/she] receives/has received in the past to assist [his/her] to maintain [his/her] housing.

The following information is provided to assist [tenant] consider his/her support needs to ensure ongoing housing stability and maintenance of [his/her] tenancy with our organisation:

- [List areas of concern or current issues. You can describe the behaviours and their impact and/or describe the support required (type and frequency) and what will happen if it is not provided].
- [Tenant] needs support to maintain a clean and functional house. [She/he] needs prompting and assistance to regularly remove rubbish, do the dishes and complete standard cleaning tasks. Without this support the rubbish accumulates and creates a health and safety risk, and leads to complaints from the neighbours. At our last inspection, we were required to issue a warning due to the poor condition of the property. In the past [tenant] has received weekly housing cleaning support and monthly assistance with cleaning excess rubbish.
- [Tenant] needs support to pay [his/her] rent and other bills on time. [He/she] has recently missed x rent payments and, in the past, has stopped direct debit arrangements. In the past [tenant] has received regular budgeting support and ongoing monitoring of [his/her] financial arrangements.
- When [tenant] becomes unwell [she/he] becomes aggressive to the neighbours. [Tenant] would benefit from the informal support provided by better social connections and a broader social network. In the past, [tenant] attended a day program several times a week, which provided a break from being at home.

### **[Include as appropriate]**

Please also note, the [community housing organisation] has undertaken reasonable adjustments to maximise access and use of the property, including [list adjustments, for example, additional lighting, sound proofing]. An occupational therapy assessment has noted that the following adjustments, which are outside the scope of reasonable adjustment, would further improve [tenant's] independence and access. A copy of this report is attached.

### **[Option 2: Support for an access request]**

The following information describes the functional impact and implications that we have noted for [tenant], along with recommendations for the type and frequency of support needed.

NOTE:

- Only include those areas which are relevant – for an access request an individual must show significant functional impairment in one of these areas.
- Describe the behaviours you observe and explain their functional impact.
- Suggest the type of support needed and how often they are required.

## **Mobility**

*Moving around the house, leaving the house, moving about in the community, including to shopping centres or recreational activities, using public transport or a motor vehicle. Getting in and out of bed or a chair, mobility difficulties as a result of side-effects of treatment.*

For example:

- Rarely leaves the property on their own or only leaves the property with a support worker.
- Appears to be very overweight, which is making it difficult for them to move around.
- Unable to take public transport due to anxiety about crowded places and being on their own.
- Is asking neighbours for food and other items, because they cannot get to the shops for groceries.

### ***Type, and frequency of support***

Guidance, supervision and prompting needed twice a week for two hours to assist them to get moving in the morning.

Support worker to take [tenant] shopping once a week. This needs to include time to motivate and support the tenant to get dressed and organised.

## **Communication**

*Communicating needs and wants, following instructions and conversations, understanding others and understanding directions.*

For example:

- Appears to be distracted and to be disorganised in their thought most of the time. For example when the housing worker attempts to discuss issues with the tenancy, [tenant] does not show that [he/she] understand the seriousness of the situation and is unable to work out what do to next.
- Has been unable to proactively communicate concerns about their property and is not confident in communicating with people they do not know. This means that they are not reporting damages and faults with the property or requesting help when it is needed.
- Has difficulty following instructions. This was an issue recently when we were unable to organise a maintenance worker to access the property.

### ***Type, and frequency of support***

Support to implement strategies to organise thinking and behaviour and to attend appointments and help with communicating everyday needs.

**Social interaction**

*Making and keeping friends and relationships, behaving within limits accepted by others, coping with feelings and emotions, having a sense of purpose in life, making connections in the community or volunteering.*

For example:

- [Tenant] finds it difficult manage [his/her] relationships with neighbours. [He/she] may be aggressive if [he/she] feels people come too close to the property (such as walking past the front fence). [He/she] appears to lack insight into the impact of [his/her] behaviour.
- [Tenant] appears overwhelmed and anxious when meeting (new) staff. Often [tenant] will refuse to meet or let into [his/her] property anyone [he/she] has not met previously or does not have a long-term relationship with.
- Not able to make appropriate social connections and, when unwell, will be very antisocial (plays loud music or makes other noise; responds aggressively).

**Type and frequency of support**

Assistance with some social skills to help get along with the neighbours.

Support to get out of the house for community or social activities several times a week.

**Learning**

*Understanding, remembering, learning new information, concentrating.*

Unless you know the tenant well, it is unlikely that you will be able to comment on this.

Some possible examples could be:

- Had previously been enrolled in a short course but has not attended since support ceased (prompting, transport).
- Likes to contribute to a newsletter but finds writing and communication difficult, resulting in [his/her] efforts often being rejected.

**Type, and frequency of support**

Study mentor, computer access or skill development.

## Self management

*Doing daily activities such as cooking or laundry, handling and solving problems that arise, managing money and budgeting, making decisions, keeping safe at home, taking responsibility and behaving responsibly, connecting to services.*

For example:

- Rent payments are on direct debit but often there is not enough money in the account for the payment to be debited.
- Tenant regularly changes arrangements and misses payments.
- Since the support worker has ceased contact with [tenant], [he/she] has been in arrears x times
- Electricity has been cut off x times in the last year due to unpaid bills.
- Obsessively collects newspaper and magazines, which is creating difficulties in moving around the house. [Tenant] is unable to use the kitchen and bathroom, which is impacting on [his/her] health, hygiene and personal safety. This includes the heightened fire risk.
- Appears that [tenant] is also finding general cleanliness difficult to manage as, since the support ceased, the rubbish has not been put out regularly and the neighbours have complained that sometimes there are bad smells coming from the property.

### ***Type, and frequency of support.***

Financial counselling, budgeting or money management assistance and skill development.

Weekly house cleaning support and monthly assistance with clearing excess rubbish.

## Self care

*Showering/bathing, dressing, eating, toileting, maintaining physical health, managing medications.*

Unless you know the tenant well or see them regularly, it is unlikely that you will be able to comment.

Some possible examples could be:

- Appears unkempt and unwashed. It would appear that [tenant] is not maintaining normal expectations of personal care. When a support worker was around they prompted the [tenant] to look after him/herself.
- [Tenant] regularly falls over and has difficulty getting up independently. [He/she] relies on a neighbour to be around to assist them.

### ***Type, and frequency of support***

Twice weekly prompting and guidance to look after their personal hygiene and do laundry.

**[All options]**

As you can see from the information provided, [tenant] has a range of behaviours that impact on his/her capacity to live independently and manage [his/her] tenancy. Without high-level support to live independently, it is likely that the impact of these behaviours will be a breakdown in their tenancy, and possible eviction.

If you have any questions related to any of the information stated above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

HOUSING WORKER NAME  
POSITION

Phone number/ email