



# YOUR SELF-ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

**ASAN AUNZ © 2024**

Self-Advocacy Toolkit v1.5.2024

## WHAT'S IN THIS TOOLKIT?

01 Introduction .....	3
02 What is self-advocacy? .....	4
03 Useful skills for self-advocacy .....	7
04 Advocating for yourself .....	8
05 Step by step self advocacy plan .....	10
06 Communication Skills .....	14
07 Making a Complaint .....	19
08 Having a Meeting .....	22
09 Understanding your rights .....	26
10 How to send an Email .....	30
11 How to make a Phone Call .....	33
12 How to write a Letter .....	37
13 Additional Resources .....	41
14 Acknowledgements .....	50
15 Join Us and Share your Thoughts .....	51

# 01 INTRODUCTION

Welcome to ASAN AUNZ's Self-Advocacy Toolkit. We hope this toolkit will help you to speak up for your rights, your needs and yourself.

## HOW DO I USE IT?

You can:

- > Use this toolkit when you need it, or
- > Explore the toolkit and come back to it when needed, or
- > Use the toolkit with others for more support in your advocacy, or
- > Share the toolkit with others to help them learn to speak up too.

This toolkit comes with guides to provide help with writing a letter or email or making a phone call. You may use all or just part of the toolkit.

## WHO IS THIS SELF-ADVOCACY TOOLKIT FOR?

This toolkit is for Autistics who want to gain self-advocacy skills. You might want a little extra help to speak up or act for yourself. We often find that planning things is very helpful.

It might also be useful for parents and carers who find it hard to be heard when they are advocating for their Autistic children. It can also help them model self-advocacy for their children.

## 02 WHAT IS SELF-ADVOCACY?

Self-Advocacy is when you speak up or act for yourself. It is about understanding your rights. You may still seek help to find out information or make decisions, but you do it yourself - even if you have someone, like a friend, supporting you.

### BECOMING A SELF-ADVOCATE

It helps if you know yourself.

- > What are your skills, strengths and challenges?
- > What do you prefer doing?
- > What types of help do you need?
- > How much of your story are you willing to share?

Knowing what you need and giving solutions are a part of self-advocacy.

### SKILLS

Think about what you are good at. They could be things like time management, math, writing, or computer skills. What are your skills?

### STRENGTHS

Your strengths could be things like attention to detail, noticing patterns, problem solving or talking to others. What are your strengths?

### CHALLENGES

It is normal to have weaknesses. Knowing what they are can help when making plans. What things do you find hard or are not so good at? Some examples could be talking on the phone or time management.

You can take note of your thoughts to remind yourself later.

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## HOW DOES AUTISM IMPACT ON YOUR DAILY LIFE?

Some examples of how autism might impact you could be:

- > Loud or constant noises are difficult to cope with.
- > Certain types of lighting are a problem.
- > Things need to be written down for you.
- > Not having a strict routine makes you anxious.
- > You are particular about what food you eat.
- > Being around lots of people is difficult.

## LEARN WHAT YOU PREFER IN DIFFERENT SITUATIONS

Your preferences or needs may be different depending on where you are or what you are doing. For example: relaxing at home, studying, working, eating out, in public or at a party.

## WHAT DO YOU NEED IN THOSE SITUATIONS?

Here are some ideas about what could help: quiet spaces, adjustable lighting, living alone or with others.

Situation

Preferences

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Situation

Preference

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# WHAT IS SELF-ADVOCACY?

## WHAT HELP DO YOU NEED TO LIVE ALONE OR WITH OTHERS?

Some people need help with personal care such as showers or medical care. Some need help with cleaning, bedmaking or other household chores. Some people might need help with being organised to do things like paying the bills or looking for employment.

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## WHAT TYPE OF HELP MIGHT YOU NEED WHEN WORKING?

For example, written instructions, a buddy system or a dedicated space.

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### What skills are useful for self-advocacy?

Here are some skills that you can use when advocating:

- > Making a plan
- > Preparing for a meeting
- > Making a phone call
- > Sending an email
- > Writing a letter
- > Knowing how to make a complaint
- > Being assertive – this means communicating calmly and firmly without getting angry.

### WHAT ABOUT SUPPORT FROM OTHERS

You can ask people around you to help develop these skills by:

- > Providing opportunities for you to learn and practice
- > Sharing information about these skills with you
- > Supporting your self-advocacy
- > Providing feedback to you when you ask for it

### BEFORE YOU ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF

Understand that when your needs are not met or you are treated badly, it is okay to feel upset or angry. It can help to take time to process these feelings before you express yourself. We find that preparing what we want to say and having it written down can help.

Pick the best time and way to advocate for yourself. This could be requesting to meet in a place you know or to meet virtually.

If you are having a meltdown or are in shutdown mode, you may not be able to advocate for yourself at that time. You may not have words to express what you want to say or access to tools to help speak for you at that time. That is okay.

Preparation is a very important part of self-advocacy. This means working out things before acting.

### WHAT

What is the issue you want to address or talk about? It could be:

- > something that happened that you want to complain about, *or*
- > something you want to change, *or*
- > something you want to make happen

Gather the information you have in preparation for self-advocating. The following questions may help you organise your thoughts:

- > What happened?
- > What did you see and/or hear?
- > What do you know for sure?
- > What was said?
- > What was done and by who?
- > Were any laws broken? Which ones?
- > Were your human rights respected?

Take note of the dates and times of conversations, and who said what.

### WHEN

You need to think about when to speak with or write to someone. You may want to wait until:

- > You have gathered enough information
- > You have your thoughts together
- > You have time so that you don't feel rushed
- > You have space so that you don't feel judged while you talk

When gathering information about the issue, consider when the event took place. Take note of the date and time, it could be important.



## WHO

Who will you contact? You need to have a name and contact information. This could be a person or an organization.

- > Who is or was involved in the issue?
- > Who is most likely to be able to help? This could be more than one.
- > Who is responsible for overseeing the issue? E.g., a commissioner.
- > Who is interested in the outcomes? This could be local government.

## HOW

You need to decide if you will call, email or write to someone about your issue. Or you may decide to meet with the people involved.

If you have communicated with that person before, think about how you left matters and if something significant has happened since then.

## SOLUTIONS

Think about what outcome you want. Some examples might be:

- > Receiving help
- > People receiving training about autism or disability
- > Support and accommodation being provided (for example easy read)
- > Policies or processes being changed
- > Your rights being upheld
- > People or an organisation saying sorry

Think about what the person or organization you are speaking to might be able to do. You could ask them what things they can do to help.

## 05 STEP BY STEP SELF ADVOCACY PLAN

Use the information you have gathered to help you plan.

### THE ISSUE

Describe the issue, event or concern. Include details of what happened, where, when and how it happened and what was done.

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### THE PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

List the people and organisations involved and why. It could be because:

- > they caused the problem
- > they witnessed what happened
- > they can provide support or advice
- > they can provide a solution

WHO	WHY

## RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

If people did not act as they should, explain the responsibilities or laws that were not met. Describe how your human rights were affected.

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## THE IMPACT

Explain how the issue has impacted you. Describe how does it makes you feel and how it has impacted your health.

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# STEP BY STEP SELF ADVOCACY PLAN

## YOUR GOALS

Describe what you would like to achieve with your self-advocacy. List the outcomes you want, they could be policy changes, training or an apology.

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## HOW TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS

Describe the actions you can take to get the outcomes you are seeking. Think about ways to create change, who to contact and what to say.

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## YOUR ACTION PLAN

Put your actions into the order you need to do them.

- > What needs to be done
- > When it needs to happen
- > Who to talk to
- > Update the progress as you go

WHAT	WHEN	WHO	HOW
What needs to be done?	When will you do it? Is there a deadline?	Who is involved? Who will you contact?	How is it progressing? What have you done?



### THE BENEFITS OF BEING ASSERTIVE

- > It can make you feel good about yourself and boost your self-esteem
- > It can help you have better relationships with others
- > It can help you reach your goals, get things done or make changes
- > It can prevent you from being taken advantage of
- > It can help you gain respect from others
- > It can protect your rights and your boundaries
- > It lets others know what you think, feel, need and want

### WAYS TO BE MORE ASSERTIVE

- > Use body language – sit or stand straight and tall with your head up  
This can show confidence to others, even when you don't feel it
- > Use your voice – speak clearly and firmly, try speaking a little slower  
You can practice this with a friend or good supporter
- > Know what you want and don't be afraid to ask for it
- > Ask for help if you need or want it
- > Believe in yourself – you are worth it
- > Take a deep breath, especially if you are feeling anxious

### SOME OTHER ASSERTIVE ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE

- > Do not say sorry for having a different opinion from others
- > Say "No" if you need to
- > Repeat yourself, if needed – it is okay to do this.
- > Try to understand the other person when you are listening to them
- > Be reasonable so that you are fair to others and gain respect
- > Use "I" statements

## USING "I" STATEMENTS

Using an "I" statement can tell someone how you feel, without accusing the other person.

When you want to use an "I" statement you can say:

"I feel ..." (say what emotion you feel)

"when ..." (say what is causing you to feel that way)

"and I would like ..." (say what outcome you would like)

For example:

"I feel stressed when you make that noise. I would like you to stop making that noise or do it somewhere else."

Think of your own examples. You can practice here.

I feel (emotion) \_\_\_\_\_

when (situation) \_\_\_\_\_

and I would like (outcome) \_\_\_\_\_

I feel (emotion) \_\_\_\_\_

when (situation) \_\_\_\_\_

and I would like (outcome) \_\_\_\_\_

## ARE YOU BEING LISTENED TO?

One of the biggest problems self-advocates can face is not being listened to. It can be frustrating to speak up and not be heard.

### LISTEN

Try to be an active listener. This means listening carefully to what others say. When you take the time to listen, you may understand more about what is happening and they will be more likely to listen to you.

- > Let others have their say when it is their turn
- > Try to understand their point of view
- > Do not interrupt
- > Ask them questions about what they are saying
- > Let them know you are listening to them

Autistics often find eye contact painful, so you could explain that using a fidget toy or looking away helps you to listen

Another way is to repeat what you've heard using your own words. For example, "So you are saying that ..." (say what you think they mean)

### KEEP TO THE POINT

For some people, it can be easy to get distracted during a conversation or forget what they wanted to say. It can help you keep to the point if you plan what you want to say.

- > What is the main message you want to get across?
- > Remember the issue!
- > What are the key points you want to make?



## COMMUNICATE AS CLEARLY AS YOU CAN

- > Use a clear voice that is loud enough to be heard. It can be helpful to practice with a friend if you struggle with volume or tone.
- > Practice your key points so you can remember them. You could write down what you want to say or use role play to practice.
- > If you use other ways to communicate, have them ready in advance if possible.
- > Write up a list of your messages and points – this can help keep you on track and make it easier for others to follow you.
- > You can use photos, pictures or video to help you tell your story.

## LOOK LIKE YOU SHOULD BE LISTENED TO

Your body language can help support your message. Doing this can be difficult for autistics sometimes. How you sit or stand will sometimes unfairly influence whether people will listen to you.

- > Sit or stand as straight and tall as you can while remaining comfortable. This makes you look more confident.
- > Try to look calm and relaxed, even if you are very anxious.
- > Look like you are listening to what others are saying. If you need accommodations, let people know so they realise you are not trying to be rude.

## USE A SUPPORT PERSON IF YOU WANT TO

It is ok to have a friend or supporter with you when you are speaking up for yourself.

Be sure to tell your support person what support you are expecting from them. Let them know if they should speak, or if you would prefer them to stay silent.

Make it clear to your audience that you expect them to talk to you and NOT your support person.

## BRING OTHERS BACK IF THEY GO OFF TOPIC

If people get distracted and are talking about other things, it is okay to say something like:

- > "Please can we get back to what we were talking about"
- > "Can we please focus on the topic?"

If people are talking over the top of you, you can say something like:

- > "Please can I finish talking"
- > "Please let me have my say"

## TELL THEM IF YOU ARE HAVING DIFFICULTY COMMUNICATING

If you are struggling to get people to listen, it is okay to tell them that it is an issue for you.

- > "I don't feel like I am being heard"
- > "Please don't interrupt."

Think about what you would like them to do instead and be sure to tell them that. You could say:

- > "Please can you listen while I explain this and then you can ask questions or comment"

## MORE HELP

We also have guides for:

- > [Making a complaint](#)
- > [Having a meeting](#)
- > [Making a phone call](#)
- > [Sending an email](#)
- > [Writing a letter](#)

## 07 MAKING A COMPLAINT

Sometimes you might not be happy with the service or product you have received. Giving feedback is helpful to others to improve what they are doing. Sometimes you might want to put in a formal complaint.

### WHY COMPLAIN?

There can be many reasons to complain:

- > You received a poor-quality product or service.
- > You were treated rudely, badly or unfairly.
- > Your privacy was not respected.
- > There was poor accessibility.

Complaining gives other people the chance to find out about the problem and fix or improve what they are doing.

### WHO SHOULD I COMPLAIN TO?

Start with the person you are having the problem with. If you do not feel safe talking to them or they do not listen, then go to their supervisor and work your way up the chain if you need to.

You are entitled to support throughout the complaint process. This could be from a family member, friend or advocate.

- > Let the person involved know about the problem
- > Contact the person's supervisor or manager if you need to
- > Find out who is more senior and talk to them

You might find the right person to talk to by checking the organisation's policies or procedures, or by asking the person you speak with.

## HOW SHOULD I MAKE MY COMPLAINT?

- 1 Identify your issue/s
- 2 Do your research
- 3 Find out how to make a complaint
- 4 Keep records
- 5 Take it further, if needed

## IDENTIFY YOUR ISSUE

- > Be clear about what has happened
- > Know what you want done about it

Use the 'Self-Advocacy Step by Step Plan' to help you with this process

## DO YOUR RESEARCH

- > If you are complaining about an organisation (or a person working for an organisation), do they have any policies that might support your complaint?
- > Are there any laws, standards or human rights which might apply?

Find this out by looking on their website or asking others who might know.

## FIND OUT HOW TO COMPLAIN

- > Find out what the complaint process is for the organisation. Do this by asking for a copy of their complaint process or looking on their website.
- > There may be a form for complaints that you can request or download or there could be an online process.
- > If there is no complaint form to use then you will need to work out how you will make your complaint.

# MAKING A COMPLAINT

## MAKE A COMPLAINT

- > Write a draft (practice) complaint
- > Be sure to keep to the issues you identified
- > Have someone you trust read it and give feedback before you send it
- > Make sure it is clear and sticks to the point

You might make a complaint by:

- > Using a complaint form,
- > Making a phone call,
- > Writing a letter,
- > Sending an email,
- > Having a meeting

## KEEP RECORDS

Keep copies of any documentation and notes together in a safe place. These will help if you need to know details later.

## TAKE IT FURTHER IF NEEDED

If you are not happy with the result of your complaint, there might be an external complaint process (outside the service, or department) or an appeal process.

It is likely you will receive a written response to your complaint and should include what the next steps are if you are not happy with the response. If not, consider asking an advocacy agency or other people who may be able to help.

### WHY HAVE A MEETING?

- > It can be a way tell your story once to a group of people
- > You were treated rudely, badly or unfairly.
- > It can be a way to have your say
- > It may help with support and change if they have the same understanding of your issue
- > Sometimes it can be a good place for questions to gain better understanding

There are a lot of things to think about before attending a meeting. Often Autistic people can become anxious, making it hard to remember all the things you need to do. Remember you can have a person to support you at any meeting.

### PREPARING FOR A MEETING

It can be hard to attend and take part in meetings, but they can be very productive.

Think about whether the meeting will be face-to-face or online.

Here are some ideas to help you take part.

### BE PREPARED

- > Ask for an agenda
- > Be clear about your issue and what you want done.  
Use the 'Self-Advocacy Step by Step Plan' to help you with this process
- > Plan any questions you might like to ask
- > Talk to others and get their input. Ask a friend to come with you for support if you want.

## ENSURE THE MEETING IS SUITABLE AND ACCESSIBLE

It can be hard to attend and take part in meetings, but they can be very productive:

Think about whether the meeting will be face-to-face or online.

Here are some ideas to help you take part.

- > Be sure the meeting is organised for a day and time that suits you as well as the others attending.
- > If the meeting is about you, it is okay to insist it is at a day or time that suits you and your support person.
- > Tell meeting organisers about any accessibility needs you have. It's okay to insist these are met.

## MAKE SURE YOU HAVE WHAT YOU NEED

- > Have your Self-Advocacy Step by Step Plan and list of any questions
- > Have copies of any important documents, including records of any other relevant communication
- > Have a friend or supporter with you if needed

## CONTRIBUTE TO THE MEETING

- > Stick to the point of the meeting
- > Have your say
- > Let others also have their say
- > Acknowledge what they have said, even if you do not agree
- > If others interrupt you, it is okay to ask them to let you finish
- > If others talk about unimportant or irrelevant things, it is okay to ask them to get back to the point

For example: "If we could get back to what we were talking about" or "Can we please focus on the topic." If people are talking over you, you can refer to the ["I" statements section of this toolkit](#).

## KEEP RECORDS

Take notes during the meeting. You could do this by asking your friend or support person to write down what is discussed, what is agreed and who will do what after the meeting. If everyone who is there agrees, you could record the meeting.

If official notes or minutes are taken, ask to have a copy sent to you. You should still take your own notes if you can.

## ALTERNATIVES

Meetings can be daunting for Autistics, so it can be a good idea to ask for help and accommodations such as:

- > Meeting with one person only
- > Have the person come to you
- > Meet at a neutral location like a coffee shop or library
- > Have a meeting online if that suits you better than face to face
- > Talk over the phone or via the internet
- > Discuss issues by email
- > Ask if someone can attend on your behalf



## ONLINE MEETING ETIQUETTE

- > Be clear what platform will be used. This could be Zoom, Google Meet, Teams, etc. Be sure to have the link and details to join the meeting.
- > Decide if you will use a phone, tablet laptop or desktop. Make sure you test it, including microphone and speakers, before the meeting so you have time to resolve any issues.
- > Check your background – a virtual background can give privacy.
- > Check your environment – make sure there is minimal background noise (turn off any radios, televisions and noisy appliances).
- > Try to avoid times when noisy gardening, building work or roadwork are scheduled.
- > Turn your microphone off if you are typing.
- > Do your best to be on time or let people know if you will be late or are having technical issues.
- > Have chargers on hand for the devices you are using in case they are needed.
- > Avoid smoking, vaping, eating or drinking.
- > Turn your microphone off when you are not talking.
- > It can be useful to ask for the agenda so it is clear what will be discussed and when.
- > Ask for any rules to be made clear at the start of the meeting.
- > Raise your hand physically or use the online 'raise hand' function when you want to speak.
- > It may be more comfortable for you to have your video off, however, when you are speaking it can be helpful to others if you have your video on.
- > If you need captions on, ask at the start of the meeting.
- > If you use sign language interpreters, ask the host to pin them to make it easier for you to follow them.

If you are visually impaired or have trouble processing text, ask for chat activity to be limited if possible, and to be read aloud.

Human rights are rights every person has. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) says every person should be treated equally.

### HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights mean that the Government should protect the rights and freedoms of everyone. There are 30 human rights, including the right to:

- > life, freedom and safety
- > an education
- > choose where to live
- > vote and run for government
- > marry and have a family
- > choose where to work

### DISABILITY RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) is an international agreement that protects the human rights of all disabled people, including Autistics.

It does not give us new rights, but says we have the same rights as all people and cannot be treated differently or unfairly. Australia and New Zealand both approved the UNCRPD in 2008. The UNCRPD sets the standards, obligations and actions required for countries to monitor and protect the human rights of people with disability.

The UNCRPD recognises our intersectionality with others, e.g. migrants, women. It says inaccessible and un-inclusive societies disable us.

There are 8 Guiding Principles that are the core beliefs and values of the UNCRPD. In summary, they are:

- 1 Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy and independence
- 2 Non-discrimination
- 3 Full and effective participation and inclusion in society
- 4 Respect for difference and acceptance
- 5 Equality of opportunity
- 6 Accessibility
- 7 Equality between men and women
- 8 Respect for children with disabilities

## SOME IMPORTANT HUMAN RIGHTS

Autistics have the right same rights as all humans. Here are some:

### FREEDOM AND EQUALITY

Everyone has human rights regardless of our differences.

### LIFE, FREEDOM AND SAFETY

We all have the right to live, and to live in freedom and safety.

### LEGAL EQUALITY AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE

The law is the same for everyone and should be applied the same way. You can ask for help to protect your legal rights. This includes support to exercise legal decision making and adjustments to courtroom procedures and legal processes to accommodate your needs.

### FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

We have the right to organise peaceful meetings. It is wrong to force anyone to belong to a group.

### FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

Everyone should have freedom to move locations. You have the right to choose where you live and to have a nationality

### INDEPENDENCE AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

You have the right to live independently and to fully participate and be included in your local community. We all have the right to decide our living arrangements including where we live and who we live with.

### EDUCATION

Everyone has the right to go to a school that is inclusive. We have the right to learn a profession or continue to study as long as they want.

### WORK

We all have the right to work and the opportunity to choose our work. We are entitled to a work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible

## WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Knowing your human rights can help you to

- > Have a happy and safe life
- > Fully participate in your community
- > Be respected
- > Understand your responsibilities to protect other people's rights
- > Feel confident when speaking up for yourself

## WHY IT CAN BE HARD TO PROTECT YOUR RIGHTS

- > Sometimes you might not know what your rights are
- > You might feel people are not listening or believing you
- > You might be worried that saying something will mean people treat you worse than before
- > It can take a lot of energy to advocate for yourself

## THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP PROTECT YOUR RIGHTS

- > Know what your rights are
- > Know who to talk to
- > Know where to get support if you need it
- > Know how to be assertive when speaking up for yourself

## WHERE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR RIGHTS

Here are some internet links to descriptions about rights that may be helpful. We have included some in Easy Read (Easy English), different languages (including Auslan), videos and audio.

- > Universal Declaration of Human Rights (in 500 languages)  
[www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights](http://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights)
- > United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (full) [www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/convention-on-the%20rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-2](http://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/convention-on-the%20rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-2)
- > What are Human Rights? Australian Human Rights Commission (video) [www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJsUfck01Js](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJsUfck01Js)
- > International agreement on the rights of disabled people (easy read) [assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/345108/easy-read-un-convention](http://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/345108/easy-read-un-convention)
- > The United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities: What does it mean for you? (easy read) [www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/2021/un-convention-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-easy-read-july-2017](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/2021/un-convention-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-easy-read-july-2017)
- > We have Human Rights: a human rights handbook for people with developmental disabilities [hpod.law.harvard.edu/pdf/we-have-human-rights](http://hpod.law.harvard.edu/pdf/we-have-human-rights)
- > United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (Auslan translation videos) [www.dss.gov.au/the-united-nations-convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-uncrpd-in-auslan-australian-sign-language](http://www.dss.gov.au/the-united-nations-convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-uncrpd-in-auslan-australian-sign-language)
- > United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (audio files) [www.whaikaha.govt.nz/about-us/the-uncrpd/about-the-uncrpd/audio-version-the-convention](http://www.whaikaha.govt.nz/about-us/the-uncrpd/about-the-uncrpd/audio-version-the-convention)

# 10 HOW TO SEND AN EMAIL

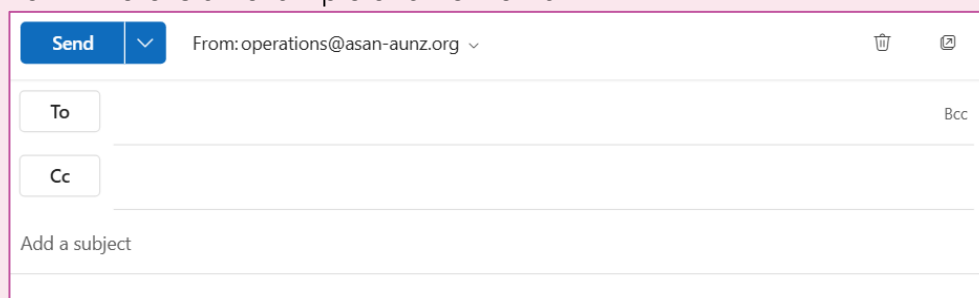
Email can be a great way to communicate with other people, especially service providers and professionals. An email is usually less formal than a letter. You will need to have a person's email address.

## BENEFITS OF WRITING AN EMAIL

- > You can write an email at any time
- > You can take your time writing it, even over days or weeks
- > You will have a written record of what you said
- > Email is fast and cheap
- > Each email can be sent to one person or many

## HOW TO WRITE AN EMAIL

- 1 Open your email application: Gmail, Outlook, what you use for emails.
- 2 Select the option to compose a new email. This should bring up a form. Here is an example of a new email.

A screenshot of a new email composition form. At the top, there is a 'Send' button and a dropdown arrow. To the right, it says 'From: operations@asan-aunz.org' with a dropdown arrow. Below this, there are three main sections: 'To' with a text input field, 'Cc' with a text input field, and 'Bcc' with a text input field. At the bottom, there is a label 'Add a subject' followed by a text input field.

- 3 **From** is you. Usually, your email address or name shows here.
- 4 Use '**To**' for the main person you are emailing. It is best to address to one main person rather than a lot of people at the same time. Anyone you want to do something when they receive your email should be in the 'To' section.
- 5 **CC** stands for carbon copy. It is for other people you might want to include so they can see the email, but it is not for them to act.

**BCC** stands for blind copy. You could use this to email yourself a copy of the email. The people you are sending the email To and CC will not see who you have sent a blind copy to.

You may fill in To, CC & BCC fields last.

# HOW TO SEND AN EMAIL

- 6 The **subject** should be short, clear and include the topic of the email.

For example: "An email from Jane" is not a good subject because it does not say what the email is about. Subjects such as "Information about tomorrow's meeting" or "Advice on problem regarding your service" are clear.

- 7 Start the **content of your message** with a **greeting**. Use the preferred name of the people you are sending the email to, if you know them.
  - > Informal emails often start with "Hello (name)," or "Dear (name)"
  - > If you do not know the person's name, you can say "To whom it may concern," or "Hello" without using a name.

- 8 Below the greeting, add the **content of your message**, including:

- > The reason why you are writing
- > A description of relevant events and facts
- > How you have been impacted
- > What you would like done

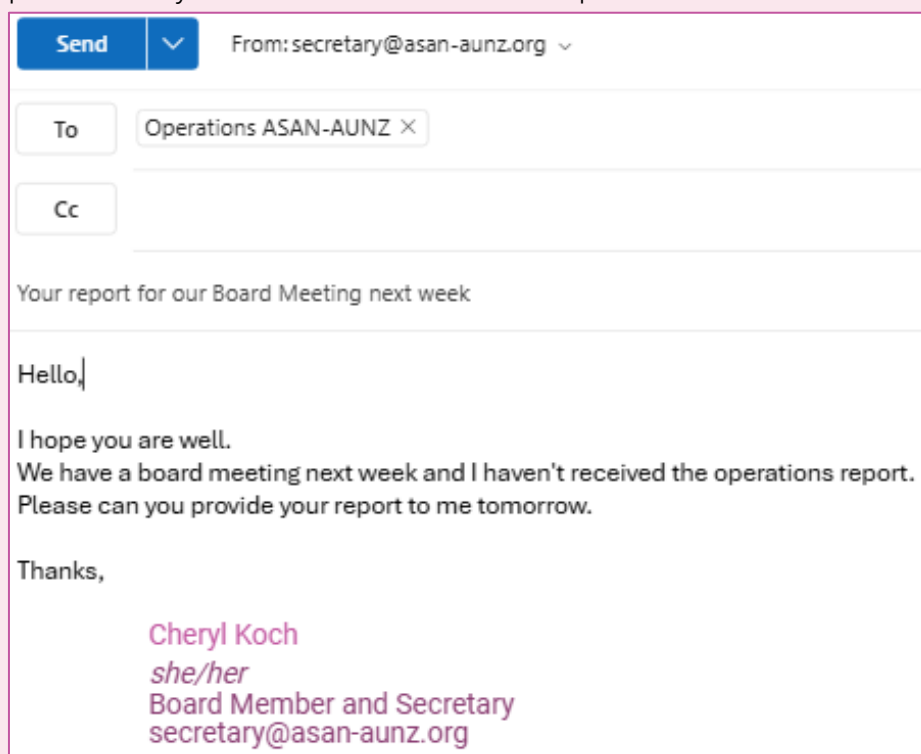
Here are some tips:

- > If you know the person, you may want to add a personal note. This could be "Hope you are well" at the start or "Have a great day" at the end of your email.
- > Try to avoid sending emails when you are upset. If you are upset writing an email, save it as a draft and come back to re-read it later when you are feeling calm. You might like to have someone else read it and give you feedback before you send it.
- > Try to keep the email to less than 5 paragraphs so that it is not too long. Long emails can be overwhelming to receive and are less likely to be read and understood.
- > If you do need to write a long email, be sure to use headings.
- > If you are sending an email to more than one person, and are asking for things to be done, it is helpful to name who you are asking to act. For example, "I want the person who was rude to me to say sorry" makes it easier for the reader to understand who needs to do what than only saying "I want an apology"

# HOW TO SEND AN EMAIL

- 9 After the **content of your message**, you should close or sign off the email. The way you do this often depends on how well you know the person or whether the topic of the email is serious. Some examples include "Regards" "Sincerely" "Thank you" "Warm regards"
- 10 At the end of your email, you sign off with your name.
  - > An informal email to a friend could use only your first name
  - > Include contact details for the method you want them to use to respond to your email. For example, if you have asked them to phone you, you will need to include your phone number.
  - > Remember to consider your privacy. Think about who you are sending the email to, who else might read it and what information they need.

What other information about you do you want them to know. If you are a member of an organisation or have relevant qualifications, you might want to include this information. You can include your pronouns if you want to. Here is an example email



The screenshot shows an email composition interface. At the top, there is a 'Send' button and a dropdown arrow next to the 'From' address: secretary@asan-aunz.org. Below this, the 'To' field contains 'Operations ASAN-AUNZ' with a close button (X). The 'Cc' field is empty. The subject line is 'Your report for our Board Meeting next week'. The body of the email starts with 'Hello,' followed by a line break, then 'I hope you are well.' The main text reads: 'We have a board meeting next week and I haven't received the operations report. Please can you provide your report to me tomorrow.' This is followed by 'Thanks,' and a signature block for Cheryl Koch, with pronouns 'she/her', title 'Board Member and Secretary', and email address 'secretary@asan-aunz.org'.

- 11 Remember to read over your email to check you have included everything you want to say, as well as the spelling, grammar and tone. Save as draft if you want to re-read it later or have a friend review it and when you are ready, press send. Remember: Once you have pressed "send" you cannot get it back!



# 11 HOW TO MAKE A PHONE CALL

Communication over the phone is sometimes a quick and easy way to get answers to questions or problems. However, for many Autistics this can be very difficult, so it is okay if you do not want to use this method.

## MAKING A PHONE CALL

If you are going to use a phone call for self-advocacy, it may help to:

- > Plan your call to help you be clear and confident.
- > Have a script of key messages can keep you on topic.
- > Take notes or record calls (with permission) to let you focus on the conversation and help you to remember what was said.

## BEFORE YOU MAKE THE CALL

### PLAN YOUR CALL

- > Who are you calling? Consider who you need to call, who might be best to call and why you are calling them, and not someone else.
- > What is the reason for calling? Try to use a short sentence to describe your problem. Think about the issue and the outcome you want.
- > What questions do you want to ask? Keep the questions simple.

### PREPARE A SCRIPT

If you get anxious, it can help to have prompts.

- > Put your planning notes in the order you expect to need them during the phone call. Doing this might help you find something you missed.
- > Add an introduction, E.g. "My name is Jo. I am from ASAN AUNZ."
- > Add a closing. For example, "Thank you for your time. Goodbye."

## TAKE NOTES DURING THE PHONE CALL

Record details of the phone call for future reference. Make note of:

- > The date and time of the call, and the name/s of who you speak to.
- > What did they say during the call? What are they doing and when?

## RECORD OF PHONE CALL

Use this space to record information about your phone call.

### BEFORE YOU MAKE THE CALL

Person I am calling \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Date of notes \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

What is the issue? \_\_\_\_\_

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Anything else important? \_\_\_\_\_

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What questions do I want to ask?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

What outcome do I want? \_\_\_\_\_

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# HOW TO MAKE A PHONE CALL

## DURING THE CALL

Date & Time of call \_\_\_\_\_

Who talked to me? \_\_\_\_\_

What did they say? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What were the answers to my questions?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

What will they do? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do I need to make another call?      Yes   OR   No

Who do I need to call? \_\_\_\_\_

What is their phone number? \_\_\_\_\_

When do I need to call them? \_\_\_\_\_

What do I need to say? \_\_\_\_\_

Is there anything else to note? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

We have listed some helpful numbers in the [Additional Resources](#) section of this toolkit.

## FINDING CONTACT NUMBERS

Here are some other places you can look to find contact numbers:

### PHONE BOOK (PAPER)

These hard copy books (on paper) that you can look through. You can find them in Post Offices if you do not have one at home. In some places, they are delivered to homes each year, but not everyone keeps them as people often use the internet.

There are two types of phone books:

- > White Pages: search by the company name or last name.
- > Yellow pages: search by the **type** of company

### ONLINE PHONE BOOKS

- > White Pages: search by the company name or last name.
  - o In Australia: [www.whitepages.com.au](http://www.whitepages.com.au)
  - o In New Zealand: [whitepages.co.nz](http://whitepages.co.nz)

You can search by business or government department, or for people.

- > Yellow pages: search by the **type** of company
  - o In Australia: [www.yellowpages.com.au](http://www.yellowpages.com.au)
  - o In New Zealand: [yellow.co.nz](http://yellow.co.nz)

For example, if you want an occupational therapist, you would:

- 1 Search the index to find a listing for 'occupational therapist'.
- 2 You will get a list of all occupational therapists listed from A to Z.

### INTERNET

You can use a search engine like Google to find phone numbers. Enter the name of the organisation or person you are looking for and search.

# 12 HOW TO WRITE A LETTER

Writing letters can be a great way to share your opinion or provide feedback. Another great benefit to writing a letter is that you can take your time to think about what to say and the best wording to use.

## WHO CAN I WRITE TO

Examples of people you can write a letter to:

- > Friends and Family
- > Doctors and health professionals
- > Carers and social workers
- > Organisations and Businesses
- > Local councils and Politicians

## BEFORE YOU START WRITING

Identify your issues. Use our [Self-Advocacy Step by Step Plan](#) to help you work out who and what you are writing about. It is good to think about what actions, outcomes, or changes you would like to be made.

## WHAT GOES IN A LETTER?

### YOUR CONTACT DETAILS

Include your postal address if you want them to reply. You might like to include your email address or phone number as well.

### DATE

Include the date you are writing (or intend to send) the letter. You may want a few days to reflect or get feedback from a friend or supporter.

### CONTACT DETAILS FOR THE PERSON YOU ARE WRITING TO

You might need to search on the internet or make a phone call to find out the best person to write to and their postal address.

## GREETING

There are several ways you start a greeting:

- > 'Hello <name>,' or 'Dear <name>,'
- > 'To whom it may concern,' (if you do not have a name)

## CONTENT OF THE LETTER

This should be clear and to the point:

- > The first paragraph is the introduction and says why you are writing.
- > The middle paragraph/s give the information you need to provide. Try to keep to just 4-5 paragraphs.
- > Use a new paragraph for each topic.
- > The last paragraph sums up the letter and outlines any actions you would like them to take.
- > If there is other information to include you can add copies of other documents with your letter (do not send originals!). Make sure you have included them and state why you have included them.
- > If you have lots of details to provide, include these as an attachment and ask the reader to refer to it so that the letter is not too long.

## CLOSING

The way you close often depends on how well you know a person, the content of your letter, and if it is a formal letter. Common closings are:

- > Formal letters: 'Yours sincerely,' or 'Yours faithfully,'
- > If it is appropriate: 'Thank you'
- > For family or friends: 'Love from,' or 'Best wishes,'

After that add:

- > your signature
- > your name, if your signature is not easy to read

If it is a work letter, you will want to include your job title or position and the name of the organisation you work for.

For anything formal, it is a good idea to make a copy of your letter, so you have an official record of what you sent.

## ADDRESSING AN ENVELOPE

It is important to put the right information on the envelope of your letter. If you put it in the wrong place, it might not reach the person you are sending it to.

### FRONT

The name and address of the person you are sending your letter to goes in the middle of the front of the envelope. Make sure to write clearly and do not use cursive. The details to include are:

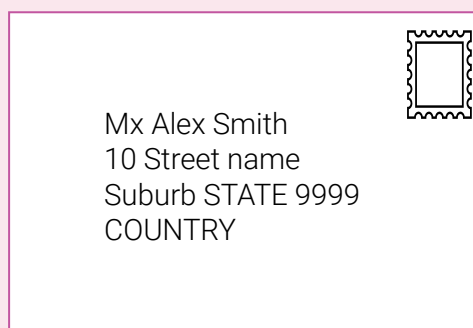
- > Full name of the person you are sending your letter to
- > Title of the person you are sending your letter to (if applicable)
- > Company or organisation name (if applicable)
- > Residential or Postal address. Sometimes this needs two lines.
- > Suburb, State or Territory or Region, Postcode

Some envelopes have squares for the postcode. Write one number in each box. If you do not know the postcode, you can search online using the suburb, region and country and the word 'post code'.

- > Country

Remember to add postage stamp/s on the front top right corner before posting. Stamps are available at the post office, or some postal or news agencies, and they will be able to tell you the right stamps to use. The amount you pay depends on the letter's size or weight, how you want to send it and where it is being sent to.

Here is an example of the front of an envelope:



# HOW TO WRITE A LETTER

## BACK

Write your name and address on the back of the envelope. You can write sender first if you want to. Doing this means the letter can be returned to you if it cannot be delivered for any reason.

Here is the example of the back of an envelope:

Sender: Mx Alex Smith 10 Street name Suburb STATE 9999 COUNTRY



We've put together some resources that may be helpful to you. Some may not be right for you and that is okay. You may find other resources that are helpful too.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

The internet can be a great place to look for information. Be careful, though, as anyone can have their own website, which means it is not always correct or reliable. You do not need your own computer or internet to see these sites. Most libraries will have computers you can use to access the internet.

## SELF ADVOCACY RESOURCES

Here are some resources that may help build your self-advocacy skills.

- > Our website [www.asan-aunz.org](http://www.asan-aunz.org)
- > Our sister organisation, the Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN) has a range of resources [autisticadvocacy.org/resources](http://autisticadvocacy.org/resources)
- > Autistics Guide to Adulthood has useful modules [autisticsguide.org.au](http://autisticsguide.org.au)
- > Kin helps people from diverse backgrounds living with disability, their families and carers. [kinadvocacy.org.au/resources](http://kinadvocacy.org.au/resources)
- > Learn how to communicate assertively with the ten module Assert Yourself Workbook [www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/Resources/Looking-After-Yourself/Assertiveness#d9d2f413-6b08-4e76-ac42-5d58b1e3b549](http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/Resources/Looking-After-Yourself/Assertiveness#d9d2f413-6b08-4e76-ac42-5d58b1e3b549)
- > Find resources for older people with disabilities to self-advocate [adaaustralia.com.au/self-advocacy](http://adaaustralia.com.au/self-advocacy)
- > A self-advocacy toolkit for older people [opan.org.au/information/self-advocacy-toolkit](http://opan.org.au/information/self-advocacy-toolkit)
- > Self-advocacy resources on the Disability Australia Hub [www.disabilityaustraliahub.com.au/advocacy-self-advocacy](http://www.disabilityaustraliahub.com.au/advocacy-self-advocacy)
- > For students with learning disabilities who want to self-advocate [selfadvocacyhighschool.wordpress.com/getting-started](http://selfadvocacyhighschool.wordpress.com/getting-started)

- > New Zealand's Health and Disability Advocacy Service on self-advocacy [advocacy.org.nz/self-advocacy](https://advocacy.org.nz/self-advocacy)
- > Find resources with Access Matters Aotearoa [www.accessmatters.org.nz/resources](https://www.accessmatters.org.nz/resources)
- > Build yourself-advocacy skills with Access Matters Aotearoa toolkit [www.accessalliance.org.nz/self\\_advocacy\\_skills\\_toolkit\\_pan\\_disability](https://www.accessalliance.org.nz/self_advocacy_skills_toolkit_pan_disability)
- > Resources and education to support autistic individuals across their lifespan [www.autismgrownup.com](https://www.autismgrownup.com)
- > Help to find support services near you [askizzy.org.au](https://askizzy.org.au)
- > Information and services for people with disability in Australia [www.disabilitygateway.gov.au](https://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au)
- > People with Disability Australia's accessible self-advocacy facts sheets for young people with disability [pwd.org.au/projects/past-projects/creating-access-project](https://pwd.org.au/projects/past-projects/creating-access-project)

## FINDING DISABILITY ADVOCATE

If your self-advocacy is not successful you may need support from a disability advocate. Here are some places you may find a disability advocate.

- > Use the Disability Advocacy Support Helpline
  - > Phone: 1800 643 787
  - > Online form: [www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/contact-us-form](https://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/contact-us-form)
  - > Website: [www.disabilitygateway.gov.au](https://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au)
- > Use the National Disability Advocacy Program list [www.dss.gov.au/disability-and-carers-programs-services-for-people-with-disability-national-disability-advocacy-program-ndap-operational-guidelines/list-of-agencies-funded-under-the-national-disability-advocacy-program-ndap](https://www.dss.gov.au/disability-and-carers-programs-services-for-people-with-disability-national-disability-advocacy-program-ndap-operational-guidelines/list-of-agencies-funded-under-the-national-disability-advocacy-program-ndap)
- > Find an advocate through the Disability Advocacy Resource Unit [daru.org.au/organisation-type/individual-advocacy](https://daru.org.au/organisation-type/individual-advocacy)
- > Use an online search on [askizzy.org.au/disability-advocacy-finder](https://askizzy.org.au/disability-advocacy-finder)

## OTHER ONLINE RESOURCES

Here are some other online resources that some of our members have found helpful. Please note that many of them are based outside of Australia and New Zealand.

- > Find tools you need to live a great life [theabilitytoolbox.com](https://theabilitytoolbox.com)
- > Personal stories from the Neurodivergent and allies, in the pursuit of decoding Neurodiversity [www.medecoded.com](https://www.medecoded.com)
- > Supporting diverse learners [www.inclusioned.edu.au](https://www.inclusioned.edu.au)
- > Autism services, advice and support [livingautism.com](https://livingautism.com)
- > Autism awareness site [autisticandunapologetic.com](https://autisticandunapologetic.com)
- > Find an accessible place to stay [www.accessibleaccommodation.com](https://www.accessibleaccommodation.com)
- > A disability-led service provider [enhancedlifestyles.com.au](https://enhancedlifestyles.com.au)
- > Women with Disability Australia's LEAD Leadership and Mentoring Toolkit [wwda.org.au/lead-toolkit](https://wwda.org.au/lead-toolkit)
- > Learn more about research with Autism CRC [www.autismcrc.com.au](https://www.autismcrc.com.au)

## RESOURCES YOU FIND HELPFUL

You might like to write down any resources you find helpful here.

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## MAKING COMPLAINTS IN AUSTRALIA

For those with hearing or speech loss, details are provided for the National Relay Service (NRS) and TTY where available.

For non-English speakers, details are given for a Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) where available.

## ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Find out how to report physical, sexual, psychological, legal, and civil abuse, restraint and restrictive practices, or financial abuse to the **national disability abuse and neglect hotline**, including video and AUSLAN, on their website: [www.jobaccess.gov.au/complaints/hotline](http://www.jobaccess.gov.au/complaints/hotline). This is **not** a crisis service.

- > Phone: 1800 880 052 (free from land lines)
- > Email: [hotline@workfocus.com](mailto:hotline@workfocus.com)
- > NRS: Call 133 677 ask for 1800 880 052
- > TIS: 13 14 50

## DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT

Find out how to make a complaint about disability employment services that you cannot resolve with your provider on the **National Customer Service Line (NCSL)** website: [www.jobaccess.gov.au/complaints/ncsl](http://www.jobaccess.gov.au/complaints/ncsl)

- > Phone: 1800 805 260 (free from land lines)
- > Email: [nationalcustomerserviceline@dewr.gov.au](mailto:nationalcustomerserviceline@dewr.gov.au)

To complain about the NCSL, Disability Employment Services (DES), Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs), or Advocacy services funded by the Department of Social Services (DSS), use the **Complaints Resolution and Referral Service (CRRS)** (video and AUSLAN) [www.jobaccess.gov.au/complaints/crrs](http://www.jobaccess.gov.au/complaints/crrs)

- > Phone: 1800 880 052 (free from land lines)
- > Online Form: [jobaccess.gov.au/contacts/online-complaint-form](http://jobaccess.gov.au/contacts/online-complaint-form)
- > NRS: Call 133 677 and ask for 1800 880 052
- > TIS: 13 14 50.

## NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME (NDIS)

Find out how to make a complaint about **the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)**, including easy read, on their website: [www.ndis.gov.au/contact/feedback-and-complaints](http://www.ndis.gov.au/contact/feedback-and-complaints)

- > Phone: 1800 800 1100
- > Email: [enquiries@ndis.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@ndis.gov.au)
- > Online form: [www.ndis.gov.au/contact/feedback-and-complaints/contact-and-feedback-form](http://www.ndis.gov.au/contact/feedback-and-complaints/contact-and-feedback-form)
- > Live Chat: Via webchat on website [www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)
- > In person: Visit an NDIS office or Local Area Coordinator (LAC)
- > Mail: NDIA, GPO Box 700, Canberra ACT 2601
- > Direct TTY: 1800 555 667
- > Direct NRS: 1800 555 727
- > TIS: Call 13 14 50 and ask for the NDIS.

For information on complaining about **NDIS service providers**, including easy read, visit [www.ndiscommission.gov.au/participants/participants-make-complaint](http://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/participants/participants-make-complaint)

- > Phone: 1800 035 544 (free from land lines)
- > Online Form: [ndiscommission.gov.au/contact-us/make-complaint-form](http://ndiscommission.gov.au/contact-us/make-complaint-form)
- > NRS: Call 133 677 then ask for 1800 035 544
- > TIS: 13 14 50.

## OTHER AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Find out how to make a complaint about **Services Australia, Centrelink, Child Support or Medicare** on their website:

[www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/complaints-and-feedback](http://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/complaints-and-feedback)

To make a complaint about Services Australia (including Centrelink, Child Support and Medicare):

- > Phone: 1800 132 468
- > Direct TTY: 1800 810 586
- > Overseas call: [www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/phone-us?context=64107#international](http://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/phone-us?context=64107#international)
- > The National Relay Service (NRS) is also available to use.
- > Mail (free): **Centrelink and Medicare**  
Services Australia Complaints and Feedback  
Reply Paid 7800, Canberra BC ACT 2610
- > Mail (free): **Child Support**  
Child Support Complaints and Feedback  
Reply Paid 9815, Melbourne VIC 3001

Find out how to make a complaint about the **Department of Social Services** on their website: [www.dss.gov.au/contact/feedback-compliments-complaints-and-enquiries/complaints-page](http://www.dss.gov.au/contact/feedback-compliments-complaints-and-enquiries/complaints-page)

Contact DSS with complaints about DSS or DSS funded service providers including complaints that cannot be investigated by the CRRS or NCSL.

- > Phone: 1800 634 035
- > Fax: (02) 6133 8442
- > Email: [complaints@dss.gov.au](mailto:complaints@dss.gov.au)
- > Mail: DSS Feedback, GPO Box 9820, Canberra ACT 2601
- > Online Form: [www.dss.gov.au/contact/feedback-compliments-complaints-and-enquiries/feedback-form](http://www.dss.gov.au/contact/feedback-compliments-complaints-and-enquiries/feedback-form)

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Find out how to make a complaint to the **Department of Home Affairs** on their website: [www.homeaffairs.gov.au/help-and-support/departmental-forms/online-forms/complaints-compliments-and-suggestions](http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/help-and-support/departmental-forms/online-forms/complaints-compliments-and-suggestions)

To make a complaint about the Department of Home Affairs:

- > Online form: [www.homeaffairs.gov.au/help-and-support/departmental-forms/online-forms/complaints-compliments-and-suggestions#](http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/help-and-support/departmental-forms/online-forms/complaints-compliments-and-suggestions#)
- > Mail: Department of Home Affairs  
GPO Box 241 Melbourne VIC 3001

If you are not satisfied with how your complaint has been handled by an Australian Government agency, find out how to make a complaint to the **Commonwealth Ombudsman** on their website:

[www.ombudsman.gov.au/complaints/how-to-make-a-complaint/assistance-for-people-with-disabilities](http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/complaints/how-to-make-a-complaint/assistance-for-people-with-disabilities)

If you are not satisfied with how your complaint has been handled by an Australian Government agency.

- > Phone: 1800 362 072
- > Email: [ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au)
- > Voicemail: 02 6243 1701
- > Mail: GPO Box 442, Canberra ACT 2601
- > Online form: [forms.ombudsman.gov.au/prod](http://forms.ombudsman.gov.au/prod)

## STATE AND TERRITORY SERVICES

You may need to make a complaint about something in your state or territory. Here are some places to start. Most of these provide a phone number, online or email forms and interpreter or translator services.

- > NSW [www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/make-a-complaint-about-a-nsw-government-agency](http://www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/make-a-complaint-about-a-nsw-government-agency)
- > QLD [www.qld.gov.au/contact-us/complaints-process](http://www.qld.gov.au/contact-us/complaints-process)
- > SA [www.sa.gov.au/topics/about-sa/government/contact-government/complaints](http://www.sa.gov.au/topics/about-sa/government/contact-government/complaints)
- > VIC [www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au/complaints/](http://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au/complaints/)
- > NT [ombudsman.nt.gov.au/complaints](http://ombudsman.nt.gov.au/complaints)
- > Tasmania [www.service.tas.gov.au/services/justice-crime-and-the-law/courts-tribunals-and-jury-service/make-a-complaint-about-a-public-authority](http://www.service.tas.gov.au/services/justice-crime-and-the-law/courts-tribunals-and-jury-service/make-a-complaint-about-a-public-authority)
- > ACT [www.ombudsman.act.gov.au/complaints/how-to-make-a-complaint](http://www.ombudsman.act.gov.au/complaints/how-to-make-a-complaint)
- > WA [www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au/complaints](http://www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au/complaints)



## MAKING COMPLAINTS IN NEW ZEALAND

You can contact the **Health and Disability Commissioner** to complain about human rights relating to health and disabilities.

See their website for how to complain, including in Te reo Maori, Easy Read, Audio and NZSL: [www.hdc.org.nz/making-a-complaint](http://www.hdc.org.nz/making-a-complaint)

To get help from an advocate (free of charge): [advocacy.org.nz](http://advocacy.org.nz)

To complain about health or disability services:

- > Online form: [www.hdc.org.nz/making-a-complaint/make-a-complaint-to-hdc/complain-about-care-you-received/](http://www.hdc.org.nz/making-a-complaint/make-a-complaint-to-hdc/complain-about-care-you-received/)
- > Print form: [www.hdc.org.nz/media/ivehraj/hdc-complaints-form\\_care-received-2023-07.pdf](http://www.hdc.org.nz/media/ivehraj/hdc-complaints-form_care-received-2023-07.pdf)

For questions:

- > Phone: 0800 11 22 33 (freephone)
- > Mail: PO Box 1791 Auckland 1140
- > Email: [hdc@hdc.org.nz](mailto:hdc@hdc.org.nz)

If you have hearing or speech loss, use NZ Relay by calling 09 373 1060 and asking for 0800 11 22 33 or see [www.nzrelay.co.nz](http://www.nzrelay.co.nz)

If you use NZSL you can record a video and email it to [hdc@hdc.org.nz](mailto:hdc@hdc.org.nz) or you can use [www.seeflow.co.nz/direct](http://www.seeflow.co.nz/direct)

The toolkit was designed and created by autistic people, for autistic people. We thank and acknowledge the people who contributed.

We especially acknowledge the contributions of:

- > ASAN AUNZ's User Led Design Group including Michael Chan, Jen Harland, Jamie McCaffrey-Creed, Yolande McNicoll, Mandar Nelson, Andrew Radford, Haley Russell, and others,
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



We, ASAN AUNZ, respectfully acknowledge First Nations Peoples as traditional custodians of the lands, skies and waters where we live, learn, create and work. We acknowledge First Nations Peoples as the original and ongoing custodians and pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.



We, ASAN AUNZ, acknowledge the LGBTIQASB+ community and its significant intersection with Autistic and neurodivergent communities. We affirm everyone's right to freely identify and acknowledge their sexual and/or romantic orientation, gender identity and neuroqueer expressions. We actively advocate for the rights of our queer community, contributing to a world that is free from discrimination. We have adopted the Australian specific acronym, that includes 'SB' to represent 'Sistergirl' and 'Brotherboy,' importantly acknowledging our indigenous peoples' queer communities

Thank you for using the ASAN AUNZ Self Advocacy Toolkit.

We encourage you to participate in the Autistic community.

## CONNECT

We'd love to welcome you to our community. [Join ASAN AUNZ for free.](#)

Feel free to reach out on socials, we would love to hear from you!



We are an Autistic-led organisation, predominantly made up of volunteers, we will get back to you as soon as we are able and have the spoons to respond, we thank you for your patience.

## SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY

If you would like to contact us regarding systemic advocacy please email [operations@asan-aunz.org](mailto:operations@asan-aunz.org) and [secretary@asan-aunz.org](mailto:secretary@asan-aunz.org).

## CREATE CONTENT

If you are an Autistic writer or content creator that would like to contribute to ASAN AUNZ by sharing your story with our community, we would love to hear from you!

If you would like to pitch a blog post, specifically around your advocacy experiences, with tips and hints you would love to share with our community, please email [operations@asan-aunz.org](mailto:operations@asan-aunz.org) and [comms@asan-aunz.org](mailto:comms@asan-aunz.org).

## PLEASE COMPLETE OUR SELF ADVOCACY SURVEY

We'd like to know how you feel about your self-advocacy and what support you are still looking for.

Please share your thoughts by taking our [Self Advocacy Survey](#).