

# Motor neurone disease: progressive dysarthria and dysphagia



Assume that today's date is 22 October 2026. You reviewed Mrs MacAulay at home yesterday. You are a speech pathologist in the community rehabilitation team. Using the information in the case notes, write a letter to Dr Lachlan Zielinska, the treating neurologist, updating him on Mrs MacAulay's speech and swallowing and requesting a timely discussion about enteral feeding. Address the letter to Dr Lachlan Zielinska, Consultant Neurologist, Neurology Outpatient Clinic, Hospital Road. In your answer: expand the relevant notes into complete sentences; do not use note form; use letter format. The body of the letter should be approximately 180–200 words.

Choose one box per line: I = Include / C = Compress / O = Omit. Answers and reasons are on the webpage (scan QR).

## Patient details

- |                                                                                          | I                        | C                        | O                        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Name: Mrs Wen MacAulay                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. DOB: 14/03/1968 (58 yrs)                                                              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Dx: motor neurone disease (bulbar onset), diagnosed 02/2025                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Referred by Dr Zielinska; SP review since 03/2025; last update to neurologist 07/2026 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Social background

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 5. Lives with husband, who prepares all meals; 2 adult children live interstate        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Former primary school teacher; previously sang in community choir                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Husband frustrated by wait for home modifications — says local council is 'useless' | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Pt keen to remain at home and to stay involved in all decisions about her care      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Medical history

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 9. Riluzole 50 mg BD                                                                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Hysterectomy 2009                                                                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Mild R hand weakness — typing slower but accurate                                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Respiratory physician review 09/26: mild ↓ in respiratory function; NIV not yet required | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. Allergies: nil known                                                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Speech assessment 21/10/26

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 14. Speech slow, hypernasal, imprecise consonants; ↑ fatigue later in day                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. Intelligibility to unfamiliar listeners ↓ from ~80% (07/26) → ~40%                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16. Husband understands most speech; pt no longer able to manage phone calls using natural speech alone | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 17. Pt reports frustration; avoiding social outings                                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Swallowing

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 18. Before 14/10: coughing with thin fluids at most meals; wet voice after drinks | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|

## Swallowing

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 19. Mealtimes ↑ from ~20 min → 45–60 min; fatigue → often leaves meals unfinished   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20. Weight 64 kg (07/26) → 58 kg (21/10/26) — ~9% loss over 3/12                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21. VFSS 14/10/26: silent aspiration of thin fluids; pharyngeal residue with solids | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 22. Diet since 14/10: IDDSI Level 5 minced & moist; Level 2 mildly thick fluids     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 23. Chest infection 08/26 treated by GP with oral antibiotics — ?aspiration         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 24. Pt says previous speech pathologist 'never explained anything'                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 25. Husband trained in fluid thickening and choking first aid                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Communication device

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 26. 6/52 trial of text-to-speech app on tablet (loan from equipment library) completed        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 27. Uses device independently for phone calls and with strangers; prefers speech with husband | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 28. Message banking of familiar phrases completed 2025 — loaded onto device                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 29. NDIS application for own device submitted 10/26                                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Enteral feeding

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 30. Pt and husband raised tube feeding at session; pt wishes to discuss with neurologist; undecided            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 31. Pt anxious about procedure; requested written information                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 32. Dietitian review 16/10: thickened high-energy supplements commenced; supports early gastrostomy discussion | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Plan

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 33. Request neurologist review soon to discuss gastrostomy, before further ↓ weight and respiratory function                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 34. SP: fortnightly home visits; review swallow and device use; strategies — upright for meals, small sips, rest before meals | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 35. Daughter's wedding 12/26 — pt hopes to give a speech using device                                                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |