

# Writing a letter for World Immunisation Week

## Some facts and arguments you can use in your letters or articles on immunisation:

- World Immunisation Week is a time to show why every person must be protected from vaccine-preventable diseases, whoever they are and wherever they live.
- Immunisation programmes save 2 – 3 million lives each year.
- We've seen great global progress and the world is closer than ever to ensuring that everyone receives life-saving vaccines.
- But too many children still die from diseases that are easily preventable, treatable and curable. In 2017, 1 in 10 children did not receive any vaccines at all.
- UK aid has immunised 67.1 million children against preventable diseases through Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, which help people get access to vaccines in the world's poorest countries.
- The Global Polio Eradication Initiative has helped decrease polio cases by 99.9% since 1988. UK support will help vaccinate 45 million children against polio each year until 2020 – that's saving more than 65,000 children from lifelong paralysis every single year.
- Continued financial support and UK leadership is vital to ensuring all children have access to vaccines and achieving the Global Goals by 2030.

## A good letter is...

- **Well-structured** – you can use the 'EPIC' model to set out your case (E=Engage the reader; P=state the Problem; I=Inform about a solution; C=Call to action – what can the reader do?).
- **Personal** – it's much more compelling and memorable if they can see why you care. Is there a particular local angle you can use?
- **Short and snappy** – busy editors will want you to cut to the chase!
- **Morally persuasive** – show how people living in poverty need vaccines just like we do. Explain how vaccines help children survive and thrive.

## Gafo's story: Papua New Guinea's first case of polio in a generation

Gafo woke up one morning in April 2018 with aching legs. Excited to play with his friends, the six-year-old boy ignored the pain, until he fell as he tried to get out of bed. His legs were so weak he could barely move. Over the next two days, the pain got worse. After a series of tests, polio was confirmed as the cause of Gafo's paralysis.

Gafo's parents understand that his paralysis has no cure, but they are determined to minimize his difficulty in moving with regular therapy from his new friend, Dr Winnie Sadua at Angau Memorial General Hospital.

His parents feel that Gafo has been instrumental in raising awareness of polio in Papua New Guinea. His plight paved the way for more children trooping to vaccination sites when the government launched mass polio vaccinations as part of the outbreak response.



"My son may not have the normal life we prayed for, but he will always be an exceptional boy," said Gafo's mother Soya. "What happened to my son has increased awareness of polio and many mothers are having their children vaccinated, saving these children from lifelong paralysis."



In early September, Gafo was unable to walk. He had to be carried everywhere. Now with help from the Morobe Provincial Health Office and Angau Memorial General Hospital, Gafo receives regular check-ups and therapy. He still cannot run. But he has developed a unique gait, moving rapidly to keep up with his friends and his sister Sola.

Next year, Gafo will start school. The thought lights him up with excitement: "I want to become a doctor, giving injections to children and making them better when they are sick." His parents hope that, with support from the Government and others, Gafo will receive a good education so that his dreams can come true.

Source: [WHO](#)

*Strong health systems are needed to ensure that polio vaccination coverage properly protects children, families and communities from future outbreaks of the disease.*