
**Advisory Committee on Health Emergency Response to Coronavirus (COVID-19) for People
with Disability**
Fourth Meeting: 21 April 2020
Key Outcomes

The Department advised members of the Advisory Committee that the Management and Operational Plan was approved by the National Cabinet on 16 April 2020 and had since been published at www.health.gov.au, including in the accessible versions. The Department thanked the Committee for its tremendous contribution to developing the Plan and the accessible versions.

The Advisory Committee discussed a range of topics including but not limited to:

- management of risks to people with disability in congregate settings;
- the importance of personal protective equipment (PPE) for people with disability, their carers and support workers;
- the establishment of the Department of Social Services (DSS) Disability Information Helpline
- mechanisms to provide support and advice to health professionals to help improve the health care of patients with disability;
- the importance of communication between the Commonwealth health and disability agencies and States and Territory agencies;
- the need for clear and accessible communication, particularly for people most at risk but also for carers and health workers. It was agreed a Communications Strategy will be developed.
- the importance of not focussing solely on people with disability who utilise the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS); and
- the importance of COVID-19 surveillance data for people with disability and evaluating the implementation of the Plan.

One of the key themes that emerged from the meeting was the need to prioritise, where possible, implementation of the Plan towards people who are at most risk of exposure and developing adverse outcomes related to COVID-19, especially people with complex health care needs.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare presented on options for developing data in relation to people with disability and COVID-19.

NEXT STEPS

- The Advisory Committee would continue to meet weekly.
- Representatives of all states and territories would be invited to one of the next two Advisory Committee meetings to discuss relevant issues, including support for people with disabilities in hospital settings, community visitors and the health needs of people with disability in prisons.
- A further Roundtable, involving additional stakeholders, would be scheduled within a month.
- A plain English summary of the Plan would be developed by the Department of Health.
- The Department of Health would lead the development of a draft evaluation framework for consideration by the Committee.
- The Chair would write to the Communicable Diseases Network of Australia (CDNA) to initiate a discussion about COVID-19 surveillance for people with disability.
- The Department of Health would also urgently develop, in collaboration with members, a draft risk framework to assist in prioritising actions under the Plan.
- Urgent work would continue on the Communications Strategy, mechanisms for expert advice for hospital and primary care workers and access to PPE.