

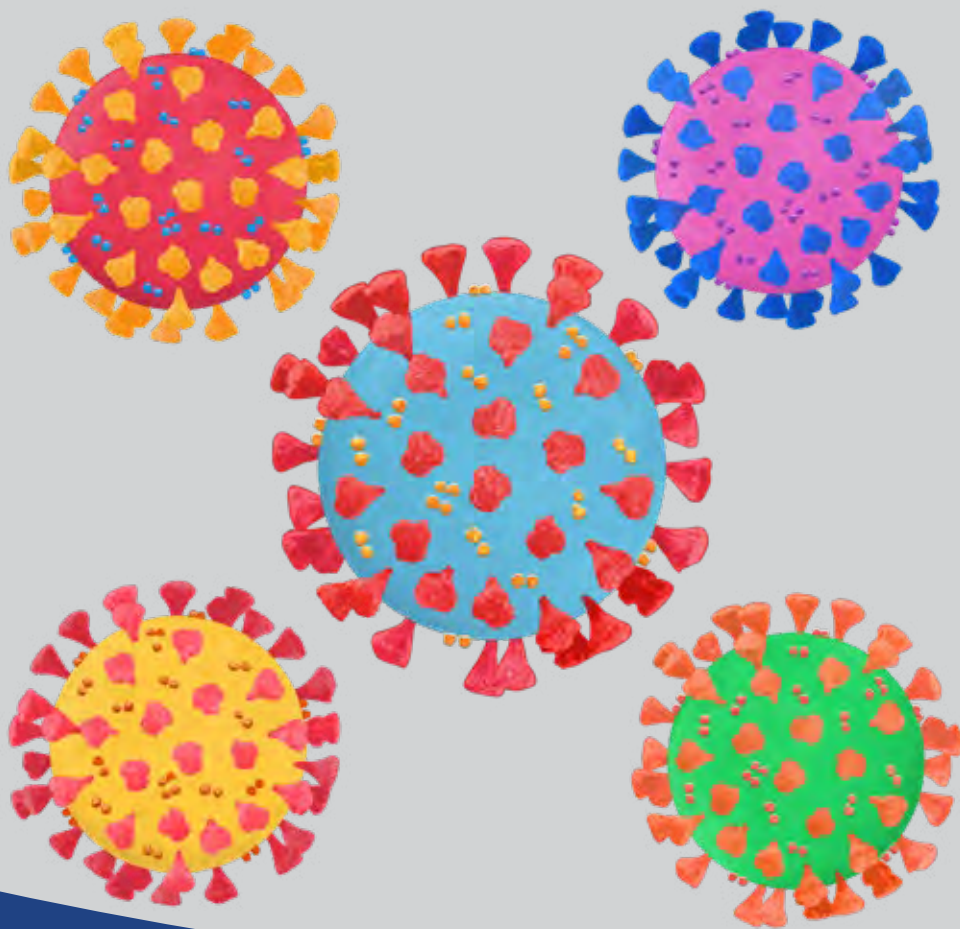


Australian Government

Department of Health and Aged Care

What we learned about helping people with disability during COVID-19

February 2023



www.health.gov.au

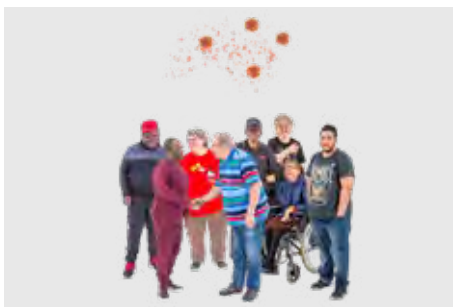


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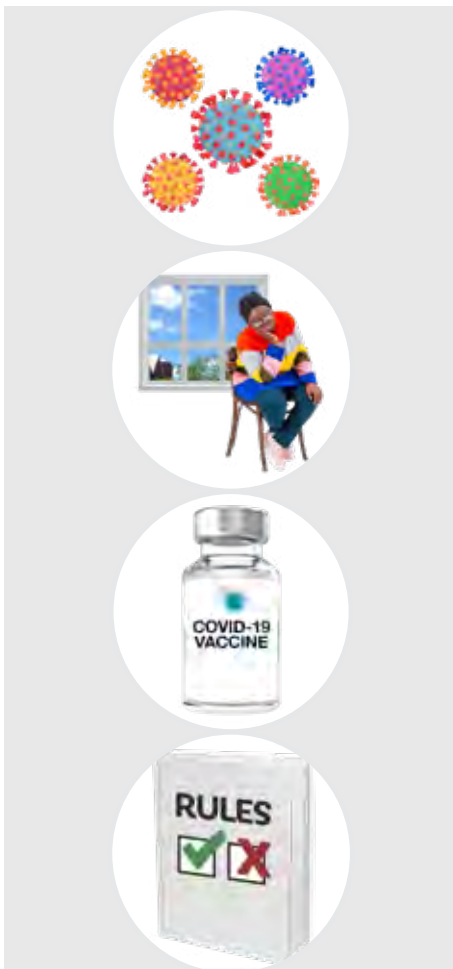
About this report



This report talks about what COVID-19 was like for people with disability.



It also talks about the support people with disability got during COVID-19.



In this report **COVID-19** means the time when

- COVID-19 started
- We had **lockdowns**
- We got **COVID-19 vaccines**
- We had less **COVID-19 rules** again.



Lockdown means when you could not leave your house much during COVID-19.



The **COVID-19 vaccine** is a medicine that can help stop you getting very sick from COVID-19.



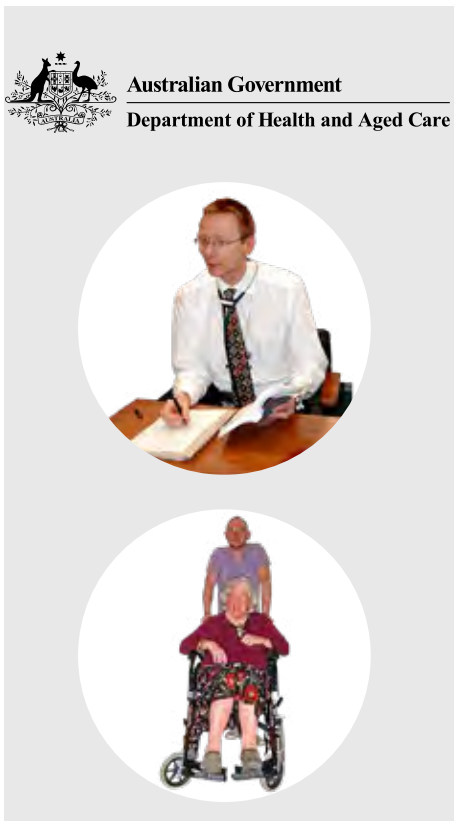
COVID-19 rules are about what you can and can not do.



This might be things like wearing a mask inside places.



Nous Group wrote this report for the
Department of Health and Aged Care.



The **Department of Health and Aged Care** is
the part of the Government that looks after people

- With their health
- When they get old.



This report only talks about the most
important things from a big report.



To read the big report go to

www.health.gov.au



You can ask someone to help you read this report and the big report.



This might be

- A friend
- Family member
- Support person.

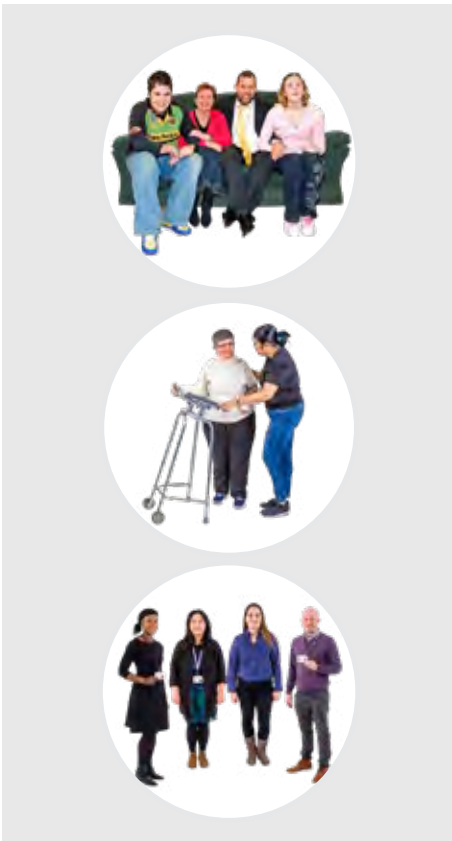
How we wrote this report



We wanted to find out what life was like for people during COVID-19.

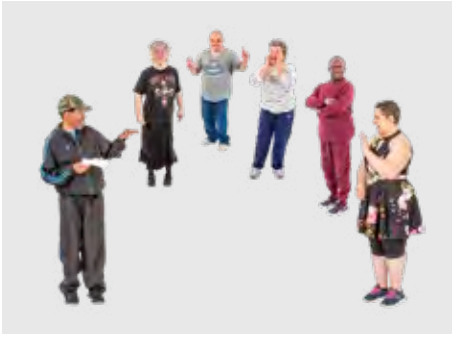


We wanted to know if there are things we can learn from that time.



To find out what people think we talked to

- People with disability and their families
- Disability support workers
- People from the Government.



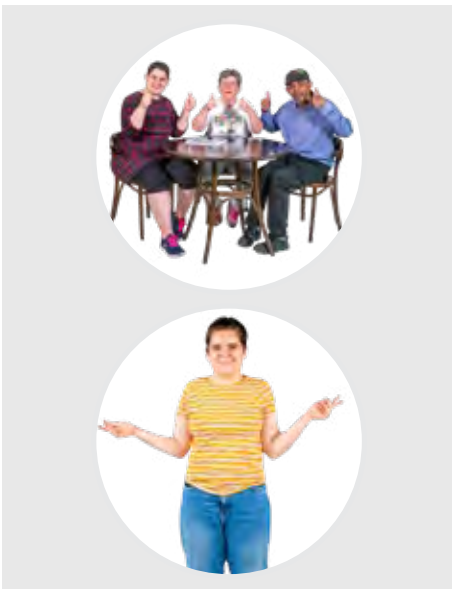
We also talked to the **COVID-19 disability advisory group**.



The **COVID-19 disability advisory group** helped the government with decisions during COVID-19.



We used what people told us to write this report.



This report will help everyone learn about

- What worked well during COVID-19
- What we can do better next time.

What we wanted to find out

We wanted to find out from people.

1. What was COVID-19 like for people with disability?

2. How should the government talk to people with disability?

3. How have health services helped people during COVID-19?

4. How did disability services help people during COVID-19?

5. What else helped people during COVID-19?

6. What should happen next?



1. What was COVID-19 like for people with disability?



COVID-19 was different for everyone.



COVID-19 was hard for a lot of people with disability.



Some people with disability can get very sick from COVID-19.



They had to be very careful to stay safe from COVID-19.



Many people with disability started to stay at home before most other people did.



Some people with disability still stay away from others to keep safe from COVID-19.



This can be hard as they might

- Feel lonely
- Not get the support they need.



People told us that it was hard for some people to get **health services** during COVID-19.



Health services are places where you get help with your health like hospitals or doctors.



It also took a long time before all people with disability could get the COVID-19 vaccine.



The government should have given people with disability the COVID-19 vaccine faster.



Some people with disability still do not have the COVID-19 vaccine.

2. How should the government talk to people with disability?



People with disability need more support when there is a health emergency like COVID-19.



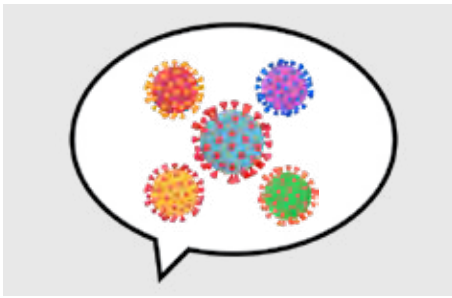
People with different disabilities need to know different things in a health emergency.



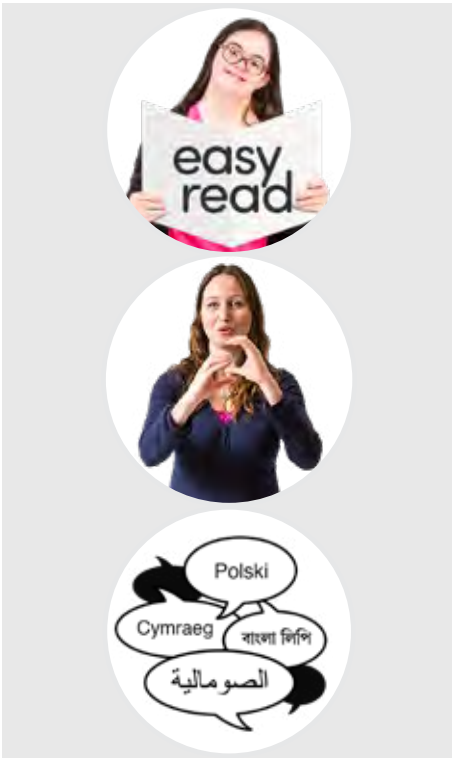
We wanted to know how the government should talk to people with disability about health emergencies.



The COVID-19 disability advisory group helped government understand what people with disability need.



The government used different ways to tell people about COVID-19.



This might have been information in

- Easy Read
- Auslan
- Other languages.



During COVID-19 people with disability sometimes had to wait for information.



People with disability should get information at the same time as everyone else.

3. How did health services help people with disability during COVID-19?



Some things changed during COVID-19 about the way health services helped people with disability.



Health services worked more together to give people the best care.



They had to find ways to make health care easier to get for some people with disability.



This might have been things like more support to get the COVID-19 vaccine.



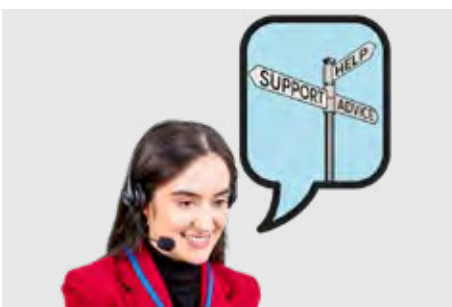
Some people could get health care like vaccines at home.



Telehealth was also used by many people to get health care.



Telehealth means you can talk to your doctor over the phone or in a video call.



In some places you could call someone to help you get

- The COVID-19 vaccine
- Other health services.



This helped many people who find it hard to get to a health service.

4. How have disability services helped people during COVID-19?



We wanted to know how disability services helped people with disability during COVID-19.



Disability services told their staff how to be safe from COVID-19.



They gave them things like

- Face masks
- Gowns and gloves
- COVID-19 tests.



Sometimes there were not enough support workers during COVID-19.



This made it hard to give people with disability the support and care they need.



Some support workers could not stay at home when they were sick.



This is because there were not enough support workers to look after people.



Sick support workers put the people with disability at risk of also getting sick.

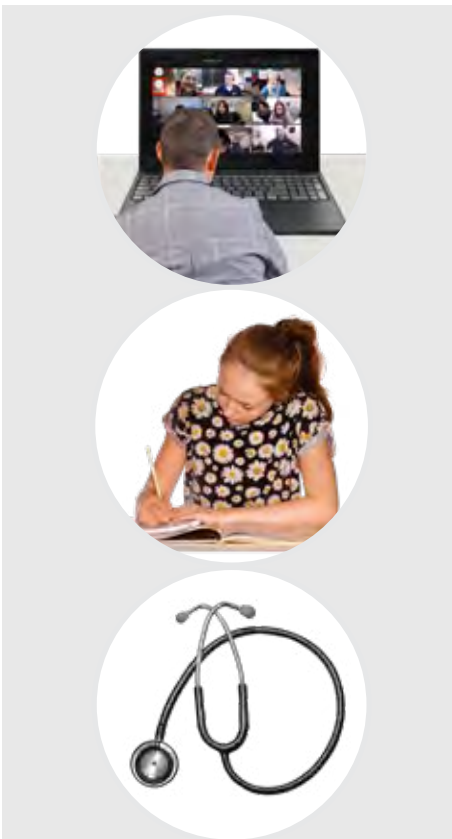
5. What else helped people during COVID-19?



Many things changed during COVID-19.



Everyone had to learn to do things in a different way.



This might have been at

- Work
- School
- Health services.



Many children could not go to school.



They did online learning to keep safe from COVID-19.



People told us that in some places the police learned more about disability.



Police could help people with disability understand which COVID-19 rules they had to follow.



The governments of different states worked together to help people with disability.

6. What should happen next?



We have some ideas about what the government should do now.



The government should keep talking to

- People with disability and their families
- Support workers
- Other governments.



We should keep the new health services that helped people during COVID-19.



The government should think about children with disability when they make rules for schools.



The government must learn more about what happens when people with disability get COVID-19.



This will help the government support people with disability in the best way.



Police should get better at talking to people with disability.



The government needs to make sure that there are more disability support workers.



The government should make sure that people can get things they need to be safe.



This might be things like

- Masks
- COVID-19 tests
- Vaccines.



To find out more about our report send an email to

COVID-19Disability@health.gov.au

Council for Intellectual Disability made this document Easy Read. **CID** for short. You need to ask CID if you want to use any pictures in this document. You can contact CID at **business@cid.org.au**.